Living the Past

In Honor of San Diego's Holocaust Survivors
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Speakers: Frances Gelbart and Lou Dunst

Transcribed by: Rachel E Lieu

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Time	Transcription
00:00	[The Library UC San Diego]
00:05	[Living the Past: In Honor of San Diego's Holocaust Survivors with Lou Dunst and Frances Gelbart / May 8th, 2013]
00:06	Deborah Hertz: Brian Schottlaender and I started this project about eight years ago. We had no idea of the thirst for history. And there's only one thing I can say that's just, summarizes it all for me, is that history is everywhere, and in this project, we've gotten it out of the classroom. I know for some of you it still seems like a classroom, but for us it's uh, real human beings, telling real witnessing stories. And for all of you who've been coming regularly, who are just coming to this, or only coming because Susanne Hillman is going to give you a half a point of extra credit, maybe if you're nice, we're happy to see you and it's been a thrilling project. So, while I have this chance, first of all, I just want to highlight the last two programs of the year, Alexander Stille on the 29th, uh *Surviving Auschwitz* on June 5th. I also want to take this minute, because I'm not always in front of this mic, to introduce and thank some people who have just kept us going, and going, and going, and going, the first is Mr. Brian Schottlaender, the director of the Library, the second one is Susanne, in hot pink, who's always on the ready um, Mr. Sam Dunlap [Subject Specialist for Classical, European, and Jewish Studies], from the Library. I don't know that he's here, but he keeps us going on the inside of the library connection um and Barbara Brink [Director of Development, UC San Diego Library], who's wonderful and indispensable.
01:19	Speaker 1: She’s gone.
01:20	Deborah Hertz: Okay. Okay, so anyway just these are the people that make it happen in the background. So, I want to introduce Phyllis. Where are you? Thank you. A couple things I want to highlight, we got to know, first of all, we want to thank her for generously sponsoring the program. Second of all, we got to know Phyllis through the USC [University of Southern California] Shoah Foundation Board of Counselors. So for those of you who know the inner workings of the Visual History Archive, it is, we are one of 44 campuses that lease the right to use the interviews in an easy way, as opposed to a complicated way. Um and, uh Phyllis Epstein has, is on the Board of Counselors for the last four years, and has been instrumental in developing the San Diego Friends of the Shoah Foundation, and this is a wonderful fantastic connection. We feel lucky to work with her. She's a bridge to LA [Los Angeles], better than getting on the highway, and it's been wonderful to work with her. So her record is absolutely extraordinary, and when I read the list of things that she works on you'll, you'll feel exhausted just listening to them. Imagine doing them all? She's the vice chair of the California Arts Council. She's a co-founder of the California Music Project. She's one of, one of the chairs, or the chair of the San Diego Jewish Book Fair. So aspiring authors, you know be

nice to her. She's on the Foundation Board of UCSD [University of California, San Diego]. She's on the Board of the San Diego Symphony, of which she's the educational chair. She's a board member of our own UCSD IRPS [International Relations and Pacific Studies], and she's an all-around dynamo. So thank you, Phyllis.

02:56 Phyllis Epstein: Well thank you so much, and I have to say that the USC Shoah Foundation Institute loves their partnership that we have with UCSD and the Library. Uh, I'm thrilled to see such a nice turnout, and especially to see students here because this is now at least three generations away from you, and you have a privilege um, that, I don't want to say it, it's too sad, but it won't last for much longer, of meeting people who were really there, that lived this life, this terrible situation many years ago. And we are honored to have two wonderful speakers today. We have Frances Gelbart, whose name uh, originally was Francesca - which I happen to love, so I wanted to mention that - and she was born in Krakow. And first, when the war started or, or before the war I guess um, the uh, uh she was uh, sent to a ghetto first, then to Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, and Mauthausen. And, and she will tell you about it. I don't want to say any more than that, and who survived, obviously she did, and some other members of her family, or member. And then we will hear from Lou Dunst, who's over there in the front row. And he's um, let's see uh, he's from the Ukraine and he was a teenager when his village was herded into Auschwitz. And you will hear his story. Both of these people are active in Holocaust education here in San Diego, and they've both given their testimonies to the Shoah Foundation Institute. And it was mentioned before, the library is a holder of the complete archives. There's 2,500 plus stories in there and you can, after you hear their story, these two people's stories, you will maybe want to go and find out more. Come to the Library and ask to hear their whole stories. Usually they um, they're going to talk for about 45 minutes each, but the complete testimonies run two to four hours. And I'm telling you, you just don't want to leave. You want to hear every word. And I hear, see someone shaking their head who has probably listened to a testimony and know how fascinating these real living stories are. So um, with that let's have Francesca.

05:51 Frances Gelbart: Thank you for the applause and I'm very happy to see you all. I see some of my friends, my family, and mostly above all the students because you are the one that will carry the message. Before I start, I'd like to share with you the look of this bag. Can you all see? This book I've received at The Skirball Museum for the 20th anniversary of US [United States] Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. I will continue sitting down now since you saw me standing up. Thank you. Can you hear me? Can you hear me? Now? Okay, as you heard I am Frances Gelbart and I'm the first speaker of this evening. On February 17 this year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC. The Museum brings us face to face with a terrible chapter in human history and how that history should guide us on our path forward. Twenty

years ago I and my husband visited the opening and were present of the unfinished museum in Washington DC. That was in 1993. The anniversary of the Museum was celebrated all over. In Florida, it was celebrated in December of 2012. In Los Angeles, we celebrated on the 17th of February. New York celebrated March 3rd at the Grand Central and Washington celebrated on the 28th and 29th.

08:43 Frances Gelbart: Many celebrities joined their occasion, including Elie Wiesel, World War II veterans, our liberators. On July 9th this will be celebrated in Chicago. So if you know anyone in Chicago, please tell them it will be celebrated at the Culture Center in Chicago. In the Skirball Museum, we were greeted by a very hard-working committee and lots of security. We were ushered inside and many young groups from all over the United States were anxious to speak to the survivors inside the Skirball Museum, see the films, and hear the speakers that was provided; it was a whole day affair. They also provided water, coffee, and cookies that were replenished constantly. People arrived in cars, limousines, and buses. We had a bus from San Diego with a group of the New Life Club. It was very nicely organized by our president. The day was long, very memorable, and when we came home we were really exhausted. It brings me to ask you guys - excuse me I have a runny nose, I shouldn't say this over the speaker - does memory have a power to change the world?

