

TAPE FOUR, "MARRIAGE TO APU, TO AFTER THE WAR, 1933-1945"

The gossipmongers in Bratislava were very busy which I understand because I came straight from Sodom & Gomorra. So they, I guess they wagged their tongues for a while. I came home and in the meantime my parents built a house on Vegelinova, which was designed by Tommy Stewart's father. It was beautiful. It was..... (tape garbled at this point). The front was to the garden and it was very, very beautiful. Inside, he designed the interior, too. Lots of photos of the interior and the exterior of the house appeared in architectural magazines. He had..... (tape garbled for a sentence or two).

(The two first tapes I made, I was very disappointed, I didn't think that my accent and my English were as bad as these tapes. I know I'm still at war with the V and the W. I try my best. I think it was because the Hungarian alphabet has no W somehow. Somehow we cannot form it in our mouth.)

When I came home it seemed as though I wouldn't have been away at all. I was again the young girl and I was asked where I go, with whom I go, what I did, when I come home. But it was all right. All my friends had gone in the meantime, they were married and moved away from Bratislava. Only Anica Eisler was there but she was so busy with her two babies and obnoxious husband who beat her, as people said. Most probably, she showed the signs of a beating. So I had all my friends gone and I had to find a new circle and I tried and I found one. The gentile and the Jewish community still were apart but we met all the same. We met at coffee houses, we met at tennis games, and we met when we swam in the Danube.

From about that time, I would like to tell you something. It was sort of a boat, which had a square opening in the middle. It had a bottom but it was constant in the way that the water of the river could flow in and could flow out. Around it was sort of a gangplank and then cabins where we could change. On the outside was a sun deck. It was hot and we didn't care who comes from the community, we just used the same swimming pool. It was sort of a pool. Sometimes, very seldom though, the lifeguards took us up, rowed us up to Devin in a boat and then they left us swim close to the banks in the Danube itself. It was very wonderful, it was a completely different feeling, although the water was flowing in the pool too. But somehow it was different to swim in the open Danube. In the winter this boat was towed away to the winter haven where it hibernated till the next summer.

As I said, in tennis we played together and we rode together. Apu had a horse together with a doctor a while. It was a white horse, had some Lipizzaner blood and Apu named it Florian after the very lovely and sad novel by Stephan Zweig, which was titled Florian: The Horse of the Kaiser. It was a very sad story but it was a beautiful book. I had one, that is I didn't have, I didn't own it, but it was possible to rent a horse. Which meant that you paid for it and you borrowed it and were the only one who rode it. She was a little black girl filly, she was very nice, she was very easy to handle. Apu rode her when he took part in competitions, in jumping because she was a good jumper. Florian was too heavy to use for that purpose. Apu won a few prizes with her. So this was the best way to get together with Apu. That's how we met again. And this time it was completely different. I was more mature and also had the experiences in the meantime. Right away from the beginning we enjoyed each other's company. We nearly, every day, especially in the summer, after the harvest, when the fields were bare, we rode

and it was a beautiful time. We slowly fell in love and we just loved to be in each other's company.

I have to mention here an episode, it was a very nice summer day, beautiful weather, we rode out. Suddenly a storm came up, the rain was pouring and we had no shelter and we didn't see anything except far away a very tall tree. So we took the directions and rode there and stopped under the trees to get to have shelter. It was very romantic, we kissed, and didn't think of it that we had the worst place for an electric storm possible. We didn't think of that, and we didn't think of the metal on the horseshoes of our horses. But it was very beautiful and, as I said, very romantic.

Apu met my friends from Berlin too. After I left, they left too, Annie and Nicholas Olah left Berlin for Szekesfehervar, Hungary which was his hometown. Odette and Kurt (her husband) traveled for a while and then, during the war they settled in New York where I met them after my emigration. George Alexander, who was very well liked and a very excellent actor, had a Jewish wife, Ilse. I don't know how he managed it but it could be that Goering's wife was an actress and they say that she had lots of Jewish actors and actresses during the best times. Maybe she helped Ilse too, I don't know. I only know that after the war George died and the last I heard about Ilse was that she opened a antique store in Hamburg. I have heard nothing about her. Annie and Nicholas committed suicide when the transports to Auschwitz began in Hungary.

Well, to go back to our romance. Apu walked me home one evening and suddenly he said, "Tomorrow we are going to drive up to Vienna. We are going to see professor X, and if you and I are both healthy then we are going to get married." It was not very romantic, but that's how we were engaged. We were engaged only for twenty days because he wanted to marry me on his birthday, which was the twenty-ninth of September. Apu 's family was not

delighted about this engagement. I think Braun Mama was afraid for Apu because he was her favorite, and they went together on vacations, and she relied completely on Apu for everything. The only one who accepted me with open arms was the youngest daughter Olga, who was the mother of Chavah and Agi. She was really a sweetheart. Braun Mama, I mentioned it, I think I wrote it when I wrote about the family tree was, and little stories which were told in the family about an Uncle who was a black sheep and was a gambler and playboy. So Braun Mama brought up her sons so that they shouldn't touch a card, which they didn't. Apu really didn't even want to play bridge. But her daughters, her three daughters had to be at her house at three o'clock every afternoon for a game of rummy. She was a wonderful woman. A very smart woman, but she was a cold woman, to shake a hand or to kiss somebody was out of question.

Annie Olah came to visit me and we had a very nice time together. Odette came to visit me too. She liked Apu very much, this time not for herself, but for me. She was really the one who pushed the last steps for us, that we should have a relationship. That's how we started and it was a beautiful time. It was really, I could say, a courting time.

