

Name of Interviewee: George Sarlo
Date of Interview: November 18th.
Name of Interviewer: Bill Yeingst
Length of Interview: 62 minutes

BY: Today is November 18th. We're in San Francisco, doing an oral history with Mr. George Saras [??].

GS: Sarlo.

BY: Sarlo? I'll let you take over.

GS: So, I am George Sarlo. I am 77 years old. We are in my home in the Seacliff, which is a part of San Francisco, California. It's a privilege to be part of this. I'm very happy to do the interview. I was born in 1938 in Budapest, Hungary. I am from an impoverished Jewish family. And shortly after I was born, the fascist government passed some of the Jewish laws, so I essentially lived under the Nazi regime for the first seven years of my life. Most of my family were killed. Only my mother, my sister, and I survived. The first thing I remember in my life is this childhood feeling of constant fear. I didn't know what I was afraid of, but of course, some horrible things were going on, including a lot of dead bodies all over the streets, bombs falling on us, living underground, being afraid of being killed., so that was a constant fear. Not only me, but everybody else I knew. I don't think that's unusual among immigrants. I think we leave because we are afraid. At least one of the reasons. After we were liberated by the Russian soldiers, I continued to live with my mother and sister, and my mother remarried, so I had a stepfather. He also lost his family. He had two beautiful children and a wife, and when he returned from the camps, they were gone. The interesting part is the way my parents reacted to all these losses. My mother, who was a very religious woman, decided after the Holocaust, if God allowed this to happen, she didn't want to have anything to do with him. So for the rest of her life, she was scared, bitter, very difficult person. My stepfather looked at it differently. He said: "Glory Be. He saved my life. What's more, He gave me a new family." And for the rest of his life, he went to the temple every day and prayed, and he was a very happy man. So it's sort of interesting how the same event can determine our lives different ways. So that was a big lesson.

BY: What were your parents' names? Can you talk a little bit about the neighborhood where you grew up?

GS: Sure. I lived in the same building, essentially, all my life, until I left Hungary. The address was Tobacco Street, Dohany[unintelligible], and that was right next to the main synagogue. It was a Jewish area, not officially a ghetto, but it felt like it. My mother's name was Cecilia Fishman. Her maiden name. Her married name was Cecilia Bryer, which was my original name. My father was known as Niklosh Bryer. Niklosh is equivalent to Nicholas. He was taken by the Nazis when I was four years old, and he never came back. I went to school. I joined the communist youth, because everybody joined the communist youth. Of course, I didn't know I was going to be a venture capitalist. In 1956, I enrolled in a technical university of Budapest. It turns out it was the university where the revolution started. In Hungary in 1956, we had the first armed uprising against a communist regime, and because

I went to that university, I was part of it. At first we didn't fight, we were just demonstrating in the streets, but the secret police started to shoot at us, and we ran. The Hungarian army opened up the armories for us, so it turned into a very ugly and long fight. And we actually won. For about twelve days, we controlled Budapest. I had an old rusty, Russian machine gun, at 18. I was very proud of it. I even knew how to use it, but I never shot. Then came the day when the Russians overran Budapest. I remember I was walking up and down the street in front of the Interior Ministry. I was guarding the secret police that we arrested, and I see this long line of Russian tanks coming across the bridge on the Danube. I looked at my gun, and I looked at that line, uh-uh. This wasn't going to work. So I ran home to mama. She was of course in terrible shape, she was basically lying in bed, wasn't able to even talk, because she didn't know if I was alive or not. Within a few days, we decided that, because I was in the revolution, I was in great danger. Our people were jailed and executed. So, my sister decided this was an opportunity to get out. Let's go to America. And that wasn't a strange thing to say, because my grandfather was American. I didn't really understand what it meant, but he came to America in the 1990s.

BY: Was this your maternal or paternal...?

GS: My father's father.

BY: Father's father.

GS: He didn't want to go into the army because there was no kosher food in the army. He fled to Germany, became a servant to a wealthy Jewish family, and then they moved to New York. They took him with them. I found the documents in Ellis Island, so I know exactly the day that he arrived, and I have a picture of the boat that he came on. So that was very interesting for me. I remember that although they were very poor, his citizenship papers were on the wall in the living room. That was the only thing on the wall. He was very proud of that. So going to America seemed like the thing to do, Of course, to get out of Hungary was very rough. My sister, her husband, their two-year-old child and I came together.

