THAT'S THE STORY: WORDS AND MUSIC BY GREGORY STONE

Volume I

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Cristina Stone, M.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1992

Dissertation Committee:
D. Barnes
P. Mullen
A. Shuman

Approved by

P. Mullen
Department of English
To All Those Who Knew My Father

And To Denise Levertov, Who Did Not:
You Will Know Him When His Dreams Become Yours
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Dr. P. Mullen for sharing the perfect understanding of both life and story that has helped me in my efforts to know my father. I know that the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. A. Shuman and Dr. D. Barnes, are as generous with understanding as they are understanding of generosity—and for that, I am sincerely thankful. For the long-distance, short-notice assistance of Dr. Elise Goodman, I am also thankful. Without the high-tech intelligence of my brother-in-law, Andrew Wermes, I am certain that my dissertation would still be in a state of dis-order, of dis-computer. Without the artistic talent of Dennis Chiangi, I am convinced that my model would still be an unbelievable dis-figure. I believe that seeing the unhappy tears of my sister, Toranna Wermes, convinced me, finally, that, for life story, one page is too many, and one thousand pages are too few: "Half his stories aren’t here; the other half aren’t his stories." I am grateful to Toranna for her criticism, and hopeful that her recommendations have spared her remembrances. Of course, I am equally grateful to my mother, Ingeborg Stone, for the bullheaded support she gave as I pursued the Holy Grail, and the happy tears she shed as she read the life story of her husband, Gregory Stone—of my father. Thank you, Papa.
VITA

19 March 1949 .... Buenos Aires, Argentina

1970 .... Reno, Nevada
The University of Nevada
B.A. in Philosophy

1970 - 1974 .... Columbus, Ohio
The Ohio State University
1972 .... M.A. in Philosophy
1974 .... M.A. in English

1975 - 1983 .... Athens, Greece
Editor, Center of Planning
Assistant to Director, Fimo Ads

1983 - 1989 .... Columbus, Ohio
The Ohio State University
Graduate Teaching Assistant
Marbella, Spain
Columbus International College
Instructor

1989 - 1990 .... New Haven, Connecticut
Albertus Magnus College
Assistant Professor

1990 - present .... New Haven, Connecticut
Paier College of Art
Director, Evening Studies/CED
Assistant Professor

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: English
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>STOPPING THE STORIES</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Stopping</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Background: Life Story</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And the Narrative Itch</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreground: Life Story</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And the Dissertation’s Niche</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shifting Ground: Life Story</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And the Perspective Switch</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Ground: Life Story</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And the People Enriched</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>The Stories</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>THE SPECIALIST IN DISORDER</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Art Dares Life to a Game of Tag</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Fantasy Joins Fact in Blind Man’s Bluff</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Intuition Challenges Reason to Play at Hide and Seek</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>STARTING THE STORIES</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Starting</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>The Stories</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taste/Smell/Sight</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

GS: So many years, I can’t fit, put many things together. I told you so many episodes, but I don’t know how to connect them.

CS: But they’re all connected, you said.

GS: Yes; no. When I talk to you now.

CS: Aren’t they all connected?

GS: I was there, but I don’t know exactly the time.

CS: Is that important?

GS: You said you’re doing the job. I don’t know.

CS: I know, but I’m asking you. Is that important for the job, about the time?

GS: No, no. You can, you can use your imagination for those things.

CS: It’s not important to you, the time?

GS: No, no, no. Who cares?

CS: What about the names of the people? Is that important?

GS: Names? It’s all forgotten.

CS: So what is important out of all of this?

GS: Your fantasy. (R2/A)

And yours, I thought . . . At first, I tried to hitch a ride to understanding the story of your life. I thought that getting the person right was a question of getting the facts
straight—of getting to the intersection of name and date, of getting to the right place at the right time. Like a tourist searching for the right way to the soul of the city, thumbing a roadmap with one hand, a ride with the other, I tried to map the city of the soul.

But chasing after names, dates, and places on the playground of your life story—where art dares life to a game of tag, where fantasy joins fact in blind man’s bluff, where intuition challenges reason to play at hide and seek—led to deadends. Grasping, running after facts, I started to lose sight and sound of the person I sought to know. Running out of patience, gasping for breath, your story stopped.

And I found your loss as great as mine: life through story from life in story wants the steady rhythm of withdrawal and engagement, relaxation and exertion, give and take. It took me a long time to learn to stop looking and listening for shortcuts to understanding your life story, to relax with the only fact that finally matters: however painful or pleasurable for me, the taking of story is, for you, the gift of life.

Given the stop-start rhythm of this study, this preface seems a likely place to pause and introduce the reader to the order of disorder, the disorder of order—the equilibrium, finally, of life and story. The seemingly unordered movement from story endings (Chapter I), via theme (Chapter II), to story beginnings (Chapter III) records the insistence with
which I ignored the obvious, with which I failed to recognize that, for my father, story occurred as a response to random, disordered sensory stimuli, and theme recurred not randomly, but as an ordering response to that very disorder. And both figure significantly in the equilibrium that the life story process seeks to maintain—sensory stimuli, as the most insistent of the forces for dynamism, theme as the most emphatic of the forces for conservatism (Figure 1, Appendix A).

Chapter I emphasizes the preconceptions and problems that, in my father’s case, almost put a close to the life story process. Part B—openly confessing to cut- and paste-work—illustrates the main points of Part A as it pieces together the stories of my father’s escape from Russia, tales that themselves barely escaped my incessant barrage of interruptions and questions.

Chapter II answers to the question of theme by adopting the overlooked typical perspective of people in old age—disorder—and by announcing the underrated special challenge to people in late life—self-conservation. The disorder theme best allows my father to view self, life, story, as of a piece: for my story-teller, the continual alignment and realignment of the "was" with the "is" entails the creation of a specialist in disorder, a dramatic hero of the disordered past who favors, in the disordered present, the maintenance of self-continuity and self-identity. Parts A, B, and C,
identify variations on the theme of disorder expressed in the protagonist's gestures toward daring and defiance; his involvements in crossed borders, reversed roles, and imaginative leaps; his encounters with destiny and death, respectively.

Chapter III remarks on the life story with respect to its function as a model of adaptation, and comments on the creative role of the life-story teller, who constructs and reconstructs the self existing in the interplay of forces whose balancing and rebalancing tends towards the equilibrium achieved by a continuance of the rhythmic relaxation/exertion of life. Part A singles out the forces for conservatism and dynamism involved in that process, and analyzes the responses--my father's stories and vivid impressions--evoked by sensory stimuli. In tracing story beginnings to their sources, Part B presents an inventory of the most important of the dynamic forces in my father's life story, and provides an ending, of sorts, to fantasy's story-giving, life-giving process.
 CHAPTER I
STOPPING THE STORIES

Grisha ran. From dawn to dusk he ran, trailing the telega that jostled Obermann, Amerikov, and a satchel of music across the frozen Romanian steppe. From dawn to dusk he ran, tripping on the hay that spilled over the peasant’s cart, slipping on the ice that cracked under the horse’s weight.

Grisha ran. Behind him, the closed border, the icy Dniester, whose banks, come spring, would redswell to tell of those who wouldn’t wait—for the emigrant’s visa, for the contact’s knock, for the smuggler’s lantern—and so were twice felled, fired at once by the Russian border guards, shot at again by the Romanian Siguranza.

Grisha ran. Before him, the open steppe, the open road, the open cart, the reeling wheeled coffin that wouldn’t wait—for the gunfire to stop, for the thaw to start.

Without gloves or boots, hat or coat, Grisha ran to stay alive. Without food or drink or rest, Grisha ran for eighteen hours. And when, with frostbitten face, chest, hands and
feet, he finally stopped running, he couldn't speak. Months would pass before Grisha could tell of his escape from Revolutionary Russia.
A. STOPPING

Background: Life Story and the Narrative Itch

A score and some odd years ago, when I was growing up, childhood—-with its innocent but inconclusive ploddings and plottings—-often seemed "a nice place to visit, but . . . ." And while I knew I wouldn't be staying forever, I passed a good deal of time planning and practicing for my eventual escape. Sometimes, however, whether from the heights of my special elm tree or from the depths of my secret tunnel, I contemplated plans that seemed forever condemned to the ups and downs of adult interference. At those times, I eagerly exchanged climbing and crawling for looking and listening; and adopting the diabolical logic of adulthood, I sent innocence to the corner store while I prepared to swap a world of actions for a world of words, to escape childhood on the tales of one of its privileged pastimes: "Papa, Tell me a story."

For some students of "story" (the what of narrative) and "discourse" (the way of narrative), narratology seems old enough to send to the corner store but young enough to lose its way among its whats. In fact, for those unfamiliar with the rapid transit of ideas in the age of Postmodernism ("the Toyota of thought"),1 the ease with which stories are now being produced and consumed must give pause: musicology and psychology, cinematography and ethnography—all, it would
seem, have tales to tell. Thus, for example, students eager to follow the movements of the Sonata-Allegro or the Native American are now encouraged to look for narratives and listen to theorists, who "tell the story" of traditional Sonata-Allegro form (a tale of incompatibility, involving a key story and a theme story) or of Native American culture change (a tale of discontinuity, involving an acculturation story and a resistance story)." Of course, as every child knows--and as some theorists argue--it is difficult, if not impossible, to resist "story": if it is not a universal phenomenon, storytelling seems to be a fact of, at least, Western life.

Stories about lives--familiar, to most students, from sociology or psychiatry, history or anthropology--might have seemed until recently, less disquieting than tales about changing keys and cultures. In fact, however, the tale of the "life story" is short and stormy. Drifting into Folklore only a quarterly or so ago, the life story submerged folklorists in a wave of criticism that seems, temporarily, to have left both fieldwork and scholarship somewhat at sea. Doggedly paddling fieldworkers who had privileged history rather than story, and scholars who had privileged anthropological theory rather than literary theory, one champion of the life story made a titanic, if perplexing attempt to disentangle the novel folkloric form from the familiar genres with which it might naturally have been confused. Unlike, for example, the personal history--which swelled with names, dates, and places
drained from the informant by means of the insensitive probes and persistent interruptions of the anthropologist, whose righting of the "facts" filled in the holes left by forgetfulness and falsification, filled out the whole truth and real life of another human being by recreating knowledge historically and logically sound—the life story challenged history and fact, truth and reality to surge with what seemed, at first, the intensity of creation itself."

Foreground: Life Story and the Dissertation's Niche

Created of the folklorist, by the folklorist, and for the folklorist, the life story seems, to me, to chronicle not the development of a methodology or the definition of a genre, but the discovery of a contradiction. Although some folklorists had experienced what Geertz (following Shakespeare) calls a "sea change" in their view "not so much of what knowledge is," but of what it was they wanted to know, neither fieldwork nor scholarship gave expression to that change. The life story seems, again to me, to record the depth of dissatisfaction with existing practice and theory felt by folklorists who, finding that they wanted to know not the "facts" that made up an accurate history, but the "personality" that made for an affecting story, found also that their perception of, for example, interviewing and editing wanted revisioning, that their conception of, for example, eloquence and intention
wanted rethinking. 

But the difference between perception and conception is categorical: Although, in its practical application, the life story affirms the significance of the personal space and time of the other by requiring not only a new kind of looking and listening of the fieldworker (who himself must learn to adopt one of the most effective postures for students of personality—a "blank screen"—and "one of the most effective probes" for students of story—a "simple silence"), but also a new kind of being (a being in touch with the exertion/relaxation that is the essence of the life story). However, life story scholarship reaffirms outdated theory that must, eventually, inundate practice in new waves of contradiction. Thus, for example, theorists continue to contrast "fact" with "fiction," to identify "fiction" with "personality" (Titon) when, for some time now, both the "fact" and the "personality" have been problematized. Given, then, the absence of a set of characteristics that might describe a genre, of a collection of studies that might prescribe a methodology, the student of the life story faces both practical and theoretical problems whose solutions must particularize rather than universalize.
Shifting Ground: Life Story and the Perspective Switch

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a graduate student in possession of a Prospectus must be in want of a Dissertation. And although I had the good fortune not to want for good advice as I prepared to study "the life story," I now believe that my initial engagements with the genre--in the Prospectus, in the field, in the Dissertation--undertaken from an unadvisedly triumphant post-generals, middle-aged perspective as natural, perhaps,' as it proved noxious, stopped the life story as effectively as the victory of Zela concluded, according to story, the Pontic campaign.

Although life-story literature is inconclusive at best, inadequate at worst, I came to Folklore, Literary Theory, and Anthropology with expectations of fitting out my Prospectus with the Assumptions and Problems, the Vocabulary and Methodology that would enable and enrich my Dissertation. Surveying the literature, I have come to see, is a poor substitute for working the field. Although my father's life is disordered at best, diseased at worst, I saw in the fieldwork an opportunity to order the past (my father's as well as my own) by ransacking and recording the present repository till the story of a life could be worked to fit the preconceptions of a lifetime. All fieldwork and no play,' I have found, makes the student dull, the study--which substitutes contrivance for creativity--predictable. Although
my father's story is unpredictable at best, unknowable at worst, I conquered the Dissertation by arming myself with the known features of traditional tales and tellers--from stylized postures to set pieces--by arming myself against the anomalous features of my father's life story--from set gaze to still hand--that threatened my confident preconceptions. A rhythmic exertion and relaxation--battling first and, then, befriending the anomaly--I have discovered, enables the "transformation"--the new ways of seeing and doing opened to those who share life stories (marked here, as in the literature--where the remarkable is more often announced than analyzed--by quotes indicative of the uneasiness enclosing the exceptional)--for which knowledge is no substitute. "Veni, vidi, vici"--my father sometimes quotes Caesar when starting the story of a musical triumph. But after citing the general, my father shrugs his shoulders, looks me in the eye, and smiles at the juxtaposition of artist and army man, "Sometimes happens in life what you don't expect."

Like a stray dog with a full belly, a well-fed expectation is not easily sent away. And my pet expectations about the life story--nourished, in retrospect, on readings that assumed not the perspective of a person in old age, of a person destined to live the increasing dis-order and dis-ease concomitant, in many cases, with the cultural, biological, and psychological experience of growing older, but the perspective of a person not yet in old age, of a person
determined to assault disorder like a well-trained watchdog—seemed here to stay. After reading in—and into—recent scholarship in folklore (e.g., J.T. Titon, D. Ben-Amos), literary theory (e.g., S. Sacks, H. Richter) and anthropology (e.g., L.L. Langness, N.J. Schmidt), I filled up page after page with bloated suppositions about the ordering principle of the life story (the necessary and sufficient properties of the genre). Ordering Sacks to heel and Titon to speak, I soon became comfortable with my menagerie of inflated claims about my father’s (Papa’s? Stone’s? Gregory’s? Grisha’s? Grigorash’s?) life story: informed by a principle of coherence similar to that of the apologue, his life story affirmed identity—gave shape to "personality" (Titon) and to "belief" (Sacks)—through its organization as a fictional example of a set of statements involving "fortune."¹⁰

Fortunately, it’s sometimes hard to teach an old dog new tricks, and more than one stray has been known to bite the feeding hand. So, as I strayed back and forth between footwork and bookwork—among the fifty plus tapes in my collection and the fifty plus entries in my bibliography—I began to tear at the thin-skinned assumptions that had fattened my original expectations. Following Titon, I had assumed the validity of the life story as "a fiction, a making, an ordered past imposed by a present personality upon a disordered life."¹¹ I had assumed, in other words, the identity of the perspectives of life-story scholar and
life-story teller. From the point of view of the scholar not yet in old age—for whom the life story is the object of study, and not the subject of experience—a life past may indeed seem disordered relative to a present personality. From this perspective—which views life’s lack of coherence as a natural state of affairs which must be remedied by importing and imposing law and order from without—the chaotic past seems to await the commanding presence of the personality like the saloontown of the old West might have anticipated the arrival of the sheriff from back East—or, in more modern terms, like the Board of Directors might await the report of the Chief Executive Officer.

In fact, researchers on middle adulthood report findings confirming the characteristically "in command" perspective of men and women in middle age. According to Neugarten, for example, "the executive processes of personality in middle age" (viz., "self-awareness, selectivity, manipulation and control of the environment, mastery, competence, the wide array of cognitive strategies") are of prime importance to members of this age group." Further, adults in middle age tend to view themselves as the most important and powerful members of their society: as the "norm-bearers" and the "decision-makers," they constitute the generation "in control." And while they feel responsible to the younger, sympathetic to the older generation, people in middle adulthood tend to view their period of the life span as
qualitatively different from, and better than, other age periods: from their perspective, middle adulthood is "the period of maximum capacity and ability to handle a highly complex environment and a highly differentiated self."\textsuperscript{13}

Recent researchers have documented the ways in which the elderly have created self-order in spite, or because of their experiences with dis-ease (e.g., debility, dementia, disengagement, and desocialization).\textsuperscript{14} And past researchers have studied the ways in which people in old age have experienced dis-order--biological and social.\textsuperscript{15} But, thus far, few researchers have questioned the assumptions on which their conclusions have been based: and, in most cases, they have assumed the validity--or, perhaps, inevitability--of their own ordered and controlled sense of self, of their own middle-aged sense of confidence.\textsuperscript{16} And while it may, in fact, be physically impossible to assume any perspective but one's own, it seems worthwhile to investigate the consequences, for the life story, of considering what might be true if one were to assume the perspective of a person in old age, of a person, that is, whose view of past and future is conditioned by a present experience of disorder.

As Myerhoff points out, "With various models and purposes, the old point the way to the search through life experience from the perspective of the present . . . " If, however, the perspective of the present is assumed to be one of disorder, it is difficult to understand how people in old
age might go about, on Myerhoff's description, "sorting and rearranging the past for the understanding that is required before it is too late." Sorting and rearranging would seem to presuppose a sense of order, a sense of self natural for people who feel "in control," for people who feel "in command" of "an ordered past imposed by a present personality."—less natural, in any case, for those in old age than for those in middle age.

In his work on the life review—the "naturally occurring, universal mental process characterized by the progressive return to consciousness of past experiences," in older people—Butler draws aside—as insightful as his conclusions—that seem to the point. Thus, for example, in discussing the pointed need of the aged for participant observers, "professional or otherwise," that witness the process of the life review, Butler notes that the "danger" assumed concomitant to the process—and, by implication, to truth—is indicative of the concept of a privileged perspective—viz., that of the professional observers and not that of the older persons. Similarly, in discussing the need of the researcher for studies that witness the positive responses of the aged, Butler notes that the emphasis of American gerontological research ("concerned almost enthusiastically with measuring decline in various cognitive, perceptual, and psychomotor functions.") is indicative of the influence of a prevailing stereotype—viz., that of older people's increasing inability
to change--likely to remain invulnerable unless research redirects its attention to the perspective of individuals in old age."

It is important, I think, to note the shift in direction effected, in this study, as a result of questioning the ordered perspective typically assumed in life-story research: once the importance of disorder is granted, the interest of research is altered. Interestingly, with a present experience of disorder as a given, the focus of the research question shifts from form to function: "What makes the life story coherent?"/"How does the life story cohere?" becomes "What makes the life story functional?"/"How does the life story function?" And while it may be unbecoming for a researcher to confess to false starts or frequent stops on the slow road to understanding, I believe that despite an inconclusiveness inevitable, perhaps, in works about individuals, this study avoids the misunderstandings and mistaken conclusions of some life-story research because it has been able, slowly, to work through and learn from its own mistaken questions and methods, because it has been able, surely, to work in and with the stop-start rhythm of its informal contexts, which resisted metronomic questions and unquestioned methods. It is important, in other words, to note that for this study, replacing the guiding questions of the Prospectus--viz.,"What is the principle of coherence organizing a particular life story (qua 'self-contained fiction')?" and "What are the
defining properties of the genre, the types in the grammar?"--with the guiding question of the Dissertation--viz., "How does my father's life story fit into the undeniable disorder of his present experience?" or "Given my father's present experience of disorder, what makes his life story functional?"--represents not a quick decision, but a long, hard, day-to-day process of learning the rhythm of adaptation, of experiencing the exertion and relaxation that allowed me to function within the facts both of my father's present life and of his life story.

Atypical in its focus on the present perspective of a specific individual in old age, this study explores the ways in which his typical experience of disorder may find expression in the text and context of his particular life story. More particularly, this study suggests that given my father's present experience of disorder--expressed, for example, in his sometimes futile efforts to command bladder, birthdates, or blasphemies--his life story seems to function as an adaptive mechanism favoring the continuance of the systolic-diastolic, active/passive rhythm that tends to encourage successful adaptation--natural, psychological, and social. 20 Naturally, the conclusions of this study must particularize rather than generalize. However, given the kinship of the life story to the life review--on Butler's view, a universal phenomenon and "a possible response to the biological and psychological fact of death" 21--and the
conformity of this particular storyteller's perspective to that generally held by people in old age—by those, that is, whose proximity to death, "the last random, untidy event of all." may contribute to their current experience of disorganization, disruption, and disorder—it may be possible to view life-story telling as an adaptive model, generally, for people in old age. If so, then it may be necessary to review concepts like memory and longevity—which this model describes not as psychological or physiological processes whose "diminished performance" in old age is a function of cognitive or genetic impairment, but as creative expressions of adaptation.

My view of the life story as a mechanism effecting adaptation—i.e., as a process for achieving a result—is as new to me as it is to folklore; thus, I am still unable to fully articulate the implications of this revisioning for the folklorist interested in the life story. However, because, on this view, the full functioning of the life story requires the disinterested participation of two human beings, I think that both the theory and practice of life-story taking must be affected in ways that, in this study, I can only begin to describe. Further, I believe that as a result of the new way of viewing the life story suggested in this study, the folklorist who wants to work with the stories of people whose lives are ending must expect not only to revise old ways of doing and old ways of seeing in fieldwork and bookwork, but
also to rethink ways of asking and answering old questions—
especially those involving the rights and obligations of the
human being who professes an interest in folklore.

Being a folklorist in the house of a stranger, an
acquaintance, or a friend is not like being a folklorist in
the home of a parent. But, as Malinowski has observed,
"Nothing is as difficult to see as the obvious"; and, unlikely
as this may seem, until I came to see the life story as an
adaptive mechanism, I viewed the father/daughter relationship
of story-teller to story-listener sometimes as complicated,
but never as crucial. Now, however, I believe that the
parent/child relationship—with a history longer, broader, and
deeper than that of the story-teller/story-listener
relationship in which the folklorist usually participates—
provided the basis for something like a crucial experiment by
demanding heart and head decisions of the daughter that would
not typically have been required of the folklorist. Further,
because the father/daughter relationship was not without a
history of feelings and thoughts—of typical expressive modes
and methods, of shared and unshared memories and expectations—
it proved a continuous challenge to the efficacy of the
methodological approach and the adequacy of the methodical
assumptions with which I had equipped myself as I prepared to
study the life story.

To those accustomed to reading for conclusions, this
study might, at times, seem more preparatory, more
preconditional, more personal than others of its kind; without intending unkindness, I suggest that for such readers—folklorists included—working with, would be as difficult as reading about the life story. For several reasons (clarified, I hope, by the necessary discussion of my fieldwork experience following), the folklorist accustomed to the collection and classification of things—of conclusive findings or cultural fragments—must be disappointed by this study's continual insistence on the reconstruction of methods and expectations. Equally necessary and disappointing, I believe, must be the fact that given the view of the life story as an adaptive mechanism—given, in other words, the emphasis not on product, but on process—this study provides, finally, suggestions rather than conclusions, descriptions rather than definitions—recommendations not for the collecting, but for the functioning of the life story.

If the model recommended in this study“ is found to represent an accurate description of the life story not only of my father, but also of other people, then, I believe, the folklorist who wants to participate in the lives and stories of people in old age needs to rethink the practical and theoretical consequences of the responsibility assumed: when the life story works—when it functions to encourage adaptation—it has both qualitative and quantitative effects (measured as a better, longer life) for another human being. Furthermore, when the life story doesn't work—when, for
example, the folklorist is unable to fully satisfy the conditions enabling its proper functioning—the loss for that human being is immeasurable. And while I am unable to specify the conditions necessary and sufficient for the successful operation of all life stories, I believe that because the life story is a process occurring through time and space, several of the important constraints to the proper functioning of my father's life story can be assumed to apply generally.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that the set of unmatched assumptions and expectations, plans and methods that I brought with me from the United States to the oddly unfamiliar ground of my parents' home in Spain would be those of both the child and the folklorist. It was not inevitable, however, that my bags of preconceptions would survive the wear and tear of five plus years of commuting between two continents and two roles; fortunately, they did not prove stain resistant, tear resistant, shock resistant. Furthermore, the thoughts and feelings grounded in the father/daughter relationship formed the background of the conformity against which features of my father's life story seemed defiant anomalies resisting every effort to make them behave. And without the time and space to behave like a daughter—to think and feel and do things other than those typically thought, felt, or done by the folklorist bound to the temporal and spatial constraints of the formal contexts in which life stories are usually documented—I would have been insensitive to the anomalies
whose emergence changed the way in which I saw my father's life story. And even had I been sensitive to the need for changes in methods or assumptions, without the contextual informality that made it possible, for example, for me to perform two pianos or rehearse three dogs, to stuff chicken breasts or to unstuff kitchen cupboards, I would have lacked opportunities to implement those changes. Further, the opportune informal contexts in which I functioned gave me room not only to exchange old thoughts and actions for new, but also to develop and evaluate new ways of thinking and doing; they gave me room, in other words, first to respond to the urgency and immediacy of new situations and, later, to reflect on the nature of my responses. More importantly, perhaps, the natural contexts, which gave me the chance to experience the exertion/relaxation that is the essence of the life story, gave the life story study room to influence its own development.

It is difficult to consider the rejection of old assumptions apart from the development of new methods: original ways of thinking influenced original ways of doing as much as revised thoughts and actions were influenced by original assumptions and methods. Still, those expectations which, originally, prevented my father's life story from functioning require annotation. For example, as I prepared to study the life story, I did more than take note of the fact that the father/daughter relationship of story-teller/
story-listener would preclude the possibility of "stranger value." Rather, I assumed that the relationship would affect my efforts only negatively, that the familiarity would only make my work less valuable because more biased. I assumed, in other words, that my work on the life story would necessarily reflect a bias, a positive "halo effect": in effect, I anticipated filling in the blanks in my father's life story with protective, positive evaluations resulting from role or reputation rather than conversation or observation. And rather than giving myself the chance to observe the actual effects of the relationship on my work, I protected myself against what I imagined as the inevitably harmful effects of familiarity by structuring research questions and constructing research methods in ways that might have ensured the reliability of the researcher, but were sure to restrict the integrity of the research. Thus, the harmless checks for listener reliability—e.g., "spacing" interviews (Ives), collecting "versions" (Ives), "sampling" family (Sundberg, Joyce Langness)—replete in the literature, but not always relevant, became, for me, not guidelines, but guarantees. In fact, my misguided efforts to deny the possible positive effects of the father/daughter relationship resulted, originally, in the "coherence hypothesis" that, for a long time, obstructed both the understanding and the functioning of my father's life story: I arrived at the hypothesis that my father's life story is informed by a
principle of coherence similar to that of the apologue by playing and replaying the 1984 story tapes in an effort to identify the negative characteristics of story/story-teller that would serve to counter the positive bias of story-listener. Counteracting and compensating for the brightly glowing halo, sharply pointed ears sprung from my headful of preconceptions, and, of course, I heard in the handful of tapes precisely what I expected to hear: To me, my father's unseemly interest in "fortune" deviated from my conception of the concerns becoming a creative artist; and his life story affirmed his identity through its organization as a fictional example of a set of statements involving "fortune."

Unfortunately, once I had determined that "fortune" held my father's life story together, I questioned relentlessly even the most oblique references to almighty destiny or dollar, holding up story after story and holding out till what I sought and what I found were identical. Thus, for example, within the context of a story about Nicholas and Alexandra, well-known protagonists in the days of the Russian Revolution, I identified my father's characteristic citation of a Russian proverb ("Man proposes; God disposes") and his idiosyncratic use of an expressive phrase ("But she was 'destined to be killed' in the palace in faraway Ekaterinburg in 1917") as critical to an understanding of his own life story--from the bloody pre-Revolutionary days of the fiery Pogroms faced by a mercantile Jewish family and the money-making musical
exploits ventured by a talented young boy, through the black-market speculation and payment-up-front escape during the Revolution, to the well-salaried musical posts held in the States, even during the Depression years. And while finding fortune everywhere would normally have depressed me, with the selfish exuberance of a dogmatist, I delighted in my findings. Thus, for instance, I interrupted many of my father’s attempts to tell the story of his escape from Russia with questions about the amount and kind of money he had been required to pay the smuggler who slipped him across the border: on one occasion, my father quoted a figure of 500 dollars rather than 500 rubles, and that slip of the tongue led to countless interrogations ("Was it 500 dollars or 500 rubles?" "Did you take money with you other than the money you had to give the smugglers?" "Did you exchange that money in Romania?" "Would they accept it?" "What kind of money was it?" "Was it 500 or 5,000?") that, finally, led nowhere—the tape counter kept moving, but the story stood still. On still another occasion, I silenced one of my father’s rare remembrances of the few innocent activities of his childhood:

CS: You used to skate?

GS: Sure, I skated. And then I liked very much sport. And I like it very much, sport. And I remember, later years, I used to . . . For ten cents, I could get a bicycle and go for few hours, two hours, I don’t know how long, around Odessa. It was beautiful streets. Of course, that, very few . . . there was hardly any—what you call that?—traffic, now . . .

CS: . . . Ten cents: You mean ten kopecks or something?
GS: Ten kopecks.
CS: For two hours, and you could bicycle ride?
GS: Yeah. (story does not continue after pause)

I can't give back the hours of life that were the price my father paid for my attempts to force the order of his story. And I can't take back the feeling of alienation that was the price I paid for my efforts to reinforce the preconceptions of my study. For though I studied the transcripts and replayed the tapes as I did my fieldwork, the more I read and listened, the less I saw of my father and heard of his story: my effort to prevent myself from liking my father's words too much backfired, and, little by little, I found myself liking his life story, like my life's work, not at all. The easier it became for me to establish all of my father's words as cognates of "fortune," the harder it became for me to maintain—or reestablish on a day-to-day basis—even the minimal rapport existing between a census-taker and a client after a twenty-minute interview. I came to dread the "life-story interviews" with my father, not so much because they became perfunctory and predictable, but because they became impersonal. Although the person across from me often indicated his perplexity with the direction of the interviews—with the constant interruptions and repetitions that followed my quest for a specific order of story—my general line of questioning, with its consequent distancing, did not immediately change: No matter what my father did, where he
went, whom he saw, before, during, and after the Russian Revolution, I saw to it that fortune follow in his footsteps: Thus, a 5,000-ruble advance pushed him toward Crimea, but a lucky break saved him from illness; a boxcar of money pulled him toward Zhmerinka, but a musical policeman saved him from jail. A prisoner of fortune, he accepted bribes from his mother and cheated his father: both gave him money—his mother, for Turkish baths; his father, for schoolbooks—but he spent it on serial magazines and sheet music, where he lost himself in worlds unknown to the parents he was destined to lose by the age of nineteen. Earlier, at fifteen, he "made a fortune" selling the music of foreign stars to local talents: while playing piano in an Odessa theater, he memorized the lyrics and accompaniments of newly performed songs, wrote them down by hand, and peddled them uptown on foot. And even earlier, at six, before he had taken his first piano lesson, my father was out there hustling—selling melody lines for mandolin to his unsuspecting schoolmates. I saw to it, first, that my father was mated to money from his childhood in Russia, and then made sure that, later, in the States, he attached importance to earning $36,000 at RKO, or having a piano at his Paramount office, or changing cars at year's end.

Of course, I could not forever ignore the confusion and distance expressed in the comments that ended several particularly insistent—and inhumane—interrogations. On some
occasions, my father commented, "But it's not important, this what you ask"; on others, he complained, "You ask such silly questions, Cristina." And several times, he told me what, perhaps, I myself felt and most feared: "Cristina, YOU'RE NOT THERE!" Being "there" with my father, wherever his life story took us, was, of course, impossible since I allowed my preconceptions to take me elsewhere. And finally getting "there"--closing the distance between interviewer and interviewee--was possible only because I was not just a fieldworker in a friendly house, but a daughter in a parental home: despite the taperecorder and typewriter, computer and camera, papers and pencils, notecards and cassettes that emptied from my suitcases to fill the guest room, I was expected to behave not like a guest, but like a daughter. And because that is how, in fact, I finally behaved, I was able eventually to participate in the creation of circumstances that favored the life story process.

Related to that fortunate participation--perhaps, more "destined" than designed--my efforts to recreate the rapport absent from the interviews, but present in many of the favorite father/daughter activities of interviewee and interviewer (from sitting around the fire in the morning to strolling around the block in the evening, from playing two piano-four hands after lunchtime to watching three cats play with three dogs before dinnertime) required that I rethink not just the methodological framework that accompanied my initial
expectations of my father's life story, but the expectations as well. For just as I had expected fortune's kind hands to bring the story together, so I had expected my father's expressive hands to bring the story to life. In fact, I had expected to relive my memories of the stories I had heard while growing up--noisy events, as I recalled them, marked by expansive body movements and facial expressions, filled with exciting sound effects and fascinating famous names. And, of course, desire and design moved as one: the original methodology ministered more to the past of the story-listener than to the present of the story-teller. Only when my father's present experience of disorder had moved the daughter's heart--only then was the methodological framework restructured. Until then, I followed the method for "taking" life stories that--lacking foresight or, better, recollecting the lack of collected life stories like my father's--I had constructed as a result of previous research and experience.

Designed to take account of the insights of other researchers as well as my own oversights as a fieldworker, the method had good intentions, but--for the life story process--bad results. Given the paucity of folkloric life stories (attributed to the folklorist's tendency to transform fiction into fact by privileging history and anthropological theory rather than story and literary theory)," it was not surprising to find that the literature did not provide a good description of the process of "taking" a life story. Rather, it gave
scattered recommendations on, for example, interviewing techniques and editing procedures (e.g., Joyce, Titon)\textsuperscript{29} culled from the experiences and interest of fieldworkers in anthropology (e.g., Kluckhohn, Rabinow, Spindler, Langness),\textsuperscript{30} sociology (e.g., Angell, Sundberg),\textsuperscript{31} and psychology (e.g., Sundberg)\textsuperscript{32} as well as in folklore (e.g., Ives, Goldstein).\textsuperscript{33}

As a folklorist originally interested, generally, in defining an approach to the life story as a fiction and, specifically, in investigating the multiple relations among story-teller, story-listener, among fact and fiction, I foresaw an indebtedness to researchers who crossed fields and blurred genres. And as I constructed the three-part methodological framework (collaboration, presentation, interpretation) that would enable me to study the life story, I borrowed freely from work in other fields, on other genres.

Like other fieldworkers (e.g., Joyce, Titon)\textsuperscript{33} who, finding it difficult--for ethical or practical reasons--to develop the requisite "rapport" and "degree of intimacy with the informant" (Langness)\textsuperscript{34} with the "interviewee" (Sundberg),\textsuperscript{35} preferred the term "consultant," I decided early in my work that "collaboration" most accurately described the expectations of both story-teller and story-listener. Even in the earliest tapes, recorded in 1984, my father expressed his eagerness to begin "work with you (sic, me)" on the "many, many stories I could tell you (sic, me)." Designed also to eliminate the embarrassing blunders I found when relistening
to the 1984 tapes, "collaboration" described the combination of formal/tape-recorded (directive and nondirective) interviewing sessions plus informal/unrecorded (planned and unplanned) story-telling sessions that I expected to engage in during my "in-residence"/participant observer fieldworking experience. A fieldworker with more experience than I has observed that "You will never listen to a tape of one of your interviews and not be at least a little dismayed at your blunders." (Ives) In fact, as I listened to the 1984 tapes, I was more than a little dismayed to hear myself constantly interrupting the story of my father's escape from Russia (a tale that finds the teller rerouting the tracks of the Odessa-Vapniarka line to get a train of performing artists into Zhmerinka--"forbidden territory"--near the Russian/Romanian border where, instead of being shot as speculators, the group is welcomed as artists--and, then, paying the unheard sum of 5,000 rubles to the unknown contact at Mogiliov Podol'sk to await the midnight knock of the smuggler who would get the escapees across the midwinter Dniester in a canoe), to hear myself nervously plugging up the story-teller's pauses with, for example, "What year was that?" and "Who was that again?" or insistently cutting into the teller's words with, for example, "And was that 5,000 or 500?" Convinced that such questions were not so much mistaken as misplaced, I saw "collaboration"--which insists on following up EVERY nondirected, with a directed interview--as a means of finding
a place not only for pauses, but for other probes as well (e.g., particularized questions, retrospective probes, re-elicted set pieces, negative leading questions)."

Although I questioned the efficacy of "collaboration" now and then during my early fieldwork, I did not adopt a more flexible method until it became impossible to ignore the fact of my father's disordered life, until it became necessary to confront the fictions that my own ordered perspective had eventuated. Eventually, I became certain of the need to rethink my conception of "collaboration" and to redirect my "collection" of life story by means of an "adaptive" methodology that allowed natural-story-telling sessions (Goldstein)" to come between nondirected and directed interviews when insistence on the "minimum unit: one interview and a follow up" (Ives)" seemed unnaturally insensitive to my father's mental or physical disposition. And even though the adaptive methodology was finally not sufficiently sensitive to the uncertainty of the circumstances in which the life story functioned most effectively, it was a step in the right direction.

However, the method took many wrong turns; and the directed interviews--which most clearly reflected my own assumptions and expectations--were, perhaps, the least conducive to the process of my father's life story. An interview that took place on 12 November 1987 (9/A, 9/B) is a case in point. On that day, I brought out an old Reno
Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra program containing a "partial list of artists who have performed transcriptions and compositions by Gregory Stone" (placed in alphabetical order and grouped by special interest)." Clearly more taken than my father with the famous performers who have entered his life, I expected to go through the list in an orderly fashion, name by name, and record the interesting stories associated with the famous names. I could not have been more wrong: contrary to my expectations, my father showed no interest in either list-reading or name-dropping. And even when he came across names that, on other occasions, had featured in stories from his life, my father did not tell those stories. Sometimes he described features of the character or musicianship of those named. Sometimes he told me how/when/where/why those musicians had performed what--and listed titles of his compositions. And sometimes my father supplied biographical data or historical details about those performers--information that might have appeared in a reference book and that might, thus, have provided an indication of the strength of my father's memory. (And sometimes, I followed my father's strong recommendation, "Go see for yourself: we have it in the books.""") But never did my father read names off the Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra list and follow up with the stories I expected. Never, unless I insisted; and then the stories were extracted in fragments, like impacted wisdom teeth.
Although the impact of "Fingerbowl"--a story my father tells about Mischa Elman and Efrem Zimbalist--is rarely lost on listeners, that story finds no place in my father's responses as he reads the names on the Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra list. The name "Mischa Elman" occurs first and, so, introduces the tape:

GS: (reading from RPSO program of 25 September 1977) "List of artists who have performed transcriptions and compositions by Gregory Stone. Mischa Elman."

CS: Alright.

GS: Zino Francescatti.

CS: Well, let's, don't read the whole list. Let's do them one by one.

GS: Well, I just started.

CS: Who's the first one, Mischa Elman?

GS: Mischa Elman.

CS: Tell me about him again.

GS: His father had to go to Plehve, the whole dictator of Moscow, to ask permission for him to stay in the city because Mischa was a little boy; he couldn't leave him alone. And few days later, or something later, he was killed by the Communists, or the demonstrators, whatever it is. That was the end of Plehve.

CS: He was, Plehve was killed? Why?

GS: Anarchists.

CS: This was during the Revolution? (nods) And Mischa didn't, Mischa had to get permission for his father to stay?

GS: No. From Plehve, from the guy, the police.

CS: The father had to get permission for the son to stay there?

GS: Yeah. The son could stay because he played a violin, he
could join. But the father could not stay. And the father could not leave the baby, the little boy, alone in city like Moscow. Not clear?

CS: No. Not entirely. They weren’t from Moscow?

GS: No. He came from a little village, who knows ... 

CS: ... To play in Moscow?

GS: To join the conservatory.

CS: Hm, I see. And the father wanted to leave him there and go home?

GS: The father could not leave him alone.

CS: Oh, when he was a very little boy, you mean?

GS: Yes, yes.

CS: So he wanted, the father wanted also to stay in Moscow?

GS: Yes.

CS: And he had to get special permission. He got the permission, though?

GS: From Plehve, yes. Plehve was killed later, after that.

CS: Hm. And how is it that you’re associated with him?

GS: With who?

CS: Mischa Elman.

GS: Mischa Elman played some of my transcriptions on violin.

CS: Did you ever speak to him?

GS: The last time I’ve seen him was at the house of my friend, the fellow who, Josef Bonime. They were talking about the olden days, and I was invited to Josef Bonime house." And they all talked about the olden days of music. That’s how ... .

CS: ... In Russia, you mean?


CS: The olden days, in Russia?
GS: Yeah.
CS: Do you remember what you talked about?
GS: Well, I talked about music, in general.
CS: But you always used to say, "You can't talk music."
GS: Hm?
CS: You always used to say, "You can't talk music."
GS: What does it mean?
IS: You always said, you quoted, you said, "You can't talk music; you have to play it."
GS: Oh, yes.
IS: What she's saying is, how can you be talking music, if you were talking about the olden days?
GS: It's not clear yet?
IS: What were, she wants to know what you mean by you talked about music.
GS: Yeah, general subject music--could be talked from morning till night.
IS: Somehow you're, you're knocking down your own quotation, "You can't talk music."
GS: No, you take that too literary.
IS: OK. I didn't take that, but that's what she was saying.
GS: Alright. Is it clear now?
CS: Yeah. (9/A)

When, towards the middle of the tape, my father reads "Efrem Zimbalist," the final name in the group of string instrumentalists, I insist that he clarify although I do, in fact, know who Efrem Zimbalist is. Again, for my father, the sound of the name, read and heard in this particular context,
does not evoke a story response: rather than relating the
"Fingerbowl" story, my father reports on the Zimbalist family:

GS: Then, Efrem Zimbalist you know.

CS: No.

GS: The one who made "Hora Spiccato" for me, for print--
edited and fingered it.

CS: How did you know him?

GS: Ah, oh. Because his brothers, he brought the whole
family to United States--his brother, the cellist; his,
uh . . . Zimbalist had a brother cellist and a brother
viola player. And he all fixed them jobs in NBC. And
he brought his mother from Russia . . .

CS: . . . Hm . . .

GS: . . . Zimbalist . . .

CS: . . . To New York . . .

GS: . . . and built them houses, built them homes, on Long
Island.

CS: You met him in New York?

GS: He came to my house, in New York, or in Hollywood, I
don't remember, to get my Hora Spiccato. (9/A)

Expecting to "get" not just the "Fingerbowl" story, but
other stories of famous performers as well, I was
disappointed, this time, with my father's perfunctory
performance--with the methodical responses he gave as he
perused the Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra list through
a magnifying glass five inches across. However, it did not
cross my mind to alter the method or abandon the list at
lunchtime break. And as I prepared lunch, my mother--who also
faulted the story-teller rather than the story context--gave
my father a flu pill and a pep talk, emphasizing the ill
effects, for my "important university work," of his lack of
interest and interesting stories. As I should have expected,
the lecture did not work, and my mother's request for the
"Fingerbowl" story was met, when taping resumed after lunch,
with the following response:

GS: I don't feel so good, Sweetheart, Mamsy. To you,
Sweetheart.

CS: Cheers.

IS: Did we give you a pill this morning? No, we didn't.
Let's give you a pill right now.

CS: Wait. I need to take a break for a minute. (tape
cuts/preparing lunch and lecturing Papa)

IS: Wasn't it Mischa Elman and, and, the other one, they came
over, two little, you said, two little Russian Jewish
boys who had never been to a, a nice . . .

GS: . . . Oh.

IS: Who was, who told you the story about that? . . .


GS: . . . Zimbalist.

IS: Efrem, OK, so . . .

GS: . . . He was watching to see what they do. He didn't eat
anything. So when they brought the water, Mischa Elman
swallowed . . .

IS: . . . The fingerbowl, you mean, when they brought the
fingerbowl, yeah. When did Mischa? Who told you?
Zimbalist told you that? Efrem? Where did he tell you
that, in Los Angeles or in New York or where?

GS: In Los Angeles, I think.

IS: Hm. And they were, you told me, one time, where they
were invited for his affair. Where did this happen?

GS: Oh, Hotel Astor.
IS: The Astor Hotel.

CS: And what happened? After dinner, they brought fingerbowls with water, after the dinner, to wash their hands with, and Efrem Zimbalist drank the water?

GS: He was watching what they gonna do.

IS: No, it wasn't Efrem Zimbalist . . .

GS: . . . Mischa Elman . . .

IS: . . . OK.

CS: Oh, Mischa Elman. And he drank the water? Nobody else drank it though. What was he watching?

IS: No, no. Zimbalist was watching.

CS: Oh, Zimbalist was watching . . .

IS: . . . yes . . .


IS: No. What everybody else was doing. And Mischa Elman saw the water come in the fingerbowl . . .

CS: . . . He drank it . . .

IS: . . . And he picked it up and drank it. (laughter)

CS: And Zimbalist thought he's supposed to drink it too?

IS: No, no. Zimbalist just watched the other people and dipped his fingers in the bowl like, like everybody else did, you know.

GS: It's very funny how Tolstoy, the modern Tolstoy, writes about Zimbalist. He calls him Efremka . . .

IS: Hm.

GS: Doesn't call him Efrem.

IS: Hm.

GS: Efremka Zimbalist.

IS: Hm. Is Efremka "Little Efrem" or what?
GS: Insulting.

IS: Oh, I don't, how come? Why is it insulting?

GS: You don't call somebody like that, any, any professor of university, Efremka. (tape continues with discussion of writers)

Obviously, despite my father's interest in promoting my "important university work" by collaborating with me on his life story, the list method, applied to names, did not have the expected results (see tapes 9/A, 9/B). But I had inherited the list-making habit from my father, who had used the technique, for as long as I could remember, to organize everything from a shave and a haircut with the barber to a performance with the Reno Philharmonic. In fact, as I rummaged through music cabinets and bookshelves to find names that might trigger stories, I came across hundreds of tiny pieces of note paper and huge sheets of score paper listing, for example, "composers using Dies Irae," "sources of Stravinsky's Firebird," "compositions using Greek themes," and more. Nothing, then, could have been more remote than the disorder theme (see Chapter II); and I continued to apply the list method--to music, going piece by piece through the cabinets (see tapes M1/A, M1/B, M2/A, M2/B, M3/A, M3/B, M4/A, M6/A, M6/B, M7/A, M7/A); to books, taking volume by volume from the shelves (see tapes V1/A, V2/B); to photos, removing picture after picture from the walls (see tapes R11/B, M5/A, M5/B); to maps, reciting city after city from the atlases (see tape R10/B)--in later, as I had in earlier, interviews.
Actually, the list method had proved ineffective in one of my earliest directed interviews (13 September 1987), when I had tried to go year by year through my father's life, expecting a chronological account of the people he met, the places he went, the things he did, and, especially, the music he wrote. Because I had expected, at that interview, to record not stories, but "facts"—and to enter those statistics neatly next to the respective years, which ran down the left-hand side of several pages of notepaper in a smart file of 87 figures from 1900 to 1987—"I did not use the taperecorder that day. And although I did not figure out the significance of that early untaped interview—one of the few intentionally unrecorded—until much later, it anticipates, in several ways, the adaptive method that would eventually prove useful for "collecting" my father's life story. First, significantly absent from those notes are the neat, economical entries that I had anticipated aligning with the years; rather, the pages are filled with writing, filled with words, phrases, and sentences from my father's life story. Second, the few empty corners contain interesting marginalia that, had I been less full of my own expectations and assumptions, I might have mulled over in the interests of a revised methodology. In one corner, for example, I observe, "Next time, tape. Note-taking too hard." In fact, I believe now—after having reviewed both the transcripts and the notes untaped (intentionally and unintentionally)—that, for me, using my tape recorder
sometimes meant not using my head. I think that, at times, my reliance on the recorder made it easier for my thoughts to move away from my father's story (harder for my responses to approach responsible participation, whence, perhaps, my father's, "Cristina, you're not there"). And the less I moved my hands, the more I moved my mouth—questions and comments coming almost as quickly as the tape counter turned. But when I turned my attention to annotating not just the gestures and expressions that accompanied the story, but the words of the story as well, I was less likely to stop my father, and he was more likely to tell his story, from start to finish. Finally, at the top of another page—containing the 1914 entry—I note the following: "Words start stories. 'Words' as transitions between 'stories.' Whole year—music idea a waste: tiring for him, and useless for 'music project.' 'Only suggests that 'words' clue memories.'" That "only" suggests, I think, the strength of the assumptions preventing me from accessing the interpretative clues contained in the story itself. In fact, though I underlined the "transition words" in the stories representing my father's response to my request for a list of music written in 1914, I did not fully understand the importance of those words—or of that interview—until much later. The following segment of the 1914 entry—which occurs relatively early in the interview—is typical: my father seems to respond not to the point of a question, but to the sound of a word:
CS: And what about 1914? What did you write in 1914? Did you write any music in 1914?

GS: 1914. I remember because Titanic was sunk in 1914, so we went to see the picture of Titanic together with my teacher, name Sarah Slieberstein. And I'm there standing, there, in my new first suit, as I remember me, dressed up . . .

CS: . . . Did you go often? To the cinema, I mean?

GS: Whenever I have the chance. Odessa, she has many cinemas. Full of different cinemas. And I liked pictures very much. Gloria Swanson, Vera Halodnaya, "Produced in Pate"—that must be Paris—comedies by Max Linder, the famous COMEDIAN. Oh, that's a COMICAL episode. At that time, I decided I'm gonna get myself a job as a helper to the regular pianist in the motion picture theatre. This is Edison Theatre, just nearby. So I go to the theatre, walk in, says, "I would like very much to work here, as a pianist. I play piano, and I can play for you." So the pianist, by name Bratslavsky, says, "Go ahead. Sit down. Play." So I sit down at the piano. The picture starts. And suddenly everything is dark. No light whatsoever, and here I am, supposed to play (hums "Liquette") "Liquette." But in the darkness, I just got lost, just couldn't play. It was so dark, I just couldn't find the keys. So I played only one picture—not so good. And when the picture was over, Bratslavsky, he looks at me, says, "Go home. You're not ready yet. Learn some pieces. Come back in few months' time." I came back in few months' time, and I took away his job. I learned all the popular pieces of the day, in the French style that was popular, like "Liquette," "Kikapoo," "Tobagan" (hums after each). And then, of course, I knew to improvise—anything you want, any style, any key, like nobody else. So when I went back, in a few months' time, was nobody could do that job better than me. I was engaged, and he became my helper.

Eventually, of course, the folklorist in me found notebook entries and journal entries like the foregoing helpful to an understanding of my father's life story. However, with my father's serious illness in late 1987, it was not the folklorist, but the daughter in me—helpless, in Spain, to deal in any useful way with the disorder of my
father's life, with all the losses, emotional and physical, that he had sustained in almost 90 years of life—who found it necessary to adopt an adaptive methodology: If collaboration meant following up every nondirected, with a directed interview without regard for the body, mind, and soul of the "interviewee"—of the human being whose faltering and momentarily futile efforts to reach for a napkin, a word, or a thought could not be experienced without pain—then it was the methodology, and not the man, that had to go.

But my effort to let go of the methodological preconceptions that guided my fieldwork—founded on the certainty of my conviction that my endeavors to command performances of my father's life story were as insensitive as inexpedient—was complicated by circumstances whose uncertainty seemed almost Heisenbergian. In my endeavor to be less commanding and totalitarian, more tolerant and compassionate, I tried to alert myself to the signs of an "off day" and, then, to avoid, myself, the circumstances and conversations that, I thought, might make my father feel compelled to talk about his life. Thus, for example, while he sat at the kitchen table, the fireplace, or the back patio, too tired—or so I thought—to do more than watch my mother and I cook food, clean house, or cut grass, I directed the conversation to topics that seemed, to me, unlikely to precipitate a story episode. I believe, now, that my behavior may have contributed, at least indirectly, to the creation of
situations that, for my father, fostered the invisibility that seems to invite symbolic elaboration through story." In any case, it was on the days of my most elaborate stratagems to avoid story-telling that I most often found myself in the midst of a performance—much perplexed and little prepared, without pen, paper, or tape recorder to hand, with hands in flour, soapsuds, or dirt, to boot. Of course, with time, I started to "prepare" myself for these unpredictable performances as much as I could—by positioning dozens of notebooks and all available recorders (which seemed to decrease in quality as they increased in quantity) at strategic locations around the house—my father's favorite piano stool, window seat, garden chair, for example. Yet, it was not until I had spent a great deal of time in my own desk chair, pouring over the scribbings that filled the sides of oil-stained napkins and the margins of grass-stained newspapers that I started to make sense of the unpredictability and uncertainty of the circumstances in which the episodes of my father's life story usually arose: Story episodes—qualitatively different, in their natural contexts, from those collected in interview sessions—occurred as spontaneous responses to sensory stimuli. And because there seems no natural way to measure with certainty the frequency, duration, or order of such stimuli in an individual life, Heisenberg survives the unprincipled adaptation to an unnatural context: with respect to my experience with my
father's life story, the more precisely I could specify the
shape of the story episode, the less precisely I could specify
its context, and vice versa."

There is another principle whose readaptation to the
context of this discussion gives proverbial food for
untraditional thought: Lives, following Geertz and his
pronoun referents none too closely, "contain their own
interpretations" provided only that one "learn how to gain
access to them." But that proviso contains notes for a
lesson in reciprocity: the mutuality of give and take implies
both gain and loss. Thus, for example, as Myerhoff notes, the
gifts of the elderly are lost to one unable to shed the
stereotypes traditionally reserved for people in old age.
Similarly, the gradual loss of my own unreserved expectations
about the story-teller of childhood and tradition--of my
reserve of folkloric stereotypes about, for example, openings
and closings, set pieces and, especially stylized gestures--
accounts for my finally gaining access to the interpretation
contained in my father's life, to the story that seemed to
spill forth at the slightest sound, the lightest touch. When
I stopped worrying about the absence of the story-teller's
typical touches--about the lack of eye contact, the lack of
body movement, the lack of gestures (see Chapter III, A), the
lack of order (see Chapter II), I started to make sense of my
father's life story: Sense stimuli, in all their disorder,
were principal occasions for recalling the past in stories
that, for my father, were not derivative, but original experiences—"immediate and satisfying in themselves, sui generis," "antithetical to the diffuseness of life.""

However, understanding the process of my father's life story—and, especially, the significance of sense stimuli for initiating that process—was far from immediate, and followed what, in retrospect, seems a senselessly long period of dissatisfaction and distress. Even though I was glad for the unexpected performances that confirmed the barrenness of interview plus follow-up, I was generally dissatisfied with the manner in which my father performed. More specifically, I had expected the manner of delivery of the life story to resemble (especially in terms of my father's characteristically expansive gestures) that of childhood dinner stories—which imitated an animal or emphasized a moral by making use of all props to hand, from the tableware to the table itself—and daily conversations. But my expectations were not confirmed: Although my father's hands are rarely at rest (whether talking with others—when he moves hands and arms vigorously in the air for emphasis—or sitting by himself—when he moves fingers rapidly over an imaginary piano keyboard), when he relates his life story, my father invariably folds his hands, placing them on the table or in his lap, where they remain until he has finished talking. Uncharacteristically, too, his gaze usually remains fixed (at an angle of about 45 degrees) on something or someplace in
front of him that I cannot discover; and he is prone to make eye contact only when, by verifying a point (e.g., "I'm repeating myself, no?") or emphasizing a word (e.g., "death"), he checks to see if I am "there."

As I saw things—and my viewpoint was clearly a function of expectations generated as a result of the father/daughter relationship—the manner in which my father performed just did not check out. And for a long time, I struggled with that fact, always on the lookout for ways to make my father's performances behave. Thus, for example, I changed my own listening behavior, hoping that my newfound broad gestures and long stares would somehow find their way into my father's expressive repertoire. Similarly, since my mother had also expressed concern over what she called "half-baked" performances, I agreed to her exuberant participation—"to liven things up," as she said—whenever possible. And, with her help, I explored the possibilities of various props (e.g., books and magazines, cups and saucers), hoping that my father would use them to bang or rattle, to imitate the sounds of cymbals or firetrucks, as he had done when I was a child. But my father did no such thing: his story was told almost without movement. And, as things worked out, though the props did not serve their intended purpose, they sometimes moved my father—quite unexpectedly—to recall the past in stories that, again, seemed to be not derivative, but original experiences.
New Ground: Life Story and the People Enriched

My experience with my father's life story—with the world of the story's "collection" and with the world of the storyteller's creation—has often caused me to sigh, in Johnsonian meditation, "This world where much is to be done and little to be known." I did not know, when I decided to study my father's life story, that my decision would mean doing so much for so long. I did not know that I would be asked to risk myself—mentally and physically—in a continual process of reevaluating my usual ways of thinking and ways of doing. I did not know that I would be required constantly to revise and redo... everything: From expectations and research designs to "interviews" and dissertation chapters—and despite diseases and deadlines—there was always a change to record, on tape or on paper, in my father's story or in my own study.

