

## **UKHMF TESTIMONY TRANSCRIPT – ADELE LEBLANC**

**[Testimony: 1 hr 15 mins. Artefacts: 4' 36"]**

**A215\_L001\_0607Y7 - A217\_L001\_060722**

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10:00:01:06

**Adele Leblanc**

I am Adele Leblanc Atlas. I born in Leipzig on the 5th March 1923 and I came as a Holocaust survivor, smuggled myself into Switzerland. I was there as a Holocaust survivor in two camps and then with a family until I met my husband and married and lived ever, there until twenty-two years ago. Then I moved to London because I have three children living in London.

**[Fade to black & back up]**

10:00:45:11

**Interviewer**

My first question to you is have you ever spoken before?

10:00:49:15

**Adele Leblanc**

No. I, er, did not speak to anybody, not even to my siblings.

10:00:56:09

**Interviewer**

Why?

10:00:57:23

**Adele Leblanc**

I don't know. I am searching now in my memory why did I never speak to my sister, my late sister, who was ten years older than me. And she was part of my experience, of her and my experience, we were together, um, flying the Germans to France, came back together and, er, as it happens, she was also lucky to be in Switzerland. She was Zurich. I was in, No, she was in Geneva. I was in Zurich. And we saw each other every three weeks for one day with permission from the Swiss Government, but we never spoke, we never spoke. We were still hoping to hear from our parents, but that's not the reason not to speak about.

10:01:59:02

**Interviewer**

And what about your own family? Have you ever spoken to them?

10:02:03:11

**Adele Leblanc**

My old, no, also not. A little bit to my, to one of my daughters called Tamara because, er, she's the one, I live around the corner from her and she's the one when I have to go to medical appointments for the hospital and you have to wait. So a little bit, but not, er, not really.

10:02:28:15

**Interviewer**

So you've ha -

**[Cut for sound]]**

have had a long time to think? [*Mic. interference*]

10:02:35:15

**Adele Leblanc**

To, to, to bury it. You can't bury, I mean.

10:02:41:14

**Interviewer**

So what you made you decide to speak today?

10:02:44:11

**Adele Leblanc**

Because, er, I get, um, a newspaper from, um, from AJ and, er, it was mentioned a few times that you should really try, er, um, to speak about and it should not be forgotten. So I said to myself, that is something I should really do. And not long ago, my daughter Tamara came up with the idea that, somebody approached her I think, and what do I think? So, very spontaneously, I said "Yes, of course, we have to do that." And so it came.

10:03:32:06

**Interviewer**

And so you are here now.

10:03:33:18

**Adele Leblanc**

And so we are here now, yeah.

10:03:36:05

**Interviewer**

And so your family, who are with you today, a lot them, are they going to hear this for the first time as well?

10:03:42:19

**Adele Leblanc**

Absolutely, yeah.

10:03:44:23

**Interviewer**

So it's a very big day for you?

10:03:46:24

**Adele Leblanc**

A very big day, yeah.

10:03:47:14

**Interviewer**

- and for them.

10:03:49:15

**Adele Leblanc**

And there are many grandchildren who are waiting to see and to hear and it's good. I mean, they should know.

10:03:57:24

**Interviewer**

And how do you feel now?

10:04:00:06

**Adele Leblanc**

Okay. I feel I have to do it. I feel, in a way, that, um, I have to be very grateful that I came out of all this, and I was very lucky. I met my husband in Switzerland, and I lived in Switzerland until, er, 20, er, something. We came here because, I have three children here. And, um, so I'm very grateful and I want do my part.

10:04:37:06

**Interviewer**

Did you not even share your experiences with your husband?

10:04:41:07

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, not much. It was like a barrier. I don't, I don't, I can't understand today, now since I know that I come here to have this, er, done, I am asking myself, how comes that I never felt I want to unburden, I want to speak about? No. But I do think my siblings as well, was the same thing.

10:05:08:03

**Interviewer**

So it's taken a lot of courage for you to be here.

10:05:10:22

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. It has taken, but I'm happy I'm here.

10:05:14:24

**Interviewer**

I think you will feel relieved afterwards.

10:05:17:18

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. I hope so. I hope so. I mean, I haven't slept last night, I haven't slept a few nights ago, because everything comes back of course and the trauma.

I had the most lovely parents, very caring, very, very caring. And I see my mother bring me to the train with the yellow star of course. First the children to send away. Er, c, it was the last time.

10:05:57:13

**Interviewer**

And, as a mother yourself [*coughing*], you know how hard that must have been for her?

10:06:01:10

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:06:01:14

**Interviewer**

and how much she must have loved you to do that.

10:06:04:08

**Adele Leblanc**

Right. Right.

10:06:07:09

**Interviewer**

Have your family never asked you about your parents?

10:06:12:15

**Adele Leblanc**

No. No.

10:06:14:14

**Interviewer**

I wonder why?

10:06:14:23

**Adele Leblanc**

Even I have the pictures of my, in my, er, er, dining room, but they never. They know that was my father, that was my mother, but, er, no.

10:06:28:19

**Interviewer**

Perhaps they didn't want to upset you?

10:06:30:08

**Adele Leblanc**

I do think, I do think that is the reason.

10:06:33:22

**Interviewer**

I think that's quite, um, a story that we,

10:06:36:11

**Adele Leblanc**

Lot.

10:06:37:03

**Interviewer**

we hear a lot here, is that children feel they can't ask cause they don't want to upset. And parents don't want to tell,

10:06:45:10

**Adele Leblanc**

Tell.

10:06:47:05

**Interviewer**

because they don't want to upset the next generation.

10:06:48:21

**Adele Leblanc**

A few have experienced now. There's a lot of people coming, how do you explain this?

10:06:57:04

**Interviewer**

I think it's love.

10:07:00:00

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. No, not this, that, that, this generation didn't want to speak. It is love as well.

10:07:06:22

**Interviewer**

But I think it's love. I think it's love because, you try to protect each other. They probably don't want to ask you because, they don't want to upset you, and you probably don't want to upset them, so it is love.

10:07:18:18

**Adele Leblanc**

That, that makes sense.

10:07:19:02

**Interviewer**

It's love.

10:07:20:17

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. Yeah, okay.

10:07:21:20

**Interviewer**

I don't think it's anything apart from love.

10:07:24:20

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:07:25:22

**Interviewer**

That's my view. What do you think?

10:07:27:07

**Adele Leblanc**

No, I think it's very logic. It's very logic. That's what we, We want to protect them and, er, and they can't help.

I do know my husband after the, er, so in Switzerland was not the same war than anywhere else. We were quite sheltered. But, er, I know that he was searching, he was working for the cr, Red Cross to see if he can know something. But, as long as the war was, nothing. And then of course, slowly, slowly the news came. This one has been deported, this one, this one. Besides my parents, my grandmother, all, all my aunty, my, everybody, my cousins, everybody. So, er.

10:08:22:08

**Interviewer**

How many members of your family did you lose Adele?

10:08:26:15

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, maybe 30. Children, bigger children. As it happens, I was the first to be sent out from, to go with the smuggler to come to Switzerland and then my sister with her little girl. Her husband has been taken from the Belge Police because he was, er, *Autrichien*, er, um, How do you say? He was an *Autrichien*, so that was the enemy. So he was sent to France, to Gurs, was a camp as well, and she didn't know until after the war anything, if he is alive. So that was also very difficult with a little girl of two year, two and a half year. But we were very pr, we are very close, so we were together anyway.