BY: Was she also a student at the time?

GS: No, she was already graduated. She was a teacher, history teacher, and her husband was actually a designer of airplanes. So they had good jobs, but they felt that they would have a better life, and to some extent, they were in danger too. The way we came, we didn't know where we were going. It was illegal to go within fifty kilometer of the border without official permission. So, we got on the train that was going in that direction, and it went for a few hours, and then it stopped and we had to get off. Found a bus which was going in the right direction, and we went on the bus until that had to stop. Then we found a local peasant, who said he knew how to get through the border. It was pretty chaotic, so the border wasn't guarded as much as normally. So he got a horse and a buggy, and we put the baby on the buggy, and we started walking toward the border, in mud. It was nighttime, and we knew there was a minefield that we had to get through, but this man said that he knew where others had gone already. I don't know if he knew or not, because after a while, he said: "This is as far as I'm going to go, and you are on your own." We could see there was a fence that was electrified, but somebody disconnected it somewhere, it was open at the bottom. There were soldiers in towers and they were shooting at us. I remember the noise that the bullets made. It was pretty exciting to get through there. We crossed into Austria on The Bridge at Andau, which became quite famous. James Michener wrote a book about

it, and I actually have a picture of it in my office. And we were free. We heard Germans talking, and they took us to the refugee camp, and we got some food.

BY: What year was this?

GS: 1956.

BY: So it was...

GS: It was November, I think, November 5th. The revolution started October 23rd, 1956. Right?

BY: How did you prepare to flee? Did you... Did you have a plan?

GS: No.

BY: Did you have special clothing, did you take photos?

GS: No.

BY: Did you take anything with you, money, anything? Or was it a spur-of-the-moment thing, let's go?

GS: It was more panic than anything. We had some Hungarian money, but you don't get very far with that. My mother actually saved a 5 dollar bill during the war, which was illegal. She cut a part open in my jacket, and she put it in there, and sewed it in, and that's all the real money we had.

BY: So she stayed.

GS: Yes. They were very old, and they didn't think they could make the trip. They had no other relatives, so it was very brave of them. She said: "Go." Knowing that she'll never see us again. Yeah.

BY: Let me take you back a little bit to your home life in the neighborhood.

GS: Before the war or after the war? It changed quite a bit.

BY: Maybe a bit of both.

GS: I don't remember much before the war. When the Nazis came in, which was March 19, 1944, I was living with my grandparents in a little village where they were from. My mother took me down there because the Americans were bombing Budapest, which was the industrial center, so she thought I would be safer in the little village. My sister and my mother stayed in our apartment next to the synagogue. As it turned out, it was a very bad decision because after the Germans came in, the Jews were no longer allowed to travel. She knew somehow that bad things were about to happen, she didn't know what. She convinced a Catholic friend of our family to go down there and get me out. And he risked his own life to do this. He took me with him on a train. European trains have these cabins; I don't know if you've been there, so we had a cabin, just the two of us. And he said: "Go and sit by the window," and he put his coat over me, and he said: "Be quiet. Don't move." The soldiers were coming through, checking documents, and he had his own document. I didn't have anything, but I didn't move. One of the soldiers had a bayonet at the end of his gun, and he lifted part of the coat. Didn't see me, but I remember seeing part of the knife. I didn't move. That's how my life was saved because within a week after, all the Jews were deported to Auschwitz and killed. If you were under 14, and I was only 6 at that point, you were killed within an hour of arrival. So clearly, he saved my life. After he died, and I went back, and I took care of his widow for 32 years, and then when she died, I've been taking care of the daughters, for the last twenty-some years, which is an amazing grace of God, to be able to do this.

BY: So you were reunited with your family in Budapest?

GS: With my mother and my sister.

BY: Yes.

GS: My father was gone.

BY: You continued to live in the apartment building where you had spent much of your childhood?

GS: Yes. All of it.

BY: What was that... What was your home, thinking... You lived there when your father was still alive.

GS: Right.

BY: What was your family life like? Do you have memories of holidays and celebrations of particular religious practices and beliefs?