"I've wasted a lotta paper in my life." I did not know that there would come a time when my father's words would become my own, when I would share my father's "dreams":

CS: By the way, I dreamed about, I dreamt about somebody named Levitov last night. I don't even know the man.

GS: Levitov was my leader, in Palmer House, in the lobby—no Palmer House, in Hotel Commodore. We had an orchestra there. He conducted. He always imagines he conducts a symphony orchestra. (R5/A)

I did not know that in the imaginative—"crazy"!—dramatization of my father's past life ("Isn't it crazy, the
story of my life?")--and despite the missing names ("Kill me if I remember.") and lost years ("Dates escape me.")--I would come to know my father, myself, uniquely, in the inconclusive present.

I did not know that it would be so difficult for me to conclude my study; once begun, there was no end--there could be no end. And so strongly did I believe that my listening to and working on story would prolong and improve my father's life that when, as I had just finished printing the final, final, complete first draft (the last of many similar efforts) of my dissertation (minus, of course, this conclusion--to be added at some unspecified future time), my mother called from Spain--"Papa died."--I could only respond, "I knew it."

I did not know that I would change, that I would learn, if not, finally, to see anew (given that, ultimately, it may be impossible to adopt, even momentarily, a perspective other than one's own), at least to see how necessary it is (for a study of the life story, for a psychology of the aging process, for an appreciation of the human being) to try and view the world through the dimming eyes of those in old age (but not out of life), of those whose stories of life past represent a response to present experience, to the principle challenge of late life: self-conservation. I did not know, trying so hard in the beginning to unearth the episodes of early life, that the stories would start most often--in response to the disordered sensory stimuli of ordinary
experience--when I hardly tried, or that my extraordinary efforts to embalm story versions would be counterproductive to the movement of forces--for conservatism and dynamism--in the adaptive process in which I had become a participant.

I did not know that I would be moved so deeply by the dynamics of my father's dramatization, by the mythic figure whose specialization in disorder (invaluable for the storyteller whose present sense of self is threatened--dis-valued, dis-eased--by his present experience of disorder) looks to both the faraway past and the foreshortened future, conferring both self-continuity and self-confidence. I did not know--despite the headaches and heartaches involved in living closely with an elderly parent (from quietly watching as the patient winces when the doctor enjoins against a favorite food or insists on a new catheter, to patiently listening as the father struggles and suffers, protesting the help needed to hold up his glass or turn in his bed)--that my father's drama would inspire my own confidence in a creation story spoken, again and again, by people living proximate to total bodily dissolution and destruction: I didn't know that "Where we live is created by and in words: a uni-verse." (Nozick)" I did not know that my experience of living in the poly-verse of my father's life story--which joined two people in "a forcing, a forcing of patience, a reflectiveness, a kind of listening, a continual selection" (Myerhoff) would occasion a humanizing process affirming the creative life force--a
"transformation."  

Of course (momentarily forcing Johnson's traveller to enter the folklorist's field), "A man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge." And I knew, when I decided to study my father's life story (a decision not uninfluenced by my father's suggestion that I move to Spain to share his final years in old age, the time to be filled with "so many, many things we could do together, musically speaking--and, of course, many other things we could do, too"), that were I forced to choose between the life and the story (but, of course, I did not know, then, that the two are one, and the same), I would, without hesitation, select the former. 

So, there is, finally, some knowledge (however tentative) to share (however hesitantly) with the folklorist who would "study" a life story such as my father's. First, the student must take care to assess his/her own life-stage perspective, remembering that it may not be shared by a man/woman in old age, by a person whose present may be defined by an experience of disorder (see Chapter II, Introduction). By demarcating the perspectives engaging the study participants, it may be possible for the student, if not entirely to adopt the viewpoint of the elderly individual, at least to develop a sensitive awareness of that perspective and so, perhaps, avoid the pointedly erroneous views precipitated when--as Lieberman and Tobin suggest in their revolutionary research on the
experience of old age—judgments and conclusions are "based on assessments from the observer's perspective." As Lieberman and Tobin point out, "When one is in one's seventies and eighties, an awareness that one has lived a lifetime is unavoidable; the elderly approach the present and the future from this special perspective."

Second, the student must give special attention to the way in which the elderly use the drama of story, always in the service of selfhood, to meet what may well be the biggest challenge of late life, viz., the continual alignment of the "is" with the "was," the constant construction and reconstruction of the past to serve the present—a "process of reshaping" which, according to Berger, "is as old as homo sapiens" (see Chapter II, Introduction and Chapter II, A). And while Berger does not confine his comments to people in old age—finding all of us engaged in reconstructing our past "in accordance with our present ideas of what is important and what is not" so that "we have as many lives as we have points of view"—Lieberman and Tobin "find that a pattern of relating to the past by creating myth and portraying people and events dramatically is more characteristic of the elderly than of the middle-aged; of those under stress than those not under stress; and of those closer to death than those further from death." These general findings, though similar to those of the present study, do not stress the way in which a specific story theme might give dramatic expression to a
particular life perspective (e.g., the theme and variations on disorder--see Chapter II, A; II, B; and II, C)."3

Finally, given the disorder of the sensory stimuli that seem to evoke spontaneous story responses, the student must make every effort to enrich the sensory environment (the opportunities for experiences involving sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell) in the life of the person whose story represents an adaptive response to aging (see Chapter III), always allowing the study of context to influence its own development. Involving several senses simultaneously, food, of course, has often been found influential in developing conditions favorable to story-telling: as Bert Kruger Smith observes, "Reminiscences about early life nearly always contain recollections of family suppers with the family gathered around the table; picnics in the country; snacks before the fireplace; holiday feasts shared by relatives."4 Relatively little attention has been given, however, to other "objects" of memory.5 Photos are, perhaps, the exception--though even here, the relationship between color and story is an unexplored area of special interest" as decorators and interior designers know, "Because the lens of the eye yellows over time, we perceive colors differently as we age. Colors become more difficult to distinguish, particularly if they are complementary or different intensities of the same hue. Yellows, oranges and reds are most easily seen."6 But enriching the sensory environment means more than decorating
tables with fruit bowls filled with oranges, bananas, and apples, or "collecting" stories at mealtimes dressed in brightly colored clothes. Because individuals in any life stage are unique, it is not possible to predict with certainty just which sensory stimuli (themselves unique and random occurrences) might precipitate stories in a particular elderly person, at a particular time, in a particular place--might, that is, trigger stories in whom, when and where. (Even the most resourceful student might find it impossible to ascertain the how and why.) This means that the student of the life story must have not just the temporal and spatial resources necessary to continually vary the sensory environment, but the common sense necessary to know when "enough is enough" as well as the caring and sensitivity necessary to evaluate the effects of such variation on the life and the story under study: The constant introduction of change can become painfully confusing for an elderly person, as I discovered when I reorganized the books in my parents' library and rearranged the furniture in their bedroom, even altering the angle and position of the television set, to which meaningless innovation my father finally responded, "That's enough, Cristina!" My belief is that the student who would enrich a life, a story, by introducing meaningful variation--always mindful of the fact that a person now in old age is a person still in life--must be guided not by pain, but by pleasure--by the thought that an elderly human being might not mind some
variety, might, in fact, find new foods and colors pleasing, different textures and sounds welcome. But the final insight is, again, Johnson's: "The great source of pleasure is variety."

1. See Rajchman, p. 51.

2. See Rabinowitz and Bruner.

3. Titon.


5. The relations among "deviance," "willingness," and "eloquence" are explored in the literature, where it is usually assumed that "deviant" persons--"exceptional" or "nonrepresentative" (Pelto, p. 75), "marginal" or "liminal" individuals (Langness 1981, pp. 44, 82, and 155), those who evidence "unusual life careers" or who exhibit unusual social "behaviors" (Kluckhohn, p. 116), those who evidence "atypical" ways of thinking (Pelto, p. 77) or who exhibit "idiosyncratic" ways of doing (Langness 1981, pp. 44)--are both unusually "willing" (Joyce, p. 11) and "unusually eloquent" narrators (Pelto, pp. 71 and 77). But when the relations between narrator and folklorist (qua listener, collector, interviewer, writer) are explored--given that the story teller is not expected to record his own story--when, that is, the relations between artist and audience are considered in an analysis of "performance"--which assumes the validity of folklore as communication, where "not only does it make good sense to base the meaning of a text upon both the intent of the speaker and the attitude of the listener, but also to consider the meaning of messages as interdependent upon their actual communicative events" (Ben-Amos, Goldstein 1975, Introduction, p. 3), the purported "ineloquence" of story tellers is matched by the presumptuous eloquence of story scholars. Scholarship is outspoken with respect to both problems of "informant reliability" (Joyce, p. 26; Sundberg, pp. 69-71)--which range from faulty memories (Titon, p. 290; Sundberg, pp. 69 and 108; Langness 1981, p. 109) through illogic (Langness 1981, p. 44) to "blatant falsehoods" (Langness 1981, p. 44; Langness 1965, p. 38)--and checks on "listener reliability"--which include "spacing" interviews (Ives 1980, pp. 70-71), collecting "versions" (Ives 1980, p. 68), "sampling" family (Sundberg,
p. 79; Joyce, p. 27; Langness 1981, p. 44). And "disordered episodes" or "limited characterizations" are often evaluated with reference to a lack of ability explained in terms of memory impairment (Pelto, p. 74) or narrative incapacity (Titon, p. 284). Clearly, however, it makes no sense to fault the "eloquence" of the narrator—for a lack of interest in chronology or characterization—when that person intends something other than a careful and complete ordering of the names, dates, and places that figure in the story of a life. Thus, the folklorist may find the "representative" storyteller as "eloquent" as the "deviant" individual. The possibility of relating "folklore and fiction" to similar "literary processes," via, especially, audience responses (and despite the possibility of structural differences between "oral and written narratives") is discussed by Schmidt, pp. 13-15. Differences between emic/etic views and relationship, respectively, to nondirective/directive interviewing techniques are discussed by Langness 1981, pp. 48-49, 89, and 107. According to Langness, the spontaneity encouraged by nondirective/open-ended interviewing "enables you to learn how the informants conceptualize and think about their own lives—the so-called 'emic' view . . .". And, as Langness points out, individuals conceptualize their lives in different ways: e.g., chronologically, thematically, "hypothetically." See Sundberg, pp. 86-88, 103, and 114, for an account of the psychologist’s identification of "major themes" as a way of assessing an individual’s life. And see Kaufman, p. 25, for an assessment of "themes" relevant to the present study: "As people interpret the events, experiences, conditions, and priorities of their lives—making connections and drawing conclusions as they proceed—they formulate themes."

6. See Kluckhohn, p. 122, and Ives 1980, p. 67. In the tradition of researchers who find a positive correlation between a nondirective response/a "blank screen posture" (Kluckhohn, p. 122) and an interest in "personality (e.g., Langness 1981, p. 48; Joyce, p. 10; Titon, pp. 283 and 286), I intended to begin each "life-story-taking interview with a request of the generality of Morton’s, "Tell me about your early life." (Morton 1973: xii, in Titon, p. 286). More optimistic than original (see, e.g., Ives 1980, p. 70, on "minimum unit: one interview and a follow-up"; and Langness 1981, pp. 48-49, on combination of "early" nondirected plus "later" directed interviews), the method also seemed somewhat artificial. I hoped that the artificiality of all my interviewing situations (see Goldstein, pp. 80-87, on artificial versus natural contexts in folklore) would be offset by the informality of the "natural-story-telling sessions" that I expected to be a part of (a participant observer to—Langness 1981, pp. 34 and 45).
7. See remainder of Chapter I, Shifting Ground: Life Story and the Perspective Switch, below.

8. More is at stake here than a playful proverbial twist. I believe that for life story research, "play" involves becoming comfortable with the rhythm of the life and the story so that the life story process is allowed both to develop and to influence the course of its own development. Of course, although "playfulness" must vary from researcher to researcher, it can be expected, I think, always to involve the introduction of sensory stimuli.

9. See Myerhoff 1984 on the "transformative" experience. And on the "transformative power" of autobiography for "marginal" individuals (e.g., "blacks, pacifists, women, expatriates, homosexuals, artists, political dissidents, and others . . . "), see Langness 1981, pp. 93-94. See, also, Myerhoff and Metzger for reflexive potentials of journal writing. Given, also, the potentially Kuhnian overtones, see Kuhn.

10. See Sacks and Titon.


12. See Neugarten, p. 98. Age groups are neither arbitrary nor absolute. Frenkel-Brunswik, p. 80, e.g., speaks of five "phases of life," periods in the life span. Neugarten, p. 144, reports that her "respondents seemed to share a view that adulthood can be divided into periods of young adulthood, maturity, middle age, and old age, each with its distinctive characteristics and each with its own psychological flavor." And she notes, p. 94, that "Middle-aged people look to their positions within different life contexts--body, career, family--rather than to chronological age for their primary cues in clocking themselves." And Peck, p. 92) notes that "There probably are still certain broadly delimitable periods, such as 'middle age' and 'old age' but these are apt to be statistical artifacts, describing 'the average person' of 40-60, or some such span."

13. Neugarten, pp. 93 and 97. On the characteristic perspective of middle-agers, Neugarten, p. 97, makes the following observation: "Whether or not they are correct in their assessments, most of our respondents perceive striking improvement in their exercise of judgment. For both men and women, the perception of greater maturity and a better grasp of realities is one of the most reassuring aspects of being middle-aged." But Kuhlen, p. 118, in a discussion of age-related factors that may frustrate, observes that "a middle-aged or older person may feel threatened and insecure because
of skill deficits generated by rapid technological advance that has left him outdated."

14. See, e.g., Dennis, pp. 111-14: "Pathological disorders increase sharply in the later decades."; and "literary persons are more prone to psychological incapacitation than are scientists." He suggests further study of the effect of mental disorders on productivity of the aged in different walks of life (e.g., arts, scholarship, science). Clark, p. 399, sees "the contradictions and discontinuities of American culture as underlying sources of not only "concern and unrest among elderly people," but also of psychiatric problems of the elderly. See, also, Myerhoff 1984, p. 308.

15. Again, the separation of biological from social disorder seems analytical. See Chapter III, A.

16. An extraordinary exception is the research of Morton A. Lieberman and Sheldon S. Tobin, The Experience of Old Age, which I discovered, unfortunately, only as I was completing final revisions of this study.


20. Note the similarity of systolic/diastolic to Toelken's conservatism/dynamism (the "twin laws" of the folklore process). Toelken, p. 35.


24. See Figure 1, Appendix A.


26. Sundberg, p. 79. See Sundberg, p. 64, on effects of "the degree of distance in the relationship" between interviewer and interviewee. Note Pelto, pp. 74-75, on effects of "long-term friendly relationships" and Joyce, pp. 21-23, on ethical and legal ramifications of problems of "distance" and "detachment."

27. Titon, p. 289.


31. See, e.g., Sundberg, pp. 67-69.

32. See, e.g., Ives 1980 and Goldstein.


35. Sundberg, p. 61.

36. Langness 1981, pp. 34 and 45; Spindler, p. 295; Sundberg, p. 74.


38. On pauses and probes, see Ives 1980, pp. 66-70.


40. Ives 1980, p. 70.

41. See Appendix A for a copy of this document.

42. It is not difficult to check the "strength" of my father's memory. References to names and titles, dates of birth or composition, of people or pieces, are more often than not accurate (e.g., Leopold Auer's students, Romania's provinces, Pablo Casal's recitals). In fact, considered an authority on "little-known facts and figures in musicology/public domain," my father was often consulted by researchers interested in verifying their data (and if, for some reason, he was unable to recall the necessary information, he was always able to recall and locate the source). In fact, however, with regards to his life story, it seems not that my father doesn't remember and, so, doesn't include such facts, but, rather, that he doesn't consider them important for his story.

43. See Chapter III, B. The protagonists of this story include two well-known Russian violinists who studied with Leopold Auer: Mischa Elman (1891-1983?) and Efrem Zimbalist (1889-1987?). See ASCAP Biographical Dictionary, pp. 145 and 560. See Auer, for more on his life in music and on the careers of his students. See Moorehead, p. 16, for more on Vyacheslav K. von Plehve, the protagonist of this story, who "accepted as a matter of course all the paraphernalia of autocracy; the censorship of the press, the suppression of the
liberty of the universities, the Pogroms against the Jews, the rule of the police."


45. Note, also, that despite his collaborative efforts, my father views my efforts to complete Ph.D. requirements as misplaced--primarily because they place me so far away from Spain.

46. In the course of working on my father's life story, I learned that my father was probably born not in 1900, but in 1899. Apparently, his father altered the figures on all official documents in order to ensure that my father would not be drafted into the Revolutionary Army.

47. On 20 September, I followed my own advice and turned "the tape on just in case," noting the following: "My thoughts while listening: asking for music by year confuses him--doesn't stick to music, but goes to stories."


49. I have just realized that the reapplication of Heisenberg is not original with this study: see Toelken, p. 51.

50. Geertz, 1972, p. Note that his focus is on societies, not individuals.


52. Myerhoff 1949, pp. 327 and 326.

53. See, e.g., Chapter III, B: "Eiffel Tower."

54. Nozick, p. 250. The lines preceding his conclusion read as follows: "One sacred scripture in the novel we inhabit says that the author of our universe created things merely by speaking, by saying 'Let there be . . .' The only thing mere speaking can create, we know, is a story, a play, an epic poem, a fiction."

55. See Myerhoff 1984.

56. Lieberman and Tobin, p. 347, claim that "The discontinuity observed with previous psychological attributes is based on an external frame of reference. That is, the view that such characteristics as ego strength, social resources, optimal personality, and coping strategies are not psychologically enabling in old age is based on assessments
from the observer's perspective." Similarly, p. 350, they ask, "How adequate can the study of lives be across different life stages when the very criteria of success may require us to adopt different images of success depending on life stage? We believe that our field has given too little attention to the appropriateness of various frameworks used for assessing successful adaptation. Psychologists have recognized for many years now that value judgments were being made, but we have just begun to recognize that we may have erred by bringing 'values' from early life stages into old age."

57. Lieberman and Tobin, p. 347. Note, also, the following: "We believe that the psychology of old age cannot be understood unless one takes into account this particular perspective on life as well as the age-linked assaults that are intrinsic to what it means to become old. The experience of external losses, of significant others, and of social roles are common to the aged, as are the narcissistic losses that include signs of bodily deterioration and the increasing functional incapacities; above all, the aged share the impending dissolution of the self through death. The psychology of old age must be placed in this context."


60. Without additional studies of life stories such as my father's, it cannot be argued that an experience of disorder will always find dramatic expression in a theme of disorder. Indeed, it is possible that other themes will be discovered to function like my father's (with, perhaps, a shift in the balance of forces for dynamism and conservatism).

61. Smith, p. 149.

62. But see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett on "objects of memory."

63. See Perchuk and Rand, p. 172.
B. THE STORIES

We had a secret pact—Obermann, the violinist; Amerikov, the balalaika player; and myself, the pianist—that we gonna get out of Odessa sooner or later. I went to the Gykommenserter ("Gubernskaya Kamisia Pobarveh Desertirsum"), the office that was fighting the desertion in the army and told them—they knew me because I was, used to play the "Internationale," on the piano, better than anybody else; I used to get double ration of everything—and I told them, the Committee, that I would like to have a car or two cars to make propaganda. They says, "My goodness. You're the one that we're always looking for. Go ahead and do it. We'll help you." So they supplied me with the train (I don't know, a few cars), full of refugees—the cooks from various places and all places who wanted to get out of Russia. (3/B)

CS: Tutti told me that you told her that Amerikov was a student of Arensky?

GS: Yeah.

CS: What did he study with him?

GS: Harmony, I suppose.

CS: Hm. Arensky was still alive when, Amerikov must've been older than you then?

GS: Oh, sure.

CS: And Obermann? Was he a student of anyone I would know?

GS: No, but he came to Bucharest and got into good graces of Grigori Dinicu and gave him "Caprice de Ballerina," some pieces.
CS: Gave him what? "Caprice" what?

GS: "Caprice de Ballerina." He gave it to Grigori Dinicu. That music was written by my friend's father. He died—the one I was in correspondence with—he died from emphysema: Jack Press.¹

CS: His father wrote the piece?

GS: His father was a violinist.

CS: Jack Press' father?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Jack Press must've been 100 years old.

GS: Jack Press? He would be now.

CS: He died recently, no?

GS: I, mother would know better, but that was four or five years ago.

CS: Oh. And his father was a musician, too?

GS: Yes.

CS: And he wrote "Caprice de Ballerina?"

GS: Yes, him. And Obermann brought it to Grigori Dinicu.

CS: He had a copy of the music and gave him a copy? He liked it? Dinicu liked it?

GS: Always played it. (V2/A)

Now, COMING BACK TO ODESSA, I decided to organize the troupe and get out of Russia altogether, for good. So I get all the cooks, for various occasions, in Odessa, who wanted to leave Russia for good. And I went to the "Gubernskaya Kamisia Pobarveh Desertirsum," the company that is fighting desertion in the army. They knew me. And I says to them, "Look, why don't you give me a train, car, and I'll start to
make propaganda for the Soviets." And that was a good idea, they thought, so they gave me a train—you know the train, a pullman car, place enough for my cooks and everybody else. And the only one who knew, the two people who knew about it more, is my balalaika player by name of Pagarelov, Vladimir Pagarelov, and violinist, Obermann. They know about my plans.

(10/A)

CS: Pagarelov's first name was Vladimir?

GS: Vladimir Pagarelov.

CS: And Obermann?

GS: Sam.

CS: Sam?

GS: Samuel, I suppose.

CS: Samuel, alright. Pagarelov is the same thing as Amerikov, right?

GS: Yes. (V2/A)

Now, JUMPING BACK TO ODESSA. In Odessa, I met a gentleman who called himself Amerikov. (His first name, what's his first name?) He called himself Amerikov because he went to America; and he got stuck, and his mother was ill, so he went to Russia to see her. And he got stuck in Russia and could not go back to America. And I met him in Odessa. We played together, and we make a pact together, three of us—the violinist, Obermann; myself; and he, Amerikov—that we gonna stick together and one day again, we'll right across the border. And he, going back, out of Odessa, and going back to United States. (3/B)
CS: How did you meet those people, Amerikov and Obermann? If Amerikov was older than you, then he wasn't a student.

GS: No. I suppose I used to go to cafes to find out about musicians, everything else. And we got together, Obermann and Pagarelov. We decided we gonna stick together and get out of Russia. (R1/B)

And--I HAVE TO REPEAT MYSELF MANY THINGS--I went to "Gykommdeserter." There was agency that were fighting deserters. And since they knew me, I said, "I would like to take a train and make propaganda for the Russian army." "Oh, my goodness. Certainly we give you the train. We give you everything, every capacity." And here I have a train. And, again, I have all those cooks from various famous places in Odessa who wanted to escape Russia and come back, go back, to their own country. (1/A)

CS: How did you know them? You used to go to the meetings? You used to go to the meetings of the "Gubernskaya Kamisia"?

GS: No, but everybody in town knows where it is. It's just like, smaller than El Coto. (R2/A)

CS: Did you ever have to argue for what you wanted? I mean, convince people verbally, with words?

GS: No, I don't think so. During the dark days of the Bolshevism, as you know, I always knew how to play "Internationale" and "Warsawianka" and other international songs that were popular at that time. And those songs and my playing got me out of all the troubles, and I got my double pay.

CS: Double ration, you mean.

GS: Double ration.

CS: But when you went to get the trains, you had to talk to those guys, right?

GS: You mean the first time?
CS: The first time, to get the cooks and all that.

GS: But they know my playing and the didn’t have any doubts that I could do something like that. They gave me train, a special train, in order for me to make propaganda for the Bolsheviks, for what you call that, and that used to be their fight against desertion in the army. (R11/A)

My "Internationale" story I TOLD YOU--how I played the "Internationale" for everybody, and I was expert at playing the Bolshevist "Internationale."

CK: For good food.

GS: For good food, don’t you remember?

CK: Yeah.

GS: I played not only "Internationale." I played all those songs: "Warsawianka," "Internationale," Melobinovelle," "Marseillaise"--all the revolutionary songs. I played like nobody could beat me. But the "Internationale"--no matter who, what Commissar was that time at the meeting, "Get Gregory. Get Grisha." And I sit down at the piano. (01/B)

CS: You said the committee knew you? And when you used to play the "Internationale," you said, they gave you a double ration of everything?

GS: Yes, because I’m the only one who knew how to play it. See, I’m so, I was so curious. I was reading books and getting together material. I knew about composers of "Internationale"--Degeyter, I think it was, the two brothers, Degeyter. They composed the "Internationale," isn’t it?

CS: I don’t know. And they would call on you, or you went to the meetings?

GS: Well, I was around. It’s such a small community, and they knew that I could play. So whenever they had a concert, they’d call me, and I would play and I get a double ration of something. It was bad times, that time. People were starving. I was the lucky one. (R2/A)

CK: You told us about the "Internationale," the Bolshevist ...
GS: ... The Bolshevist hymn, the "Internationale," is written by textile working man from Lille, France: Degeyter. His brother wrote the lyrics, and the other brother wrote the music. There were two brothers.

CK: Two brothers--one wrote the music, and the other, the lyrics. And when, it was the first time . . .

GS: ... I tell you . . .

CK: ... That you came across the music?

GS: I have the music somewhere here, original copy.

CK: Original copy?

GS: From Paris. At that time, it was a local hymn.

CK: Ah, I see.

GS: They barely knew, very little, about the Communism. They started a socialistic society, I imagine, in France.

CK: (omit Lenin digression) The "Internationale" were known before the Russian Revolution?

GS: Yes.

CK: It was written and played among those young students, lecturers?

GS: Yes.

CK: So it came to Russia?

GS: In Russia, it came. (03/B)

So I came that time, I told them, "I would like to take "Kollektiv" and go make propaganda for the Bolshevists, against the desertion of the army." (omit meetings discussion) So I get a troupe out of Odessa. I make propaganda. So I took all--Franconi, Rabina, Ambalzaki--I took all those chefs with me because they all wanted to leave Russia altogether. It was nothing else to do. It was in the
Bolshevist hands, so they gladly join me. They gladly join me, and they went on a tour, AS I TOLD YOU. We travelled as far as Vapniarka, and we used to come back again.

CS: Franconi and Rabina were the names of cooks or the names of restaurants?

GS: Restaurants.

CS: And they were foreigners who wanted to leave Russia?

GS: They leave. They wanted to leave Odessa. It was bad time. They didn’t want to stay there. (omit questions on Ambalzaki Cafe) You see, it all came to that. I had to organize that train and all those guys out of every cafe they worked in--Liebmann, Cafe Liebmann; Franconi; Paraskeva. That’s Greek, isn’t it?

CS: Yeah.

GS: That also was a big one.

CS: Liebmann, Franconi, Paraskeva. You mentioned before Rabina.

GS: Ah, Rabina.

CS: And you got the musicians and artists from there?

GS: Yeah.

CS: As well as the cooks?

GS: Yes, everybody, everybody who wanted to get out of Odessa. And then, when I came to the Committee to Fight Desertion in the Army, they gave me leave because--I TOLD YOU--I played "Internationale" and "Warsawianka," and all the Russian songs. And I got free, I got coupons more than I can eat.

CS: But those artists didn’t know that you were trying to escape?

GS: Artists knew.

CS: I thought only Obermann and Amerikov knew.

GS: Amerikov? No, they knew the last time, when I’m not gonna give an order to unchain . . .
CS: ... Only then? (P2/A)

We, one day (I was supposed to stop the train): We going from Vapniarka, and from Vapniarka back to Odessa; Vapniarka, Odessa; Vapniarka, Odessa. One day, I "forget"--I didn’t. On purpose, I did not give an order to connect our train back to Odessa. So the train pulled us as far as Zhmerinka. Zhmerinka used to be the center of all the railroads going to Europe. And in Zhmerinka, I saw the blown-up bridges. And I used to go everyday to, to "Voksal," we call it, where people used to go, walk around, just look around. And waiting for the opportunity. And then a guy came to me, heard me play and said, "Listen, Tavarische, I know that you have a purpose to be here. We have a train. If you and your troupe would join our train, we going to Kiev and back; Kiev, back; Kiev, back. And you can speculate as much as you want. And maybe one day you’ll be able to do what you want." "OK." We agreed, and we started to travel with him that station and Kiev, station and Kiev, station and. The station was Mogiliov. Finally, one day, Commander came and says, "Tavarische, I have to say good-by to you. We finished our job, and now you’re on your own. Do whatever you please." And here we are, troupe of ex-chefs, of the famous restaurants; Pagarelov, the balalaika player; myself, the pianist. (1/A)

CS: How many people in the troupe?

GS: We have a French cook; a German cook; about eight people, actors, who wanted to go. Some wanted to escape; some
wanted just to speculate.

CK: Survive?

GS: Speculate. Because sugar, salt was cheap in Odessa; and few hundred miles from Odessa, for the same sack of salt, you could get five sacks of sugar. If you bring that to Odessa, you become a millionaire. (04/B)

CS: Speculating in sugar. (04/B)

GS: And I brought my salt home to my oldest cousin, and she converted it, brought ham, and bought any kind of food you can imagine . . .

CK: . . . Ah, used it to preserve food? . . .

GS: . . . And bought cigarettes . . .

CS: . . . No. They exchanged the salt for other things . . .

CK: . . . Ah, salt, that it was valuable . . .

GS: . . . And she bought millions of cartons of cigarettes, and she was selling cartons triple the price, later on, so triple. So I had a lotta things to do. But finally, I got a train to make agitation for the government, in Odessa. They gave me a whole--AS I TOLD YOU ALREADY--they gave me French, German cooks, Italian cook, a big car, a piano. And I had a whole troupe. And we were travelling from Odessa to Vapniarka; Vapniarka, Odessa; Odessa to Vapniarka. (03/B)

And we started speculate, going from city to city, carrying salt or sugar, whatever we could take on. Finally, my people--specially the cooks--says, "Look, Grisha, we joined you because we wanted to get out of Russia. You stick around in Russia. What do you want? Either you turn back home to Odessa, or let us get out." (10/A)

Finally, one day, I decided--my, the singers and the cooks, they were complaining, "Why don't we go farther?" So, one night, I did not give order to unchain my car. And I only
told my violinist and my balalaika player. One day—we had only three people that knew about our scheme: myself; the balalaika player, Pagarelov; and the Obermann, the violinist. And we decided that it's just about time to go ahead. And without saying anything, I didn't tell at the station of Vapniarka, the train pulled us to Zhmerinka . . .

CS: . . . Zhmerinka?

GS: . . . Which is a big station not far from the border, already. Forbidden territory, to anybody.

CS: But inside the Russian borders?

GS: Yes. (03/B)

And the train pulled us out to Zhmerinka, pulled out to Zhmerinka. Zhmerinka was the biggest port between ports, connecting Odessa with all the Russia. And just in the morning, somebody was knocking (knocks three times). Was the Cheka, Cheka that was center of killing everybody—all the speculators and everybody else. Anybody they wanted to. And they looked inside of the car and says, "Ah, speculators. Arrest them!" "Oh," I says, "Tavariische, not speculators. We are artists." "Artists? My goodness! We are dying here from boredom." (crosses himself three times)‘ And they helped us with all that money that was lying on the table—dollars and all kind of money; and sacks full of sugar that was so expensive in that part of Russia. They put us in the best hotel at that time, and brought the piano. And I started rehearsing. And pretty soon we gave a big concert. (3/B)

CS: Let's start at the beginning.
GS: WHAT'S THE BEGINNING?

CS: At the beginning, again. (omit discussion of lost voice)

GS: I got, I got the train. I wanted to go and do propaganda for the Bolshevists.

CS: Right.

GS: So they gave me a train . . .

CS: . . . Right. And you went from Odessa to Vapniarka; and back and forth; and back and forth; Odessa, Vapniarka; Odessa, Vapniarka, no?

GS: Yes.

CS: And then from Vapniarka . . .

GS: . . . To Zhmerinka.

CS: To Zhmerinka. You didn't unchain the train in Vapniarka, right?

GS: Well, now I had full train, full of people, all the speculators there . . .

CS: . . . And Zhmerinka is where the Cheka came in.

GS: Yes. That time.

CS: Zhmerinka, not Mogiliov?

GS: No. Zhmerinka. (R1/A)

Zhmerinka, I TOLD YOU THE EPISODE. They, the Cheka came in to, saw us, our car full of sugar, monies on the tables, everything else, says, "Speculators. Cheka." I says, "Tavarische, we're not speculators. We're artists."

"Artists? My goodness!" Starts to cross himself (makes sign of cross). Says, "We're dying here for entertainment. We'll do everything for you. What do you want?" "Well, give us a, first of all, hotel." So they took us to hotel. They brought
the piano in the hotel. We rehearsed in the hotel, all the program. In the meantime, I used to go to the railroad station, and there I met one of the guys, who said, "If you have nothing else to do, we take you back and forth." (R2/A)

CS: They were dying for entertainment?

GS: Naturally, entertainment, naturally.

CS: So you played for them?

GS: Oh, sure. We played for them for weeks. Finally, but I used to go to the railroad station and play there.

CS: Railroad station?

GS: Railroad. And an officer, wearing a uniform of a Commander, comes to me, says, "Tavarische, what are you doing here?" I told him the whole story about "Kollektiv," that we are trying to get to Mogiliov Podolsk, on the Dniester, right on the Dniester. He says, "Ah, I can take you. Why don't you join our troupe here, our train? We have the"--you know, covered-up wagon, train, that no, bullet proof . . .

CS: ... Armored train. Armored train.

GS: "Armored train." So we get on that train, and we start to make Kiev, back; Kiev, back; Kiev, back. (03/B)

CS: OK. And from Zhmerinka, some of them went home because they got tired of waiting, right?

GS: No. They all went with me to Mogiliov.

CS: They all went there?

GS: Yes. And then many of them decided to go back . . .

CS: ... from Mogiliov. And the "Voksal" where you used to go, the "Voksal," was that in Zhmerinka or Mogiliov?

GS: WAIT A SECOND! (1R/A)

The bridges over Dniester were blown off. There was no connection with the West unless it was illegal. Every day,
as a rule, I used to go to the "Voksal." That was the station where people used to go, wait for the trains. And there I was sitting at the piano and playing. Finally, the guy comes to me, says, "If you join our train, we’ll take you to Kiev, and Kiev to other places. You can speculate, whatever you want." So I thought it’s not a bad idea. I told my company, "Let’s do it for a while until we be able to get out." So we started to go to Kiev, back from Kiev, back to the Dniester city—finally, it’s Podolsk, Mogiliov Podolsk. (10/A)

CS: Where did you say good-bye to all of those people?

GS: Mogiliov Podolsk. Some of them decided to go back to Odessa, and some of them remained there. (R4/A)

CS: Oh. But who was the guy who came up to you when you were playing and said, playing in the station?

GS: The Commander. Commanding Officer. I used to go to the station, to the station there, not far, railroad station—to play the piano, practice, perform. A lotta people around me. Finally, one man came to me in uniform, said, "Tavarische, what are you doing here?" I said, "Well, we have a troupe here. We’re trying to go maybe to Mogiliov Podolsk." On the border of Romania, on the Russian side. Forbidden territory unless you live there. He said, "It’s nothing for us. We’ll take you if you wanna go. Join us, the troupe, on the troupe. Join our, we go back to Kiev. You can go back to Kiev to us." They have "blindaki"—what you have, a car that you cannot shoot through?

CS: Armored.

GS: Armored car.

CS: Why? It was police, that guy?

GS: No. Those trains were armored.

We must have given them a concert, somewhere there—either on the train or around the train somewhere. And that’s
in gratitude they told us, "We take you anyplace you want now. You can speculate now, back and forth, from here and Kiev, between here and Kiev, go back and forth." And so I, so we did it, did it. (R2/A)

So we joined it. We going back, we speculating. We still speculating, back and forth. And they also speculating, all those guys. Finally, we said to him, "Take us and leave us in Mogiliov Podolsk." We came to Mogiliov Podolsk. We stayed there for a long time, quite a long time. I played the accompaniments in all the shows. And one guy comes from Moscow--fine artist, I have his pictures on my music--Sabinen, fine singer. I played for him. I ask him, "Tavarische Sabinen, what are you doing here? You wanna cross the border?" Says, "God forbid! No." And they caught him with a peasant, crossing the border. Lucky for him that his name was so famous that they let him go back to Moscow. He didn’t tell me. He didn’t trust anybody, and he got in wrong, with the peasant, you know. Finally, after a long time staying there . . .

CS: . . . How long were you there?

GS: About six months. I imagine so, maybe so. Time flies fast, I don’t know. And, finally, the one, they came--smugglers. They came to me. They says, "Look, what are you doing here?" My troupe was complaining, too. They want to go back home to Odessa, some of them. "You probably want to cross the border. You wanna cross the border?" "Yes." "I’ll take you. Only you have to be ready. We come in, you prepare the money, and we cross you over the border."

CS: How much did they ask for?
GS: 5,000 rubles.
CS: A person?
GS: No. Altogether.
CS: Three people?
GS: Three of us. (04/B)

Three of us. The whole troupe was there. We stayed for about two, three weeks, and the troupe says, "We wanna go back to Odessa." I, how can I let them go to Odessa without me? Would be very suspicious. Says, "Wait, wait, wait!" Finally, I sees they couldn't wait. I says, "Well, go." And here, one of the man comes in, used to come in to the theatre, says, "What are you doing here? I know you don't wanna stay here forever. Are you wanna cross the border, to Romania? I says, "Yes." "Have you got any money?" "Yes. We have about 5,000 rubles." "OK. We'll come in one of the nights and get you. Be ready any time."

CS: Who was that man who told you, "You want to cross the border?"
GS: He's a smuggler.
CS: Smuggler?
GS: Yes. They have signals, from windows. It's close by. It's just close by. (03/B)

CS: How did you know that the guy who approached you wasn't an informer and wasn't going to turn you in to the police?
GS: No, because I knew him, what he was doing in the city.
CS: You'd seen him before?
GS: Yes, because I played quite a lot of jobs in Mogiliov Podolsk.
CS: Not only the theatre?

GS: Well, many jobs, yes.

CS: And he was always around?

GS: Yes.

CS: And you knew that he would approach people?

GS: He approached me. Says, "Have you got any money? You wanna cross the border? You don't belong here: you wanna get out." I says, "Yes."

CS: How was he dressed?

GS: Regular, he was dressed.

CS: Like an ordinary person, not a government . . .

GS: . . . NO, NO. (R1/B)

We didn't even know what to do, what's gonna happen to us. So, finally, the guy came to us, says, "You have any money on you?" "Yes, yes, yes." "Well, be waiting." "How much?" "500 dollars." "Every one of us?" "Yes. Well, be waiting. Be sure that when we come in, you're ready to go." (5/A)

CS: And this guy who approached you, he approached you in Mogiliov, not in Zhmerinka?

GS: No.

CS: And the "Voksal," where did you used to play in Mogiliov?

GS: There was a theatre there.

CS: Hm. Outdoor or indoor theatre?

GS: Indoor.

CS: Indoor theatre? With a movie?

GS: No, just a concert hall. (R1/A)
WAIT A SECOND! Then, in Mogiliov Podolsk, a guy came up to me, says, "Look, you play accompaniment here very fine, but you don't wanna stay here. You wanna get outta here. Where do you wanna go?" I says, "I wanna cross the border." "Alright. You have money?" I says, "Yes." "500 dollars?" "Yes."

CS: Was it dollars they asked for then or rubles? Where would you get dollars from?

GS: Rubles, whatever it is. Rubles, yes.

CS: Not dollars?

GS: No. (R1/A)

So, we got all our stuff. We didn't know. We had a midnight supper at the house, just about midnight. Knock (knocks) at the door. The smugglers. "Ready? Let's go." Cold. And the moon is shining. Cold. We went. Was a lotta other people on the streets already. Little by little, more and more people got together, more and more people, more and more people. It's all prearranged with the police, the, everybody were involved in it, getting money. But still, one baby started to cry. He says, "Either you get out of this crowd, or we'll kill the baby." It was dangerous. Finally, at the, at the shore—we came to the shore, the narrowest place on the river, where it was very narrow . . .

CS: . . . Which river was it?

GS: Dniester. (04/B)

CS: And this was in Mogiliov? And this was the Dniester?

GS: Dniester River.
CS: Not Dnieper?

GS: No.

CS: Dniester.

GS: Dniester falls in on Dnieper.

CS: OK. Then, after that, that night, you were sleeping and you heard a knock at the door?

GS: Yes. And they came in. We were sitting—Amerikov, Pagarelov, the balalaika player; and the violinist, Obermann; and myself . . .

CS: You were sitting, or you were sleeping?

GS: No. We were sitting: it was not that late.

CS: And they came, and they asked you if you have the money.

GS: Yes. "Get ready. Get out right now."

CS: Then that's the night you paid them?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Not beforehand?

GS: No. (R1/B)

So, one night, we were having supper, three of us, sitting. Cold night, I remember. Winter. Knock at the door (knocks five times on table) "Ready? Let's go. Right now. No delay. Nothing. Get yourself dressed." We got dressed, took our baggage, whatever it is. We joined the big crowd on the street, already, from various places, wanna cross the border. (O3/B)

CS: What did you take with you? What did you take with you when you left?

GS: I? Practically nothing except my manuscripts, some manuscripts I had.
CS: Did you carry a suitcase?

GS: Suitcase? Yes, "chamadan."

CS: "Chamadan"?

GS: "Chamadan" was this. (sketches notebook-sized square using fingers in air)

CS: A small valise or a briefcase?

GS: Small valise.

CS: Did you take clothes with you?

GS: Very few.

CS: Money?

GS: Oh, we had money by the plenty. We had to pay the smugglers.

CS: Other than the money you had to give the smugglers?

GS: We had some money, naturally.

CS: No letters or anything like that? Photographs?

GS: I had something, something for the Romanian violinist, to give to his, in, but we did it so fast, crossing, the whole darn thing, so I forgot all about it. I just wanted to get through with it. (11/A)

CS: And you took your "chamadan" and some manuscripts?

GS: Yes, I had some manuscripts with me, whatever I had . . .

CS: . . . And the little suitcase. And you started walking through the city.

GS: Through the city, a lot of people join us.

CS: Other people they had contacted.

GS: Yeah. (1R/B)

Well, we were ready to join the crowd to go over the border. At the precise time, the smugglers knocked on our
door. It's evening. And I remember it was cold. "Ready? Let's go. You have the money?" "Yes. Here's the money." "Give me the money." So he took the money, and we started to walk with round about streets to join the whole crowd. Because, as a rule, the Bolsheviks also wanted to send their propaganda men across the border, too. So, little by little, the whole became a big crowd. And then, all of a sudden—as we were crossing, about coming to the seashore, or the rivershore—all of a sudden, one of the babies started to cry. So the smugglers said, "You better keep quiet with that baby because we have to get you out of here or kill you and the baby," he tells the mother. Well, nothing happened. We came to the little, little river. It was a little boat. And he, I sat on that boat. And it was just a second—we crossed.

And we were already in a peasant hut. And there we stayed overnight. And early in the morning, we were provided by horses because it was a dangerous part of the border: on one side the Bolsheviks and on one side the Romanians. And there were cases when the people with visas could not remain any longer, wait any longer, tried to cross the border, and tried to cross the river, and were shot from both sides. So many people just died for nothing. And we crossed the border. Now, our balalaika player reminded himself that 25 years ago, there was an uncle of his, uh, across the river. So, "Let's find the uncle." So we were going. I was not walking, was not sitting in a "britchka." I was running all the time
because it was so cold. (11/A)

CS: After you crossed, though?

GS: Yes.

CS: First you crossed the river, and the baby cried.

GS: Then we decided--yes, the baby cried. Then we decided, Pagarelov said to us, "I have a relative here who lived 25 years ago. Let's go look for him."

CS: At night time? At night time? You were supposed to go look for him at night time? In the middle of the night?

GS: No. Well, by that time, it already got . . .

CS: . . . It was dawn already?

GS: Yes.

CS: So you walked the entire night and took the canoe. (omit "telega" discussion) Leaving Russia, leaving, after the water, after you crossed the water . . .

GS: . . . I was in the peasant . . .

CS: . . . Peasant hut? Whose was the peasant hut?

GS: When we crossed the border, we were in the peasant hut.

CS: And why did you go to the peasant hut?

GS: Well, where would we stay? We crossed. We were waiting till dawn. (omit hut-finding discussion)

CS: The next morning. But you didn't sleep that night in the peasant hut?

GS: No.

CS: You never slept.

GS: Never slept.

CS: You just kept walking. After you crossed the river in the canoe, you walked, and then they brought a. (1R/B)

And we crossed it in a little canoe. In five minutes, we were on the other side. And it was about 3:00 in the
morning already, and my balalaika player, "My uncle lives not far from here. Let's go to visit him. He will help us." So we get the horses, and we started early in the morning to go to that. Cold weather. And I was running all the time because it was too cold for me to sit down. And I got cold, such cold in my chest that I lost my voice. (03/B)

Finally, we came to, at night we came to a little, a little city, with hotel, everything. That's the first time when I saw white bread.

CS: You never saw white bread before in Russia?

GS: No, for a long time.

CS: Did they have it in Russia?

GS: Now?

CS: Then, when you were in Odessa.

GS: Hm, hm.

CS: No?

GS: They make bread out of green peas.

CS: In Odessa, during the Revolution? And so you never saw white bread before?

GS: Well, I saw white bread before the Revolution. I was, don't forget, I was born there.

CS: So, before the Revolution, they had white bread. But then they didn't have it for many years, and you saw it again in this hotel.

GS: In the little hotel.

CS: And you hadn't slept at all the whole night—you were walking and walking.

GS: No. We had, we had a peasant "telega."

CS: What?
CS: The same night you escaped?
GS: It was already morning.
CS: I thought you had a droshky the next morning.
GS: It's not droshky. We couldn't have a regular, fine droshky.
CS: "Telega"?
GS: "Telega." Just a peasant wagon.
CS: But I thought you called it a droshky the other day.
GS: Maybe it's a droshky, you can call it droshky.
CS: But it wasn't fancy?
GS: NO, NO, NOTHING. (1R/B)
CS: What's the difference between a "britchka" and a droshky?
GS: "Britchka" is more civilized, like you have here.' They take passengers for a . . .
CS: . . . The uh, carriage, you mean, like they have here? You mean like the horses we have here?
GS: Cristina, but it has two horses. Usually "britchka," like they have here, they take them for a ride, you know, the tourists.
CS: And a droshky?
GS: Droshky is just a primitive . . .
CS: . . . Little wagon?
GS: No. Droshky, you sit in front, the driver. In the back, there's room for two, three people.
CS: And the "britchka" has no driver in the front?
GS: "Britchka," I TOLD YOU, is something that they take the tourists for a ride.
CS: So that's like a carriage, like those pretty little carriages. And the other one that you were on is more
like a little cart, like the ones that they have . . .

GS: . . . NO. But this is already better, this one you show to me."

CS: The troika.

GS: Troika.

CS: Were you on the "britchka," drosky, or the drosky, I mean running behind? Which did you run behind?

GS: Terrible, primitive.

CS: Aha. The more primitive of the two, the drosky.

GS: It's so hard for me to remember--the words, too. Half of the drosky was covered up with, has, has hay on. (11/B)

CS: OK. The first thing I want to ask, after you escaped from Russia, after you escaped, who was the first person that you told the story to? Because when you first escaped, you lost your voice, right?

GS: That was in Kishinaw, yes.

CS: And you didn't get your voice back until you were in Kishinaw?

GS: Yes. In Kishinaw, I got it because I got a Goggle Moggle' from my house-, housewife. She cured me.

CS: In Kishinaw.

GS: Kishinaw. And there I started to play the first job. I played a job. It was wintertime, and I played the first job in Pavilion, Pavilion it's called, with a gypsy violinist--Diokitsian, Diokitsian, it doesn't make any. He spoke Russian because he was in Russia before playing, broken Russian. (1R/A)

IS: When you got across, Gregory, after you escaped with the smugglers, and all that, and you had your horses, and you lost your voice, how? You told me you went to a peasant's house, you were staying in a peasant's house, and she said she would cure you. How did you come upon this peasant's house? Was it? . . .

GS: . . . No, it was in the city of Kishinaw.

IS: When you lost your voice?
GS: Yes, was Kishinaw. That's when . . .

IS: . . . But who made the Goggle Moggle for you?

GS: She did.

IS: Who's she?

GS: The lady that had that home, we stopped. He was there with all his family; he got her, Sascha Lukas. He brought all his family. We took pictures, just that time, on the street.

IS: Hm. But you couldn't talk.

GS: No, for a while, I didn't. But then I started.

IS: Who made the Goggle Moggle?

GS: The lady of the house.

IS: What house was this? Where you stayed?

GS: Yeah. We were in civilization, already. Kishinaw was a big city.

IS: Hm. How did you find her? How did you know to stay in a house like that?

GS: We had to stop someplace. Everybody knows where to stop when you come to the city. I'm not alone there.

IS: No, but I mean, there are hotels and stuff. How did you find this? Somebody's friend, or what?

GS: I don't know how it came about . . .

IS: . . . A Russian lady or what?

GS: The Russian lady was the one who gave me Goggle Moggle. She saved me. Smelled like "skippidar."

IS: "Skippidar"? What's that?

GS: I don't know. Something that you inhale. I had to cover up myself and inhale . . .

IS: . . . Eucalyptus oil . . .

GS: . . . Maybe, something. Could that be eucalyptus?
IS: Well, Oma used eucalyptus oil to inhale, but I don't know what "skippidal" is, "skippidar." Maybe that's what it is because there's nothing new under this moon.

GS: That's right. (10/B)

Finally, we got to the Dnieper, very narrow at that place. We just stepped over; we were already in Europe. And early in the morning, he put us on, Amerikov remembered that he had an uncle that lived not far away. He said, "Let's go." Early in the morning was cold, winter, winter, and I was very shabbily dressed. And I could not even sit down on the "britchka"—whatever they produce us—and I was running after her because I was afraid I'm gonna be dead. And we were running. Finally, in the evening, in the evening, we came to a little place where there was a little hotel, like. We came that hotel, and they knew we come from the other side. But I didn't tell them where we came from. The first time we saw white bread and all the bourgeois food that we were accustomed to have in Odessa. After staying some time in that little city, I gave a concert. People even couldn't cross the street: it was such fat earth. Anyway, we, after staying there, we finally, three of us, decided we are going further to Kishinaw, to Kishinaw, which was the center of Bassarabia that time—Obermann, Sascha Borisoff, and myself, always together.

We come into a theatre. It was evening, and I was wearing white shirt. And we come in front of the theatre.
All of a sudden, they, Azsrofsky, first cellist of the Odessa Theatre, runs out, "I haven't got a pianist! My pianist was supposed, I engaged, he didn't show up! He must have run back to Russia, or something, but he's not home, no place!" (That was Jules Berg, you know.) "And I need a pianist." "Well," he said, "Don't worry about a pianist. Here is Gregory. He'll play for you." And I went on the stage, and I played the accompaniment. The Sascha Borisoff was turning pages for me. That was my experience in Bassarabia. (3/B)

IS: Bassarabia is a part of what?

GS: Bassarabia?

IS: Bassarabia is part of what?

GS: Now? Romania.

IS: Hm. The place where you stayed after you crossed the border was occupied territory, right?

GS: Now, it's Romania.

IS: Hm. But then, was occupied territory?

GS: Yes.

IS: Who occupied it?

GS: Russian. (11/B)

CS: So when you went, after you crossed the border in the canoe, you went and stayed in a hut?

GS: Yes.

CS: In a hut, overnight, right? (nods) And the next morning, they brought horses.

GS: A "britchka." Yes.

CS: Oh, they brought horses and a "britchka"?

GS: Well, "britchka" is with horses.
CS: How many horses?

GS: Two horses.

CS: And who went inside the "britchka"?

GS: There was nothing outside. It was all open up; everything was open.

CS: Oh, the "britchka" was open?

GS: Yes.

CS: Who sat down?

GS: I couldn’t sit down. If I would sit down, I would die.

CS: Because it was too cold, right?

GS: Yeah, cold. I was running after the "britchka."

CS: Was it Amerikov who was sitting?

GS: Yes.

CS: Obermann?

GS: Obermann was sitting, and he got up or sit down.

CS: Anybody else inside, or just the three of you?

GS: Just three of us.

CS: No driver?

GS: Yes, the driver, was.

CS: And the driver. What does the "britchka" sound like?

GS: Sounds?

CS: When you were running behind it, did you hear anything?

GS: Well, couldn’t hear because of the snow, which was so high, covered up. Regular, like we have here on the street: those guys come in and take you for a ride--little "britchkas"--you know, equipages."

CS: But this was with the snow, right? And you were wearing a coat, anyway.
GS: Yes, I had my . . .

CS: . . . But it was still too cold.

GS: Terribly cold.

CS: Did you have your hands covered?

GS: No.

CS: No? And it wasn’t too cold?

GS: What could I do? What can I do? I don’t have to play piano.

CS: How, and you ran until the nighttime?

GS: Yes. Finally, we came to that little hotel?

CS: Hotel or a hut?

GS: No, hotel, a little hotel, where I saw the white bread for the first time, and herring, and everything else.

CS: And by the end of that trip running, you lost your voice?

GS: Yes. (11/A)

IS: Greg, how did the smugglers, oh, the smugglers had the horses, oh, I see, OK. So there were smugglers on both sides, the Romanian side and the Russian side.

GS: They worked together.

IS: But did you ride horseback, or is that the sled that was open?

GS: A little, they gave us a little "britchka" with horses.

IS: Uh, you weren’t riding the horses?

GS: No. Was just, it was so cold, Inge. I was running after that to get warm because when I came to Kishinaw, the Doctor says, "It’s very difficult. You have a catarrh of the lungs." I don’t know what you call that.

IS: Frozen chords, voice chords, you told me once.

GS: Yeah. (10/B)

IS: What year was this, Greg?
GS: I don't know exactly. But I know we crossed the border, and Pagarelov, our balalaika player, says, "Let's go. Not far from here there was a little town, and my uncle used to live there." This way, he said, you escaped Siguranzo, the police. And it was, and the farther away from the border. How did we get, I remember, the black earth was, you couldn't even cross the street, those days. And especially in a small village.

IS: Tell Cris about your boots, your boots and the piano.

GS: I gave a concert; we all gave concert. My piano, you have to hold the strings because some of the strings would come out. You have to push the hammers all the time.

CS: What do you mean, you have to hold the strings?

GS: Well, when the piano is not organized, you have to push back, the hammers would come out right in our face, don't you?

IS: Well, I thought you played, and the keys were stuck, and somebody was behind the piano . . .

GS: . . . Yeah . . .

IS: . . . Pushing the hammers back. Well, who was behind the piano?

GS: There's a lot of people there.

IS: I mean, not one of the people that escaped with you?

GS: No; maybe so. I don't remember.

IS: I thought you and a friend gave a concert, and the piano was so bad that when you played the keys, they stayed down, and so he had to stand behind the piano and push . . .

GS: . . . Yes . . .

IS: . . . The hammers back so that you could continue playing.

GS: Yes.

IS: But it was not your friend? You don't remember it as your friend, or anything? Who was the one who had the uncle there or something?
GS: Maybe he--I don't know--Pagarelov.

IS: And tell the, Cristina, when you crossed the street, what happened to your boot.

GS: The Ukrainian "chornozem," the black earth, is so thick, so powerful, that when I cross the street, my boots got stuck in that "chornozem." And I had a hard time to pull them out.

CS: It was ice or mud?

GS: Mud.

CS: In the mud?

GS: Mud.

CS: And this was in the wintertime?

GS: Now, I don't remember what part of the year because I was there many times in the city before I get my final OK to go.

IS: What kind of final OK, Greg, is this?

GS: I had to give them . . .


GS: . . . Contrabandistes--to be ready, we have the money--smugglers.

IS: Oh. So this happened not on the other side of the river; this happened on the Russian side, with the mud?

GS: Yes.

IS: And you gave concerts on, I thought you gave it on the other side, when you escaped?

GS: Also on the Russian side.

IS: Where was the business with the piano? I thought that was on the other side already, when you were giving concerts so that you could stay alive.

GS: No. That happened on the Russian side, because we kept on speculating. Finally, we came to Zhmerinka . . .

IS: . . . Where was this business with the piano, the stuck piano? Do you remember? What village?
GS: ... I know people who were waiting with papers, with, to leave Russia, and got stuck. They wanted to run. And they were shot from one side, from the Russian side, and also from Romanian side. And they were killed.

IS: So you were still on the Russian side when all of this, you gave the concerts on the Russian side? I mean, the piano business was not on the other side when you were looking for that uncle? ... 

GS: ... No, Russian ... 

IS: ... When you were looking for that uncle, when you lost your voice?

GS: No, that’s Russian side.

IS: Oh, I was always under the impression that it was when you were already on the other side.

GS: Finally, we crossed the border. Finally, I gave an order to—now, I GO BACK—because I still had an agreement with the “Gubernskaya Kamisia Pobarveh Desertirsum” to fight desertion in the army—that goes way back.

IS: What was that?

GS: That goes back to Odessa.

IS: You went back to Odessa?