10:09:30:13

**Interviewer**

So you have lost at least 30 members of your family?

10:09:33:19

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:09:35:17

**Interviewer**

And you've never spoken about it to anybody?

10:09:38:18

**Adele Leblanc**

No.

10:09:39:19

**Interviewer**

How have you coped with that over the years,

10:09:41:20

**Adele Leblanc**

If I would have spoken, I think the first would have been my parents and then going on his mother, who was a old lady already, but very independent, and his sisters and that's,

10:10:01:21

**Interviewer**

And over the years, when you have been trying to deal with your grief, how have you coped with that on your own?

10:10:14:23

**Adele Leblanc**

I think I just buried it. I just didn't want to think about. And then I had my children and, er, the new family, which was very, very, very nice. So, and I made my friends.

10:10:35:03

But deep down, even before I married, I was always thinking what was my mother, what would my mother have done, what would my mother have said, my father? Would they be happy with what I am doing? And that was it.

10:10:52:13

Even I was in the family when I came to Switzerland, first in two camps, but then a family took me in and, er, I was very close to this lady. She had no children and she considered me like a child of hers. But I also never spoke about. She never asked me if I would like to speak or so. She didn't dare I think. But I also never felt, not to a Rabbi, not to, to nobody. But it must be that my sibling were the same. The one who are not here anymore I can't ask.

10:11:41:15

**Interviewer**

And now that you have decided to talk and you're here and we've started, and you don't need to worry about it anymore because we are doing it.

10:11:49:17

**Adele Leblanc**

No, I'm not, I was not worried.

10:11:52:03

**Interviewer**

No?

10:11:53:01

**Adele Leblanc**

No. I was only worried that my emotion will be, am I going to cry and, er, will hold back and if we will have to stop, but not about speaking about. I'm, er, I'm actually relieved that I can speak about and it also nice. It's not that I feel intimidated. So that's a good thing. And I do hope then after this, I will feel very well about for the few years or many years which I still have in front of me.

10:12:31:24



**Interviewer**

And hopefully it will be the start of a new relationship with your family now.

10:12:36:24

**Adele Leblanc**

Family, yeah.

10:12:38:06

**Interviewer**

who can fully understand,

10:12:39:09

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah, that they can understand.

10:12:40:07

**Interviewer**

and have the invitation from you to ask.

10:12:42:09

**Adele Leblanc**

Yes. Yeah, definitely. That will be a good thing.

10:12:48:04

**Interviewer**

Mm. There are other people who have, um, sat where you are sitting who have never spoken before and afterwards have almost started again with their family, that they've been able to share everything. And they talk of their huge relief,

10:13:04:04

**Adele Leblanc**

Exactly.

10:13:04:22

**Interviewer**

that finally they can speak. And I hope that you will have that experience. I think you already will.

10:13:09:11

**Adele Leblanc**

I hope so. I will let you know.

10:13:11:15

**Interviewer**

You must. Okay. So it's taken courage to be here, but you understand why, and you know, know what this project is about?

10:13:24:03

**Adele Leblanc**

Yes.

10:13:25:15

**Interviewer**

So why do you think it is important that people like you give their testimony?

10:13:30:14

**Adele Leblanc**

Oh, because there are not so many anymore and, er, the next gener, the next and the next generation should never forget. They should really know. And I am the lucky one, I was not in the concentration camp. I get through a lot, er, running and hiding, all this, but not in a concentration camp. And they should know what's all about and never forget. I never wanted I got an invitation from Germany, from Leipzig, where I am born and where my parents is at, but I never wanted to go back. They offered the f, t, the ticket to, er, the air, er, the am, er, not the am, er, the, the flight, the hotel. I never wanted to go. At this, I couldn't. I could never go back.

10:14:28:00

**Interviewer**

Have you ever received any compensation, financially?

10:14:30:11

**Adele Leblanc**

Yes, I did. Yeah, I did get something.

10:14:33:14

**Interviewer**

And what did that mean to you?

10:14:37:03

**Adele Leblanc**

It's right that they should pay. They could never pay enough. Never, never.

10:14:44:09

And one of my grandsons went to Leipzig for business and, er, he phoned me twice to say he's looking for the street, but it doesn't exist anymore, was bombarded and, er, doesn't exist, so my home anyway. So what I am going to look for? Nothing.

10:15:04:18

**Interviewer**

Have you ne, You've never been there?

10:15:05:09

**Adele Leblanc**

Empty, empty, empty places where I knew the family was living. No. So, um.

10:15:15:01

**Interviewer**

And how do you feel, um, towards the people, the Nazis, who disrupted your life so significantly?

10:15:24:05

**Adele Leblanc**

I hate them. I hate them with every fibre of my heart. And, er, I am not convinced, I'm still convinced that there are many, many who are still Nazis. In my heart I feel like this. Even we lived with some, er, the owner of the house where we live, we were in very good, er, relation. He came Hanukkah to us; we went up to the christ tree. We were very, very friendly with each other but, on the whole, I can never forgive them. Maybe with the years it mellows but, forgive, no, never, never. They don't know what it is from one day to the other. You are exactly alone with anything in a strange country. They can never pay enough, in my view. *[clears throat]*

10:16:46:20

**Interviewer**

So you cannot forgive?

10:16:48:03

**Adele Leblanc**

No. Not, I cannot forgive. Even the people who say they went back and, er, met people who said they're so sorry. Um, no.

10:17:07:01

**Interviewer**

Because you have been alone in your grief for such a long time, how often have you thought about everything? Or has the way that you've dealt with it been that you just don't think about it?

10:17:19:07

**Adele Leblanc**

Oh, quite often.

10:17:20:22

**Interviewer**

Every day?

10:17:22:05

**Adele Leblanc**

No, not every day because, I had to look after my children and, er, not every day but, er, very often. When comes Shabbat when it comes the festival, you remember going with your parents to the synagogue or the Bar Mitzvah of my brother. A lot of thing which will never be forgotten in my, in my view. It depends, maybe they come back for, for p-person, um, in this respect I would, I could never forget.

10:18:05:11

**Interviewer**

And all the significant moments in your life, your marriage and your children, you would have hoped that they were there.

10:18:11:04

**Adele Leblanc**

And then when I m, when I got married, not with my parents. And I had my children, not with my parents. When they got married. How can you forget this? You cannot forget, never. Never. And I don't pardon them either. I am very determined in this, that I cannot pardon them. Even the, maybe people who were, er, not, who did not agree, but, um, no.

10:18:46:12

I remember one day my father coming home and they had shaved his beard and he was beaten. That are impressions which you, you cannot forget. [*Clears throat*]

10:19:05:00

**Interviewer**

You had very full life, didn't you?

10:19:07:17

**Adele Leblanc**

Yes.

10:19:08:06

**Interviewer**

And a, and a big family.

10:19:10:01

**Adele Leblanc**

Family and a very lovely, My husband died five years ago, a husband where I could share everything and who was very special.

10:19:23:14

**Interviewer**

Mm. And, in many ways, your family was your compensation for what you lost?

10:19:30:03

**Adele Leblanc**

That's right.