Apu's family wanted a religious wedding. When Apu went to the rabbi in Bratislava, he said that he's not going to marry us and suggested to Apu that he should look for a honest, nice, Jewish girl. Not marry a baptized divorcee. Just refused to marry us. But as the family wanted to have a religious wedding we had to go to Vienna, an old synagogue. We were married. Only a meal after, I mean we had no reception. We were only the closest family and the only ones who were not family were Annie and Nicholas who came to our wedding.

After the wedding we went to Paris on our honeymoon. I wanted to show Apu this lovely place I knew, Lapin Agile, and we went there. But somehow it changed, it was not the same as it was. Then one day we went to the very famous Lido where you have to be formally dressed and had a very fancy floorshow but it was really not our taste. It was not and it never was. On the second or the third day in Paris we came back from sightseeing, I met somebody who I knew when I was with Imre in Brussels. Apu didn't like it and he decided it is better if we leave Paris. So we went to Barcelona and in Barcelona I met one of Odette's discarded boyfriends, so we left Barcelona and went to Palma. Palma was beautiful . It was a sleepy little town. It was not discovered by the tourist trade yet. It was mostly an artists' colony. We liked it so much that we spoke about that when we will retire we will come here and we will live here because it was cheap and it was delightful. Apu made a lot of photos and then when he put the photos into the album he wrote underneath: "It is not Jewish, it is Spanish". Because they looked very, very Jewish. Which we found out later were the Maroons, who were Jews and had to be baptized during the inquisition time and settled in the Malorcas.

When we came back from all of our honeymoon, my mother made contact with the Rettbergs who were very good friends of mine. The Rettbergs arranged that all the things I had in Berlin I had sent back to Bratislava. And my mother again prepared a beautiful apartment for us in Erkelova. This time it was not only the apartment itself but she even gave me her cook, which was a blessing because Juliska was a perfect cook and I was not.

That we left Paris and Barcelona, the reason was that Apu was insanely jealous at the beginning of our marriage. On our first anniversary he sent me a beautiful flower arrangement and in the center of it was a little cactus. But then when I got pregnant with

you, John, then everything was smooth sailing. He was not jealous anymore and everything was just perfect. We had a good life, I had a good pregnancy, I had a wonderful doctor who kept me very much on a short leash. I was not supposed to drink much, I was not supposed to eat sweets or fat things but if I could make it I should eat two pounds of apples a day. I had exercise, I made squatting exercise the last day of my pregnancy. I expected for the twenty-ninth of November and the doctor said it would be the first of December. So we had planned a big dinner party for the twenty-ninth. But after seven o'clock you started to tell me that you are ready to come to this world and I called Apu to tell some of our friends not to come. But they were already on their way. Apu picked me up and took me to the Koch Sanatorium, which I told you was a fancy clinic. I didn't even have time to go to my room, I went straight to the delivery room and you were born at 9:12. You just couldn't wait to come to this world.

I was very much against circumcision. I didn't want that it be done to you, John. So what was done was I was being surprised. They put me to a fait accompli and there was nothing else to do but be very mad, which I was. I didn't speak with Apu for a whole month. But then I realized I can't do anything, it happened, I just have to forget about it.

We came home to Christinka Pagacova, who was your wet nurse and to Teta Kaminsky, who was your nurse. Both of them were lovely and took good care of you. It was very strange, in your room there was a sort of strange odor. Teta always said that it was Christinka and therefore she had to take a bath every day. The poor peasant woman was terrified she had to take a bath every day. She was used to twice a year. But Teta made her do it. Even when Christinka left after three months the odor was still there, so we tried to find out what it was. It turned out that the halls were

heated before by gas and some pipe was not quite shut. But it was not bad, it was not dangerous. The problem was solved.

We lived a carefree, beautiful life. Apu, in the fall, we usually went to Italy and in the winter we went to Davos. The last time we went to Davos was in thirty-eight. On our way home we stopped in Basel to stay with Irene and Emil Wolf who moved away from Bratislava and were on their way to the United States. When we were ready to go back we heard about things happening in Germany but we didn't know the full horrible extent of it. When we were ready to go back Irene stole the jewels that I had with me out of my pocketbook, and she said she's not going to let me take that home again. She brought it with herself to the United States after they moved. Refugees were starting to come through Bratislava and we tried to plan our future, which meant that we wanted to come to the United States, and it was a little hard to bring Apu to that decision because he always said that the Jews in the Slovakia are a minority and nothing could happen to them. We didn't know that this can happen from one day to the other. Then, that his grandfather and great-grandfather and father were in this part of Slovakia where we lived, and why we should go away. But finally he realized that it would be the best thing to do and we asked for an affidavit from Minnie. Which we got, but unfortunately it was not time anymore that the visas should come through in time.

It was a hard nut to crack, to make him understand that it would be much better and safer to be baptized. That was very hard for him, I know. We started to live by dates. For instance, I think it was the thirtieth of June that those who were baptized before the thirtieth of June were accepted by our President, who was a priest by the name of Tiso. He accepted those Jews as Christians, which meant that we didn't have to wear a star, and you could go to school with the other children as you did before, John. Then when

we finally managed to bring Kornel Papa to the decision to be baptized it was too late. He had to wear the star and I know he suffered very much by it.