GS: Yes. I remember going to the main synagogue, which is a quite beautiful. It's been completely restored. Yes, my family would go to the temple regularly. Maybe not every Friday, but certainly we celebrated. I would often spend my holidays with my grandparents, and that was a most wonderful time because, especially my grandmother, was very, very loving. I was the first male grandchild, so properly spoiled. I had a happy life until all these restrictions started to happen, and then we were really scared. I continued to live in that apartment after we were liberated. For a period of three months, we were put into what was called the foreign ghetto. That was for people who had passports from neutral countries, and you may have heard the name Raoul Wallenberg, he was a Swedish [unintelligible] who came to Budapest to save the Jews. He would make these false passports called the Schutz-pass. Sometimes the Nazis would honor it, sometimes not. He saved probably 10,000 - 20,000 Jews. We were saved by the Spanish Counsel. Spain was a fascist country also, and we had some relatives there. My sister, who was only 13 at the time, went to the Consulate, and would not leave until she got Schutz-passes. Middle of the night, can you imagine? It's interesting, she thought that she got it signed by the Spanish Counsel. It turns out that he wasn't the Counsel. He wasn't even Spanish. He was an Italian meat broker. These are crazy stories. But they're documented. There's a book and a movie about this guy. He was sent to Budapest to buy cattle to feed the Italian army. He got stuck because the Russians surrounded Budapest. It just so happens that he was a fascist who fought in Spain during their Civil War, on the side of the fascists. He had his medals, and he had his papers, so he went to the Spanish embassy, asking, "Can I stay here?" They let him in, and everybody fled. He pretended to be the Spanish Counsel, because he couldn't stand watching everybody being shot.

BY: You couldn't make this up.

GS: I could not. About forty years ago, I decided to try and find this man, to see if I could help him, or even to thank him. And I found him, but he just died. I got in touch with his son, and helped him put together a little museum for him that exists in Bologna. There was a book written about him and there is a movie called "Giorgio..." It's going to come to me, remind me, I...

BY: Okay.

GS: It's a very bad movie. It just proves that I'm not a complete liar.

BY: So you... What were you studying at the university?

GS: Well, I was just started. I enrolled as a civil engineer, but I couldn't draw a straight line, so when I came to America, I switched to electrical engineer.

BY: When you saw these events around the revolution unfolding, what gave you the courage and the conviction to embrace this? Because surely having grown up and witnessed the way things worked, it must have taken a great deal of courage on your part, to...

GS: I don't think so. I think it was more, 18 years old, adventure. Later, of course, it became very scary, but we didn't want to fight. We were marching arm to arm, singing songs, carrying the flag. Nobody expected in the revolution. So, I'd like to say it was courage, but it wasn't. The rest of life took courage.

BY: Pick up when you fled, and then what happened?

GS: We were in a refugee camp, and for many years I've been a director of the International Rescue Committee, which is the world's largest refugee organization. Whenever I give a speech, I tell them, I'm special because I was not only a refugee, but I was a refugee twice. It's not a distinction I would wish on anybody I like. It was really an adventure because once I was in Austria, I thought, the world is mine. I didn't know anything about passports and visas and money. Nobody told me. But I had five dollars, and I used it to call my stepfather's brother, who was in New York. He was an immigrant. He had never even heard of me. Next day, he was in Vienna. He got me a hotel room, so I didn't have to stay in refugee, and a warm coat, because I didn't have a warm coat in November, in Vienna. Then he said: "Look, we have to get your parents out. Otherwise, you'll never see them again." Another story. He found one of these guys who made a living out of it. You know, the coyotes on the Mexican border? Well, it was the Austrian version. The guy would get so much down, and he was supposed to go in and get my parents out, and then he gets the rest of the money. C.O.D. He's supposed to get back on Wednesday, and he doesn't show up. Thursday he doesn't show up, and everybody was very concerned. The best thing was, he just took off with the money, eh? But after a few days he showed up with my mother and my stepfather. Everybody's hugging and crying and kissing, and the guy is just standing there, "Where is my \$800?" Then he sees that my uncle had a transistor radio on the bed,

and it was playing music, and he was looking for the cord, and there was no cord, and he's never seen anything like that. So you know the story about buying Manhattan for \$200 in beads? I got my parents for a transistor radio. Crazy.

BY: Unbelievable.