11:28 Frances Gelbart: Absolutely. If the future really is to be different from the past we know that people must understand the truth of the Holocaust and learn its lessons about the fragility of democracy, the nature of hate, and the consequences of independence. As you heard I am a survivor. I went in five - I went - I was in five camps. Not a pleasant information, but it must be told. I bear a number on my left arm 26284. The number is fading away but not my memories. When I was 10 years old the war broke out. My father was a high officer in a Polish military, and at that time we were vacationing in the mountains. He came to see us, talk with all of us, me being the oldest daughter. My brother was older from me, and at that time I had six other siblings that end with me. He told my mother we have to pack and go back home because the war in 1939 is breaking out between Poland and Germany and we have to pack, go back home, but he has to report to the military. And this is how my young life changed from a nice, normal middle-upper class, I guess, family to wearing a Star of David in a band on my left arm, walking in a gutters, not in the sidewalks, not being able to go to public events, or school, no libraries. And what really hurt, when I heard from my non-Jewish girlfriend from school I cannot play with you, because you are Jewish. I didn't understand that. I came home crying. I told this to my parents and they tried to explain the best way they knew how.

15:20 Frances Gelbart: Excuse me. Like I said before, the memories never fade. Only my tattoo on my left arm fades with the years. That was the beginning when I witnessed in Krakow people being gathered, the very pious Jews run with a water

hose, being beaten. Some were on the sides and applauding, and some didn't know what to do about it. I remember especially on Friday night, we just started our Shabbat, when the SS used to storm in our homes and used to ask my parents to put everything they have of value on the tables. They used to confiscate everything. Sometimes they used to announce through the loudspeakers outside the buildings, please throw you all furs. And you should see, the ermines and minks the people were throwing through the windows. They were actually tramping on them not to give anything that was so perfect and beautiful and of value to the Germans. I remember the time came to go into ghettos. And I don't mention staying in line for food, or when they knew you were Jewish and you came to the counter they say, go back - all the way back to the line again. And by the time you went again to the counter, there was no more food. At that time we still stayed in a lines between the Christians. And some of them, when they recognize you Jewish, they had no empathy and opposite. But that was in the past. I hope you all feel this way because I certainly do. I have nothing against the German people, only the SS, the groups that were in concentration camp that were killing mirthfully. They were taking children by their feet and hitting them against the walls where, during the segregation, there was no mercy.

18:49 Frances Gelbart: My maiden name was Immerglück, which in German means always lucky. When it came to segregation, and the segregation was completely nude, one of the SS - and there were usually three or four of them - one of them was Mengele, a very famous doctor. They pull me out from the line and ask me, was ist deine Name? Which means, what is your name? I answer him in German, meine Name ist Immerglück. And ironically he told me back, Hast do immer Glück? And I said, ich hoff so. Which means he says, do you always have luck? And I answer I hope so. And he sent me to the line of life. The others behind me weren't that lucky. In Auschwitz, they cut my hair. Excuse me. I came to Auschwitz from Płaszów. Probably you all have seen the *Schindler's List*. This is the camp that I came from to Auschwitz. Going through segregations, having my hair cut, receiving a striped jacket, skirt, and wooden pair of shoes - nothing more - and being hurried, being hurried to get a tattoo, which I didn't know what it was. When I received my tattoo my hand swell, and I was trying to rub the tattoo off, but no success. In opposite, my arm blew up more. And the ladies that were with me suggested, don't do that. We could not get water. We could not get anything to get the swelling down. And the women around me always protected me.

21:53 Frances Gelbart: When we marched to work they always try, as we walked four or five in a row, they always tried to go shelter me on the front of me, or behind me, because I was the youngest among them, and children did not survive. I remember the SS women and the tremendous dogs. There was always promotion of terrible chaos. You have to stay for hours. They were counting you. They were screaming; I don't know why and what for. I also saw people throwing themselves on electric wires if they get if they could get to them. I was, how you say, deported on a death

march from Auschwitz. I don't remember what camp I went from Auschwitz but it was an ammunition camp. Which I was again shipped to the camp of Mauthausen, where Anne Frank died. I was shipped from there before the epidemic of terrible typhus hit the camp, and they were liberated by the English. From there I went to camp Mauthausen. I think that was the main camp, but it was already in 1944 that I arrived to Mauthausen. In Mauthausen, I witnessed tank division, which I thought they came from a Mars. I didn't see Americans on the tank with all the gears and they were really, you can see, they were fighting. When they saw our camp they start throwing chewing gum and chocolates, because the man that they've seen they were skeletons. They could weigh maybe 55 pounds, or maybe less. The men and women were separated. They stopped this because the dysentery hit the people and they were dying on the spot.

25:32 Frances Gelbart: They were hungry. They didn't eat for weeks. Our rations was a slice of bread, soup that had floating grass in it, and in this soup was something so the women would not menstruate. That's why, when I was liberated I called myself a late bloomer with everything, and you ladies know what I mean. I was reunited luckily because I do believe we all have angels, our own angels. I knew I will survive. I just always knew. I survived and my older brother survived; he was in Dachau which was only 25 miles away. I didn't know that he was alive. My parents survived but not my younger siblings. It was a horrible time. We had a family whistle, and one day we heard a whistle once I was reunited with my parents, and going back from Mauthausen through Czechoslovakia. And I didn't mention that during the transport from Auschwitz we were in the open wagons, that was cattle wagons. We had to make the room for the passing transport of the Germans and we were probably standing there for maybe three days. When we got out, I couldn't move my jaw. There was no water, no food. People were dying in those cattle trains, the open wagons. It was winter and I froze my two toes on my left leg, which I called gangrene. Speaking of angel, during the transport I met a woman. I never saw her before in my life. She was a doctor. I don't know from what country, but she put some kind of a salve on my toes, and the following day the gangrene separated from my toes. To me, this is my miracle, and she was my angel. How many more minutes do I have?

29:16 Susanne Hillman: Ten more, ten more minutes.