CS: No, HE’S GOING BACK IN THE STORY.

IS: Oh. (10/A)

CS: And what do you remember on the Romanian border, then? The uncle, you went to visit the uncle. He was still there?

GS: No. He was gone 25 years. No. 25 years—he went back.

CS: He went back to Russia?

GS: No, back to where he came from—Bassarabia, I don’t know.

CS: So the house you stayed at was a hotel or a house?

GS: First, we stayed in that hotel. Then we were, we were spread out in another house. Was very nice home. I had time to compose music, sit down there. It was a nice place, belonging to, what’s the term? Uh, a pharmacy man
who had ... 

CS: ... Hm, but nobody that you knew? No relation of the other guy?

GS: No.

CS: And how long did you stay there?

GS: Well, I imagine—I don’t know, a week or two weeks.

CS: They had no piano.

GS: Yes, they have a piano.

CS: They had a piano, in the middle of the steppes?

GS: It’s a big, in those days, either you have something or you have nothing.

CS: Aha. It’s like an estate then? A big home?

GS: Yeah.

CS: By accident you happened to come to a big house?

GS: We liked them very much.

CS: All of you stayed there? The three of you?

GS: Yes.

CS: And they cooked for you and everything? Did they know you had escaped?

GS: Sure, everybody knows what’s going on there: it’s near the border.

CS: Did they ask you to pay anything?

GS: No.

CS: Nothing. (omit "underground" digression of IS) And at this house where you stayed, there was the pharmacist, the man, and his wife.

GS: Yes, a whole family.

CS: Children, too?

GS: Yes, I suppose so.
CS: And where did he work? Was there a town nearby where he was the pharmacist, or he just was the pharmacist for scattered houses?

GS: Pharmacist, pharmacy, those days, was a rare thing. One in a hundred miles, two hundred miles.

CS: So he went . . .

GS: . . . Supplied the whole . . .

CS: . . . Served everybody. Did he go from house to house?

GS: No, I don’t think so. I think people used to get it.

CS: Huh? So she must have known what she was doing when she gave you the Goggle Moggle!

GS: Who you talking about now?

CS: His wife.

GS: CRISTINA, YOU’RE NOT THERE.

CS: His wife is the one who gave you the Goggle Moggle.

GS: NO. Goggle Moggle was given me by a, a Russian woman who had a flat in Kishinaw.

CS: Oh, so you left the pharmacist, still without your voice?

GS: Yes. We went farther, to the . . .

CS: . . . And you still, you had no voice till you got to Kishinaw?

GS: No. Till we got to Kishinaw.

CS: And where did you stay in Kishinaw?

GS: Oh, well, I didn’t have any trouble because I started to work, to play, right away.

CS: Hmm. And the three of you went together? Amerikov and Obermann and you went together to Kishinaw?

GS: Yeah. Only we did not work together.

CS: No, but you went together, you left together.

GS: Yeah.
CS: How did you go that time?

GS: We were there, by "britchka."

CS: "Britchka," again?

GS: "Britchka."

CS: Were you running behind, again?

GS: NO, NO, NO!

CS: You sat inside?

GS: It was warm already.

CS: But you still had no voice.

GS: No. Voice came back to me when I was with, when I was living in that new flat, and she treated me with Goggle Moggle.

CS: Who was she, this woman?

GS: The woman who had a flat there, and she rented the flats to everybody.

CS: The landlady? . . .

GS: . . . Yeah . . .

CS: . . . Of the apartments. And after you drank the Goggle Moggle, immediately you got your voice back?

GS: Yes, little by little, I got well . . .

CS: . . . In a few days? . . .

GS: . . . And I inhaled that "skippidar."

CS: That's where you got the "skippidar," too. Aha. And then you went to work there. (11/A)

GS: Yeah.

CS: (tape cuts into first part of opening question: And when you were running, and that's all you) saw when you were running? Flat land?

GS: Flat land.

CS: No trees, nothing? Just . . .
GS: ... I don't remember any trees because was so cold.

CS: Huh? I mean, no scenery or anything like that? So, if it was all flat, then could they see you from the river that you crossed in the daytime? If it was flat land, couldn't they see you?

GS: We left, it was still dark when we left.

CS: And you went far enough away . . .

GS: ... Yeah . . .

CS: ... From the river. Oh. Then the hotel was not directly on the border, next to the river?

GS: No.

CS: The hotel, did you walk from the river to the hotel?

GS: No, on the "britchka," yet.

CS: You had a "britchka" there as well?

GS: We always had a "britchka." That was it . . .

CS: ... No, from the river to the hotel.

GS: The "britchka" came in the morning, with horses, to go out of there.

CS: Oh, from the river you found a hotel to go to at nighttime. You crossed the river at night, and, you said, you found a hotel. So the hotel, was it near the river? You walked?

GS: Early in the morning, the come in. And they tell, "Let's get out of here!"

CS: But you had a hotel though already. You slept overnight someplace.

GS: NO, NO. That's peasant hut.

CS: Oh, peasant's hut was the first thing you touched, and . . .

GS: ... Yes . . .

CS: And that's where they had the white bread?
GS: NO.
CS: OK, from the peasant's hut, you slept there, and . . .
GS: . . . Yeah . . .
CS: . . . And then they had . . .
GS: . . . They provided me with . . .
CS: . . . The "britchka"?
GS: TRANSPORTATION.
CS: Transportation. And from there you went to the hotel.
GS: Yes.
CS: And that's where you saw the white bread.
GS: Yes.
CS: And then from the hotel, that was inland already, away from the river. And then where, from the hotel, you went to this . . .
GS: . . . We got our . . .
CS: . . . Where the lady had the flat? . . .
GS: . . . Then we got to that place where I . . .
CS: . . . The pharmacist . . .
GS: . . . Get my papers.
CS: Where was the pharmacist? Was that the hotel?
GS: NO, that's further down.
CS: Further? After the hotel?
GS: Yes.
CS: Ah. And then after, how did you get to the pharmacist? From the hotel, you got to the pharmacist? . . .
GS: . . . With a beautiful home and a piano.
CS: Ah. That was from the hotel to the pharmacist with the beautiful home.
GS: Yes. I don’t know how many miles it was.
CS: Ah. The same morning?
GS: No, well—I don’t remember. But it was not too long.
CS: Hm. And you stayed there for a couple of days or?
GS: Yes.
CS: And all this time you didn’t have your voice?
GS: No.
CS: Ah. So, from there, then you went to the city . . .
GS: . . . To Kishinaw.
CS: Kishinaw.
GS: Kishinaw. (11/B)
CS: Then it was snow and ice?
GS: Yes.
CS: How could you run on the snow and the ice?
GS: Well, that time, the snow was covered the ground. But I don’t think it was frozen yet. Snow was not frozen, just covered a lot of, you know . . .
CS: . . . Did the wheels get stuck in the snow? Sleds or wheels? Was it a sled or wheel?
GS: Sled.
CS: It didn’t have wheels, the "britchka," droshky, what was it?
GS: SMALL, everything was on small scale.
CS: Droshky, it was called?
GS: Yes, droshky, yes.
CS: Did it have wheels? . . .
GS: . . . Yes . . .
CS: . . . That turned around? Or was it flat, it, in the snow?
GS: No, turned around.

CS: And they, out of wood? Wooden wheels? And they didn’t get stuck in the snow? Did you make any stops on the way?

GS: There was NO TRAFFIC THERE--was desert.

CS: No, I mean, in the snow, because the snow was deep, and the ice was hard, maybe it . . .

GS: . . . But who paid attention? It was forgotten steppes, country. NOBODY THERE--crazy people will be, like us.

CS: Did you think that you would live through the experience?

GS: I had very, I was very skeptic.

CS: Really? Skeptical? Did you think you would be caught?

GS: That was one thing. We, that’s one thing. We were worrying about Siguranza, the Romanian Siguranza, and the Russian Police, because together they’ll get us back. Because--I told you--there was one peasant who took care of one of our singers, wanted to cross the border . . .

CS: . . . Oh, yeah . . .

GS: . . . Sabinen. I have his picture. From Moscow.

CS: Sabinen.

GS: Sabinen.

CS: He’s the one who because he was famous, he was sent back to Moscow, or someplace.

GS: He was not, because he was famous. It was lucky for him that they just sent him back.

CS: Aha.

GS: He was well known.

CS: So you thought, on the one hand, that the smugglers or somebody might shoot you--not the smugglers, but the Siguranza might shoot you.

GS: Siguranza or Russian Police.

CS: So you were skeptical about getting through it. What
other reasons?

GS: What other reasons could I have? . . .

CS: . . . That you were skeptical?

GS: Well, how could one, in that dead country, steppes of Asia, with snow, no civilization, NOTHING—and here, we have to go across.

CS: Hm.

GS: I don’t know—just destined to live, that’s all.

CS: Did you make any stops on the way?

GS: No, we just went to that little hotel.

CS: Without stopping, to give the horses a rest or anything?

GS: No, I don’t think, the horses have to eat, that’s all.

CS: What does the "britchka" sound like when it moves on the snow? Does it make noises?

GS: Slight noises.

CS: The horses?

GS: Horses make noises with their hooves.

CS: And the wheels?

GS: You cannot call that tremendous noises.

CS: Then it wasn’t noisy enough for someone to hear the "britchka" coming along, to hear you and find you?

GS: NO, NO. They couldn’t. Here, we’re far away from the border at that time.

CS: And when you were in the rowboat, to cross, the little rowboat, with Obermann and Amerikov, that was also Obermann and Amerikov in the same boat? That was just one boat?

GS: Just one boat.

CS: In the same rowboat?

GS: Yeah.
CS: Was it just one boat?
GS: Yeah.
CS: I thought there was many, many people you gathered in the crowd.
GS: But I don’t know what they did with the other boats.
CS: There were other boats, too?
GS: Yes.
CS: Several boats? And they all crossed at the same time?
GS: More or less.
CS: Not one boat that went back and forth to pick up people, back and forth?
GS: NO, NO, NO SUCH THING.
CS: Several boats at the same time. And did they have to wait until the guards weren’t around? Did they know the movements, that must have been border patrol or something?
GS: Well, by that time, we already were far away from the border, so it was not dangerous any more. We’re trying to get to that place we could get our passports in order because we didn’t have any papers.
CS: No, I mean, when you crossed in the boat, were there border patrol or Siguranza coming up and down the border there? . . .
GS: . . . NO, NO . . .
CS: . . . Or lights? . . .
GS: . . . NO . . .
CS: . . . Fences or anything? And the river was not frozen at that point? There was no ice in it?
GS: NO, NO, NO! Was no ice.
CS: Was it deep? I mean, going down?
GS: River, at the beginning, they not deep.
IS: You told me, Sweetheart, that there were patrols on the
Russian side and . . .

GS: . . . Oh, yes, that's another . . .

IS: . . . That's what I think she's asking.

CS: That's what I . . .

IS: . . . Explain that to her.

GS: When? Before we crossed the border?

IS: Yeah.

GS: The smugglers give signals, from Romanian side and the Russian side, that the coast, that the coast is clear.

CS: How did they give the signals?

GS: I don't know.

CS: Lights?

GS: They had windows open, I suppose.

CS: Was it, was the river narrow enough so that somebody could walk across it, jump across it, or was it wider than that?

GS: NO, NO, you couldn't jump.

CS: It was too wide.

GS: Then you fall in the water already. Eventually, yes, I suppose you could cross it. But who's gonna do it? A lot of, but a lot of people--I TOLD YOU--got killed on the ice. They had all the visas to come to the States. They were desperate to go across. They could not. So, they tried to do on their own, crossing the river, and they were shot by police, Siguranza--Russian Police and Siguranza, Romanian Police.

CS: Hm.

GS: That was the outcome of all those. (11/A)

CS: Why is it that when you were running behind the "britchka," from the hotel to the house of that lady, why is it that you did not have gloves on your hands?

GS: I don't know--maybe I had gloves, I have no idea.
Or you don’t remember?

NO. I may have gloves, I may have hat, I may have a lot of things--I was not thinking about it now.

You weren’t thinking about it? What were you thinking about?

To get out, out of the, to get out of that danger. (11/A)

Did you think about anything while you were running behind the horses?

What could I think about? I thought, "If I will be alive, I’ll be happy." That’s all. "If I come out alive." (11/A)


2. Compare R1/B:

What was Obermann’s first name?

Simeon.

Simeon?

Simon, Simeon.

3. "Urbanizacion El Coto": the Costa del Sol complex of approximately 250 houses and apartments where my parents now live.

4. "L’Internationale" ("Debout, les damnes de la Terre!") was written and composed by Pottier and Degeyter, two French workers, according to Grun, p. 433.

5. See 03/B, where GS plays the "Internationale," and note the following self-evaluation with respect to the importance of his playing:

And this was your contribution to the Revolution?

Yes, a good one. Because they would not have, they would not have any meetings without me. I was always invited to play.

6. Some versions (e.g., 03/B) include Russian:

And I told you about how the car, the door opens, "Cheka, open!" Says, "Tavarische, 'mi artisti'." "'Artisti'?
"'Tselaya troupa'." ("The whole troupe.") "Oh, God," he start to cross himself, "We are dying here from boredom." And they help us to take all that money, the dollars, and diamonds, and sugar—everything we had—to hotel, where we stayed.

7. GS refers here to open carriages drawn by one horse (usually decorated with flowers) and available (at a per-hour or per-ride rate) to tourists and locals in downtown Fuenjirola, the city closest to El Coto.

8. I have shown my father a troika pictured in the Random House Dictionary always to hand—as dozens of foreign dictionaries—in my parent’s home.

9. At the first sign of a cold or flu—or, for that matter, of any illness—Papa made Goggle Moggle (a blend of hot milk, honey, raw eggs, and, I believe, a secret ingredient) for his children.

10. Sascha Lukas (dates of birth/death unavailable), Russian violinist and long-time friend who recorded "The Gypsy King Album" with my father.


12. Reference, here, is to horse-drawn, open, rental carriages commonly seen in Fuenjirola.

13. Compare 11/A:

IS: How long did you go without your voice?
GS: Just a few days, because the lady of the house prepared for me Goggle Moggle, and that saved me. And, also, the "skippidar" I was inhaling.
IS: Only a few days, or a few weeks?
GS: A few days.
IS: You told me two weeks, Gregory.
GS: I don’t know, Mamsy.
IS: You said the lady prepared Goggle Moggle and said, "In two weeks we’ll have you cured."
GS: Well, she might said, but it took much less than that.
CHAPTER II

THEME: THE SPECIALIST IN DISORDER

Introduction

Forever unsettled, the relationship between what we see and what we know is further complicated when, as Bishop Berkeley observes, "we have first raised a dust and then complain we cannot see." When the dust finally settles—over assumptions and expectations, stereotypes and preconceptions—complaint can lead to clarity, dissatisfaction to discovery—to new ways of seeing—only if we stop bemoaning and starting befriending the square peg, the unknown.

When I learned to relax with those aspects of my father's performance that didn't square with what I knew, with my own well-rounded preconceptions (from "lack of expression" to "lack of interest"), I discovered a new view of the life story as process, whose most effective functioning occurs under circumstances of uncertainty and unpredictability that problematize both the ways currently used to collect, and the words customarily used to characterize the genre. Thus, the shift from story endings (Chapter I), via theme (Chapter II), to story beginnings (Chapter III) marks the discovery that,
for my father, story episodes occurred—somewhat like reflex actions—as spontaneous responses to sensory stimuli. And that shift—remarkable, for me, because it would not have been observed had I lacked the opportunity to work informally and intuitively—against the precepts of method, the concepts of theory, and the sense of "other"—made possible the adaptive model of the life story process for a person in old age (See Figure 1, Appendix A), and was made possible by the adoption of the perspective usual for a person in old age. Furthermore, once I was able to make the self-adjustments needed to see the significance, for my father, of a present perspective of disorder in life, it became impossible for me to dust off and readjust the destiny theme, impossible for me further to ignore the thematic insistence on disorder in story. But before clarifying the function of the disorder theme in the life story process, it is useful to remark here on one of the two key concepts (viz., perspective and process) surrounding the new direction suggested here: Life story scholarship that is not to stop short of process must start with perspective.

Although it is sometimes argued that all people have stories to tell, not enough can be said about the fact that life stories are discovered among people who have lived a long time, among people not in young, not in middle, but "in old age"—among people, that is, whose life stories are uniquely situated vis-a-vis culture and biology, present and past,
action and cognition. Although it is sometimes argued that story telling is possible because actions are asymmetrical to their cognition, because events originate a quest "for understanding, by a later action and a later time, by a later perspective." to which story telling is the response (Caserio, Danto), not enough can be said about the fact that life stories are discovered among people for whom a later action or a later time may have become a luxury, for whom a later perspective may have become a last perspective. And although it may be argued that for people close to life's "last random" event--death (Myerhoff), a long life or a selective memory, as creative responses to life story telling, might represent the products of similar asymmetries--i.e., the biological self must find its affirmation in the cultural self; the past self must find its ratification in the present self (Mandel, Beaubier)--much remains to be said about the present perspective of the self in old age. Perhaps, from the perspective of a person in old age--of a person, like my father, living the increasing dis-order and dis-ease concomitant, in many cases, with the cultural, biological, and psychological experience of growing older--a life past might assume a high degree of order relative to a present story, or a life story might affirm a high degree of disorder not unrelated to a present existence. Of course, lives and stories do not exist independently of the perspectives of human beings; and collected life stories do not exist
unmediated by the presence of performance participants. Still, the privileged perspective of the life story—as the expressive response of a person in old age to the increasingly remote events of previous ages—favors the exploration, at least, of the explanatory power of a hypothesis of increasing disorder: if the movement from birth to death represents a movement from order to disorder, then story might be expected to lack the order of life past, or the disorder of life present might be expected to mark life story—for a person, that is, like my father, for whom the proximity to death must mean the perspective of disorder.

Perspective is a complex topic: but, in life as in art, one person’s foreshortening is another’s foreshortened ability; or, in the absence of perspective, one person’s duck is another’s rabbit. Thus, for example, newly aware of their shortened futures, middle-aged adults like myself take to reshaping life like the proverbial duck takes to water: with characteristic confidence and competence, they "create" norms and rules, they "structure and restructure" experience. But from another perspective, confidence and competence can be seen as conceit and conservatism. In this connection, Peck notes that while people in old age are most often labelled "intolerant" or "inflexible," most people are sensitive to such labelling—and see their vulnerability as a "critical issue"—for the first time during middle age. Apparently, people in middle age are not unaware that rule-governed
behavior can seem automatic, that restructured experience can seem artificial—-and such an awareness can be the cause of anxiety. According to Kuhlen, however, the personality changes associated with the increasing anxiety and vulnerability that motivate people moving into middle and older/later adulthood (e.g., "conservatism, intolerance of ambiguity, and rigidity") can be seen as ego defenses. More like scared rabbits than mechanical ducks, on this perspective, men and women in middle age tend to stop in their tracks when confronted with this view—denying, first, and relying, finally, on their characteristically positive perspective of their competency to control their social environments and life situations.

According to Becker, situational adjustment—the process in which people acquire "the characteristics required by the situations they participate in"—can account for personal development in adulthood such that change, in middle and old age, need not be viewed as either accidental or anomalous. It is no accident, then, that Becker moves away from theories that trace change to personality components and/or value systems—and toward a theory that finds the explanation for belief and/or behavior in the character of the situation—by way of a noteworthy discussion relating change and perspective. As he notes, descriptions of personality change often privilege the perspective of the observer—"the eye of the beholder" (i.e., myself)—when, in fact, there is often
good reason to prefer the perspective of the observed (i.e., my father).6 Although a symbolic-interactionist like Becker might not be expected to see eye-to-eye with a developmental psychologist like Neugarten,7 it does not seem unreasonable--given the shared concern with the social contexts of aging--to explore the consequences of considering the changes experienced by adults moving out of middle age and into old age as perspectives acquired as a result of situation adjustments, maintained as a result of what might be termed "self adjustments." Like age definitions, situations are bound to social institutions.8 And just as social age definitions may exhibit inconsistency from one institution to the next, so perspectives may exhibit inconsistency from one situation to the next. Or, from another perspective, differences among social institutions may provide opportunities for the development not only of many different age definitions, but also of many different situations and many different perspectives. But a profusion of situations and perspectives may seem opportune or ominous; and it is difficult to determine how and why confidence or confusion might become the predominant perspective of a person in a particular age period.

If people in middle age can be expected to participate in more situations than people in old age,10 then, potentially, people in middle adulthood can be expected to acquire more contradictory perspectives than people in late adulthood.
Yet, rather than feeling incapacitated by experiences whose potential for confusion—if not discontinuity—seems limitless, middle-aged men and women consistently report feeling capable of controlling their social environments and life situations. Why? Or, bringing the reports of Becker and Neugarten together to ask the same question at the level of practice rather than theory: given the greater potential for discontinuity afforded me, for continuity afforded my father, by life situations, why might my father’s predominant—and preferred—perspective consistently suggest confusion rather than confidence, disorder rather than order? In a discussion of the life review (the occasion for the "reorganization of the personality"), Butler explains the consistency of adult life in terms of the process of commitment (in which people can choose to ignore or to maintain specific situational adjustments), and locates the limits to consistency in the possibilities of commitment afforded by social structures. Yet, commitment doesn’t fully explain the confident behavior of middle-aged adults; and its absence doesn’t fully explain what Butler calls the "erratic behavior and 'random' change" in adult life." It seems possible, for example, that a middle-aged adult committed to an unpopular course of action—e.g., to behavior judged foolish by family and friends alike—might pursue his line of activity with caution and without certainty, by "erratic," "unstable" leaps and bounds suggesting not consistency, but caprice. Nor is it clear why
an adult committed to a popular line of activity should feel certain rather than uncertain about his ability: it seems likely that a popular course of action will be the occasion for others to voice opinions or offer advice that might be expected to precipitate if not doubt, then deliberation. Indeed, the reflection of middle-age is sometimes seen as the forerunner of the reminiscence of old age.¹³

Sociologists, gerontologists, and anthropologists reflecting on the loss of control felt by many Americans in old age have often explained that perspective by referring to the dominance of the social, rather than the physiological dimensions of aging.¹⁴ With reduced social interaction—the result of a forced retirement or a fixed income, the loss of a friend or a spouse, the absence or ambiguity of expectations,¹⁵ the chilly or conflicting attitudes,¹⁶ the lack of rites and rituals¹⁷—it is no wonder that so many people in old age experience loneliness, isolation, or fear.¹⁸ And, in this regard, my father's experience as an aging Russian-American living in Spain is not atypical: although not entirely without (new) friends (in fact, living in an area populated predominantly by Europeans has provided increased, if irregular, opportunities to meet and speak with Russians),¹⁹ he has been cut off for some time now from the constant whirl of musical activities associated, most recently, with his position as Founder/Conductor of The Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, causing him to comment, "I can't do here
the things the way I want" and "There's not enough for me to do here." And though he might be able to do more elsewhere (he was musically active even in his mid-eighties (writing and arranging music, planning concerts and orchestras), getting from here to there has become a problem since, without ceremony--and without a driving spouse--my father lost his driver's license. Many times, too--often, while reading the obituaries in monthlies like International Musician or Musicians' Local--my father has wondered, with curiosity and concern, at his own continued existence when there have been so many lost friends over the course of a long life: "I've outlived them all. Why, I don't know. But there's no one left."

Still, one must wonder--with respect, especially, to interaction--at the wisdom of privileging culture or biology: for many people, the social and physiological experience of aging must seem one and the same thing. One need only consider how difficult must be interaction for a person with reduced mobility like my father: perhaps water retention makes visiting or even moving about painful; perhaps cataracts make driving or even watching TV impossible. Similarly, for a person with swollen or arthritic joints, how difficult must be communication: pushing pens and telephone buttons is painful, so--even with the aid of a devoted spouse, like my mother--correspondence and calling must be curtailed. And if that person happens also to suffer from loss of hearing or
sight, then telephone calls, television broadcasts, and even daily newspapers and conversations must make interaction tiresome and trying, at best, dissatisfying and depressing, at worst. Of course, the wondrous and wonderful thing is that despite the loss in instrumentality—favoring "disengagement," the lack of interaction—favoring "discontinuity," people in old age have dealt wisely and originally not only with the discontinuity and the disengagement, but also with the stereotypes—e.g., "disengaged," "original," "wise." Besting old records and testing old measures—flouting cameras and glucose levels on a mountain peak, stopwatches and intelligence quotients in a basement lab—adults from sixty to one-hundred continue to demonstrate that it is never too early to seek new ideas and images—new perspectives—to explain the experience of people in old age.

While it is difficult to account fully for the perspectives of people in middle age (who tend to see themselves as the "haves" with respect to control) and people in old age (the "have-nots"), an explanation for the differing perceptions might be sought in the different patternings—e.g., symmetrical, asymmetrical—created as a result of social approvals and disapprovals, indicating favor or disfavor with "good" or "bad" belief or behavior in specific situations. More specifically, perhaps an explanation for the presence or absence of the feeling of
being "in control" can be found in the nature of the relationship between social approval and disapproval typical of each group—favoring symmetry, for those in middle age; favoring asymmetry, for those in old age. In middle adulthood, people often win social approval for antithetical patterns of behavior: for instance, they accept praise for both their productivity and their reflectiveness; they receive encouragement for both their risk-acceptance and their risk-avoidance (e.g., for being bold speculators on the job and steady bread-winners in the home). In a sense, people in middle age seem to be in a "no-lose" situation that might contribute to their confident sense of being "in control."

Although it may not, finally, be possible to determine precisely the reason that societal contrariety encourages not diffidence or confusion, but confidence, in middle-aged men and women, perhaps the explanation can be found in (a reapplication of) what Clark recommends as "the key to successful adaptation" in OLD age: viz., "a judicious assessment of strengths and resources and a continued application of these to the flux and reflux, the rhythmic exertion and relaxation which characterize social relationships at any age level." It seems, in other words, that—as a result, maybe, more of social contradictions than "judicious assessments"—people at the mid-level of life gain social approval for exertion and relaxation, for activity and passivity—for participating, that is, in the
systolic/diastolic movement characteristic of living things." And although it may not, finally, be possible to overlook permanently the difference between is and ought, perhaps the understanding can be found in (a rethinking of) Clark's valuable reminder of the symmetrical relationship between activity and passivity that seems to signal "successful" adaptation in nature (the is) and in society (the ought):

From the earliest moments of living organisms, we can observe this systolic-diastolic movement from solitary, self-absorbing activities to those where the individual is actively engaged in meeting and absorbing the environment—from periods of rest, sleep, digestion, and homeostatic contentment to restless searching for food, animated self-assertion, and hungering for stimulus and pleasure. Our most successfully adapted subjects witness to a continuation of the systolic-diastolic rhythm of engagement and withdrawal from others, sometimes under the most incredibly delimiting of circumstances."

If favorable adaptation—both natural and social—is a function of the balance between contraction and expansion, of the symmetry between activity and passivity, then people in middle age are a privileged lot indeed: the active/passive behavior that, in mid-life, meets with social approval, mirrors the systolic/diastolic movement that, throughout life, makes for both natural and social adaptation."

But that is not the lot of people in old age: if, in late life, biology favors a continuance of the systolic/diastolic, active/passive rhythm that tends toward
equilibrium, culture encourages its discontinuance. And if, throughout life, a balance between active/passive behavior makes for social adaptation, then people in old age are, of necessity, "imbalanced," "maladapted," because, as a result of societal contrariety, their active behavior meets with disapproval. Adaptation is redefined for the old, who are expected to maintain their integrity in a diastolic state (now seen not as imbalanced, asymmetrical, or stagnant, but as "serene") where their withdrawal is labelled "wise" and their "passivity," "peaceful." And those who disturb the peace by exhibiting "bad traits"--i.e., "the aggressiveness, independence, individualism, competitiveness, initiative, future orientation," formerly seen as approbatory--or "bad behavior"--i.e., the activity formerly seen as adaptive--are now perceived as "maladjusted." Given that the world at large encourages the discontinuity of their experience, it is small wonder that the perspective of people in old age--who tend to "perceive the world as complex and dangerous, no longer to be reformed in line with one's wishes, and the individual as conforming and accommodating to outer-world demands"--suggests a loss of control and a lack of order.

But if it is possible to explain a lack of order as the perspective of a life, perhaps it is possible to understand a lack of order as the theme of a story. In fact, in my father's case, the theme of disorder that seems to connect the episodes of a story that "stand for" the experiences of a
life" affirms, paradoxically, in its affinity for upheaval, liminality, and paradox, the very order that it seems to deny. Because my father's story selects "definitive moments"—providing, as Myerhoff suggests, "connectedness to the personal present as well as to the collective past"—favoring disorder, it offers possibilities not only for the order conferred, generally, by themes—for Kaufman, "cognitive areas of meaning with symbolic force"—but also for the order, continuity, and, perhaps, predictability of ritual, which, as Myerhoff notes, is "inherently connective."

"Making connections" among, and "drawing conclusions" about "... the events, experiences, conditions and priorities of their lives," people go through life formulating themes—what Kaufman calls "the building blocks of identity." And, according to Kaufman, these themes, "as reformulated experience," respond to two challenges of identity formation in late life by rendering continuity and conferring reconciliation: they provide "a sense of continuity across the life span," and they reconcile the "course of a life with ideals and expectations of how a life should be lived." Themes make it possible, that is, for people in old age to feel, maximally, that the life that was lived is of a piece with the life that should have been lived and, minimally, that the life that was lived is not in contradictions with the life that should have been lived. It should be remembered, however, that people in old age—though they may be
forgotten—are PEOPLE IN LIFE, people in the process of living, people in the process of interpreting "the events, experiences, conditions, and priorities of their lives," of formulating the themes—interfacially situated between the "was" and the "ought to have been"—that enable individuals to "know themselves and explain who they are to others." It should be remembered, in other words, that since people do not exit life when they enter old age—and, in fact, figure both subjectively and objectively in the reformulated experiences that constitute the themes of their lives—the biggest challenge to self-knowledge in late life might involve not the definitive alignment of the "was" with the "might have been" (a task possible to complete, despite its difficulty), but the continual alignment and realignment of the "was" with the "is," of the self that was with the self that is, of the past that was experienced with the present that is being experienced (a task impossible to complete—unfinished, by definition, even at the moment of death). And proximity to death seems to demand not just the expression of the order of life story, but, for many story tellers in old age, the experience of the disorder of life; thus, people in late life must find the creative energies necessary to construct and articulate themes with interpretive power either wide enough or narrow enough to facilitate the integration, with previously ordered past perspectives, of a present experience of increasing disorder—always internal (Chapter III) and,
many times, external as well.

From my father's present perspective, it is almost meaningless to ask whether the story orders the life or the life orders the story: underlying the theme of his life story is the unquestionable implication that only, borrowing from Myerhoff, a "specialist in disorder"--a person whose lifetime is "entirely given to the principles and practices of uncertainty, exploration, innovation, rebellion, and many varieties of nonbelonging"; a person for whom the givens of life are artistry and daring, fantasy and intuition--could have survived the "dark days of Pogroms in Odessa," the "terrible times of Revolution in Russia," and the "bad times of depression in America." (R2/A, R6/A, R11/A) And it is no accident, I think, that the theme of disorder (clearly traceable to Kaufman's historical, geographical, and social conditions) survives the retellings of the story: on my father's view, the events and experiences of the past few years of his life in Spain have been fraught with disease, disability, and disillusionment (recently, cherished plans for a foundation and an orchestra have moved even more slowly than is characteristic of all things and activities in Spain)--with disorder, both physical and emotional--that might have destroyed someone less able to "adapt" to adverse conditions. ("Imagine me, in my condition!") And though my father never refers directly to the disorder theme that connects the episodes of his story--counting on me to "connect" and
"combine" things when he "cannot manage to put them in the right place" (R4/A), when he cannot "remember how to combine" episodes (10/A), and insisting that "somehow those things all connected" (9/A), that "all these episodes lead somehow to the same conclusion" (R11/A, R10/B, 10/B)—I believe that this particular theme best allows my father to integrate his perception of a profoundly disordered, negative, present experience with his interpretations of a profoundly valued, positive, past experience with disorder. In other words, the theme of disorder best allows my father to see past and present as of a piece, a view that seems to give him pleasure.

Of course, as my father is fond of noting (in Russian and in English), it is impossible, finally, to grasp the pleasure or pain of another human being: "Another man’s soul is forever a mystery." However, it is not impossible to touch the soul of the mystery: understanding the function of theme in the life story involves looking not to the past, but to the frequently overlooked present experience (the only experience, finally, to which human beings have access) of the storyteller (following Becker’s analysis, the frequently underprivileged perspective of the observed). And though (following Kaufman’s analysis) the "sources" of all themes may be located in the historical, geographical, and social conditions of an individual existence, the function of theme in the reformulation of life experiences, past and present, is constrained not by the names and places that may have
figured, historically or geographically, in a life, but by the creative energies and interpretive strategies that may be applied, by the story-teller, to effect the figurative continuity challenging identity formation in late life."

Late to approach my father's present perspective of disorder, I did not immediately identify the theme of his life story; however, as I began to recognize the significance, in his life, of that perspective, I started to realize the selection, in his story, of definitive moments favoring disorder--expressed, especially, in conflicts with authorities, in role reversals and border crossings (literal and figurative), and in close calls with disease and death. Further, I think that the figure of my father emerging from what he calls the "crazy story" of his life (1R/B)--the figure, that is, who defies past disorder by challenging authority with artistry (Part A), fact with fantasy (Part B), and reason with intuition (Part C)--embodies traits of the figure who must live and deal with the disorder of the present." It seems reasonable, then, to suggest that when my father ends a taping session with a smile and a query--e.g., "Isn't it crazy, the story of my life (1R/B), "How can you connect those things?" (R5/A), or "See how I adapt myself to any circumstances?" (V2/A)--he is not just indicating satisfaction with his account of disorder. Additionally, he is suggesting, I believe, that his listener "connect" the past triumphs of the impatient artist--who dared Bolshevists and
dodged bullets, escaped border patrols and avoided breadlines, belittled death and befriended destiny—with the present trials of the patient, who has had to adapt himself to the unartistic circumstances associated with, for example, the irreversible loss of sight, which makes reading books and music difficult; the permanent need for temporary catheterization, which makes sitting—at the piano, on the porch, in the taxi—painful; the sudden dependence on a succession of ominous pills and other people—from morning to night, at mealtime and bathtime—because eating and bathing, dressing and shaving are now painful; the sudden reliance on extra pillows and external apparatuses (most recently, a walker)—because walking (which used to be as easy as breathing) and even breathing are now difficult. And it is not difficult, I believe, to understand the significance of my father’s suggestion for both story and life: continuity and credibility. My father—even by his own admission—is not always a model patient: at times, he defies his doctor’s advice and despises his wife’s attention; he spits out his pills and pulls out his catheter; he refuses to touch his food or his walker, to rest his legs by day or his eyes by night. A nightmare of disorder, on his perspective, his life evokes and explains the figure who gestures toward daring, liminality, and unreason.
1. See Berger 1982 on this complicated relationship.
2. Rabinow, p. 6
5. Peck, p. 90.
7. Kuhlen, 125. Neugarten (Neugarten 1968, p. 98) notes that middle-aged persons "feel that they effectively manipulate their social environments on the basis of prestige and expertise; and that they create many of their own rules and norms."
9. See Karp and Yoes on the overlap resulting from the tendency of interactionists to accept certain developmental patterns, but not as universals.
10. Neugarten, p. 5; Becker, p. 151.
12. Butler, p. 490. Butler sees the life review as the occasion for the "reorganization of the personality" which "may help to account for the evolution of such qualities as wisdom and serenity in some of the aged."
13. Neugarten, pp. 140 and 98. Restak, p. 101, citing a study of residents in a nursing home, notes that for these individuals, being encouraged to meet for an hour a week "to do nothing more than to reminisce about themselves and their families increased health and happiness, and even improved memory in about 40% of the participants."
14. Clark 1967, pp. 426 and 433, notes the "social withdrawal" characteristic of American culture and sees people in old age as an important human resource despite the fact that such people are "devoid of the social and political power whose activities make headlines." Myerhoff 1984, p. 307, notes that "In contemporary industrialized nations, old age as a life stage seems particularly to be dominated by social rather than physiological criteria."
15. Kuhlen, p. 116; Myerhoff, pp. 307-08. Kuhlen notes that "As an individual moves into a new role, e.g., is perceived by others as being middle-aged or old, he may be subjected to a new pattern of expectations, a new set of approvals and disapprovals."; Myerhoff notes "the ill-defined conflicting attitudes and dearth of expectations and rituals surrounding and punctuating the latter part of the life cycle."

16. Kuhlen, p. 133; Myerhoff 1984, p. 308. Kuhlen observes that Western cultures share a typically "unfriendly attitude toward old age." Myerhoff observes that "The discrepancy between individual capacity and cultural/legal definitions of old age are sharp in Western modern societies."

17. Myerhoff 1984, pp. 312 and 308. Myerhoff notes that culture is "vague" with respect to people in old age: "the degree of social and ceremonial specificity surrounding old age in most societies, of all levels of technological complexity, is generally less than that accorded earlier phases in the life cycle." She finds the absence of "public social rituals during late life, since a great many older people create their own private rituals with enthusiasm."

18. Restak, p. 103.

19. Lyell, p. 232, notes that people in old age often "substitute less meaningful and less involving new acquaintances for the more involved and deeper friendships" that are lost as people in late life retire, move, or die—something that contributes to "feelings of loneliness."

20. Restak, p. 97. "Older people may have good reason to be depressed; loneliness, frailty, the fear of illness and dependency, the side effects of medications they are taking—these and other factors can all contribute to depression."


22. Clark, p. 429; Mullen, p. 5; Myerhoff 1984, p. 311.

23. See, e.g., Mullen, p. 5; Career, 240; Butler, pp. 490-92; Reichard, Livson, and Petersen, p. 179; and Rose, p. 181.

24. Butler, p. 154, relates the personality organization effected by the life review to the "evolution" of "wisdom and serenity in some of the aged." Myerhoff 1984, p. 311, notes the stereotypes associated with the aged: "serene, detached, disengaged, wise, and so on--." Clark, pp. 426 and 432, sees withdrawal as maladaptive, but inevitable; he discusses the ways "America's old can make their greatest contribution to American life."
25. Myerhoff, p. 311, notes that the elderly are assigned "roles that represent a limited range of stereotypes--serene, detached, disengaged, wise, and so on--all closely related to maintaining a manageable problem population, easily institutionalized and patronized." She applauds the elderly "exploiters of cultural freedom and confusion" who often justify "stereotypes concerning their unconventionality, originality, and wisdom." In Restak: on glucose levels, crystallized intelligence, redundancy (p. 76), on Hulda Crooks, age 91, the oldest woman to have climbed to the top of Mount Fuji (p. 103). Gerontologist Marian Perlmutter finds traditional intelligence tests inappropriate measures of the abilities of people in old age (pp. 96-97). Psychologist Leonard Poon finds that "Many of the tests used to assess the cognitive abilities of the elderly are biased in favor of younger people" (p. 97). Paul Baltes assesses the abilities of people in old age from a different perspective: he measures not IQ, but "wisdom" (pp. 97-100).


27. Clark, p. 385.

28. Clark, p. 399, sees the "contradictions and discontinuities of American culture" as sources not only of "concern and unrest among elderly people," but also of psychiatric problems of the elderly. Neugarten, p. 97, notes that the assessments of people in middle-age may be mistaken.


30. Of course, as Back has observed, p. 76, "it is always possible for society to arrange institutions such that either youth or age can be peaks or depressions in life."

31. Neugarten, p. 140, notes that people in old age "see the world as complex and dangerous, no longer to be reformed in line with one's wishes, and the individual as conforming and accommodating to outer-world demands."

32. Fry, pp. 42 and 44, notes difficulties associated with answering "large questions." Thus, for example, it is probably impossible to separate biology and culture: "To construct a theory of aging based exclusively upon the elderly is most unwise. It is almost as foolish as focusing exclusively on biological processes." Note, though, in this connection, Butler's caveat, p. 496: "Similarly, it may be argued that the entire life cycle cannot be comprehended without inclusion of the psychology of the aged." Kagan, p. 76, notes that "From a theoretical perspective, the aged are neither disengaging as described by Henry and Cumming (1961) nor are they assuming highly specialized or exalted roles..."
reserved exclusively for their age group. Successfully aging individuals are, instead, reducing their participation in some activities while increasing their contribution to other areas of village life." Neugarten, 140-41, substitutes "interiority" for "disengagement": "With increasing old age, ego functions are turned inward, as it were. With the change from active to passive modes of mastering the environment, there is also a movement of energy away from an outer-world to an inner-world orientation." Vatuk, p. 146, asks about the problems of adaptation for the elderly and/or for those with whom they interact--problems "arising out of difficulties in reconciling a normative prescription for 'disengagement' with the evident desire of the elderly to continue, or even to increase in some areas, their levels of activity": "On the one hand, there is the force of equally strong cultural prescriptions of respect and obedience for one's elders. On the other hand, the inevitable physical decline that generally accompanies aging makes it impossible for many of the elderly to sustain the level of control and management that they might prefer."

33. See , e.g., Butler, p. 490, on "wisdom"; see, e.g., Myerhoff 1984, p. 311, on "serenity," "wisdom," etc.

34. Myerhoff, p. 311.

35. Neugarten, p. 140.

36. Note, here, Zeitlin's "transition principle," p. 16: "Along with characters, families hold on to episodes which mark the upheavals and sharp changes in their history. Families, like individuals, have a life cycle marked by stages of transition which are often celebrated in story." And "Families, then, are selfish in what they choose to remember and pass on. They are willing to remember incidents which come to epitomize the character of a particular family member; and they are willing to remember an occurrence which marks a turning point in their own life or their family history. In this way, each narrative becomes not a rehash of an event, but a distillation of experience. A single episode comes to represent the entirety of a relative's personality; a whole family history is symbolized by a few dramatic turning points."


38. Kaufman, pp. 25-27: Themes--"as reformulated experience . . . the building blocks of identity"--"integrate experience in meaningful ways to meet two challenges of identity formulation in late life: providing a sense of continuity across the life span, and reconciling the course of a life with ideals and expectations of how a life should be lived."
Further, "As people interpret the events, experiences, conditions, and priorities of their lives--making connections and drawing conclusions as they proceed--they formulate themes. In this way, individuals know themselves and explain who they are to others."


42. Myerhoff 1984, p. 310: Liminality, Van Gennep's middle phase, "may be a period of marginal existence that passes, or it may become a role extended through a lifetime entirely given to the principles and practices of uncertainty, exploration, innovation, rebellion, and many varieties of nonbelonging. Then we may speak of specialists in disorder: the ritual clowns, transvestites, shamans, poets, rebels, mystics, and vagabonds who move perpetually at the borders of known categories and agreements." Liminality is "conducive to the generation of social criticism, creativity, and play, with its built-in affinity for paradox, symbolic and social opposition, and disorder."

43. R4/A: "Can you make something out of that mess?" R5/A: "It's so difficult to connect those stories, Mama."

44. On the idea of narrative as an "instrument for obscuring, hedging, confusing, exploring or questioning what went on," see Bauman, pp. 5-6.

45. Despite his many "close calls" with death (even as recently as 1971, when he contracted Guillaume-Barre Syndrome), my father did not "show" his age (which he hid from us as children--along with his Russian name and his Jewish heritage--see Chapter III, A) until he contracted a viral infection five years ago (with 104 degree fevers, cold sweats, convulsions, etc.). With my mother's vigilant 24-hour attention, my father outwitted death and his doctor (who had no hopes for the patient's survival). When my father relapsed three years ago--necessitating the expertise of a new specialist (the third or fourth), who was contacted by carphone after five hours of constant redialing--and after two nearly fatal nights without medical attention (services--from telephones to hospitals--in Spain are not what they are in the States), my father, never too unfit to defy, once again challenged authority: Dr. Nesgard arrived at the house at about 2:00 a.m. and completed his examinations of the patient at about 3:30 a.m. After undergoing the ministrations of the
specialist in urinary tract disorders, the specialist in disorder—who had been confined for days to an upstairs sickbed—and despite protestations from all sides—forced his wife, his doctor, and his daughter to help him descend the two flights of steep stairs—a feat as difficult, perhaps, as unwise—and walk the seventy feet of cold marble to the living room in order to entertain the Norwegian with some two-piano, four-hand music, some Grieg, and some aquavit.
A. ART DARES LIFE TO A GAME OF TAG

Many of the moments selected by my father's story-conferring connectedness to both present and past—are variations on the theme of disorder expressed in conflicts with authorities. In story episodes that integrate recent experiences of late life as well as faraway experiences of early life, my father emerges as a character—in old age or in young age—whose relationship to all sorts of authority figures—from father to fireman, piano teacher to police chief, office boss to Bolshevik official—must be described as sensitive, at best, sinister, at worst. In stories recounting experiences that, to some, might seem to go from bad to worse, my father figures as a character respected and rewarded, time and again, for defiance of authorities dreaded and distrusted. Further, in story after story, my father's artistic mastery is the basis for the bravado that is, eventually, liberating: his indisputable aptitude for piano plus his insatiable appetite for musicianship—for opportunities to read and write, to hear and touch music; to learn and study about, to meet and perform with musicians; to improvise and memorize, to accompany and arrange, to conduct and compose—provide both the rationale for rebellion and the means for emancipation. And, in my father's stories, the combination of musical virtuosity and curiosity means that the protagonist, who cannot be made a slave to authority, need not
become one of the many whose obedience was rewarded with suffering and starvation, poverty and persecution, brutality and banishment, deprivation and, many times, death. Indeed, time and again, the protagonist of my father’s stories, true to the principles and practices of Myerhoff’s specialist in disorder, risks various kinds and degrees of punishment (e.g., from being expelled from the conservatory to being exiled from the country, from being fired from the Hotel Londonskaya to being fired at by the Cheka). In other words, in my father’s stories, the free artist, who dares the authority, finally, of death itself, fills not just his bankbook or his belly; the free artist fills those around him—even those whose feared authority he flouts—with respect and, even, reverence when he dedicates himself to fulfilling his first and foremost obligation—truth to the artistry which is his trust. And while his stories never conclude with a statement of that theme, which is always suggested indirectly, my father obliged me, in one directed interview, with precise answers to pointed questions:

CS: Hm. And when you said one time that all of these stories that you told me lead to the same conclusion, but you didn’t tell me what the conclusion was . . .

GS: . . . If you’re a true artist, you’ll never get lost.

CS: . . . Ah . . .

GS: . . . That’s all the story (stop/cuts/move to kitchen--R10/B, R11/A)

CS: . . . If you’re a true artist, you said, what?

GS: Yes. If you’re a true artist, your artistry come, will come, to the fore.
CS: And help you?

GS: Help you, to win over all the obstacles that may be on your road.

CS: So, being able to play the piano or write music or arrange or conduct or anything always helped you to overcome obstacles?

GS: Yes, well, your instrument. If you are devoted to piano, I mean, this is the most important argument you can have against anybody. (continues with discussion of verbal argument)

Interestingly my father's response on this occasion might seem to suggest not disorder, but order—that art or the ideal of the artist provides a way, ultimately, of making sense of even the most chaotic experience. And one might argue that, in a sense, music itself might seem to be a metaphor for order. However, a closer look at my father's "argument"—and at his "open road" metaphor (and, unlike irony, metaphor always selects in favor of closing distance and opening communication, of furthering understanding)—can help to explain the apparent contradiction. On my father's view, if one is a "true artist," then one dares authority; if one dares authority, then one takes risks; if one takes risks, one "wins" (one never "loses"; one is never "lost"). And, of course, being free (a "true" artist) on life's open road—with its false turns and frequent obstacles—far from guaranteeing order, almost ensures continuous encounters with disorder. In other words, one finds the source of the seeming contradiction by countering the third premise of my father's
"argument" (and by noting the ambiguity of "win" and "lose") on a common sense account, if one takes risks, then one wins or one loses (and not both)—but at stake here are, for example, social sanctions versus disapproval or punishment, material rewards versus poverty or death (so that it may seem possible for one to take risks and then to both win and not to win—win freedom and not win, for example, approval—to both lose and not lose—lose, for example, face and not lose freedom—at one and the same time). Or, to say the same thing differently, my father seems to be staking a claim NOT for the power of art or music to provide existence with a sense of order, but for a sense of self whose authenticity ("truth") is most firmly established—tested and retested—in its free encounters with the very openness of life, with the disorder of experience.

It is meaningful, I think, that in the handful of story episodes devoted to experiences of very early life (the years before his important first piano lesson with Sarah Silberstein at the age of six or seven and first conservatory class with Biber Galperin at the age of eleven or twelve)³, my father emerges as a child full of wanderlust and rebellion, a spirited adventurer who—not just figuratively, but literally—took to the open roads of his native Odessa unafraid of encountering obstacles or losing bearings on his self-appointed quest for knowledge and experience:

GS: Then, on my own, I always used to go on my own, you know. I wanted to see the city. Once, they found me far away
in other part of the city, and they guessed I probably belonged to somebody in the other part, and they brought me back. See, I was always a wanderer, somehow, must have been.

CS: Your parents were still alive?

GS: Yes. That's the time when they had a store.

CS: And you just wandered off to the other side of the city?

GS: Yes.

CS: Doing what?

GS: Just walking around.

CS: Was it far away?

GS: Well, Odessa is a very big city: you can go far.

CS: How old were you?

GS: A little boy. It's before my conservatory days--before everything . . .

CS: . . . So . . .

GS: Before we went to Paris.

CS: So you were about six years old.

GS: Something there. But I had that revolutionary spirit in me. I wanted to see, the city Odessa. (4/A)

GS: I used to like to go wander by myself in Odessa, at night, on various streets. And they always found me. They knew me right away, where I came from, and took me back.

CS: Who is they?

GS: People on the street, who live in that section.

CS: Where were your parents when you were doing this? (10/B-tape cuts; continues on 11/A)

CS: The parents were working and you just walked out and started looking at things, or what? Your curiosity . . . . ?

GS: . . . Walking to the vitrines . . .
CS: ... Windows ...

GS: Window shopping, especially bookstores.

CS: Hm. How old were you?

GS: A little boy. I don’t know, ten, eleven, I don’t know. (11/A)

It is important, I think, to note that the knowledge I sought, in these discussions, was not the knowledge I found. My father’s self-characterization as a "revolutionary spirit" unafraid of getting lost occurred within the context of my own efforts to get my facts straight, to get my bearings right, to find myself among the difficult-to-pronounce, easy-to-forget Russian names of the streets where my father lived and worked. My interest in working it all out (Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa was the street of my father’s parental house; Manezhnaya Ulitsa was the street of his own apartment; Gretcheskaya Ulitsa was the location of the Ambalzaki Cafe where he played for a contractor by the name of Lochman, who lived on Polodisi Priulov Street, and who saved my father from death due to typhus by seeking him out at the Manezhnaya address) was not shared by father, whose response to my attempt to sort out the streets was to wander among them while his mother and father waited and worried at home or at their fabric store:

GS: I played in the Cafe Ambalzaki, Greek. And Mr. Lochman was an impresario. And he took care of me: he paid me my salary, whatever he collected there. And I used to come to his house. He lived Polodisi Priulov in Odessa, Polodisi Priulov, with his mother in the same two rooms. And I used to come in and arrange some music for him that
I--Imagine me, arrange music for him. I still visualize that Polodiesni Priulov. When they, when he died during the famine in Odessa, they got him out of the house, and they told me, and they found a lotta gold under the bed. He was very rich man. That's the contractor I worked for, Lochman.

CS: He's the one who found you when you had typhus? How?

GS: Yes. I didn't show up to play, so he wanted to know what happened to me. So he went to the flat and saw me lying down.

CS: Hm. Did he get a doctor for you or what?

GS: I don't remember the details of those things, but he did take care of me, and everything else.

CS: And why did you have that apartment by yourself?

GS: It was my apartment, father and mother apartment.

CS: Oh, that was the same one you lived in before they died?

GS: What?

CS: You said you had a flat by yourself.

GS: Yes.

CS: Why did you have one by yourself?

GS: But who? It belonged to me.

CS: But had they already died, your parents, died?

GS: Father died in 1914. Mother died 1916, something like that, '17, I don't know, '18. I don't know exactly because I played.

CS: So you stayed in the family apartment? That was the same apartment that you used to live in when your parents were alive?

GS: Yes. It was Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa, Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa. I don't remember the number.

CS: This is the same place you lived in when your parents were alive too?

GS: Yes, that was our flat.
CS: Then why was there so little in the apartment, you said—only so few things, only a piccolo and a piano, you said?

GS: Oh, that’s another place.

CS: Then what is the other place?

GS: The other place is after the Revolution already.

CS: Why did you have the other place?

GS: What other place?

CS: The second place.

GS: The first place I described to you, that was when I was about 16 or 17, when I played for Mr. Lochman. He came and found me in my flat lying down, and he, because he was contractor on the job, as I told you, and I didn’t show up . . .

CS: . . . But that was the same house you grew up in, wasn’t it?

GS: No.

CS: No?

GS: Where I grew up in a house, the only things I remember the maid carried me around. I was little.

CS: You don’t remember the house?

GS: It was on Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa.

CS: That was the same place that the guy found you?

GS: NO, NO, NO . . .

CS: . . . He found you . . .

GS: . . . And the maid carried me around, because my mother was very much busy in the store, and she had a lot of confidence in the maid, I suppose. Then, on my own, I always used to go on my own, you know. I wanted to see the city. Once, they found me far away in the other part, and they guessed I probably belonged to somebody in the other part, and they brought me back. See, I was always a wanderer, somehow, must have been. (cut 4/A to include earlier discussion above plus further interrogation about Kniazhenskaya and Manezhnaya)
CS: Was the one, Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa, was that a house or an apartment?

GS: Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa was an apartment belonging to us.

CS: It belonged to you, or did they rent it?

GS: They rented it, I suppose. That I remember.

CS: And this one, belonged to them or you had to rent it?

GS: Which one?

CS: The second one, Manezhnaya Ulitsa.

GS: Manezhnaya Ulitsa, I had to rent it.

CS: You had to rent it? Where did you get the money to rent it?

GS: That was when I already played and make money. That's when Lochman found me practically dead.

CS: You were already earning a living?

GS: Yes, through Mr. Lochman engagement. And I played on Cafe Ambalzaki, on Greek, on Gretcheskaya Ulitsa, on Greek Street. (4/A)

But in stories that tell of an earlier time—a time long before my father tested the authority of the Odessa Conservatory by playing in professional engagements, by participating in faculty seminars, by experimenting with modern harmonies, frivolous activities off limits to serious music students—my father emerges as a serious prankster who tested the limits of authority at home, school, and work by playing hooky, by playing musical texts, and by playing telephone tricks. And although the hands of an irate father, teacher, and employer meted out various forms of punishment—a spanking, a scolding, a firing—that left my father with
a red face and a red bottom, his adventurous activities earned him, on his account, the respect of peers and the regard of adults who, after wringing their hands and shaking their heads, continued to recount the daring exploits of little Grisha, of "Portik" (the destroyer) in stories about my father. And in his own story, little Grisha himself continued to risk being spanked, scolded, or fired in his desire to explore the breadth of the autumnal Black Sea's coast, the depth of the buccaneerman Henrik Leitweis' cave, the length of the Russian firebrigade's hose, by cutting required classes to go for a swim, by reselling assigned textbooks to buy up an adventure, by reporting imaginary fires to gaze at a firetruck. In other words, the image of the boy in childhood that emerges in the story of the man in old age typifies Myerhoff's devotee of exploration, rebellion, and uncertainty:

IS: Does Cristina know how you played hooky from school, and how you played leapfrog, and how your father scolded you when you were swimming and all of that stuff? You better tell her those early stories, when you were a little boy.

GS: Yeah, but . . .

IS: . . . Not "Yeah, but." She doesn't know these stories.

GS: I played hooky from the school, when I used to go swimming. It was already cold. I mean, it was Autumn. And I remember when I came once there, my whole stomach was red. And my father already knew what I was doing, so was waiting for me there, to give me some licking.

CS: This is from the Conservatory? You played hooky from the conservatory?

GS: No, not exactly. I must've been about 9, 10 years old, age, maybe. I can't remember dates; dates escape me.

IS: Tell her something about the games you played--the
leapfrogging, diabolo, and stuff like that.

CS: Diabolo, where did you learn to play diabolo?
GS: I don't know. I was a virtuoso.
CS: Was it a popular toy?
GS: Popular game in Russia.
CS: For children or adults too?
GS: No, children.
CS: Children.
GS: Well, adults played it too, I suppose.
CS: Where did you play?
GS: Outside. I had great ability. And throw in the air and catch it back on the sticks. Don't we have some sticks in our house, Inge?
IS: Yeah, we have some.
CS: You played on the street? Other boys played as well?
GS: Yeah.
CS: Who taught you? Do you remember?
GS: I don't know. We throw from one to another. (Doorbell) Who could that be? (10/B cuts)

Importantly, I think, the devilish little boy who dares teachers, parents, and the elements themselves to go for a cold off-season, off-limits swim emerges, in my father's account, as the virtuoso of "the Devil," a fiendishly difficult game demanding both skill and daring of the solo player, who must both balance and toss a spinning disc, shaped something like an eggtimer, on a string attached to two wooden sticks. The skillful player moves the sticks rhythmically
until the devilish disc develops a momentum of its own; but the daring player tosses the disc wide, from stick to stick, and high—hundreds of feet in the air—before catching it on the extended string—all the time wandering, traveling, never standing still. And if the game captures elements of the elderly man’s cherished image of the young boy—the restless wanderer, alone, able, and adventurous—it bespeaks a sense of continuity and becomes a symbol for control in old age.