GS: Because I had documents, and I was a revolutionary, I didn't need the passport and the visa, and they put us ahead of everybody else. Very soon, my sister and her family left for America. The agency who helps refugees paid for her way. Women and children first, so I was left behind. Within another week or two, I was allowed to get on a plane, and I think it was a DC-4. It stopped twice for refueling. I think that's when I was a little scared. 'Now what? Now what?' All my knowledge about America was... I don't know if you've ever read the Upton Sinclair ... It was about gangsters, and the Chicago meat yard. A little tougher than Russian tanks. It turned out fine. We landed in Camp Kilmer, which is an army camp base in New Jersey. I had my first meal in America. You know, the army chow is pretty good. The one thing that I had trouble with, I asked for milk, and they gave me this little carton, which I'd never seen before, and I kept looking for, where do I get it out? Started squeezing, and it was coming out ... I was there for one night, and the following day I was taken to New York, and met with my sister and her family. The following day, we flew to Los Angeles, where my uncle was waiting for us. He moved from New York to Los Angeles. We had another relative who had been there, an aunt. We had finally some connection to the place.

BY: Did your parents join you there?

GS: They had to wait for quite a while, several months, to get out. They were safe in Vienna. You want some more funny stories? We arrived to Los Angeles, and it's December. All the Christmas decorations are up, and it's blue skies, and the sun is shining, and they're coming from Vienna. I mean, you can imagine. We got into a taxi to go to the agency, and the driver asked, where are you from? We said we're from Hungary. He knew all about refugees, so he wouldn't take any money. He stopped to get some ice cream for us, in December. We went to the agency, there was a lady at the agency who took us to a little furnished apartment in Hollywood, which they rented for us. One bedroom, so my sister and her family stayed in the bedroom. I stayed in the living room, which had ... You know what a Murphy bed is?

BY: Mm-hmm.

GS: It's a bed that's in the wall. You can pull it down. I didn't pull it down right. In the middle of the night ... What a country, eh? The lady gave us some money, and pointed to where the market was, and said: "For dinner, you go there and buy food." We did, and we bought food, and we ate, and we were very happy. Next morning, the lady from the agency comes and,

"How was everything?" "Everything was fine." She walked around and gets to the kitchen, and picks up a can, which is empty. "You already have a cat?"

BY: Oh!

GS: It sounds crazy, but this is all true stories.

BY: I believe you.

GS: The next day we had a job. My brother-in-law and I were working. It was a little engineering firm. We specialized in hiring new immigrants because they were cheap. \$1 an hour, that was my wage, which I thought was wonderful. In fact, there's an article about us in the L.A. Times, and I think I have a copy someplace. Picture of us...

BY: Describe this community when you arrived. What was this neighborhood like? Where did you go hang out? Did you meet friends? How did you fit in? Did you engage in sports, or...?

GS: No.

BY: Anything? Language?

GS: None of that. It was a lower middle class neighborhood. We didn't know anyone. We never went to any place. We went to work in the morning, and one of our colleagues gave us a ride, and gave us a ride back. We stayed in the apartment pretty much all the time. We didn't stay there very long. We found an apartment in Venice, California, and that's where my uncle lived, so it was close to them. And there I started to go to school right away. I figured out that in this country, you have to have an education. It's not enough to be a communist. I enrolled in Los Angeles City College. I had no car, so I would take the bus, and that's a long ride. In the afternoon, I would go to the engineering firm and work in there, and at night, back to the city college, and then back home. I think I got maybe four hours a night of sleep, mostly on the bus. I was going to school, which was wonderful, and I started to make some friends there. I wrote to every university I could find asking for a scholarship, because I didn't have money. I got a response from University of Arizona. Tucson. I didn't even know how to pronounce the name of the town. They offered me a full scholarship. I turned it down because I didn't have the money for room and board. Here comes the next miracle. There was a Presbyterian minister who worked on the campus. He heard about me, and that I had to turn it down. He took up a collection among the Presbyterian students. Never even talked to me. That was enough to pay for my food. He went across the street to the Methodist fraternity. [Unintelligible]. He talked them into giving me a bed to sleep in,

and then he went to the Catholics, and talked them into giving me a part time job, to wash the dishes after the put-luck dinners. I swore I would never wash dishes again. Then he said: "Come on over." The first time I met him was at the airport in Tucson. He never asked who I was, what religion I was, he didn't have much money, and he had to guarantee my financials. He's still alive. I'm in touch. It's another grace of God. Every Sunday night, I was invited to their house for dinner. I met a girl. Another immigrant family. Her family was from Mexico. I got a bicycle. I went through college in two and a half years. I was in a hurry.

BY: What did you study?

GS: My major was electrical engineering, and my minor was nuclear engineering, which sounds ridiculous. Just moved here from a communist country and expect to work in nuclear engineering? What did I know? I would go home to California maybe two, three times a year. I was happy. It was great.