29:26 Frances Gelbart: Thank you. I want to leave you with something, sometimes profound wisdom is not only found in a great literary classics of the world. It can also be discovered in the words of intuitive and insightful simple folks. Once, an aged grandmother, who never attended school, gave her granddaughter a slip of paper with all the advice she would need to lead a good life. What she wrote is of value to all of us. Wash what is dirty. Water what is dry. Heal what is wounded. Warm what is cold. Guide what goes on the road. And love people who are the

least lovable because they need it most. Thank you so much. Do you have any questions?

31:05 Speaker 2: I'm sorry um you said that you went from Plaszow to Auschwitz and then from Auschwitz to the ammunition and then from the ammunition you went to where?

31:15 Frances Gelbart: Bergen-Belsen.

31:16 Speaker 2: Bergen Belsen and then to, uh?

31:17 Frances Gelbart: Mauthausen. I was liberated in Mauthausen in May 1945. These are the last numbers of my telephone number, please do not call. I want to thank you. We have two veterans in our presence that I know of, one is my husband Sam Gelbart, and one is my in-law Larry Greenbaum. They are both veterans that served in World War II, and we thank you, guys.

32:10 [cross talk]

32:53 Lou Dunst: Is it on?

32:59 Susanne Hillman: Yes, it’s on.

33:01 Lou Dunst: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Holocaust, six million of our brothers and sisters, including one and a half million children, were tortured, starved to death, murdered, reduced to ashes. Those ashes were used for fertilizer. They make soap from our bodies. The formula is available because it went through the Nuremberg Trials, so you can read up on it and know exactly what they did and how they did it. They took our gold teeth called fillings, our homes, our furniture, our bank accounts, everything we had, they took. All of that was not enough. The most important thing was to murder every Jewish man, woman, and child. That was the most important thing to them. And um they, after they've taken everything from us, there was nothing left just to take our lives. And guess what? The free world did nothing. It was the biggest mass murder, the biggest uh, catastrophe in the history of mankind.

34:28 Lou Dunst: I was born 1926 in Jasina [Yasinia] Czechoslovakia, beautiful part of the world, the highest point of the of the Carpathian mountains. We had snow on top of the mountains all year round, so a lot of skiing, skating, and so on, just what children do. I was born in a Jewish Kosher Orthodox shomer Shabbos home. I need to say a few words about the home life, the unity that we had in our home, in most of our Jewish homes in our little town that we lived in. There was no divorce, and there was no such language - leave me alone, I'm busy - you know. I live my own life. So I had a sister and a brother, both of my past already. When I was about four years old I started to go to cheder. Cheder was a Jewish school. It was one room, one small room in a private home, one teacher. We had students

anywhere from four and up to eighteen. The older ones were teaching the younger ones. We had a shortage of books so we slide a book around the table till it comes back. Shortage of pencils, so we got a pencil tree. Maybe the shortage was not in the books or the pencils, but the money to buy. We were poor people. We didn't have running water. We didn't have electricity, uh, but we were anxious to learn. To cheder, we had to carry a little firewood under the arm, and maybe a little kerosene for the lamp - especially in the wintertime. We had long cold winters and short summers.

36:14 Lou Dunst: When I was about five years old my father put me on his bicycle and he says, we have to go and do a mitzvah - a good deed. He took me to a place where a synagogue was being built. He put down a brick and a certain amount of money. I put down a brick. We paid a certain amount of money to help financially to complete the building. That building was completed and put into proper use. I'm sorry to tell you it has not been in proper use from the time that we were taken to Auschwitz. And my father instructed me, whenever there is something important to be done in the community, every one of us has to take part in it. In other words, he meant me. Even though you're a child, but you have to take your part in it. I need to tell you that he was murdered in Auschwitz. I was about six years old, started to go to public school. Public school in the morning and cheder, which is the Jewish school, in the afternoon. We Jewish kids didn't like it because we were short-changed of skiing, and skating, and playing soccer. But we also understood education, education.

37:33 Lou Dunst: Going back and forth to school and cheder, we were attacked by antisemites, Nazis, whatever you want to call them, antisemites, murderers. Sometimes we try to fight them back. Most of the time we try to avoid them, so we don't run into them. My mother was fixing lunch for me, and she makes a big bag. And I'm telling them, this is too much for me. I just want to talk to you, straight in the eyes. Said this is not for you. This is for those that don't have. And there were children that were coming to school hungry, and go home hungry, and that next day the same thing. So she instructed me how to share with them so there will be no, no hard feelings then. She explained to me that the human feelings are more important than the bread, or the food, or whatever. And I followed her instruction then, and I will follow her instructions for the rest of my life. I need to tell you, she was murdered in Auschwitz. Soon comes 1933. I was about 7 years old. Hitler came to power and things started to happen.

38:51 Lou Dunst: The antisemites, the Nazis became more and more aggressive. In other words, we were going through changes in history always from bad to worse, from bad to worse, from bad to worse. Soon came 1935. They wrote the Nuremberg Laws consisting of several chapters. I will go into maybe two or three of them. One chapter deals with um, or dealt at that time, in that place, arianization - where they took Jewish properties, Jewish businesses, Jewish belongings, and

signed it over to the Nazis. And according to them, it was done legally. That's where justice failed. Also, the Nuremberg Laws calls for Jewish doctors, dentists, lawyers, teachers were not allowed to practice. We lost our citizenships. We have lived there for generations and generations, all of a sudden we lost ours. We are not citizens any longer. There were signs Juden Raus, Juden verboten, Jewish people were kicked off streetcars, trains, so on. One very important, also we were considered Untermenschen - sub-human. We were not human any longer according to the Nuremberg Laws. One, what they called a very important chapter, dealt with uh, rassenschande - race disgrace - where Jewish people were not allowed to have certain relationships with non-Jews, sexual relationships, inter-marriages, and so on. It was highly punishable. Their theory was because the, our blood, the Jewish blood, is contaminated and their blood is 100 percent pure. So we don't, they didn't want to have their blood contaminated from us. Of course, it was a lie. They themselves proved it a lie. When they needed blood for the wounded soldiers in the Eastern front, they took Jewish blood. It was good. So they themselves proved it to be a lie.