My father was still a virtuoso "Diabolist"—a daredevil of sorts—in his eighties, and he always attracted an awed audience whenever he performed his repertoire of tricks. In fact, despite the poor eyesight and swollen legs, he gave his Spanish neighbors a virtuoso performance in 1985 and never failed to catch "the Devil."

Although, generally, it is difficult to capture my father "at home," in one of his rare responses to queries about family living conditions that might have nurtured his interest in studying music and reading anything, my father provides a self-characterization that connects the wanderlust and daring motifs with cutting classes and loving books:

CS: Did you go to operas and things like that when you were a kid?

GS: Yes, many operas. But my mother would not. I took her few times to the opera—my father didn’t go—but my mother used to go to the opera, she fall asleep . . .


GS: . . . So I did not take her any more.” The operas that I’ve seen, as you know: Eugene Onegin, Boris Gudonov, Ruslan i Ludmila, Zhizhin zat Tsaraya, Traviata,
Rigoletto, Niaz Igor, things like that . . .

CS: . . . Where did they take place? . . .


CS: Where did they take place?

GS: In the Opera Theatre. We have imitation of the Vienna. Just like the Vienna. It was made after. I think they renovated it; it still exists.

CS: Before you went in the Conservatory, you went to the opera? Or after?

GS: Yes, yes, sure. Before. I used to go myself. You know, I was a very, the Spanish say "attribution," daring boy, you know. I did go; I go. If I was punished by my father--if I miss school, he would punish me--but otherwise, I would go. He was too busy: he won't go anywhere. And, then, after he died in 1915, naturally, I had free will. I did go anywhere I wanted to. Music was to me--I looked in the vitrine of all the music stores. Or books--such a tremendous attraction. Those wonderful Russian editions, the beautiful bindings--impossible--just fascinated me. They had all, they had tremendous editions. (02/A; omit library and Jesuit stories)

As my father tells his story, his love of almost everything in print extended from poetry and prose classics (his favorites were Alexander Pushkin and Jack London--see 3/A) to comic book adventures (e.g., "Captain Nemo," "The Cave of Henry Leitweis"), from musical pieces (fashionable tunes and waltzes like "Kikapoo" and Kews' "Amarousia" as well as serious standards by, for example, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Kreisler, also in vogue) to popular magazines (e.g, Satyricon and Budilniki--see R11/A). Some books, however, were as unpopular then as they are now: my father's love of things in print was not large enough to include textbooks. In fact,
in his stories, my father emerges as no small entrepreneur—the proverbial black marketeer—who defied teachers and parents alike by reselling his recent editions to buy back outdated versions of his school books at reduced prices and by using his profits to buy up the serious and comic books that he adored, that his father abhorred:

CS: Do you remember any of the Russian proverbs that you used to use?

GS: (laughs) Probably, yes. But I . . .

CS: . . . Did your parents ever use proverbs when you were bad?

GS: Just give me a spanking.

CS: No proverbs. Did they read books, your mother and father?

GS: He had particular enjoyment to destroy all the books I bought.

CS: Did he read himself? Do you know if he read?

GS: See, you, I bought all the adventures. I was the first one waiting for the books to come in. But those was five cents editions.

CS: And he didn’t want you to read them? (omit repeated question)

GS: No.

CS: Why?

GS: Because of those adventures. There is, according to him, there was nothing solid, educational. He was right, of course.

CS: Adventures like what?

GS: "Kaftan, Captain Nemo." "The Cave of Henrik Leitweis." (omit repeat)

CS: Henrik Leitweis?
GS: Yes. He was a famous buccaneer, bandit. "Lagtopf of Berlin," "The Executioner of Berlin." (omit discussion of book size)

CS: Aha. Did your mother read?

GS: Read but seldom. She sang to me songs. (hums) (10/B; continues discussing, humming, naming tunes sung by mother)

Further, according to my storyteller, the "song and dance" with his own father was repeated many times, with always the same consequences for both participants: Though he knew that he would be properly punished for bringing home the trash literature, though he believed that his father would be justifiably gratified in destroying it, my father, according to story, repeated his flagrant defiance again and again—"swallowing" the adventure stories (an interesting word choice given the importance, for elderly story-tellers, of sensory stimuli such as those associated with food and drink) "like nothing":

CS: What is the importance of Russian proverbs? You use proverbs all the time, like "You can’t throw the potato out the window."


CS: When do you say that?

GS: Well, I don’t know. You have to wait an occasion to say it.

CS: You mean there’s always an occasion to say it?

GS: Yes.

CS: Tutti said your Russian friends used to be amazed because
you used to use proverbs all the time?

GS: Well, you know that yourself. You heard many of them. I always use them because I think they, they are, they show the face of the Russian people, the soul, the face, the inside of the Russian people.

CS: Do you consider yourself a Russian or an American?

GS: Russian.

CS: Then you said when you were a little boy, you used to wait for the books to come in? That were five kopecks, or five cents, or five kopecks, I don’t know.

GS: Yeah. My father was against it because they were mostly adventures, mostly trash, according to his words. And I was waiting at a kiosk till they come in. But my father knew about it: he would come out too, then, and destroy those books.

CS: Did you hide them someplace? (omit repeated question)

GS: I couldn’t hide it in my, our place, no. He would eventually find them. Then, I didn’t wanna lie to him.

CS: You didn’t have a place to hide them? Under the bed or? No?

GS: No, wouldn’t be good.

CS: So, as soon as you bought them, he would find them immediately?

GS: No. I start reading them first.

CS: At home or someplace else?

GS: At home. My father was probably at, doing his business outside; and mother was not interested what I’m reading, as long as I don’t bother her, you know, as long it’s quiet in the house. She doesn’t want to disturb me or something like that. She was not interested.

CS: And so, when he came home?

GS: Well, he, he knew I have the books. He asked, "What did you get today?" And I told him what I got today. "Where are the books?" "Oh," I told him, "They’re here." "Let me have them," and put them in the fire.

CS: A fireplace like this or a stove in the kitchen or
something?

GS: A stove in the kitchen, yes.

CS: A woodburning stove? And he put them immediately in? Hm. All the books you read or only those adventures?

GS: Well, all of them. I swallowed them like nothing.

CS: But, I mean, he burned all the books you had or just the adventures?

GS: Well, those that he knew I got them. Not my books, the ones I studied, no.

CS: But the ones you studied, didn’t you sell those back or something?

GS: Since I needed the money, I trade them in for older editions.

CS: Older editions?

GS: Well . . .

CS: . . . The ones they didn’t use any more?

GS: They use them, but, well, I don’t know how, in the school. I wanted to have money on hand, and I traded all my new books for older, for older books—all the same thing, but older edition. Usually the pages were not the same. No, they always change them, the new editions, so something is different.

CS: Yeah. So how did you follow what the teacher was saying?

GS: I followed. Well, my boyfriends and friends helped me, anyway. They tell me, "No, this is the wrong," or something like that.

CS: And what did you do with the money you got from selling them back?

GS: Buy more books.

CS: The adventures, you mean?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Did they have a public library then?

GS: They, I had a public library. I used to go there, too.
CS: Oh, where you could borrow books and return?

GS: Yes, no. I don’t think I could take them out, the big ones. The big, I could not take the big ones home. No, impossible. The big ones had to stay here. The big ones, no; they wouldn’t give me the big books home. I could sit down there at the table and read them there. But they couldn’t take a chance. There would be no library then if everybody would take those big volumes home. No, no.

CS: And what sort of things did you read at the library?

GS: Also adventures—from Greek, from Roman histories, full of illustrations. Greece was the most, number one, because all the famous story came out of Greece. Rome was the second. Who wrote The Huguenots? (R11/A; continues with discussion of Meyerbeer and Galina as well as operatic and stage productions seen in Odessa)

Around the time of his first piano lessons (probably between six and nine), my father, again, according to story, caused quite a production at Polyakin Music Store, where he worked part-time sorting and selling records—and where he took a chance (again, not without an understanding of the nature of risk, for, as he notes above in relation to the library’s non-lending policy, "But they couldn’t take a chance.") that cost him his job: Intrigued not just by the record player, but by another new invention, the telephone, my father looked for opportunities to touch and try the phone that he was forbidden to use. On one such occasion, he decided to satisfy, as well, his curiosity about the Odessa fire brigade:

IS: Tell Cristina how you enjoyed fire engines when you were young, and what you did in the store.

GS: Oh, yes. I was working already in a store. All of a sudden, I decided I’m gonna play a trick. I opened,
called on telephone, says, "Fire!" "Who's calling?" They knew the telephone. There were not so many telephones in Odessa. And they knew where they installed the telephone. They come in, and that's when they told me I cannot work there. I was working in a music store, Polyakin Music Store, very good one. All the records I could play there, everything else.

It is interesting, I think, that elsewhere my father again associates the wanderlust and daring motifs with his love of music and books: at Polyakin Music Store, located "right next to" Josefer Book Store, my father, curious and daring, played not just records, but pranks, and his bravado recalls, in story proximity, the boldness with which, in his later Conservatory days, he "applied" for a job as accompanist to the famous singer Iza Kramer by patiently finding her address and, then, bravely presenting himself at her front door."

CS: The music store. I thought that was your first job, wasn't it?

GS: Yes, I was, Polyakin, Polyakin Store. That's where I called people on the telephone, and I lost the job.

CS: The fire department?

GS: Yeah.

CS: You called other people too or just the fire department?

GS: No, I don't think I called, because telephone was limited. And I just got an idea to call up, uh, the, you know. Crazy boy! And I lost the job.

CS: Do you remember your boss? (omit repeated question)

GS: Polyakin Music Store was my boss.

CS: Was he a friend of your father's?

GS: No. I just, being a very curious boy, I would walk around to look for a job. Just like I went to Iza Kramer. Remember, I told you? And she says, "Alright. Sit down and play something for me." And I, she liked
my accompaniment. Says, "You can come any time and play for me at my rehearsals." And when I met her the last, in Buenos Aires, I had some regards from Mischa Borr to Greenburg, a pianist who played. And, and he was playing a very fancy place there. And when she heard the name, she ran away, ran to me, "Grisha, ti menya uznash?" ("Don't you recognize me?") And I looked at her. "Oh, Iza Kramer." She was that time emigrated to Argentina, and she married a doctor in Rosario. Rosario was a city.

CS: So you got the job in Polyakin, in Polyakin Music Store just by walking in?

GS: Just, yeah.

CS: What did you say? Do you remember what you did or what you said? How you got the job?

GS: Oh, that's easy. I got the job. "I would like to get any kind of a job here. I love music, and I see you have a lot of records, and I like records." So they put me right away to sort the records. (omit discussion of wind-up record players)

CS: And after you sorted records, did you do anything else?

GS: There is nothing else. The store was not famous for anything else, eh, no, just recordings, records.

CS: Not music?

GS: Maybe they have music, but I didn't. Right next to this, the Polyakin, right next to me, not far from me, there was a store where I used to go and look in the vitrine. I liked the music they had in the vitrine. It strucked me with different languages: French, English, German. Those copies I would like to get. So many times I did buy. I think I still have some of those copies in my library.

CS: What? The ones that you got there?

GS: Yes. They were five cents, ten cents a piece. Ten kopecks, you know, and I bought them. Always intrigued me, intrigued me, those big copies. They used to publish those big copies--not like now, small--very large copies. (omit discussion of age and first piano lessons)

CS: And after you lost the job at Polyakin, what did you do? (P2/A: continues with introduction of Obermann and Pagarelov)
Time and time again, my father's story selects significant moments that introduce, separately or together, and esteem the motifs of wanderlust and daring, defiance and wonderment. It is no wonder, then, that his rare recollections of early home and family life favor experiences reflecting that same "revolutionary spirit" of independence that colors so many of his self-characterizations: "But I had that revolutionary spirit in me. I wanted to see the city Odessa." (4/A); "But I was too independent. See, I didn't want any, any helps from anybody side, you know." (R11/A)." In fact, my father relates one of the most insistent of his infrequent recollections of very early childhood (when he was probably about 6 or 7 years old) in a story about the pre-Revolutionary activities of his parents, whose home on Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa (Kniazhenskaya Street, my father's birthplace) served, during the Pogroms (1R/B) as a meeting place for the members of the so-called "Sama-Obarona" (the "Self-Defense League"/the Revolutionaries), who protected Jews and foreigners from persecution (e.g., robbing stores, burning houses, killing people) by locating and killing the "Pogromchiki" (the "Pogrom-Makers"), the members of the "Chornaya Sotnya" (the "Black Hundred"/the counter-Revolutionaries) and throwing the bodies directly into the canals of the city sewage system:" "During those days, the Revolutionaries, when they caught any of those "Pogrom-Makers," they just open the canalization and threw them down,
killed them on the spot." (04/A)

Usually, when my father talks about how his house served as a spot where the "Sama Obarona" could congregate, he stresses the involvement not of his father (a second-guild merchant who did not belong to a political organization)," but of his mother (a housewife who helped out in the family's fabric store), whose participation in anti-Pogrom activities involved, primarily, preparing and serving food for the Revolutionaries, but included, as well, protecting and saving property from the anti-Revolutionaries. In fact, many times, my father moves from the story of how the "Self-Defense League" met and ate at the family home to the story of how, when the "Pogrom-Makers" tried to burn the family store, his mother ran out to protect it, and he called out to save her:

CS: OK. Then we have to go back. What was the "Sama Barona," "Sama Barona"?

GS: "Sama Barona." "Sam 0barano," "Sama Obarona," you don't pronounce it. In our flat, people used to get together and get sandwiches and everything else. My mother would do it. And then went on the street to defend the stores, Jewish stores in Odessa, and kill out the whole "Pogromchiki," the "Pogrom-Makers," the "Chornaya Divitsia," "Chornaya Sochinski" (omit discussion name confusion), "Black Guard," "Chornaya Divitsia," "Chornaya Sotnya." (omit discussion name pronunciation) "Sama Obarona" was the job to get the criminals on the street and kill them and throw them in the canalization.

CS: Did they do this for a long time?

GS: During the Pogroms, yes.

CS: This was when you were a little boy?

GS: Yes.

CS: But you remember it?
GS: Yes. I remember those "Pogromchiki" coming on our street, and I saw mother coming out, go to the store. I say, "Mama! Mama!" And she looked up and saved herself from those . . .

CS: . . . They just killed randomly, anybody?

GS: Yeah. "Pogromchik." The government knew about it; they didn't bother. The less Jews and New Christians, whatever it is, they didn't, they like it. (1R/B)

GS: We had a flat, a very nice flat. I told you, as I remember, our house was a house of the "Self-Defense League." During the Pogrom, they used to kill out all those, all the, all the "Chornaya Sotnya," the "Black Hundred." They used to catch those "Black Hundred" on the street and put them in a canalization, you know, drown them dead. Uh, the "Sama Obarona," they just leave them.

IS: What are "Black Hundred"?

GS: "Pogrom-Makers." Mostly Pogrom was making against foreigners. Foreigners were either Jews, or there was other, small nationalities that they have no protection.

IS: Like the Chinese, the Chinese that sold . . . ?

GS: Anybody that was there. Could not escape the Pogrom. So, in our flat, we, they used to come in. They got hot sandwiches, and coffee, and whatever—no coffee those days, tea, you know. And they found, and they used to go back on the street and kill, and kill out those Pogromists, and kill out and catch those "Pogromki." Because I remember, as a child, my mother was on the street, was going the store, and all of a sudden, I saw some of those "Pogromki." Says, "Mama! Mama!" and she saw them and she hid herself into something.

IS: They came on horseback or what? (omit repeated question)

GS: No, just walking. The only horses could be, only the police had horses. (omit repeated question)

IS: Were there many of them at one time, then?

GS: Sure, always.

IS: Armed?

GS: Big groups, armed. Make, make their own, they didn't
have modern armaments. They had knives and things like that. They kill on the spot, and kill on the spot, you know. (omit discussion of rocks as arms)

IS: And what started them? Who were these people, I mean?

GS: The government, the Tsaristic government.

IS: But not the police or soldiers.

GS: No. The police was just an intermediary, like; they could not. The order came to let the "Pogromchiki" out of jail, go ahead, let them kill the Jews or anybody else. They let them out.

IS: Did they wear uniforms? No, huh? Just a band of ruffians, ruffians. (4/A)\(^{14}\)

GS: Where I was born, when the Pogroms were, we lived on Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa. And "Chornaya Sochinski" were running from house to house, with permission of the government, to rob all the Jews, rob everybody, specially the Jews. And I remember mother. Mama was crossing the street, to save the store, and they saw her, started to run after her. She hid herself into the house. I started to say, "Mama! Mama!" She heard my voice, and she saw them, and she hid herself. And our apartment was "Sama Obarona," what you call that? "Self-" . . .


GS: . . . "Self-Defense League." Mother gave them food, everything else. (V4/A)

Occasionally, my father associates the story of how he intervened to save his spirited mother from the anti-Revolutionaries with an episode involving the capture of two uncles (two of his father's three brothers), university students whose revolutionary activities resulted in arrest and exile: their attempted train escape from Russia was apparently aborted when the two brothers (nameless, in all of my father's accounts) were seized by police and sent to Siberia. And although, after their banishment, the young men
were never again seen by any of the family, my father's parents heard that both brothers eventually married and raised families in Siberia:

CK: The other brothers and sisters of your father? . . .

GS: . . . I don't remember the names . . .

CK: . . . Went to Paris, too, with him?

GS: NO, NO, NO. Those went to Siberia.

CK: They were sent to Siberia when they were young?

GS: They were sent to Siberia from the train. They were escaping Russia. They were arrested on the train, and they were sent to Siberia. I never seen them. They married there; we knew they married.

CK: Aha. Who sent them to . . . ?


CK: The Tsar, the Tsar police sent them to Siberia?

GS: Yes.

CK: Why? What was, because they were coming from Poland, from the Polish section? Why?

GS: No. Because they were students in university, and they were look, and they were arrested for something pertaining to some organization.

CK: Belonging to some organization, political organization, against . . .

GS: . . . Yeah . . .

CK: . . . against, against . . .

GS: . . . The government.

CK: Against the Tsar? So they were part of the, and you were very young that time? . . .

GS: . . . Yes.

CK: Did your father belong to some organization?
GS: No. He was a merchant . . .

CK: . . . He was a merchant . . .

GS: . . . He didn't bother.

CK: But his brothers and sisters were all somehow involved?

GS: There is an episode in my life I'll never forget. When there were Pogroms, we have big stores. And my mother, I visualize right now, running from our house to save the stores. She thought she's gonna save the stores, and she couldn't. As she was running cross the street, I see the "Pogrom-Makers" running after her, and she hid herself, and I screamed, and she hid herself into some houses. She wasn't hurt. Because those days, the Revolutionaries, when they caught any of those "Pogrom-makers," they just open the canalization and threw them down, killed them on the spot . . .

CK: . . . On the spot, ah . . .

GS: . . . All the counter-Revolutionaries, we call them the "Black," "Chornaya Sotnya," the "Black Hundred." Are there "Black Hundred" in Greek?

Unless questioned directly, my father does not usually provide information, in any language, on the personalities, beliefs, or behavioral patterns of his parents; however, the few stories that he tells about his mother and father stress those qualities that my father seems to value in himself. The wanderlust and rebellion motifs, especially, recur regularly in stories about Abady Gagelstein and Anna Nadel Gagelstein that otherwise contain very little or no detail about their characters and habits, or even more ordinary information about, for example, their dress or appearance:

CK: Who are your grandparents, or your great grandparents? Were they musical?

GS: No. Nobody was musical. My, my father was playing flute in the band, but not because he liked it. Because he played flute in the band, that doesn't mean that he was
musical. He liked music. At home, we sang "ta-ra-ra-boom-dee-ay," and all those songs, you know. He was walking with me, holding the hand, till he died 1914, 1913. Don’t forget, he died 1913.

CS: And your mother?

GS: 1919.

CK: 1919. And do you remember your grandparents?

GS: No. Vaguely. I remember when they were dead, or lying dead, something like that . . .

CS: . . . Where were they from? . . .


CK: How old were you when they died?

GS: Young, very young.

CS: Before your father?

GS: Naturally, before, was before. You know the episode how we went to France with all the gold that my mother saved. Five rubles a day gold piece she saved. And she says, she’s gonna go to Paris, only on one condition, that she’ll take her two cousins. And three of us, five people. I would be a Parisian! Imagine me being a Parisian! (laughs) My father says, "No French for me!" He could not learn that language: "It was forbidden to me. No French for me, no!"

CS: Your grandparents weren’t musical either? Not at all?

GS: No. Well, they liked music.

CS: What did they do?

GS: My grandfather, I don’t remember grandfather. Must have been merchant, too. But my grandmother, I know mother used to go every year . . .

CS: . . . To visit her parents, right?

GS: Her parents. Cherson. They were living Cherson, which falls in, in the Dnieper. From Odessa, one night. I remember the first class that we were traveling by, first class. And she, the boat was named "Todleben" (laughs). General Todleben was the famous general.
CS: And you don't remember your grandparents?

GS: No, no. That's too far back. My father was born in 1869.

CK: Oh, he died young, no? 49, 50 years old.

GS: 44 he was. (omit discussion of father's age at death). .. He had that, what do you call that illness when you have the ear? I forgot. Mother knows.

CS: An ear infection, wasn't it?

GS: Ear infection, operation.

CS: He had an operation for it? And where was your mother born?

GS: My mother was born in Cherson.

CK: When?

GS: When she was born? I, well, she died in 1919. To tell you the truth, I don't remember her age, but she must've been a few years, the same age as father.

CK: Where was he born?

GS: In Warsaw.

CS: Oh, yeah? He was Polish? How did they meet?

GS: I don't know how they, I suppose they met during his days of traveling with the band (laughs), "Astrahansky, Dragoonsky Astrahansky Polk." Regiment, that's "Polk." And they probably traveled around. Finally, they settled in Odessa. They opened big store, manufacturing. He used to take me along on his trips to buy manufactured things, to Poland, mostly. Odessa-Lodz. Lodz, it's a famous center where manufacturing goods were made.

CS: (omit repeated question) He was in textiles, wasn't he? Fabrics?

GS: Yes.

CK: Materials.

GS: That was in England, done in England. Those textiles came from London, I imagine. (02/A)
Similarly, below, my father's imagination blends bits of stories unified by the defiance and wanderlust motifs associated with both his Siberia-bound uncles and his France-Odessa-bound father, equally determined, first, to escape the Russian Pogroms and, then, to abandon the French language. ("Ta hell with Russia!" and "French is not for me!"):  

CK: What do you remember before the Revolution, few years before the Revolution?  
GS: I remember the whole, all the regime. I remember everything.  
CK: You remember the Tsars and the priests?  
GS: The Tsar, I remember, the Tsar came to Odessa, and big parade, "Hooray!" You know, it was tremendous, those with the Tsar, he was with Alicia, his wife, and Maria Fiodorovna, his mother. They were going in big parade on the most, on the biggest street in Odessa, which is called Deribasovskaya Ulitsa, the street of Deribas, Deri-bas, the famous Frenchman, and they was a big parade for the Tsar."

CK: When was that? What year? (omit speculation about year of parade)  
GS: Before the First World War. 1913, 1912, something like that.  
CK: Were your parents alive then?  
GS: My father died in 1913, and my mother died '18.  
CK: What was your father doing?  
GS: My father was a big merchant.  
CS: Ah, you should hear the stories about how he used to go on the ocean with him.  
CK: Really?  
CS: Not the ocean. The Black Sea. He was going to make him, what was he going to make you? He wanted to make you into what?
GS: Well, he wanted me, also, the same thing, I suppose.

CK: To be a merchant. What was he trading?

GS: Huh?

CK: Merchandising, what?

GS: We used to go all over. He would take me along, to Warsaw, to Lodz--Lodz is a very big city, Poland--to buy merchandise.

CK: What kind of . . .

GS: Textiles (omit Greek translation talk) material. So, . . .

CK: . . . Was he born in, your father was born in Odessa?

GS: No. He was born in Warsaw.

CS: Oh, he was Polish? I didn’t know that.

GS: Yeah. But he was born in Russia--in Poland--but Russia was Poland then.

CK: Yeah, Polish part of Russia, yeah.

GS: . . . So, WAIT A SECOND! When I was about 7 years old, after those big Pogroms in Russia, he says, "Ta hell with Russia!" Because, at that time, two brothers of his tried to escape Russia, the students, and were arrested on the train and sent to Siberia. So we, so he decided we have to go to Paris. His older brother lived in Paris, Bernard Hagelstein.

CK: Bernard Hagelstein. He had, there were four brothers altogether?

GS: Uh, two brothers, arrested, sent to Siberia; and my, three; four brothers altogether.

CK: Sisters?

GS: Yes, sister, two sisters.

CK: Who?

GS: Ah, so he said, "Let's go to Paris!" Mother saved every day a gold piece, for a year.

CK: For a year.
GS: She had 365 pieces of gold, 10 rubles or 5 rubles, I don’t remember. She says, "I have the money, but I want my cousins to go with me. We all go; otherwise, I don’t go." So my older, uh, what you call that? Bertha, Bertha, and my "primi," my cousin Sol, two, and that’s all, and me, four of us . . .

CS: . . . Whose children were they?

GS: They were children of . . .


GS: . . . My mother’s side. (omit discussion of siblings: my father was an only child) Only one. So, alright, so we decided we going, to Paris. We came to Paris and, all of a sudden, we entered our apartment, "Rue de Temple, quatre-vingt-cinque." (The Greek, the boy of our chauffeur, the one studies in Sorbonne, says, "I know the street. The building still exists." The building still exists. Usually, all the immigrants live there, in that street) . . .


GS: . . . So we got--and I remember, they brought in a cooking equipment, a little electrical gas--because we didn’t have it in Russia yet, the gas . . .

CS: . . . Stove?

GS: Stove. The gas stove. But my father, from the very beginning, he couldn’t get French. "French is not for me!" he said to his brother. Naturally, a jeweler, a big jeweler in Paris. His brother’s a big jeweler, a rich man.

CK: Really?

GS: He can’t take, he can’t. "We have to go back home." After six months, after six months, we got our tickets. And the day of departure, Sol, my cousin, drops a "night topf"--for urinating, "night topf."

CS: Oh, one of those little porcelain bowls, a . . .

GS: . . . And, in the toilet, and breaks the toilet. And we have to go, leave, leave Paris at night. And we couldn’t find him.

CK: Why, he ran away?
GS: Yes, he ran.

CK: He was afraid?

GS: Afraid . . .

CK: . . . to be punished? (all laughing)

GS: My father paid him, I suppose, he paid him, his brother. Anyway, at the last minute, he showed up. (omit discussion of 8-year old Sol’s year of birth) Finally, he showed up, and we went to the—what’s it? Gare du Nord?—Gare du Nord, I think that’s the famous, the station in Paris, and took our train and went back to Odessa. It took quite a few days, when we came to Odessa, you know, and my father started again . . .


GS: Business, with the stores.

CS: And he insisted then for you to go on trips with him?

GS: Oh, always I went with him on trips.

CS: By boat?

GS: No, by train.

CS: Train. (04/A)²⁰

In my father’s story, then, seemingly disparate people and places are thematically unified: by means of motifs recalling wanderlust and daring, defiance and wonderment—on his perspective, the risk-taking necessary, despite the threat of punishment, for intellectual independence—my father puts together (following Kaufman, he interprets "the events, experiences, conditions and priorities" in his life—"making connections and drawing conclusions"); and, following Myerhoff, he emphasizes the "uncertainty, exploration, innovation, rebellion" in his story—highlighting principles and practices.
of the child "specialist in disorder") an epic account of rebels and rebellions whose separate pieces—the episodes composed of the important individuals and incidents in his "faraway" early life—might, on closer scrutiny, seem inconsequential. Consequently, to make his life story of a piece, he glosses details of personalities and events that might conflict with the valued theme. And, in the act of evaluating and reevaluating, interpreting and reinterpreting the past (following Berger, "... malleable and flexible, constantly changing as our recollection reinterprets and re-explains what has happened."), he remembers "... incidents which come to epitomize" character—so that a story becomes a distillation of experience (following Zeitlin). But because his present experience determines his present (and, perhaps, last) perspective of his past, my father responds to late life's biggest challenge to identity formation (viz., aligning and realigning the was/the past self with the is/the present self) by referring everybody and everything to the preferred "building block" of identity (Kaufman)—viz., the disorder theme. Accordingly, the details of personalities and events that don't "fit in" with the "in theme" are "out"; and, as Berger points out, "... the things in the past that we have decided to ignore are much more helpless (sic., than those in the present) against our annihilating non-remembrance." Thus, for example, almost ignoring Abady Gagelstein's almost total lack of interest in
Revolutionary/anti-Revolutionary activities—barely noting that he was far from being a political person—my father prefers to remember his father most fondly and most fully in stories that emphasize his independence of thought and action. (e.g., As the decision-maker behind the expeditions to and from France: "Ta hell with Russia!" and "French is not for me!"). Similarly, although my father concedes that Anna Nadel trailed her husband everywhere during regimental travels (and probably would’ve followed him to hell and beyond), he likes to recollect her in stories that stress her role not as a follower, but as a leader. (e.g., As the sole provider of victual sustenance and spiritual vitality for the Self-Defense League, as the monetary mover and symbolic shaker behind the smart move to France).

As might have been expected, my father moves to stories of a rebellious youth from stories of a rebellious boyhood with a clash of cymbals that sound—off beat, of course—someplace between the two periods of time played in precisely the same rhythm:

IS: When was that time when you joined the army and then said you were a musician, and they said you had to join a band?

GS: I joined, I did. I told them what I want.

IS: No, I thought, I thought when you first joined, they, they made you join the band.

GS: I, I mean, walking on the streets yet; that’s long before.

IS: ... She doesn’t know that story.
GS: I had to join the band. I don't know, it was a force majeure that I have to play the cymbals. And I hold that cymbals in my hand, and I nearly broke the whole band in two because I played against the rhythm. I was so bad. So, he says, "Let him out, please. He never be a drummer or a cymbal . . ."

IS: . . . Bandman.

CS: This was the regular army?

IS: I don't know. What was that?

GS: No. All those things happened during the Revolution. This is before the Revolution. That must've been 19, that must've been after Paris, so it must be after the comet, so it must be about, when I was about 12, 13 years of age.

IS: He decided the cymbals were too heavy to play, so he played off beat.

CS: Were they taking 12- and 13-year-olds into the army?

GS: Yeah, they take anybody . . .

CS: . . . So young? . . .

GS: . . . It was not forceful. I wanted to do it myself, to join, because where you can get food? In the army, you can get a ration. That was the story. All that time was people worrying about how to get food, how not to stand in lines. That's the whole, the most important thing what's on everybody's mind. (5/A)

Interesting to note in passing are the mental gymnastics characteristic of my father's efforts here—and elsewhere—to date himself, to figure out the actual age of the figure in the story. Usually prompted by my insistent "How old were you then?", these efforts commonly involve references to either historical or personal events (and sometimes both). For example, story X takes place before or after the Russian Revolution, the sinking of the Titanic, the appearance of
Haley's Comet; story Y takes place before or after "my Conservatory days," "father's baptism," "our trip to France," . . . "so it must be about, when I was about" ___ years old. In the present case, two events serve as reference points for my father's determination that he was twelve or thirteen years old at the time of the cymbal story: first, the journeying to Paris (circa 1908/1909), which is also dated by means of, second, the spotting of Haley's comet (circa 1910/1911), whose course the family followed nightly--after returning from France--on the sky's brightly colored, "all lit up," horizon."

In stories of his youth, my father emerges as a colorful character who, once determined to play the piano, could not be bothered by the obstacles that, at times, threatened to block his progress on the musical road that he had taken. When my father took his first piano lesson from a neighbor named Sarah Silberstein, his parents didn't have a piano in the house and, what's more, didn't have any plans for acquiring that instrument; my father's musical progress seemed unlikely without a piano on which to practice. But he liked the piano ("As I remember myself, I hoped to play, I liked the piano, the best instrument"--10/A, see, also, 5/A) and his parents liked whatever was best for their only child: for one hard-earned ruble per day, my father could go to Sarah Silbersteins', where he had both formal piano instruction and informal practice time. His progress was exceptional, and in no time, my father needed a teacher more advanced than the
young girl who had first inspired him:

CS: And there was nobody who you saw before you started to play the piano, who inspired you, and you said, "I want to play like him," or something like that?"

GS: My, my teacher, Sarah Silberstein.

CS: Oh.

GS: She played very good piano.

CS: How did you get it in your head that you wanted to play piano?

GS: She, cross, we lived in a big, we had a balcony on our house, and I always listened to her play. So I said, "I would like to play piano." Said, "But we have no piano." I didn't have any piano. "It's not necessary." I could go to Sarah Silberstein and practice there for a ruble a day. You know, was big money, those days—for them, too. And she had a piano, old Pleyel from Paris, with those hanging, uh, there were no electricity, and she had . . .

CS: . . . For candles? . . .

GS: . . . Candles. (omit description of piano and apartment) (plays piece) I heard that piece. (plays again)

CS: Which piece was that?

GS: It's a Durenroi piece, either Rabina or Durenroi piece in F sharp minor. (R7/B)

CS: And when did you start playing piano?

GS: I started to play piano, I imagine, when I was about, I played mandolin.

CS: Mandolin?

GS: Yeah. I played mandolin. And I wrote arrangements for mandolin for my friends, on mandolin, the melody lines. (omit discussion of his age at time—perhaps 10 or 11)

CS: You didn't play piano yet?

GS: No, about, I start to play piano about 11. My first teacher was our neighbor.

CS: You didn't have a piano?
GS: No. She had a piano, and I paid her one ruble every lesson.

CS: Whose idea was that?

GS: My own. I liked it. I heard her play "Auf der Wiese," "Zu Hause." (hums) So I liked it. I liked the sound of the piano. (omit discussion GS and IS of composers of these pieces, as well as "Toreador and Andaluce," the first piece he played; omit discussion of Sarah Silberstein's age.)

CK: Was the one that she died in London?

GS: NO, NO, NO! That was another one. That was just young girl who gave lessons and was practicing the piano herself. And I played the piano, and started to play the piano, and I progressed very fast, all those things. In two months, I played the whole repertoire that somebody would take a year or more to play, till I come to the time, I remember, I told you about my sonata playing. I already joined the Conservatory. (04/A)

In stories of his years at the Conservatory, too (which institution, on my father's account, was "first called 'Musikalni Uchilitsa'"), my father defied rules and regulations, customs and conventions, when they threatened to impede his musical progress. Once, for example, when he had difficulties with the piano music of Beethoven, he dared decorum and duty to seek out his Conservatory piano teacher, Biber Galperin, at her home (an unheard of breach) and demand, impatiently, an impromptu lesson (another unheard of departure from the strict schedules of the Conservatory). In this story, as in others, my father risks punishment--perhaps, suspension from the Conservatory--to dare authority, and his defiance is rewarded: my father became Biber Galperin's personal messenger and earned extra piano lessons by
delivering love letters to her many beaus:

GS: I told you about my sonata playing. I already joined the Conservatory . . .

CK: ... When you joined the Conservatory?

GS: It must've been when I was 12 years old. And I started to play, and I was very good in Conservatory. But once, I got stuck playing a sonata of Beethoven . . .

CK: ... Which one? Do you remember?

GS: Ah, yes. "Pathetique." (hums) I remember, it was "Pathetique." (hums) And I didn't like the way I played it. So I found out where my teacher lives. She was about 35 years of age . . .

CK: ... What was her name?

GS: Biber Galperin.

CK: Biber . . .

GS: ... Biber Galperin. She was married before; she divorced, I suppose. And I decided to come to her. so I found out where she lives, and I went. I came to the house and rang the bell, and she herself opened the door. Says, "Grisha, what you doing here?" Says, "I can't play the sonata." "So wait for Tuesday. You have a lesson." "No, I want now." "Oh, come in." I came in, sat at the piano; she corrected me. I played well. She said, "You're a bad boy. I'm gonna punish you." I started deliver her love notes to her boyfriends: for that, I got extra lessons (laughing), as many as I wanted, because that was not that time with the telephones. Now, they have telephones.

CS: Did you know what you were carrying?

GS: Sure, I knew what it is. I knew that. I read plenty of French novels to know these must be love letters, must be something like that. So I got all the lessons for free, and she liked me very much. She's the one who died in London. She was 96 when she died in London . . .

CS ... When did she die? . . .

GS: ... We sent her packages . . .

CK: He told me the story this morning; ask me later.
CS: What year did she die?

GS: I really exactly don't know; it must have been, if I ever in London, I'll find out. So that's the story about Biber Galperin. But the, she's the one that it's impossible to believe: everybody else on the stage uses music; she plays all the quartets, all the quintets without any music. She makes everybody sick. All the accompaniments by memory, all the things.

CS: She must've had a phenomenal memory, or else she worked very hard.

GS: I don't know how she get it, but that it was impossible to believe it, to know so many quartets. I just visualize before, I see her playing Tchaikovsky, trio--it's very difficult--everything, by memory. (04/A)""""

In other stories of his conservatory years, my father recalls being well liked both by his Professor of Conducting, Pietro Cimini (an Italian who "knew all the Russian operas by memory," 3/B) and by his Professor of Theory, Vitold Malishevsky (a Pole, student of Rimsky-Korsakov, who became Director of the Conservatory) primarily because, as my father confesses, "I always wrote impossible solutions to musical questions in harmony." (3/B) In fact, despite the fact that my father rebelled against the strict rules of the Odessa Conservatory--which prohibited untraditional musical effects and extracurricular professional employments--he was, again, rewarded for his defiance of convention: my father's creative genius earned him the respect of his teachers, who went out of their way to provide him opportunities for extra lessons and performances--in conducting and composing--to develop his talent:"

GS: I continue my study in the Conservatory, which, at that time, was called Odessa Music School, before Malishevsky.
Vitold Malishevsky was the Director of the Conservatory. Somehow, the Director of the Conservatory got a liking to me: I always wrote impossible solutions to musical questions in harmony. But he says, "Alright. You’re doing very fine. Don’t worry." Finally, when he gave me to conduct, in the opera Eugene Onegin, I killed it: with so many cues that one has to give to the chorus, to the soloists, to the orchestra, I was stuck. And I told him, "Vitold Yosefovich, Why do you give me? I spoil everything." And he says, "Don’t kid yourself, Grisha. You’re doing better than anybody else. You are the best." And that was, continued for a while. I conducted all the first performances of the operas--he gave me. My other teacher was a conductor teacher, Cimini--I forgot his first name. He was already a middle-aged man, but he knew all the Russian operas by memory. He could conduct! And he also was my continuous teacher when I came back to the States. And he giving me still lesson. He was married to a Russian, fine soprano, called Zakrefskaya. He took her to United States. He would be now, maybe 120 years of age now, or something like that, I imagine, not less, even more. And he came to my apartment, and we started all anew. I liked him very much. He was the first one to conduct in Hollywood Bowl Russian operas--Prince Igor, Eugene Onegin, I don’t know, many others, I suppose. (3/B)

CS: When did you start getting theory?

GS: At that time, I started to take lessons with theories, and I would take, "Bad!"

CS: Bad? You weren’t a good student?

GS: Everything "Bad!" (laughs) because I wanted to write my own style.

CS: What did they ask you to do?

GS: No. I wouldn’t follow the form. I did use parallel fifths and what not--you’re not supposed to do.

CS: You used parallel fifths?

GS: Sure! Fourths, fifths, sure! (laughs) I tried, I thought it was very modern. And, naturally, they were very strict. I learned to write without parallel fifths. There’s nothing to it; you just observe the rules of harmony, of the, anyway, the teachers were very fine. Malishevsky, he died in Poland--also escaped Russian Revolution, went to Poland, and died there, in Warsaw. The government helped him. His name was--uh, you know,
I get, it's in my, in the book.

CS: Whose name?

GS: My Professor's name, Malishevsky, is in the . . .

CS: . . . Witold, wasn't it?

GS: Vitold. Vitold Malishevsky. He was a great teacher.

CS: How many years did you study with him?

GS: I studied all the time with him. He liked me very much. And even when I was wrong, he still corrected me, and I still was, yes, I the one, I killed the Eugene Onegin. (04/A; omit continuation of story because tape cuts)

IS: Do you know the story of this? Tell her the story about how you did it. That's so funny.

GS: Well, Eugene Onegin is a very difficult opera: there are choruses, there are ensembles, there is overture. You know, it's difficult music. But I did. So, the first time, after the rehearsal, it came to the performance. To give so many introductions--I got kinda LOST." And, so, I told the Professor, "Witold, Witold, Victor, Witold Yosefovich," "Yes?" "Witold Yosefovich, I killed it." He says, "No, you did better than anybody else." And so I conducted other operas, too. So I conducted Rusalka, Eugene Onegin, and "Rusalka," and "Rusalka" is--what is it, "Rusalka"? Losing the word, charms man. Oh, mermaid! Mermaid. Anyway . . . (4/A)

In those days when, according to my father, "food was a luxury" (R6/A), the wide musical world--of live performances in gardens, cafes, and theatres--held charms lacking at the Conservatory, with its narrow-minded disdain of modern harmonies, popular songs, and professional musicians. So, despite the fact that Conservatory students were expected not just to abide by conventional standards of musical style and taste, but also to avoid encounters with popular music and paid musicians, my father, as might have been expected,
experienced both theoretically and practically, risking expulsion from the Conservatory by meeting musicians and playing performances, of all sorts, all around Odessa. Thus, for example, he played with a trio in a park and for an impresario named Lochman at a cafe called Ambalzaki (04/B). Similarly, he played the piano accompaniment for many of the popular singers who appeared at the Teatro Kometa in Odessa (e.g., Tina Karenina, Tatiana Vasilevna Strukhova) and at the city’s various popular concert halls (e.g., Alexander Vertinsky, Samuel Pokrass, Yuri Morfessi), thus satisfying his need to learn the harmonies and rhythms of non-serious (anti-Conservatory) music and to earn the extra money that enabled the family to survive the bread lines and food shortages of pre-Revolutionary Russia.

But my father’s favorite story of that time period involves his job as orchestra pianist at the Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre in Odessa where, within three short days after their first appearances, the famous Russian and European stars (e.g., Morris Ismaeloff and Yuli Oobayko) complained to all who would listen, "We’re only here three days; everybody sings our songs." (04/B) "They never knew," as my father notes, "there was a guy in Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre that sits day and night and memorizes all those words, and sells it." (8/A)" While playing his regular evening job at the Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre, my father memorized the words and music of the "new and exclusive" repertoires of all the famous
"foreign" singers. When he went home, after work, he stayed up until morning, the first night copying out the lyrics, the second night copying out the accompaniment—all from memory! The third evening (in conformity with story and tradition), he sold the manuscript copies to the aspiring songsters of Odessa:

GS: Revolution was in full swing. After Ambalzaki, I went to play Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre, one of the biggest theatres in Odessa. I played piano there, for the biggest vaudevillian theatre in Odessa. How I got the job, but I got the job, as a pianist with the orchestra. And all the big vaudeville acts came to us. I would memorize all the words the first night; the second, I would copy all the music; the third, I would sell to the local people. (laughter) And the artists, "Look this! We're only here three days; everybody sings our songs." That was me. I made a lotta extra money doing all those things. (04/B)

GS: So it was, many things there. (omit questions about time period) Yeah, well, I played in the theatre, Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre, Ekaterinskaya Ulitsa—I bet it's still there. And we had all the biggest show, coming from the Center, St. Petersburg, from Moscow, and everything. And they used to come in, and I was so anxious to get the music. The first night—they played a whole week—and the first night, I copied it, one number. Finally, at the end of the week, I had everything copied. And the next week, the artists used to come in and buy from me—city artists—and buy from me. I used to sell them the orchestration. And the people from the Center say to me, "My goodness, we only here one week; now everybody sings our songs." Understand, Cristina, the story? I fooled them. I had a talent for all those darned things. (5/A)

Several things about the preceding version deserve mention here (though they are discussed fully in Chapter III, A, in connection with the stories collected in Chapter III, B, and the vivid impressions included in Appendix B). First, as often happens in my father's stories—and though the
movement between present and past tense is, atypically, not free in this story--there is a tendency toward minimizing time constraints: The three days of tradition expand to at least one full week. And the story itself, though relatively short, is expansive: Busy story people (generously, unnamed city artists) engaged in life--connected to giving and taking, to buying and selling--still take the time--or, perhaps, do not feel time-bound and, so, "pause"--to speak to one another: "And the people from the Center say to me, "My goodness, . . ." Second, in an interesting rhetorical inversion, my father starts the story with an opening more typical of the closing formulas used in his vivid impressions (viz., "I bet it's still there") and ends the story with a closing more typical of the opening formulas used in his longer stories (viz., "Understand, Cristina, the story?") In other words, given that both the opening and closing of this story--a story not triggered by a sensory stimulus, but delivered during a directed interview--work from start to finish, as it were, to bring together past and present, speaker and listener (see Chapter III, A), the value in performance for the "interviewee" might be found in the insistence of his decision to stake claims for continued identity through time, for engagement and interconnectedness with life--clearly, issues of increased importance for story-tellers in old age, like my father, but, perhaps, issues of spotlighted significance for story-tellers in late life who might feel--situated at center
stage, at "now or never"—a heightened sense of urgency in the context of an interview situation. And the interviewer alert to that possibility—though this discussion includes no novel or suggestive observations on interviewing techniques—might find in the fact of narration itself (and in the fact that a story-teller like my father can choose any one of many different possible expressive strategies in any particular context) clues to understanding the life, the story that is the object of study. And before leaving this short story, that interviewer would, of course, note my father’s use of "understand"—a word suggesting that the object of his story interest may be in communicating something that cannot be bought or sold, revoked or repossessed (as often happens to things "owned" by people in old age—see Chapter III, A—something, perhaps, like knowledge or wisdom."

In another story of his conservatory days, my father tells of how his quest for musical knowledge necessitated breaking not just school rules, but civil laws as well, resulting in his arrest and imprisonment for a day. Again, against Conservatory regulations, the disorder specialist had a special contract to play in the Cadet Corps headed by Colonel Polkovnic Tesevitch and in the dance classes taught by Tanzmeister Holochov. The job paid well, and my father enjoyed the experiences he gained playing and traveling with the band class, accompanying and mingling with the dance class." But one day, his curiosity—his inquisitiveness or,
as Myerhoff would say, his devotion to exploration—was "punished": after deciding that he wanted to learn more about wind instruments—in particular, about his father's instrument, the flute—my father selected several flutes (alto and soprano) from the band's reserve, put them into his bookbag, and took them home. Of course, the flutes were missed immediately, and the authorities were sent to my father's home, where the police made their arrest. Although my father's curiosity cost him his contract, his day in jail fed him and his growing reputation, not just as a virtuoso pianist, but also as a volatile musical personality:

GS: (See Chapter II, B, for omitted references to love letters—role reversal—written by my father for Clara, one of five illiterate girl cousins—Clara, Olga, Anna, Bettie, Edith—on his mother's side.) They liked it very much, especially Clara. And she really becomes, later on, my enemy. Many years have passed, and I used to go to that house because my former pupil used to live there, the first pupil, Sarah Silberstein. (sir, As the "first" or "best" pupil of his first teacher, Sarah Silberstein, my father used to visit the house in later years.) So I used to come there. She (sic, Clara) saw me there. "What you doing here?" "Why?" Because I played in the Cadet Corpus, Cadet Corpus, every day. We used to travel with Holochov, the Tanzmeister, and all those (garbled) things. And there was a orchestra class, band class. And I liked the flutes. So I took a few flutes, and clarinets, many other things, and put it in my package and took it home. I was not supposed to do it without permission. Naturally, they, the Colonel of the school liked me very much. He told me, "Why did you do that? Why didn't you ask permission to do that?" "Well, forgive me." "For this, you cannot be in that class anymore. You're out of that class altogether." Polkovnic Tsevitch, his name. "Alright." I got punished, and I, Holochov found out that story and said, "Grisha, I cannot employ you." Holochov is the Tanzmeister, where I used to play classes for him and then dance with little girls all the time, you know, at the Hall, "Bladaronaya Sabrania," for noble born, nobility . . .
CS: ... The aristocracy.

GS: And I lost the privilege to go there. (See Chapter II, B, for omitted references to dance class--role reversal.) Anyway, I lost the job. I lost the contract.

CS: Why did Clara become your enemy?

GS: Oh, Clara. Many years after that--I told you, I used to write letters for her, and she knew the story about the flutes, that I lost the job because I took flutes home. That flute story she knew, and she used to pick on me always, "Flaytitchky, Flaytitchky, Flaytitchky" ("Little flutes, little flutes, little flutes") when I used to visit my former teacher. That's what happened. Clara, Bertha, Edith, Anna, and the fifth, I don't . . . (4/B)

CS: Holochov was the Tanzmeister, right?

GS: Armenian.

CS: Oh, he was an Armenian? Jewish? (omit repeated questions)

GS: His wife was Jewish. Where I took the flutes to look over and study, and they arrest me for that. Before they got somebody from the Corpus, one of the people who work there; then they arrested me, and I went to jail, was . . .

CS: ... You went to jail?

GS: Yeah, for one day. And they let me out immediately because they put there in the Jail "Kammer" somebody, and I told the story what happened. So they say, "What are we gonna hold this guy? Just feed him for nothing?"

CS: Were you fed in the jail?

GS: Yes.

CS: Good food, or bread, or what?

GS: Who cares those days? Food was a luxury.

CS: So they actually took you to a jail? With bars on it?

GS: No, I don't think that kind of jail.

CS: A room?
GS: Just a police station.

CS: Oh. And you had to stay there overnight? Do you remember what it was like?

GS: What you mean?

CS: I mean, what was it? A room where you were by yourself, or with other people who had been arrested, or . . .

GS: . . . No, I was just alone, I think. And then they let me out immediately when they saw, I tell them the story. They send even some guy to sit with me, like somebody arrested. And I told him the story. So he probably called the officer, or someone in charge, and says, "What the hell we gonna hold this guy? Feed him for nothing?" (omit questions about the size of the Hall of Justice, the police station rooms, and the jail cells; R6/A)"

Soon after my father left the hallowed halls of the Conservatory," he began to plan for his eventual escape from Russia by organizing the troupe of artists that would travel by train, from town to town, serving the interests of the Bolsheviks in combatting army desertion (see Chapter I, B). Of course, since my father was serving, as well, the interests of Myerhoff's specialized rebel, he resisted Bolshevik authority as much as possible by using the train trips to engage in the illegal speculation that enabled him to help his family survive the famine of the Revolutionary period: "I still had an agreement with the "Gubernskaya Kamisia Pobarvreh Desertirsum" (the Government Commission to Fight Desertion) to fight desertion in the army--that goes way back. (omit interjections of IS) And they gave me the train. I used that train speculation." (10/A)
And, according to story, during those early train trips—speculating and performing between Odessa and Vapniarka—the rebel never lost an opportunity to resist authority—in any shape or form. Thus, for example, although my father was usually able to lose himself in his music for hours on end, practicing piano while the other artists passed the time between train stops by playing cards or telling jokes, one wintry afternoon, he received an order that, of course, he must defy—in one way or another. When the train pulled into a small village, my father was told to stop practicing the piano and to start looking for firewood with the others. Despite protests, he was forced to join the little band of artists in the steppes of deep snow. His smoldering anger must have kept him warm throughout the day, only bursting into flame at the evening performance for the village audience: causing confusion and chaos, my father played every accompaniment for every artist in the wrong key, transposing now a half-tone higher, now a half-tone lower. Needless to say, as my father tells the story, risk again reaped reward: from that time on—rightly or wrongly—no one on that train ever dared order the rebel to tend to the wood, the fire, or anything else, for that matter:

IS: Then it must have been on that first trip, Gregory, where you also, where they had to get out of the train and chop wood.

GS: Yeah, get out of the train and chop wood.

IS: Tell Cristina that part because I don’t think she knows that story.
GS: I didn’t wanna go . . .

IS: . . . Everybody chops wood . . .

GS: So they told me, "If you don’t chop wood, you’re not gonna eat." So I said, "Well, if I chop wood and I won’t eat, I won’t play." It’s also a long story. So they got convinced that they could not play around with me.

IS: Well, first, they had you chop wood. They made you chop the wood, didn’t they?

GS: Hm.

IS: And then Papa didn’t. Tell her what you did.

GS: I killed all the numbers.

CK: How so?

GS: I played for one guy, half a tone lower; the other one, higher. They didn’t know what’s all about: they hear the melody comes out correctly, but it’s in another key. (5/A)

IS: But what about everybody collecting firewood, and you said, "I don’t want to." Tell her about that. (omit confusion over various trains) They all had to go out.

CS: Who said?

GS: We, everybody.

CK: Who said?

GS: The artists.

CS: The other artists said you had to go, too? . . .

IS: . . . And tell her what happened. (omit Kazanji discussion) The firewood. They said, they insisted you had to go out and get firewood.

GS: Yes, I did go, but I killed them when I played the piano. And they never bothered me again. Boy, boy, they couldn’t take me again! (10/B)

Given the risks he took to escape from Russia--by train, by canoe, by "telega"--my father might have been expected to
terminate, or at least to tone down, his defiant tendencies. However, even as an escapee who daily risked being turned in to authorities and returned to Russia, the youthful specialist in disorder—true to Myerhoff's conception of the individual whose entire lifetime is given to "revolutionary" principles and practices—did no such thing. In fact, the stories he tells of the time he spent in Bassarabia and Romania, after crossing the border, resound with familiar Revolutionary/anti-Revolutionary tones. Thus, for example, as orchestra pianist at the Nobility Hall ("Blagarodnaya Sabrania") in Kishinaw, my father "started a revolution" (P2/A) when he refused to play until he was served, a la carte, the dishes prepared for distinguished guests, and not the hamburgers, concocted from leftovers and reserved for the hired help—musicians included:

CS: Which were the jobs in Kishinaw?

GS: First, I got a job in "Blagarodnaya Sabrania." And there I played with a, a—Sascha Lukas played a job there, too, with pianist by name of Raffe. Raffe was the pianist, and Sascha Lukas played with him; but I never played with Sascha Lukas. And, eh, that's where they used to feed us with "Budilniki," with hamburgers; and I didn't wanna have hamburgers. So the show started, and I would not play the show. And Sascha Borisoff says, "Grisha, 'ti'? Why don't you go and play?" I says, "No, Sascha. I will not play unless I can eat something else." So they told this guy, the boss, was sitting right next; they told him the story. He could've sent me already back to Russia in no time if he would wanted to. He looked at me, says, "Give him what he wants!" . . .

CS: . . . This was at . . .

GS: . . . I ate a la carte, and musicians looked at me. Imagine? And I felt like I'm in heaven. I offered them to join me, but I stick by them. They didn't want to: they were afraid to lose their job. Well, I says, "If you don't want to, alright. I will stick to my . . ."
And they gave me. "Give Gregory whatever he wants!"
So, and they gave me everything I wanted. (omit questions about pronunciation and name of hall)

CS: And there were other musicians, too?

GS: Yeah, all from the city. And I started a revolution!
They didn’t wanna join me: they were afraid they gonna lose the job. Says, "Alright. I’ll . . . " Says, "I’ll do it myself." It was so easy for me to be taken across the border, back to Russia, by this powerful Romanian. But, you see, he listened to my opinion and did whatever I wanted. And I played the job there. (P2/A)"

According to story, soon after the Bassarabian Budilniki Revolution, my father found another opportunity to create chaos in Kishinaw. Following his winter engagement in the Pavilion and his summer engagement in the garden of the Nobility Hall, my father was offered a job at the Hotel Londres, performing with Paniciu Stefanescu, a popular and powerful gypsy violinist who immediately came to rely on the Russian refuge’s specially composed arrangements and accompaniments, and soon refused to allow my father, now known as "Grigorash," to write for or play with anyone else. While someone else might have appreciated an exclusive engagement with the famous Paniciu, characteristically, my father rebelled at the restrictions on his creative liberty and planned a first--but unsuccessful--escape to Bucharest as soon as possible: Before taking the morning train to the capital city, the rebel made arrangements with a friend to substitute at the evening performance; but when Stefanescu came on stage and saw the new accompanist, he packed up his gypsy violin, picked up his pregnant wife, and looked up the
next train for Bucharest. The first time, Stefanescu returned to Kishinaw with "Grigorash" in tow—despite complications and protestsations. Of course, my father protested again: realizing that discussing his intentions to flee Stefanescu would practically guarantee their failure, my father made plans for a second—and successful (so no third)—escape involving only himself: "This time, I didn’t tell anyone when I wanted to go to Bucharest; I just took the train and went to Bucharest." (1R/A)

GS: (omit preceding "Budilniki" story) Then Fanicu Stefanescu came on the scene. He had a job in Hotel Londres. So, he liked my playing tremendously—specially all my Russian transcriptions, gypsy transcriptions. I have to teach him all those things; I taught him how to play classical music. So, one day, I decided, "It’s not for me. Why I’m gonna play with him? What for?" So, I told Sascha Borisoff brother—he was by the name of Borisoff—"Come be my substitute. I’m gonna go to Bucharest." And I left for Bucharest, by train; and he came there. Fanicu saw me, "Grigorash, Grigorash, and where is Grigorash? Grigorash?"
"He went to Bucharest."
"And you are the substitute?"
"Yes."
"Aha. Well, you stay and play with the orchestra, play with the orchestra." And he took his wife—she was pregnant—and he went to Bucharest to look for me. Naturally, it was easy to find me because all the refugees stop in the same place. He looks at me, says, "Why you have to do it?"
I says, "Fanicu, I don’t wanna play all my life gypsy music, just like that. I wanna play, when I like to play gypsy music, I’ll play, and I’ll publish it, and I’ll do everything, but not just like that."
So, "But you have to go back with me."
"But Fanicu, I haven’t got even the papers to go back to Romania." (That part was called Romania, Kishinaw, that time.) "They’ll arrest me on the border." And that’s what happened: I, we came back to Ungaynee . . .

