Interview 2

Rachel Bodner (2005)

Interviewers: Alexis Vast, Lauren Geldzhaler

[Beginning of Interview 2]

Alexis Vast: Hi. I'm Alexis Vast. I'm going to be interviewing you about the war today.

Rachel Bodner: Okay. And I'm Rachel Bodner and I'm from Belgium and I'll gladly answer your questions.

AV: Thank you. What do you remember about when the war began?

RB: Yes. I remember I was in school because it was May. It was May 10th, but before I went to school we heard the thunder like a thunder--we first thought that it was going to thunder, but it wasn't. It was really already some--I don't know, like cannon balls or something that they were firing, and being that they were only an hour from Antwerp—it's like maybe an hour, an hour-and-a-half to the German border to the east, we probably heard the noise. It must have reverberated or something. And we were scared. I know we were scared. We went to school and we had our classes, but when I came home, my father and mother were discussing maybe we should leave because they were scared. You know, we were scared of the Germans. And we said, okay. My mother had her siblings. She had like four siblings living in Paris, one brother and three sisters, and she said, you know what? I'd like to go and join my sisters.

And my father said, okay, and it was like—it took us a few days. We packed. My mother got us some, we used to call that a backpack, but it was rucksacks in Flemish, and we got these backpacks and we packed certain things and we figured, my father went to get, and it took like, I think, four days for us to decide to leave. So it was like May 15th that we left.

AV: What kind of things did you pack?

RB: I cannot remember. I guess a change of clothes and underwear probably.

AV: Was there anything special that you brought with you?

RB: No, because you know what? We were also disturbed, kind of, a little bit in shock I think. That's why it doesn't register what we… I cannot for the life of me remember what, but I know we each packed a backpack, and my mother, I later found out, she put the money that we had—we did not deal much with banks because in the business that we had you needed cash every day, so it was back and forth, and my mother had brought a few diamonds she had. I remember my
father had bought a whole slew of furs, very, called camacout, and these are like better than a Persian lamb.

**AV:** Camacout is a cat from Africa?

**RB:** No, it's from Russia. It's like a Persian lamb, but it's a nicer Persian lamb. It's like the elite, beautiful gray skins. They were beautiful. So he had invested money into that and we bundled that up and we carried it, too. It wasn't such a big bundle, but it meant a lot of money. You know, in those years, maybe a thousand dollars was a lot of money. It's not like compared to today.

So anyway, we went on the train and when we sat down, there were already people on the train, and we went from Antwerp to Brussels. I cannot very much remember whether, but I think we went on the train in Antwerp and there wasn't that much room anymore, but my father and my mother were seated and my older sister was sitting, too. There was only one spot left at the end of the wagon somehow, but you had to sit a little high and for a normal person to sit there, she had to sit with her head down because there was something, obstruction. I couldn't see my sister sitting there. She was older than I was anyway. I said to my sister, no, no, no. You go sit with dad and mom and I'm going to sit there, and it was grueling to sit like that. My neck hurt after a while, but I didn't say anything. And my little sister sat on my mother's lap, my father's lap. I can't remember. And now we're going. It's supposed to be a five hour trip to Brussels. Three days we were in that. Three days we were in that train.

**AV:** Why did it take so long?

**RB:** Because you went one hour and stopped for three hours. Why? I'll never understand why, but that's how it was. So, the Red Cross came around and brought us water and brought us bread with lard. There was lard on it, white bread, so we ate that. And my aunt, my aunt was with me. My mother's oldest sister was there. She was very Orthodox. Crazy. She didn't want to touch it, and my father, and we know it, for survival you can eat anything. You can eat. No way. She was such a stubborn woman. So we tried to find from the Red Cross, can you just bring plain bread? Nothing on it. I don't know whether they did or not. I can't remember much about that.

**AV:** Were a lot of the passengers on the train Jewish?

**RB:** No. There were, but we were very mixed. I would say really, because there were not that many Jews to begin with in Antwerp, and I don't know what happened. No, I would say that probably 60 percent were Christians and maybe 40 percent were Jewish.

**AV:** Why was the Red Cross bringing you food?
RB: Because we couldn't get out of the train. We were just sitting there. You relinquished your space, you came back. You didn't have anything. So everybody was watching their seat. Me with that seat I remember like today, but at night, what happened at night because a lot of us--I don't know maybe the younger ones--we laid down on the ground to sleep because it was just impossible, and with the stopping. And then we got to border. After, I think, two days we got to the border, and then you had to cross the border to get to a French train. And it was also hours and hours of checking us and seeing to it. It was really--it's all now a blur to me, but I know it was unbelievable.

Then we got into that other train and again we went on. Now we're going again at the same pace and now we had gone on the train the 15th, and I said on the 16th the night, the 17th at night.

Now the 18th the night, and I say to my--I think I told my sister. I said, you know tomorrow is my 13th birthday, the 19th of May. “I have a very bad problem.” I said to her, “I have a very bad premonition,” and she kept on saying, “What?” I said, “13, that number 13. I don't like 13.” It's always been. During the night we were in the train station in Arras, and here along comes a train full of French soldiers and parking right next to us. And we couldn't always stay in that train, so I think I went off the train to walk a little bit and my parents, too, maybe, and then people went in and out. Then we had our seats. We figured nobody is going to touch it.

So the soldiers come down and I started talking to them, and they say they're going to the front. And I say, okay, and I don't know. We went into conversation. We're finished and we're going and we're trying to sleep. The next morning, I think it was like around 9:00. They left 6:00 I remember because I looked at my watch or whatever. Six o'clock that train of the soldiers departed and we, the refugees, are sitting in that train for hours. Arras is like all the stations in Europe. It's covered with glass. It's made out of glass, the station where the train is in. We're hearing a noise and the airplane is coming, and I didn't feel good and I said, it's my birthday. Nobody even thought about it. This plane comes over. It's a German plane. You could see some of them starting hollering, said “En basch.” This is German slang, lousy slang for German. It's like you call a Jew a kike. You call a basch for German, and he bombs us. He bombs the train, the beginning of the train, the end of the train, and we're in the center of the train and it's like incendiary. The flames started shooting up and my mother--the trains from those years--you're sitting like here and somebody sits opposite you, but you have a door there and a door there to get out, all doors, the train. That used to be that type of train. My mother goes to, tries to open--my father had gone out at 6:00 to go and look for milk for my little sister. She's three years old. And my mother tries to open that door, but from the pressure of the bomb coming down, the door is locked in. So she tries--a window had broken because they were also glass panels. She sticks her arm up to try from the outside to move the handle so she could open up. He's coming back and people are already--you hear them screaming and shouting and running to the basement of that station. The station had a basement where it used to be underground tunnels from the First World War where people went in. So they knew it's an old descent to go down, and my mother
sticks, and she tries again, and the guy comes back and machine guns. As the people are running, he's machine gunning them because he thinks they're the soldiers. Somebody, a spy, must have said there's a whole train of soldiers in there.