Everybody tried to get and find some connections to embassies in Prague. So we thought it would be very good if we would live in Prague for a while, and we moved there. We had a small apartment and John and Teta were there with us. We sort of commuted from Bratislava to Prague, from Prague to Bratislava. It was an atmosphere I likened to Casablanca. Everybody had some connections. We sent some money out to Switzerland, what never arrived, naturally. Many people succeeded to get visas. Mostly to South American countries, but we never tried, we always wanted the US and it was just too late. The one trip which I made from Prague to Bratislava, it was by the Strela, it was a very fast train. It was overheated and I was terribly hot, and when I got out of the train I took a few deep breaths. It was icy cold outside and later I came down with pleurisy and pneumonia and bronchitis. I was in bed for twenty months and Apu refused to go away. I couldn't do anything about it but he stayed. I was twenty months in bed with high fever and had twenty-six different doctors. We had no penicillin or no antibiotics, which would have cured me very fast. In fact I was given up twice. I had two sympathy letters for Apu from London, so I was in a pretty bad shape. We decided that it has no use to stay in Prague, we couldn't achieve anything. What we did was only that Apu went to school to be a gentleman's gentleman, and I learned how to make silk artificial flowers and handmade gloves. I don't know where we came to this idea because it was never needed, but everybody tried to do something and to find something what would be worthwhile or valuable in a new start of life in a strange and new country.

(I have a feeling that it is one of my bad English days. I have trouble finding the right words.)

One thing that I would like to mention was that Prague was occupied by the Germans, and at that time the occupation was done by the Army. The SS came only later. Two people turned up in our apartment in Prague, they were sent by the Rettbergs to us. They were on their way to Israel but they were stuck in Czechoslovakia, they couldn't continue because they had no exit visa. So Apu decided that he's going to the commandant of the occupational forces, and with his military bearing he went to a guy and told him that he would like to have two people to leave Czechoslovakia and these two people need exit visa. The commandant looked at Apu and said "are they Jews?" Apu said yes. Without a word he gave the two exit visas and Apu was very happy. As happy as the people who got the exit visas.

When we came back from Prague we moved in with my parents because it was much, much easier. One room was for Teta and John, one room was for Apu and me, and my parents kept their bedroom and their living room. I think I couldn't have done it without my mother. I was sent to the doctor and everything was said and everything was tried but nothing helped. I was just not getting out of this sickness. Until somebody told Apu about a homeopathic doctor who was really a doctor, but he himself had lupus and went to Dresden to a homeopathic doctor who cured him. So this suggested to Apu, well you've tried everything so why don't you try this guy? So Apu called the homeopathic whose name, strangely enough, was Wunder, which means miracle. He came and looked at me, not really examined me, he just looked me in the eye and then he said: "I will tell you in three days whether I can help or not". In three days he came back with Indian tea, he told me that my teeth will be very ugly and black because I have to drink it for two

years. Then he gave me little balls which he made himself, because on Mondays he never had office hours but he went into the woods and collected herbs and different things and made his medications himself. To be short; in ten days I was out of bed without fever and it was a miracle. His name was miracle too.

Things started to be a little difficult and we were not supposed to stay in our apartment. It was too big for us. They started to take away fur coats, and silver, and jewelry. The Slovak SS, the Hlinka Guard, had always access to every apartment, to every house, it was a very, very bad feeling. But we had no choice. We could keep our apartment only when we took in somebody who was in diplomatic service. We had the two sisters of the Bulgarian Ambassador or consul who were satisfied to stay in our apartment. We were a little crowded and we had only two rooms left for ourselves. At that time we lost Teta too, because according to the Nuremberg laws she couldn't serve in a Jewish household. Though she was completely safe from Apu. She was not Apu's type anyhow.

So we stayed with them for a while. They were not unpleasant but they were not pleasant either. Shortly we had to move to the so-called ghetto to Rybne Namestie but I think that was already on the Speilberg's tapes and I don't want to repeat it. It was anyhow pretty exciting to tell everything one time. I don't want to go into it a second time.

So many memories crowd my mind which I wanted to say, that some of them slip my fingers. I want to go back now to that part of the tape where I speak of riding and exhibition jumping with Apu. He won some prizes. They all were arranged by the army. They had some civilians ride along. They arranged the so-called fox hunts too. These fox hunts were a little different from the English ones because we have no hounds and we have no fox. The fox

was somebody who pinned a foxtail on his head and rode ahead and we had to find him and catch up with him. Then we dined after the “halali”, which was a nice buffet prepared for us and we had a jolly good time.

Then I want to go back to my flight from Prague.

After a thorough search they looked over me, they looked over my things, they even took apart my lipstick. I don't know what they were looking for. Most probably for jewels. I took a plane to Zurich where I was supposed to board a SABENA plane. What plane it was, whether it was Czechoslovakian or anything, else I don't know. But when I arrived in Zurich and I wanted to get my ticket to Brussels I realized that I was twenty Swiss francs short. I didn't know what to do so I told my trouble to the steward, at that time there were no stewardesses, and he said why don't you walk and ask the other passengers and maybe somebody will give you the money? So I went to a lady, told her my story and told her what I need. She said that she was sympathizing with me but sorry, she cannot help me. Then I went to another woman. It was exactly the same. She was sorry for me but she couldn't help me. So I went back to the steward.

I was interrupted before. I think it was when I told the steward that I didn't get any help from the ladies. So he had an idea that I shouldn't ask ladies for the twenty Swiss francs. What I needed was a gentleman. Which I did and the first one whom I asked gave me the twenty Swiss francs. I asked him where he would stay in Brussels and he told me the hotel's name but I knew that he didn't think that he would ever see the twenty francs back again. But we arrived in Brussels and Apu and John waited for me at the airport. We took a cab, drove to the hotel and arrived before the gentleman himself, who was very, very surprised because I know he didn't think that he ever gets his money back.