BY: Your parents had moved to California at that point?

GS: Yes.

BY: Going home... Home is a place many of us think of as a place of comfort and joy and reassurance. I'm curious when you returned home, was it different? Was it much the same as you remembered from those years in Budapest?

GS: It was very different because we were Jews. Hungary never felt like home. Yes, I had a home, and an apartment. I had loving parents for a while, but Hungary was not home. In fact, oftentimes I'm asked where were you born? And I sometimes answer, I was born an American, but in the wrong place.

BY: What does it mean to be an American?

GS: It means being very lucky. When I think of all the things that went right ... It's truly one miracle after the other. After I was 18, it was pretty much a straight line up. There is no other place in the world where I could have done what I've done here, where I could have lived the way I've lived here. It meant freedom, free to do anything. Especially in San Francisco. Most of my life was looking for freedom. At first, it's physical freedom, against an oppressive society. Probably, then, free of a rather difficult, oppressive mother. Then, freedom from poverty. Freedom from lack of knowledge. Then the freedom from my own

demons. That took a while. It's the only country that's ever been, where a skinny little refugee, persecuted by his own country, can get everything. Still. I'm very patriotic.

BY: Talk a little bit about your sense of identity. Do you consider yourself Hungarian? Do you consider yourself Jewish? Do you consider yourself American? Are there times when you might feel one of these versus another?

GS: What I am is a free man. That's my identity. Beyond that, I would say I am American. Very proud of it. I tried to teach my children and grandchildren how lucky they are to be born here. I do have a Jewish identity. It's not a religious identity. It's more a cultural identity because I never knew anything about Judaism. It's too scary. No, when I came to this country, I never dated Jewish woman. It was my subconscious way of protecting my future children. I married a Catholic girl. I have two daughters who were brought up Catholic. They went to the convent. God has a sense of humor. They both married Jews. You think you're going to get out of it so easy? Nah, ah, ah. My grandson and my granddaughter just had their Bar Mitzvah, which they insisted on. Go figure. Life is mysterious.

BY: Let's go back and pick up when you worked at university. You completed your degree, and then what happened?

GS: I looked for a job. My dean gave me an introduction to Hughes Aircraft, which was the largest employer in Tucson. I got a job offer from their California plant, Newport Beach. It was one of the very first semiconductor companies. In a way, my nuclear minor helped. I worked there for two years. I hated it. I wasn't meant to be an engineer. One afternoon, I walked through their lab, and my boss wasn't sitting at his desk, but on top of the desk was his paycheck stub. I knew that never in the history of human civilization, could anybody walk by somebody else's paycheck without looking, right? So I looked, and I saw my future, and I didn't like it. I think he was making \$2,500 a year more than I was. I quit that day. I asked people, what do you have to do in this country to make some money? That's an immigrant thing. Everybody was pointing at Harvard Business School. I didn't know that I can't possibly get in with my grades, so I applied. I think they needed a Hungarian that year. I got in and that, of course, changes everything. I learned a lot. It's a pedigree.

BY: You have this sort of drive to succeed.

GS: Yes.

BY: You knew you wanted to be an entrepreneur and be successful?

GS: I did not know I was going ... I wanted to be an entrepreneur. It never even come to my mind. To us, to my mother, if you can be an engineer, and you work for a big company, and you get a paycheck every week, that's about as good as it's going to get. So I never thought of starting my own company. I got a job in between first and second year, and I went back there after the second year, and I worked there for a couple of years. Then, I moved to New York. I was offered a partnership in an investment firm. You know the Dean Witter firm? It was the youngest son of Dean Witter, Bill Witter. He heard I was smart, and I guess he loved the irony [??] Within three years, I made my first million on Wall Street, which was a terrible mistake. I confused a boom market with intelligence, and that's very dangerous. I lost most of it, which was worth probably more than Harvard Business School.

BY: What year was it?

GS: This was 1966. I think. No. I graduated in 63 ... Yeah, 1966. I started at the bottom of the market, and Bill Witter loaned me \$50,000 for the incentive to come to work for him. He said: "If you lose it, you don't have to pay it back." I bought the most [unintelligible] stuff that I could find. It worked out, because even after I lost it, I learned a lot. Firm got into a bit of trouble, and I left the firm. I had difficulty fitting in there. Mostly very waspy ... It's not that they were nasty to me, I just ... The outsider. I moved to San Francisco. By that time I was married, another refugee. I had two daughters by then.