So, she finally draws her head back, but she had opened the door and she had gotten hit and here, and here it was the artery. That blood was spurting there and I'm like total shock, but we had learned in school if somebody is wounded to make a scarf around, a tourniquet, to hold the blood from coming out. So I had a scarf on and I turn and I couldn't stop, but I held my finger on my mother's hand to stop. And we got out of the train and there's a soldier standing near going down who--a Red Cross soldier. I went over and I said in French, my mother is hurt. She's hit. Please, can you take her to the hospital? And he says, fine. So he takes my mother away. I'm turning around. Here's my older sister holding my younger sister and she's bleeding from the foot. So I went straight over to the guy and I said, here's my little sister. She's wounded on her foot. Take her to the hospital with my mother. And you know, on three years olds you had to hang on their names because otherwise--I had forgotten to put her name tag on and she went. After she had gone I said, she doesn't have a name tag. How is she going to know who she is? How are they going to know who she is?

In the meantime, I saw my father coming. [To interviewer] Bless you. I rush up. I say, Mama's been hurt and my little sister, too. And I was glad to see him because I thought maybe he got killed in the bomb, and he has a bottle of milk with him. And I say, come, let's go in the shelter, and my sister came down and she's like shaking like this. She was always much more nervous, my older sister. We knew it, and we're going down in the basement there, underground, and there's only cobblestones there. I swear, only cobblestones all there, and we find a place and my father says, maybe we ought to go to the hospital. So we're trying to go back and my aunt and my sister, I tell them, stay here. Sit here. We're going to try to find Mom and Isabelle, my little sister. As we're walking back, the soldiers are already on top there saying, “You can't come out. You have to stay there.” And by now, it's already the afternoon. We can't do nothing and we are tired. We didn't sleep or anything. So we find a spot somewhere. I remember like today. We're laying down on these cobblestones, cold and hard, and my father holds my sister with one hand and holds me with the other. We're laying against him and we fell asleep throughout the night.

We woke up and the first thing, let's go and find Mom. And I say to my sister again because I see she's totally shaking. I say, “Ida, you stay here and you don't move” and I say to the aunt, “And don't you dare move. Stay here. We come back to see you.” We're going and we're going out and now they're really shooting in the city. We see soldiers on the roofs and they're shooting at some airplanes that are coming over. The Germans are coming over, and they keep on hollering at us. And you see, that's what I know. There were no Frenchmen fighting ever because they were shouting to us in English and I understood. I had learned--I knew a little bit, understood a little English. “Get out of the street! Get out of the street! You can't go in the street,” but we went
anyway and we found the one hospital. If I tell you that hospital. Don't forget, there were people brought in from 10:00, 11:00 in the morning and this is now the next day. They're laying all over the hospital, in the corridors, wherever you want. I wanted to tell you when I got out of the, when my mother pulled me out and I looked around me and the people were asking, “Help me. Anyone, anyone.” And I looked, but I didn't want to look. There were people you could see already legs bloodied up and hands, faces. It was such a horrible sight.

**AV:** As a 13-year-old girl--

**RB:** God! I said, it was like-- Would you believe it? This is one of the real things. I had 20-20 vision, perfect vision, saw the blackboard, never needed glasses. When I came back to school months later, I needed glasses. I couldn't see anymore the blackboard and I had the same vision for maybe 40 years. Never changed. Must have been the shock. So if I tell you that hospital. It reeked and these poor people laying there, and each one looking, “Did you see my daughter? Did you see my mother? Did you see?” My heart went out and I'm running and I'm looking for my mother and I'm calling, “Mom, Mom,” all over that St. Pierre. There were two, St. John and St. Pierre, and we're looking all over, and here is this--I'll never forget that--this elderly man and he says, “Do you speak Yiddish,” in Yiddish. I said, yes, what do you want? He says, “I want to know about my grandson. My grandson. His name is so and so” and he told me the name. “Go and look. If you find him, come and tell me that you found him.”

So then I go around and I ask the name also, and my father behind me, and we're coming to one room, to one room. It was one doctor for maybe 3,000 people in that hospital. One single doctor, a Frenchman. No, I didn't see another doctor. And a couple of nurses. And there's one room where they say, do not enter in French. Ne entre pas. And I say, I got to go in there. Maybe my mother is in there. I didn't care. I opened up and I went in and I called my mother's name and I called also the boy's name. And a boy answers me. He says, “Yes, I'm here. I'm here.” I said, you know your grandfather is downstairs. Maybe you can try to get the nurse to bring you down. So I'm going out and I say to the nurse--he's liked wounded, laying there--I say to the nurse, tell me, his grandfather is downstairs. Maybe you can bring that boy down. Innocent me, 13 years old. She says to me, all the ones in that room are going to die. [cries] I couldn't go back to the grandfather and tell him that. All these people are going to die. She says, “We have no help for them.” This was so devastating. I'll remember the rest of my life.

So then I went down and we didn't find my mother and we didn't find my little sister, and my father looked, too. Then we went to the other hospital. Again the same thing, and the stench because they didn't change their--you know how the blood stink after a while. Oh, my God! It was unbelievable. And then we went back and we found my sister, but my aunt who had the fur package, she had disappeared. My aunt had disappeared. We couldn't find her. We're looking all over. She disappeared. I found my sister and then they're coming, soldiers are coming. You've
got to get out of the city because the Germans have announced they're going to bomb us, that city. And you must probably read in some books you will find the bombing of Arras. You will find it because they did come. We had to walk up. We had our backpack. We went back to the train and we got our backpacks. My mother, we asked her later what happened with the pocket. I mean, she had the money. When she was bleeding, she had forgotten. She had gone away, and when we went back in the train, we never saw a pocketbook anymore. Even then some people go and loot. It's incomprehensible that people have the--while bombing and while the people are running and while everybody is screaming, they have still the idea to loot and take things.