I didn't tell you anything yet about what happened after we came back to Bratislava, after the liberation. The house on Vegelinova/Partizanska was in terrible shape. It was used for the German headquarters and they built a bunker in the garden, which was indestructible and it is there still today. It was very hard to get an apartment or to get a house back, but you had to have connections in the communist party and that we found in Tessa's cousin Zsuzsi and her husband Vlado Klein. They had good connections with the new communist party and what they asked us for was, because apartments were very scarce, that we should give them one room and cooking facilities and then they will help us to get the house back. We did that because it was a small price to pay for it.

When we returned to the house we found it in an absolute terrible shape. Empty, because the Germans didn't leave a nail in the wall. The Russians occupied the house afterwards and had unfortunately no experience with toilets and used the living room to relieve themselves. The same they did in a little small garage for motorcycles, which I never had a chance to have it cleaned. When we left Bratislava it was still there. By now, everything must be petrified.

After a while a Russian lieutenant came to the house, I think that the right word is that he was billeted to us. He got one room. He was a nice guy when he was not drunk. Kolozov was his name and he brought us flour and sugar and lard. That was very fortunate because food was scarce and we were very grateful for it. We found out that the flower of Queen Anne's lace, which was flat, could be used and eaten as a "wiener schnitzel" and it didn't taste bad and it was food in our stomachs. We had no dishes, we used cans we found in the garden. The Germans threw them out. I think they made their own canned food. We were just satisfied with

whatever I had. Slowly, slowly we tried to get pieces of our furniture, or furniture at all, back. Some people volunteered and gave us things back. Some things we found. We found for instance one big shelf, which was for books in the Orthodox Jewish Cemetery.

Slowly we got back to normal. The house became sort of a halfway house. People came back from the concentration camps. One was a young woman, Ruzena Dusinska , she was the wife of Apu's friend, Paul Dusinsky. She was, she told us she was in the same cattle car as my parents. She told us everything, what happened and so we had no hope of ever seeing them again. But Ruzena was a young strong woman and she survived. Ruzena stayed with us until we left for the US.

Dezsoe wanted to open the store again. But Apu didn't want it. Apu thought that when he starts going to the store he would never leave. And we were set on it to get out of Czechoslovakia and to go to the United States. Apu found a job in the Department of Health in Bratislava. I don't know, maybe because of my getting well from herbs and teas, that he got the idea of bringing up the importation and study of herbs. This way he succeeded, he wanted permission to go to Brussels and explore the possibilities. I got the permission to go with him as his secretary. John was on both our passports so that was no problem. We left for Brussels.

We found a furnished room on, I think it was Avenue Victor Hugo and we lived very frugally. We had every day mussels as a main dish, and the soup in which they were cooked first. Then we had chocolate mousse which was really good, actually. We had it in the basement cafeteria of the Bon Marche.

John went to school and Apu tried to find the right connections for what he came for and I found Tommy and Harry's cousin who was married to a doctor Winter, and I found her. They were very

helpful to us, I did what I could. I sewed, I was sewing a lot for them and I baby-sat Judith's obnoxious little girl. We hated each other but we just had to pretend to get along. After two months, or three months, we heard that the Hungarian Embassy was interested in the house in Bratislava and would be willing pay for the house in dollars. (Some stuff lost here.)

TAPE FIVE, "IN THE U. S."

We arrived in Hoboken on April the twenty third, 1948. Apu and John saw the Statue of Liberty, but I missed it. Dave (Ed: Klau) was waiting for us on the pier, even boarded the ship. They drove us to the city and to Giza's (Ed: Loewenstein) apartment. She was so kind and went to Minnie (Oppenheimer) for the time being and gave us her apartment. It was the first day of Passover when we arrived and in the evening we held the Seder Abend at Minnie's house. It was as my second Seder and it was very different from the first one. Leon, the son-in-law of Minnie, Ruth's husband, conducted the service and he took it very, very seriously. It lasted for hours but it was very nice and very interesting. We sat around a horseshoe table; there were 65 people. After dinner everybody asked us how we liked the US. It was very, very overwhelming and very interesting at the same time. When we went back to Giza's apartment and John took a bath, he started to cry in the bath that he wanted to go back to Bratislava. He was very, very overwhelmed, the poor guy.

On the first day I walked from 94th street down to 42nd street. I couldn't get enough from all the new impressions I saw and it was

very, very interesting. The first months that we were here we didn't do anything. Just we were lazy and relaxed and tried to get around and see as much as we possibly could. Then after that we started to look for a job.

John went to school and I got a job at Saks Fifth Avenue; that was my only job. It was not very hard because they only wanted somebody who could sew, which I could. My starting salary was thirty-five dollars. Apu had a very hard time finding a job. He tried and tried these fast food chains but it was even hard to understand the people, how they spoke. He never complained but I know it was very hard on him. It was six months and he couldn't get anything. Finally, Leon Gildesgame came, gave him a job in his warehouse. It was physically a very hard job. Unfortunately, Apu got a kidney hemorrhage from it. After he was all right, Dave (Klau) gave him a job at Weiss and Klau. He loved the job and he was appreciated and loved and he proved himself wonderful. He was very good with figures.