CS: . . . To where?
GS: Ungaynee. And the police came, gendarme came on the train, looked at my passport, "You’ve gotta go off the train. You better go off the train." I’m off the train, and there was a big crowd there. And the crowd saw Funicu, "Funicu, what you doing here?" "Oh, I come back," (garbled) and he told them the story. Says, he told him, "'Par garantia mia, para garantia mia'," in Romanian, and they let us go, let us go back to Kishinaw.

CS: Who said that?

GS: And there I’m back in Kishinaw. And then I play with Funicu. Funicu does everything for me—whatever I wanna eat, whatever, "salata" every day, dinner, all the food (garbled) . . . (P2/A)

GS: (omit preceding Dinicu story) At that time, I was in Kishinaw, playing with the famous gypsy violinist, Funicu Stefanescu, who thought I’m a genius. I wrote for him a lot of songs, a lot of gypsy music. But, one day, I decided, "It’s not good enough for me to play all my life with the gypsies. I’m gonna go to Bucharest, and this time do something with Grigori Dinicu." So I left Sascha Borisoff brother—I have his music here, too, belong to him. He was John Borisoff. I left him as a substitute, took the train, and tell John Borisoff, "Don’t hurry. Come in at the last minute."

John Borisoff came in at the last minute, and Funicu says, "What you doing here?"

He says, "Well, Grigori went to Bucharest and asked me to be here to play for him."

Well, Funicu closed his violin, took the first train, and with his pregnant wife, went to get me in Bucharest. Came to Bucharest hotels—everybody takes the same hotels, the refugees, I imagine, when they’re refugees. Came hotel and says, "Grigori, what did you do that for? You can’t do that to me!"

I says, "But you had other pianists before."

"No, I need you."

Well, he had to drag me back to, and here my papers were not in order. I knew I’ll be stopped in the border, at the border. And that what happened: We came to the border town, and the gendarme came to the train and says, "Oh, you have no paper? Get out!"

I get out of the station with Funicu and his pregnant wife, and there people look, saw them and says, "My goodness, Funicu, the whole world is waiting for you in Kishinaw. What you doing here?"

So he explained the story to the, to the manager of the station. "Let him go!" And they let us go, and we came back to Bassarabia. And I started to play again with
GS: Kishinaw. And there I started to play the first job. I played a job, it was wintertime, and I played the first job in Pavilion—Pavilion, it’s called—with a gypsy violinist, Dialkitsano, Dialkitsano, it doesn’t make any . . . He spoke Russian because he was in Russia before, playing, broken Russian. And after that, I remained there in Kishinaw, playing with Panicu Stefanescu. Panicu Stefanescu, who I was teaching all the classical music that he didn’t ever know, knew in his life to play. Like Kreisler pieces, and gypsy pieces, Russian gypsy. He learned very fast. And the moment he got a hold of it, in his hand, he would teach it, the interpretation, the whole group.

I was tired, naturally. I wanted to get to Bucharest to see Grigori Dinicu, who I didn’t see yet. So, one day, I called John Borisoff, the Russian, there ask him to come as a substitute for me. He came as a substitute. And Panicu saw him, says, "Where is Grigorash, Grigori?" "He’s in Bucharest." Panicu dropped the whole darn thing, took his pregnant wife, and they take the train off to Bucharest. In Bucharest, naturally, they found me. And says, "Grigori, why do you have to do it?"

I said, "Panicu, but I, you played before with other pianists. Why, all of a sudden, do you want me?"

"No, I don’t want anybody else—you."

So I was forced to go. And when we came to the border town, the gendarmes came to the train and saw me—you have to cross the border between Bassarabia and Romania. And the gendarme looked at me and says, "You have no passport. You better get out!" So I got out together with Stefanescu.

And then, station master saw Stefanescu, says, "Stefanescu, what are you doing here? The whole people are waiting for you in Kishinaw." When he found out the story about me, he says, "Let him pass! ‘Par garantia mia’," my guarantee.

So, again, I go back in Kishinaw. This time, I didn’t tell anyone when I wanted to go to Bucharest: I just took the train and went to Bucharest." (1R/A)
story, Dinicu loved the talented young Russian trained not only to play and accompany from music and memory, but also to improvise, orchestrate, and compose with equal facility. My father was without musical equal in Dinicu's eyes, and the violinist envisioned playing with a new orchestra that would incorporate all of the young Russian's revolutionary recommendations for improving the sound quality of the ensemble. But before my father was able to initiate his plans for a better orchestra, a Russian bass player sounded a note of warning: Mihalaki wrote my father a letter advising against modifying the orchestra in any way, "If you change the orchestra, they'll kill you." (04/B) Thus, my father stopped working with Dinicu and started playing with another--jazz--group that, in a way, marked the beginning of his American experience:

CS: (omit preceding Stefanescu story) How did you finally leave the gypsies?

GS: Ah, well, the job legitimately finished, so I went to Bucharest now, on my own. And there was a Russian bass player who played with Faniucu Stefanescu, with Grigori Dinicu, the best violinist in Bucharest. And he knew already about me from the bass player. And he invite me to sit at the table, brought me champagne, everything, and said, "I hear you're a fine pianist. Can you play for me something?"
"Well, I'll play 'Rigoletto' by Liszt." (laughing)
"Alright. How about accompaniment? Do you play accompaniment?"
Said, "What do you want to play?"
"Kreisler accompaniment."
I played by memory all the Kreisler, all . . .

CS: . . . All Kreisler you played by memory?

"You’re hired!"
And I became his pianist, and I played with him a whole season. And I wrote the first "Hora de Concert," my own, because the musicians, "Ah, Russian, with Tchaikovsky," all the time talking. I wrote, show to them what I could write. I wrote a Romanian hora. I still have it, and I play it for you if you want. They stop talking about me. I went back to play, back to Bassarabia—I don’t know who I played with again. But I got a letter from the bass player ... 

CS: ... What was his name? Do you remember it?

GS: Mihalaki. Anyway, he writes to me, "Grigori," in Russian, "I know that you wanna come back to Bucharest to play with Grigori Dinicu. I love to see you. But I know you wanted to change the orchestra according to your plan. If you change the orchestra, they’ll kill you. If you have those intentions, don’t show up your face in Bucharest. Because I heard from Grigori he wants to do the changes according your desires. Don’t do it." So, I figure out, "What the hell do I need all that trouble, to worry about changing the orchestra, to worry about musicians? To hell with him!" And I didn’t go. And that was in Bucharest.
In Bucharest was bad time started in Bucharest. No, not for me. I played with, I played with the jazz band: the violinist was a gypsy, the saxophone player was a Turk, the banjo player was an Italian, and the drummer was a Belgian. And the language was, naturally, French, in this. The Belgian were throwing sticks in the air—that style, you know. Those were the shimmy days. I played that. Big success we had: "Some of These Days," "Whispering," all the songs of them. (continues with first view of Americans and visa story) (04/B)

Although my father’s stories of his musical life in the States continue to select for elaboration events that focus on the protagonist’s tendency to defy everyone and everything, they favor, as well, a figure of great flexibility and adaptability: "you know me; I adapt myself immediately to any circumstance—start to write, and that’s all." (V2/B)" In fact, as a greenhorn hoping to write and play in America, the specialist in disorder—Myerhoff’s devotee of the principles
and practices of exploration and uncertainty—was regularly required to adapt himself to the new and uncertain circumstances of his adopted country. When my father deboarded the Haberline ship that took him across the sea from Romania to America, (see Chapter II, C for the story that details his crossing and brings together all of the crisscrossing motifs of the disorder theme), he acquired a new culture, a new language, even a new name and, in a sense, a new self that would ride as well as make waves.

Yet, even in these stories, still waters run deep, and the rebel surfaces most often when least expected. Elaborating on events at least 40 years distant, two stories—one from the early (circa 1939), one from the later (circa 1979) years of my father's musical life—are typical in their final focus on defiance and are suggestive, I think, of the degree to which the disorder theme provides for the continuity of identity, allowing my father to align the selves of his past stories with the self of his present life. In the first—the activities of whose middle-aged protagonist my father himself sees as continuous with those of the fifteen-year-old conservatory rebel who "fooled them all" while playing, memorizing, and selling music at the Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre in Odessa—my father tells how, while working as composer/arranger for Paramount Studios in California, he worked simultaneously for Longines Symphonettes in New York, responding successfully to the challenges of both positions,
thus defying the wishes of the Longines conductor, Michel Piastro (who wanted an in-house musical advisor) and earning the respect of the Longines President, Mr. Cartoon (who wanted no one but my father: "I don't care where Gregory write his music; he's the only one who could write music for Longines"; 9/B) To this day, however, no one knows the extent of my father's quiet defiance of everyone at Longines. His copyist, Sol Spiegel, devised a careful money-making scheme that was never discovered: every week, my father sent Spiegel a new conductor score, from which Spiegel copied out the orchestral parts and spun out a piano-conductor score; then Spiegel returned the full orchestral score to my father, who rented it out to other radio programs and concert performances. Thus, on this scheme and this account, my father not only earned two salaries, but "made a fortune out of it" besides. (9/B) In the second story, my father tells how, while working as visiting artist at the Bogota Conservatory in Colombia, he attended a concert and, as a member of the audience, disagreed with the prepared discussions of invited panelists, raised his hand, walked on stage, and sat down at the piano to make his musical points. Fortunately, his spontaneous defiance--expressed by means of pianistic improvisations and Russian innuendos--was applauded, especially, by the Communistic contingency in the audience, and lauded, the next day, in the Colombian newspapers. Newsworthy or not, my father's resistance to authority in both stories (both of which include
interesting examples of dual narration") is noteworthy because
typical, again, of Myerhoff's specialist in disorder:
CS: Jean Paul Morel.
GS: This is the one who conducted New York Symphony
Orchestra, my--what you call it?--two pieces, my
"Rhapsody in Blue," with Piastro as a violinist, and some
small pieces I wrote for violin as an encore. (omit
discussion of Morel's personality and Piastro's
performance of the piece at Carnegie Hall)
CS: Piastro?
GS: He liked me, and he didn't like me. He had to come to
me, beg for materials, because all of a sudden, he sends
me a telegram: he wants to play "Rhapsody in Blue" for,
with the orchestra. And I should immediately come to New
York. So, naturally, I came to New York.
CS: From Hollywood?
GS: Yes. By train. Probably in eight hours.
CS: That's all?
GS: And I gave him (coughs), and I, anyway, was a big
success.
CS: What was Longine Symphonette?
GS: Longine Symphonette was an orchestra, I started to write
music for, small group first--15, 20 men, 25 men--
transcribing all classical music for the orchestra. And
I always have trouble: somebody was supposed to be
advisor there, to do, what to do about Longine--what to
write, what composition to select. Nobody knows anything
about it, including Piastro. They all played a lot of
music, but ask them "Where's it from?" (hums), they don't
know. That's where my great knowledge of music came, of
tunes, of music in general. Don't forget, I was a
greenhorn. I suppose it was inborn in me. I give them
all the information (coughs), all the tunes. That's how
Longine came about.
CS: And then you made transcriptions for the orchestra?
GS: Various instrumentations, yes; I have a lot of them here.
CS: Where were they performed?
GS: On the air, running.
CS: This was on radio also?
GS: Radio.
CS: Live?
GS: Live.
CS: And Piastro was the head of it? He was supposed to be the advisor, or whatever it was, but he didn’t have the information?
GS: He conducted.
CS: Aha. He was the conductor.
GS: But he didn’t know, he could not understand how Spiegel could, from those little sketches, to know what I want.
CS: Who was Spiegel?
GS: Sol Spiegel, my copyist. Because Spiegel said to me, "Grisha, I have an idea. You write scores, and when it comes to, and I’ll rewrite them, all your scores, in the form of, for him to understand what’s all about, but send you back the scores." I made a fortune out of it.
CS: I don’t understand.
GS: Here is the score. I wrote all this, and Spiegel had to copy it. But he didn’t copy it—just copied little suggestions, sent me back this, and give, gave Piastro to conduct from piano direction—whatever you call it. And Piastro couldn’t figure out how he, Spiegel, know what I want from those little sketches.
CS: You mean Sol Spiegel was supposed to give the score to Piastro conduct from?
GS: He didn’t . . .
CS: . . . But he didn’t do it. Instead, he wrote a conductor, piano-conductor part . . .
GS: . . . And the rest, he sent it back to me . . .
CS: . . . And he sent the score back to you. And he copied the . . .
GS: . . . Parts . . .
CS: ... Parts for the orchestra from the score, an- ... 
GS: ... Yeah ... 
CS: ... And he sent you back the full score and gave Piastro the ... 
GS: ... False ... 
CS: ... Just the piano score, something like that. Why did he do that? 
GS: Huh? 
CS: Why did he do that? Why did he send the score back to you? 
GS: So I could make some money out of it. 
CS: How? 
GS: He knew that they want my scores all over United States, all the stations, and also in Mexico. 
CS: But why didn’t he just give the score to ... 
GS: ... What? ... 
CS: ... to Piastro? 
GS: And then what? 
CS: And use the score to conduct from? 
GS: He was supposed to use the score. 
CS: He sent you back the score so you could use it for other people? 
GS: Yeah. 
CS: You sent it to other people as well, the same thing? They would make piano conductors? 
GS: Yes. 
CS: And you always kept the score? 
GS: Yes. 
CS: Aha. Who else did that besides Sol Spiegel?
GS  Many, many orchestras.

CS:  And you sent away the score (nods), and they always returned it?

GS:  Yeah.

CS:  And it was supposed to be exclusive to Piastro?

GS:  Piastro was supposed to get it, yes . . .

CS:  . . . Get it exclusively, but instead, other people got it as well. And they paid you for getting it?

GS:  Yes.

CS:  For using it.

GS:  Poor Spiegel. He certainly made a lot of money for me.

CS:  Why poor Spiegel?

GS:  Well, he didn’t live.

CS:  Oh. He was just the copyist, though. He was only supposed to copy the parts, and, instead, he was helping you to make more money. So he made the piano conductor as well. Why didn’t you send him the piano conductor part instead of the score? Just send him, oh, you sent him the score to make the copies. And, as a favor to you, he sent you back the score and kept the small . . .

GS:  . . . Not a favor. It was our understanding.

CS:  Hm. But Piastro didn’t know that, he . . .

GS:  . . . He couldn’t figure out how could . . .

CS:  . . . Oh, I see now, how Spiegel could write all those parts from the small score. He thought Spiegel was a genius to write all the parts from the score, from the piano. He didn’t know you had sent the score there.

GS:  Sol did tremendous thing.

CS:  Well, then Piastro . . .

GS  . . . And Spiegel calls me on the phone, "Grisha, come to New York because they start something against you. And I don’t want to participate anything against you."
So I come to New York, early in the morning, "Let's go!" And they're supposed to start rehearsal at Longine. And they are, and I hear arrangements—not mine, somebody else's already. Spiegel didn't copy them. Anyway, I listened to it, and I tell Spiegel—we're sitting in the same room, listening to the other studio. Says, "Sol, they'll never make it. It's too difficult. It's good, but it's too difficult." See, I knew, knew how to arrange. I knew how to make it. And I was right. They rehearse for three-quarters of an hour, and then came in to record fifteen minutes. Was the poorest job I ever heard. So Mr. Cartoon, the President of Longine, comes to me, says to Piastro, "Mischa, I don't care where Gregory write his music. He's the only one who could write music for Longine." That's how bad it was. You understand?

CS: They were recording or fifteen minutes on the air?

GS: Well, recording fifteen minutes on the air.

CS: So the performance was broadcast badly?

GS: Yes. At that time, it was not broadcast: it was prepared for recording; it was prepared for future.

CS: Prerecorded.

GS: Prerecorded.

CS: Were most of them live performances or prerecorded?

GS: Prerecorded. On those programs, was prerecorded.

CS: So they didn't broadcast that one, apparently?

GS: No, they didn't broadcast. I don't know what they left out, but . . .

CS: . . . Whose arrangement was that that was too difficult?

GS: Very fine arrangers in New York. You get them a dime—what you call it?—a dime a dozen. But what's good of it to make it so difficult that you cannot play it? But they don't . . .

CS: . . . Do you remember the arranger's name? . . .

GS: . . . But they don't realize it. See? So, Mr. Cartoon says, "Gregory, no matter where he is, he has to write all the Longines music." So Piastro had to swallow a bitter pill.
CS: Who was Mr. Cartoon?

GS: President of Longine.

CS: He was a musician or not?

GS: No.

CS: Well, how did it hit Piastro to get somebody else to make arrangements? How did he decide to get somebody else? Why did he do it? Why?

GS: Because he could not understand what happened to those scores.

CS: Oh. Did you ever tell him?

GS: No.

CS: And you continued to do that, the same scheme, sending the scores and then sending them back?

GS: Yes.

CS: Hm.

GS: The same scheme, more or less, in Odessa, when--I told you, the singers come in and next week, all of a sudden, the next week, they sang all their numbers. They didn't know that Gregory Stone sitting there and copies all the numbers, and copies all the orchestrations. Don't you remember?

CS: Those you did from memory, though, right? You played it in the daytime, and then you went home and you had it in your head . . .

GS: . . . And wrote it down . . .

CS: . . . And wrote it down. You weren't copying from a score. You were copying it from your head, no?

GS: Yes.

CS: And you wrote scores that time in Odessa?

GS: No. Huh?

CS: You were writing at night time scores, piano accompaniments, or what?
GS: Yes, piano accompaniments . . .

CS: . . . And the melody line. Not a full score.

GS: No.

CS: How much did you sell them for?

GS: I don’t know. Those days, it was a lot of money, whatever I get.

CS: No, I mean in Odessa--oh, whatever you got was a lot of money. (9/B)"

Regardless the discontinuity of geography—whether the setting is North America, Russia, or South America—story attests to the protagonist’s continuity of identity:

IS: This was in Bogota, when you were invited to conduct the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Concert for the Symphony of Bogota, Bogota, Colombia—"como se llama"?—How do they call it?

GS: I don’t remember.

IS: I don’t know; it’s on the thing. We’ll get that later for you. OK. Tell her the story about the university.

GS Now, the secretary came to get me to the university . . .

IS: . . . Yeah . . .

GS: . . . of this . . .

IS: . . . What was he? What did he have to do with, the fellow you met, what did he have to do with the Symphony? Board member or what, of the Symphony? Or he was a professor or what?

GS: I can’t . . .

IS: . . . He had something to do with the University Symphony, that was for sure.

GS: Yeah. And he sent his secretary to get me to the university. I went to the university, and they left me in the public . . .

IS: . . . In the audience, yes, . . .
GS: ... To listen to the concert ...

IS: ... Describe the conductor ...

GS: ... All of a sudden, ...

IS: ... Describe the conductor. That was funny.

GS: Well, the conductor was conducting Tchaikovsky like Brahms and Brahms like—that I'm gonna tell you the story ...

IS: ... But you said he conducted like a ballerina, he was tippy-toeing ...

GS: ... He was jumping around ...

IS: ... From one end of the stage to the other ...

GS: ... And I'm in the public. All of a sudden, I raise my hand ...

IS: ... No. Intermission comes. Intermission, and some damsels are on the stage ...

GS: ... Yes. Oh, they're damsels on the stage. They talk about affinity of Brahms to something--what did they ...?

IS: ... I wasn't there ...

GS: ... They're talking about Brahms' affinity to some other composers. I couldn't stand it. I raised my hands. So the girl, or the secretary, says, "Oh, Maestro wants to say something." I didn't say anything; I just moved from my chair and went on the stage. And the house is full. So I said, "There's nothing, everything is wrong what you say about Brahms. The melody he took was brought to Vienna by the Russian diplomat--forgot his name, now; I have it someplace. Oh, so everybody starts to applaud the moment they hear "Russia": they're all Communists there, in Bogota. And I rushed to the piano; and, immediately, I improvised how would it sound in Russian, the Brahms. I suppose I did it well.

CS: Hm.

GS: And so all the people in the audience applauded: the moment they heard about Russia, everything's fine. And I left the stage. He also wrote about it: Beccera knows about it. Beccera ...

GS: . . . He heard about all that episode. He immediately knew that I would do something like that, that I’m the only one who would do something like that.

CS: Hm.

GS: And, of course, it was me to go on the street and take pieces of everything and give it to, give it to the animals.

IS: But go back to the stage. What was it that you had played? What was it that they had played and you said the ladies were talking and talking such quatsch about Brahms? A lot of baloney, you said, they were talking. And you, finally, you couldn’t stand it, and that’s why you raised your hand. But what was it that they had been playing? Do you remember?

GS: Yes. I improvised on the Russian melody—I can’t think of it now, this. It was taken by Prince Razumovsky to Vienna. He got it from the archives, Prince Razumovsky.

IS: How did Brahms get it? The Prince brought it to Brahms or what?

GS: No, that was a mistake, and Brahms never got it. It was Russian melody that they found in the archives, then discovered that it was a Russian melody.

IS: And what did the women say? What were they talking about?

GS: They’re talking about greatness of Brahms in comparison with Beethoven.

IS: Oh, they were talking about how he wrote, created the melody?

GS: Yes.

IS: And that’s what you couldn’t stand? Aha.

CS: Was the conversation in Spanish?

IS: Yes, Bogota.

GS: Yeah.

IS: That’s what it was. They were talking about the
greatness of his inspiration. Finally, Papa was listening and listening, couldn't stand what they were talking about, said, "Wait a minute," and raised his hand, said, "Wait a minute; let me tell you where it came from." That was the whole gist of this thing.

CS: Was that the same Razumovsky quartets?

GS: Yeah, the melody. But they didn't know anything about Razumovsky quartet. Razumovsky quartet was that Prince Razumovsky got it from the archives of Beethoven. Beethoven loved money; for money, he did everything, as you know. Wrote all kind of junk, including "Yehal Kozak za Dunai."

CS: What?

GS: "Yehal." (hums piece) I have all the Beethoven works here, all of them. The English publishers loved Beethoven, that he could write anything, so they sent him all kind of orders. And he fulfilled all the orders, which was just exactly what the students of university wanted to know. Beethoven wrote Italian songs, Ukrainian songs, so many things that you wouldn't believe that a great genius like him, but he wanted to make money.

CS: Hm.

GS: That's all that's to it. And, uh, what else did I, that was the story--was galore in Bogota, in all Colombia, about me. (R4/B)

1. See V5/A, reference to John Field: "What's your religion?" "I'm a pianist." Note, also, the reference to the ritual Orthodox crossing in the Cheka story: "Artists?" (making the sign of the cross) "We're dying here from boredom."

2. It is not always easy, in a study focusing on a person, to determine how much weight to accord, especially, responses to direct questions. At different times, my father seemed to give his answers seriously or humorously--and, sometimes, ironically. Thus, on one occasion, my father and I had the following conversation (10/B):

CS: One time, when you we're telling me the stories, you told me that all of the stories led to the same conclusion. They all lead to the same conclusion. But you didn't say what the conclusion was. What's the conclusion?
GS: What was I talking about?
CS: Escape from Russia, the time in Paris, the playing in Romania—the stories, you said, led to the very same conclusion, one conclusion.
GS: No matter what I say, it’s baloney. What you want me to say, sweetheart?
CS: Well, I don’t want you to say anything in particular, but I was wondering what you mean, what you had in mind. You said all the stories lead to the same conclusion.
GS: Who tell me, tell me who was your teacher, I’ll tell you how you play.
CS: That’s it?
GS: I told you my teacher was Ivan Knorr, in Berlin. (omit discussion of various teachers)
CS: So you don’t remember what you said that they all go to the same conclusion, that they all point to the same conclusion?
GS: Tell me who was your teacher, and I’ll tell you how you play.
CS: That’s the conclusion? What does that mean?
GS: If you had a good teacher, you play good. If you had a poor teacher, you play badly.
CS: And did you have good teachers?
GS: Yes. (omit discussion of proverbial character of his response; see, also, 5/8).

In his responses, my father is as likely to wax "proverbial" as "philosophical." And though favorite re(reading) material of the time period included Free Artist: The Story of Anton Rubinstein; Galina, A Russian Story; Testimony, The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich; and The Joys and Sorrows of Pablo Casals, especially episodes where the artists stood up for their rights when treated unkindly or unfairly, it is difficult to determine if and to what extent those readings might have influenced his thoughts. Finally, when I thought that going through the many filing cabinets full of hundreds of my father’s (published and unpublished) compositions would evoke stories, I was disturbed both at the failure of the mission and at the fact that my father seemed to disparage all of the music he wrote for which he received payment, saying time and again, "No story. It was just a job." (See M1-M7).

3. My father’s manner of dating himself (by referring to personal or historical events—e.g., the various "turning point" activities of the family, the activities of the Pogromists in Odessa, the wanderings of Haley’s Comet across the horizon) often meant additional research for me—in history books, astronomical records, etc.—(determined, as I was, to get an answer to my insistent, “How old were you then?”). By the method of calculation used by my father, his first piano lessons must have occurred around 1905.
4. See, also, R11/A: "I would take a train and go out of Odessa just to find out how people live, how's that people live outside of Odessa. And I remember I didn’t have enough money to come back. He let me go in those big trains they used, I mean, big trains. They let me go back home."

5. See 04/A for a similar version (unique, however, in its rare inclusion of childhood friends as fellow participants in my father’s escapades) that names the Black Sea and ironizes the male parent: "We played hooky, and all my old friends, we used to go to the ocean, to the Black Sea, to swim. And he was going to, 'accidentally,' to school, to catch me. Couldn’t find me: I didn’t show up at school. So he decided I must’ve gone to the beach, Black--it’s cold weather. Imagine! My stomach was all red from that water. Really cold in Odessa. Wintertime, more or less; not winter, autumn."

6. See Bronner, for insight on why elderly men often use tricks, puzzles, folk toys, and games from childhood.

7. Compare R11/A:

CS: What did they usually do for entertainment?
GS: I told you, they had theatres. I took my mother few times, but she falls asleep. She fell asleep in those theatres; she couldn’t stay awake. She’s, she was probably tired out from, and she just fell asleep, in the chair.

8. According to Timofienko, p. 189, the Odessa Public Library, the second in the country (St. Petersburg boasted the first) was constructed between 1904 and 1906.

9. Compare 02/A: "Oh, I used to go to the, no, I couldn’t take any books from the public library. I could play, take them off from the stands. They would say, 'Little boy, why do you need such big books?' "I like it.’ So they put them on the table for me, in the library. I was sitting there, look over all those illustrations, of the seven wonders of the world, you know, things like that. You know, those big editions. But not, no, that I could not get out."

10. See Chapter III, B, "Rosario."

11. See Appendix C, "Polyakin," for a 1984 version, unique in its tendency to include other pranksters.

12. Compare the wording of the "Budilniki" ("Hamburger Revolution") story (P2/A): "And I started a revolution." Also note that R11/A moves on, as before, to the Iza Kramer story.
13. Circa 1905. For more on the Pogroms, see Moorehead.

14. According to Timofienko, p. 18, many of Odessa’s sun-saturated buildings were built of a shell-limestone substance that helped to create a "labyrinth of underground galleries" as well as a maze of legends concerning the underground activities of contraband dealers. On Timofienko’s account, the stories were "true": Odessa’s underground sheltered the Revolutionaries, for whom the galleries served as a hiding place as well as a storehouse (for banned political literature from abroad).

15. See R6/B on "second-guild merchant." And note, again, below (and in Chapter III, C) Abady Gagelstein’s lack of political involvement:

CK: Did your father belong to some organization?
GS: No. He was a merchant.
CK: He was a merchant.
GS: He didn’t bother.

Finally, see Appendix C ("Mama! Mama!") for a version unusual in its involvement of both parents.

16. On the Tsar’s Edict, see R6/B:

CS: Then you told me a famous story about one of the boys from one of the camps? You said they had camps for boys where boys who were not Christians were sent.

GS: No, it was, that’s long before. The Tsar gave an edict to take people, specially Jews, everybody, Gypsies, everybody, and send them to special places where to educate them, or something like that. So that’s the famous Arachayev: General Arachayev took it over. Arachayev was famous with his plantations, whatever you call that, for the reeducate. And he lived together, his sweetheart was a peasant woman, Anastasia. That was later on, killed by the peasants. The peasants made an insurrection against him. That was another story.

See, also, Flannery, pp. 189-91, 308-16, and 234-34, 310-16, for information on the Pogroms--from their origin (p. 310: "This Russian word originally meant ‘storm’ or ‘devastation,’ but came to signify any planned attack on a defenseless group, especially Jews, and including looting, rapine, torture, and even murder. The word crept into other languages after the turn of the century and was widened to mean almost any violent attack on Jews.") to their history (p. 189: "Though it cannot be said for sure that the government deliberately instigated the pogroms, it is certain that they were perpetrated with its connivance. The peasants made no secret of the fact that they believed they were doing the will of the Czar.") And p. 191:
"Toward the close of 1904, the 'League of the Russian People,' known as the 'Black Hundreds,' was organized to combat constitutionalism—and the Jews. Though this group undisguisedly perpetrated assassinations and pogroms, Nicholas II gave it his blessing. In 1905 a series of the cruellest pogroms of Russian history was launched, in preparation for which anti-Semitic pamphlets were printed in government printing offices. In one week during October, 670 pogroms counted hundreds of Jews killed, thousands wounded, and tens of thousands homeless." ) Finally, see Appendix C, "Self-Defense League," for additional versions of this story.

17. See Appendix C, "Siberia," for another version of this story as well as for two accounts where my father speaks of Siberia in connection with his father’s spirited decision, first, to emigrate to France and, then, to return to Russia.

18. See Appendix C, "Family," for similar accounts of the life and death of Abady and Anna Gagelstein and their parents.

19. See Timofienko for visual information on Deribas Street. Note, too, that while listening to this tape, pre-dinner on 18 February 1988, my father said that he went to the parade with his father, still alive.

20. See, also, 10/B on trips to Lodz "to buy manufacture for rugs," and 11/A on trips to Lodz, "the famous place of the English, of the English merchants" for material to make clothes ("I don’t remember anything ready-made.") and to Cherson ("My mother used to go there every year, to her Remembrance Day, her parents."). See 6/A for similar association of uncles’ trip to Siberia and father’s trip to France. ("I told you about the two brothers: the two brothers of my father were taken off the train. They were supposed to be in the army, but they fled the army."—army discussion omitted—"He did not serve the, we, he ran out of the country and went to Paris.") In 6/B, my father says that the Paris trip took place before his father decided to baptize the family:

GS: My father decided French is not for him.
CS: And, yesterday, you said that, uh, he decided to baptize everybody.

GS: Yes. Long before he baptized us all, because of the Pogroms, he says, "I don’t want to be castigated here. Let’s, we get." He went to church, took us all to church, and we were baptized.

And in 7/B, he associates the baptism of the Gagelstein family with the meeting of the "Self-Defense League":

CS: So the main reason your father became baptized was what?
GS: Because of the Russian Pogrom.
CS: Because of the Pogrom against the Jews specifically?
GS: (Nods) I told you, our house was a house of "Self-Defense League." They used to collect there, get hot food and everything else, then come on the streets and kill the "Black Hundreds." (omit questions on name) "Black Hundreds" are the government instigated ... 
IS: ... Rabble ...
GS: ... Rabble, against Jews, against Tartars, against anybody that are not Christian.

See, also, Appendix C, "Parents," for accounts that bring together the travels and deaths of my father's parents.


22. See Berger 1963, p. 111.

23. See Zeitlin, p. 16: "Along with characters, families hold on to episodes which mark the upheavals and sharp changes in their history. Families, like individuals, have a life cycle marked by stages of transition which are often celebrated in story ... Families, then, are selfish in what they choose to remember and pass on. They are willing to remember incidents which come to epitomize the character of a particular familiar member and they are willing to remember an occurrence which marks a turning point in their own life or their family history. In this way, each narrative becomes not a rehash of an event, but a distillation of experience. A single episode comes to represent the entirety of a relative's personality; a whole family history is symbolized by a few dramatic turning points."


25. See Appendix C, "Cymbals," for a version unusual in its insistence that my father did not intentionally play off beat. See, also, Chapter III, B, "Cymbalic New year."

26. See, for example, R5/A and R6/B.

27. See Spitz and Gaynor, p. 182: "Haley's Comet: its last return was in 1910. It was discovered in September 1909. It became conspicuous in May 1910 and was followed until June 1911, when it was beyond the orbit of Jupiter." See, also, R5/A, where my father and I discuss information from this book.

28. See Appendix C, "Influences," for the names of other pianists who inspired my father.
29. In R5/B, my father discusses practicing piano at the Stardusky house.

30. See 10/A and 4/B. And note that in 04/B, my father recalls joining the Conservatory at the age of 12; in 10/A, he remembers starting in 1909 (i.e., at 9 or 10 years of age). On some accounts, the school was known as the Imperial Conservatory of Music.

31. In 10/B, my father says that he was 17 or 18 when she was 35 (the time when he delivered her letters). Compare 4/B, where he recalls having difficulty with the "Moonlight Sonata":

GS: So that's the story. And I always remember Biber Galperin, my teacher, because everybody used music--she never used any music. Was it a trio or quartet or quintet, whatever it is, she was sitting on the stage without using one sheet of music. Such a memory she had! She died in London. I don't know, maybe she was about 97, 98. I wasn't in London.

CS: She was a good teacher?

GS: Fine teacher. She's the one who I came to her flat, found her flat and said, looks me, "What you doing here, Grisha?" "I have playing sonata, Beethoven sonata, and I cannot play it." . . .

CS: . . . Oh, that's the one . . .

GS: . . . "So? When is your school? When is your lesson?" I says, "Tuesday." "Alright. Wait till Tuesday." "No, I want it now." She looked me, "Alright, sit down." I think it was "Moonlight Sonata," difficult--you know--the second allegro part is difficult--you know. I played for her. "Grisha, you're a bad boy, but I'm going to punish you." And I became deliverer of her love letters to her many boyfriends.


33. Unique among stories, this version includes one of my father's only references/admissions to "getting lost" (see beginning this chapter). And, later, toward the end of this version, he talks of "losing the word" (as, elsewhere, he talks of "losing" dates and names). In her telecon of 5 June 1991, my mother told me, "This will make you cry, Cristina. The other day, Papa told me, 'Mama, I'm just lost.' He meant his lying in bed and everything, and not being able to do anything anymore."

34. See, also, R4/B.
35. See Appendix C, "The City Sings," for additional versions of this story.

36. See Chapter II, B.

37. See Appendix C, "Flutes," for other versions of the story. Note, also, in R5/B, the reference to Holochov's wife: she, not Holochov, takes away the contract. See, also, R4/B and R6/B. And for more on arrest, see V4/A. Finally, although my father insists that he did not steal, but only "borrowed" the flutes—"What do I need them?" (R4/B)—he is just as adamant about having engaged in thievery (together with others) on two other occasions: One time, when he was still attending the Conservatory, he went to the Governor's Palace in Odessa, together with some friends, and cut down the wall hangings made of "special material, and we brought, took, stole it from there and made ourselves shirts and things like that." (R2/A: see, also, 7/A, R6/B, and Chapter II, C.) Another time, he went up and down the streets of Kaminetz Podolsk, together with other artists, chopped down the street lanterns made of "good wood," and brought them home to burn as fuel for cooking and heating. (See Chapter III, B, "Lantern.")

38. In R4/A, he identifies a reason, other than graduation, for leaving the Conservatory:

CS: Why did you leave the Conservatory?
GS: Well, that first time, as you know, we organized the troupe to fight the desertion in the army. So I got the train, I got the car, and everything.

39. See Appendix C, "Bassarabian Budilniki Revolution," for other versions of the story that detail the number of performing musicians, the power of Romanian officials, the menu of hired hands. Note, too, that my father translates "budilniki" variously as hamburgers, cutlets, or beefsteaks. Finally, it should be noted, I think, that my sister remembers another version of this story in which my father refers to "budilniki" as "alarm clocks."

40. According to Myerhoff, the specialist in disorder often experiments with many varieties of nonbelonging and changes of identity. In this connection, it is interesting to note, I think, the many name changes—with, perhaps, attendant challenges to identity formation—that my father experienced. Known as Grigori/Grisha Galgelstein in Russia, he became Gregor Hagelstein in France, Grigorash in Romania, and, finally, Gregory Stone in America (where he was "baptized by an artist by name Helen Moniac, just like that because, she says, 'They'll never make it, be able to pronounce that name. You gotta have something easy for the Americans, so they can say
it." And while it is difficult to speculate on the
importance of a name to the identity of an individual, it is
noteworthy that my father concealed his "real name" when I was
growing up--often saying that "Stone" was an abbreviation of
"Stonofsky" or a direct translation of the Russian "Kamine."
In fact, I only learned my father's Russian name in the course
of my work on his life story.

41. See Appendix C, "Stefanescu," for other versions of the
story. And see, also, R4/A for clarification on Dialkitsano:
"I met a Romanian violinist who was in Russia and he spoke
Russian, broken, broken Russian. His name was Dialkitsano
(omit repeated questions about correct pronunciation). He's
the one, I played with him short time. He was married to a
sister of Gulescu, a famous Gypsy violinist in Russia, Jean
Gulescu. Well, anyway, we played in 'Blagarodnaya Sabrania'."

42. Thus, e.g. my father often recalls the unusual
circumstances involved in working for Bill Wieman at the
publishing house of Witmark, Remick, Harms:

GS: Oh, Bill Wieman. I worked in the office, but 9:00 a.m.
says, "Go downstairs and get a bottle." So I used to go
downstairs, get a bottle. Then he would come in and I
would "take a shot": I would go in the bathroom and
start to gargle."
CS: Gargle?
GS: Gargle. "My, my goodness," he says, "You drink a lot."
CS: But you didn't drink it.
GS: (laughing) No. (M2/A)

CS: That's when you went to the Harms and you sat there and
wrote them (sic, specially commissioned arrangements)
right there, and he gave you a drink? a bottle?
GS: I gave, yeah, I used to buy those bottles in the morning.
He says, "Get a bottle." He gave me the money, and I go
downstairs and I get a bottle, and I go upstairs and he,
"Take a shot." You know what I did? I just took a big
shot, to gargle, my throat. And he looked at it, "My
goodness, you certainly drink a lot in the morning."
(R10/A)

43. On dual narrating, see Young.

44. See Appendix C, "Longines," for additional versions of
the story.
B. FANTASY JOINS FACT IN BLIND MAN’S BLUFF

Many of the life experiences elaborated by my father in story are variations of the disorder theme expressed in the border crossings (literal and figurative), role reversals, and imaginative leaps typical of Myerhoff’s "specialist in disorder," of the individual whose lifetime represents a ceaseless experimentation, a continual exploration—behind, between, and beyond certainties—a never-ending story of a life colored as much by fantasy as by fact.

In fact, according to story, my father entered early a life behind masks and mysteries; between castes and countries; beyond religions and regiments, rules and realities. And most often, his entrance into "forbidden territory" (P2/A) was facilitated by a musical talent. Thus, for example, behind the back of an impossibly strict Conservatory faculty that forbid music students to play professional engagements, hidden behind the make up of an old teacher with long white whiskers and sideburns or a young dandy with trim mustache and short hair, my father played piano in the dramatic performances staged by Glagocin and Valerskaya, actor-owners of an Odessa theatre. Again, while a junior Conservatory student, concealed behind the back row of seats, he managed to get in to off-limit lectures whose attendance was strictly restricted to senior faculty members. Similarly, while still at the Conservatory, situated behind the screen that separated the
tradespeople from the nobility, he performed the piano accompaniments for the dancing classes of Tanzmeister Holochov: sometimes, with Holochov's permission, my father took over as dance teacher; other times, without Holochov's knowledge, the youthful specialist in disorder put on the smart identifying epaulets of the school uniform, drew aside the tall dividers of the disunifying screen, stepped out from behind the paravan, and--crossing the borders of religion and rank to glide into the "forbidden territory" of the dance floor--requested "the honor of a dance" with a proper little Orthodox girl of the nobility.

Unorthodox, too, was my father's thrice-repeated effort to land a job as pianist at the Edison, a silent-movie theatre in Odessa: in the tale he tells of that childhood experience, six months after his third--and, finally, successful--attempt to locate and play the piano keys in the darkened theatre, the bold young boy became "the boss" and the elderly theatre manager (Bratslavsky, who had twice refused my father employment) became the old student who turned pages for the new teacher. In another story of reversed roles, my father relates a similar page-turning experience of his adulthood with the older Emmerich Kalman (8/A). And in yet other stories of reversals and borders, the specialist in disorder tells of writing love letters for his illiterate cousin Clara, whose membership in the merchant class and the female sex made education impossible, and of delivering love letters for his
ingenious piano teacher, Biber Galperin, whose classification as a divorced woman made direct courting somewhat difficult.

In story after story, my father figures as a person in youth, middle, or old age who reverses the direction of musical events by getting beyond borders that others describe not just as difficult, but as impossible to cross. Thus, for example—and despite negative responses from all quarters ("It can’t be done." "You’re crazy." You’re a dreamer; it’s impossible")—my father, already an older man of 69, decided to found an orchestra in Reno, Nevada, "The Biggest Little City in the World," where, at the time, only the steady oom-pah-pahs of the one town band, the unsteady high Cs of the one city opera, and the low drone of the many underemployed musical casino hands sought to be heard above the insistent clank, clank, clank of the nickels, dimes, and quarters constantly played in the thousands of one-armed bandits that filled the city’s space—its streets and stores, its bars and bathrooms. Clearly, the orchestra’s success fills my father with pride: although he doesn’t often discuss the difficulties surmounted to create a symphony orchestra, he often equates "organizing the symphony orchestra in Reno, Nevada" with "conducting Eugene Onegin and all the other operas" in Odessa—both of which he views as important artistic events in his life—and he frequently cites an old friend’s response to the vision of an orchestra in Reno: "It’s impossible, Gregory; but if anyone can do it, you can."
Possibly his earliest recollected life experiences are those that figure in stories that my father tells of his preschool years when, as a small boy barely able to walk or read unassisted, he was taken by his father to a large "Traktir"—a "for men only" tearoom/cafe where merchants conducted their business—placed in a high chair, and given a stack of "big magazines—Budilnik, Satyricon, all those big magazines" whose illustrations he looked at while he listened to songs like "Marusa Travilusta" (sung in 6/B) from "tremendous big machines built into the wall" (8/B) whose wooden figures marched and danced, clapped and drummed in what must have seemed, to a little boy, a spectacle of changing sounds and sights:

GS: When I was a little boy, my father was doing business with everybody, and we were going to that "Traktir."

GS: He put me in a high chair. And I loved those big magazines—Satyricon, Budilnik, all those book, big ones. Satyricon was a very big, large copy, full of illustration magazine. Budilnik was the same thing. Probably was many others, but I loved those things. I could, I could not, I don't think I could read yet. And I was enjoying reading those things. My father made business at the "Traktir." No, he ordered "silyotka" (herring), butter, cheese, salami, everything they ate, friends, all those things. Friends with him, they were eating and drinking a lotta tea. That was the Russian custom. And I would be sitting in that high chair and enjoy myself reading, uh, the magazines: Budilnik, I told you—what I said?—Satyricon. Satyricon. There were others too.

CS: That's how they transacted their business?

GS: Who?

CS: In the tearoom, your father?
GS: Yes, yes. It's a "Traktir," a place where all the merchants get together and drink vodka, and buy that, eat herring, all the "zakuskas," everything else—that's "Traktir." (R5/A)

GS: I remember myself: we come to the "Traktir," in the restaurant, early in the morning. My father would put me in a high chair, give me Russian magazines—the big one—and I looked all over, all the illustrations. I don't think I could read, maybe, little bit. And machines were playing, big machines, in the "Traktir." And the drummers were moving (pounds on table), and everything, clapping, cymbals were (claps hands together) . . . You know, those days, they made really, it really was interesting . . .

CS: . . . beautiful things, hm . . .

GS: . . . Those machines, you know (hums), you know, upbeat and upbeat, and then figures were jumping around. I don't know how they made those things, but I suppose it came out of the factories like that. (11/A)

IS: (omit interrogation of GS on who sang couplettes, where and when) Did your Tante sing couplettes? (shakes head "no") So where, at 5 years old, did you hear couplettes? Did people sing them, or what?

GS: No. My father used to take me to the "Traktir."

IS: What's "Traktir"?

GS: Tearoom.

IS: You heard couplettes in the tearoom?

GS: No. That's where he used to put me in a high chair, and I was reading those Russian magazines—I told you already.

IS: OK, but where did you hear the couplettes?

GS: They also played them in "Traktir," on the machines. There were big machines, and those machines played various songs. (sings "Marusa Travilusta"); omit discussion of song sung by Jack Palance's mother) Big machines. And the figures were turning around, and the figures were turning around. Someone was beating the drums (beats on table); the whole thing was moving. Those machines—I don't know if they make them now—tremendous big machines built into the wall.
CS: I don’t know what you’re talking about, what kind of figures . . .

GS: . . . Moving figures, right in the machine.

CS: You mean, like people?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Out of wood or something?

GS: I don’t know how was made. I was always enchanted to see it. (6/B; see Appendix C, "Traktir," for a continuation of questions/answers that fill in descriptive details of the musical machinery, and for other versions of the story)

A few things about the elderly story-teller’s treasured account of the kind of "knowledge" gained in crossed boundaries—apparently, my father was the only child to gain entry to the "Traktir’s" vital world of male adulthood—merit attention, especially in connection with the lessened sensory vitality of people in old age. First, the interest of my father’s story is clearly pleasure—specifically, the pleasures not of the intellect, but of the senses: In the quasi-carnivalesque atmosphere of the Merchant "Traktir" ("They had Baranskaya for the noble people"; 6/B), tradesmen leave off their barter and leave behind their identity when they enter the tearoom/cafe, where they become friends—eating companions ("herring, butter, cheese, salami, everything they ate, friends"; R5/A) and drinking buddies ("Friends with him, they were eating and drinking a lotta tea," R5/A; "Sitting and drinking vodka and drinking vodka, and having herring," 6/B). But at some point, amid the strong smells of food and drink,
the loud sounds and the spectacular sights of the Nickelodeon’s/laterna’s (6/B) ever-playing music ("It was plenty loud for them," 8/B; "And they play all kinds of tunes: 'Marusa Travilusta'--sings--then every Russian song," 6/B) and ever-moving people ("And the drummers were moving, and everything, clapping, cymbals were . . . ," 11/A), the comrades in pleasure take up, once again, their merchant identity, for they "conducted their business" in the "Traktir" (8/B)--"That's for them, for the guys who buy and sell." (6/B) Further, my father himself identifies the pleasurable associations at the story's core: When asked if coins were needed to start the laterna, "like a jukebox," he responded: "NO, NO, you don't pay. You belong that cafe. You belong to the 'Traktir.' You're entitled to all the pleasures of the . . . "(8/B) An entitlement to pleasure, the "Traktir" of story must seem appealing to the story-teller in old age, for whom the feeling of "belonging"--whether to a small Musicians' Local or society at large--may be painfully tenuous.

Second, the appeal of my father's story is clearly drama, specifically the dramatic intensification of experience: In the imaginative world of the "Traktir" (looking in from without through the eyes of the elderly man, and up from within through the eyes of the small child), everything is larger than life. Seated in a "big high chair," my father looks over "big magazines, tremendous Russian magazines" (6/B) while watching the "big wall" with the "tremendous big
machines built into the wall" and operated by means of "those large records . . . big records" with the "huge" cylinders (8/B) that caused the "big, big figures" constantly to move: "Upbeat and upbeat, and then figures were jumping around," 11/A; "Big machines. And the figures were turning around, and the figures were turning around." (8/B) And as if caught up in the revolutions of that world of hyperbole--whose figurative twists and turns are recalled as interesting and enchanting (8/B), evoking happiness and love (6/B)--as if catching hold of the illustrated magazines' turning pages and the Nickelodeon machine's turning figures, my father recreates the intensity of the experience by means of unique verbal and bodily expression. My father's intense participation is evidenced, sometimes, by language suggestive of the "Traktir's" carousel-like movement: "and drinking vodka and drinking vodka" (6/B); "Upbeat and upbeat" (11/A); " . . . a big machine that played all the songs, those days, big, gigantic machines, you know, that played the songs" (6/B); " . . . gave me one of those magazines, and big magazines" (6/B); "And the figures were turning around, and the figures were turning around" (8/B). Similarly, my father participates--exceptionally, among the many stories told almost totally without movement--by a clapping of hands and a pounding of fists in imitation of the crashing cymbals and beating drums of the laterna's moving figures--"And the drummers were moving (pounds on table), and everything,
clapping, cymbals were (claps hands together)" (11/A, 8/B)--
and by singing the melodies or verses of the Nickelodeon's
tunes.

At times, my father connects his recollections of the
songs (the "couplettes") that he heard at the "Traktir" with
those of the "couplettistes" (the performers who, "half-
singing, half-reciting," traveled from town to town to share
tales of recent political or social events, 5/B) that he
accompanied at the theatre. Thus, for example--and after
removing the tell-tale epaulets that identified him as a
Conservatory student (01/B)--my father sneaked off to the
theatre, to the half-lights and half-songs of the stage and
its world of masks and make-up, costumes and curtains, to
accompany Yuli Oobayko, Cesar Corado, Pavel Troisky, Piotr
Nievsky, and other popular bards. And oftentimes, when
recalling these otherwise forgotten singers of tales, my
father half-recites, half-sings numbers from their
repertoires: Oobayko's "Zhenskaya Lubov" ("A Woman's Love")
or Corado's "Hochim Hiber Hochim" ("Our Odessa") or Troisky's
"Ah, Daizhe Nu Tavarische I Bolsche Nichevo" ("Give Your Wife
to the Tavarische, And That's All"):

CS: And what was it like in the Conservatory? Did you have
to wear uniforms?

GS: Yes, I had my uniforms, with epaulets. And on my first
job, I have to take off my epaulets because I went to
the theatre--you know, you're not supposed to do it.
And my, and my copyist who became my copyist in United
States, Sol Spiegel, was a leader of the orchestra. And
he's the first one who played my arrangements, you know.
For that I supposed to illegal do, illegally out from
Conservatory—not knowing what I’m doing. You’re not supposed to do those things. And he was performing them with the artists in the theatre. Imagine that? And the orchestration, as I told you before, was string players—violin, viola, cello, bass—piano, we had one trumpet, one clarinet, one trombone, drums, something like that. I don’t think we had an oboe in the orchestra those days. And I remember the famous artists who came to sing: they were dressed up like a working man. He came out on the stage, sang those couplets, and he gave me once to write an orchestration for him. So I had to carry fourteen books, those big books, to my house, to write the orchestration. How he entrusted me such things like that? Suppose I lose one trombone book? There’s a hundred numbers written in every one.

CS: Oh, they wrote each one in a separate book—not separate copies.

GS: Yes.

CS: Not separate copies for each song.

GS: No. There were hundreds of numbers. How could they do it? And I carried that from his house to my house, blocks and blocks and blocks, those heavy volumes. And I wrote it in myself, and I brought it back to him—complete. And he looked at the photo, and I said, "Who’s that beautiful woman?" "Oh, oh, she’s a ‘blad’, she’s a whore." "Who is she?" "My wife."

CS: Who was he?

GS: Famous artist on the stage, Oobayko—Yuli or Juli—Juli Oobayko. He died outside of Russia. He went, when the Revolution started, he went to, he was against the Bolsheviks, and he went to Bulgaria or Serbia. There, I didn’t know him there. That’s where he probably died. I don’t know who wrote his books, who has his books, and who wants that, them, because the books have no lyrics. You understand? There hundreds of numbers, but no lyrics, no lyrics.

CS: You wrote the orchestrations straight in the books?

GS: Many, many orchestrators in Russia did it, write for him. All the best ones did write for him. But it’s useless material. Put it in a museum, people wouldn’t know what it’s all about. Large, big book, bound. That was Juli Oobayko. (01/B)

CS: Can you do "Zhenskaya Lubov" again, this one?
GS: "Zhenskaya lubov, adeen adman, zhenskaya lubov, veedet f'karman."

CS: Can you sing it the way you just sang it? (sings) Alright.

GS: It must, there must be another phrase, but I don't know.

CS: That's alright. (V5/B)

CS: The one you just sang now . . .

GS: . . . Where is it? You didn't write it, yet?

CS: No. Where is your copy? The other one, alright. (I hand him first, although I had requested a different copy.)

GS: (recites)
"Pridetyol na rus,
On bomboy chrez germani pod plomboy,
Bzyalson iz prastakov,
Na Pladit balshevlikov,
Fsyeh nigraimoo?
Krichali on zhes razu prinachali,
Seik shisinski na varetz
Ai da Lenin, maladyetz.
Lenin vazhnaya persona,
Eh zhelnyel heskals balkona,
Stal on rechi gavariit,
Lu chestnoi vo fsyou divity,
Russkislushit, lud ohochen,
I rabochki ne rabochki,
Fsyak stayal razinya rot,
Nu a Lenin znaty arot.
Eh, rebyata du lazhu ya,
Bay praklayta burzhuyeh,
Yesli bidish fkrakmalyeh,
Pryal vmordu s'il vous plait.
Fsyaw sburzhuya zabiraitye,
Stof ni brozhet ni kalyetz."

(Twice you say that line, actually, the one before: "Fsyaw sburzhuya zabiraitye."

CS: Yes, I know.

GS: "Ai da Lenin, maladyetz." It's up to you.

CS: Is that how it sounded when he recited it?
GS: Yeah.

CS: He didn’t have music?

GS: He’s got music. He had music.

CS: He had music that you accompanied to?

GS: Yeah, he had orchestra.

CS: You don’t remember it?

GS: He had books. Remember—I told you—I took those books home, and I was worried I could not carry them.

CS: And what about the other one, "Daizhe nu Tavarische"?

GS: That’s Pavel Troisky.

CS: How does that go?

GS: He came to Odessa, and I was invited to his hotel. And we composed that "Nastnyet vremnya skora"—I don’t remember if that’s the beginning—"Nauka prochudiot." You know, "Nauka," knowledge, "Ibez barbay ispora, grazdansa propadiot."

CS: Did that have a melody?

GS: Yes.

CS: How did it go?

GS: I’ll play it for you. It’s not so easy for me to get over there. (tape off while he moves from window chair to piano bench; tape on while he plays—improvises, there’s no music)

CS: How does the other one go? It was the one, wait, I’ll tell you, that was done by the Jewish guy, about the wedding?

GS: What Jewish guy? What’s the name of it?

CS: I’ll tell you. "Raspaygane"?

GS: Huh?

CS: Wait a minute. "Razdolsky."

GS: "Razdolsky," maybe.
CS: "And he sang, he, I'm gonna sing a song for you about a Jewish wedding. I have a desire only to sing." (GS searches keys till music comes back to fingers) "And the dance was become 'zaharka,' and even the mama was moving and dancing."

GS: Aha. (starts to play again, but repeats previous melody)

CS: No, that's not how it goes.

GS: I don't know. What was there?

GS: Wait a minute. Let me stop this. That's the one, the one you just played. (tape on and off several times till he remembers melody--takes about three minutes; recites in Russian; then plays and recites at same time. Batteries or tape or both are bad: it's flat and faded.) Did you play the part about the money, the dowry?

GS: Oh. (plays again.) Recites: Ne shalitz, Vladeet po stararitz, Zal vecheslochek, Po denisch schot payol ispamen (Then) idoot pezhenneet kanetz.

"He got the 'wechsel.'" I don't know; more or less, this is correct. My goodness.

CS: Alright. We'll write it down tomorrow.

GS: What?

CS: We can write that one down tomorrow. And there was another one here about "Bublika."

GS: "Bublika, republica, Nyet kirpikalni rublika, Konyet pikalni bublika, Zatrel y nac republica."

CS: But that's all I have. Alright, we'll get this one tomorrow. (V5/B, tape cuts off)

CS: Oh. What are these, couplettes?

GS: Couplettes.

CS: Oh, that the man sang that time?

GS: Oobayko.
CS: Do you know any others?

GS: Not concerning . . .

CS: . . . Not concerning what?

GS: Recites:
"Vischel knalnya vyes paradnasti," (That's Oobayko.)
"Stalin videtlya skazat,
Ee a nasha Russa zhadnasti,
Ya hachoo oomna skazat.
Zhadna, zhadna, zlvolee Ookrain,
Ludem oozheshlee eesiosh,
Ee sfoy nashe plehmedikaya,
Snovak krapsu imperidiosk."