So now we're walking out of Arras and we decided we're going to go west because we want to go to the border near where England, to the part, just the crossing so we could cross into England. And we went to--and it was funny. Just yesterday how, this was so funny. We went to one town where the animals were, horses, dogs and everything because they bombed there. It was another town bombed. They were just laying in the street killed from the bombs, these animals, and they were talking about looting. Could you believe it? Our shoes were bloodied and everything was soaked, and there were a few people walking with us and we're passing a shoe store and one of them says, “How 'bout we go in and we get ourselves some shoes?” And we thought nothing of it. We went in that store and we just threw away our shoes and we took other shoes.

AV: When was this?

RB: That was a few days, that was, I would say the 21st of May, like two days later when we went.

AV: And who all was with you at this point?

RB: My father was with me and my sister and another boy, a Belgian boy, who had attached himself to us. He was 15 years old, a boy scout. I don't know. He didn't have any parents. Maybe he was running was running away from Belgium, too. I don't know.

AV: Was he with you for very long?

RB: Yes, yes.

AV: What do you remember most about him?

RB: I will tell you that when he attached himself I, maybe because we were two girls and he wanted to be with us and he felt safe. But as we went through that town where the horses were, it's the funny part. The name of that town is Upperville and I had totally forgotten, and there in New Orleans it said a sign, Upperville. They have that town from the French, Upperville. That's
destroyed and it all of sudden came back to me. I said, that's the town that we walked through where we saw the dead horses and everything, and there was a bombing there, too, and probably if you would ask the French government, they would tell you that Upperville was bombed.

Now we're going east and the boy follows us. Now what are we going to do? We're walking. How far can you go when you walk? So we get to a town called Flixacourt. That I remember because we said we've got to find a place where we can sleep. Like here they have shelters, but there they don't have anything like that. So we found a house and we went in there, but we went then to the police department. There was like a police--said, look, there's a house there and we need to sleep. We're just passing by. We're not going to take anything. Can you, will you allow us to sleep in there? Yes. It was the mayor's son's house, a nice house. I went in there with my father and we found a bedroom, and it was like we didn't want to disturb their beautiful bedroom, so we went to the attic. It was like two beds and we said we're going to just sleep there. But my sister didn't want to. She went into a shelter. There was a shelter there and she says, I'm too scared to be in a house. I want to be in the shelter.

I said, okay, but I need to sleep and Daddy, and we're going to sleep there, and I went to sleep there in that house. We stayed in that house for about, I would say five or six days because we had to get back to--we didn't know what was going to be, how to, and there was a place where you could get bread in the morning. We had to stand on line, and in that house we had--I found onions in the basement and old potatoes and a whole vat they had with eggs, eggs in brine, in salt water to save, I don't know. They probably figured the war is coming, something like that. Would you believe it? There were others that, my sister, there was a young Frenchman. I mean, she was at the time 15. He was 17 with his mother in the shelter, but he liked my sister, so once in a while he used to come over to the house because during the day she came into the house because I said, look, I'm going to cook up. I never cooked at home, but somehow I remembered my mother. Would you believe it? We ate eggs for breakfast, probably five, six each, eggs for lunch and eggs for supper. You had to eat something, so I made them. I fried the onions or I boiled them. I don't remember anymore.

And then also--this is also, I said, but we got to have some meat. We got to eat something. How are we going to get it? One guy I remember, [phone rings] a Frenchman came by--

[Break as RB takes phone call]

**RB:** One guy came by with a little coach. He had a cow on it. The head had been shot off. He said, the cow got hit by--you see, the Germans were hitting us with these cannon balls and the English were shooting back the French, so we were like right in the middle, but it went over our head, each time zzzzzzzzzz while we were sleeping. As long as we heard it, we knew it was going to go over our heads. So he had that cow and he said, “Do you want some meat?”
I said, “Yeah, yeah, give me a piece.” He cut out a piece of meat. The cow has been killed by one of these cannon balls and somehow I cooked it up. I think I remembered seeing my mother. I always loved to see my mother cook, and somehow I made that thing, 13 years old. And I said, being I had a big piece, I said from the shelter I invited that Frenchman who liked my sister. His mother and he came. In fact, he stole a chicken one day from a farm and he brought us, and we had to pluck and I didn't know what to do with the chicken. But then it was good that I had that young boy from Belgium. He was a Boy Scout and he knew how to pluck the chicken, and there I see all these fleas on the chicken. I said, what is this? Then I remembered how my mother used to, over the flame always hold that chicken probably to kill the fleas when it's fresh plucked. [laughs] I mean, things that come to you when you're young.

My sister, she was like, Ida, she couldn't do anything. She was like totally out of it. And one day the Germans hang up a sign where I went to get bread and it said, all males from 15 to 50 have to come to the main place in that town, Flixacourt. I said, “Daddy, you are not going. We're going back to Belgium. There's no way. The Germans had overrun us. We got to go back.” So that's how we got back to Belgium, and then was the decree. We found my mother as we got back to Belgium, and there was the decree that Jews could not have phones or radios. In from 7:00 at night 'til 7:00 the next morning. For two years, we got kind of lulled into safety. We didn't realize what was going on. A lot of people disappeared, but we--you don't ask. You don't find out. You're like living in a twilight.

AV: Did you go back to your original home in Antwerp?

RB: Yes, yes. We went back to Antwerp and we opened the store again like nothing happened. Of course, we had lost everything. My mother had lost the pocketbook with all her money, and we never found--at the end my aunt came also back, but she lost the fur and you have to start from scratch. Now you see these people? This reminds me each time. They say, look, we lost everything. My parents lost everything. They had lost with the bankruptcy, too, but now the second time. And it was a time of fear and sitting indoors and not knowing what was going to happen to us, and having the feeling each time they're going to do something to us, but we didn't realize. I don't think anybody ever read really Mein Kampf. I am so astonished myself. How is it possible that a people--adults. We were children. Adults read a book like Mein Kampf and are not alarmed and don't say, we're going to get out of the way of these Germans? They're going to annihilate us. Why? Each time I asked them, each one gives me that stupid answer, “Oh, we didn't believe that something was going to happen like that.” And I am so frustrated. You read that somebody is going to annihilate you and you just--you don't take it seriously.

AV: Well, you said that people started disappearing for a while.
RB: Yes!

AV: And you didn't--it was kind of don't ask, don't tell.

RB: Exactly.

AV: What did you think?

RB: There was from generations on this thing in Jews, that submissive thing that I hated. I could not understand how rabbis for centuries and centuries always said, “Don't defend yourself.” How is it possible to tell a human being don't defend yourself? Why did they do that to the people? They put them--it's like with a mantra, you can't kill. You can't murder. You can't kill. And then you become submissive. I say the same thing for the blacks. I say 50 Klansmen came and you were maybe a thousand and you let them hang somebody? Why didn't you annihilate the other ones? Same thing. If you become, I don't know, if you become submissive, you lose. You lose.