41:30 Lou Dunst: Soon comes 1938. The uh, Nazis marched into Austria where they were greeted with open arms, with kisses, flowers because there are plenty of Nazis in Austria at that time. They rounded up the Jewish people, beat them in the streets, break in their homes, make them scrub sidewalks and toilets with hand brushes and toothbrushes on their knees, kicking them, spitting at them, urinating on their heads to dehumanize and demoralize them. Thousands of people were taken to concentration camps for a one-way trip. The same year, 1938 November 9th Kristallnacht, you probably heard that word before. What was happening, it was November the 9th onto the 10th, Jewish homes, Jewish businesses were broken and vandalized, Jewish people beaten up on the street, Jewish businesses were broken. So much glass, they described how many millions of the money it costs to replace those glasses, and the insurance that they were, the Jewish people were insured but they, they were not allowed to pay it back to the Jewish people. The government took the insurance money. All Jewish artifacts were thrown on the fire. Just a mountain of fire, they throw all the Jewish artifacts, Jewish books. Synagogues were burning that same night. Historians are telling us that hundreds and hundreds of synagogues were burning that same night. It was frightening. It was a big turn in history again from bad to worse, from bad to worse.

43:41 Lou Dunst: Soon after that Hitler made a big speech. A lot of people showed up to his speech. Everybody cheered him. Heil Hitler, heil Hitler, you're doing a good job, go and get them, you're doing good, you're excellent. The reason that happened, or they were so anxious to get rid of the Jewish people, once they took us out of our homes they moved in. They used our home. They had our businesses. They used our furniture, they had our bank accounts, they had our properties. So they made sure to tell Hitler that, not to bring any of those Jews back from the concentration camps. Can you imagine among so many people that no one lift

their hand and said, wait a minute? What are we doing here taking our neighbors to concentration camps, beating them in the street, burning their synagogue? What's happening? Not one person said something like that. Everybody agreed with Hitler. That he's doing a good job, going get him, heil Hitler. That gave Hitler a lot of guts, sort of, that nobody was against him, what he's doing. So he started to think about Lebensraum, living space. He didn't have enough space to live in Germany, so he wanted more living, more living space, Lebensraum, more and more. He started out to negotiate about Sudetenland. At that time we had our president of Czechoslovakia by, a man by the name of Dr. Edvard Beneš.

45:29 Lou Dunst: He told the free world if Hitler gets Sudetenland, or any part of land in there, it will not be peace. It will be war. Sure enough, they negotiated back and forth. They thought they would have peace, so they gave Hitler Sudentenland. He was not satisfied by far. He got into Bohemia, Moravia, part of Czechoslovakia, [unclear] which was the most eastern part of the old map of Czechoslovakia. He gave that to the Ukrainians with the the agreement that all Jews have to be liquidated; liquidation meant killing. They made up this right away, Jewish men to hang. My father's name was on one of those lists. Some miracle, we all live on miracle. Jewish people live on miracles. Something happened the way Hitler used people against people. They themselves were murdered. We were occupied by the Hungarians. Soon comes the 1939. In our religion, the Jewish religion, when a boy and a girl get to the age of 13, we become bar mitzvahed, what we call. In other words, we have to do all the um, all the laws and all the responsibilities that grown people have, including the uh, good deeds. There is not too many of those good deeds; it's only 613. So we have a little life supply, and it's good to do those good deeds. It's good for our heart, for our soul. And we did my bar mitzvah ahead of time, approximately two or three months ahead of time because we were afraid if we wait for the right time to come, we will not be able to do it. I had a teacher; he was a brilliant man. How should I say, I'm looking for certain words and at my age, I don't get them so easy, but I go on anyway. He was a genius of a man. Whatever he taught me about 80 or something more years ago. He was a little bit deaf but he was a good teacher. Whatever he taught me about 80 some odd years ago. Not only do I remember what he taught me, I still practice. I still practice whatever, and I will continue to practice for the rest of my life.

48:04 Lou Dunst: Here comes, well this is in [19]39, Poland was attacked by the Wehrmacht. The Wehrmacht is the armed forces of Germany at that time, the Third Reich. Poland capitulated in approximately 30 days. It was frightening and the free world did nothing. They're out for a three-martini lunch. They did nothing. They had a good time. So uh, that gave Hitler more power to fight, more manpower. They had to go to fight for him whether they liked it or not. If they didn't like it, they did not live. So that gave him more guts, what we call here, more so he can go in deeper and do something else. He got an idea and got into the Scandinavian countries, including France and Belgium, and so on, again the free

world does nothing. That gave Hitler more ideas and, more uh, encouraged, more encouragement to attack the Soviet Union. That was a big undertaking and he was very successful, to a certain point. Of course, that was his downfall also. He got into Stalingrad in the south, Leningrad the north. Leningrad was encircled. They wouldn't let any food into the city of Leningrad and Hitler was not satisfied with that, that just a few people died of starvation. He says this is not enough millions of, he mentioned how many millions have to be, have to be dying of starvation right in the Leningrad area, and the city of Leningrad has to be flattened out, just like he did to Lidice. He flattened the Lidice was flattened out completely. This city was not flattened out, Leningrad, but it was damaged. Of course, it was rebuilt a beautiful city. And also he said that Leningrad has to be taken off the map, period. No more Leningrad.

50:28 Lou Dunst: Here from 1940, they rounded up Jewish men - including my father - and take them to slave labor called levente, this is Hungarian word, and they worked them day and night, starvation, beatings, torture, and so on. They also used Jewish men to be mine-sweepers. There were territories that were mined with explosives, so they took the Jewish man was, Jewish life, the Jewish man was cheap, so they walked those Jewish men over those mines. So they killed them and, so they can have a free passage to go through. We Jewish teenagers at home, I was about 14 years old, we had to go to work, slave labor to load and unload military x-ray equipment. It was called levente. They worked us day and night, freezing in the winter time, starving around the clock, work, work. Here comes 1941. They rounded up Jewish people in other countries, and other cities, and other towns. They brought them into our town in boxcars - men, women children, pregnant ladies, sick people. And I remember a woman with a baby, newborn baby, in her arm crying for some foods, or some water. The little food we had we shared with them, but it was not enough by far. Because they amount to several transport, they amounted to about 14,000 people. They were unloaded there because they could not continue. The rails were different size because we were a border town, so those boxcars could not continue. So they were unloaded there.