I must have it somewhere Cristina, among my, my Russian stuff.

CS: The "Lenin Zhadnaya Persona," was that Troisky, Pavel Troisky, or Oobayko? Who was reciting it?

GS: Yeah. Oobayko.

CS: Oobayko, not Troisky? What did Troisky recite?

GS: I came to him in a hotel, in Odessa. He just came, a runaway from the Bolsheviks, from the Center. He had a guitar in his hand, and I sat near him and at the piano. And he dictated to me the famous couplet. I don't remember how it starts. Must be somewhere. He's the one who said, "Ah daizhe mu tavarische." (Omit lyric recited, cited above) He's the one who said, "Nauka propadiot, astanische tavarische." "Tavarische will remain, so best of all, give away your wife to the tavarische, and 'bolsche nichevo.'" Strange, Russian language.

CS: Strange is not the word for it. (laughter) This was Troisky, Pavel Troisky.

GS: Pavel Troisky. He just ran away from the Bolsheviks. He was against me. Later on, he sang in that--it's difficult for a Russian coupletist to sing in Romania, where everybody speaks another language. Despite the fact, a lot of people know Russian. But how can he adapt himself to speak Romanian and Russian at the same time? So when I met him in Bucharest, he told me, he told me that I didn't support him. I say, "Pavlusha, what could I give to you? What you wanted? Money from me?" He was suffering in life. A Russian coupletist outside of his country.
CS: Oh. There, when, other than Pavel Troisky and Corado, did you see any other couplettistes?

GS: Yes.

CS: Any that you remember?

GS: Dobreenyen.

CS: Dobreenyen.

GS: The same name as the ambassador.

CS: Did he recite these?

GS: Yes.

CS: Do you remember any of them? About Lenin, again, or about something else?

GS: No.

CS: Not about Lenin?

GS: No.

CS: About Russia?

GS: I can't think about anything now.

CS: About past history?

GS: No. About bread, waiting in the lines. (omit discussion of Russian word for "bread" and conversation with IS)

CS: Sang about bread?

GS: "Hodyet bublika, republika."

CS: Oh, good. That was one of his?

GS: Yes. I don't remember the beginning.

CS: How does it go, again?

GS: "Adnyet pikalnee bublika," ("There is no 'bublik' in 'pikranaya,' breadplace) "Zatrov," ("But still we have republic.")

CS: (omit discussion of singular/plural noun forms) How did that one go again?
GS: (hums) "Nyet pikaralnee bublika, republika."
CS: Was this one sung or recited or half-sung, half- . . .
CS: Did Dobreenyen play guitar or anything, instrument?
GS: Dobreenyen? No, just sang. He was a very tall man.
CS: Hm. And he sang in the theatres?
GS: Yeah. All these things are from the theatre, Cristina . . .
CS: . . . And he was . . .
GS: . . . Remember, I told you, they complained to me, "Look, we are only two days here. Everybody sings our songs." That was me.
CS: But this guy was reciting, half-reciting, half-singing.
GS: Half-reciting, half-singing.
CS: You didn’t write down his, also, to sell?
GS: Yes, I did. It must be upstairs someplace, or downstairs . . .
CS: . . . And, and he was a traveling couplettiste? He went . . .
GS: . . . They all travelled. Corado was traveling, too. But he was former governor of some state in Siberia. I still remember him. And his wife—she could hardly speak any Russian; she was Italian. They lived not far from me. (omit speculation on Dobreenyen’s first name) Kerensky, too.
CS: Kerensky was another one?
GS: No. We glorified him, in the songs, they put the, in the . . .
CS: . . . The couplettistes glorified . . .
GS: . . . Oh, the Kerensky, who came, the provisional government. (continues with Kerensky story; V3/A)
GS: During the Revolution, he was a first man with the government, and Aaron told me he’s doing very well in
Russia at that time. His name was Grigori Stelyarov.

CS: And he was the arranger for the singer?

GS: For Oobayko. The name of the singer was Oobaykov, Oo-bay-ee-kov.

CS: And he actually sang them? He didn’t recite the couplettes, he sang them?

GS: No. Those days, they never sang those, they never sang, they half-singing and half-reciting, you know.

CS: Half-singing, half-reciting. Did he have some kind of accompa-, little hand instrument that he played himself, gusle or something?

GS: NO, NO. None like that. I had a guy like that, too.

CS: Oh, yeah?

GS: Famous accordion player, Peter Nievsky. I played for him, too. Peter Nievsky.

CS: Hm. I don’t know that.

GS: I played for him, too. But he was real accordion player, the old-fashioned accordion player, not with a lot of . . .

CS: . . . The buttons on each side?

GS: Yes.

CS: And he sang when he played also?

GS: Yes, sang, well, most of them.

CS: Between talking and singing, you mean.

GS: Yes. That’s what means couplettiste. He’s not really a singer. He’s between. And Piotr Nievsky was a famous one, on his accordion.

CS: Did he do it all by memory?

GS: Who?

CS: Piotr Nievsky.

GS: All of them did by memory, naturally. Those years, sung their own material.
CS: Before an audience? Other people came to see them, or what?

GS: Big theatre, Cristina.

CS: Those guys, too, in the theatre?

GS: Near me, where I used to live, there was a little house in Odessa, and there lived Cesar Corado, Cesar Corado and his wife. And he wanted to do something. Life was very difficult in Odessa at that time. And he was a big one, years ago, was a governor in some state. But in Odessa, he wanted to do something. So I knew about it and came to him, and we figured out songs that he could sing, and half-singing, half-. He became quite a sensation on the stage. He also sang, and I wrote all the music. He also sang "Hochim hiber hochim, Zubit ochim na Odessa, Russe ni hochit sa glacitsa, Nam nee verit hochubay, Eta nasha zagranitsa, Eta nasha hajeebay." He sang those songs. I wrote.

CS: "Ojeebay" has something to do with Odessa?

GS: Yeah, well, he sang about Turks, that they wanna take Odessa back, and they pray to the government. "Eta nasha zagranitsa" ("It's our country), "Eta nasha hajeebay, Eta nasha hajeebay." "Hajeebay" was the famous, Odessa has "Hajeebay f'speriman." That's where the people come from all over the world to take Russian dirt, smear theirselves.

CS: You mean mud baths?

GS: Mud baths.

CS: And you accompanied him on the piano?

GS: Oh, well, with little orchestra we had in the theatre. We had an orchestra of string and woodwind and brass. We were about 10, 12 men.

CS: And he recited at the same time?

GS: Yes.

CS: And he became successful, right?

GS: Oh, big success.

CS: There was a demand for . . .
GS: ... Yeah, big audience.

CS: Did he himself play any instrument?

GS: No.

CS: No. This was, which house were you at then? Was this before Ambalzaki Cafe?

GS: No. I was already playing in that cafe. It must be one of those cafes.

CS: Not at the theatre?

GS: No, this was at the theatre, where he, there, because (garbled) in cafe. (5/B)

These stories of my father's association with Russian singers of tales are interesting, I think, for two reasons. First, they provide a record of the narratives—half-sung, half-recited—apparently, in oral tradition at a particularly turbulent time in Russian history: according to my father, though the country was on the verge of full-scale Revolution, "millions of people" flocked to the theatre (where, as my father says, they could warm their bodies and "feed their souls")¹⁰ to see the newest bard, who "looks like a Russian peasant," whose "costume was like, like a Russian working man" (8/A) and to hear—against a background of musical and verbal innuendo—the latest news. From these singing newscarrriers, who "had to travel from city to city" (8/B)—for "they all traveled" (V3/A), carrying with them only their large books of orchestrated accompaniments; they took no lyrics and no accompanists—the Russian people learned of the formation of breadlines throughout the country, of the installation of
Bolsheviks at the Kshesinskaya Palace (in the ballerina's home), of the arrival of Lenin at the Finland Train Station (in Petrograd), of the activity of Kerensky in the opposition government."

Second, although these stories find my father successfully opposing Conservatory regulations--crossing borders by working "illegally out from Conservatory" and in professional theatre, writing music for much needed money--they provide a record less of pleasure than of pain (interestingly, given their close association with the "Traktir" stories), less of victory than of defeat or, at least, real difficulty. According to my father, "Life was very difficult in Odessa at that time" (5/B) "and it was really terrible times in Odessa. There was hardly any food," "the transport was bad, there was no place to go." (R6/A) Apparently, going from city to city--"Odessa and surrounding little cities" (R6/A)--these singers of tales could not afford to travel with their own orchestras; thus, they were forced to find and rehearse a new group of musicians (sometimes as many as 14) at every one-night stand. And, of course, since they didn't stand a chance of surviving those "bad times" unless they were heard, they had to adjust their orchestrations to locally available musicians and to entrust their orchestration books to totally unknown arrangers, such as my father. In fact, my father wonders even now not just at the weight of the large books, one for each instrumentalist
("Imagine me carrying all those big volumes, and stopping at every block!" 8/A, R5/B; "And I carried that from his house to my house, blocks and blocks and blocks, those heavy volumes." 01/B; "I was worried I could not carry them." V5/B), but at the weight of the responsibility that he was given ("How he entrusted me such things like that? Suppose I lose one trombone book? There's a hundred numbers written in every one." There were hundreds of numbers. How could they do it?" 01/B; "I don't know how they entrust those things. I could lose the book, one or two." (8/A)

Additionally, since, for these bards, a loss or gain in popularity was a function of, among other factors, the topicality of their narratives (none of which were written down, all of which were performed "by memory, naturally." 5/B), the singers had to adjust their tales to the needs of local audiences. And, as my father recalls, during those "terrible times" of constant fleeing, constant running "away from the Bolshevists" (V3/A)--"They all left Russia. The wouldn't stay there." (8/B)--the needed adjustments were often made with extreme difficulty. Thus, for example, according to story, Pavel Troisky, "a runaway from the Bolsheviks," eventually arrived in Romania, where he had to perform in another language. And, as my father notes, "It's difficult for a Russian couplettiste to sing in Romania, where everybody speaks another language. Despite the fact, a lot of people know Russian. But how can he adapt himself to speak Romanian
and Russian at the same time? ... He was suffering in life. A Russian couplettiste outside of his country." (V3/A) And even when they performed in their own country, the couplettistes suffered: as my father tells their stories, all of the traveling singers experienced difficulties of one sort or another. Like the fleeing Troisky (who held up in a hotel, holding "a guitar in his hand," V3/A), the anti-Bolshevists Oobayko, Nievsky, and Dobreennyen finally left Russia—apparently, when fast bullets and not full bellies resulted from recitations of satiric lyrics. Similarly, Cesar Corado, already an old man when he arrived in Odessa with his Italian-speaking wife and daughter after being ousted by Revolutionaries from his post as State Governor, eventually left for Bulgaria or Serbia to escape further Bolshevik persecution. (8/B, V3/A, 01/B)

It almost seems that if the world of semi-dark and semi-songs that filled the family table intrigued the Conservatory escapee with the promise of pleasing appearances or empty pleasures, the theatre, in fact, afforded my father an initiation, of sorts, into the hard realities of life in Revolutionary Russia. As my father tells his story, real effort as well as talent, a sense of business as well as responsibility were required to bring home the books and the bacon. ("And I carried . . . , blocks and blocks and blocks, those heavy volumes. And I wrote it in myself, and I brought it back to him--complete."; 01/B) And if the
sixteen-year-old of story did not completely lose his illusions among lyrics like "A woman's love is a lie" and "The people have no bread, but the Government goes ahead"; among down-on-their-luck couplettistes--demoted (like Corado), despicable (like Oobayko, with the beautiful wife: "she's a whore"), or desperate (like Troisky)--he must have gained not just income, but, perhaps, insight into the painful existence even of those who successfully survived the "dark days" of the Russian Revolution.

Even a few years prior to the Revolution, and even though still a sophomore Conservatory student, my father was already supplementing the family income by crossing borders, by "illegally" entering, as usual, the "forbidden territory" of theatre and dance: At the "Ruskii Teatra" (Russian Theatre) where the husband/wife acting team "Glagoin i Valerskaya" put on their stage plays, and the "Blagarodnaya Sabrania" (Nobility Hall) where the Armenian Tanzmeister Holochov and his Jewish wife showed off their star pupils, my father entered a world of parts and pas, where being in step often meant being in disguise: And with his various disguises in place, the youthful explorer of parts unknown--literal and figurative--continued to pursue what Myerhoff calls a lifetime of "ceaseless experimentation." Concealing his identity--as a member of the Conservatory student body, of the working class, of the Jewish faith--my father learned the parts needed to perform on the stage (filled with professional players) or
in the dancehall (attended by Orthodox aristocrats). And, according to story, he must have learned his lines well: "Nobody knew" of his extracurricular activities (02/A), and even the experienced chaperons who scrutinized him through their lorgnettes did not detect the "false Gregory." True, my father was eventually found out, but he had already looked in--on the costumes and stage lights, the ballgowns and diamonds (02/A): The observed was also the observer, and a lost job was, apparently, small price to pay for participation in the "adventure" (04/A) afforded by these unsanctioned sallies into "foreign" lands. Indeed, on my father's account (and contrary to his stories of encounters with couplettistes), the jobs he landed as pianist--behind the curtain, on the stage of the Russian Theatre, and behind the screen, on the stage of the Nobility Hall (R4/B)--brought him "happy times" with Glagoin and Valerskaya (R6/A) and "golden days" with Mr. and Mrs. Holochov (02/A):

GS: Oh, yes. On the same time, I always wanted to make money. In Odessa, there was a famous actor, Glagoin, Glagoin. He presented always unusual operettas, unusual foreign stuff. I forgot his first name, Glagoin. His wife was Valerskaya. And he presented, and I always wanted to play. The used to make me up and put me on the stage. And I played the piano, whatever was required. (4/A)

CS: Who was Glagoin?

GS: Glagoin i Valerskaya, two great Russian artists of the, of the drama, comedy theatre. They used to, I used to, ah, Glagoin i Valerskaya, Glagoin i, that's his wife. (omit confusion over wife's name) Glagoin i Valerskaya, they had a theatre--"Ruskii Teatra" they called it--and I used to perform there. They make me up, and I, they used to make me up, and I play the professor, with a
beard and everything. (omit repeated questions on acting)

CS: You were acting?

GS: Well, they put me on the stage.

CS: In what kind of plays?

GS: From the repertoire.

CS: Russian plays?

GS: I don't remember--Russian, French plays. (R4/B)

From untutored acting, my father moves, in a reversal of roles, to tutoring dance:

GS: Didn't I tell you that I used to give lessons, of dancing, a famous school of Armenian by name of Holochov?

CS: Hm. What year?

GS: Must've been--let's see, well, I would be about 12 years of age. It happened during my Conservatory days. And I had to play accompaniment to this class of dancing of the aristocratic Russian children belonging to the society. They never seen me because I played in a pit, and they were dancing at the stage. So, usually, after that teaching session, I'm in my uniform of the Conservatory, with the epaulets, mixed in the society of the aristocracy, and would invite those little girls to dance with me.

CS: You invited the little girls?

GS: Yes. And they usually dance the actual dancing of the day--you know, pas de quatre, pas d'espagne, cracoviak, all the dancing of the style of the day. I would come in, come up to the lady of the ... She was sitting, look me over--probably mother or grandmother--look me over in her monocle, and let me have the girl to dance with. I dance, and I put her back to the seat and give my good-bye salute, and to her, and that's all. And that was done for a long time until, one day, the daughter of Holochov--she had access to those dances--and, all of a sudden, she saw me dancing one of those girls who belonged to the society. So she told that to her father. And father called me, says, "Look, you don't belong to the society. How dare you to come in there, invite girls to dance!" That was the end of my adventure of dancing
for the society. But, at the same time, Holochov let me teach his class when he was busy. And I would come up from my piano, stand up and teach them how to do correctly the Vienna waltz, because very few people knew how to do the Vienna waltz.

CS: Where did you learn to do it?

GS: Watching him, I learned to do the Vienna waltz. And he entrusted me with his pupils. And I would come up and start to do one-two-three, one-two-three, and doing the correct, the pas. I don't know, Cristina, if you know how to do the Vienna waltz. As a rule, the girls don't have to do the Vienna waltz, but it's good to know, because when you do waltz, you automatically have to do the Vienna waltz pas. (04/A)

GS: You see, in Russia, they had salon dancing, as you know. Salon dancing—that means you were like a herd of animals doing a certain kind of figures, every time: pas de quatre (hums), pas d'espagne (hums), or Hiawatha—that's based on the Indian, American Indian (hums), many dances, or . . .


GS: "Kikapoo," "Kikapoo," the dance in Russia (hums).

CS: What year are you talking about?

GS: Oh, 1910. Don't you remember when I went to dance for the, for the noble society, and I was not supposed to be seen? And, all of a sudden—they never seen me because I played there, in the dark, then the girls all went to join their parents, and was grand ball, would start with big orchestra on top floor. They playing all the dances, and I would come in there. And I was having uniform of the Conservatory. I would come up and invite them to dance, little girls—make the "reverence." And they would look me over with lorgnette, the women, "Alright. Go ahead." And then the girl, bring her back—dance with the girl and bring her back to the seat. We danced all those dances till, one day, Holochov the Tanzmeister daughter—she was there; she was dancing all the time. She was admitted to the, not because she belongs to the society, but because she's daughter of the Tanzmeister, Holochov. She was allowed to come in there and dance. And she sees me dance. She didn't say a word, but she called father and says, "Look! Grisha is dancing there!" "What's the matter? What is it?" He called me, says, "Grisha, You know what you did? I could've lost my job. You don't belong to that society. It's all noble people.
My daughter dances there because she's my daughter, and I teach there because I'm a teacher. Don't do it again!

CS: How old were you then?

GS: I imagine about 13, 14. That was my golden days, golden (laughs) youth days. Just imagine me doing that stuff. Well, "tanz" class, you know. Then, you know, I was, he would allow me in the class to teach students how to do the waltz and all the dances. He was tired. In his class, I would do it; I would teach them how to make a waltz, which is very difficult to do, for a man, to learn how to do right waltz. Remember, I showed to you?

CS: Yes.

GS: That's hard to do correctly. A woman doesn't have to do; she may go also to other steps. She doesn't have to, she can jump around in one place. But still good to know. So, I was teaching them all the salon dances to all my students there. I missed on some of the dances, I'm sure. I can't remember those dances. (5/B; see Appendix C, "Tanzmeister Holochov," for additional versions of this story)

Another story of the same Conservatory period finds my father missing the piano keys at the Edison, Odessa's silent movie theatre, where the darkness twice prevented the youthful adventurer from landing a job as accompanist. In a light-hearted story blending daring and defiance ("I went there on my own"--an unsolicited and, again, unsanctioned explorer) as well as of dark disguise and role reversal (though the lights were still off, "Later on, of course, . . . he became my help." 8/B), my father tells of being undaunted by the discouraging words of Bratslavsky, the old boss ("You're not ready. Come in in a few months, and learn some pieces." P2/A) And, three auditions later (apparently, my father took his preparation seriously: "And I learned that
pieces--'Liquette,' 'Tobagan,' all that pieces that were in the style, 'Kikapoo.' And, eh, practiced." (P2/A), Bratslavsky suddenly found himself assisting the determined new accompanist he had so cavalierly dismissed: "The first time, he asked me to sit down at the piano, and I couldn’t find the keys in the dark. He says, "Oh, you come another time." The next time, I came in, and I already found the keys, everything. And the third time, he was not there because I took over his place." (R9/A)

CS: What was the time when you played in a, you went to get a job at a movie house or something like that? You auditioned for somebody--I don’t remember entirely.

GS: No. I went to the motion picture theatre and sat in the first row, and the friends there, and the pianist there. I says, "I can play something." "Well, come on! Sit down and play!" So the picture started, and I got lost. I couldn’t play (hums piece he couldn’t play); I was supposed to play something that I memorized--"Liquette" or "Croquette" or something French. So he looked at me and says, "You’re not ready yet. Come in in a few months." Then he became my helper, because I was better and they engaged me to play.

CS: Hm.

GS: Yes. The name was Bratslavsky.

CS: Bratslavsky?

GS: Bratslavsky.

CS: He was older than you?

GS: Yes, much older, much older. And he became my helper.

CS: You got an actual job in the music house?

GS: Yes.

CS: Paid job?

GS: Paid job.
CS: Were you little or old or do you remember?

GS: I must have been about 11--no, between, that was the second time--15 or 16. (omit discussion of movie machine operation; see Appendix C, "Edison," for this digression)

CS: When you went for the job? The first time you went there, you just went . . .

GS: . . . I played only one picture. I knew only one number, "Liquette." And I was not so good because I couldn't find the keys.

CS: Why couldn't you find the keys?

GS: Dark.

CS: Oh.

GS: You know, all of a sudden, got dark, and he says, "Sit down! Play!" And I couldn't find the keys, I couldn't find the . . .

CS: . . . It got dark because they were showing the movie? They turned out the lights? Yes?

GS: No, well, it was not necessary to play then.

CS: But, I mean, they turned out the lights in order to show the picture, no? And that's why it became dark?

GS: No. They turned down the lights in order to show the picture . . .

CS: . . . And you couldn't find the notes . . .

GS: . . . At the beginning. Later on, of course, I told you, he became my help. (6/B; see Appendix C, "Edison," for other versions of this story)

Before moving on to other stories of role reversals, I think it interesting--given the many disorder motifs found here--to speculate on sources of the obvious pleasure that telling the Edison tale gives my father (who often closes his eyes while moving his fingers over an imaginary keyboard to
indicate the circumstances under which he played—sometimes laughing and always smiling (indicating apparent satisfaction)" whenever he reaches the story's ironic close, "And he became my helper." 8/B) Obviously related to other accounts of daring transgression, the story is, perhaps, less evidently connected to the theatrical tales of concealment. But whether my father is hidden, as at the silent movie theatre, in a cloak of darkness or, as at the Ruskii, the Whodawzhestvehnee, the Glagoin, or the Baranskaya, behind stage make-up, curtains and screens, or epaulets, the effect is the same: his true identity, his real nature, is not seen.

Further, although the Edison tale, unlike the theatrical tales, is a story of ironic inversion," the irony present in this story and absent in the others accounts for an underlying similarity: as D.C. Muecke observes, "basic to all irony" is a contrast of reality and appearance—-a contrast, of course, just as basic to all theatre, and, as R.W. Clark notes, just as basic to (the "grand theme" of) all philosophy,— without which "Life is lived on the intellectual surface of things." What underlies, then, all of my father's stories of hidden identities and role reversals is the distinction between reality and appearances that, once identified, can become the source of a lifelong exploration, a ceaseless seeking, a developed disposition to probe behind, between, and beyond the way things seem to be in order to discover the way things are—-the source, that is, of traits and tendencies recognized
by Myerhoff as typical of the individual whose specialized life-role is disorder.

But though the theatrical tales typically involve the recognition of the reality/appearances distinction, they don't situate my father in what Muecke identifies as one of the roles involved in irony, viz., "as a mode of apprehension for the 'ironically developed'"; and they don't possess what Muecke recognizes as "the dynamic quality of irony as a movement from an appearance to a contrasting 'reality.'"\textsuperscript{19} And, I think, the source of the special pleasure that my father appears to derive from the Edison tale of reversed roles is to be found here, in his participation--active and reflective--in the movement towards "the 'reality' that definitively unmask the appearance."\textsuperscript{20} In other words, though the theatrical tales participate in what G.G. Sedgewick describes as "one of the keenest and oldest and least transient pleasures of the reflective human mind--the pleasure in contrasting Appearance with Reality,"\textsuperscript{21} the ironic Edison tale intensifies pleasure by involving my father not just in the recognition of the inherent contrast, but in the control of the ironic result.

In this tale, my father is observed as actively participating in the progressive unmasking of seemings--the young piano player who seems not to know how to play piano; the old boss who seems not to know how to boss (after all, my father, and not Bratslavsky, initiated the "three auditions"
for a position that did not need filling)—and reflectively commenting, through the story itself, on the disparity between "what might be expected and what actually happens". For example, Bratslavsky might have been expected to refuse the bold young pianist even a first hearing, let alone a continued series of auditions (and, in this connection, it is interesting to note the urgency with which my father counts out the traditional number of auditions: he insists on, though he can't fully account for, three—see Appendix C, "Edison"); the pianist himself might have been expected to trivialize the usefulness of the required skill—the ability to play in the dark—or to try, but fail, to acquire that skill; the boss might have been expected to hire the young pianist on trial, as an apprentice or an assistant, but not to place the teenager in the important—his own successfully occupied—position of control. And, I think, it is in the controlled stance of the ironist—characterized, in Muecke’s words, "emotionally by feelings of superiority, freedom, and amusement and symbolically as a looking down from a position of superior power or knowledge"—that the source of my father’s enhanced feeling of pleasure in the Edison’s tale of reversed roles is to be found.

In this connection, I find it preferable to permit Muecke’s insightful observations on the special "feeling-quality" of irony to speak for themselves:
The ironic observer’s awareness of himself as observer tends to enhance his feeling of freedom and induce a mood of satisfaction, serenity, joyfulfulness, or even exultation. His awareness of the victim’s unawareness leads him to see the victim as bound or trapped where he feels free; committed where he feels disengaged; swayed by emotions, harassed, or miserable, where he is dispassionate, serene, or even moved to laughter; trustful, credulous, or naive, where he is critical, skeptical, or content to suspend judgement. Where his own attitude is that of a man whose world appears real and meaningful, he will see the victim’s world as illusory or absurd . . . the pure or archetypal ironist is God . . . He is the ironist par excellence because he is omniscient, omnipotent, transcendent, absolute, infinite and free. The archetypal victim of irony is, per contra, man, seen as trapped and submerged in time and matter, blind, contingent, limited and unfree—and confidently unaware that this is his predicament."

"Submerged in time and matter, blind, contingent, limited and unfree . . . bound or trapped . . . "—these words might be used to describe the experience of people in old age, like my father, people, that is, who are daily reminded of—or who might seem, to some, living reminders of—the discrepancy between appearances and reality. How many times have I heard my father remark, as so many elderly people must have done so many times: "I look myself in the mirror; it’s me, but it’s not me." or (usually in French and often in apology, for walking slowly, for sitting awkwardly) "It’s not a pleasure to grow old: inside, I’m the same, but outside . . . " And, of course, as Matthew Arnold has written, in his perfectly
entitled poem, "Growing Old" involves losses not just physical, but emotional as well:

Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion--none."

Again, reading Muecke's words brings back the memory of the stereotypes often associated with people in old age--"serene," "joyful," "disengaged"--but with a fullness of meaning not usually present: it would seem that the ironic stance presents people like my father the possibility of "liberation" by raising them, as Goethe has written, "above happiness or unhappiness, good or evil, death or life."5

Another story of (doubly) reversed roles from his school-life takes my father, again on his own, into the off-limit ("For teachers only," R11/A) lectures of Professor Polfiorov, who came to the Odessa Conservatory "from the Center somewhere" (R11/A) to introduce French Modernism, Debussy, and Impressionism to the music faculty: somehow, "by hook or crook" (R11/A), my father got into the lecture hall attended also by the imposing Professor Lipschutz (who "always walked around with a big portfolio, and had probably one page of music there," R11/A), an older faculty member who, many years and miles later, would become my father's copyist:

GS: Well, Lipschutz was the bass player that time--remember? I told you. I, I must've been a very impressionable--what's it, "impressionable"? . . .

CK: . . . Yeah . . .

GS: . . . Boy, because--I remember Lipschutz. I couldn't even come up to him. And he became my copyist and my bass player. Sitting, watching Lipschutz, sitting, and
listen to Professor Polfior, who came to give lectures on Debussy—how he played on the piano "L'apres-midi d'un faune." And Lipschutz was sitting, listening to it. And I was in the corner, also watching. How I got in those places, I don't know; (laughing) but I got in, did get in there.

CS: You weren't supposed to be there? It wasn't supposed to be for all the students?

GS: No. I don't remember how it was but I'm not supposed, I'm a boy. Lipschutz was ten or fifteen years older than I—-at least fifteen. (01/B)

CS: And what was the story about Lipschutz again? Lipschutz?

GS: Uh, he played in the opera in Bucharest. (tape starts to cut and continues to cut throughout—garbled) He was the best bass player; he was a good bass player. (garbled)

CS: What was the story with him? He was in Bucharest, right?

GS: No. But I knew him much before. I followed him. He, he was like Professor at Conservatory, and I was a student. So I followed him wherever he got. So, all of a sudden, there was, is a lecture by famous Professor Polfiorov. So I got in. And he was explaining to us about Debussy—first time I ever heard that name—the role Debussy played in Russian music (because Madame von Meck also wrote about Debussy, one of her daughters, because one of her daughters, all of a sudden, fell in love with Debussy to such an extent that she wanted to marry him).

CS: Madame von Meck, the same one that Tchaikovsky . . .

GS: . . . Yes, but that's her daughter: she didn't wanna have her daughter marry a musician.

CS: So, Lipschutz got you in that time?

GS: Yes, Lipschutz was with, no, Lipschutz was with me that time. He was at Conservatory.

CS: But he got you into the lecture?

GS: He was, NO. He got into that lecture of Polfiorov, with me. We were sitting there enchanted, listening to all the stories that Polfiorov told us about various composers of Europe—we didn't know the first thing about, and among them was Debussy. (V4/A; see Appendix
C, "Polfiorov's Lectures," for other versions of this story)

At times, my father intertwines the stories of borrowing boxed flutes (from Holochov) or delivering billets doux for Galperin)—see Chapter II, A—with his recollections of enchanting his illiterate cousin Clara by composing the love letters she sent to her boyfriend, stationed in Hokoloki, an outpost in the faraway Caucasus. Taking his part far too seriously, my father apparently disguised his identity and adopted the Romantic mode popular among educated young Russian womankind, utilizing his knowledge of Russian poets and French novelists to help Clara win her love. However, in an interesting twist on the reversed roles motif, Clara, the friend and partner in crime and deception, later became my father’s "enemy," the only cousin ("the bad one," R6/A) to denounce the criminal deceit of the flute thief: when my father lost the contract with Holochov—see Chapter II, A—Clara hurt the quasi-Cyrano by taunting him with the words, "Flaytitchky, flaytitchky, flaytitchky" (R6/B):

GS: You stopped me: now I got stuck again. Wait a second. What was I talking about?

CS: Love letters, you delivered love letters.

GS: Aha. Coming to the love letters, I have to go back to my days when I was about 12 or 13 years, after we came back from Paris, in Odessa. I imagine, some of my sisters-in-law (sic, cousins) could hardly read or write. And I used to write love letters to their boys—they're far away in Hokoloki. Hokoloki, in Caucasus. And I would write love letters for her. I say, in letter, I say—"How does it sound to you?" "Good, good. Send it to him." (omit confusion over family relationships) They’re children of the, of my mother’s brother’s
children.

CS: Ah, cousins.

GS: Cousins. So I wrote those letters. When I wrote in Hokoloki, I use my phraseology: "I love you. I wait for you day and night. I hope you will come soon." (garbled) They liked it very much, especially Clara. And she, really, becomes, later on, my enemy. (4/B)

GS: I wrote love letters for one of them— for Clara, I think. She sent it to Hokoloki, way out in Caucuses, where he was serving.

CS: Then Clara's the one who used to talk about the flutes then, not Olga?

GS: Yes.

CS: Not Olga.

GS: No.

CS: Were the other nicer, Olga and Anna?

GS: All nice girls. (R6/B)

Even later, as an adult, my father enjoys donning the mask and turning the tables. In a story that he suggests is not quite nice, the adult specialist in disorder returns to Bassarabia several years after arriving in the States and, while in Germany for a short time, delights in playing the role of rich American when, from his table, he overhears the owner of a Russian restaurant tell a waitress— in Russian— "He's American. Charge him double!" Apparently, my father doubles his delight by softly romancing the waitress in broken German every night after hours, counting on her incomplete knowledge of that language and his complete familiarity with German song titles to get him over the rough spots. When his
stay is over, according to story, my father reveals his true identity to the falsely-wooed waitress and the dishonest owner, who immediately tries to squeeze out of a tight spot and redeem himself with an offer of champagne that my father rejects with an onslaught of curses. Needless to say, the waitress who was so loose with her affections was ready to slaughter the suitor from whose Russian lips had so freely flowed German song titles like "Holde Maria" and "Nur in der Nacht."

GS: That's the time when--I told you--I came to the Russian restaurant. They looked me over; the boss looked me over. Said, "Amerikanitz. Charge him double!" I liked the girl, and I took her home every night. And I had to sing to her songs like "Holde Maria," "Herrlich Zuruck," "Nur Eine Nacht Sollst Du Mir Gehoren." And she had to listen to me, when I spoke perfect Russian, and I could tell all my stories in Russian. And, the last night, when I had to leave Berlin, she was so mad at me. Says, "How could you tell me those things--you, knowing Russian; you, Russian?" The proprietor, when he found out that I'm Russian, he put champagne on the table as much as we wanted. I cursed, I cursed him in--like you know how to do it in Greek, I did it in Russian! (1/B)

GS: Later in my life, I came to Berlin again. And, naturally, as a Russian born, I was looking for a Russian restaurant. And I found one "Unter the Linden." Was a beautiful cafe, and I walked in. And the proprietor looked at me, says, "Amerikanitz. Charge him double!" That was probably 1931. Alright. I liked there a girl who was waiting at my table all the time, and I took her home every night. But she didn't know that I'm Russian because I spoke English to her. And, later on, when it came out that I'm Russian, she looked at me, says, "How could you make love to me in German?" I came to the proprietor, said, "How could you ask anybody to charge me double?" He says, "Oh, Mr. Stone"--naturally, he was surprised, ordered champagne and everything else to appease me. Imagine! (10/A)
With regards, finally, to the imaginative leaps typical of Myerhoff's specialist in disorder, the appearances/reality distinction again makes itself felt, though, perhaps, more abstractly, whenever there is a sense of the seemingly impossible becoming actual. And, sometimes—in the absence of the self-awareness of the ironic observer—my father surprises even himself with the stories he tells of the impossible experiences and interests of a long life in music. Thus, for example, when he talks about an interest in Japanese music, language, and lore (testimony to which: two filing cabinets of original music based on Japanese folksongs, scales, or stories which he translated after teaching himself to read Japanese)," intensified by an illustrated article in the Japan Times Weekly (1 January 1940), "We Greet the New Year's Dawn with Prayers for World Peace," that touched his heart, he astounds even himself by reciting the Japanese words ("Roashio toshio mushkayeti yoninnuui," M7/B) and humming the pentatonic tunes that come to mind at the distance of almost half a century." And pride in his efforts often mingles with surprise at his accomplishments, though neither inhibits his intention to explore further, "to make a study":

GS: I have to make a study.

CS: You have to make a study?

GS: Yeah, to see what I did here.

CS: You've forgotten what you did?

GS: My goodness, Cristina. Look here. Have a heart, my dear. How will I know all I've done here? . . .
CS: ... This says "Japanese Serenade" ...

GS: ... I made so many translations, piano accompaniment. I don't think anybody, no person in the world, did what I did Japanese. Nobody. (M7/A)

Similarly, although unless questioned directly, my father rarely details the difficulties involved in founding the Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra in "The Biggest Little City in the World," nobody, but nobody thought it was possible. In that connection, my father often remembers the words of his lifelong friend, Fred de Salvo: "It's impossible, Gregory; but if anyone can do it, you can." (R6/A) And, I think, few of my father's "friends" of the orchestra (i.e., those who believed in his much-mocked vision of a vital professional orchestral presence in the community) or "enemies" of the orchestra (i.e., those who could not imagine the possibility of, or conceive the necessity for a permanent orchestra in Northern Nevada) will forget his oft-repeated, "When I die, I want people to remember there was a fool named Gregory Stone who started an orchestra in Reno, Nevada." And, of course, what my father started in 1969--amid the mocking sounds of the city's many of little faith and biggest laughs--others are continuing now, over twenty years later. And though the orchestra's continued success clearly pleases my father, when I see him composing new programs and hear him planning new orchestras, I am reminded of the words of Samuel Johnson, clearly applicable to this particular specialist in disorder:
"To rest below his own aim is incident to every one whose fancy is active, and whose views are comprehensive; nor is any man satisfied with himself because he has done much, but because he can conceive little."

It is, perhaps, not difficult to conceive why—given their shared and active interest in the appearances/reality distinction—these and many other stories of the crossed borders, concealed identities, reversed roles, and fanciful leaps that constitute expressive features in the make-up of Myerhoff’s specialist in disorder should have interested my story-teller in his old age. Apparently, as Sedgewick argues, merely contemplating the contrast is itself a source of intense and, perhaps, permanent pleasure for people in any age. Still, underlying the possibility of pleasurable contemplation is the necessity for accurate discrimination—and that is an assumption that just cannot be made for all people at all times. It would seem, in fact, that for many older people, late life many times becomes the occasion for an ever-widening gap between what seems and what is: What seems to be the footstep of an old friend is, in fact, a glass door slamming down the hall. What seems to be the face of a loved one is, in fact, a shadow playing on the wall. And even for someone in old age still able to make accurate discriminations between appearances and reality, merely thinking about the contrast might originate not a continued quest for meaning, not an intensified experience of pleasure,
but confusion, perhaps even pain—unless, that is, the contrast is cast in the form of story where, for the person experiencing the disorder of late life, it can give witness to the continuity of a lifetime (of a present aligned with a past) entirely given to imagination's ceaseless search . . . for something other.

1. My father often quotes pianist John Field who, when asked, "What religion are you?" apparently responded, "I'm a pianist. And when BBC announcer/author Ian Henry paid an unannounced visit to my parents' house in the summer of 1989 ("to meet the pianist known as the world's greatest sight reader and the composer of Benny Goodman's theme song", and to deliver a copy of the book on jazz wherein he mentioned "Let's Dance" and its composer), he, too, cited John Field's well-known quip on religion, much to my father's delight. However, for my father, the relationship between religion, music, and identity is more complex, I think, than Field's response suggests. Until I began this study, my father had never told the family (my mother included) about his Hebrew heritage and his father's decision to have the family baptized. And while it is possible to speculate on the significance, for my father, of his conversion, it is impossible to ignore the liberal spirit of the individual who wrote and/or performed music for every faith, race, and nation—e.g., his Mormon "Thirteen Articles of Faith," his "Aren't There Black Angels in Heaven Too," his concert programs to recall "All Faiths," "All Nations"; to "Remember Cyprus" and "The Liberator, Bolivar."


3. These and similar sentiments were voiced by practically all interested members of the community (e.g., university professors, businessmen, professionals, amateur musicians).

4. My father was present, via telephone, at the orchestra's twenty-year founding celebration concert. After the conductor established the telephone connection and officially introduced my father to the audience (many of whom were present at the inaugural concert of the Reno Philharmonic Symphony
Orchestra), the orchestra (composed, again, of many of the original musicians) began the program with a special arrangement of "Happy Birthday" dedicated to their founding conductor. My father was happy to learn, too, that unlike the time when only family efforts and savings prevented the orchestra from floundering, at present the board boasts an annual budget of half a million dollars.

5. My mother—and her children—recall the difficulties in great detail. In particular, I remember literally forgetting my mother’s face: after completing an eight-hour work day at school, she began her second job, walking the streets of Nevada to promote the orchestra/collect the advertisements that, together with family monies, would finance the performances (i.e., pay for the salaries of the musicians, the rental of the auditorium, the purchase of music stands, etc., etc., etc.—my father did not collect a salary for his contributions). When, after walking and talking for hours, sometimes in alleys and clubs that were less than safe, with shopkeepers and businessmen who were less than supportive, my mother finally returned home, I was usually half-asleep, or just awake enough to make out the parental conversations concerning the funds that still had to be collected, the music that still had to be transposed (for musicians who had difficulty playing in standard keys), the extra parts that had to be written, or the petty jealousies that had to be resolved (as the orchestra became more successful, so the advice became more generous and the nouveau-supporters, more avaricious for power and glory).

6. See Haskell for more information on Satyricon. And see Fokine, pp. 134–35, for the founding of Satyricon among students at the Technological Institute; apparently, the poet P. Potemkin and Mikhail Germanovich Kornfeld became the magazine’s first publishers.

7. See Piatigorsky, pp. 26–27, on that difficult to describe and/or document institution of old Russia, the "Traktir."

8. But see 8/A, where he insists that couplettistes did not appear in the "Traktirs."

9. As a boy, he also heard Dobreenyen (V3/A) and Razdolsky (8/A).

10. Moorehead, pp. 240–42, notes that "the theaters and the moving picture houses remained open throughout the revolution." And, in R6/A, my father notes that even during "bad times," people were drawn to the warmth of concert halls:

GS: Yes, performances for the people, would come in there and listen because it was a good place, warm.
CS: Hm. And even in those bad times, people went and listened to the music?
GS: Yeah. Music for them was something to enjoy, forget their troubles.

11. See Moorehead, p. 240, for more on the formation of breadlines ("Food queues began to assemble before dawn, and fantastic prices were paid for fruit sugar and even bread."); pp. 184–85, for more on the installation of Bolsheviks ("Eventually they arrived at Kshesinskaya's house, where the Bolshevik party was now solidly installed."); pp. 180–85, on Lenin's arrival ("Lenin's arrival has become so much a part of Soviet folklore and has been so drummed-up by official writers and artists . . ."); and pp. 237–39, pp. 248–56, on Kerensky's activities.

12. Elsewhere, my father recalls walking home from the theatre at night, "bullets flying all around my head," while he sang "Kolya."

13. See Hutcheon, pp. 61–63, for a description and a diagram that capture the significance of the smile: "If, within the mocking ethos of irony, there exists a gradation—from the disdainful laugh to the knowing smile—then at the point at which irony overlaps with satire it will be that contemptuous laugh that will merge with the scornful satiric ethos (which always implies corrective intent)."

14. It is interesting to note irony's affinity to parody: according to Hutcheon, p. 6, ironic inversion is "a characteristic of all parody"; and parody is "a form of imitation, but imitation characterized by ironic inversion."

15. Muecke, p. 44.


18. Muecke, p. 44.

19. This is the mark of what Muecke calls "Closed Ironies"—ironies "so called because each points to the 'reality' that definitively unmasks the appearance." Muecke, p. 46.


21. Muecke, p. 53. And, as Muecke notes, "the wider the disparity, the greater the irony."

22. Muecke, p. 47.
23. Muecke, pp. 48-49. See, also, p. 45: "It is the absence of this feeling" (viz., "that curious special feeling of paradox, of the ambivalent and the ambiguous, of the impossible made actual, of a double contradictory reality.") "that distinguishes irony from what is too heavy or too light to deserve the name."


25. On "liberation," see Muecke, p. 47, where, also, Goethe is cited.

26. See M7/A and M7/B, where the music in those cabinets is explored piece by piece. And see 03/A, where my father refers to Alfred Newman's assessment:

GS: And that's the story of the, then, Boris, Alfred Newman calls, "Gregory, I hear you're a master on Japanese music. We need music for Purple Heart." So I wrote two, three little episodes in Chinese, Japanese style, with, recorded perfect. I have the music, too. That could also be played anywhere--real Japanese music based on three original Japanese songs, the melodies, which are traditional. What else you want?"

Note, too, the implied plans of the tireless (90-year-old) experimenter to have the music performed.

27. His Christmas 1991 preparations for the visit of a Japanese friend of mine.

28. See, for example, the articles that appeared in the Reno Gazette after my father's death, in Spain, on 11 June 1991.
C. INTUITION CHALLENGES REASON TO PLAY AT HIDE AND SEEK

Death, that final tribute to the disorder of life—what
Thomas Nagel describes as "the negation of something the
possibility of whose negation seems not to exist in advance"—
as a proximate reality for a person in old age, might also
have been figured for a real preoccupation as my father
approaches the end of his world. (And, as Nagel notes, "My
death as an event in the world is easy to think about; the end
of my world is not." ) However, my study of my father's life
story does not lend support to any such eventuality: in fact,
I suspect—though validating my suspicions would be difficult—
—that my own middle-aged perspective makes eventual death, for
me, a critical concern that my father does not share with
respect to the impending end of his life.

This is not to say that my father is either unwilling or
unable to talk about death, within or without his life story,
his comments and commentaries ranging from the concrete to the
abstract, from the humorous to the serious. Sometimes—from
a playful and positive position somewhere in between the
extremes—he describes the kind of music (Bach and Mozart are
to be preferred) and the kind of service (official
representatives of all faiths—Hebrew, Catholic, Orthodox,
Moslem, etc.—are to be present) he would like when he dies,
ending with his well-considered plan to postpone the event
until such time as he has composed his own requiem. In other
words, although my father seems to consider death a valid topic for discussion and development, he does not seem to regard it as the ultimate challenge of his last years, as the singularly significant issue to be worked through in whatever way, in whatever time, might yet be his to elaborate.

Rather, in selecting for elaboration experiences involving death—and its comrade in unreason, destiny—my father's story represents, I think, a consistent—and positive—response to what might well be the biggest challenge to self-knowledge in late life, viz., the continual alignment and realignment of the past with the present, of the self that was with the self that is (see Chapter II, Introduction). In other words, from my father's perspective, the critical concern of his present life is not the certainty of death—or the uncertainty of destiny—but the defense of selfhood. And since his present perspective is defined by disorder, so death and destiny, as variations on the theme of disorder expressed by Myerhoff's specialist in disorder, find their way into story with no more or less determination than do, for example, defiance and daring, crossed borders and reversed roles.

In this connection, the recent findings of Lieberman and Tobin on the role of the restructured past in serving the maintenance of the self-image in old age support the suggestions of this study. Using "life as a laboratory" and studying "adaptive processes under conditions of high stress," Lieberman and Tobin have determined that elderly
people frequently utilize—reconstruct, redraw, recreate—the personal past not in the service of pre-death conflict resolution or life reorganization, but in the interests of creating "an enduring and affirming self" as their time on earth is lessened and as their "ability to maintain a consistent, coherent, and positive self-image is challenged," suggesting that how people in old age respond to that challenge—"the central issue," "the core task" of late life—has "profound implications for their capacity to adapt."

As Lieberman and Tobin so capably argue—and as the present study suggests (see, especially, Chapter II, Introduction)—the psychology of old age cannot be understood unless account is taken of "THIS PARTICULAR PERSPECTIVE on life as well as the age-linked assaults that are intrinsic to what it means to become old" (caps mine); and from the perspective of those living in old age, the essential task of that life stage is maintenance of the self: "an overriding motivation to maintain a sense of self-continuity, self-integrity, and self-identity." Further, it is in the service of the current self that many people in old age use the personal past, reconstructing a "self-in-the-past" that reflects "positively and sustainingly" on the "self-in-the-present."

More specifically, according to Lieberman and Tobin, elderly people utilize the past to make myth and drama—in "a pattern of relating to the past by creating myth and portraying people and events dramatically," by creating "a
mythic view of the self that provides a sense of uniqueness— in a reconstructive process that is essentially adaptive. And though the researchers concede a lack of clarity with respect to how myth functions in this process, I think that future studies of life stories like my father’s cannot afford to ignore the profound implications of the work and words of Lieberman and Tobin:

Our evidence for the centrality of self-consistency is perhaps clearer than our understanding of how the creation of myths function in this process. It appears that the creation of certain kinds of myths that will maintain the self is, by and large, adaptive. The sense of control and mastery over relocation and the sense of an enduring and affirming self based on a recreation of one’s personal story are all adaptive . . .

Our premise, then, is that psychological survival is equivalent to maintaining a sense of self-continuity, integrity, and identity, and it is toward this conservation of self that psychological work among the elderly is focused. Moreover, this work occurs within the unique psychological context of the aged—of a life lived and of personal finitude coupled with the fact of personal and structural losses. Roles do change, the body does fail, and important people die. The self is challenged to its very core because the opportunities for maintaining a coherent and consistent self, which are ultimately dependent on input from the external world, are radically altered. The sense of self does not change; rather, what we see is the utilization of strategies by the elderly to maintain this sense of selfhood. At its most general level, the strategies represent myths—the myth of control, the myth of self-constancy—and the blurring of the boundaries between the past and the present.
Blurred boundaries—the place or, perhaps, non-place where the specialist in disorder is most himself: on the line drawn by daring between authority and rebellion; by disguise, between appearance and reality; by death, between known and unknown; by destiny, between reason and unreason. It is not without reason that in my father’s epic—"mythic"—account of his life, story insistently selects experiences emphasizing defiant revolutions or crossed borders, concealed identities or reversed roles: through these episodic variations on the theme of disorder, my father creates a self-in-the-past (specifically, a self that he interprets as enjoying a profoundly valued, positive experience with disorder) that reflects "positively and sustainingly" (Lieberman and Tobin) on a self-in-the-present (namely, a self that he perceives as enduring a profoundly disvalued, negative, disordered present experience). So, he is able to view past and present as of a piece—a view apparently pleasurable and probably adaptive. And improbable though it might seem, maintenance of the "valued self" is served, again, when my father relates episodes of his life story that develop the disorder theme by invoking a protagonist who gestures toward the inexplicable, the irrational, in his close calls with death and his accidental encounters with destiny.

It is no accident, then, that in a story of early childhood, my father vividly remembers saving his mother from
being beaten to death by the "Pogromchiki"/the "Pogrom-Makers": seeing "a whole bunch of those wild Black Hundred" (6/A) ready to fall upon the family store, the four- or five-year old called out, "Mama! Mama!" (a cry that my father always recreates with intensity), enabling his mother to duck into an alley and hide inside a house until the streets were safe. And it is no accident that the elderly story-teller intensely cherishes this particular recollection: his mother is able to hide from death because she heeds (hears and runs--"running cross the street," 1/B) the clear vision, powerful voice, and quick-thinking of the pre-schooler of story (see Appendix C, "Mama! Mama!" for other versions of this story):

GS: Where I was born, when the Pogroms were, we lived on Kniazhestkaya Uliitsa. And "Chornaya Sotnya" were running from house to house with permission of the government to rob all the Jews, rob everybody, specially the Jews. And I remember Mother, Mama, was crossing the street, to save the store. And they saw her, started to run after her. She hid herself into the house. I started to say, "Mama! Mama!" She heard my voice, and she saw them, and she hid herself. And our apartment was "Sama Obarona"--what you call that? "Self-" . . .


GS: . . . "Self-Defense League." Mother gave them food, everything else. Whenever they found a . . . (tape cuts off; V4/A)

CS: What kind of a house did you live in?

GS: In Odessa, we lived in an apartment, apartment on Kniazhestkaya Uliitsa. And then the Pogrom started, 1904, 1905. My mother was, I remember her, I was 5 years old, and I saw her facing the street where the bandits were. And I said, "Mama! Mama!" and she ran away. She was trying to save the stores; they were robbing the stores. I don’t think she could save anything, but she tried to save the store. And she came home, and see, those days, the people, the students, used to go, catch those robbers
and kill them and put them in canalization--what you call that?

CS: Sewers.

GS: Sewers. Just kill them so they would not blame for anything, you know, the police, by police. But the more they on the street, they caught somebody, shot him down, put him right in, they were fighting, in Odessa. We call "Sama Obarona"--which mean self-preserving--Command. Those were the revolutionary, young people, who were fighting the Black Hundred--we called them Black Hundred, "Chornaya Sotnya," "Chornaya Sotnya." They belong to the "Chornaya Sotnya," they call themself. "Bai zhee dov, spasye Rasiu." ("Kill the Jews and save Russia.") (02/A)

GS: There is an episode in my life I'll never forget. When there were Pogroms, we had big, have big stores. And my mother--I visualize right now--running from our house to save the stores. She thought she's gonna save the stores, and she couldn't. As she was running cross the street, I see the "Pogrom-Makers" running after her, and she hid herself, and I screamed, and she hid herself into some house. She was not hurt. Because, those days, the Revolutionaries, when they caught any of those "Pogrom-makers," they just open the canalization and threw them down, killed them on the spot. (04/A)

In an unforgettable story of a close call during his teenage years, my father--suffering, almost dying, from scarlet (or yellow?) fever--shared a bed with death when the latter came to call on an elderly uncle: left to recuperate--or not--in the open death bed of his older relative (whose demise was not immediately detected and whose body was not immediately buried), my father recalls being untouched by the unusual circumstances ("I was still lying next to him: there was no other place to go," 5/A; "It didn't bother me," 1/B) while suggesting, in a revealing self-characterization--"I was abandoned boy." (1/B)--just how closely he was, in fact,
touched by death. For, as Thomas Nagel suggests, the idea of
death—entailing the realization that "the world will go
calmly on without me after I disappear"—is "the ultimate form
of abandonment."¹³

GS: Then, on top, on top of it, I had a scarlet fever, or
something like that—I don't remember. I was lying with
the same room, with my father, with the father, with the brother of my mother, who was dead already. It didn’t
bother me. But I had "krapidnaya likratka"—you know, that, when you itch. And that bothered me a lot. I was
abandoned boy. (1/B)

CS: But now, when your parents died, you went and moved
there? And lived with the five cousins, yes?

GS: I remember where I was dying . . .


GS: . . . When my uncle died. I was there lying. I had
"kataralnia zhiltuxa." "Kataralnia zhiltuxa," didn’t I?

CS: You said you had "karatnaya . . ."

GS: . . . "Kataralnia zhiltuxa." I was yellow. I was near
dead myself.

CS: This is when your uncle died, in the same room?

GS: I was there lying with him.

CS: This was at his house, your uncle’s apartment?

GS: Yes, his, yes, the apartment where all the sisters lived
together.

CS: And your parents were already dead?

GS: My father, he was dead already. And my mother was dead,
too.

CS: And, then, you were living with this uncle and the aunt.
(R5/A)

GS: When I moved, finally, when my mother died and my father
died, I moved to live with my uncle apartment, who had
five daughters, wife, and myself. And when he died, in
the apartment, I was still lying next to him. There was
no other place to go. And I had the "karalnia likratka." (omit discussion of English translation and Lochman digression) ... But, you see, I was destined to live. (5/A; see Appendix C, "Uncle," for additional versions of this story)

According to story, my father was destined to brush with death from typhus, of some sort, at least twice in his life. Apparently, sometime after losing his parents died (his father, circa 1913/1914, to "gnilakrovia" or mastoid; his mother, circa 1918, to asthma or heart failure); and before moving into the house of an uncle (the old man whose death bed he shared), an aunt, and their five daughters (cousins Clara, Olga, Anna, Bertha, and Edith), he lived by himself in a room/apartment on Manehznaya Ulitsa. At that time, too, he was employed at the Ambalzaki Café by an impresario named Lochman, who took an interest in the talented, but "abandoned boy" then playing evenings with a trio in a park. When, one evening, my father didn't show up at the Ambalzaki for work, Lochman himself hurried over to the Manehnaya Street address, where he found his young pianist ill ("practically dying," 8/B; "lying there practically dead," R5/A) and--as my father insists in every version of this story (see Appendix C, "Lochman")--alone.

GS: I had a, we had a friend who was a contractor of the orchestras. He contracted various orchestras. And, and in 19-, just before--I don't remember, now--1914, I played with some trio in a park. And, at night, I didn't show up to play, and they had to struggle without me because this man took me over to another job. So we became very friendly.

CK: Who was that?
GS: Lochman. This man, Lochman, was contracting orchestras, writing arrangements for singers, and things like that. He gave me the first job to play, in Ambalzaki--another Greek . . .

CK: . . . Ambalzaki . . .

GS: . . . Ambalzaki. Greek name?

CK: Maybe.

GS: Ambalzaki Cafe, at night. I got typhus of the abdomen. I drank some water or beer--I don't know. That's very dangerous: it affects your stomach, the tissues of your stomach; they become so thin like cigarette paper.

CK: Yeah.

GS: And if you eat something, you die. And here I am, lying home, alone, in my flat. There's nobody there.

CK: Nobody there?

CS: Your father was alive, or not?

GS: Dead.

CS: Your mother, I mean?

GS: Mother dead.

CS: Oh, this is after 1918.

GS: I'm alone in that big flat. He comes to the flat . . .


GS: . . . Finds me there. Immediately takes me to a hospital. And I'm in the hospital. First of all, brings food, and everything else for me to--whatever it is--to take me for a while. And I got out of the hospital, just a few days later. I was while like m- . . .

CK: . . . Yeah, pale . . .