10:19:33:13

**Interviewer**

But now that everybody is growing up

**[Cut for sound]**

does it become harder

10:19:38:04

**Adele Leblanc**

No.

10:19:38:15

**Interviewer**

because you've got more time to think? I'm thinking about the memories.

10:19:42:18

**Adele Leblanc**

No, no.

10:19:43:24

**Interviewer**

No?

10:19:44:12

**Adele Leblanc**

No, no, because I am, er, a very busy lady. [*laughs*] Busy in this respect, with my children, my grandchildren. I see them, my children, I see maybe every day. Grandchildren coming and going, very, I have a very full life. No, wouldn't say that. Of course I live still in my, on my, on my own in my house. Of course I look, I have a lot of pictures, er, photos and, um, and the memories are there, but I am not, um, how can I say, so unhappy anymore.

10:20:35:06

**Interviewer**

So has it got easier with time?

10:20:37:00

**Adele Leblanc**

It has gone easier with the time, yeah.

10:20:39:17

**Interviewer**

Apart from the run up to today when you've been dreading speaking to me.

10:20:43:01

**Adele Leblanc**

Absolutely. [*Laughter*] And that's also a part. If some days are like this, some nights are like this. It can be a dream, or I think or, but, on the whole, I can say I am very grateful that my children take such a big place in my, in my life.

10:21:05:19

**Interviewer**

And, apart from the run up to this interview, do you have sleepless nights still about what happened?

10:21:13:16

**Interviewer**

Of course. That's, that why I said you cannot forget. Not forgive and not forget.

10:21:20:18

**Adele Leblanc**

So you have dreams?

10:21:22:13

**Adele Leblanc**

The dreams and, er, sometimes very little things all of a sudden you, you remember. Like when I go on a f, a holiday in, er, in Switzerland, very often. I lived there. I mean, I married there, I lived there until 20 something. Then I moved here. But, er, I remember when we were walking, and we were afraid of the Germans. It can be just a dog who start, and everything comes back. And I see the German soldier, er, the, the fear we had. Er, so that, er, er, it's not a automatic remembering, it's just something all of sudden comes and you remember.

10:22:16:16

**Interviewer**

So, even the sound of a dog barking will set off a memory for you?

10:22:20:09

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. And from one thing I got, which I will never get, er, rid of it, if you say this in English, I don't know, is, er, everything which is with an uniform. I have nothing to fear. I live a very quiet life. If I see a policeman coming to my house forever, I get phoooo. I get scared. Why, I don't know.

10:22:51:05

**Interviewer**

So even a, a, a policeman? I mean,

10:22:54:09

**Adele Leblanc**

Even a policeman, yeah.

10:22:55:24

**Interviewer**

And, in this country, policemen are supposed to be friendly.

10:22:58:16

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. [*Laughs over interviewer*]

10:23:00:00

**Interviewer**

But still that, that frightens you?

10:23:01:03

**Adele Leblanc**

Well, in, in Switzerland they had the same, um, er, the same, er, colour uniform. So I remember when we were on the train, er, er, going, er, f, just arriving to the border and the next day we went with the train to Zurich and in the train all the, er, er, soldier, the, the, the person who comes for the ticket have the same uniform. And I remember we were all trembling. I was with a couple and a little boy and, er, the lady was [?]. So, er, that was something still, still in my system. [*Laughs.*]

10:23:45:19

**Interviewer**

Have you ever had any professional help coming to terms with what you've been through?

10:23:48:14

**Adele Leblanc**

No.

10:23:52:02

**Interviewer**

You're a very strong lady.

10:23:54:17

**Adele Leblanc**

Hm. I try. I had my husband, who was very, *compréhensif* [understanding.]

10:24:06:15

**Interviewer**

When you look at the news now and you see everything that's happening around us, do you feel that we learnt any lessons from that period of history?

10:24:18:08

**Adele Leblanc**

Not much.

10:24:20:15

**Interviewer**

Tell me.

10:24:21:12

**Adele Leblanc**

Not much. Say, p-people say, oh look, the children and this and that. I don't think so. Unfortunately, no.

10:24:33:04

**Interviewer**

And when you see the Syrian refugee children that are trying to come to this country, that must bring back memories for you.

10:24:39:18

**Adele Leblanc**

It does bring, brings back m-memories, yeah. But I feel more when I am in Israel the, the fear for the people when I hear this one has st, been stopped and this and this, so that brings more the memories back to me.

10:25:01:04

**Interviewer**

Mm. You have grandchildren.

10:25:05:12

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:25:05:22

**Interviewer**

How many?

10:25:07:03

**Adele Leblanc**

I don't know. [*Both laugh*] No, I am, I am serious.

10:25:13:05

**Interviewer**

You have so many.

10:25:14:19

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, one of my daughter, who is here has twelve children.

10:25:18:06

**Interviewer**

Okay, you've got a lot of grandchildren.

10:25:20:09

**Adele Leblanc**

So, er... [*talking over each other*] And, er, my, my late mother-in-law always said don't count, so I don't count.

10:25:28:07

**Interviewer**

You don't count. So you're family,

10:25:30:14

**Adele Leblanc**

But they're always, they're all really lovely. [*talk over each other*] All very, very caring. That's why I'm called *maman* from everybody. Not my, not, er, grandmother, not safta, not, er, er, any other name. And also my daughter-in-law who is here. [*talk over each other*] It's very special.

10:25:51:21

**Interviewer**

Your family is replenished.

10:25:53:20

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:25:55:00

**Interviewer**



And that is some comfort to you.

10:25:57:15

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah, a big comfort. It's all the comfort.

10:26:01:13

**Interviewer**

And you know that your grandchildren and their children, at some point, will sit and listen to your testimony and your story.

10:26:10:20

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:26:11:24

**Interviewer**

So do you have a message for them about their life and about what you have learnt through the hardship that you've endured?

10:26:20:00

**Adele Leblanc**

It's very, very, a very difficult question. I want them to be courageous in life. I want them to have every happiness which you can reach, but you have to work on it. And you have to be grateful for what you get and not thinking what I didn't have. That's it.

10:26:47:17

**Interviewer**

How strong is your faith?

10:26:49:18

**Adele Leblanc**

Very strong.

**[cut for direction]**

10:26:51:09

**Interviewer**

...you have had a lot of sadness in your life and yet you still have a very strong faith

10:26:59:01

**Adele Leblanc**

Very strong.

10:27:00:06

**Interviewer**

And despite the fact that your family have been murdered, you still believe in a God.

10:27:06:00

**Adele Leblanc**

I still believe that God has his plans. Why did I escape? Why did my sister escape? Why? Why us? Why not the two older one? Not, not older one, the, I was, I was two years older. So there must be a reason why God does things in his way and, er, I accept.

10:27:45:08

**Interviewer**

Let's move away from the general questions now and let's talk about your life and what happened here.

10:27:51:10

**Adele Leblanc**

Okay.

10:27:52:23

**Interviewer**

Are we allowed to say how old you are?

10:27:56:10

**Adele Leblanc**

I was born the 5th of March in 1923 in Leipzig at Eberhardstraße, 9.

10:28:08:17

**Interviewer**

And that makes you 93 years old.

10:28:11:03

**Adele Leblanc**

Right.

10:28:12:13

**Interviewer**

I think you're wonderful. Tell me about your,

10:28:15:00

**Adele Leblanc**

Thank, thank you. *[Laughs]*

10:28:17:11

**Interviewer**

*[Laughs]* You know you are. Tell me about your parents and about your brothers and sisters?