BY: So that was when, 1967?

GS: No, that was 1970.

BY: 1970.

GS: I became head of research for another investment firm here, and rented a beautiful place in Pacific Heights. A couple of years later, it came up for sale. I bought it. I think, \$125,000. My ex-wife just sold it for 5 million. She did very well. It was pretty much straight up from that point on. I started my own firm in 1973, another firm in 1974. The first was an investment management firm, which I thought was kind of boring. The second was a venture capital firm. We were one of the first. Again, being in Silicon Valley when the boom starts, and first in venture capital, I mean, how lucky can you get? It wasn't designed. I think that luck is really more than something that comes your way. The way I tell my daughters, luck is opportunities taken because not everybody jumps at luck. It doesn't look so lucky when you see it. For an immigrant, there was no such thing as risk. People often ask me, "You're a venture capitalist, isn't that risky?" I just sort of stare at them. What are you talking about? Compared to what? The Holocaust, or the Revolution, or the electrified fence? That helped because I was willing to take risks. We were very lucky and did very well. I started my current profession, this is my fourth profession. I started the foundation.

It truly, truly was the best thing I've ever done. And I started it as a tax dodge, I hate to tell you. It was legal. But, we did very well. The first fund we started, and I'm still partner with the same man, we raised a total of \$695,000, which, today, is ridiculous. That paid back 20 million dollars. So based on that record, we raised a whole bunch of other funds, and we all made money. I started the foundation about 15 years ago, and that's my job now.

BY: Can you talk a little bit about the work of the foundation?

GS: Absolutely. It's very important work. Very important. At the beginning, we focused on human rights, which is understandable, given my life. Education and health care to the neediest, and I mean the really neediest. We spent about half of our money overseas, where the dollar goes a lot further, and half in America. We did some wonderful things, and it's not because I was wonderful, but I met some wonderful people who had really great ideas. It was actually similar to being a venture capitalist. You meet smart people and then you help them to realize their dreams. I'll tell you about one which I think was the best, maybe not anymore, but for a long time. My eye doctor calls and says, "I would like you to meet a childhood friend of mine. He is also an eye doctor, and he is here to give a lecture at University of California." So I said: "Okay, I'm not doing anything. Send him over." So the guy comes in, sits down there, and he starts talking about himself and I am sort of listening, but, it wasn't that interesting. A nice Jewish boy from Chicago, and he's a doctor, right? Until he got to the part where he said something like: "Well, when I climb Mount Everest for the second time ..." And then you kind of ... Wait, what? Fantastic athlete. He climbed all the highest peaks in all the seven continents. I think only four people have done that. He was a professor at the University of Vermont, and he developed a low-cost cataract operation. You both know cataract ... If you live to be old enough, you get cataracts. It's not a disease, and it's very simple to remove it. Very short operation, 99.9% effective, and it's good for life. But if you don't take it out, then you go blind. Those people with a white ... In this country, the cost is about \$2,400, so everybody gets one because everybody can come up with insurance or something. But in a place like Nepal, or Tibet, \$2,400 is a lifetime income. They don't get the operation, and there are no doctors, and there is no equipment. So they go blind. And in an environment like Nepal, in the mountains, if you go blind, the average life expectancy is less than three years. So instead of a simple afternoon's work, it becomes a terminal disease, and it's very sad. This guy would go and climb, and then he would operate for a week, or two, for free. It cost me about \$28 an eye. So that's a venture capital type of ... I wrote him a check. I got on the plane with him, I went to India, and I helped, and you can't imagine that feeling. You see old, old ladies, who haven't been out of the kitchen for ten years because they're blind, who hear about this American doctor's coming. They announce it on the radio. She walked for four days, led by the nine-year old granddaughter, and then when it's her turn, she doesn't know what's going to happen. She lies on the table. Usually we do it in a monastery, and the monks are the assistants. She gets disinfectant and ... What is the word for painkiller?

BY: Painkillers, yeah.

GS: Then she is under a microscope and the doctor operates, and it takes a few minutes. And then she gets the patch, and then she stays overnight, and the monks change the patch, and they feed them. In the morning, we come back and we take off the patch. It's incredible to watch.

BY: You can reflect a little bit on what are you most proud of?

GS: Proud of?