AV: If we can jump ahead just a little.

RB: Yes, yes.

AV: When did the decision come for you to go someplace else? I know that you went to a convent, so what were the events that led you to this?

RB: It was--we were allowed. We didn't do nothing. We just sat, and them my sister and I, we got a letter, certified. I think I told you before. We have to come. I was 15 at the time. We have to--and she was 17. This was two years later, to come and work in Germany and they told us that every month we would be allowed to come three days to visit our parents. We have to come to work in Germany. This was from the German Commander Tour, the one who was occupying Belgium, his stamp and everything, but sent out by the Jewish Council. This is also the horror of it. The Jewish Council sent to every Jew because every Jew was registered with the Jewish Council that we have to come to work and failure to do so, your family will be shot.

AV: How did you respond to that?

RB: Well, we went. We're obedient people. We were always obedient, for 1,800 years, since Christianity. We were obedient. You have to obey the others.

AV: Did your father question? Were you concerned?
RB: Nobody questioned. Nobody. We felt we're going to--being people disappeared, you didn't know. Nobody knew there were concentration camps. Nobody knew.

AV: It was like they left.

RB: So my sister, my mother said my sister should go and she'll send me a week later, and she went to the Council and she said, look, I'll send my second daughter a week or two later, but I'll send the first one. We took my sister to the station. She left. She waved goodbye. She was crying, poor thing, and we gave her cards to just throw out of the thing, maybe-- We got only one card. "I'm already one day in the train. I don't know where we're going and I'm scared." That's all she wrote.

AV: Did you ever see her again?

RB: She went straight to Auschwitz. Three days later that train went to Auschwitz and she got gassed.

AV: When did you find out?

RB: After the war. The Germans kept a good book. She went with the third, second or third transport. There were, those that went before her, and it said they went to Auschwitz, the Germans. The train went straight. It was all a ruse, all--15 transports from Belgium went straight to Auschwitz. Fifteen times 2,000 people, straight, young people and older people later and so forth. Well, what can I--after that, after the 15 transports, a year later, they kind of kept the ones who were healthy, younger people, to work, but before that it was total annihilation. Just total annihilation. And me, we were just lucky that one day they came in, like in "Schindler's List," they came in and started taking the Jews out from their homes. I remember like today, my mother, she grabbed her head. What have I have done, she said. I had begged her, before my sister, when we got the letters, I said, “Mama, I don't want my head searched. Mama, let's go into hiding. We can go and hide.”

And my mother answered me, “I cannot do that to our neighbors.” And that's such a Jewish thing. I'll tell you why. It was always implanted in Poland, wherever, to Jews especially, that you could not do something different then what was directed because it would be a shame. A shame. It was a shame for the neighbors that we should go and hide. And yet, when this happened, she right away said, “Oh, I've got to hide you,” and she went to a Christian woman that we knew from way before and she said, I want you to hide my two children, with my little sister, “and baptize them Christian. I don't care, but they've got to be saved.”
So the woman said, the only way I can save them is if I bring to the convent where I went as a child. And she called up and she got, but how could we go there with Jews? They probably wouldn't take us, it’s a danger. Everywhere it says if you harbor a Jew, you'll be shot. So she said, you know what? We'll say that they're Protestants being you don't know anything about the Christian religion. So, that's how we went. We went there. Two days later the daughter from that woman took us there. She was a lovely woman. She was--I was 15. She was 20, and when she took us there, we went there as orphans, and she also found out, the woman, how much it would be. It's like you pay college here because I was going to sleep in the dormitory. Where am I going to sleep? So my mother gave the money to the woman and we went to the convent to give the woman the money for the whole, the nun for the whole year for the two of us.

And here, I'm entering the church, the chapel, in the afternoon, and you've got to kneel. Catholics are kneelers, and after half an hour that I'm kneeling, I feel I'm going to faint here. I'm going to faint. I can't take it anymore. My knees hurt and everything, but I stood up then, and my little sister, I felt so sorry for her, and I had said to her, remember one thing. Don't ever tell we're Jews. We are not Jews. Don't say anything. At night the nun said to me, “Let's pray. Let's say the, Our Father.”

**AV:** The Lord's Prayer.

**RB:** Our Father. “I don't know.”

“You don't know and you're Protestant? They didn't teach you?”

“No.”

So then she gave me a book to read from, and then we had maybe 15 other Marias after that and I keep on saying, “Oh my God, how stupid. How can you keep on repeating the same thing over and over and over?” I'm giving you the truthful way that if you don't know anything, this is so absolutely ridiculous. Our Father, I could see it, the prayer, but this?

**AV:** Before you went to the convent, when you found out that your mother was looking into it, how did your father--

**RB:** My father didn't say anything. He let my mother do all the decisions because all of a sudden she seemed the stronger one at that time to be able to manipulate and do things.

**AV:** What do you remember most about your departure?
RB: From where?

AV: From home.

RB: I'll tell you. So here I am away from my parents and all that and now we're going to sleep, and my little sister, dormitory, you have curtains all around you, bed and everything, because God forbid one would see the other one nude. God forbid for the Catholics. This is like a sin. Everything you do is a sin. And this, too, baffled me so totally. What is this? I mean. I don't know. I wasn't brought up. I never heard of sin. I never was, felt uncomfortable as a child or anything. Nobody ever told me of a devil. Ach! When I was five years old and somebody told me, a Christian neighbor told me there's a devil. I said, a devil? And she showed me the picture. I didn't sleep for nights.

AV: What did the picture look like?

RB: With the horns and the fire all around him. It's so frightening for a five year old. Why frighten a child like that? We're so innocent at five years old to tell about the devil and-- Well, anyway, I go to sleep and I'm burning up from fever. All of a sudden I got like, compared to a 104 temperature. They called the doctor right away. He comes. He doesn't find anything, but in those years when somebody had a fever like that, that was meningitis and they don't know what to do for it. So the nun comes and she washes my face. I can't say they tried to take--and now, this is the thing. The cross is hanging over me with Jesus and I'm looking at that, and I say, “It's because of you that I'm in trouble? Because of you I've got to be in a convent? Why? Why is this? Why should that be?” because I didn't understand much about Jesus. What do I know about Jesus? Never heard, never talked about it.

AV: Do you understand now?