They appreciated him and his work so much that when he was sixty-five and retirement age they didn't let him go. They kept him until he was seventy. At that time we thought that it is wonderful. Today I think that if he wouldn't have stayed with Weiss and Klau five more years we could have enjoyed five years retirement years.

We found an apartment. That is, we didn't find it, Irene Wolf found it and she paid the first rent for it. (Tape garbled)was a house (The Guilford) with furnished apartments on 46th street. It was a street where nearly every house had a restaurant. I remember in the morning when the garbage trucks came and I looked out of the window and I saw unopened loaves of bread thrown out, I just couldn't understand it, because we came from a very hungry Europe, and it was just unbelievable that they throw out bread.

We had very nice people on the same floor as we lived, and they are all dead now. Only Margie Duane is still alive. (Tape faded at this point)

The first Christmas we had.....one after the other with little presents, nothing valuable, just a token and they said no, it is our first Christmas in a new country and maybe they can make it a little happier. It was very, very nice. We were very, very touched. I am even touched today when I think of it. It was quite far back. So we tried to reciprocate and Apu made up a little jingle, which went:

If you want a New Years' Eve
Harmony and balance
Come and see
The gladly waiting Balans.

It was a very nice time that we spent in the Guilford. In the second summer when John got polio we were terribly afraid because Dezoe's son Tommy and Chavah's little boy succumbed to the disease. John, Thank God, came through and was absolutely all right. And when he came home they made a welcome sign that they hung on the door and they brought Pepsi and all these drinks and cookies and they really made a feast when John came home. It was really very nice and very good. I am sorry that they are all gone.

The first year John finished at public school and then he got scholarships to the Collegiate School where he finished Cum Laude. After that he received a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia for five years. We were very proud and very happy because even with both of our salaries we couldn't have afforded an education for him. And he made out all right. He finished it and got a job in Europe, I think it was RCA at that time.

We started to look for an apartment, left the Guilford and found one apartment in Elmhurst. We had to pay for the apartment. It was still, I don't know why, but it was still very hard to find an affordable apartment. We had to take the furniture which was in the apartment itself. It was in horrible taste, it was in good shape and it was clean but in an absolutely unbelievably bad taste and when we called the Salvation Army we wanted to get rid of it, they did not even want to look at it. They didn't want to take it. But we were happy in that apartment. I don't know when we went there. I think we spent two summers in the Guilford and then moved to Elmhurst, and then in 1959 they sold the house. We had to leave.

So we thought that instead of paying rent maybe we could buy a house and put the rent for mortgage. (I had some old jewelry which was left at home when we went to Brussels and Apu made a package of it and pasted it in the railroad car behind, perhaps on the heating system. That's the ways he smuggled it out. I say we because Apu was very much against it but I did it because I knew that I will have never any occasion to wear that stuff.) I sold the jewelry and that was the down payment for the house. To get the mortgage was not very difficult. We spent a few beautiful years in that house. We loved it, I think because it was very the first place what really belonged to us. It was a lovely house. Apu planted rose bushes in the garden in the back and planted little flowers in the front. We had a gorgeous dogwood tree which bloomed in the spring. It looked like it had been covered with snow. Apu always said that when we have the house I will always have a roof over my head, we would not have to worry. Because nobody could predict at that time that the lovely neighborhood in Jackson Heights will turn to a neighborhood which was just overrun by drugs and drug pushers and they made me afraid after a while and I saw it myself. John was very, very unhappy knowing that I was there though I had

bars on the windows it was not the place for an old woman to be and I had to sell the house. Unfortunately I waited too long. I came too late to King Street to enjoy the life in the village. But not only that, we got about half the price of that which I could have gotten four years before. It was gone, it's not worth talking about it.

As I said we spend beautiful years with Apu in Jackson Heights, and I think that if I would have known then what I know today he wouldn't have died. He was insured by the HIP. We had a doctor one block away from us and when I called him that Apu had a heart attack he said he can not come because he's busy. Then Dr. Shusdeck came, and he said he has no way to find a bed for Apu anywhere. At that time 911 didn't exist yet and emergencies were not what they are today. And so Apu suffered a heart attack. It was after Dezoe's visit, I was very much against that visit but I couldn't tell him "I don't want your brother to come". Dezsoe came and it was just too much for Apu and he got sick at the airport when we drove Dezsoe to PanAm, and then the real heart attack came the next day. Apu came home from the hospital a little after five weeks and lived three more months, and just one day after we celebrated our arrival in the US (Oerdy and her husband were our guests in the afternoon) he died one day after the anniversary of our arrival.

I tried to do my best with the house and I was pretty lucky. I had nice people, I had one tenant, Ingo Hoffman, who was twenty-two years with me. Then I had another tenant, Ervin Egry, who was thirteen years with me. Unfortunately, he died in a car crash. I had very funny experiences too. I had two men for instance who came with perfect references to me. One was working with the museum, the other one in a Catholic organization. It turned out that both were gay and both were drug addicts. One day they came into some altercations and there was a big fight between them. They went

against each other with screwdrivers. I had to call the police, I couldn't do it any other way. Then I had once an old German gentleman who shared the bathroom with another gentleman who wanted to use the bathroom and who couldn't get into it because the German was inside and it was locked inside and he didn't react to any knocking or any calling. So one of my tenants climbed through the bathroom window in and found him in the bathtub. I think he had a slight stroke but in a few days he was all right. Then I had another experience with another older gentleman who had a stroke and I couldn't reach his son in California because whenever I called I got an answering machine, "don't disturb us we are playing Nintendo". But finally he came and he took away his father, he went to California with him. I never knew what happened to the old gentleman. But the son paid all his debts because he was in my house for about a year without paying rent. But otherwise, I had nice people, I was lucky. Only the last year I didn't rent any more because I was too afraid who I might get into the house, maybe a drug pusher or somebody who uses drugs himself, and I didn't rent anymore.