10:28:23:00

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, about my parents? Yeah. My mother came from a very special place called Lizhensk, I don't know If you ever heard, there was a very, er, famous rabbi there where people still go today on his grave. And, er, they were a very, very happy

couple and, as it happens, my father was very much involved in, er, our education, but also on being with us like, er, g, er, He came in the break to bring us fresh rolls because, the one from the night before was not good enough. And I exchanged it with somebody for brown bread. [Laughs]

10:29:15:20

**Interviewer**

So you felt very loved by your parents?

10:29:17:23

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, er, yes, very much so. So he closed his shop. He had a wholesale shop. He closed the door, he came to the school when there was a break and he brought for my youngest brother and me, brought, er, the rolls.

10:29:34:07

**Interviewer**

And your mother?

10:29:35:08

**Adele Leblanc**

And my mother was also very, very caring, very, very, caring. What can I say, very lovely. And she went every year to see her parents in Poland and we, the two younger one, we went with her.

And then we went to Czechoslovakia. There was a spa, Marienbad, I don't know if you ever heard about, and we had the holidays there. We had a very, very good life, very, very, very lovely childhood. Very caring. Soft spoken, good manners.

10:30:28:22

**Interviewer**

And you were cherished.

10:30:30:15

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, er, m, Very. I remember when - don't know how old I was - father tried to give us books to sit on the table be *comme il faut*. Er, he was very gentle. [Sighs] Um, yeah.

10:30:48:02

**Interviewer**

What, what did your mother look like?

17:22:06:17

**Adele Leblanc**

I do think I look like her. To me, it seems so. Yeah, but it's not a good picture. I don't know where the picture come, for instance. My sister gave it to me when she lived in New York at the end of her life and, er, she gave it to me, and I don't know why I didn't ask where did you get the picture? This from father is a very old picture. I don't know. Maybe she married ten days before Hitler marched to Austria and that I do remember that my parents sent a lot of good stuff, er, like silver and so. It's, er, you

call it heiratsgut. When you marry, you can take. And then ten days later, Hitler marched in, and she had to flee, but. So everything, I don't know, I don't know how she got it. And I asked her daughters. She said, "Don't know." Also, my sister did not speak to none of her daughters. She has three, three daughters. None of them does know anything about, even about the story I know because, I was fleeing with her. We were, er, er, together. I don't know.

10:32:18:15

**Interviewer**

Do you now have, at this point, regret that you didn't ask more questions?

10:32:22:07

**Adele Leblanc**

Of course.

10:32:23:02

**Interviewer**

You do?

10:32:23:18

**Adele Leblanc**

Very much, very much so. Especially, I was very close with my sister, very close. And, even when she lived in New York, I went to the weddings of her daughters and I went to visit her and she never spoke about, not even about our travelling together, er, running away from Antwerp.

10:32:51:05

**Interviewer**

And why do you think with you, w, if you, if you examine yourself, why do you think you didn't ask questions?

10:32:56:09

**Adele Leblanc**

I don't know. I don't know. I cannot explain. I said to my daughters, "I cannot explain how I didn't have the urge to say I would like you to know that it was like this and why." I don't know. I really don't know. But, even my youngest b, brother, who is in Israel now, and I - I was there, er, a few months ago - er, if I speak with him, so we remember things from home. He say, "Remember Papa did like this, Mummy did like this," but he also never ask what was it before you came, never.

10:33:46:15

**Interviewer**

Does he know you're doing this interview today?

10:33:49:10

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:33:50:04

**Interviewer**

What does he think?

10:33:51:03

**Adele Leblanc**

He, he was very impressed.

10:33:53:05

**Interviewer**

What did he say?

10:33:54:08

**Adele Leblanc**

He, er, is very proud and I do the right thing and I should phone him tomorrow. [Laughs] which I will do.

10:34:07:16

**Interviewer**

Well, maybe he will be able [coughs] to share memories with you after, after this interview, that you, There'll be a new start hopefully.

10:34:15:05

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. I do think so. Now that I'm here and I overcome my night, these emotions this night. I hardly slept. So I do hope. I'm sure it will be easier for me to, to think back and to know it might help people to go on alive. Because I do know people who couldn't manage.

10:34:46:00

**Interviewer**

What do you mean?

10:34:48:08

**Adele Leblanc**

Mm. They became depressed. Er, we had a very small community in Geneva, so we were quite close with the refugee who came and, er, I did know at least two women who couldn't get over. Okay, the husband was not with her, s. was deported, was already in Switzerland, was sent back and never came back. So, um, of course that makes a difference.

10:35:22:08

**Interviewer**

When you weren't sleeping last night, what were you worrying about the most?

10:35:27:24

**Adele Leblanc**

No, I was not worried.

10:35:29:13

**Interviewer**

No?

10:35:30:09

**Adele Leblanc**

No, I was worried I will cry. It will come all of a sudden and, er, because, I have a cried a lot many times in the night, thinking back, specifically in the beginning when I started to meet the young men and I was thinking what would my father say? what would my mother say? Eventually, to get married with them, yeah. Er, but, er, So that, that, er, thought and emotion you cannot control, you know. What goes in your head you cannot control. The heart, you can more, more or less, you can reason, but what you have in your mind is very difficult. So, um, that was one of the things I was thinking, how I'm going, er, Going to cry? No, I'm not going to cry. I told myself no, you're not going to do that.

10:36:38:07

**Interviewer**

[*Coughs*] It would be okay if you did.

10:36:39:20

**Adele Leblanc**

Absolutely.

10:36:41:08

**Interviewer**

There are plenty of people who do. And, as I said to you, I am always the first. Um, let's talk about, We've talked about your family. Let's talk about your h, your home. What kind of life did you have?

**[Cut for direction]**

10:36:57:09

**Adele Leblanc**

What can I say, like, um, a lovely home, lovely.

10:37:08:05

**Interviewer**

And your f, you, you've described how caring your father was.

10:37:11:23

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:37:12:24

**Interviewer**

Um, but he used to take you to school every day, is that right?

10:37:15:04

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:37:17:07

**Interviewer**

So you felt very,

10:37:18:06

**Adele Leblanc**

Because it was very cold and was very, so he was also very caring for my Mummy. Very. So, er, was a big love affair. So I think he didn't want her to go. *[Laughs]*

10:37:38:01

**Interviewer**

Um, when you were 16 and 17 - we, we've fast-forwarded a lot now - you, you worked in a nursery, didn't you?

10:37:45:08

**Adele Leblanc**

Sorry?

10:37:45:19

**Interviewer**

Did you work in a nursery?

10:37:47:20

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. In Leipzig. Yeah.

10:37:50:11

**Interviewer**

So tell me about that. You became a nursery teacher.

10:37:53:06

**Adele Leblanc**

Well, it was not for a long time. You had to choose and, er, I was always fond of children so, er, I choose this. But it was not a long time because then, and Hitler made the end of it.

10:38:09:15

**Interviewer**

So, so, we're, we're talking now about 1933 and the, and the Nazis came to power.

10:38:15:16

**Adele Leblanc**

The p, er, yeah.

10:38:15:20

**Interviewer**

You were working in the nursery, were you?