RB: Oh, do I. Sure I do. I saw it always at Christian neighbors, but I didn't think that this was God to them. I didn't know. It's like you probably would come and you'd see a mezuzah and you'd ask, what is this? I mean, if you don't know, you don't know. And I had such a fever. And guess what? That cross could not be over my head. I took it down, shoved it under the bed. Do you know how many times that cross went up and under the bed? The nun came. She tried to sponge me off. Cross under bed up. Didn't take two minutes. It was right under the bed again. When I'm 15, my God. I'm a child. What do I know?

After three days, I was like totally--all my muscles, everything. They had to come and massage my muscles. I was like totally out. They bring me down. I have to go see Mother Superior. Mother Superior walks up and back in front of me, red like a beet, turns to me and like daggar ing eyes she said to me, “You lied to me. You're Jews!” Well, I started crying. I say, “I couldn't tell
you because you wouldn't have accepted us.” And she said, “I don't know what to do with you. I don't know what to do with you. You're orphans and what am I going to do with the two of you?”

So later on, she told us she called the bishop and said, “Look, I got two Jewish kids here. What am I going to do?”

And he said to her, “Look, you've got 25 nuns in the convent. If they find out, you're all going to be shot. It's up to you. I don't know what to tell you.” And she kept us. She did keep us. That's why I say she was an unusual, wonderful woman to do that.

**AV:** What was she like inside?

**RB:** She was--I understand today. Then we disliked her in a way because she used to say she took in 17 Jewish children and we were sometimes down. She used to say, “Oh, you don't like it here?” [laughs] I remember her gesture. You can go. She knew we couldn't go anyplace. There was a bit of a hate relationship, but what we didn't know is, she was such a brilliant woman. She understood that we were hurt. She understood, but she wanted her to frustrate us to change our thinking from being frustrated being that we don't think that way. She was very good at that so that she got us angry in a way, but she didn't want that anger to go to ourselves, but to her in a way because later I wrote to her about it and all that, and she explained many things. And I honored her. She's got her plaque at Yad Vashem. I honored her because she was an unbelievable woman, unbelievable, and she helped me when I came to America, too. And I would stay in the convent for two years. Ask me really if I can really--I can remember things, but ask me if I felt I was alive. No.

**AV:** What do you mean by that?

**RB:** I feel like I was in shock the whole time. I learned everything. I did everything. I was an excellent student, and I asked, how is it possible to excel like that and have such pain, not feel? Like you see the zombies. But I remember certain things that stand out, but otherwise if you'd ask me day by day do you remember living through this, it's like a blur to me.

**AV:** Do you remember the food?

**RB:** Yes. I do remember the food. I'll tell you. We used to get--it was enough, but it wasn't enough. We were growing girls and could stand more food, and there was no fat so it doesn't satisfy your hunger. I remember one thing. They used to make buttermilk porridge I liked with rice and sugar, brown sugar. I loved it. That nun, we were sitting, let's say we were 15 in the mess room and none. I would say like half of them couldn't eat it, so what do you think? It was a pleasure that evening because I could get as much as I wanted. The others [laughs] “Rachel, you
want mine? You want mine?” The things that they disliked that I finished. I had enough to eat, but the nuns, they were unbelievably good. Look, I'm 60 years that I left there. I'm still writing to them, not that they're the nuns who were there, but the continuation because I cannot forget these nuns. They were absolutely wonderful, the most—if Christians want to have examples of people. And yet I hear others were in convents, too, and didn't fare as well as I did. But they were excellent, and food was like the—it wasn't enough to fill, and yet I can't say that I starved from hunger, and my little sister, I made sure that she should always have the bigger pile because I felt that she wouldn't understand and I would. I didn't want her to suffer.

Also, in the morning we had to get up at about 6:00 to go every morning for mass and all that, and I went to Mother Superior. My sister was five years old and I said, “Look, I don't want her to go that early to church. She's a little girl. I want her to sleep. I'll make sure that she's down. I'll run up after mass and I'll dress her and she'll come down and we'll eat,” but Saturday, Sunday. I don't remember. Saturday she could sleep, too, I think. Sundays she had to go down, but I didn't mind because it was later, too. Then I understood more about the sacraments because the first day I see all the next morning when I was all right, I see everybody go for communion. Here I am, following through. What do I know? The nun grabs me. You can't go.

Why can't I go? Why, why, why can't I go to this? Would you believe it? It took then learning catechism to understand that you have to be baptized in order to get the other sacraments, and there must have been children wondering why we did not go or nothing, but they didn't—somehow they didn't betray us. It's weird.

AV: Were there any close calls?

RB: There was, no. Absolutely. There was only one time that the Germans knocked at the door and it was only because there was a light, but during that time the nuns came and took the Jewish children in their quarters, and they dressed me as a nun because with these white robes and all that, and they said that the little children, like my sister, she would hide under my skirt. But that was the only time, but otherwise we were never bothered which was also a miracle. It was just a miracle.

AV: Where was the convent?

RB: The convent was next to Brussels. It's called La Vein, La Vein, and they have the most monasteries and convents there. It's known for monasteries and convents. And we stayed there for 21 months, and after the 21 months, we had, the Americans came. It was pre-VE day, May again. It was May—every time May came around I was scared because May we had to put on the star to walk and what happened to us when we went away, and then May when VE day. All of a sudden, Americans came over to bomb, and guess what? They came and bombed even though
they know it's the convents, but they heard the Germans--and it was true. The German soldiers were hiding in that town because they felt Americans are not going to bomb where there are monasteries, but they did. They came and they bombed, and the bomb fell like, let's say, half a block away from our convent and we only, the Jewish children, were left in the convent at that time because the Christian children had gone away once they started bombing. So we went to the cellar, and here's the priest and the nuns, and we down the cellar, and the bomb fell, I would say, like a half a block away and through the air--the air gets pushed out from the, somehow, from the force of the bomb coming down, and we thought here we're dying because we couldn't breathe. All of a sudden there was no air in the basement there, and like today I remember. And the priest fell and the nuns fell, and we fell on top of everybody. We just fell, but then we realized after a while we could breathe again. Ah, it was good. But then the nuns didn't want to keep us any longer. They said, you have to go back to your parents. That was not such a good thing because you came back some place. There were always spies. Why are these children all of a sudden back? There must be something, and they always suspected they must be Jews or something. A lot of them were betrayed at that time. Only one family that I remember from--two girls that were with us were put into concentration. One got killed. The other one in concentration camp. The other somehow survived. And we were taken--I went to my mother. She hid in a house of a resistance fighter, and they were the only Jews, my father and my mother and one more guy in that house. The rest, he had rented out, the resistance fighter, to Germans who were the ones conducting the trains to Auschwitz. They came back and forth, so he had given it to Germans and he said, what better way to hide Jews than amongst the Germans are there. Nobody will suspect. It was his way of his thinking, so I went back.