We really put every penny together from the beginning until we bought the house. At that time Dezsoe Frankl owned two movies downtown and he gave us passes so we could go to the movie any time we wanted to. That was really our only luxury but then we realized that New York gives so much without having to pay anything for anything, we just had to find the places where we could go and enjoy it. So we had a good life. It didn't last too long before Apu left.

From now on, John, you know everything so I leave it up to you whether you want to finish this tape or whether you just want to leave it as is. I don't think that I have anything else to tell you because I had two long tapes for the Spielberg Foundation, and

after I came to King Street unfortunately I was not very well physically and, as I said, I couldn't enjoy the life in the Village so much as I would have liked to. But it was a very lovely life and I love my apartment and I'm happy that I'm here.

TAPE SIX, "AFTERTHOUGHTS"

(Tape starts abruptly).....this into the past they have no recollection at all.

First I would like to talk about Imre. When Hitler became Chancellor of Germany he moved to Vienna. And in Vienna he, Imre, met Clari and after a short affair they were married. Clari owned a Swedish travel bureau and had very good connections to the Embassy. When Hitler came to Austria they moved to Budapest. I don't know whether they knew or worked together with Wallenberg but I know that they helped a lot of people. The Swedish Embassy bought houses in Budapest and they became Swedish territory. This way they couldn't be touched and they filled it up with Jews and saved them from the deportation. In one of the houses was Imre's mother and Thomas Stewart's grandmother. They survived the war and unfortunately after the liberation both of them succumbed to typhoid fever.

After the war Imre and Clari went back to Vienna and he became a very successful and very rich ore merchant. They came once to New York and we met in Manhattan, had dinner together. I was a little afraid but everything went very nicely. No tension, no embarrassing moments because like old friends coming together. Somehow this Clari, we clicked like right away. When Imre died I

wrote her, she wrote back, I wrote her again and we started to write each other and it was very nice, really very nice. Then in 1973 she sent me airplane tickets and invited me to come to Vienna. Well, I went and once I went with her to Imre's grave. She went there every single day until she died of a brain tumor.

From Vienna I went to Cologne to Uncle Mishi. There were quite a lot of Bratislava and Hungarian people and we met once in a restaurant, and being Jewish and being Hungarian we were a pretty loud crowd. At the other end of the room were two Germans drinking beer. Twice in my life I saw so much hate in a face: this was one. The other one was when I was three years old and the mother took her two little kids away from me.

I would like to talk about Josef and Karoline Brown. They lived in Bratislava at the time but they opened a little store in Petrzalka. So they had to cross the Danube every day in a small rowboat. They did that in every kind of weather, sometimes among ice floats. But business prospered and it was so good that they decided to open a store in Bratislava. They opened a store in the same house where Jozo still lives. They were very respected because they worked hard. They were honest and nice people, in fact they were very, very They got it because the last year of the war, in 1918, they closed the store because they didn't want to take advantage of the ever rising prices.

The store prospered and after a while they opened a store in Ivanka. Then later one in Bystrica and then in Bratislava itself in the market place, and in it would be, it was a big place, it was a big hall for nothing else but for food.

(I don't know how to play back so I might repeat something what I already said.)

Renee and I were alternated half days in the main store. Business was good. We were not rich but we were, I will say, very

well off. We bought in the suburbs of Bratislava an orchard. This orchard had eleven hundred apple trees and some cherry trees. Dezsoe was very good in horticulture and he crossed the sour cherries with the sweet cherries and what a wonderful mixture! They were big and red and had an excellent, wonderful taste. He called them Spanish Cherries. Then we cultivated the wild strawberries and they grew fruit from June till November. The hotels couldn't get enough of them, and then we had asparagus. After a little while Dezsoe built a house in the middle of this orchard and he spent a lot of time out there with his family which was very good because this way Apu was alone in the store. The store was working fine. Everything was all right till one of the new Nazi regimes showed up and took over the stores and kicked us out. But that is said already on the Spielberg tapes.

After the war Braun Mama who survived hiding in a peasant woman's house in a small village looked fine just like she always did. But after a little while when people started coming back from concentration camps and we learned about it, it appears she sort of weakened from one day to the other. She realized that seventy-two persons in her family perished. She got sort of uninterested in anything and didn't eat well and sort of started going downhill. Then her favorite grandchild, Mariska's older daughter, Gerti, came home from concentration camp only to die one week later because of tuberculosis. That gave her sort of coup-de-grace. She sort of, she just gave up. She didn't want to eat, she didn't want to do anything. It went rapidly down hill. One day she called us and she didn't get up anymore. She was in bed. We stood around her bed. She didn't speak, she just looked at each and every one of us and we had the feeling later that she sort of said good-bye, which she did because the following day she died.

Now I want to tell something that is not sad but funny.

You know the picture which was made of me in the, at my first ball. Well, the photographer sent this picture to Vienna to a magazine named "Die Dame". It was about the same as Vogue here. It was without a name, it said only: "A beauty from Bratislava". Well, through the photographer I got four letters, four marriage proposals. It was quite funny because they described themselves: one loved roses, the other one loved bees, but to this day it is very funny.