52:32 Lou Dunst: They were put on trucks, some of them had to march on foot onto Kolomyja, Kamenets-Podolsk, which I will have a map to show you, right close by where we live. Uh, those that were marching on foot couldn't, couldn't uh, continue so they killed them off, shot them, uh just murdered them, whatever they could do. Then they just leave them for the vultures. They didn’t even, even bother to bury them. The most important thing for them was to collect their gold teeth, gold fillings, their clothing, their shoes, and leave them for the vultures. Those that made Kamenets-Podolsk, they were chased into ravines and machine-gunned down. As long as there was some movement somewhere, there goes the machine, the bullets boom, boom, boom. Some were buried while they were still alive. Some were were able to crawl out of those mass graves, and that was, so by that time

they had run out of bullets ammunition. They didn't have any more ammunition to shoot, so they tied their wrists and ankles, and throw them into the river, so they will drown in the river. One night there is a knock on our door, young lady maybe 17 years old. She was dressed in men's military clothes. They didn't fit her at all but. So we we had to change her clothes and, some money, we put together some money and uh, so she can go look for her parents or relatives. Her name was Schwarzwald Charlotte. Hopefully, she made it. We have never heard from her, or any of her relatives, or parents.

54:27 Lou Dunst: A couple of weeks later or so, there's a knock on our door middle of the night - very hard knock. Everybody has to get ready, uh, to go to the downtown area. And they explain to us that this is martial law. If you don't move fast enough, they shoot you right away. Somebody's sick in the bed, shoot them. So all the Jewish people had to go to the downtown area. Uh, my father, myself went to uh, our synagogue which was about five or six doors from our house, and we brought those three Torahs into our home with a very nice, neat, and clean. That was the last time we saw those Torahs. All Jewish people were chased into the downtown area. They were put into the largest building there was in our town called corona. It was a theater building. Some of us had to stay out in the mud, and the rain, and the cold. Several days later they marched us to the Jewish cemetery. It's, the cemetery's on the top of a hill and before you get there's a flat piece of land. We were lined up on that flat piece of land and the [unclear] believed that we will have to dig our own graves, and we will be machine-gunned down. And we knew that this was, this time, this was the method for them killing the Jewish people, the way it was done. And all the killing was done by Einsatzgruppen. They started from the north, A, B, C, and D. D was the most southern and the A was the most northern. Uh, the report came to Hitler that Estonia is Judenfrei. No more Jews in Estonia. They're all killed.

56:27 Lou Dunst: And for some reason, which was a some kind of vile reason or why, who knows what it is - we don't even know to this day - for some reason the top man, which was a man by the name of Hauptmann, that's his rank. Krieger, his last name. I think, William Krieger, something like that. He was the top man of those Einsatzgruppen. He had thousands of people; he interred thousands. He didn't do any killing himself, but he had people doing, and he came into our home one time. It was on a Friday night and he said, good shabbos, an SS man, in a uniform with his entourage with him. We didn't know what was happening. He spoke very nicely, and my parents uh, inquired where he is, or what he's doing. And he says, wir habben doch die Juden [unclear] in other words, we have a job to do with the Jews. He did not mention any killing or anything like that. He was never rude. He was always very polite, and very nice. He did that several times. My brother, myself, all of our lives - he, my, my brother is gone by now; he is deceased - we try to figure out what made him come to our house, into our house. Well, we reached some kind of a idea that maybe since the war started going the other way for them,

that he will have some friends, some Jews that will help them out. So, but we don't know the actual. I tried to trace him, the best thing I could do. I found out that he committed suicide. Okay, so the same thing is waiting for us.

58:11 Lou Dunst: Also, they would, the Sonderkommando the, no, Einsatzgruppen, they would take Jewish people from town, city, or wherever they were, chase them into the synagogue, lock the doors, put the synagogue on fire, throw in hand grenades. And this is as long as they took their gold teeth, gold filling. This was the, this was waiting for us and we knew that because, most of the Eastern, from that part of the world, like, which would be Galicia, the Carpathians, and uh Belarus - which is white Russia - they were, those people were not taken to Auschwitz. They were murdered in their own towns by the Einsatzgruppen. And the same thing is waiting for us. They were there with the uniforms, with the picks, with the shovels. All we could do is pray to God. We said, Sh'ma Yisrael - [unclear] - Tehillim, whatever we know how to pray. And they were there with the uniforms, with the machine guns, with the trucks, to do a good day's job. They brought in civilians from the town to help them do the job. They were all anxious to do that. Something changed in a just a second, like that. Either they got a telegram or a telephone. We were rounded up taken to the railroad, put into boxcars jam-packed men, women, children, sick people, pregnant ladies, whatever there was, jam-packed like this. Doors locked from the outside, without food, without water, without enough air to breath, or any toilet facilities. Off we go, stop and go. The reason the stop-and-go was to pick up other box cars, and other trains from other places. And we couldn't tell which way we're going. We tried to look out from the small opening, that was just a small opening like this, to find the sun. We couldn't do that. In other words, we could not even estimate which way we are traveling.

1:00:25 Lou Dunst: Last stop Mátészalka. Mátészalka is a small city in Hungary. Uh, we were put into a ghetto. We were fenced in like animals, without food, without water, without enough space to lie down and sleep or something. There was an SS man walking, a tall one, with his machine gun across his chest, and hand grenades, and handguns and everything, with a long stick in his hand and nails sticking out on the other end, just hitting everybody over the head, whoever he could reach, or see. He didn't say anything to them or ask nothing. Starvation, no water, no or couldn't clean up or anything. Several days later, we were marched to a cemetery in Mátészalka. We were told to give up everything we have in our pockets, a pen, or a pencil, or a notebook, whatever. But we didn't have any luggage, really for a long time, we didn't have any luggage. As soon as we left our home we had no luggage. So they um, and they continue to tell us that they will search our bodies, and those that didn't give up everything will be shot on the spot. Naturally, we gave up. And when they're talking about searching bodies, they're talking about human cavities in a very brutal sadistic way. Oh, we go to to the railroad into boxcars. This time it was a little bit worse than before because many of us had problems, health problems, diarrhea and whatnot, body problems.