10:38:17:14

**Adele Leblanc**

But in '33 maybe, er, er, er, it cannot be '33. I was I think 14 when I started the nursery.

10:38:27:22

**Interviewer**

I see. Okay. I understand. So what was the reaction within your family to the Nazis coming to power?

10:38:36:09

**Adele Leblanc**

They didn't believe it. I do remember my father sitting, er, er, he had his shop, his office shop, er, in the same street and he had, um, I don't know how you call this in English, he had, um, like, um, cotton lin, cotton linen which he made up, you know. In old time, when you married you did have to have 24 sheets and all this and that's what my father did, so he has very long benches where they measured, er, the cotton. And there were three friends. I was a little girl in '33, and three friends and they said he's not going to stay on, Hitler, you don't have to have, er, to be afra, afraid.

And they were, er, er, reading a letter from somebody who emigrated to Israel who said, "Oh, the life is very difficult with everything, made it very black, whatever is in Israel. Stay where you are. It's very hot. There's no air-condition. Everything is primitive." That I remember.

So nobody thought, it, he's going to last, nobody. Because, in this time, everybody could escape if they would have had the feeling that will be the end. Well, okay, nobody was thinking about what was then. This, nobody could imagine. But, er, still, huh, clever people did go away.

10:40:34:19

**Interviewer**

The next big event was Kristallnacht, wasn't it?

10:40:37:20

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:40:38:10

**Interviewer**

What do you remember about that?

10:40:40:07

**Adele Leblanc**

Well, I remember I went with my brother, my youngest brother, to school on our own then and, er, the school was burning. And, er, the teachers were there and said, "Go quickly home." And, er, when we, so we went home and, er, my father had found out - we had Polish passports - that if you go to the Polish Consulate the Nazis cannot take you. So we run and we were a few hundred in the villa, which the Consulate at, and effective, the, the Nazis couldn't go, come in. And we stayed, er, the, there I



think, er, one and a half day. Was terrible, so many people in a, in a small, er, villa

**10:41:39:24**

but, er then my father decided we had visa for Switzerland. He sent my little brother and me with the train to Switzerland. And my mother was there on a holiday, so she didn't go back, and we didn't go back to Leipzig. It was the last time. We were very frightened. Like I said, when they came to us for the ticket, and they had the same uniform. So, er, but everything went fine, and we left in Zurich.

**[Cut for direction]**

10:42:16:14

**Interviewer**

Um, when you say it was the last time, what do you mean?

10:42:20:22

**Adele Leblanc**

I didn't, I never returned to Leipzig.

10:42:23:06

**Interviewer**

That was the last time you went to Leipzig?

10:42:25:00

**Adele Leblanc**

Leipzig, yeah.

10:42:26:23

**Interviewer**

So your father put you on a train, but your mother was already in Switzerland?

10:42:30:15

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah, yeah.

10:42:31:22

**Interviewer**

So you knew that you were being received by your mother?

10:42:35:08

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah, yeah.

10:42:36:22

**Interviewer**

And how did your father get to Switzerland?

10:42:39:01

**Adele Leblanc**

Oh, that, Very, v, much later. He was first in a prison there and then, er, he was very lucky that they let him out and, um, then he also came to Switzerland, but he couldn't, we couldn't stay. That's why we went to Belgium then.

**[Cut for camera card change]**

10:43:02:10

**Interviewer**

You're determined not to cry.

10:43:03:17

**Adele Leblanc**

No.

10:43:04:18

**Interviewer**

Tell me why. I don't want you to cry, but you've made a pact with yourself, haven't you?

10:43:09:09

**Adele Leblanc**

No, I have a little, how do you say, alarm, tear ready. But, er, er, at the moment, I can't do it out.

10:43:22:13

**Interviewer**

You can cry tomorrow.

10:43:24:00

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. Or tonight. *[Laughs]*

10:43:25:17

**Interviewer**

Or tonight. Well, thank you for being so brave. We were talking about your journey to Switzerland. And you had a big string around your neck, didn't you?

10:43:37:18

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah, I had a string with the, with the name and my little brother as well. And, er, but we arrived well and, er, and my mummy decided to send my little, my little brother, he was two years younger than me. So that was in '38, yeah? The Kristallnacht, this was just right after, to the Yeshiva Montreux and, er, I stayed with her until, er, I don't real, really re, er, remember how long we stay there. Must have been very difficult for my Mummy, knowing she cannot go back and knowing that my father was still there. But how the, When did he come, I don't remember.

10:44:38:08

**Interviewer**

What do you know about what happened to your father in this time?

10:44:41:19

**Adele Leblanc**

Nothing.

10:44:42:20

**Interviewer**

You don't know what happened?

10:44:43:17

**Adele Leblanc**

No.

10:44:49:11

**Adele Leblanc**

But, eventually, he came and then, er, [*mic. interference*] he tried, he tried to have a visa to Cuba. Um, which you could bo, b-buy in this time and he went to Geneva, cause, er, he was in Zurich. They were in Zurich, my parents. But when he came, I don't remember.

10:45:22:04

**Interviewer**

But, Adele, is there a story that he tried to smuggle himself to Switzerland, didn't he?

10:45:25:18

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. Yeah, but,

10:45:27:00

**Interviewer**

And he was caught.

10:45:27:21

**Adele Leblanc**

He was caught, yeah.

10:45:28:18

**Interviewer**

And then he was put in prison for one week.

10:45:30:18

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:45:31:10

**Interviewer**

So how do you know about that?

10:45:33:07

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, that my Mummy told us. We were, er, I was with my Mummy then.

10:45:37:12

**Interviewer**

So she must have been beside herself with anxiety?

10:45:39:16

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, er, absolutely, absolutely. But it was really, er, exceptional that they let him out.

10:45:47:22

**Interviewer**

You describe your parents, um, er, er, like a love affair, that they were very, very bonded and very close.

10:45:55:10

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:45:55:23

**Interviewer**

So that separation must have been very hard for them?

10:45:58:16

**Adele Leblanc**

Very hard, yeah. And this was a very nice, um, family who helped him to come from Basel - I don't know if you know a little bit of Switzerland - from Basel to Zurich, it's not very far. And he was caught and then he tried again, and he came. This was with the same person, with, er, this family, this is another smuggler but with the family. But Switzerland didn't let him stay. Nobody like us us, so we had to see what we can do, and my father just heard that you can buy a Cuba visa, so, er, he went and, er, he bought one. But we never went.

10:46:52:04

**Interviewer**

What happened next?

10:46:53:11

**Adele Leblanc**

The next we went to Belgium.

10:46:58:17

**Interviewer**

Who?

10:46:59:24

**Adele Leblanc**

My Mummy with the, the boys, the two, my two brothers went to the Yeshiva Montreux and, er, my Mummy and my father and me, we went to, er, Antwerp.

10:47:16:13

**Interviewer**

And your sister?

10:47:17:17

**Adele Leblanc**

And we stayed there.

10:47:19:11

**Interviewer**

Where was your sister?

10:47:21:05

**Adele Leblanc**

My sister was there already.

10:47:23:08

**Interviewer**

Already. So you, the four of you were together?

10:47:25:15

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:47:28:05

**Interviewer**

And then what happened?

10:47:30:11

**Adele Leblanc**

And then, er, I do remember I went for a few weeks in a school and, um, nothing major. We had a good time.