And then my girlfriend--I had made a very good girlfriend in the convent, a Christian girl. She came with her father, and she came. She said, you cannot stay here because you're in danger. You've got to come and stay with my parents.

And I said, no, I don't go because they're going to shoot you and your parents. And she wouldn't leave and he wouldn't leave unless I went back with them. And my mother said, yes, I want you to live, and I went and I stayed three months with my friend and her parents, and I honored them, too. And last year, the grand--, I mean the daughter from my girlfriend, because she died in the meantime, she was honored in Belgium. They made a big thing, not her, but all the other Christians who had helped Jews survive, and she was very touched by it because she doesn't remember her mother that much. Her mother died when she was 14, so it's kind of honor for her and her grandparents, and they're coming to visit me this month.

AV: Oh, that's wonderful.

RB: Yes, I'm glad. She's coming, the granddaughter.
AV: When you returned from the convent to your home, was your father still alive?

RB: No. Because my father, during the--

Lauren Geldzhaler: Should we do another tape, or should we finish up?

Rachel Bodner: During the time that I was in the convent, before I left--I left in 1944, so it was 21 months from '42, May to May—uh not in May. I came there in August '42 and left in May '44. But in '43, late summer, my father came to see us in the convent. Once in a while, it was my mother or my father came to see. The nun had found out that they were my parents, and when my mother came the first time she was so perceptive. She said to me, this was not your aunt. This was your mama. She was very perceptive. But then when my father came--he had only come like twice. Maybe this was the third time, and he hugged me and he said, I think this is the last time that I'll come to see you.

I said, “Why Daddy?”

“Ah, it's so dangerous now because we have no transportation.” On the buses, the Germans came to check for Jews, so they were on the buses and on the subway--not subway--on the trolleys. The trolleys were still running. He says, “I don't want to, something happen.”

And I cried so hard. I said, “Daddy don't say that. Don't say that I'm not going to see you.” I couldn't take that. And yet it was the last time because shortly after that a friend of my father's son--you see, in order to have 2,000 people to go on the train and Jews were harder to catch. They assembled them in a house called Marine Mechelen and that's where they assembled them, and of his friend's son died there and he was buried in the cemetery, Jewish cemetery, and in order to say the prayer, you need ten men. You need ten men in the synagogue. You need ten men to--it's a Jewish, I would say. I don't think that God came down and said you need ten men, but it must be a Jewish custom that became then incorporated into being the religion. So they came for my father and he was the tenth man, and even though he wasn't Orthodox at the time, he couldn't say no to the boy who came to ask him to come to the cemetery for his brother. And I rebuked my mother my whole life. I said, “How could you let him go? You know that the Germans would be around waiting.”

“Well, I couldn't say. I said to him, don't go, don't go, but he said, I have to go.” So he went to his own funeral. They caught him right there on the cemetery. The ten men, they caught them and they took them to Mechelen. My father was there for three months. I have some letters that I gave to the museum that my father wrote from there that he's begging for some bread and lard to survive. So that's that. That's what happened to him.

Bodner Rachel, Interview 2
Now we got liberated 29th—at that time there was this underground guy came to take us from the convent because he was scared that we should go on the trolley and the Germans would come even though I had a false identity card, but you never know what could happen. So I was on the bicycle and the brother who had come to ask for my father, he took my little sister on his bicycle, and we went back to Brussels on bicycle. And when I said, “Oh, I'm so glad I'm going home. I'm going to see Daddy and Mom,” he was kind of quiet, and I said, “Why are you quiet?”

He said, because “Don't ask your mother about your father because he went to work in Germany.” He didn't want to tell me the truth. I knew right away. I said, “You're lying to me. You mean to say my father [tape skipped]” and he says, “Yes, but don't ask anyone.” So I cried in the back. I was sitting in the back holding on to him and he says, “Don't cry because people are going to look and you look suspicious,” so even I had to hold in, and when I saw my mother, I didn't say anything, didn't say a word.

And then I stayed with her until my girlfriend came to get me and took me to her house for three months. Now they were unusual, good people. He was such a nice man, her father, my girlfriend, and the mother, too. They were nice, nice people. And the one thing that always touched me, and when I think about it I have to laugh. Sundays they went to mass, but not the father. He stayed home and I used to say— I used to call him father—“Father Payne, why are you staying home? Why aren't you going to church with your wife and your daughter?”

“Oh,” he said. “That's for women.” So it just goes to show you, you don't have to go to church and you don't have to pray to be a good guy because he was a good guy. Whenever she went out, like Saturday night she wanted to go see a movie, my girlfriend, and also have an ice cream, and each time he says, “Ah, you've got to go, too.”

I said, “But I'm scared.”

“No, no. Go with her. You don't have to be scared.” And he gave her, like I say five dollars, but it isn't five dollars for a movie, and then he gave me. He put five dollars in my hand also.

I said, “But I don't want to take your money. I don't.”

He says, “Look, as long as you're in my house, you're my daughter.” Can you imagine what a man?

**AV:** How did that make you feel?

**RB:** Aah. Such a good guy, such a wonderful, and he wasn't that [can't understand word]. Like when we used to get porridge at night, there wasn't that much to eat so we ate porridge. There
were three bowls, smaller ones for us and him, a bigger bowl. We'd sit down and then all of a sudden he'll change his big bowl with mine. I said, “Why are you doing that? I mean, you're the man and you need.”

He says, “No, you're too thin. You got to eat more.” Oh, God. No, I didn't always let him do it, but I said, my God. He's such a decent, nice human being. Now you see, you give examples of Christians like that and to compare them to the others who were so willing to kill. It's mind boggling. How is it possible? I keep on thinking all the time. They pray to God. They're praying to Jesus, but they're praying to a Jew. Jesus never said he was Christ. He was born a Jew, died a Jew. Two hundred years later, they brought up another religion, Christianity, but he was a Jew. So how is it possible? Every Jew they killed, they killed Jesus over again. Don't they realize that? Where's the common sense? And you know how many are still here on television. Cspan. I love Cspan. How many are calling in. It's because of the Jews. It's because of Israel. It's because--and I say to myself, all the trouble in the world. Oy. You should hear them, and I keep on saying, this is a Christian calling in, praying to Jesus. Doesn't he realize because basically in my mind, if they follow Jesus, they're all Jews because they're following a Jew. Why isn't that pointed out more? And when he made that movie, the "Passion," that upset me because you don't bring up things again and again. Sure, there were people against Jesus in those times, but we learned in catechism, we learned in catechism you had so many different Jewish sects at the time--the Samaritans. You had the Scribes. You had the Assyans. You had so many different groups of Jews. He belonged let's say to the Assyans which they never found in the scripture. They looked at the Assyans and he was never mentioned among the Assyans. All right, but here we have, in this day and age, we have Jews. We have the Lubavitcher. We have the Satmar. We have so many different groups following their rabbi, so there is in a way a little bit that--like with Republicans and Democrats. This one says I'm right and this one says I'm right. Now Jesus at the time also had his group of people. They were people who eyed, who want to do something. It was just in fighting. It was nothing more than in fighting between different rabbis and different groups.