When Hitler occupied or took over Austria, Czechoslovakia mobilized. Apu was called into service and he didn't like that we were so very close to the Austrian border and he sent John, Teta and me to Kosice. Kosice was in the eastern part of Czechoslovakia. Gyula, my father's youngest brother, lived there with his wife and two children. Unfortunately, all four of them perished later. We were staying there for a while.

Then Hungary mobilized. Czechoslovakia thought that they will take back what was cut off from Hungary after the treaty of Versailles and would attack Slovakia. Apu thought that we are too close to the Hungarian border and wanted us to go from there, but telephone was impossible because no private calls were allowed. We had a friend close to a man who had a large estate and Apu called there and said that the mare Nelly and the colt Johnny should be sent to a certain village in the Tatra mountains. So we moved again, and then we stayed till the Czech part of Czechoslovakia was occupied by the Germans and the Republic just broke apart. Slovakia was never occupied because it was Hitler's showpiece to tell the world that a small independent country at his frontier can survive. That it had puppet government, everybody knew. Our president was a Catholic priest and the Premier was the head of the Slovak SS, Hlinkova Garda. They were both deeply religious, went everyday to church, took

confession. I wonder whether they confessed all the transports which they sent to Auschwitz.

The Slovaks were in their element. They could again steal and rob, which they did. The funny thing is we always thought that Rumanians are like that, because we said that to be Rumanian is not nationality, it is an occupation. But the Rumanians were sort of cheating or playing con games, but Slovaks just openly robbed or stole. They did it in 1918 when every single Jewish home was ransacked. They had a good time now with the new Hitler Laws. After they got rid of the Jewish problem they turned around and started with the Hungarians. They took away their citizenship and pronounced them to be alien. Then they pushed them to the Hungarian border, to Hungary. I wonder who will be the next? They didn't do anything to the Germans, naturally, but they got the same treatment after the war. There were a lot of German families in Slovakia who fled the allied bombings. Wounded soldiers were convalescing in the Slovaks spas.

When I spoke about our staying with the Palasthys, hiding with them, I say that only one person know, knew about our whereabouts. But that was not quite so. I remember that somebody else knew about it too. It was a German woman by the name of Hella Kunz. I made her acquaintance when I was pregnant. John was born the summer after that. I went to the spa of Trancianske Teplice. I don't know why but I got the whole treatment, including mudpacks. As I say, I don't know why. During that time I stayed in a boarding house which was owned by Otto and Hella Kunz. She was a delightful woman and we got very friendly. During the time we were at Palasthys, and our cash slowly disappeared, our bank accounts were naturally closed, but it wouldn't have helped anyhow because it would have given us away. Though the Palasthys never wanted a penny from us, we somehow managed that we said that

we are going to take care of the household expenses. We even bought once a pig and in fact we prepared everything in the Palasthys' kitchen for the smokehouse. We made the sausages. Very delightful, at that time I could eat them.

So as I say our money ran out. I remember Hella and Otto Kunz came to Bratislava when the war broke out. He was an engineer, and I don't know what kind of engineer, but I know that his business bloomed and they made a lot of money. What I thought, what we thought maybe we could try, is to get in touch with Hella and maybe she would be interested in some of my jewelry which we could have sold. I think Karol or Nora (Ed: Palasthy) got in touch with her and explained the situation and she came. We knew that they were both Nazis, especially him, they behaved very nicely to us when we were in the ghetto and we naturally didn't have any radio. They came once or twice in the evening, and he brought his radio and we listened together to the BBC. Somehow we were not afraid that she would give us away. And she did not. She came and she was ready to buy some of my jewelry, which helped us out a great deal naturally, and she never gave us away. He was an ardent Nazi and always spoke about some weapon which Germany is going to develop, which would raze England and end the war. Maybe he spoke about the atomic bomb because they were feverishly working on that, as we did. So she was the other person who know about our whereabouts.

After the war, when the war was lost, they went to Austria. They got in such with us and asked that they had some things to take care of in Bratislava were we could help them. Naturally we were willing to do that and they arranged that we will meet at the Austrian-Czechoslovak border and talk it over what we can do, what has to be done. So her brother and Apu went by car to the border. I didn't have room so I stayed at home, which was very

lucky because when they met they were taken to the police station and were jailed. Apu was there three days, and after three days he came out only because before it happened that we had met a Danish man, a Dane, who came as many others came after the war, to make business with Czechoslovakia. He imported butter and cheese. We met him, we liked each other. Mostly he liked my friend Ruzena, who lived with us at that time and was very happy to visit her very often. So when Apu was taken prisoner they told him that, and he said that he will get him out, which he did in a way that he said to the police officers that he can't make business with the state only through Apu, and he wants him out because they can take care of the import of butter and of cheese. So Apu came home after three days, well, we didn't even let him in the apartment. We had to strip the poor thing in the stairwell and then straight to the bathtub. But Hella and Otto were jailed for six months before they could get out, and so we were very lucky that Apu was only, was only three days there. Though the first night he said that he is homesick for the boys, that they had a wonderful time. So that is the story of Hella and of our acquaintance.

A funny thing happened on a Sunday. We went, the three of us, to for the morning service to Marble Collegiate Church. After the service everybody in the aisle tried to get close to the altar to shake hands or to talk with Dr. Peale. We didn't do it with the crowd. We tried to get out as soon as we could from the crowd. We tried to get out to Fifth Avenue. Suddenly we stood face to face with Richard and Pat Nixon. They stopped and Nixon shook hands with each of us.