BY: And also, what's been the most challenging for you?

GS: Well, the challenge part was different things at different times. Obviously, survival. I would say that, in America, the most challenging part was to try to regain my humanity. You know, that trauma leaves a mark on you. Very often, trauma creates mental illness, and the mental illness is a very painful thing. You will do almost anything to stop it. And then you become an addict, so we're now focused on mental illness and addiction because there was mental illness and addiction all over my family. I didn't realize it then, but I, myself had a true clinical depression period, for sure. Extremely painful. My first wife was depressed all her life. Also a refugee experience. My mother was an alcoholic and also hooked on Valium. My sister was alcoholic. It's not that unusual. It's all over. The way we treat them is truly criminal. We lock them up. So we're working really hard to change that, and there is an opening right there, where the stigma is lessening a little bit, in both. More on mental illness than ... Addiction is still a very dark place, but we're making progress, and it's very exciting. It's very important. In America, 30% of Americans will have, sometime in their lives, clinical depression. Less than 10% get treated. It's a stigma, and they don't even know what it is. They know it hurts, and their wives know. PTSD, are you familiar with PTSD?

BY: Sure.

GS: One billion people have it worldwide, and almost nobody gets treated. You know, American veterans commit suicide one an hour? We have some solutions. Exciting.

BY: What are you most proud of?

GS: I was going to first say my children, then I was going to say my grandchildren, and the foundation's work. By the way, both of my daughters are helping me with the foundation, which is very special. But I think what I'm most proud of ... Restoring my humanity.

BY: That triumph of the human spirit.

GS: Yeah, I don't act like a 78-year-old. I'm kind. I like myself. I think that's probably it.

BY: It's a very good thing to be proud of.

GS: Sorry about all this emotional stuff, but it's probably not unusual.

BY: It's not unusual, and it has to be emotional. We've covered a lot. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

GS: Just that I'm very grateful. I often debated that the best possible feeling, is it love, the best possible feeling? I think a combination of those two is the best possible thing.

BY: I have one more question. I'm particularly curious about your daughters, and their home life, and their household, and how this incredibly rich and diverse heritage that you and your wife and family brought to this, how are they the same, how are they different, in their lives and their experiences than your generation?

GS: Unfortunately, we find that children of Holocaust survivors have [unintelligible] so they're struggling with depression. They're beautiful. I'll show you the pictures. They are good people, but they are both single parents. I've been married twice, so some of this stuff that we carry with ourselves, unfortunately, keeps on going. I think that I have been able to cut some of the chains, and maybe that's what I'm most proud, and I think they are cutting the chains so that their grandchildren will have a better life. They are healthy, physically, they are beautiful, they are smart, but there is some mental problems. Nothing severe, nothing like what I went through, and they know it. They carry it the best way they know how. I think there's a lot more love in their families than was in mine. It's very difficult to ... Not so much give love, but accept love, after what I've been through.

BY: In terms of cultural markers of identity, do you have a continued ... You did talk about your religious beliefs and practices? What about language, food, music?

GS: They don't speak Hungarian. I never asked them to speak, and I didn't talk much about being a Jew either. They all have some Jewish education. They know that I am from Hungary and their grandmother is from Lithuania, but only one of them has been in

Lithuania. None of the grandchildren have been to Hungary. I will take them sometime, but they'd rather go to Mexico. My children have been to Hungary, and it was scary. They were scared of being there. I was scared of being there. My daughters cook Hungarian food. I think they are probably more Jewish than Hungarian, or Lithuanian. The traditions are very difficult to transfer, especially when I am drawn both ways. Hungarian food is great, and I love hiking in Hungary, but the people are ... Mixed messages.

BY: Well, good. I just have to ask one more thing. As a young student, you lived the revolution, and you then came to the United States, and in the 1960s and early 70s, your witnessing this almost revolutionary, certainly cultural revolution and political revolution to some degree. What was it like witnessing that, and did you participate in any way.?

GS: No. Remember, I was a professional investor at the time. On the other hand, I can tell you that some of our research dollar is in psychedelics, and we're finding a great deal of potential. Now, the way they handle that is very different now. Now, we're doing the research at New York University and UCSF, but there is good stuff coming out of it. No, I didn't connect with... I missed the sexual revolution. Maybe it's not too late. I'm dating.

BY: I think we'll end on that.

GS: It's a good place. I can be very inappropriate.

[END OF AUDIO]