**AV:** Well, this questioning of religion, did you ever wonder about the existence of God?

**RB:** Well, to me it's a funny thing. When bombs used to fall, when you're in such terror, and I wasn't taught much about God, there is that inner voice that says, oh, God, please help me. There is an inner voice that directs you to God, yet it's not--I don't believe in the God like the bible portrays. Forget it. There's no such a thing as a father or-- I do believe that there is such a powerful, and I won't say a being, a powerful energy in this world beyond our comprehension who did the creation, who did all that, but it's not in the sense of a father figure or a God. No, I will not because I will not accept that because from religion stems everything bad that came in this world--wars, killing each other. Look at the Arabs. They have no qualms to kill a woman if she commits adultery. I mean, in the name of religion. No. That doesn't make sense.
AV: When you were a child, during the war, did you feel this way as well?

RB: I wasn't raised Orthodox or religious, but I was raised--my father taught me right from wrong and he used all the parables that Jesus used. In Hebrew, the nun used to say, and now Jesus said in a parable. Jesus said? My dad used to say that, and he said it in Hebrew and he translated it for me. No. My father taught me right from wrong, but to him, too, I surmised the liturgy did not make sense because it's a division. It's a division like the same division is if you're white or black or yellow. There is a division, and this is what's no good. I cannot accept because we're all created--we're all human beings. There must have some reason why we're all created differently, but we're all the same and why, why say, my religion is more than your religion? That's also stupid. It's so totally stupid. If anybody has common sense, he will realize that either we're good or we're bad. There is no such thing. Nobody can tell me you're a sinner. True, but that's our makeup. It has nothing to do with you're going to wind up in hell if you do this. That is ridiculous. Where are we all going to go? I mean, there's no such thing. I don't believe in hell per se. No. They'll be accounting, but then hell in a way is sometimes here on earth. We are going through hell before in one way or the other because each one of us is going to be hit in life with something that we think we'll not be able to overcome and that is the hell, the moment of hell. You ask anybody, anybody! Everybody went through something terrible more or less.

AV: Can you pinpoint a moment in all those years that you spent in hiding or fear? What was your moment of real, true hell? Is there any one time?

RB: I think the moment I went in the convent for the first three months until I knew what happened to my parents. I was so afraid that they were caught and I had no communication, but then the woman who took me, the girl, the daughter from the woman. She promised she was going to write to me, but it took her two or three months before she wrote, and she says, your aunt and your uncle are okay. Then I knew, but that was hell then. That was the worst, the first few months not knowing, and also being subjected to a new religion that I thought--look, I went into the chapel and I know one thing. It's peculiar that even though I wasn't raised Orthodox, but my father brought in a lot of things of the bible in me. Like he said, we're not supposed to make graven images of ourselves and other things, and when I came into that chapel and I saw Virgin Mary and St. Joseph and others there around the thing, [gasp] My God, they're idol worshippers. I mean, this was my impression. You're not supposed to make a graven image. So there was some sort of religion within me and it's still within me. I'm not--I'm not saying that people who pray or go. If they need it, fine, and you do whatever is good. If you want to live with that, fine, but you cannot put it on me.

AV: Can you think of a moment where you really felt true comfort?
RB: I felt comfort in the convent, yes.

AV: You felt totally safe.

RB: Yes, yes. I felt safe and after a few years there, and the funny part was seeing how content they were, the nuns, and it was such a regulated life. I like regulation. My father had done that to me, too, in a way--the getting up in the morning and the eating. You're going to school and you're doing. It was so regulated and you didn't have to think too far ahead, that came to the point that if it would have lasted another two years, I would have become a nun. I loved it. I loved their tranquility and the safe, feeling so safe. I can understand now why some girls, especially when they're 15, 16, why they became nuns and they took them at a very early age. Now, forget it. No more. Not in Belgium. They tell me no nuns anymore. It's like really going out, with what they're seeing, the evolution of everything. And I guess people, with all the new inventions and everything, there's more maybe thinking going on in a different way, not being so gullible, accepting things that aren't, isn't there, never will be there.

AV: When you returned to Antwerp after--

RB: I didn't return to Antwerp, to Brussels.

AV: Oh, to Brussels.

RB: My mother was hidden in Brussels. We did not return. I could not return. Mom, she said, maybe we should return. I said, Mom, I don't want to go back.

AV: Why at that time?

RB: I tell you because we heard the terrible stories of what had happened to the people who had disappeared.

AV: What did you hear?

RB: We heard that there were concentration camps and that a lot of the people got killed.

AV: Was the phrase "concentration camp?"

RB: Yes, yes. Then we started, but we didn't believe it at first, not in the beginning. You really cannot believe that such a tragedy would have occurred, but then little by little it sinks in, and even then, even then, I will tell you that maybe, even then maybe ten years of my life went
through also in semi-consciousness. I did everything that had to be done, followed everything, but still not really feeling things.

**AV:** Like what?

**RB:** Like going to a wedding and not being able to have joy.

**AV:** How did that resonate within you? Could you feel that something was off?

**RB:** Yes, yes.

**AV:** Did you try to find a way to make that--

**RB:** I knew that it couldn't go away, not in the beginning.

**AV:** What do you really attribute the emptiness to?

**RB:** The loss of my father and the loss of my sister. You ask any one of us, we'll all tell you the same story. We cannot find joy in life like others. We don't have it anymore. Hitler took that away for the rest. There are moments like the birth of my children when you're happy and all that, but there's always the sadness.