And then one day, So when the war break out.

10:47:51:18

**Interviewer**

Well, Hitler invaded Belgium,

10:47:53:05

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah, w,

10:47:54:07

**Interviewer**

er, on the 10th of May in 1940.

10:47:57:10

**Adele Leblanc**

Yes, er, '40.

10:47:58:08

**Interviewer**

And you were seven, and you were seventeen.

10:47:59:22

**Adele Leblanc**

So, so that, so there start this terrible thing that, um, my sister, the baby and me were taken with friends with a car. They said, "Let's go out from Antwerp." Was bombarded, Antwerp. And we go to the coast.

And my parents took the train, and we went, my sister and me. And, er, the train didn't stop, so we didn't know anything about my parents. And we, um, we also had to stop somewhere

10:48:51:17

And was, then marching to, thought France will not be invaded. Now, I don't remember if that was this time.

We came, er, on the bombardment to, er, to the coast and one officer, for, for what reason I don't know, was very friendly, came over to my sister and said, um, "You can, you cannot take the presh, the, the, the buggy. But, if I make you a sign then you run to the boat."

10:49:39:04

There were English, um, military, mil, er, soldiers. So we were, er, hundreds of people waiting on the coast and, er, he did make the sign, but when we started to, to run there was the, the Germans were already there bombarding, so everybody was on the floor and the English went without us. The boat went. They had to escape; I think.

10:50:16:14

So what will we do? We go back. And we started. There were cars who took us because of the baby. Um, and we started to go back.

10:50:33:13

**Interviewer**

Back to?

10:50:34:17

**Adele Leblanc**

Back to Antwerp. We said, maybe my parents will be there. And then we had a terrible thing. Er, one or two, ones, the ones we were on the bus and the bus, there was a truck or whatever who stopped and did take people. And, er, the Germans were already everywhere and, er, they stopped the truck. They came on and they said, er, "All *Juifs* out. All the Jewish people out." Um, my ses, my sister said to me, "You don't move and if they come to me, the baby is yours." But the, and the, the people who went out were shot in front of our, of our eyes.

And they came, they asked for the passport, just one before us, just one before us,

and they didn't ask n-nothing. And then they made a sign, the truck went on. People were on the floor. Um. And with the German, with the German we, we arrived in Antwerp.

10:52:07:04

**Interviewer**

How many people were shot Adele?

10:52:08:24

**Adele Leblanc**

And, and actually, actually, a few days later, my parents came also back. And then it started to be difficult. Now I don't remember how long we were in Antwerp, but then everybody said if you go to Brussels it's better than Antwerp. They know everybody who is Jewish. Mm.

10:52:38:05

**Interviewer**

So there was a period where you were separated from your parents, but then you, you were back again together with them?

10:52:43:10

**Adele Leblanc**

We were back again, yeah.

10:52:44:17

**Interviewer**

Before you tell me a bit more about that, how many people did you see being shot on that bus?

10:52:53:11

**Adele Leblanc**

At least twelve, cause they were all sitting on the bench, on the benches.

10:53:08:24

**Adele Leblanc**

But mind you, even some German soldiers did stop and wanted to take us. And once we went, because we were afraid if we'd say no they were thinking we are against them, so partly we went with the German until we came to Antwerp. And then we moved from Antwerp to Brussels.

10:53:35:21

**Interviewer**

How did you find your parents again in Antwerp?

10:53:39:11

**Adele Leblanc**

They came to the house, to the, the apartment.

10:53:41:08

**Interviewer**

[*Talking over each other*] You went back to; you went back to the apartment, and they were there too. You must have been so relieved to see them.

10:53:46:08

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:53:54:02

**Adele Leblanc**

Okay. And then we moved to Brussels.

10:53:59:09

**Interviewer**

Are you okay to continue?

10:54:00:10

**Adele Leblanc**

And from Brussels they were,

10:54:02:21

**Interviewer**

Say that again.

10:54:04:23

**Adele Leblanc**

They were deported from, er, Brussels.

10:54:07:07

**Interviewer**

So you all went to Brussels together?

10:54:08:19

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:54:09:21

**Interviewer**

The four of you?

10:54:10:24

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. Um, and then my parents, then they started to take first the, the young girls, so my, my parents did find out from somebody who, a young girl, she was about 22, 23, who had a connection with a smuggler and, er, like I say, they brought me to the train, and she was there and her, her uncle and her aunty and a little boy. And so we made our, our way to go to Switzerland.

10:54:54:08

**Interviewer**

So when did you say goodbye to your parents?



10:54:56:23

**Adele Leblanc**

On the train station. My mother. My father didn't come.

10:55:02:24

**Interviewer**

He couldn't?

10:55:04:11

**Adele Leblanc**

I don't know why, er, We kissed in the apartment and, er, all he said... I said, "What I'm going to wear tomorrow?" Very silly question. And he said, "Don't worry." We had just the rucksacks. That what the smuggler said, er, just this. Um, "You will find Mummy in Switzerland." That was it. That was the last time.

10:55:54:19

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. Go on.

10:55:59:06

**Interviewer**

So your mother took you to the train station. [*Coughing off camera*]

10:56:01:24

**Adele Leblanc**

Sorry?

10:56:02:13

**Interviewer**

Your mother took you to the train station,

10:56:04:04

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

10:56:04:20

**Interviewer**

with your sister.

10:56:05:14

**Adele Leblanc**

Said, "Bye." Not my sister.

10:56:08:01

**Interviewer**

Not your sister?

10:56:08:16

**Adele Leblanc**

My sister came the same week, um, two days later, with the same smuggler. And the same smuggler was supposed to come for my parents. Meanwhile, one of my cousins was taken from the street - she was very blonde, she didn't look like Jewish - and, um, and she gave a message for my parents. She need something, a blanket. I don't know why; it was in the summer. And my mum, um, my parents went to bring the blanket and so they were caught from the street. That what people told us.

10:57:07:00

**Adele Leblanc**

And that was the last time we heard something.

10:57:15:24

**Interviewer**

Through an act of their kindness, that they were trying to help somebody else.

10:57:20:01

**Adele Leblanc**

Yes, that's true. [*Talking over each other*] But, still, it was very silly.

10:57:22:21

**Interviewer**

That sounds,

10:57:26:03

**Adele Leblanc**

They don't think this was very silly. But was their, their choice, like you say, for kindness. I think she, er, she gave the message - how, I don't know - that her, her parents have been caught, she has nobody and, er, she needs a blanket. I don't remember who told us this. And that was the last time.

10:57:58:17

**Interviewer**

Do you know what happened to them?

10:58:01:03

**Adele Leblanc**

To who? To,

10:58:01:24

**Interviewer**

Your parents?

10:58:03:08

**Adele Leblanc**

I have the paper who say which day - I brought it along - which day they were sent to Auschwitz.

10:58:13:01

**Interviewer**

How did you get that?

10:58:15:05

**Adele Leblanc**

My brother, my youngest brother, the one in Israel, he went to Yad Vashem and, er, out there as well, all the family I think is mentioned there.

10:58:31:17

**Interviewer**

How many years later did you discover what had happened to them?