1:02:20 Lou Dunst: We were packed in again, jam-packed like this. And soon the floor and the box car gets covered with human waste. Off we go, stop and go. Hook up other box cars, another. We had no idea which way we are going. Last stop, doors opened up and everything was done with them in the German language, schnell, fast. Schnell schnell, schnell, mach schnell, mach schnell, mach schnell. Open the doors, everybody, out in a hurry. Uh, some were dead, some were dying, some were laying in their own excrements, some were giving birth, some lost reasoning. Some of us were able to get out. We were met by men, probably 95 percent Jewish, in those uniforms that you probably saw in the films, talking Yiddish language, Jewish language. We are inquiring where are we. Say Auschwitz. We have no idea what Auschwitz is, or where it is, or what it's supposed to be or no idea at all. And they continued to tell us they were not allowed to talk to us because if they find them, they shoot them right away. So uh, we, we just thought that the people talking language like that are not normal. There is something wrong with these people that we are talking to, or they are talking to us. So they knew that we don't believe what they're saying. So they showed us. You see the the the the smoke coming out of the chimneys. And we're kind of, yeah. You can smell it but we still did not believe, because we knew that we are decent human beings. We are not criminals. We are tax-paying people, wherever we live, whatever country. We are not criminals, that nothing like that is going to happen to us. We just didn't, you couldn't even imagine, forget about believing. We were marched forward and then schnell, fast, fast, fast. Dogs biting us, hitting us with whips or, or sticks, or whatever.

1:04:30 Lou Dunst: With us, in our group, was a set of twins, my cousins, twin girls. Uh, Mengele was looking for twins, so he got those for experiments, whatever experiment they did there. Uh we, I had no idea what was going, well we can imagine. They have never shared with us what happened to them. They survived, but they died after. Schnell, schnell, forward and they didn't talk to us; they just point. You go here. You go there. You go here. You, and if you didn't do it fast, they hit you over the head, or the dog will bite you. My mother and sister had to go this way. That was the last time I saw my mother. My father, my brother, myself this way. Shortly we were separated from our father. He was murdered either in Auschwitz or [Monowitz-] Buna or on one of those death marches. We don't know the truth or have any idea. We're just guessing. Our group was marched on top of a huge, like a mountain of clothing, and we were told to completely undress. Once we got completely undressed, they could tell who was young and strong. Because before that we had two coats on, or maybe three coats over them. So when you're completely naked they could tell who's young, strong, healthy. You. You. You. You. You stand over there. They told us that these people are gonna go to work in the cookie factory. They lied to us because they took them to work in the Sonderkommando. Sonderkommando was a group of men, mostly Jewish, maybe 90-95 percent Jewish. They had one job to do, to work the gas chambers in the crematorium. The, the amount, there were about 850 men in the

Sonderkommando. They had a very good life but they were dead as soon as they stopped it, stopped into the Sonderkommando because whenever they got good and ready, they killed them off, got a new set of men, killed them off. But they did that about 13 times. One group said, no we are not going to do this. [shooting noise] The next people did it.

1:07:11 Lou Dunst: Uh, we are inquiring, so the the the people that, from our group - the young, strong young men - had to go work in the Sonderkommando. When we were in Auschwitz, our group, the the amount of people that were exterminated at, in those days, was about 10 to 12,000 people in 24 hours. So the killing was cheap, fast, and very efficient, and easy. They put in about 4,000 people into a warehouse-like, the hermetically closed, put in the Zyklon-B. They were done in less than half an hour, all done. The biggest problem was to take care of so many bodies. So then that's why they took the those young strong men to go and help to work, the Sonderkommando, because the uh, to carry them, or drag the dead people from the gas chamber, just throw them on the mountain, on fire. There are pictures available from that. The just throw them on the mountain of fire. It was the biggest catastrophe, the biggest mass murder in the history of mankind. And again the free world does nothing. We are requiring, our group, they took us into a barrack where all of our hair was clipped off. Wherever there was hair they clipped off hair. And we are inquiring about water, about food, something to eat. That, nothing to worry about because we were not tattooed. Our group was not tattooed. We didn't have tattoo numbers, none of us. So that means that we are going to straight to the gas chambers. Some changes came in, they took us to the railroad, into boxcars. Now this time it was different than any, any time before. There were no more women, no more children, no more sick people, no more elderly people - only men about from 14, 15 on up to maybe 42 or so, 40 or 40, depends how they look to them.

1:09:25 Lou Dunst: Uh into those boxcars, so we go. Uh last stop, we are in Oberösterreich, upper Österreich [Austria], place by the name of Mauthausen. There was a colleague from Mauthausen right here sitting. Mauthausen. Mauthausen was famous or infamous, whichever way you want to label that. They were famous for what they were doing, anybody needed special treatment - that means torture, and sadistic torture - to Mauthausen. Mauthausen, everybody to be, wants to be punished Mauthausen. Uh they, to give you a little for instance, how they interrogated a Russian general by the name of [Dmitry Mikhaylovich] Karbyshev, he was interrogated to a point, they tortured him to death. When the war was over, the Russian uh, government came and they put out the monument. There are other monuments there. So, if you ever around there uh, close to Mauthausen, which would be close to Prague, Linz, Budapest, all central Europe. It's very easy to get there and there are tourists from all over the world. I've been there a number of times. All day long, every day, come from all. In other words it, by now it is a gold mine for the government of Austria. They're talking about

propping it up, so it won't sink because they, they look for the money. They're going to do the same thing with Auschwitz, trying to prop it up a little bit. Most of the good barracks have burned already; they use them for firewood, the local people. The camp Mauthausen, there was a camp below, but the the main camp was on top of the hill. There is 190 steps. There are pictures available to see. So we had to run up those steps. They were sticking their rifles in our ribs so, schnell, schnell, fast. They chased us with dogs. So most of us didn't have the strength to walk. So some of us fell down. They were trampled on. So some of us made it up to the camp and some of us did not.