GS: . . . I looked myself in the mirror--you know--and I looked around, got out. (04/B)

GS: That was, happened much, I was ill. And I played in Ambalzaki Cafe, Mr. Lochman, impresario. He paid me, and I played in that cafe, with a violinist and a bass. And we made quite a lot of money there. But, all of a
sudden, I developed into, typhus--I don't remember ..
.
CS: ... Typhus, I think you said.

gs: No, typhus was too, too dangerous.

cs: I thought you had it, where everything turns to paper, or something.

gs: Oh, "typh." This is "bruschnoi typh," stomach typhus, not the other one, intestinal typhus, yes. And he came to the place, and he didn't find me. I didn't show up. And he ran home, home to my house. And I was alone there. There was nobody. It was an empty apartment ..

cs: You weren't living with your cousins and? ... 

gs: ... Not yet. And he immediately brought me food. And, I remember, I looked the mirror: I was like a dead ..
.
cs: ... Hm ... 

gs: ... Dead man. But, you see, I was destined to live. (5/A)

As the death and destiny motifs intersect, the characters in my father's increasingly complex story start to assume more dramatic roles. Without Lochman's vital help, according to story, my father "probably would be dead." With Lochman's own death--which occurred at the small house that the impresario occupied with his mother on Polodisni Priulov Street, "just near the Gretcheskaya Ulitsa" (and the precision here is significant)--"they say ..., they found a lot of gold .. . a lot of money." (5/A) And elsewhere, my father's story finds Cousin Edith--who turned speculation salt and cigarettes into money, stolen tapestry into shirts and suits--also playing the role of saviour: "Otherwise I would be nothing,
if not for her. I didn’t have, what would I do? I would die on the street someplace." (R6/A) So, these otherwise forgotten figures from the past stand out in the recollections of the specialist in disorder who, it must be recalled, from childhood takes to the streets of Odessa unaccompanied and unafraid (see Chapter II, A): Lochman . . . "I’ll never forget him, because if not for him, I probably would be dead. Nobody would know anything about me. You see, it’s difficult for me to coordinate all those happenings." (R5/A)

In another typhus-related story about the general, uncoordinated retreat that took place, perhaps, during the Pilsudski Invasion" (see, also Chapter III, B, "Rain" and "Toothache"), my father tells of giving up the war effort, running toward the Ukraine, and jumping aboard the first train headed for Odessa. Astonished to open the train door and find the pullman car empty, the young soldier realized why no one else was on board when he saw a large sign reading, "Do Not Enter: Typhus Quarantine." Rather than risk exposure to the disease so dreaded at that time"—"Imagine me: if I would catch typhus, . . . there was no escape." (6/A)—my father hung on to the outside of the car for the long trip home, shaking and trembling not from fear, but from the blasts of cold air and cannon fire:

GS: And that was the big invasion of that part of Russia by the Polish army. I don’t remember who was the commander, maybe Pilsudski—I don’t know. That big, big invasion. And I started, I wanted to get away from it, and I went to the station. And the train come in, and I didn’t care what train it was: I jumped on the train. And I wanted
to open—the door inside was written there, "Only for typhus allowed in this." In this car was typhus, I imagine.

CS: Quarantined, you said it was quarantined.

GS: Quarantined train. And I stood up outside, freezing to death . . .

CS: . . . Hanging on . . .

GS: . . . Hanging, till I came to a station where I took a train that took me to Odessa. (5/A)

GS: All of a sudden, we started to run back to Ukraine, all of a sudden . . . Finally, we came to the station of Yermolinsee, and I took the first train. And I thought strange, it was empty, that, full, the car was completely full of that, with "sifnoi typh," the typhus of the lice—you know, very contagious. And I stood up outside the platform, with wind blowing in my face, because I wouldn't go in that room, in that car, till we came to another place, and I took another train to Odessa. And I was, I had contusion—what's contusion?—when you shake like this. Contusion, what's contusion? I had my face like this for weeks after that . . .

IS: . . . Like Gerda had, has, but has it permanently, I think . . .

GS: . . . Till I came home. And was like a miracle coming to my home. So, that's one of the stories, that's one of many stories I could tell you, but that's one episode that stays in my mind. (01/A; see Appendix C, "Quarantine," for other versions of this story)

In another story, the youthful specialist in disorder miraculously escapes death repeatedly during his residence at Manezhnaya Ulitsa, where he remained even into the early days of the Russian Revolution. Despite the disorder on all sides—"There, it was shooting, all the time, from one side, all the sides." (R7/B); "It was already bad times in Odessa." (4/A)—my father, again alone, apparently continued to practice at the apartment by day, to perform at the theatre by night. And
when the performances ended, long after midnight, he made his way home from Ekateriniskaya Ulitsa impervious to all assaults, through streets filled with "flying bullets" and "roving bands"—"Tutunick, Picurah, Maxmoh, all those bands" (02/B)—all the while singing to himself verses of "Kolya":

CS: And you lived in Manezhnaya by yourself?

GS: By myself. And I used to play in the theatre, and come at night, go through that—-they, people was scared stiff. There was shooting on the street, and I went through those big places, went right through, into my house. And the "Sama Obarona" of the house opened the gates for me, and I went into my apartment. (omit discussion of houses protected by the "Sama Obarona")

CS: Why were there shooting on the street?

GS: There was a Revolution—-everything happened those days. You have to figure that out yourself. I don’t know how to tell you, where, but it was, I played in Whodawzhestvehne Teatra . . . (omit repeated attempts to get pronunciation straight). . . Na Ekateriniskaya Ulitsa . . .

CS: . . . While you were in Manezhnaya Ulitsa?

GS: I lived there.

CS: But you played in Ekateriniskaya . . .

GS: . . . And I had to go through night, not worried that something’s gonna happen to me—-who knows? They were shooting from right to left. (R4/A)

CK: Manezhnaya?

GS: Manezhnaya. No, that was already Revolutionary days of Russia.

CK: And your parents were dead?

GS: Yes. And I used to go through a big place at night. There was shooting on the street. And I was singing to myself. And I came to those gates and rang the bell, and they opened the gate. They saw me, and they let me in. It was already bad times in Odessa. (4/A; see Appendix C, "Flying Bullets," for other versions of this story)
Of course, as my father notes, the times were "already bad" and the people were "scared stiff": there seems no rational explanation for his having escaped a random gunshot or a raging gang where others did not. But to demand reason is to reject drama: Myerhoff's specialist in disorder is positively himself—and the self of Lieberman and Tobin is "positively and sustainingly" maintained—when the mythic protagonist gestures toward the dark and dangerous, the random and irrational other side of life—death—and walks away unscathed: "And I used to walk at night—I told you—and there was shooting on the street, and I was singing to myself, and going through all those places, crossing all those... And nothing happened to me, Cristina." (R5/B)

In another story of a lucky escape from death by gunfire—at the hands of a tap dancer who twice put a browning to my father's temple (first from the left, and then from the right side) and twice pulled the trigger to my father's distress ("Peristan durakavalyat!" "'Peristan'... . . . Stop; 'Durakavalyat'... being a fool"; R5/B) in a solo game of Russian Roulette that ended when, on the third attempt, the dancer shot through his own leg ("And he was, kept on shooting, shooting, shooting"; R5/B)—my father notes, "But, you see, crazy things happen like that." (05/B)

CS: And it was on that tour, was the ballet dancer who played Russian Roulette?

GS: Ah, that's...
CS: ... Oh, that's a good story. I think it's marvelous. Was it the same troupe, the same train, or another one?

GS: Yes, that was the same train. Kazanji, his name. He was an Oriental. He was doing the . . .

CK: ... Russian Roulette . . .

GS: ... What you call that, Inge, where you dance? . . .

CK: ... Oh . . .

GS: ... Tap, tap dancing.

CS: Tap dancing? I thought he was a ballet dancer.

GS: No. He used to make up his face dark you know.

CK: Oh.

GS: Yeah. But, anyway, I was practicing piano . . .

CS: ... It was a regular piano or a silent one?

GS: No, regular piano, pianino--you know--old-fashioned. He comes to me with a gun, puts it against my . . .

CS: ... Forehead, temple.

GS: Right here. Temple. And shoots. "Are you crazy? I don't like that kind of a play." He had a browning, his, he did it again, this guy . . .

CK: ... Who was that?

GS: One of our dancers.

CK: Dancers, ah.

GS: Turns to the right side, does the same thing: shoots me through. I said, "Look," I said, "I don't wanna see you go do something." He was contemplating, staying like that, not doing anything. On the third shot, he through his leg, shot himself through the leg.

CK: He was crazy?

GS: Not crazy. That was the play. He had a swivel gun . . .

CS: ... It's Russian Roulette . . .
GS: . . . He has the, it was the, two of them were empty, and the third one had the bullet.

CK: Oh, really? Had the bullet? Oh, really?

GS: He pointed it down and shot through his leg.

CK: Really? Dancer?

GS: Yes. He couldn’t dance for a while. But, you see, crazy things happen like that. (05/B)

GS: I don’t know where to start.

CS: I’ll tell you; I have my notes. First, you started with the guy on the train, who, the Oriental, who was Oriental, the one who shot at you. What was that story, again?

GS: You sure it’s working now?

CS: Yeah, I’m sure it’s working now. There was something wrong with the batteries or the tape. It was a bad tape, like this one might play and the other one, no. (tape already starts to cut)

GS: I have to repeat myself. We were stationed somewhere--I cannot tell you details, but I know I had a piano. It was like coupe. And this Kazanji, the soft-shoe dancer, Caucasian, and he walked in once, comes to the piano, and put it against my--what’s that part of the? . . .

CS: . . . Temple . . .

GS: . . . Temple. And shoots through. I says, "Look, I don’t like that kind of stuff. You’re not supposed to do those things." His Browning was the one that has open spaces in between; it was an old-fashioned one. Then, he comes to the other side, does the same things. I says, "Get away from me!" He got away. Then he was, stood aside about, for a few, half a minute. Then shoots himself right through the middle of his leg. He had to be in hospital for six months. Was lucky for me that I was not a victim of his foolishness. Otherwise, I would not be sitting now with you and telling the story. (V4/A; see Appendix C, "Kazanji," for other versions of this story)

Lucky for me, my father did not fall victim to the foolishness of others. And though it is difficult to
determine the degree of indebtedness to destiny in his "lucky" (other-eventuated) escapes from death," it's somewhat easier to account for the determined insistence of such stories: far from being a victim of random happenings, the specialist in disorder is, finally, a master--of circumstances as much as of ceremonies. In fact, the image created in my father's dramatic--mythic--account of risks, transgressions, and reversals is one of a protagonist who, by virtue of his very flexibility in adapting to (apparent) disorder, emerges as a figure in control--of the disorder, of the destiny, and, of course, of the (very real) death that might otherwise be perceived as threatening. And this image of the self-in-the-past is adaptive for the self-in-the-present: dramatizing--mythicizing (Lieberman and Tobin)--as a strategy for dealing with loss and threat, represents an effective "effort to transform a loss of control into a perception of control over one's destiny." Further, the specialist in disorder, who stops at nothing and whom nothing stops--not the forbidden territories behind patrolled borders or locked doors, curtained stages or masked balls--creates the spectacular terms of his own triumphant destiny: Outperforming both destiny and death, the specialist in disorder is a showstopper who plays his way through the dark night of life--crossing rivers and streets unscathed by the flying bullets of firing squads and roving bands, testing rules and roles untouched by the imposing forces of institutions and conventions.
An imposter whose real self is impossible to detect under cover of painted faces and screens, of darkened streets and theatres? The question intrudes like an unwanted guest, inviting self-conscious squirming and cautious self-service. Throwing caution to the wind and "reality" out the window, my father creates the dramatic hero of the disordered past in order to establish a sense of self-continuity, self-integrity, and self-identity in the present. In other words--those of Lieberman and Tobin--for my father, as for other people in old age, "Stress, nearness to death, and aging all present the individual with diminished self-esteem, and basic dissolution of one's personal self. Given such an onslaught, it is not surprising that many individuals will forgo commitment to the reality principle in order to serve a higher purpose--the maintenance of selfhood."

And the specialist in disorder's successful performance in the high drama of a life lived "on the line"--neither uncommitted nor unstudied--is affirming: by creating a story protagonist of mythic dimensions (viz., the free artist whose dedication to his chosen profession--the music that, not unimportantly, involves sight, sound, and touch--entails welcoming risks to the self whose authenticity is most firmly maintained through engagement with life's disorder), my father creates a self as much specialist as special--unique. Indeed, it is perhaps this sense of uniqueness, which the speaker remarks--in comments like, "I was destined to die, but I
didn't"; "Otherwise I would not be sitting now with you and
telling the story"—and the listener registers—in terms
like, "This figure was special"; "This life was purposeful"—
that might, in part, explain the positive value of
mythicizing for maintaining self-consistency, at least in my
father's case (and taking as starting point the conclusion of
Lieberman and Tobin that "Our evidence for the centrality of
self-consistency is perhaps clearer than our understanding of
how the creation of myths function in this process")

Although the theme of my father's story is very special,
its direction—simplification—and its destination—
adaptation—are not. Simply stated, my father's story of a
unique protagonist who fine-tunes the perceptions—valued in
any age, but not always validated in old age—that make him
a virtuoso life performer must inspire in the speaker, as it
does in the listener, a pleasurable feeling of confidence.
As Lieberman and Tobin observe, "Feedback, or validating
experiences, are essential for maintenance of self-concept.
In advanced age, however, opportunities for such validating
experiences may lessen . . . Nevertheless, it may still be
possible to perceive oneself as the same person when such
opportunities are diminished, or even nonexistent . . .
Particularly for the elderly, the past may be the repository
of memories that assure the maintenance of their self-identity
in a deselfing environment." In other words, when validating
experiences—especially those obtained in "interaction with
others"--are not available in the present, people in old age can "focus on the past, where there is evidence" that they have succeeded in, for example, managing a household or running a business, in leading a girl scout troupe or commanding an army platoon--in stopping the show and mastering the disorder.  

Of course, when my father focuses on the past, he creates a protagonist alert to the disordered sensory evidence about him (which, Myerhoff suggests, can no longer be relied on in old age) and alive to the actively engaged others around him (whose loss Lieberman and Tobin considers among the onslaughs apparent in aging)."  Far from being victimized by appearances--by the sense perceptions of experience that can confuse a person in old age--my father's protagonist, with a nose for danger and daring, with a taste for exploration and experimenting--is quick to perceive . . . everything. And everyone is attentive to his perceptions. Others respond to him--they see him, hear him, and touch him--literally and figuratively. Almost from babyhood, it would seem--when he was carried through the Port of Odessa in the arms of the maid who exposed him to foreign tongues while feeding him with exotic fruits and pacifying him with colorful flags--and toddlerhood--when he was lifted into the high chair by the father who handed him illustrated magazines to see and touch while letting him revel in the smells of the cafe, the toy figures and pop tunes of its Nickelodeon--the protagonist of
my father’s story is immersed in the vital world of sense experience. And almost as soon, he begins to feel his way in that world, touching others with dramatic results. People stop and listen when he cries, "Mama! Mama!" or "Fire!", "A la carte!" or "Stop, fool!". And if they don’t hear or see him (through letters or lorgnettes, epaulets or paravans), the sound of his musical voice never fails to affirm his presence—in accompaniments played in unexpected keys, in parts played in silent theatres, in silences played in testy repartees. And, of course, as this protagonist plays out his part, always testing and retesting himself, he gains strength and stature—self-confidence—so that when destiny beckons even with threat of death, he must be expected to give the best performance of his life as a specialist in disorder—the performance that stops the show when the show itself stops.

Many of the episodes of my father’s life story develop the disorder theme by intertwining the varied forms of its expression—in artistry and daring, fantasy and intuition. But for my father, one story in particular seems, perhaps, to testify to the grand and mysterious miracle of life, to the never-ending story of an absolute dedication to music that enabled the artist to escape from a dark world of sickness and starvation, of closed borders and crazed bullets, and into a world bright with the lightness of being—of being relative, of being open and alive, of being ready to write in the margins and to read between the lines of a life, the fullness
of which no book can suggest."

On my father's suggestion, one of his most significant life experiences involved acquiring the visa that allowed him to leave Romania and enter America:"

GS: You have to construct all those things, different times, that happened, to your best of your ability. I don't know how to tell you. See, you're calling this out of my past, and it's not so easy for me to bring it together, so far apart. How to get out of Russia? Finally, I got out of Russia.

CS: What were the only, most important events of your life, as you see them?

GS: It's to, to go to the Consulate of United States, in Bucharest, and get myself a visa and a letter of recommendation to Ellis Island, when people were waiting years and couldn't get it--nothing.

And, importantly, the story of how he got that visa gives full expression to the disorder theme and variations. There's the lone and daring explorer, "always looking," who uncovers a piano and "preludes" in the darkness, "hidden in shadow" like the unidentified woman whom he discovers (and who "discovers" him) "listening . . . in another room," from behind a wall. There's the encounter with destiny ("It's lucky for you that you saw my wife") and the leap of imagination that prompts the protagonist to speak of his "dreams," of his vision of crossing borders, waters, when it was "practically impossible" to go "across to United States," "to America those days--that was forbidden territory." There's the difference between appearances and reality, in the image of the uncouth American--the noisy, maddening, dancing
barbarian—who is, in fact, civilized and "nicely inclined"; in the white European’s view versus the Black drummer’s version of America. And in all the versions, there’s much, much more: the dramatized past, the mythical protagonist, whose identity—despite the usual paperwork problems—is shared, in the present, by the story’s creator.

GS: Now, let’s go to Bucharest. I, finally, trying to go to Bucharest to get a visa. How to get a visa to get out of Russia? And before that, I went to hotel there and, and, I always, no, we played a concert there for the Americans, at American Embassy, in Bucharest. And I always looking, always, to have a piano to practice. And I walked around there, and I found a nice piano, sat in the dark and start preluding myself and play, not realizing that somebody is listening to me in another room, right close to. And, finally, I discovered her. She looked at me, says, "You know, you play very good piano. Where are you from? Where you going?" in Romanian. And I didn’t know any Romanian those days, hardly, I spoke the language. And I told her, "I like to get to United States, naturally, I’m an artist." She says, "Oh, I tell you what to do. Since I know you already, why don’t you go tomorrow morning, to the American Embassy and wait for me there. I’ll be there." I went to American Embassy. There, thousands of people with visas and everything else, waiting to get to United States. It was not so easy. That was 1924—I don’t remember exactly, was it 1923? And she was there. And the Consul looked at me, says, "It’s lucky for you that you saw my wife. She came here, and she guaranteed me for you, for your sake. And I’ll, naturally, give you the visa, to you and your friends. Just send them to me, and I’ll give them the visa," which I did. (10/A)

CS: And the time that you got the, Am-, the visa, you never learned the names of those, the woman who was standing there? She was the wife to the . . .

GS: . . . That’s another time . . .

CS: . . . Consulate. I know.

GS: Yes. She was in the audience, and she was listening to me in the dark. I was playing. That’s the time we had a concert at the Consulate, and I, there was a lot of time, so I was looking around. Then I found that piano.
Where to, then I found that piano, and I start to play. And, all of a sudden, I realize that there was a shadow there. So, all of a sudden, the light came out, and I looked at her. She says, "You play very fine. Are you from her?" I think she spoke Romanian. Says, "No, I’m Russian. I’m trying to get out of here and go to the United States." "Oh, alright, I am--why don’t you come in to the, in, tomorrow, to the office of the Consulate, of American Consulate? I’ll be there." So, next morning, I saw tremendous lines of people waiting in there--people who didn’t sleep nights. And she saw coming, me coming in, from afar, and she moved away all the people, and I come in there. And the Consul says to me, "I hear, my wife is just spellbound of your piano playing. Here’s a, I give you a letter to New York, to one of my friends in Ellis Island. And here is your visa." I says, "How much you have to pay?" He says, "Nothing. You don’t have to pay. Here’s a letter of recommendation, to the Ellis Island manager"--or people, whatever it is . . .

CS: . . . That was the American Consulate in Romania? So they were Americans, those two?

GS: Yeah, Americans.

CS: But they spoke Romanian.

GS: Yeah.

CS: You don’t remember his name, do you?

GS: I spoke very good Romanian, since I lived there--you know--I learned the language.

CS: Did you ever use the letter of recommendation?

GS: I just presented it in New York, and they looked at me and everything, let me pass.

CS: And then you took a boat? You took a boat to America?

GS: Ellis Island is in America.

CS: No, I mean, say, you took a boat from Romania?

GS: Yes, Faberline.

CS: It was Faberline from Constantsa?

GS: From Constantsa directly to New York.
CS: How long was the trip?

GS: I think, two weeks.

CS: Was it difficult?

GS: No.

CS: No bad oceans or anything?

GS: Huh?

CS: No bad oceans?

GS: Maybe, sometimes. I was laughing because on the boat was written, "No Smoking." To me, "smoking" means, "no smoking." I says, "What do they want of us, 'No Smoking'?” But I took it, I don't have to wear a smoking.

CS: Hm. Did they have any piano on the boat?

GS: On this one, no, I don't think so. (R10/B)

GS: In Bucharest, was bad time started in Bucharest. No, not for me: I played with, I played with the jazz band. The violinist was a gypsy. The saxophone player was a Turk. The banjo player was an Italian. And the drummer was a Belgian. And the language was, naturally, French, in this. The Belgian were throwing sticks in the air, that style—you know. Those were the shimmy days. I played that. Big success, we had. "Some of These Days," "Whispering," all the songs of then.

CS: What year was that?

GS: That was, must've been 1922. I had a job to play. No, first of all, a lotta people come in: decollete, women; with American dressed up in tuxedos; and women, decollete. I says, "Who are those?" They made a lotta noise. "Those are Americans." "Americans?" And we started to play selections from Aida or Rigoletto, a couple would start dancing. We were, I was mad. I say, "What the hell do they dance for? Can't they wait till we're finished, when we start to play fox trots, to dance?" That's, you couldn't stop Americans.

CK: Americans. That was your first impression of Americans?

GS: My first impression of Americans (laughing). Finally, the Belgian left, the drummer. We got an American drummer, a negro, married to a Russian woman. He heard
me play, says, "You don't belong here. You better go to America." So I heard him play, beautiful drums—you know, real. I said, "Why don't you go back to America, the America?" He says, "When you in America, you'll find out." He was a negro, and he was married to a Russian woman. He was doing fine in Europe. And, so, one day, we had a job at the American Embassy, with the jazz band. Big crowd of Americans—you know how loud the Americans are, especially those guys who collect salaries in American money. They think they're, they're the kings of the day. They do everything they want, which I didn't like altogether—you know me. But I was in a room, after the intermission—we had a long intermission, I start to go around, and I, in the dark, I saw a piano, a Steinway piano. I started to play my own music, in the dark, without realizing that, in the shadow, there's a silhouette of a woman, listening to me. "Ah," she says, "Continue. You play very fine." So we started to talk, in Romanian, whatever language. She spoke Romanian. English, I didn't know English. To me, it was just barbarian language. Anyway we got to understanding, and she says, "Fine, why don't you go to United States? Have you got anybody in United States?" "Not a soul." "You know what?" She wrote, scribbled here, "Tomorrow you'll go to..." (tape cuts off) (04/B)

GS: So, so, I remained in Bucharest, playing in a first-class restaurant, night restaurant. And I liked to play it very much. But, all of a sudden, I never knew the Americans. The Americans used to come in the club—oh, the Americans! I like them. All of a sudden, among the Americans, a couple gets up—when we play a classical selection, they dance. They don't care what do we play, how we play, we play. We make ritardandos, they make ritardandos. We make accelerandos, they make accelerandos. Says, I ask, "Who are those people?" He says, "Americans." That's how I knew Americans. And we were five people playing there—as I told you: the drummer, this time American drummer; I was the pianist, two; the gypsy violinist, three; the Turk played the saxophone; and Mimi, played banjo. Now, how did I get out of Bucharest? Aha. All of a sudden, we got a job in American Embassy. Nobody could go to America, those days—that was forbidden territory. But we had a job in Embassy. And Embassy is a big place, American Embassy. And during the intermission, I have nothing to do. I was looking around to find a piano; I knew they must have pianos beside the one I played on. Yes, I found a piano and started to prelude, without realizing that somebody is always listening to me. And that was a lady. She says, she comes in and says, "You play very nicely. Are you from Romania?" "No, I'm Russian." "Would you like
to go to United States?" I says, "Sure." "Come, tomorrow, to the Consulate. We'll see what we can do for you." That time—as I said before—was a prohibitive time to get a visa to go to United States. I came in, and she was waiting for me. And the Consulate was very nicely inclined toward me. He says, "Here's my wife, and she has told me all about you. Here's your visa. You don't have to pay a penny. Here's a letter of recommendation to the"—to the famous island, where they stop you. So we got that visa, and I went with, I still had a job to play in Constantza, Romania. (garbled) On the Black Sea, and because the ships stops there. Was a ship, Faberline. It was always mystifying me: everywhere was written, "No Smoking." I said, "What do they want from poor immigrants to have a smoking? Lucky they have a suit on." I thought "smoking" is a smoking, to wear. And, anyway, so, then we started on our long trip by boat, and we came to United States. (1R/A)

GS: I got my visas—I told you how I played the, for the, in the hotel there someplace. No, I think we had a big concert for the American Embassy in Bucharest, and, in Bucharest. I tried to look around for a piano to practice, and I found a piano. I didn't realize that somebody was always listening to me. Was a lady listening to me. Says, "You play very good. Who are you, and what you're doing in the Embassy?" I told her, "Well, I had a job at the Embassy, and I hoped, some of these days, I, maybe, some of these days, I be able to go across to United States." "Oh, you wanna go." So, she told me, or I told her, my dreams—I don't know. But, anyway, she says, "Come tomorrow to the Embassy." So I came the next day. She was there, and, uh, Consul says, "Where is your passport?" No, we didn't have any passports; we had Nonsen passports those days; they didn’t have any value.

CS: Nonsen?

GS: Yes, the famous, he saved a lotta refugees, from Russia. I forgot his first name. So, I have a nonsen passport. Says, "Don't worry about it. We'll get you a passport." He got me a passport, and he got passport with Obermann; Pagarelov got, also, the paper. And we, we got perm-, we could go to New York. (P2/A)

CS: You had no other passport from Russia?

GS: Nothing.

CS: Because you were Jewish? . . .
GS: ... I still have ...
CS: ... Or because they didn’t have passports? ... 
GS: ... They didn’t have any passports ... 
CS: ... You still have what?
GS: I still have it.
CS: This passport?
GS: My passport, yes. I still have from Chicago, passport.
CS: The old one, but ...
GS: ... Yes ...
CS: ... But not the Nonsen one? ...
GS: No.
CS: And the Romanian woman from the Consulate, she gave you a regular passport?
GS: She gave us a visa.
CS: A visa? And she put it on the Nonsen passport?
GS: No, just a visa, special document from the Embassy.
CS: And a recommendation letter?
GS: Yes, sure.
CS: You, and you landed in Ellis Island.
GS: Yes.
CS: Did you stay there?
GS: Huh?
CS: Did you stay there?
GS: No.
CS: You didn’t go through the quarantine or all that stuff?
GS: No, no, very little.
CS: Hm.
GS: Because we traveled second-class, or something like that.

CS: . . . On that, the Haberline or Faberline . . .

GS: . . . Faberline.

CS: Faberline. You left Constantsa . . .

GS: . . . constantsa, we left, for United States.

CS: How long did the trip take?

GS: Ten days, I think.

CS: Only ten days?

GS: Hm.

CS: Did you have beds, or you were standing?

GS: Huh?

CS: How was the trip?

GS: Fine, naturally. It's a regular ship.

CS: You had beds?

GS: Yes.

CS: You went second-class?

GS: Yes.

CS: And there was a first-class and a third-class? Hm. Alright. Now, these places that I don't . . . (omit discussion of sick cat)

GS: (as tape cuts off) "Isn't it crazy, the story of my life?" (1R/B)

GS: I was just crazy about music, in any form, any kind of music--intrigued me. And that's, I got in mind, to go to United States. That's how I got through, got the visa--and the Consul didn't charge me even for a visa--and got a letter to the, to the immigration authority about me.

CS: Because of the music?
GS: Because of my music. Because, at that time when I went to United States, practically impossible was to leave Europe and go to United States. People with passports, with money, gave everything to get there. Very few. Many could not leave their own cities; they died on the ice trying to cross to the place, the border. It’s a story without an end. (5/B)

"Bravo!" "Bis!" "Encore!" The curtains have closed:
this very special life story "ended" on 11 June 1991.

3. Unfortunately, inexplicably, I did not discover the research of Lieberman and Tobin, The Experience of Old Age, until I had almost completed revisions of my own study.
5. Lieberman and Tobin, pp. 349 and 292.
14. See 03/B, 04/A, 04/B, 4/a, R5/A, and R11/A for information on the death of his parents. With regards to the cause of his father’s death, "gnilakrovia" (a blood disease) is mentioned in R5/B; mastoid is mentioned in 04/B.
15. For more on the five sisters, see 4/A, 4/B, R4/A, and P2/A. On the death of Olga’s fiance, see R2/A.
16. Jozef Pilsudski (1867-1935), Polish general and statesman vested with dictatorial powers in Poland and elected chief of state (1918), in Grun, pp. 430 and 472. See Moorehead, p. 41, on Pilsudski's involvement in the "plot against Czar Alexander III" (1887).

17. See R4/A, where he notes: "And I was there playing in the theatre, and the typhus was in full swing--people died right and left. And I remember, because there was a troupe, a Jewish troupe, and she was with her husband and she lost him right there, in Mogiliov, or something, and she buried him right there."

18. See Appendix C, "Hafel," where a lucky escape from death by asphyxiation is attributed to the actions of an anonymous hotel owner or guest.

19. Lieberman and Tobin, p. 348. The authors continue, "We found that to the extent an individual was successful in creating these perceptions, the likelihood increased that the person would remain intact under stress."

20. According to my father and proverbial wisdom, "An unwanted guest is worse than an enemy."

21. Lieberman and Tobin, p. 294. Elsewhere, the authors identify the onslaughts associated with aging that would cause a "deselfing" as follows: "losses of people and roles, denigration by society, confrontation with bodily disintegration and personal death."

22. Note similar comments below:

CS: Did you listen to the radio when you first came here?
GS: The radio, yes. Radio was powerful, but not to the extent like now. I visualize those radio in hospital. I was lying in hospitals so many times, Cristinuchka, I don’t remember now. But that’s the time that they had to put something in my stomach because my stomach could not function. You remember that story. I was destined to die, but I didn’t. That’s the story. (1/B) and

GS: You realize what could it be on the ship when it’s people together. I’m talking about "tzinga," "tzinga," is the one that have bad teeth, they got bad teeth. But all, really, sicknesses that get into you when you’re together in a society of all people don’t wash theirself for a long time, or they didn’t have a bath--same type. Well, I would never see Europe, now, I would never be born, I would be probably dead, I don’t know. (F2/A)

24. Regarding simplification: "These myths, the blurring of the past and present, and our findings of an age-linked reduction in introspective behaviors suggest a simplification of identity." Regarding adaptation: "It appears that the creation of certain kinds of myths that will maintain the self is, by and large, adaptive." Lieberman and Tobin, pp. 348 and 349.


27. See V4/A, where he notes that he didn’t help Stefanescu to come to "another world":

GS: He wanted, he wrote me, to come to New York. But I was afraid to take any responsibility. I know he, I knew he would be able to get a job; but to take a responsibility to take somebody from one country, to take him far away—I was afraid.

CS: That was in the twenties? To another world, you said, to take him to another world?

GS: Yeah. I’m sure he would find a job. But why should I take responsibility on me?

28. Consider, too, the following:

CS: What is it that you remember most as important in your life in America when you first came?

GS: . . . Being able to buy all the food, I imagine. (R6/A)
CHAPTER III
STARTING THE STORIES

On the inside cover of a pink notebook fondly labelled "jelly bean journal"--in reference to the colorful collection of writerly gems germinating therein--I have carefully pasted a paper cutting no larger than a gum wrapper: Black on blue, the words of Flaubert summon smartly, "Be regular and orderly in your life . . . so that you may be violent and original in your work."

In deference to Flaubert--whose wise advice I have worried into a wearisome wad of words--I have long wanted to create order from the chaos that is my life. But my private complaint, "Papa, I want to be orderly," like the repeated protestation of my nephew (who seems to smart the less, from the mortification of being spanked on the bottom for disorderly conduct and sent to the bedroom for quiet deliberation, the louder and the longer he proclaims, "Mama, I want to be good.") has not produced the desired results. ("Son, it's not enough to want to be good; one must be good.") The desire for order, I have discovered, is only part of the story.
A. STARTING

When I began my work on the life story—from the typical perspective of a person in middle age—I assumed the necessity of decreasing disorder in life, the possibility of increasing order in story. And the story of both my work and my life tells of a protagonist black and blue from her efforts to force sense where she did not find it. But it seems sensible to recall, at this point, that life stories are found not among people in middle age, but among people "in old age" (Kaufman). And, it seems necessary to reflect that, in a very real sense, life stories are not products "found" in situ, but, rather, events "discovered" in process. And with that discovery in place, it seems to me, it will be possible for fieldwork and bookwork to begin anew—by exploring new ways to collect and new words to characterize the life story as process.

Of course, that discovery—slipped snugly between two sentences—is just what is not in place (other than at the heart of this study and in the heart of this student); and characterizing its implications seems to involve circumstances as unpredictable and uncertain as those under which the life story—at least, in my father's case—seems to function best. A case in point: At the present writing, my father's health is worse than it has been at any time since the informal taping sessions of 1984. In fact, from the time of the last
tapes, made with my father during the 1989/1990 Christmas season (when he continued, daily, to climb, bottom to top, the three dozen or so steps in a three-story house; to play, beginning to end, the dozen or so pieces in a two-hour, two-piano repertoire; to entertain the several dozen friends who visited, called, or wrote during those three weeks), through summer 1990 (when he came downstairs only four times in twice as many weeks to play piano or talk for no more than an hour or so at a time), until the time of my last visit, during the 1990/1991 Christmas season (when, bedridden and handfed, partially blind and deaf, he seemed, at times, to continue his existence in a painful, silent world foreign to all of us—herself included—and from which he emerged occasionally to ask about figures from his life and his story), my father has become (from the doctor's perspective) more and more unwell, (from the family's perspective) less and less himself—less like, in any case, the man whose life story I shared. Thus, although I had no expectations, this past Christmas, of further exploring my father's life story (for I believed that the process had, finally, come to an end), I thought that my mother's well-meant efforts to stimulate and entertain my father by replaying some of the old 1984 and 1987 tapes would bring him pleasure. I could not have been more wrong. (Perhaps, the final painful reminder of the many wrong turns taken in this study.) After several days of listening silently to/sleeping soundly through the many tapes, my father
finally responded (conversation written down by IS):

GS: Mamsy, please turn it off.

IS: What, Greg? The tape recorder? Do you mean the tape recorder? Don't you like it? These are the tapes you made. These are the stories you told Cristina.

GS: No, Mama. Please turn it off.

IS: But why, Greg? I don't understand. Why?

GS: They're old-fashioned, Mama, old-fashioned.

Certainly, I could not have predicted a stronger incrimination, a weaker confirmation: despite the long periods of silence and longer periods of sleep that have become usual, now, for my father, something unusually like the life story process must continue to function. And, of course, the present story must continue, in some way, to respond to the new and evolving conditions of the present life. Clearly, then, although I will probably never share the current version of my father's life story, it must render the versions taped over the past few years--the embalmed moments of a continually evolving process--"old-fashioned."

The evolutionary nature of this study--a function, I think, of my desire (and fortune) to work with, and not against, both the informality that I could not, finally, control, and the subjectivity that I could not, finally, conceal--explains many of the emphases that make this study unlike other life story research and elicits many of the suggestions (not conclusions), the descriptions (not
definitions)--the recommendations for understanding the functioning of the life story--that make this research resemble, at times, an unending lesson in reflexivity. And while learning to look at and work with the life story as process was neither immediate nor easy, the view now seems, to me, inevitable: obviously, my father's faraway looks, folded hands, and fanciful narratives (characters and descriptions) can be viewed negatively, can be described as "lacking"--in bodily movement, facial expression, or story order--only if they are considered out of context, only if they are considered apart from their positive contributions to the functioning of the life story as a mechanism favoring the maintenance of the equilibrium achieved by a continuance of the rhythmic exertion/relaxation of life. On this view, too, the descriptive traits of my father's life story must be (re)understood not as features, but as forces that figure in a process.

Understanding the implications of this view of life story requires a closer look at a topic as complex, perhaps, as perspective: process. Writing not about life story, but in another--not unrelated--context, John P. Lynam observes, with regards to the artistry of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, that "... process is principle seen from within time, ... ." and, thus, that "... the process of Franklin's self-interpretation points toward the principle of his identity." But, as Lynam notes elsewhere, the identity in question hovers
on the problematical because the self "... is constantly in motion—hovering, as it were, between two different modes of existence, the present event and the accumulated past." And, for Lynen, the true self can be seen neither in the self of the present moment nor in the self of the past and present moments, but in their relation, "—in the constant interplay between the transcendent and immediate views of identify." As Lynen notes, the transcendent view—with its attendant assumption of omniscience relative to earlier views (necessary because the autobiographer's "... present view of his lifetime is the truest of all those he has to choose from. ...) makes, of the autobiography's author, not just a God of power, but a God of paradox: the self, qua 'eternal being' and 'immanent spirit' is simultaneously "... a man living in a particular moment and a consciousness which transcends all its lived moments in the act of regarding them from the outside as elements of a single lifetime."

Singling out the problems, again, not of life story, but of history, biography, and autobiography, Lynen regards the last-mentioned as the most "... demanding form of retrospective literature":

When a man writes of his own life, the present is embodied in his personality at the time of writing, and every fact he reports about his past reveals the author by showing what he now thinks of himself. Thus even a dishonest autobiographer would fail far less through the objective falsehood of his facts than through the resultant contrast between what he alleges about his past and the authorial
personality his claims imply. More commonly, the failure is unintentional and consists either in making the past self so like the author that there is no development—and hence no story to tell—or in making the past self so different from the author that it is someone else's story rather than his own that is told. An exact balancing of identity and difference is required.

The similar, but more complex, balancing required for the life story process makes it, I think, the most demanding "form" of retrospective literature, oral and written; and the principle reason is to be found, I believe, in an elaboration of Lynen's writings: If, for the autobiography, "process is principle seen from within time," as Lynen observes, then, for the life story, process is principle seen from within time and space. If, for autobiographers, the process of self-interpretation points toward the principle of their identity as immaterial substances, then, for life-story tellers, the process of self-interpretation points toward the principle of their identity as both immaterial and material substances. And for life-story tellers, it is not just the immaterial self that hovers on the problematical, but the material self as well: just as the former moves constantly between two modes of existence (Lynen), so too does the latter—hovering, as it were, between organization and disorganization, coherence and chaos, order and disorder (Lieberman). Thus, for life-story tellers (whose true selves can be located, if at all, only in the constant interplay of the transcendent and the immediate views of
identity relative to the immaterial and material concepts of self), the transcendent view entails an assumption not just of omniscience, but of omnipotence as well. In other words, for life-story tellers, the position of creator is doubly paradoxical: to paraphrase Lynen, the self is simultaneously a man living in a particular moment of increasing disorder and a consciousness which transcends all its lived moments in the act of regarding them from the outside as ordered episodes of a single life story (for story is always an ordering of sorts).

Of course, given Lynen's concern with time, immaterial substance, and autobiography--off the hook, contextually speaking, once the word gets on the page--the discussion cannot be expected to clarify the complexity of the movement from organization to disorganization, coherence to chaos, that preoccupies a man living and telling a story in the fullness of consciousness and age--the disorder, that is, that preoccupies a teller of life story.

However, clarification comes from Lieberman, who posits disorder (a present experience of disruption, a current experience of disintegration) to account for the complex psychological changes usually associated with longevity. On his view, people in old age withdraw from others not because they are preoccupied with fear of death or love of self, but because they are "preoccupied with an attempt to hold themselves together--to reduce the experience of chaos." For
Lieberman, withdrawal (less a movement away from life, towards the periphery—the withdrawal often observed in aged individuals and suggested in images of an old man who, like my father, often sits at a window, quiet and alone, for hours on end—and more a movement towards the center) represents an attempt to cope with the chaotic disorder of old age—with the diminished integration and organization of external stimuli, experienced as a result of reduced ability and energy. But the energy exerted in Lieberman's withdrawal (i.e., in the attempt to "cope with the experience of inner disintegration") like that exerted in Butler's life review (i.e., in the effort to order the thoughts that "may undergo constant reintegration and reorganization")—though difficult, perhaps, to measure, provides a clue to understanding the life story as a mechanism favoring the continuance of the rhythmic exertion/relaxation that makes for adaptation (Clark): As a model of adaptation, the life story seems to favor the maintenance of what Liebermann calls the "precarious equilibrium" of individuals whose distance from death accounts for "... a general system decline which may be measured either psychologically or physiologically."

Another clue to understanding the life-story process as an adaptive model can be found in Hawking's discussion of energy and order, provided in a distant, but not unrelated, context:
The progress of the human race in understanding the universe has established a small corner of order in an increasingly disordered universe. If you remember every word in this book (sic, his 198-page *A Brief History of Time*), your memory will have recorded about two million pieces of information: the order in your brain will have increased by about two million units. However, while you have been reading the book, you will have converted at least a thousand calories of ordered energy, in the form of food, into disordered energy, in the form of heat that you lose to the air around you by convection and sweat. This will increase the disorder of the universe by about twenty million million million units—or about ten million million million times the increase in order in your brain—and that's if you remember EVERYTHING in this book.

Simultaneously reassuring and unassuring, Hawking's hypothesis of increasing disorder makes understanding the experience of the aged individual easier while it makes understanding the equilibrium of the life story more difficult. Although life-story telling most assuredly involves remembering (both ordinary recollection and re-membering—on Myerhoff's definition, "... the reaggregation of one's members, the figures who properly belong to one's life story, one's own prior selves, the significant others without which the story cannot be completed"), it also involves "forgetting" (on most definitions, an indication of cognitive failure). But for life-story tellers, as for joke tellers, verbatim memorization does not guarantee success: what one "forgets to remember" (usually lumped, in the literature, under the problems of
"informant reliability" cited earlier—e.g., impoverished memory, reasoning, and truth)—seems to depend as much on one’s active role in selecting details as what one "remembers to forget." In other words, although elderly life-story tellers may look like they are forgetting, "What looks like" lessened ability may, in fact, represent a "lack of interest" (Poon) associated, in the elderly, with an active "appreciation of context" (Baltes) signifying not memory warp, but mature wisdom (Restak). Rather than experiencing memory impairment, aged story tellers may, in fact, be exercising what Schaie calls "... the privilege of 'selectively ignoring a good many things.'" And though the process of selection involved in life-story telling may represent, on Hawking’s model, an increase in order that seems easy to ignore, the process of life-story telling itself must involve a decrease in energy and order that seems as difficult to estimate as to equilibrate.

Although I would imitate Hawking’s easy presentation of difficult concepts (the implications of which I do not profess to understand), I can furnish only a diagram and a qualitative description—no figures and no quantitative discussion—of the potential for equilibrium provided by the life story. Figure 1 (Appendix A) depicts the most consistent features of my father’s life story translated into forces for conservatism (i.e., those which conserve energy, resources, order—indicated by an inward-pointing arrow) and into forces for
dynamism (i.e., those which expend energy, resources, order—indicated by an outward-pointing arrow) as a model, generally, of adaptation. However, it should be noted that specific tellings or retellings of a life story (episode)—my father's included—might well involve contextual variations which would, in turn, effect changes in the strength and even the direction of the forces toward whose exact balancing life-story tellers aim. Further, it should be noted that life-story tellers are not aimless jugglers or jolly acrobats intent on entertaining with a skillfully performed balancing act; rather, they might be compared to serious conductors who, with an almost imperceptible hand movement, can alter the dynamic expression of a piece performed by the one-hundred plus musicians in an orchestra.¹⁵

That is the context, I think, which can evoke appreciation for the artistry of a life-story teller like my father, whose every telling represents an attempt to balance and rebalance the forces playing in the life-story ensemble, to create and recreate the self existing in the interplay of those—frequently oppositely directed—forces. And that is the context, I think, which can elicit understanding of the creativity of a life-story teller like my father, whose very telling rejection of typical story-type touches might obscure—or cause an observer like myself easily to overlook—originality. For what may (and, to me, often did) look like lack of interest, involvement, or artistry on the part of a
life-story teller is, I believe, a creative response to the demands exacted of the self by a retrospective "form" with both temporal and spatial dimensions—a "form," that is, whose "parts" might best be described as the events in a process. On this view of the life story as process, the self is created—and recreated—in the interplay of the forces for conservatism and dynamism whose exact balancing is—literally and figuratively—in the artistic hands of a life-story teller.

Although I think that all life stories must involve the interaction of conservative and dynamic forces, I suspect that it will not be possible to predict the correspondence between forces and features for a specific life story or even a particular telling of a story. Of course, as with thematic predictions (where determining each of the factors that must influence an individual’s thematic "selection,"¹⁶ the myriad hows and whys that must affect thematic formulation and articulation, seems unlikely), only time—and, perhaps, a body of life stories like my father’s, informally and resourcefully collected—will tell. In the meantime, for my father’s life story, features tending in the direction of order (i.e., conservative forces) include the absence of gestures or large body movements, the lack of eye contacts or unusual facial expressions, the minimalization of vocal marks (e.g., the sound imitations characteristic of the stories I heard while growing up), the re-membering (in Myerhoff’s sense) of
significant others and the reconstituting of significant times and places, the "distillation of experiences" and the experience of "epiphanies" (again, in Myerhoff’s sense—effected through sensory stimuli), and—most importantly, I think—the presence of theme (especially, the text’s thematic—almost unreasonable—insistence on disorder). Similarly, for my father’s life story, features tending in the direction of disorder (i.e., dynamic forces) include vocalization (i.e., the actual physical telling of the story, even the loss of voice resulting from two-hour story-taping sessions), story endings (i.e., the interruptions—e.g., my irrelevant questions and comments—that resulted in some repetition, some confusion, some impatience, and, in some cases, a full stop to the story), recollection (i.e., the often unnecessary search, precipitated by my insistence on facts, for names, dates, and places misplaced in memory’s "lost and found"), and—most importantly, I think—story beginnings (i.e., the sensory stimuli that seemed to start the story)." 

There is, I believe, good reason to think that the story collection of Part B gets off to a bad start: in a sense, the categorization of the stories selected for inclusion in this chapter is both overdetermined and underdetermined. Overdetermined because among the myriad variables that might be suggested as story sources, the isolation of sensory stimuli seems optimistically simplistic. Underdetermined because once a specific story episode is traced to a sensory
trigger, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to talk conclusively, or even cogently, about the particular sense impression involved. In fact, given my father’s life-long refinement of the abilities required of a musician—in his long life as a pianist, conductor, arranger, composer—it seems almost nonsensical to suggest that a specific sensation might stimulate a specific story. A single example might help to clarify here: When my father turned the pages of a violin sonata, a flute concerto, a piano trio, or a full orchestral score, he heard the music as he read the notes. And when he did this while sitting at a piano or standing before an orchestra, he used fingers or hands not just to turn pages, but to play or conduct—thus involving at least three senses simultaneously. So while, in my father’s case, it might not be possible, finally, precisely to isolate story stimuli (especially when sight and sound might be found working together), the categorization reflects a decision as to the primary sense involved given the particular context elaborated.

Another difficulty, especially with regards to the selection of representative stories under the sound category, is to be found in the very nature of conversation with my father. Throughout his life, an insatiable reader with phenomenal recall, my father often made it difficult for others to hold up their end of the conversation with him, just because he always seemed to have something interesting to
say—especially about figures in his favorite fields: music, history, literature, and philosophy. From Austen (whose works he quoted regularly—especially the words of those might-have-been-greats who never worked or practiced) or Arensky (whose compositions he called "pianistic") to Zimbalist ("Fingerbowl") or Zola ("Nach Berlin"), my father had something—and usually something unusual—to say about all of them. And since it is not possible to include all of the stories that seem to have been triggered, for example, by the title of a book or the name of a musician, the selection offers a sampling and, again, reflects a decision to exclude stories about personalities that my father could not have encountered during his life."

Although necessary, the exclusions, I think, are regrettable because both the problematic "multi-sense" and the "extra-life" stories are not incidental to an understanding of the personality that figures in my father’s life story. However, yet a third category of "stories" (included in Appendix B) merits, I think, special consideration primarily because it brings into focus the ease with which, given preconceptions such as my own, stories and story tellers can be found "lacking"—in eloquence or elaboration, delivery or development: my father’s more vivid, but less elaborated brief "impressions" seem clearly to have been triggered by sensory stimuli. And although, oftentimes, the "lack" of elaboration or development can be traced to unnecessary
interruptions or incomplete notes, other times that is simply not the case: the brief impressions would seem to exist complete in and by themselves only for the moment of translation into the spoken word.

With seeming indifference to the words of others—and with the fixed eyes and stilled hands that for so long I mistook as disinterest—my father would suddenly engage in speech and, then, just as unexpectedly, withdraw, leaving behind a vivid impression and a conversational blank. But because my own preconceptions made it difficult to see what was in front of me—on the lookout for "stories," I often overlooked so much more—there are many unfortunate blanks in my father's life story: many more impressions were "lost" (to an imprecise summary or an imperfect understanding) than were recorded. Fortunately, the remarkable drama of these impressions was not forever lost, even on me—and even before I began to think about their origin: Whether I characterized my father as "lost in thought" or "inattentive to conversation," as "bored with playing two pianos" or "out of touch with ordinary things," I could not help but remark the extraordinary way he seemed to enter and exit a conversation, a context—dropping in unexpectedly for an absent-minded moment, hanging an impression, like a hat, on any convenient peg (or so I thought), and then leaving without further adieu. Of course, the further the distances of those impressions from what I considered the topic at hand, the greater their
imposition on conversation, on context, the easier it became, eventually, to identify their sources, which, once located, seemed as conspicuous as footprints, as incontestable as fingerprints.

Further, it is, perhaps, the distinctive anatomy of these impressions--especially those cued by smell, taste, sight, or the sound of a word--that enables their suspension in conversation like drops of oil on water. First, directed toward the personal and the past, these impressions seem to pinpoint, for my father, not people or places or moments so much as units of experience, remote associations--in terms of age and accessibility--that make not the slightest rhetorical attempt (at least, at first) to involve or include the audience in any way. Thus, for example, the impressions of the chestnuts and the Chinamen (which bring my father back to his teenage years at most, since he probably left Odessa for the last time before the age of eighteen or nineteen), of the fresh fish and the Conservatory street (which take him back to a much earlier age since the family moved to Matrusky Spusk around 1907, and he graduated from the Conservatory around 1915), and of the samovar (which brings him back to the age of about six or seven) all use opening formulas that draw attention to the urgency of the first-person recollection: for example, "comes (back) to me now," "I remember, I never forget the smell," "I hear them crying," "I see myself," "I remember myself."
And the sense of urgency is heightened by the fact that these formulas make no effort to bridge the gap between what was being said (by others) and what is being said (by the speaker): there are no apologetic or laborious preambles, no polite or graceful lead-ins. In fact, the very absence of such transitional devices serves to focus attention all the more directly on the "presence" of the speaker—on the present moment, on the momentousness of the presentation, and on the ability of the speaker to perform—which translates (even in dictionaries) into the reassuring poise that makes, generally, for a close relationship between performer and audience. For my father, the device has been effective: regardless the context or the confusion, he never failed to get the attention of his audience. And, of course, people in old age, like my father—with "their heightened need for physical verification and sensory proof of ongoing vitality when evidence of the senses may have grown dim" (Myerhoff)—must often use powerful devices to call attention to the fact of their existence, to insure that their voices are heard."

Often, too, these opening devices link the first-person point of view with a particular sense—for example, "I never forget the smell," "I hear them crying," "I see myself," "First time I seen"—thus providing my father the opportunity to reaffirm—for himself and for others—the quality of the senses whose strength guarantees that he is still vital, still "connected" to the mainstream of life. So although my father
does not directly emphasize the interconnectedness theme often associated with people in old age, the opening formulas of his vivid impressions work, in a roundabout sort of way, to connect him both with a present audience and with a much larger, possibly more important group: the living—those very much in life and in the midst of giving continued peak performances.

When my father continues his impressions, he usually moves between the present and past tenses, often using the present tense to deliver the central image and the past tense to provide secondary commentary. Thus, for example, the fish impression: "Mother goes to the market, buys all the provisions . . . The cats just loved her because, after all . . ." Similarly, the Chinamen: "They were wandering all through the streets of Odessa, and crying, all the time they cry, 'Silk, sholk, nada sholk.'" So, too, the uncut money: "And every time we play, he takes out from his jacket, porte-monnaie, . . . all his money, rolled up money. He had a big roll of money, all connected together . . ." And, again, in the samovar impression: "Mother would not go, . . . insisted we take with us the little boy cousin of mine. So we take with us the little boy cousin of Edith . . . And we take with us the samovar."

So while my father's impressions do not take the listener on the developmental twists and turns typical of stories, they do exhibit a basic organization that has been seen, thus
far, to include an opening formula and a simple system of prioritizing information by means of tense shifts. Additionally, these impressions tend toward the inclusion of characters (also acting in the present tense) other than my father by means of shifts in person and/or number: in other words, although the recollection is personal, it makes an effort to connect the speaker to other people. Thus, for example, my father does not say something like, "I remember buying chestnuts in Odessa," but, rather, "I remember how they're selling those chestnuts, hot." Similarly, "I hear them crying 'Sholk'"; "I see myself already close, quite close to the border. And here we are playing,"; and "I remember myself on the train, four of us--father, mother, my cousin, myself--so we take with us . . . " Again, then, although the opening formulas, taking the listener unawares, suggest the interiority of what is to follow, the impressions themselves immediately open up to link the speaker to a world of people engaged in the activities of life: buying fish and selling silk, playing piano from "morning to night," "enjoying our tea," "drinking . . . having a good time." And, of course, for many people in old age, my father included, some form or another of "disengagement" from the world's activities seems to be a fact of life: buying groceries at Europa is tiring, sitting long hours at the piano (especially, with a catheter) is difficult, mixing medicines and drinks is prohibited. Perhaps, then, if there is some truth to the stereotype of the
older man or woman sitting by a window "living in the past," it is to be found not in the appearance of "withdrawal," but in the very real function served (as in my father's case) by vivid impressions that may help people in old age deal with their so-called "disengagement" from the world of activity that has, in many cases, closed to them.

Interestingly, unlike the "disengaged" opening formulas of these impressions, the closing formulas seek directly to engage the listener in the speaker's experience—and, in that regard, differ importantly, I think, from the stories, which most often gain closure by means of a self-conscious reference, in statement form, to the story at hand (e.g., "And that was the story of theirs, pathetic story of their love."/"Liver 1") or a formula such as "That's the story." Characteristically, the closing formulas of the impressions use imperative verb forms (e.g., "Don't forget, it's quite cold in Odessa, in winter"; "Imagine, just imagine!"), interrogatives (e.g., "Who's gonna do it, feed all those animals, when so many people are, go without food?"; "What else could I do under those circumstances, those bad times?") and pronoun shifts (e.g., "Such funny, you would laugh."; "You probably find the street even today, if you look.") that seem to link the speaker to the listener's present and, oftentimes, the listener to the speaker's past (especially as they invest the speaker with authority on a range of experiences including, for example, the Odessa wintertimes, the "bad
times"). And, in one interesting case (viz., "You probably find the street even today, if you look.") past and present, speaker and listener are brought together in a closing that brings into focus another possible function of these impressions: with their interest in linking then and now, the closing formulas stake a claim for the speaker's continued identity through time--a concern of increased significance for people in old age like my father, who has frequently expressed both worry and wonder at the task of holding himself in tact through almost a century of living: "It's hard to connect all those darn things."; "I was there, but I don't remember when."; "Sometimes I can't believe all those things that happened to me.",

In terms of identification, the most worrisome of my father's impressions were, I think now, those that seem to have been triggered by sound--and this, perhaps, because it has always been impossible for me to think "Papa" without, at the same time, thinking "music." But, upon analysis, those impressions that followed the strains of a piece or a song reveal the usual characteristics of the genre, from the "disengagement" with context typical of the opening formulas to the closing formulas that openly intend the listener's engagement with the speaker's experience. Thus, for example, and despite its unusual length, the flag impression, which seems to have been triggered by the sounds of Puccini's Madame Butterfly: The opening formula ("I remember Bucharest, as I
see myself"), again disconnected from the preceding contextual drift (the playing of a tape containing my own Greek songs, with the composer/lyricist performing at the piano—the bid not of an artist for a place in music’s history, but of a daughter for a place in Papa’s heart), draws attention to the insistence of the personal and past while linking the first person to a particular sense, sight. Moving in and out of the present tense (with secondary information like "He was playing bass in the opera orchestra." delivered in the past), the impression again links the speaker to others active in the present ("So, here we are in cafe, sitting together—Lipschutz, myself, together with musicians—") and engaged in life ("eat, drink, talking"). And, finally, the closing formula links the lifetimes of speaker and listener by means of both an authoritative imperative ("Imagine! Was such dangerous times, just crazy.") and a pronoun shift ("Those Romanians could do anything what they want with you.").