10:58:38:15

**Adele Leblanc**

Like I say, my husband tried with the Red Cross after we were married, after the, I married in '44. And, um, just later on I went back to Brussels to see with my husband, if he can find something. Nothing. We didn't even have the information which we had later on that they were in, er, Mechelen, I think it was called, where they did take the people before sending them to Auschwitz. Otherwise, no, we didn't know anything. Whenever we try to, Well, the Red Cross try, they didn't find either, only then in the Yad Vashem my brother found out.

10:59:40:17

**Interviewer**

If you imagine from a parent's perspective, they must have had some comfort that they knew that you were safe?

10:59:50:21

**Adele Leblanc**

That we were safe, yeah. That's for sure. Yeah, that's for sure.

10:59:55:12

**Interviewer**

So there is little comfort, but to think that they would have,

10:59:58:05

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah, ve, very little.

10:59:59:08

**Interviewer**

It's a very small bit of comfort but, as a parent, you would give your life for your children.

11:00:04:08

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah, yeah, all safe. You're right.

11:00:06:17

**Interviewer**

You would do anything for your children.

11:00:07:09

**Adele Leblanc**

I w, I would also,

11:00:09:05

**Interviewer**

Of course.

11:00:10:16

**Adele Leblanc**

do anything, er, to save my child. That's true.

11:00:14:07

**Interviewer**

So they would have had that knowledge that you and your brother and your sister were safe?

11:00:22:04

**Adele Leblanc**

That we're, that we're safe, yeah. But still, no, I don't say anything.

11:00:26:24

**Interviewer**

Please do.

11:00:27:20

**Adele Leblanc**

That what the, no, that what it is. I still, I still thought, why did they go? They did know the day after they're going to be smuggled out, you know. But one thing I don't forgive myself is, for instance, I never tried to find out what happened to this young girl who smuggled us out. And, um, I know somebody here in, er, London who is related but unfortunately he doesn't remember, not the name or nothing. He's not so old, but he doesn't remember.

11:01:17:10

**Interviewer**

And why do you want to see that person?

11:01:20:01

**Adele Leblanc**

Because I am very grateful to her.

11:01:22:23

**Interviewer**

You want to say thank you.

11:01:24:02

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. At least, the least I can do. I would have been a bit generous maybe with her. I

don't know. I had the feeling. That's very, very recently. Also, why didn't it occur to me? Why did it never, never touch me to say what happened to her? Why? Also pushed back, you think? I don't know. [*Sniffs*]

11:02:01:15

**Interviewer**

I'm sure you will find a way of reaching one of her relatives or something to mark what she did for you.

11:02:09:03

**Adele Leblanc**

Mm, yeah. [*Talking over interviewer*] I, I, I must maybe search more than this person who lives here. Maybe there is still somebody here. I don't even know if she married. She was very beautiful and, er, she didn't look Jewish, so she, we we're hold up and she was very courageous. She answered them, "You think they're false passport? Come, let's phone." And, er, the police went with her, and, in the middle, they said, "Oh, go your way." So that's also destiny because, have all, every passport was false. [*Clears throat*]

11:02:54:03

**Interviewer**

She had courage.

11:02:55:04

**Adele Leblanc**

She had very much courage, yeah.

11:02:57:11

**Interviewer**

I'm sure you can find somebody who's related to her.

11:02:59:16

**Adele Leblanc**

I hope so. I let you know.

11:03:00:15

**Interviewer**

I think you should try. You must let me know.

11:03:02:09

**Adele Leblanc**

I let you know. [*Laughs*]

11:03:03:04

**Interviewer**

You must let me know. But, what you experienced in that very short period, Adele, was the worst of humanity and the best.

11:06:13:04

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. And then, er, I don't know if I have mentioned it, when we went with her and we were very much in danger. And when we saw, when this, this smuggler, she had somebody who g-guided her, when she, when this person said, "You see the little, er, er, chalet there? That is Switzerland. You don't have to be worried anymore." And they disappeared. And we were sitting down and, er, um, and then all of a sudden we hear barking dogs and soldiers just on top. There was a little bridge, and we were under the bridge and the chalet we had to go *a travers*, how do you say? Um, um, a big, er, no man's land, I don't know. So she was very clever as well. She said, "You sit here. I go." And she went alone to the chalet and the lady was very, very nice. She said, "You cannot come as a group because, the soldier can see you. We were thinking they will surely know that you are running away." So she came with a cow and every time she puts, there was one man, the woman, that were the un-uncle and, er, aunty of this lady, of this young girl, and a little boy of eight and me. And every time she came with the cow, she took one person.

And she was very, very nice. She said, er, "You can sleep here overnight." She gave us the eat and said, "You can sleep all, er, but my husband has to report if there are people coming." And the next morning she ran to buy the t, er, train tickets and she took, um, a [?], how do you say, er, *foin*. You know, when they take the, the blé and we were all sitting with the, with the, um, scarf like peasant and, er, we went to, to the station and she waited until we went. Was very, very nice. Of course, we sent her back the money, but that's beside. She was extremely nice. And so I arrived in Zurich.

11:05:56:16

**Interviewer**

When were you reunited with your brother?

11:05:59:15

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, what?

11:06:00:03

**Interviewer**

You were reunited with your brother in Zurich?

11:06:03:01

**Adele Leblanc**

No, my [*talk over each other*], my brother was in Montreux Yeshiva

11:06:06:12

**Interviewer**

Okay.

11:06:07:13

**Adele Leblanc**

Er, yeah, my other brother, my brother [*talk over each other*], my married brother, yeah. [*talk over each other*] Yeah, yeah.

11:06:11:12

**Interviewer**

Okay. What, er, what happened next Adele?

11:06:18:13

**Adele Leblanc**

And then I was put in a, in a camp. It was not like the camp in Auschwitz, but not very pleasant. No beds, on the, er, er, straw. And, um, the person who was in charge was drinking a lot of, of [laughs] beer and wine or whatever and got in a temper. So I was there about maybe two months.

11:06:50:24

And then, er, I was transferred to another *lager* where, er we had to, er, work a bit with taking up potatoes and, er, cherries from the tree and, er, we were told, "Nothing from the tree you can eat, only what's under the, everything which is on the floor," which was already not eatable, this we can eat. Mm. But, we did eat anyway. [Laughs] And then I had, er, a very lovely family who took me out and I stayed there until I got married.

11:07:37:09

**Interviewer**

And is this the Libbensteins?

11:07:38:21

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah.

11:07:39:15

**Interviewer**

This is Esther and Danielle, and Daniel.

11:07:41:09

**Adele Leblanc**

Esther and, Esther and, er, Alexander. Alex. No, not, er, Daniel, Daniel.

11:07:46:15

**Interviewer**

Daniel.

11:07:47:09

**Adele Leblanc**

Daniel Libbenstein, yeah.

11:07:49:24

**Interviewer**

So, again, you experienced great hardship, but then also some kindness.

11:07:55:17

**Adele Leblanc**

Absolutely.

11:07:57:03

**Interviewer**

Mm. And all this time you didn't know about your parents.

11:08:00:00

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah. That's why I say I still have to be grateful.

11:08:06:09

**Interviewer**

How did you meet your husband?

11:08:09:01

**Adele Leblanc**

Well, that is a very interesting story.

**[Cut to second telling of story]**

11:08:12:17

**Adele Leblanc**

I was in a camp in Switzerland and every three weeks, I had one day off so er, I went to visit my sister. I was in Zurich and my sister was in Geneva, which is about er, three and a half hours from one place to the other.