1:12:01 Lou Dunst: Here comes nighttime. The chief of the barracks says, everybody going to sleep. And he says, you look around - nothing looks like sleeping, no beds, no bunk beds, no, no blankets, no mattresses, no hay, nothing that is related to sleep. So he goes like this, every one of you will take up this much room. If you look like this, this, this. None of us had any of this. We were already skinny, very skinny, and we still didn't know what he's talking about. [unclear] So, and he says [unclear]. We still didn't know what he's talking about. He lie down the straight line like this. So that goes to this. This is how much room you take up, and his feet were in somebody else's face, and somebody else's feet were in his face. So, like this. You couldn't turn, just like this. Maybe some of us did sleep uh, because we have gone without food, without water. One was worse than the other, but sleep was worse. We were like zombies. And again, we are asking for food, water. They say nothing to worry about because we are going to the gas chamber. The same thing. We were completely naked. We were chased into the underground. It's still there. My wife and I we were there. It's still there and will be there for a long time because we build that uh, stone, the stone barracks are still there the stone buildings. So we were chased into the so-called gas chamber. Well, anything can be a gas chamber with some hermetically closed - doors. locked. We look around, nothing is happening. After a while, we cannot breathe; there's not enough air to breathe. So some of us fell down on the floor. There was nothing we could do. The uh, all of a sudden, doors opened up, raus [out], to the Appellplatz, schnell [fast].

1:14:08 Lou Dunst: Uh, we came to Appellplatz the commander of the camp said [in German] meaning, that the the fuel to burn our bodies is too expensive. We will vanish like dogs. So this was his, and he he said it with such pleasure. So we were lined up in groups. We were given numbers uh, metal numbers - like this one here, one here, one here. Those metal numbers were done, were made out of the uh, containers that the Zyklon-B came in, so they used everything they could. So my number 68-122. My brother behind me; he saved my life and I saved his life. He uh, hold on to my shoulders and his name is 123. I donated my number to the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC personally. I have pictures. So if you Google me, my number comes up 68-122. This is the only thing that I saved. I don't know why I saved it but I saved it from the camp. Off we go to the railroad. This was my number four trip in the boxcars. Number four, I was an experienced

traveler already uh, because the next stop is uh, Ebensee. Ebensee was a sub-camp of Mauthausen; Mauthausen had over 40 subcamps. So it was not a kindergarten; it was a big operation. We were working, making underground factories to build missiles to go to Washington DC and New York City. Wernher von Braun was the top man in the missiles. You probably heard that name. He was the top man for the Germans and the missiles. And when the war ended, he came to the United States and he became the number one man in the missile right here. So which was, they used them as long as they could. He came there to make sure that everything goes like he wants it to.

1:16:36 Lou Dunst: Uh these were underground tunnels sort of, in the mountains. They go in, and they joined, and they go in, and they joined. The one that I worked in was Stalle number three; the full-size railroad went into that. The, the finished product we didn't have yet to see, but we did other work there. And uh, starvation was horrible; freezing in the wintertime. The bottom of my feet, and many other feet, was frostbitten, blistered. We had to go to work in those wooden clogs. We didn't have proper shoes, or clothing, or anything. We had parasites, lice eating us up the body. I had two kinds of lice, one type lived in my clothing, and one type in the pubic hair, under the skin, very flat ones, small ones. And the only way to get them out is having a sharp needle to dig him out. That's the only way you get it, if you have a sharp needle you can do it. Um, I didn't mean to give you a lesson about the lice, but it was part of life. The starvation was so bad that many of us became very Musselman, including myself; no flesh, or muscles on our bones. I, and many others like me, couldn't stand up, couldn’t work. So they hauled us, hauled us up again to the to the uh, back of the of the of the camp where the crematorium was. The crematorium was working. So they just made a pile of people here, and a pile of people, and a pile of people here. Those that were on the bottom, on the fire, were dead already for maybe a day or two and the vultures are doing their, their job. Those that were on top, including myself, we didn't want to live, just die and go to sleep, or whatever. They said they were going to bulldoze us, no bulldozer showed up.

1:18:44 Lou Dunst: So the American Army was getting close to the camp. The commander of the camp by the name of Anton Ganz, Anton Ganz was, he made a nice speech and said for all of us, those that are able to, to go into those underground factories because the Americans are getting close. They will shoot; they will bombard; they will kill. So in order to save our lives, we should all go in there. But he did not tell us that this was all mined with dynamite and other explosives. All they had to do is get us in there, force us in there, like whichever way they could push a button and all of us would be covered with the mountain and nobody would ever know who, and where, and why, and what for. Now comes the question, where does a man, or a human being, or a beast actually - he was not a human being, he was not a man either - get so much poison in his heart to finish us off the last minute before the liberation? It's mind-boggling, and I am sure that he, and many like him, had

families, sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers go home for dinner. What kind of a beast were they? Where could they come from? Was it a reality or do we dream about this? Even though some people said it never happened. So, but it's impossible to understand how some people can have so much poison in themselves to finish us off the last minute before. After we have slave for so many years, make bullets to kill ourselves, to kill us - and for them - but, no mercy. This is what I say today. The most important thing was to kill every Jewish man, woman, and child. So this is what, when he was gonna do the last minute, make sure that we are all dead.

1:20:48 Lou Dunst: The, the American Army got close to the camp. The tank by the name of Lady Luck and the commander of the tank was Bob Persinger, he broke the gate, liberated our camp. By the way, I'm still in touch with him. He'd be, we call each other. Yeah, we call each other and talk about the old days. I don't know that they were good or bad, but we talked about it. He liberated, he was the commander of that particular tank that broke. And uh, people like me uh, and others, we were taken to to hospitals, whatever they could find a room, or a hospital, or a bed to cure us. My brother, myself ended up in one of the hospital city called Podoli Sanatorium Prague. Uh, 50 years later I've invited to tell them thank you for saving my life. I showed them the room that I was in. They knew exactly what I was talking about. Now it's a children's hospital, but they knew what I was talking about. Now comes the question, where and how does what we think may be human beings get so much poison, so much hate in them? I don't like you, the way the way, you comb your hair. I don't like where you come from. I don't like you because you're Jewish. I don't like you because you're Spanish. The first, hatred, hatred, hatred, and killing each other, but why, what for? We are God's children. We are brothers and sisters. We have to live with each other. We have to help each other, not killing each other. But hopefully that someday we will realize that we are God's children, that we are brothers and sisters, and we will help each other to live instead of building more and more means to kill people. I think my time is about up and I would like to hear questions from you. And there is no limit of what you can ask, anything goes. Please speak loud, with my age my hearing is a little bit not like it was ten years ago.

1:23:11 Speaker 3: We had a lecture two times ago and uh, it was about uh, the psychologists that met with the Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg.