**AV:** Is it still with you?

**RB:** Yes, yes.

**AV:** Have you gone back to the cemetery where your father was--

**RB:** No, we never went to that cemetery. I don't even know which cemetery is was, but it's like--I used to go to, let's say an affair or something happy, and all of a sudden to your mind it comes, why am I here? Why isn't my sister here? It always comes in--the loss, the terrible loss. Nobody overcomes and that's why I feel with those people, 9-11, I feel with them. They're never going to be the same again for the rest of their lives. They'll always experience that terrible loss. I know. I know what they're talking about. They will never, never overcome this. Anyone, anyone, whether it be in Iraq when they lose a father or mother or sister, these people will never be the same. Never. You've got to be, and that's when I go and speak in schools to the children, I say, don't fight with your siblings. You never know what happens. If you lose your sibling, your whole life you're going to think about it. They'll always be on your mind.
And you know the beautiful letters I get. I feel so good. I went through my life always saying, why did I survive? Why did I survive? Why was I the lucky one? What is the purpose of me being survived? I think I found it now, coming here to Baltimore for about 13 years. I go to schools and speak about the Holocaust and maybe to tell the children. First of all, I keep on saying to them, what are you against? Against parents? You rebel against those who feed you, who put a roof over your head, who make sure that you're going to have a good life, and you tell me Americans rebel. What is this? It's the most stupid thing that they could be to rebel against your own parents. Imagine just if you're going to lose them. You come home one day. Nobody's home. How, with all your rebellion, and how about your siblings? Why do you call them names? Why do you do? Why do you fight with your siblings? I hear everywhere, believe me, my friends and all over, the siblings, but we cannot say anything. You see, we're the older generation. Our children have children and these children are fighting, the young kids and all that. Why do you allow these children to fight? Why don't you explain to these children, you as parents? Just picture something happens to one of you. Your whole life you're going to think about that. You're going to miss somebody. They don't--they let the children fight. Well, children have to fight, I hear. Americans say it. Children have to fight. It's a natural thing. No, it shouldn't be a natural thing. You have to get along with your siblings. If you're already instilling that fight when they're young, how are they going to get along when they're going to be older? I mean, and then when I speak to teachers there--they're so happy I come--I get letters from these children. If you have time, I would show you. Thank you, Mrs. Bodner. I'm not fighting with my siblings anymore. Do you know what that does to me? Maybe that's why I survived. I have to open up eyes, some eyes, make some children aware, if their parents cannot do it, I have to be able to do that for them, and maybe then they're going to feel good. They're going to have a sister they're going to love.

**AV:** Are there any stories that you can think of that we haven't--I've asked you about or haven't touched on the really--anything you want to share?

**RB:** Yes, with my friend. Let me tell you. My friend, my friend Jeanne, the one that I made in the convent, she was like a sister to me. Wonderful, wonderful human being. So truthful and so feeling. Just to bring me like a piece of chocolate sometimes, that kind of kindness, that love, the sharing. Also with the nuns, I must have learned a lot from them anyway that makes me realize more about life than I see other people. Here, I'm living in this building. We're older people here. Some of them are so mean to each other. I'm sickened and I'm cringing. How is it possible? I go over sometimes to one. I say, give in. Don't be like that. Why don't--why don't you learn to accept a little bit?

No, I'll never accept. I don't want to accept somebody 55 years old telling me.
So what? So she told you something. Big deal. What is it with people? Why? Why don't they understand to get along with others? And that stems already--this is what I want to say--from my father, how he taught me. You want to say your opinion. Sit with your sister, but don't call names. Nobody's name. I married and my husband, his family, how they, between sister and brother, oh, you, you're an idiot. You don't know what you're talking about. I think you're crazy. Why this? I was so horrified. I said, how is one family talking like this to another member? Why do they do that? Why do they want to hurt somebody else like that? You're wrong.

**AV:** Tell me more about your friend in the convent.

**RB:** The friend. She was so good to me and she knew at first--the funny part of it that she told me, she wanted to be friends with me and she said, “but I don't know whether I can be friends with you.”

I said, “why.”

“Because you're Jewish and I'm Christian.”

I said, “what does that mean?”

She says, “I got to ask my father confessor.” So she went and asked and he said, no, there's no problem. He was such a nice guy, too, but the nun, she--Mother Superior, she said, “I don't want you to be too good friends with each other.”

I said, “Why? What are you scared of? Why can't I be friends with Jeanne?” But then I realized something because being in a convent, I said, you have to remember one thing. Christians always come out and they say, “We want to talk. We want you to become a Christian because we want to save your soul.” That is their aim. I said to the Mother Superior, I said, Mother Superior, you have to know one thing. We Jews, we don't do that. We don't proselytize. We never want to. On the contrary, we will say to anybody, “Don't become a Jew because we don't want you to suffer. You want 2,000 years of suffering on your back?” So that's why we say, “Don't become a Jew. Don't. Don't.”

So then she didn't know. What did she know? What did she know when they come and they touch my head, the nuns. Where are your horns? You know that? Each time, where are your horns?

I say, “What do you mean? What horns?” This is 1942. They're looking for horns. You have no horns. You must have a third eye on your head. Why? Where does this come from? I didn't tell you where this comes from.
AV: Were you raised?

RB: Yes [can't understand]

AV: Go ahead.

RB: No, it's the same darn thing, and probably there must have many other things. Now also that fallacy--and it's still propagated by the Arabs--that we Jews, we make the matzo, our bread, unleavened bread, from the blood of Christians. Now you think anything blood. How could it be white after you bake or cook? I mean, if you think about it, anything that you use blood with gets dark no matter what you do, cook or bake or mix. What is this? And why was it perpetuated? For centuries, this is perpetuated. See, there again, I say I blame the rabbis. Why didn't the rabbis go over to some priests and say, why, why are you telling this? This doesn't make sense. That's why I love it today with the ecumenical thing and people do get together and people do tell of each other of some customs and some ways to understand better. People don't have to be fearful. Like they say to me, “You're going in the church?” Why? Why shouldn't I go in the church? To me, like I use God here. It's the house of God. So a church is the house of God. They pray to their God. I pray to my God. So what's the difference? But why? Why are people so lacking common sense?

AV: We're going to have to wrap up.

RB: Yes.

AV: So if there’s anything else you’d like to add?

RB: Not much that I can, unless you have questions.

AV: I think I’m—I still have questions, do you guys have anything you wanted to ask?

RB: Yes if you have questions. Yes, David would you like to know something, something that seems.

David: I don’t think I have any questions, I mean, I’ll think of one next time.

RB: Yes, why not. While you are thinking—you know, I always say, while you are, until we see you next time, if you have questions about this, write it down. And I always say, even after we’ve finished a program or something, if you ever want to ask me something, ask. You know, if something seems baffling or whatever.
AV: Thank you.

RB: You’re welcome.

[End of Interview 2]