..... a very touching little story. Apu's grandmother, mother of the twenty-eight, had a little dog, Daisy. It was like a black Chihuahua. And she loved that dog more than her children or her grandchildren. In fact she chased her grandchildren out of the room

because they made the dog nervous. She reached an old age, I think she was 96 or 98, when she died of old age. A few days after that the little dog made himself a nest out of her clothes and died in it. I think he must have died of a broken heart.

Minnie had the whole family for dinner on Friday nights. When she died Sadie took it over. But I remember two different dinners with Sadie and Dave Klau. The first one was shortly after our arrival, they invited us for dinner in the Harmony Club. Sadie must have been either very tired or very bored, because sitting at the dinner table in the middle of dinner she fell asleep. The second was, when we bought the house in Jackson Heights, Apu insisted that Dave and Sadie should be our first dinner guests. We had no furniture, we had no china, we had no flatware. All that came later. The living room was furnished with our porch furniture. At that time Apu loved the frozen Danish, what's this one called? Oh, yes, it was trout, the frozen Danish trout. And he wanted to start our dinner with it. Well, the fish were a little too big for our plates, and the head and the tail were hanging over the rim of the plate. I don't remember what else we served. It was just terribly embarrassing because Minnie and Sadie set beautiful tables, so did I in other times, and I was just very embarrassed. They were very gracious about it.

Another thing that I wanted to talk about, in the first ten years we didn't have too much money and time for entertainment except we have passes for Dezsoe Frankl's free movies houses. It was ten years when we went the first time to the theater. It was the Metropolitan Opera House. It was the old Met on Broadway, and we set on the highest tier. We just saw half of the stage but it was beautiful anyhow because Nureyev and Fontaine danced to Romeo and Juliet. It was the most beautiful crypt scene dance I ever saw in my life. The house itself was very, very shabby and the rugs and

the seats were torn. The famous diamond horseshoe was dark but for us it was a great thrill.

John worked in his mid-year and Christmas vacation and somehow he saved twenty dollars, which he wanted to put in a savings book. So he went into a bank, I don't know which one it was. But he was told that this bank was a commercial bank and he would be better off going into a savings bank, which is just across the street. That was the Seamen's Bank for Savings. So John went there and at the door a young lady waited and asked him if he's the boy who wants open a savings account? And then she ushered him to the right places. What do you say about this customer service? I think John stayed with the bank as long as it existed.

It happened to one Frankl relative, I don't know the first name, but it was told in the family many and many times. He was a dealer in antiques. He asked a friend of his to come with him to Devin. At that time it was Saturday, because at that time there was no transportation to be had. They wanted to buy an Iron Man. Iron Man is a full body armor from the middle ages. So it was summer, it was hot, it was a Saturday, so transportation was out of question, so they walked to Devin. They arrived full with dust, thirsty, exhausted and sweaty. Frankl said there is a house on the marketplace with a red roof and there is the Iron Man. So they went to the marketplace, went around and around and around again. There was no house with a red roof. So, finally exhausted, they settled down and Frankl said to his friend "you should never rely on a dream." Well, that's the story.

One summer, Rheingold beer made ethnic commercials. Supposed to be in Hungarian, about a wedding. At this time a young Hungarian portrait painter lived in the house and his friends arranged for him to have an audition to have a role for the bridegroom. His English was nonexistent, he asked Apu to come

with him and interpret. Well, off they went. The young man didn't get the role, but they kept Apu for the father of the bride! He made a thousand dollars that one day and became a member of the actors' union. Naturally, we didn't know when the commercials would be on, so we watched the whole summer the baseball games. We saw him a few times, he was very good, really very, very good. But the baseball games were just too much for us. We were used to the pace of the European soccer and that was just too slow. From that time on he got \$3.50 every month from the union. When he died and the \$3.50 came I sent it back with an explanation. A short time later they send me \$5,000 life insurance, which very smartly I put into the stock market and it was gone.

I remember one more thing. That was in 1939 in the winter months, shortly at the beginning of the war, Klemens Kraus, the conductor, came to Bratislava with a Viennese Philharmonic and we all went to the theater. The theater was packed. We didn't arrange it before, didn't speak about it, but everybody was dressed. Apu had a navy blue, double breasted suit with a tuxedo collar, a little bow tie. He looked very, very handsome. I had a long black velvet dress on and black velvet evening coat with white satin lining and jewels. Everything just looked beautiful. And I said, we didn't speak about it, we just had the feeling that it was the last time. And it was sort of a Dance-Macabre. It really was the last time.

Yes, it was the end of a beautiful, genteel way of life.

Shortly after that I became ill and was sent to the Tatra mountains to a hospital. In 1939, on the first day of September, I was a patient in my hospital bed on the Czechoslovak side of the mountain and I woke to a horrifying dreadful noise of war. Hitler invaded Poland.

There are nice old ladies and there are grouchy and cranky ones. This are those where I belong. These are those who change

behavior and personality so very much. They do and say things as I do, which they would have never done before. I would like to change back to what I was, I have good intentions, but they somehow never come through. They change their minds often depending how they feel and that confuses those who are around them. Old age is a very sorry place to be in, I regard it as a punishment and the only good thing about it is that it is fatal. On the other hand I am afraid of the when and the how. I don't know which I am more afraid. "When", I hope it doesn't take too much time to come, and the "how", well I can't imagine how because really there is nothing wrong with me.

Anyway, what I want to say is that I would like to be remembered the way I was and not the way I am now. I'm sorry I always find something to complain about. It is really not physical, it is little things which are absolutely unimportant. The physical complaints I really just say it as facts of old age and process of getting old.