1:23:26 Lou Dunst: Yes

1:23:27 Speaker 3: And they had two, two, they came out with two different opinions, the two psychologists. One came back and said, it was a humanistic view of everyone. That everyone had evil in them and they could, everyone could do something bad if they were in a, in a group. And they all went into a like uh, kind of a group thing. That everyone kind of get caught up in something, you could do something bad. And the other one had the idea that no, it was that these men were just evil. How

do you look at that? Do you do you think everyone has evil, or do you think that they're, they, they can just be caught up and do things uh, from the group dynamic?

1:24:17 Lou Dunst: Well they learned one for the other, from the other, from each other they learned. In other words, they were doing sadistic things that uh, sexual sadism that is not even the dictionary, but one tried to top the other. One picked up a baby and threw it against the wall, the other one would throw it up and catch it on the bayonet in front of the mother. Now, these things were going on constantly. The, the sadism was so maybe contagious that everyone become worse and worse, instead of better. So wait a minute, don't kill the baby. No, kill him, torture him, whatever. The mother you know, a pregnant lady hit ‘em in the stomach, or kick her in the stomach. Every one that did something, wanted to do something worse than the one before him. So this this is the way I looked at those people.

1:25:16 Speaker 3: Right. So you think instead of being evil from just because, just being evil people, they were, they were um, they were more influenced from the group dynamic?

Lou Dunst: They were, as I said a while ago, the most important thing is to murder every Jewish man, woman, and child, regardless. Don't ask any names. Don't look at them. Don't care about a big, small, good, whatever, murder, murder, murder, murder. And one was doing worse than the other. Like [Rudolf] Hess was on the on the trial and the court and he was accused of murdering 10 to 12,000 people in 24 hours. He says, correction, when he was a commander of, of Auschwitz it was 16,000 that were murdered. In other words, he felt heroic. He was a hero. He made himself a hero, or he wanted the people to believe that he's a hero of killing more than they accuse them. So this is what they are made out of.

1:26:20 Speaker 3: Can I ask you that same question?

1:26:22 Frances Gelbart: Well I remember, and we know that the propaganda was so great, that the Jewish people were compared to rats and mice. I believe that those that join the group, and be aware of groups - personally I don't believe in groups because these are the worst - this is how Hitler start with his group. He surround himself with a very intelligent people after all Germany was one of the culture of Europe. The propaganda, and the people around Hitler, try to get rid of of the Jewish race. They were not successful; I'm here, and so is my colleague. Evil, some people believe that Hitler was the devil on earth, and he infected the people around him. We still trying to find out why. And I wish I could explain more, but this is my opinion now as an adult. Because when I was in a camp, the only thing you were thinking of is to do what they told you, at least me. The hunger, the cold, and the work um, took your mind of anything else. There was no paper to read, no pencil to write. You were like a, I don't know, a poor robot.

1:28:50 Susanne Hillman: Mrs. Gelbart, I have a question. Abstractly, how would you say it has, your experience of these years, how has it affected your life after that, the decades after?

1:29:04 Frances Gelbart: You remember, I mentioned that I am one of the maybe handful of people that were connected with their parents, that I found my parents. This alone protected me. Once I found my parents, my parents were very protected, naturally. They lost other children. Coming to United States, when I first came to United States from Germany I was still afraid when I saw a policeman in uniform. It wasn't easy to become free and be in America. I remember going to the store. I didn't know how to say a calendar. So I said, I like to buy something that macaroni stops and water go ahead. Because I couldn't say what I wanted. It wasn't easy to become part of this United States, but you find that most survivors try to run, always running, and doing, and catching up with the lost time. Most of survivors' children are very prominent citizens of the United States, professional people, doctors, lawyers, teachers. Yes, we brought up a generation to be proud of and I am proud to see this generation. You look like a very smart, worthy, wonderful young people, and I'm so happy that you're here.

1:31:30 Speaker 4: Sir, what gave you the will to survive? What, was it your brother who saved your life, or how can you describe how you're able to survive?

1:31:41 Lou Dunst: Well, since you mention my brother, I'll start there. That was, we were in the same camp but he was over here, and I was over there. We could meet only once in two weeks for a few minutes, and the first time we met, he gave me something to eat, and I grabbed it and put in my mouth. He went this way, I went that way, and I start thinking that we say, man does not live on bread alone. So I figured if I keep on taking this he shared with me, neither one of us will survive. Because if I don't, maybe he will survive and I will be a goner. So this is one thing that gave me mentally the will to live because he was willing to give up his life for me. If he shared with you a little piece of food, whatever it is, he was giving up his life actually too. So this is one thing. Uh, since you mentioned brother so I want to continue the brother story. Not on bread alone lives a man. So I, this mentally helped me survive. Physically is a different story. Also, God, I talked to God. I bargained with him. I said, don't don't let me vanish here. So I figured, what is God saying to me? What are you better than anybody else? No, every one of us wants to live in uh, I didn't promise I couldn't promise him any money because I didn't have any. I was completely without nothing else. So I, I figured if for nothing else let me live so I can tell the story. Because I was worried we were all gonna be dead and nobody will be here to tell. So here I am, obligated to share my story with you.

1:33:34 Speaker 5: Have either of you guys gone back to your hometown since the Holocaust?

1:33:40 Lou Dunst: Yes I did go back a number of times. I was on the March of the Living if you know what that is, maybe seven, eight times, several times to Poland, into Israel. And I explained and talked to them. They wanted to know what was, since I was an inmate there, what was here, what was there. So we spent one, internationally students from all over the world, we had as many as 10,000. The numbers run anywhere between 7 to 10,000. One time there was 10,000 and at that time we had Netanyahu came to speak to us. And they put me up on the on the podium, and six minutes, you get whatever you want to say, six minutes you're out. So I did, I did my six minutes. Internationally, it was televised internationally. So I think it is very important for the young people to go and see with their own eyes, and be able to touch things and to speak to someone that has some experiences there. So this is my job but now I'm too old. I don't want to become a burden. They ask me to go. I, I'm too old to do it. I did it while I was younger, and I and I kept on going one after the other, and I did a good job. I say so myself.

1:35:10 Susanne Hillman: I think we should allow individuals who would like to come up and ask you individual questions, Mrs. Gelbart and Mr. Dunst, and uh, allow the people to mingle a little bit. And I thank everybody for coming. And above all, I thank you Frances Gelbart, and you, Lou Dunst.