11:08:33:14

And er, when I came, my sister was unwell, she had angina and there was a Hanukkah party and she asked me. She said, my daughter called Taya is er, very upset that I'm not, cannot go. Maybe you can go, would you mind. So I said no of course.

11:08:54:19

So er, I went with her and um, there were about fifty people maybe and a young man came over to me and presented himself and said um, can I take you home and I said no, for no reason. And er, then he said um, I must tell you I met your father. I said how did you met my father? He said er, when he came to Geneva, to the Cuba Consulate er, he was working in the street and I saw it's a stranger in town, so I crossed the street and asked where he want to go. So he said to our home, and I took him home to my parent's house and he was doing his prayer and having breakfast, and then I went with him to the consulate. So that's how he met my, my father. But my father never know that I married him. That's the story, okay.

11:10:15:16

**Interviewer**

How do you feel?

11:10:17:09

**Adele Leblanc**

And only, er, I can say it's still, I don't know which, er, married I have, but after all



God has been very kind to me. And, er, my f, strength to go on is of course because I do believe what God does is the right thing and for all the happiness, for all my family, my extended family and for all the care I get now. I am never a burden to my children or my grandchildren. That means a lot to me. As I'm sure you come in my age you will remember maybe that is one of the things which is for people who age and who feel they are a burden much of unhappiness and, er, worry and, er, that shorten the life.

11:11:37:01

**Interviewer**

So now that you have told me your memories and your story, how do you feel?

11:11:45:11

**Adele Leblanc**

I feel I'm not crying now.

11:11:47:21

**Interviewer**

You've done amazingly.

11:11:49:07

**Adele Leblanc**

I did think I'm going to cry. And,

11:11:52:19

**Interviewer**

You didn't.

11:11:53:18

**Adele Leblanc**

I don't feel I'm crying now. So I'm happy again and if I can, er, help anything to do for you, maybe to convince other people to come and tell the story.

11:12:10:08

**Interviewer**

And for your family, who will be listening and who have heard what you have said today, what do you think they are going to say to you now?

11:12:23:03

**Adele Leblanc**

They must have been very worried, knowing how I am. I wouldn't say I'm a worrier, but they know it was deep, deep down and they must be very happy that now I will be able to speak *legement*, how do you say, very lightly, not, not with so much emotion and not with so much tears. As it happens, this grandson who is here, once or twice I mentioned one or two things, so he will be very pleased that I come out normal, if I may say so. [*Laughs*]

11:13:14:01

**Interviewer**

More than. And I would think that they are probably unbelievably proud of you and

probably feel that they can now ask you questions that they haven't been able to ask you before.

11:13:23:23

**Adele Leblanc**

Yeah, that is for sure. Proud, I wouldn't say proud. What is to be proud? Er, I do think every person who can give something, *contribuer*, how you say, to this important, er, *heritage* of the Holocaust must do it because, er, like I don't know I've seen in a, in a *journal*, in the newspaper that they didn't even know what the Holocaust is. How can that be? How can that be?

11:14:06:08

I do remember Rabi Lau; you know who that is? Rabi Lau was the Chief Rabbi in Israel before. In one of, in, er, one of his books he writes he went to Heidelberg. Heidelberg was the university, the top university in, in Germany. And he was not far from there at a, a Rabbi conference and he said he must go to Heidelberg to see how is it possible that people from Heidelberg could be Nazis. B, because he had found out that, er, I don't know if teachers or, or students, but this Heidelberg was like here but, it's the best, they were the best. So how is it possible? So if nobody is speaking, like I didn't speak for so long, what's going to happen? Nobody will know.

11:15:07:04

So my aim now is to see with people. I do quite a lot. A lot of people from Leipzig escaped to London with the Kindertransport or because they had the business, er, connection. So, er, I will try to do my part and convince people to contact and to, and to speak out.

11:15:35:22

**Interviewer**

Do you feel relieved?

11:15:37:13

**Adele Leblanc**

Yes, yes. Like I say, for sure I'm going to cry a lot. I have full of, of, er. Okay. Thank you very much.

**[Fade to black and back up]**

## **ARTEFACTS**

### **ARTEFACT 1: Scan of photo of Adele's mother, Rachel Atlas**

11:16:00:02

**Adele Leblanc o/ov**

This is a picture of my Mummy [...] not a very good picture. I've no idea when it was taken, no idea who gave it to me. One of my siblings, maybe the one [...] who are not here anymore, who passed away. [...] it's not like this I remember her. But still, it's good to have it, that's why it is, it's in my bedroom.

### **ARTEFACT 2: Scan of photo of Adele's father**

11:16:31:09

### **Adele Leblanc**

The same is with my father er, here. It's like I remember him. He was very very gentle, did take a lot of time off to be with the children, did take us to school, did bring us fresh rolls in the break. Every Saturday we went to a beautiful park, and he always was with us. But I also don't know who gave it to me.

### **ARTEFACT 3: Scan of photo of Adele's siblings**

11:17:04:21

#### **Adele Leblanc o/o/v**

[...] These are my siblings. There's my older sister, she was ten years older than me, my youngest brother, he looks like he has a little dress, but it's a boy and my older brother and me [...] I guess, four years, about, looks like [...] In Leipzig, I think in a studio. It's typical, they were, posed like it was. I hold his hand; my older brother and my sister takes care of my little brother.

### **ARTEFACT 4: Scan of photo of Adele and her little brother, Morris**

11:17:52:22

#### **Adele Leblanc**

Here is myself and my little brother who lives in Israel now and er, we see each other quite often now. He's only eighteen months younger than me [...] Maurice. [...] he lived er, actually in er, America, then he had a very [...] dangerous heart operation, [...] maybe twenty-five years ago, was not like today, a heart operation and he's said if he gets well, he goes and lives in Israel, that's what he did.

### **ARTEFACTS 5 & 6: Scans of photos of Adele at school**

11:18:36:13

#### **Adele Leblanc o/ov**

This photograph, I got from er, lady [...] who was in school with me, and she escaped to er, America, to New York, and she sent me these pictures, but she didn't mention who I'm there on the picture and I can't see myself. I don't know. I don't, recognise myself.

#### **Adele Leblanc to cam**

Not in one, not in two. But I do recognise the teacher.

#### **Adele Leblanc o/o/v**

The teacher, I do recognise. [...] in Leipzig in the Carlebach. The school from Carlebach where I, which I attended. It's a school outing I think [...] All the girls must be in my class, but there are also boys, I don't know. [...] She sent it to me, unfortunately she passed away  
[...]

### **ARTEFACT 7: Scan of photo of five generations of Adele's family**

11:19:31:08

#### **Adele Leblanc o/o/v**

This is my wonderful picture. I just got it. And here we have five generation and all very caring and I have a lot of pleasure having them from time to time

#### **Adele Leblanc to cam**

because my granddaughter, this one, lives in Manchester.

11:19:58:08

**Adele Leblanc o/o/v**

Was overwhelmed to get the picture. It's not every day you have five generation.

**[Fade to black and back up]**

11:20:10:20

**ARTEFACT 8: Scan of document 1 dated 1942**

11:20:15:13

**ARTEFACT 9: scan of document 2 dated 1942**

11:20:20:16

**ARTEFACT 10: scan of document 3 dated 1942 with date and place of birth mentioned.**