As mentioned, despite or because of context (here, again, perspective is important), my father’s life story—like a shiftless drifter ready to do anything or go anywhere—seemed, at times, hell-bent on getting heard: No matter where we were at when, what we were up to how, who we were with why—or so it seemed—somehow, I always found myself in the midst of a story episode that had something to do with my father’s life—with the personal past—and absolutely nothing to do with the present. Thus, for example, with an appetite for waffles, but
no room for the pancakes in front of him—and no room in his heart for his cooks—my father suddenly began talking about Victor Young. On another occasion, with no interest in his cooks’ conversation—viz., a housekeeping campaign: one room per month—my father broke in with an off-the-wall story about Stravinsky. Similarly, bored, many times, with the limited repertoire and ability of his two-piano partner, my father often used the time between pieces or repeats to talk, for example, about Cy Walter or John Philip Sousa or Sergei Rachmaninoff—in any case, about someone whose music we were not playing, whose life we were not discussing. And on one noteworthy occasion, the sound even of a single note (B flat) was enough to distract my father, who abruptly began to talk about Anton Rubinstein. Examples could be given ad infinitum: stories, like impressions, seemed to make their unexpected entrances into unrelated contexts while we were making dinner or watching television, trimming a tree or mowing the lawn, going to the supermarket or attending a piano concert. And the ease with which I was able, at first, to dismiss my father’s positively annoying or painfully agonizing momentary intrusions into life amazes me even now: blaming his old age, I found him, understandably, inattentive or distracted, indifferent or withdrawn, unkind or uncaring; blaming myself, I found him, justifiably, uninterested or bored—and started to read more and to practice harder.
Hard to countenance now too is the ease with which I allowed my own interests--especially in people and places--to obscure the importance of my father's present experience: jotting down a few notes and a name, I overlooked the interruption and looked to the future, when I would "get the story" about Toscha Seidel or Pablo Casals or some other important personality." Thus, my journal contains dozens of notations (such as "Talk about Karl Karrash's trip to Southwest: brings up story of Mae West," "Looks at 'Yablotchko' and tells story of Gliere," "Hears Brahms' piano concerto, reminded of Fiatigorsky," "Playing Godowsky studies: remembers Einstein") that exclude as much as they include, for they record the stories' sources, but not the teller's words. And oftentimes, later, in the context of the directed interviews during which I tried to get my father to retell the story of so and so, even when the story might have been "the same," the feel was different--the singularity that gave unity to the story and shape to the experience was gone. Gone, too, were so many of the stories that my father had shared with me--despite the journal notations and the repeat requests, the stories never got retold in any shape or form.

Despite the small number of stories collected relative to stories told, it is still possible to single out recurrent features of content and form. Like the vivid impressions, the stories are what might be called "contextually indifferent": with content unrelated to the center--or even the area--of the
conversation or activity at hand, the stories connect to context on its periphery--or circumference--amid the tastes and smells, the sounds and sights that make experiences unique. Unlike the impressions, however, the stories often utilize opening formulas that, finally, lessen the distance between the experience of the speaker and the experience of the listener by means of an apologia (sometimes apologetic, sometimes aggressive), suggesting that my father is neither unaware of nor indifferent to the fact of his intrusion, that he, in fact, finds it necessary to effect some sort of transition from the interests of others to what must seem most interesting to him--his story. Sometimes my father combines the hard fact of ownership--that what is to follow IS "his story"--with a gentle reminder of his sensitivity to "that" which preceded, to those conversations or activities owned, in a sense, by others. Thus, for example: "That reminds me now the salt, my story of the salt." ("Salt 1"); "I told you my story of 'Internationale'." (Chapter I, B); "I want to tell you now something about Bernstein, Leonard Bernstein. You don't know my story of Bernstein." ("Lennie 1"); "Seeing that spaghetti, that's my story of Heifetz, Jascha Heifetz, famous story." ("Spaghetti 1") Occasionally, too, my father embeds story ownership in a question that, although it doesn't refer to preceding conversation, addresses the listener directly in a modest assumption of interest. Thus, for example: "I told you, didn't I, my story of Rachmaninoff?"; "You know my story
of Mae West?" Of course, the implications of both "story"—which suggests, at least, duration and complexity—and "ownership"—which establishes repeated performance—and performer identity—are far-reaching and forceful; and, perhaps for that reason, my father tucks his claim near words that allow the listener to rest easy, assured of the speaker's concern for the interests of his audience. For, most assuredly, "story" and "ownership" obligate audience—in demanding, minimally, respectful attention—as much as they do performer. Furthermore, for a performer in old age like my father, the pride and confidence that must be associated with owning a story (when sickness and time take possession of one's faculties, when children become co-owners of one's home, when agencies revoke—without ritual—the token assurances that one still has control—from drivers' licenses to insurance policies) seems inestimable. And although it isn't easy to estimate the importance, for a story-teller in old age, of the authority and privilege endowed by ownership, it is interesting to note how my father links what he owns to what he knows (e.g., "You don't know . . . my story of Bernstein"); "You know . . . my story of Irving Berlin?") suggests, perhaps, that while the speaker may or may not be willing to relinquish or transfer story ownership, he might be interested in transferring something far more valuable, something that cannot be revoked or repossessed even in old age—knowledge.
Others of my father's opening formulas omit the reference to possession as they link present to past experience by remarking directly (in statement or question) on whatever seems to have evoked the story, often identifying a specific sense as well. Thus, for example: "Silyotka, I see those silyotka, herring. And it's there in Odessa, now, like. I'm back in Odessa." ("Herring"); "Special coffee? Special coffee I had also in Romania, in Bucharest, where I'm staying at . . . Princhiar, the hotel." ("Coffee"); "Can't you find anything else to make it? I see cointreau, and it's, I see, makes me to see those Siguranta faces, . . . killers . . ." ("Cointreau"); "Every time I see liver, I think of Carmencita Pernay and Fernando." ("Liver 2"); "Talking about waffles brings me to early days of mine in Chicago, Chicago Theatre, with Victor Young." ("Waffles 1"); "Just an accident. Just like the time--accidentally--I suppose to go to Crimea. And I didn't go--" ("Accident 1"); "I told you the time, in the woods: I was walking, and it's raining--a little, slight rain, like now." ("Rain, Introduction").

Now and again, my father's opening formulas acknowledge neither ownership nor sensation, but, self-consciously, allow the magic of "story" to effect, on its own, the transition from the listener's to the speaker's world. Thus, for example: "That's the story again how they killed Dora's brother--" ("Valkyries 1 and 2"); "Ah, that's another story, very cute." ("Lakme 2"); "That was the biggest story. That's
another one." ("Rain/Toothache 2"); "That’s the story, again, of Mogiliov." ("Lantern 1"); "You know the story about Rubinstein?" (R7/B); "Dimitri Tiompin--the bad stories I know about him--" (R9/B); "I tell you now the story of Caruso." And these examples--although many more might be given--are telling: it is almost as if the mere mention of "story" assures my father unquestionably--whatever the context and without the apologia--of a performance, so that he finds unnecessary the use of a transitional device that glances back towards the sensory periphery of the listener’s experience. When he uses opening formulas that stake a claim for private story ownership, however, my father usually includes sensitive reassurances for the listener--references suggesting, perhaps, his sense that, for an older story teller like himself, the authority of ownership might be questioned. Finally, when my father omits references to "story" or "my story"--opting, apparently, not to make use of a free pass or a senior discount--he makes his longest and deepest bow to the interests of his audience, locating the story source within the context of the listener’s experience--citing a food or a word or a song--and, often, clarifying further by identifying a particular sense. And it is the particularity of this last device that suggests a way to make sense of my father’s opening formulas.

Whereas the openings of my father’s vivid impressions clearly tend toward disengagement, all three of his story
formulas obviously aim at opening up to his audience. In fact, it is possible to order my father’s opening formulas for stories in terms of what might be called the "transition requirement" (i.e., the need for the direct reference to context). Thus, the opening formula that refers to "story" seems not to require a transition: the word itself seems sufficient to secure my father a hearing. Next, the opening formula that secures private story ownership seems to require some sort of transition as well—a response, perhaps, to the questionable claim to ownership, of any kind, in old age. Finally, the opening formula that excludes mention of either story or ownership seems obviously to require the fullest transition, including even sensory details.

But things are not as obvious as they might seem: while fulfillment of the transition requirement seems a gauge to the generosity of the speaker with respect to his listener, in fact, it locates the uneasy tension—in terms of the antithetical interests of performer and audience—marking the relationship. And why this should be the case is difficult to explain. In any case, to the extent which they fulfill the transition principle, my father’s opening formulas might be seen to mark, on a continuum, the degree of risk or security in which they involve the participants in the story relationship. Thus, the "story" formula, at one end of the continuum, seems most "risky" for the listener—who, devoid of a lead-in, a contextual transition, is suddenly thrust into
the world of story—and least "risky" for the speaker—who, relying on the powerful associations of that marvelous word "story," can afford to remain disengaged, as it were, from context. At the other end of the continuum, however, the opening formula that fails to refer to either story or ownership seems least "risky" for the listener—who, via sensory detail, is led to accept the performer’s elaborate and explicit assurances of interest in and engagement with the non-story world—and most "risky" for the speaker—who, as a person in old age, can no longer rely on the sensory evidence he claims, on the sights and sounds and smells whose strength counts as proof that he is still connected to life. Of course, answering the really interesting question—why my father might prefer one or another opening formula on any given occasion—would require not just a method of identifying and evaluating the countless variables that must affect his process of selection, his decision whether or not to play it safe, whether or not to put his senses—in a sense, his life—on the line, but a methodical—and, perhaps, comparative—study of other life story tellers.

Interestingly, just as my father’s opening formulas for stories and impressions contrast, so too his closing formulas: unlike the closing formulas for the impressions, which seek to engage the listener in the speaker’s experience, the closing formulas for the stories aim at keeping the story world self-contained, in tact, closed, in fact. Sometimes my
father closes a story with a proverb (e.g., "Love is not a potato. You can't throw that out of the window."); "Liver 1"). Other times, he ends a story with an explanation (e.g., "And that's the story. That's how came about the end of my friendship with Stravinsky and the beginning of my work, that time, with Copland."); "Houses 1"; "Watermelons 2"). Often, too, my father uses a closing formula that refers, somewhat self-consciously, to "story" and describes, by name or description, the who or what of the story (e.g., "And that's the story of Iza Kramer."); "Rosario 1"; "And that was story of theirs, pathetic story of their love."); "Liver 1"). Most frequently, however, my father finishes his performance with "(And) That's the story." (see Chapter III, B, throughout). And that seems to be his preferred closing formula.

Although I expected—and would almost have preferred—to find clear organizational patterns between the opening and closing formulas of my father's stories, I have made no such discovery. On the contrary, the stories do not seem to exhibit even the basic ordering—in terms of the prioritization of information by means of tense shifts— characteristic of the impressions. Indeed, in the story worlds, my father seems to move freely between present and past tense—as if time were of no importance. And although important and active others people the stories, as the impressions, story persons share, almost without exception,
a greater gift for gab than impression people. Again, as if time were of no significance, characters--major or minor, young or old--converse on all manner of subjects, significant or trivial. Thus, for example, Maestro Pribik leaves off his conducting to tell a cellist, "You take my share." when the musician refuses to play without food, "No herring, no Tosca." ("Herring 1"). Similarly, King Ferdinand calls to Grigori Dinicu from behind a royal screen to say, "Tell that Russian Bolshevik to play me something of Tchaikovsky." ("Coffee 1").

Talking as if there were no tomorrow, Bucky Harris and Gregory gossip:

"Gregory, you know who's here?

"No."

"You have to go visit them."

"Who?"

"Carmencita Pernay and Fernando. They here, living together, Someplace here in Mexico."

("Liver 1")

And in a story set someplace on the Russian front--despite the approaching night, the nearing storm, the advancing army, a soldier, a cavalryman, and a commander have time to chat about a jacket, a toothache, and a piano:

"Tavarische, wake up. Are you crazy? What are you doing here?"

(I told him the story.)

"Get my jacket. You return me the jacket tomorrow morning."

"Alright . . . "

"Alright, Gregory. Let's go and see the piano."
"Tavarische . . . Nach Kompodiv, . . . --I can't. I'll see it next time." (I had a toothache, terrible. ("Rain-Toothache 1")

Time and again, story people are heard in dialogue--from happy reunions (Iza Kramer and my father):

"Grisha."

"Who?"

"Iza Iakovovna, Grisha. Sto ti delaesh?"

"I have a job."

"I'm married now and live in Rosario. My husband is a doctor. He's a doctor. And I'm glad to see you, naturally. If you're in Rosario, don't forget to look me up." ("Rosario 2")

to bitter breakups (Stravinsky and my father):

"'Internationale?' I won't do it. I won't touch that dirty music. Let them hire a band, but I'm not gonna put my hand to it. I don't want it. Let them hire, give the picture somebody else."

"But Igor Fyodorovich, even Sergei Vasily" (Rachmaninoff) "just played concert for the victims of the war."

"Nothing doing. I don't care what Rachmaninoff does. I won't do it. Let them do the picture without me, hire somebody else. Tell them to get somebody else."

"You see? That's why they call you 'Belaguardyayetz'. . . . You see, Igor Fyodorovich? They're right: you're 'Belaguardyayetz'." ("Houses 1")

In the story worlds too, the time is always right for--or, better, time is no obstacle to--repeating a limerick ("Coffee 1": "Her name was Magda Lupescu"), reciting an entire narrative poem--sometimes more than once, sometimes in more than one language (e.g., "Zhenskaya Lubov"), humming a melody--usually more than the royalties-free four bars (e.g.,
"Lakme"), or singing a song—many times, from start to finish (e.g., "Marusa Travilusta").

It's important to note that, for my father, these may be devices for starting the process of transporting the person backwards/bringing the event forward in time, that, together with rhetorical strategies such as tense shifts, help to connect past and present time. However, it's important to notice, too, that, for my father, story worlds, though not timeless, and story people, though not ageless, seem to be free of at least some of the constraints associated with the sense of purpose and direction implied by concepts like backwards/forwards, past/present. And, of course, to a storyteller with a foreshortened future, like my father, the time for moving freely in time may seem "long gone," or time itself may not longer seem absolute and universal, but, rather, dynamic and subjective—something, perhaps, conceived or sensed internally.

Another interesting device used liberally in the stories, but not at all in the impressions, is what might be called an "internal transition." Oftentimes, my father seems to repeat key words as a means of expanding the story—in terms of both duration and interest. And it is not as if he is interested in killing time or filling gaps—the rhythm of his talk is not stop/start. Rather, again, time seems not to constrain speech, so that the speaker is free to make the associations that enable him to develop his story, to take his words—as
repeated or in cognates--into new contexts. Thus, in the following example, the word "there" first locates the herring and then relocates the speaker; after several repetitions of conductor/conducting, opera/operas, "(that) time" zooms in on a specific production in the opera season, and "(bad) times" expands into a panoramic view of a difficult period in Russian history:

Silyotka, I see THERE, silyotka, herring. And it’s THERE, in Odessa, now, like. I’m back in Odessa, little boy--well, no, not so little boy. And the CONDUCTOR of the OPERA in Odessa is Pribik, Josef Pribik--was CONDUCTOR of the OPERA. Fine CONDUCTOR too. He’s CONDUCTING all famous OPERAS--Russian, Italian--all famous OPERAS. And CONDUCTING, that TIME, was CONDUCTING Tosca. Was already bad TIMES in Odessa; was shortage of everything. ("Herring 1")

Similarly, in the following example, "time" and "every," with repetition, acquire greater specificity, as do "summer" and "palace," so that, with the motion of the words, the speaker moves from a vague period in Bucharest to a Sunday in King Ferdinand’s home. As "sit" becomes "sitting," the focus shifts from the habitual at-home behavior/location of the King and his family/audience to the customary playing/position of the pianist/performer--with "fine" performing overtime to describe, first, the screen and, then, the piano:

So this was the TIME when I’m in Bucharest, playing with Grigori Dinicu. And EVERY TIME, EVERY week, EVERY Sunday, we going to the Kotrochaynee, to the PALACE--the SUMMER PALACE, SUMMER residence--of the King Ferdinand to play. So EVERY Sunday, we’re coming in--Dinicu and myself--to play for the King, who SITS, with his family, the children, and his son, the, later, Crown Prince, who he becomes later the King Carol. And they SITTING, all of them, listening, from behind the "schirma"--small, FINE "schirma," screen like. I’m SITTING at the piano,
FINE, big piano, and we playing with Dinicu all the popular tunes of the day. ("Coffee 1")

Here, as in the many other examples of internal transition that might be given, there is ample time for the meaningful repetition and variation of the spoken word. And, in fact, it is precisely this penchant to indulge in the pleasures of words—whether in a transition or an opening, a dialogue or a limerick, a poem or a song—that seems to best explain the value in performance of these stories. Whether playful or serious, my father's stories seem to resist the constraints—perhaps, the passage—of time by giving free play to verbal (and sometimes musical) expression and so point to the fact of the performance itself—which is, after all, not a small feat when one considers the constraints to effective communication often experienced by people in old age (from the loss of hearing that can make conversation trying to the lack of time/interest/patience in the young that can make the old stop trying altogether). My father's stories—even those few not densely filled with people who pause to come together in speech, who stop to talk and listen to one another—celebrate the timeless appeal of stories, of the worlds from words that can distract a sick youngster, stop a busy cook, or stay an execution, by using language in a way that calls attention to itself. Finally, it is by means of language that, regardless the risk for both, the listener is initially called upon to embark on an exploration of those worlds with the speaker.
And it is language taken by surprise—in uncUSTOMary uses, for example, of tenses and transitions—that makes of listener and speaker fellow travelers in worlds where time pauses for someone to place the hundreds of words in a poem, where a slight variation of a single word essentially transports someone from one place to another, from one time to another. With a sense of direction that has nothing to do with maps and a sense of time that has nothing to do with watches, my father charts a course in words; and, of course, it is words that, finally, bring the voyage to those worlds to a close: "That's the story."

1. Although some time after learning of this conversation, I questioned my father about the meaning of "old-fashioned," his only response was, "If I said they're old-fashioned, then must be old-fashioned."


4. Given the view of life story as event, it is tempting to speculate—but difficult to understand—that process is principle seen from within what physicists call "spacetime." For suggestions on events, see Hawkings, p. 23 ("An event is something that happens at a particular point in space and at a particular time.") and Toelken, p. 129 ("Studying the Event"). See, also, Hawkings, p. 151, and Davies, pp. 58-59, on the paradoxical position of the self given the past-future asymmetry, the order-disorder irreversibility.

5. Liebermann, p. 518.


7. Lieberman, pp. 518 and 509.


10. See Chapter I, A.


15. There is a temptation to suggest, as well, the ability of "conductors" to transmit light, heat, sound, electricity—energy.

16. Thematic "selection" is a misnomer because, as Kaufman points out, themes are not "deliberately fashioned" by informants who self-consciously "describe" or "set forth" the themes of their lives in any organized fashion. Thus, e.g., my father's "You have to connect the episodes," "It all fits together," etc. (R4/A, R5/A, R10/B, R11/A)—though he didn't identify the "theme" of his life story. And on my father's view of just how to connect it all, note the following conversation overheard between GS and IS on 29 December 1987:

GS: It's so difficult to connect those stories, Mama.
IS: Think how hard it is for her, Greg.
GS: But she can use fantasy and connect them.

17. Set pieces (e.g., "Houses") would tend toward greater dynamism.

18. See Chapter I, A, for other factors of which loss in ordered energy is a function (e.g., power cutoffs, cassette failures, defective tapes, "blue days," powerful medications, etc.).

19. With rare exceptions, my father's stories did not start as a result of what might be called "holistic" stimuli/associations. In fact, I can find only one story that seemed to start in this way: after telling my father about my crush on D.A., a brilliant musical talent who ended up by becoming a sheet music salesman, my father told about his boss, Kirilov ("he had all of NBC in his hands), whose bouts with jealousy, greed, and drink finally left him friendless, penniless, and homeless—a talent with a bright future who came to a dim end.

20. In this context, it is interesting to note that my father often referred (indirectly, of course), to the concept of "body memory" (that odd ability of the body to "remember," to
register or record "thoughts" that the mind may have forgotten): several times, he referred to the way his body or that of another artist (e.g., Josef Hoffmann) took over when the mind failed--"Sometimes you forget the music, but your fingers take you out of your troubles." (62/B)

21. When, for example, I complained one morning that I had stayed up all night to finish reading Zola's Nana only to get to the end of the book and find the last page missing, my father responded, "Nach Berlin" and explained the ending. I could only smile, sometime later, when I found the lost page with my father's words.

22. It also excludes stories about people my father knew, but in which he does not figure--with one exception, "Fingerbowl" (which it includes because my father heard this story from one of the participants).

23. Myerhoff, p. 321. Note, also, p. 320: "The importance of ritual as a persuasive form is highlighted among the elderly by their heightened need for physical verification and sensory proof of ongoing vitality when evidence of the senses may have grown dim, and when sharp distinctions between dreaming and waking may have become blurred. The participation in a ritual gives one the sensory experience of continuing existence and vitality, of being still in life."

24. It is sometimes observed that the privileges of storytelling are reserved only for the very young and the very old. See Cowley.


26. "Uncut Money" excepted, which is included among the vivid impressions primarily because of its characteristic closing formula.

27. See, e.g., R1/B and R10/A. (In R1/B, e.g., my father asks, "Did I make 'Embraceable You'?"--and wonders at his own two-piano arrangement of the Gershwin song, an arrangement that my sister and I played together as children.)

28. "Flag" differs from other impressions because it contains a direct statement of opinion in the first person: "But those Romanians, very nationalistically, I would say, they made her to sing them, not to sing them in Italian, to sing them in Romanian, translated into Romanian."


32. See R7/B, for story of Anton Rubinstein and his famous waltz.

33. Our repertoire included the following pieces: my father's "Volga Journey Capriccio: Metamorphoses on a Familiar Tune" and "Boogie-Woogie Etude"; his two-piano concert transcriptions, "Dance of the Soviet Sailors," "Dark Eyes," and "Jalousie"; Arensky's "Suite for Two Pianos"; and St.-Saens' "Variations on a Theme by Beethoven." It continued to grow, however, upon my father's insistence, "Keep reading music, always more and more and more music--whatever it is, doesn't matter, but read."


38. Some of my father's set pieces (e.g., "Houses") have the stamp of repeated performance, but also have a literary quality that is easy to account for: off and on, over the years, my father wrote down some of his stories hoping,
eventually, to publish them in a collection, "Sense and Nonsense in Music."
B. THE STORIES

Taste/Smell/Sight (Food)

1. "SALT"

I heard this story, first, in 1984 and, again, in 1987. The first telling (unrecorded) followed a breakfast conversation between my father and my husband on the latter’s over indulgence in salt (a weakness inherited, according to my husband, from his father, who stuffed his pockets not with pistachio nuts—as most Greek men—but with salt bags, which he emptied continuously by taking up large handfuls of salt that he swallowed without the benefit of food or drink). The second telling (S1) followed a pre-lunch kitchen conversation between my father and myself on the tasteless food that he was forced to consume as a result of the salt-restricted diet inflicted on him by Dr. Lara. Another telling of this story followed the tasting-session that I inflicted on my father the day I discovered a salt-substitute at a nearby pharmacy. Subsequent retellings (in both years) occurred most often in response to my direct requests for this particular story (e.g., S2 and S3).

S1: 9 September 1987

GS: That reminds me now the salt, my story of the salt. Salt, as you know, was very much in demand in Odessa. It was bad times in Odessa, and I had, that time, to organize a troupe, musicians, to play every week, every Sunday, to the salt provinces, outside of Odessa. Every Sunday we go to that place, play concert, and collect all the salt we can. They tell us, "Take as much salt as you want." This is how they paying us to play concert. This is how, now, we playing for salt. And playing with us, singing, is a famous Italian tenor from the opera, by name de Neri. Beautiful tenor voice, from the old school. He’s singing with us every week—singing the arias from all the famous Italian operas: Rigoletto, Trovatore, Aida. His repertoire. And when we finish our playing, we collect all the salt we want, carry it to the "telega," take it back to Odessa.

But de Neri, he was an old man already that time, maybe 70, 75 years of age. By himself, he can’t carry all that salt. So we helped him to get as much salt as he can—collecting that salt, carrying it to the "telega," taking it back to Odessa. Tell we get him home—him, de Neri,
and all that salt. We brought him right to his house with salt.

And I brought all my salt home to Edith, Edith my cousin who, she kept us alive. She exchanged that salt; she sold it. And from that salt money, she bought everything--food, any food imaginable, ham, meat, all those things impossible now to get in Odessa. And then she bought cigarettes, millions of cartons of cigarettes-lousy, stale, which she sold them again later, triple the price. Because who cares, that time, the cigarettes are fresh or they’re stale? They care only to smoke; they smoke anything. So, from that salt money, Edith bought everything, everything we need to stay alive. And we did, we did. We did stayed alive.

S2: July 1984/date garbled (03/B)

CS: What was the story you told this morning? I didn’t hear it all. About the salt?

GS: About what?

CS: The salt.

GS: Salt?

CS: And there were fighters against desert-, fighting against deserters, and the tenor, the salt . . .

GS: . . . Oh, no. This story, that’s this morning story. Well, it was also bad times in Odessa, and I played two pianos that time with Roismann--you know, the Budapest Quartet sister, sister of his. We played two piano music, and Lenin just announced--I think it was before NEP. NEP, remember NEP?--that all the stores were open. You wanted to hear the story of . . .

CS: . . . The salt.

GS: The salt. In Odessa, at that time, salt, which is right outside . . .

CK: . . . It was valuable in the war; even in Greece, it was valuable in the war.

GS: So, the salt was not obtainable in Odessa. Outside of Odessa, we have the big salt seashore, and we had concert. I had concert to organize, bring a troupe every week, every Sunday, to have a concert there. And they told us, "Take as much salt as you want. Put it in your ‘telega’."--or whatever you call that, horse, horse
carriage. And I took as much as I wanted. Now, we had a tenor, from the opera, de Neri. He was 70 years old, of age, at that time.

CK: 70 years.

GS: Beautiful tenor. Singing, I, singing in our Trovatore, Rigoletto, all the things. And we helped him to get as much salt as he can. Then we brought him right to the house. And that was every week. And I brought my salt home to my oldest cousin, and she converted it—bought ham and bought any kind of foods you can imagine.

CK: Ah, used it to preserve food? . . .

GS: . . . And bought cigarettes . . .

CS: . . . No. She exchanged the salt for other things.

CK: Ah, salt, that it was valuable.

GS: And she bought millions of cartons of cigarettes, and she was selling cartons triple the price, later on, so triple. So I had a lotta things to do. (omit following train story)

S3: 2 January 1988 (R6/B)

CS: And another story you told me about, how you used to get salt? Where did you get the salt from?

GS: Well, we used to go, travel to the salt. Odessa is famous for salt. We used to go out of town to play the concert at the salt province—I don’t know how to say it.

CS: Salt mines?

GS: Salt, yes. We played there. We collected as much salt as we could carry to the "podvoda"—not "podvoda," to the "telega"—and we had a famous tenor from the opera, de Neri. We helped him with the salt to carry it till we come to Odessa. Those were different times.

CS: So you went and played in those places and got salt instead of money?

GS: Yeah, yeah.

CS: And then what did you do with the salt?

GS: I gave it to my, Edith, and she bought cigarettes. She bought everything for that salt money.
CS: She sold the salt?
GS: Yeah.
CS: Where did she sell the salt?
GS: You know, there's a lotta people need salt.
CS: In Odessa, you mean?
GS: Yes.
CS: And she, you got the salt from outside Odessa and brought it back?
GS: Huh?
CS: You got the salt from outside of Odessa?
GS: But I had it, and I gave it to her long time before.
CS: And gave it to Edith?
GS: Yeah.
CS: And then she sold it in Odessa?
GS: Yeah.
CS: Took the money and bought cigarettes?
GS: Yeah, lousy cigarettes.
CS: And then what did she do with the cigarettes?
GS: Sold them.
CS: And then sold the cigarettes? So first you sold the salt, and then you sold the cigarettes, and you made more and more money then—or she made money that way. Edith is the same one who made the clothes from the tapestry that you tore down? Edith, right?
GS: Edith, yes.
CS: She sound like she was a good businesswoman . . .
GS: . . . Yeah, she was . . .
CS: . . . Of the five sisters, I mean.
GS: She made all those shirts. She made for me all those suits, for me. Otherwise, I would be nothing, if not for her. If I didn’t have, what would I do? I would die on the street someplace. (omit story of Edith’s son, Gabriel Wasserfuhrer, following)

2. "HERRING"

In July 1988, my sister and I decided to surprise my father with a traditional Russian "zakuska" (plates of meat-filled piroshki, boiled eggs, and herring; several kinds of salad, cheese, and salami; and mounds of sour cream). We planned our menu the night before and started cooking early the next afternoon. But neither the surprise nor the "zakuska" came off as planned: Drawn to the activity in the kitchen (or to the giggles of our "assistants"—my sister’s two children), my father sat himself at the kitchen table to watch our preparations. And because I interrupted those preparations to take down this story (H1), we managed to burn the first two pans of piroshki. The story has a happy ending, though: my father enjoyed even the burned piroshki—or pretended to, on the recommendation of my mother, quick to remember the words of "Tante Hulda": "Charcoal is good for the stomach."

Though I did not remember this story at the time, it occurred once within the context of a recorded follow-up interview (H2), in response to my direct questioning about Pribik, its generous protagonist. In earlier and later taped interviews—and in accordance with Zeitlin’s character principle—my father always seemed to remember Pribik as a conductor whose sense of timing was absolute, "perfect." For example: "He was a fine musician and a fine conductor. And musicians used to mark their time according to his watch: they knew that he’s always right." (15 November 1987; 10/A) "And the musicians used to mark time according to his watch?" "No, they set their watches, and he was always right... It was so perfect." (1 August 1988; R10/B) But my father never followed those recollections of Pribik with the herring story.

H1: 18 July 1988

GS: "Silyotka," I see there, "silyotka," herring. And it’s there, in Odessa, now, like. I’m back in Odessa, little boy—well, no, not so little boy. And the conductor of the opera in Odessa is Pribik, Josef Pribik—was conductor of the opera. Fine conductor, too. He’s conducting all famous operas—Russian, Italian—all famous operas. And conducting, that time, was conducting Tosca.
Was already bad times in Odessa; was shortage of everything. And that was the day they giving out herring. So the cello player, by name of Tyerpehleeveh, he comes in late for rehearsal. And, already, the herring is gone; was no more herring. And there's big solo, cello solo, before the end of the last act.

So Tyerpehleeveh, he says, "No 'silyotka,' no solo."--"No herring, no Tosca."

So the, Pribik, so Pribik, he says to him, Tyerpehleeveh, "You take my share."

H2: 2 January 1988 (R6/A)

CS: Hm. And Josef Pribik?

GS: Josef Pribik was the conductor of the opera in Odessa. And cellist, Tyerpehleeveh. They were giving out herring that day, and Tyerpehleeveh came late for rehearsal, the cello player. And was no more herring.

So he said, "No herring, no Tosca."

So Pribik says, "Take my share."

CS: Tyerpehleeveh, that was his last name or everything?

GS: I don't remember first name.

CS: How do you know that story?

GS: I was there.

CS: Oh, you were there too? Doing what?

GS: Where?

CS: The time that Pribik . . .

GS: . . . That's Odessa. I'm telling you about Odessa.

CS: Well, he was the conductor of the orchestra, Josef Pribik?

GS: Yes.

CS: Yes. And what did you do?

GS: I used to go to the opera.

CS: And you saw what happened, with the herring?
GS: Yeah.

CS: Oh. Why were they giving out herring?

GS: Was shortage of everything. You still don’t understand.

CS: It was instead of salaries?

GS: Yeah.

CS: So they paid them in food instead of . . .

GS: . . . That time, that day, was just giving out, uh, things, various things. I imagine, among them, herring. And there’s a big cello solo at the end of the act, last act.

And Tyerpehleeveh said, "No 'silyotka,' no solo."

So Pribik says to him, "You can take my share."

3. "WATERMELONS"

On two occasions, my father told this story when he had been offered watermelon for dessert. The first (unrecorded) telling occurred in September 1987 at a neighbor’s dinner party, when Josefina, the hostess, asked my father why he looked so pensively at his plate. He responded with a request that she remove the seeds from, and cut up, his watermelon, and with a version (in Spanish) of this story. The second telling (W1) occurred in July 1989 on the patio at home, when I—well-trained in the likes and dislikes of my parents—brought my father a dish of deseeded, presliced watermelon. Similar versions (W2 and W3) were recorded on 4 October 1988 and 26 October 1988, respectively, when my mother, a born folklorist, asked my father if he remembered any of the smells or feelings of his childhood. References to the story (R4/B, 6/B, 11/A) were recorded subsequently when I—lacking my mother’s instinctive feel—questioned my father directly about the places and people of his past. (e.g., "And in Cherson is where you saw the watermelons being thrown?"; "Do you remember the others? Do you remember their names?")

W1: July 1989/date difficult to decipher

GS: As I remember myself, I’m in the port of Odessa, and a maid was carrying me around, in her arms—a maid, by name of . . . Marusa. Marusa, like the song. (hums; sings "Marusa Travilusta"/"Marusa Took Her Poison") Always, I’m in her arms. And she, she’s taking me always to the
port because she’s got a boyfriend there. She had a boyfriend who worked on the port of Odessa.

And we’re going around the port, collecting all kind of things, things to eat—Eastern fruits, thinks like "bashmala," "tangier," all Oriental fruits. And I remember, still, all kinda different languages I hear there. And seeing, I see a lotta people, different people.

A lotta people working in the port, carrying "karpuzzi," watermelons—the big ones, heavy—throwing them one to the other. They’re standing in line, those working men, throwing watermelons from one to another, until all the melons get to the city, far away Odessa, center of Odessa. Tremendous job, they had to do, to throw those melons—and hot weather, too. That’s how they made a living. And to do that job, they get just few kopecks a day—all the melons they can eat, and just four, five kopecks a day. And always throwing, throwing, all day long throwing those melons to the city.

W2: 26 October 1988 (5/A)

IS: You remember anything, I’ve already, always heard stories about things that happened outside of your home. Do you remember anything that ever happened inside your house, with your mother and father? Her cooking, or anything like that? Or does, did that all escape you? You know, the things you did as a child with your parents.

GS: Yes. My mother was cooking for my father all the time, in the house . . .

IS: . . . I realize that, but I mean, do you remember anything . . .

GS: . . . I remember those episodes.

IS: Well, what about them?

GS: What’s there to know about?

IS: The kinds of things she cooked, how she cooked, how she dressed—what sort of smells you remember, what kind of food. Was it borscht, or . . .

GS: . . . I don’t know. Just cooking.

CS: Was it the first house that you had a maid, you remember, carrying you about?
GS: Yes. My mother was, hired a maid to carry me. I was a little baby. And she had a boyfriend who worked on the port of Odessa, and she brought home all kinda things that we know, appreciated—"tangier," "baklava," things like that.

CS: What's "angier"?

GS: "Tangier" is also a round one, very sweet.

CS: A candy? Cookie?

GS: No, a fruit, Oriental. And brought it from the port. I still remember the conversation, in French and all kinds of nationalities, was at the port. They spoke different languages. Of course, to me, it was nothing. I could not understand anyway. Some things . . .

CS: . . . The maid used to take you to the port?

GS: Yes. She did carry me, yes. Food was the most important thing. A lotta people working in the port, carrying "karpuzzi"—what's that?

CS: Melons.

GS: Melons. They could eat all the melons. I think they receive about five kopecks a day, and they had to throw all those melons to the city.

CS: You mean one to each other, to each other, passing the melon?

GS: Yes. That, also, was a big thing. The Greeks had the biggest little store where they sold those things on the boulevard.

W3: 4 October 1987 (4/A)

IS: Was it cold, or warm, or what kind of weather, climate, or . . .

GS: . . . Hot.

IS: Hot?

GS: I remember how we used to throw the watermelons from one to another, those working men in the port. They stood in one line, throwing watermelons, one to another, till it came to, I don't know how far they had to do it. In the center of the city, there were trucks, or something, that had to pick up, picked up those watermelons.
Imagine that? That's how they made a living.

IS: I saw that in Argentina. And I also saw them carrying bananas on their heads, on the boats.

GS: But those watermelons, some of them very large, too.

4. "COFFEE"

I have never been able to visit my parents without planning and implementing some kind of clean-up campaign. And even when I'm pressed for time—as I was during my month-long Christmas visit in 1988—I always manage to clean, if nothing else, the kitchen cupboards. In the interests of thoroughness, I insist on cleaning the cupboards in three stages: first, empty the shelves; second, do "everything else" but: third, refill the shelves. In the interests of fairness (because the state of the cupboards has been the cause of much quarreling and crying), the second stage is a watershed usually as long as my visit: I empty the shelves the day I arrive, refill them the night before I leave, and do "everything else" the rest of the time, with the result that the kitchen usually looks its worst when I'm visiting.

But no job is all bad, and the process has its perkish repercussions: my Christmas 1988 campaign exposed a stockpile of the "special tea" and "special coffee"—some, in their original, airtight plastic and foil containers, still usable—that I had brought, some years before, from Greece. Thus, I interrupted my cleaning, one evening, to find and polish the special Greek "briki" and tiny copper coffee cups—that I had brought many years before, when my parents still lived in the States—and to make my father a cup of "special" coffee.

The result of my special effort was this story, which, I believe, had been brewing for some time: less concentrated versions occurred in interviews taped between November 1987 and February 1988. In the version of the first interview, 15 November 1987 (P1/B), my father struggles for a while with the limerick, which he claims to have heard first from Felix de Cola, his "partner in crime" (i.e., his two-piano partner). In this version, too, he recalls that one of the popular pieces played for King Ferdinand was Padilla's "El Relicario." When mentioning (and humming) the Tchaikovsky piece, in the interview of 24 November 1987 (P2/A), my father recalls that his playing pleased the King, and that "Tchaikovsky dedicated the romance to his sweetheart, already that fat . . . " (opening both arms to indicate a distance of about four feet). Distanced by more than a month, in the interview of 3 February 1988 (V2/A), my father perfects the limerick and answers direct questions about the story’s players, recalling that the
instrument he played at the King's palace was "a big Steinway piano." On 9 February 1938 (V4/A), in the last interview referring to this story, my father adds the name of the Romanian hotel and the special coffee.

C1: 15 December 1988

CS: Here, Papa, I made you some special coffee.

GS: Special coffee? Special coffee I had also in Romania, in Bucharest, where I'm staying the, staying at Hotel... Princhiar, the hotel. And every day, every morning, I'm ordering, first thing every morning, I'm ordering my coffee, my cafe, cafe Margiloman, in name of Prime Minister. This was the time when Romania, out of nothing, she became a big country: five provinces she took. She took Basserabia, from Russia; Transylvania, from Hungary: Bannat, Serbia; Dobrujoj, Bulgaria; and the fifth, one more, from Germany, must be... Czerenovitz. And all of a sudden, out of nothing, Romania, she became a big country.

So this was the time when I'm in Bucharest, playing with Grigori Dinicu. And every time, every week, every Sunday, we going to the Kotrochaynee, to the palace—the summer palace, summer residence—of the King Ferdinand to play. So every Sunday, we're coming in—Dinicu and myself—to play for the King, who sits, with his family, the children, and his son, the, later, Crown Prince, who he becomes later the King Carol. And they sitting, all of them, listening, from behind the "schirma"—small, fine "schirma," screen like.

I'm sitting at the piano, fine big piano, and we playing with Dinicu all the popular tunes of the day. Till the Ferdinand, the Kind Ferdinand, always he used to say, to call to Dinicu from behind the screen, "Tell that Russian Bolshevik to play me something of Tchaikovsky." Which I did, of course. Always, I played for him the famous "Romance" (hums), which he liked it, very much. And afterwards, he comes out, sees us, feeds us. Of course, he's not eating with us; but we having always fine food, as much as we can eat. Until the time comes, when it's time for us to go back to Bucharest...

CS: ... Hm, interesting a story.

GS: Wait! But this is not the end of the story—where I am? Yes, now, time has changed; many years has passed. And, coming back now to the King Carol, I'm this time in Mexico, in a restaurant, fine restaurant, fine club. Club Minuit. Fine wine, fine food, fine
music--everything else. And sitting there, drinking, eating, listening the music, in the same club, the same restaurant with me, is the same, the son of the Ferdinand, the King Carol and the famous Magda Lupescu. Well, no more King because already, that time, he gave up, renounced to be King, divorced his Queen, wife, Greek wife, to be with the Magda, Magda Lupescu. How it goes?

Her name was Magda Lupescu.
She came to King Carol's rescue.
It's a wonderful thing
To lie under the King.
Is Democracy better,
I ask you?

This is that they always used to say about her, then, for her doings, goings, goings on with the King. Now, this is different time already altogether. Romania, this time, wartime, is one of the enemy's side, on the side of the enemy of the allies. And there is already no recognition, official recognition, of the foreign countries who are enemy of the allies. All the time, we're being warned to stay away from the foreign enemy, not to do anything, mix in, with the Romanians. So now, this time, I see the Carol, the King Carol, after so many years has passed. And it's impossible for me to recognize, to do anything, to even to say hello. Like his father, the old man, the King Ferdinand was recognizing the official, was trying always to preserve the protocol to his musicians, now we doing the same, same darn thing. And that's the story.

5. "COINTREAU"

In late summer of 1987, I arrived in Spain to find that my father had recently developed a passion for breakfast waffles. With patience, at first, and pride, my mother found, in my father's passion, an opportunity to disprove her reputation as "the Frau of a house, but not a Hausfrau" (and her retirement had, apparently, provided her other such opportunities, for I was treated, during my stay, to an array of extraordinary dishes--from "Rouladen mit Kartoffeln" to "spinach souffle a la sicilienne") that caused me to reconsider my mother's culinary potential.

However, a few weeks into my stay, I realized that the waffle passion had become a potential problem: because the waffle batter had to be made from scratch, because the waffle iron had to be heated in stages, because the entire waffle-operation had to be undertaken in solitude (with concentration, and without distraction from three curious cats
and three huge, hungry canines), my mother had started to get up almost two hours before the rest of us.

To give my mother a much-needed rest, I took over operation-waffle, devising a variety of time-saving stratagem (from bottled batter and canned cakes to reserves of frozen waffles) and suggesting a variety of breakfast alternatives designed to preserve the spirit of the crisped cakes and the peace of the household. Thus, one evening, I suggested that we start the next day with "Oma's pancakes" (an old household tradition) a la grecque (with a special sauce of fresh oranges and cointreau that I had perfected in Greece).

At first, my father responded by suggesting an alternative topping: the cranberry sauce that I had brought from the States. (Since my parents' move, carting ten or fifteen cans of cranberry has become a new household tradition: Spain has only recently started to import a tasteless variety of cranberry in tiny, caviar-sized jars.) Because my mother started to object--she wanted to save the cranberry sauce for special occasions--I suggested that my father at least taste my topping. Of course, after his response (O!), I did not insist on the cointreau sauce. (And my substitute toppings were so successful that my father's waffle passion eventually became a pancake passion (see "Waffles").

When, a few months later, my father became sick, the cointreau story took the form of an admonition: Josefina, the neighbor who recommended Dr. Lara, advised, also, that my mother place the customary liqueur tray--with bottle and glass--someplace in the sickroom, within reach of the doctor. In sickness and in health, my mother has always sought my father's advice before making any kind of decision: when she brought up Josefina's suggestion, my father responded as follows:

GS: Get for him what you want, Mamsy. Buy for him the best, fine, best brandy, what he likes to drink. You know best. It's up to you. But, only don't come in with those bottles of cointreau, big bottles. What else you get, I don't know. But don't get, not those big bottles of cointreau. I just can't take it, to see now from my bed those faces, Siguranza faces, of, those faces of those guys coming in. You know. I told you before. (Journal entry, 23 December 1987)

Needless to say, after my father's admonition, my mother inquired after the doctor's drinking preferences and placed a bottle of his favorite brandy on the traditional tray. Thus, where a bottle of cointreau and my father were concerned, I seemed always to be in the wrong place at the
wrong time: Although my father referred several times (e.g.,
C2 and C3) to the associations that "cointreau" seems still
to hold for him, those associations were triggered not by the
taste or sight of a drink, but by the sound of a word.

C1:  11 September 1987

GS: Can't you find something else to make it? I see
cointreau, and it's, I see, makes me to see those
Siguranza faces, Siguranza guys coming in, killers of the
poor people crossing the border, sitting, drinking those
big bottles of cointreau. Here I am sitting, playing--
this time, with me, three people with me, always
together, Aliosha, Zhunka, Pyedya, the three together
playing--in Kishinaw, just early Kishinaw days. And in
Kishinaw, we playing in Londonskaya Gastinitsa, Hotel
Londres, and everyday, coming in to hotel, those
Siguranza guys, with all the money they taking from the
poor people, poor refugees--just killing them and take
their money. Then, they coming in to us, listening to
us playing, and ordering those big bottles of cointreau.
All the time drinking cointreau, which they paid for it
with the refugee money: they spending all the money they
take from the poor refugees to drink cointreau. When I
see cointreau, I just see before me those faces, killers,
makes me to see those faces of killers. Just makes me
sick.

C2:  15 November 1987 (11/A)

GS: Siguranza: Later on, in Kishinaw, I met all those people
that were killers. I recognized them. They used to come
to Londonskaya, Hotel Londres, where I played. And they
were drinking cointreau, big bottles of cointreau. Those
are the ones that were killers.

IS: Romanian killers or Russian killers?

GS: Just killers. I don't know who they are--Romanian,
Russian . . .

IS: . . . What were they killing?

GS: The innocent people crossing the border. They're taking
away their money.

CS: Were they paid to kill? Paid killers?

GS: They would kill and take the money after.

IS: You mean, they were just murdering people in order to get
money for themselves?
GS: Yeah.
IS: I mean, nothing political or anything--just lousy people?
GS: Yes. That was awful.
CS: And how did you recognize them?
GS: Because I know them. I knew them, their faces. When they came to the Londres, I knew who they are.
CS: Hm. Were you scared?
GS: I wasn’t scared: I was out of their reach.
C3: 15 November 1987 (11/8)
GS: (omit "Budilniki" story preceding this discussion, which suggests his fear that, in fact, he was never out of reach of the Siguranza) But this Romanian, he could’ve sent me out.
CS: This was after you had crossed the border sometime?
GS: Yeah.
CS: And they could still send you back?
GS: Well, that was in a big city.
CS: This was Kishinaw. What reason would he have to send you out? I mean, how could, you send, he send you out?
GS: By, "Arrest him!" By, "Police! Call the police!"
CS: Just for not eating? Just for not eating your food? Or he would make some pretext?
GS: No. For making an agitation. Always can find an excuse. That’s why, I tell you, up to this day, when I see cointreau, you know, those bottles of cointreau, I don’t like it because I see, visualize those Siguranza guys coming in hotel, sitting, ordering all those things, after they kill the refugees.
CS: Hm. They’re the ones, you said, the killers, you could recognize?
GS: I recognize them.
CS: Well, that must have been expensive, the cointreau?
GS: Huh?

CS: It must have been expensive, the cointreau. And they had the money to buy it.

GS: Londres was an expensive place, Hotel Londres.

6. "LIVER"

On two occasions, in January and September of 1988, my father opened this story with the comment, "Every time I see liver, I think of Carmencita Prenee and Fernando." However, since both the lunch dinner (of L1) and the dinner liver (of L2) were ground, and not sliced (to make cutting, chewing, and digesting easier), I believe that his story represented a response as much to smell and taste as to sight. Additionally, although the original response to the liver was my father's, in L2, my mother found, in the mention of Carmencita Prenee and Fernando, an opportunity to tell the story of my parent's 100-day trip on the Dutch freighter, the Ganemedes--an interesting story that, perhaps more interestingly, my father does not tell (except in dual narration). When, after many side trips and asides, my parents finally reached the original story--"the one we started this whole story, the reason we started this story"--my mother and father gave different reasons to explain the pathos of Carmencita Prenee and Fernando.

L1: 5 September 1988

GS: Every time I see liver, I think of Carmencita Prenee and Fernando. And I think that was pathetic, just pathetic story of theirs. Because every time they do, try to do something to find the way to be together, whatever they do, they cannot make it. They trying always to be together, but she is always singing, always travelling here and there to sing, making money to live, make a living. And then she comes in, just few days, to be with him, bringing money, and then leaving him alone again, again travelling here and there.

When I first met them, was in Bogota. And she was singing in small places here and there. And here, Bucky Harris, he's good friend of mine--from the Grant Advertising, was called those days--he's just crazy about Carmencita Prenee. So I have to write, now, specially, one arrangement a week for Carmencita Prenee. And in just few days, in no time, she becomes crazy, just crazy about my arrangements and wants to have all the time new arrangements, those special arrangements of mine.
But for some reason, Fernando had that time a friend who he wants to take away my job, conducting, give it to his friend. Only Bucky Harris, he's good friend of mine and he, of course, he supports me. Says, "Don't worry Gregory. It's your job."

So, of course, Fernando with his friend, they out of a job. But still Fernando, poor nice feller, he finds somehow the way to make the money, pay for my arrangements, so Carmencita Prenee can sing. Only the more she's singing, becoming always more successful, the more somehow she's leaving him alone, travelling, always travelling here and there, making money to be together with him. And he leaves, left already his wife--by name of Martita--his children, whatever he had, to be together with her, Carmencita. Only whatever they try to find the way, never they can be together.

And that's how I found him again, years later, in Mexico. Years has passed, and I'm in Mexico now when I find Bucky Harris.

Says, "Gregory, you know who's here?"

"No," I says.

"You have to go visit them."

"Who?"

"Carmencita Prenee and Fernando. They here, living together someplace, here in Mexico."

So I go to visit them, and here I find him, Fernando, alone. Again, Carmencita, she's travelling, singing someplace, comes in like before, just few days, and then again travelling here and there. Again, same pathetic story of theirs. And the day I'm visiting, supposed, according to Fernando, supposed to be some day where only they serving liver. So he makes for me liver and tries to tell me just happened to be liver day. But, I suppose, they having liver every day because that's all they can afford.

And that was story of theirs, pathetic story of their love. And that's how we say, always say about love that it's not, "Love is not a potato. You can't throw that out of the window."
L2: 8 January 1988 (R10/A-R10/B)

GS: Every time I see liver, I think of Carmencita Preenee and Fernando.

IS: My goodness. I haven’t thought of them in years. That’s an interesting story. You should tell that story to Cristina.

CS: Alright, let me make sure this is on alright. OK. Go ahead.

IS: Actually, this shouldn’t start with Carmencita Preenee. It should start with Buenos Aires, where we left. Shall I tell this, or should I get Papa to interpolate?

CS: Whatever you want, Tutti.

IS: OK. We left Buenos Aires, and you were—God, what was Cristina, two months old? Or, no, she wasn’t even, she was just a few weeks old when we left Buenos Aires. And cold, cold, cold weather. We went to the "aduana," and the "aduana" didn’t even want to open our suitcases: it was just simply too cold, and they didn’t want to bother.

So we went on board this Dutch boat. When I looked at the boat, instead of going up a gangplank to a boat, here we went down. I thought, "What kind of a boat is this?" We left Buenos Aires into a terrible story--from Buenos Aires to Uruguay. And Papa told me I would not like to sail because I would get seasick. And Papa was on board the boat, feeding the fish for about three days. And then we got to Uruguay.

What was the first place? Where was the first place we stopped in Uruguay after that storm? Oh, and the sailors were all complaining about the storm because the waves lashed over the boat and went into the porthole of another couple that was there. It was really quite a severe storm. We went, where did we get?

GS: She’s not here. You’re talking . . .

IS: I’m talking here. OK. Where was the first port we stopped, Gregory, in Uruguay? It wasn’t, it wasn’t the big city?

GS: Puerta de Este?

IS: We didn’t stop there, did we? We went a little bit further. Well, we stopped in Uruguay and picked up some more passengers and then started this magnificent,
magnificent journey where boats never stop because this was a tramp steamer, one that picked up freight—or freighter, I should say. But passenger trips, boats, never would stop at these weird ports. Oh, I need a map. We stopped at, at, Oh, I need a map in front of me. We stopped at . . .

GS: . . . Kalamazoo?

IS: Kalamazoo is in the United States. We stopped at, uh, in Brazil. Santos, I think, was the first one, where they have the--I have to find the map; I have to look it up on the map and tell you exactly. But we stopped in one place, then we stopped in Camamu. Don’t you remember when we were there and we arrived at nighttime and all we saw, we looked out of the porthole, all you could see were palm trees and all these natives standing out there looking at the boat? Well, we were the exciting things for them, and, of course, we were excited at seeing this. In the morning, when we woke, oh, the lights, the dogs, and the men were there—you didn’t see anything else. And the, in the dark, you couldn’t tell it was palm trees: it was dark except for the lights on the wharf. In the morning, when we woke up, and looked at, through the porthole, here were thousands upon thousands of palm trees.

And, of course, the stevedores, or these natives, were busy doing something with the boat that we didn’t pay attention to: we had several hours to, to escape from the boat and go walking along the path. Uh, the women that lived in these little shacks alongside the path, uh, held up their children. They were all toothless, by the way; they had no teeth. Held up their children to look at these people from the boat; and we, from the boat, were looking at these people holding up their children. But so prolific is this land that the coconuts fell on passengers’ heads while we were walking—I mean, they just dropped: bing, bang, boom, like that.

We went, we were invited, there was a mine there, in Camamu, and we were invited to the foreman’s house. And there were three people in charge of this mine; it was a boride mine. Three people were in charge: an American foreman, and under him were a Frenchman and a German. And neither of them could communicate with each other as far as languages go, but they all got along very well. But the American foreman said he had somebody send seeds, vegetable seeds, from the States, and he said,

"Breadfruit grows here. Everything grows here. The ground is so fertile, whatever you do comes, comes up."
So he said--he told Papa and I--he got seeds. Two weeks later--he just threw them in the ground--two weeks later, he had huge carrots, huge everything else, just. Then, had furniture; his furniture was made by hand. And he showed us the chairs and the things that the natives made--beautiful mark, perfectly plane, I mean, smooth, smooth, by, but with the markings of their native instruments.

OK. Then, we went on. From there, we went on. We stopped in a couple of other places and ended up in . . . (tape cuts/IS gets map)

CS: OK.

IS: Montevideo was where we stopped; that was it. Montevideo. And then we went, then we went to, to Santos. Santos was where we stopped and went into the port in there, where they had the little--no, they had the monkeys in another place. We went further on to Santos, where they had the monkeys. Oh, no--which?--oh, no, further upward, they. Where was the city of churches, Gregory? Is that Santos? Where you had the lower level and the higher level and the square-rigged sail boats that we saw passing from our boat? Then, well, anyhow, then we went to Camamu after that and came back to Rio de Janeiro.

And then, from Rio de Janeiro, that was a long trip all the way around to Camamu, to, uh, Trinidad. And that’s where Papa went in. Our pass-, it was such a long trip that our passport ran out, and Papa had to go there. And we went to another place along the way--Salvador was the city of churches. Santos had the little monkeys, the little tiny monkeys that fit into the pockets of the people, were carrying these little tiny delightful little creatures, little itsy bitsy creatures. Then Salvador was the city of the churches, and that’s where we went in and stayed. And then, from Salvador to Trinidad was a long trip, and our passports, passport ran out; and we had to go to the Colombian Consulate. Do you remember that story?

GS: Well, tell it to her: you know how to do it better.

IS: But this is your story, Gregory.

GS: Go ahead.

IS: OK. We went into the pass-, into the office; and here was this very severe looking man behind a long desk.
And he said, "Passports, please." And he looked at them and he said, "I can’t do anything. You were born in Russia?"

"Si."

"You were born in Germany?"

"Si."

"But you’re ‘enamigos’ of Colombia. You can’t, you know." Then he looked a little more carefully at the passport and he said, uh, "You’re a musician, it says here?"

"Yes, sir. I’m a musician."

"What instrument do you play?"

"Piano."

"Piano? ‘Dios mio!’ Come here."

So he opened up the desk, somehow or other, so we could pass through, went through another door behind the desk. And behind all this was this lovely apartment where he and his wife lived. And as we walked in, on the right-hand side were two small pianos--upright, but spinet, not spinet: they were like your, a little bit higher, studio, like two studio pianos, or two little upright pianos, side by side.

And he said, "Sit down and play." So, whatever he put in front of Papa, Papa naturally just played off the bat. "Dios mio! You have to give a concert tonight," the Consulate said.

The wife comes running in, holds the baby--which was you, Cristina--holds the baby, takes her from me and holds the baby, and says, "But it has to be at 8:00 because we have to go to a Panamanian dinner at 6:00." (Or "It had to be at 10:00 because we had to go to a Panamanian dinner at 8:00." I forgot the time or the hours.)

And Gregory said, "But I can’t. Our boat leaves."

And he said, "No, it doesn’t. It can’t leave until I give the Captain permission. I have to give him the permission that he is able to leave, uh, Trinidad; and without this permission, he is not allowed to leave. So you’ll give your concert, and the Captain will leave when
the concert is over."

So Papa gave a concert that night, and we got in the car. The Consul himself drove us to the boat, racing through the streets of Trinidad—the poor Captain, sitting on deck, going stir crazy because he doesn’t know what’s happened to his permission to leave—and arrives with the Colombian Consulate and Papa and you and me. And the boat took off again.

The, from there, we went to, uh, Caracas. We were down there in Caracas, and the Captain took us to a very beautiful hotel along the beach there. It was just built, and it was new; but now, then, afterwards, they built many more, very luxurious hotels. Then, we went from there to—oh, what was the city where they had a, they were having a strike, and there were some English boats there that had to throw, they’d been waiting for two weeks to get into port, and all their potatoes got rotten in the tropics; and they threw all the potatoes overboard, into the bay there. This was in the northern part of Puerto, what was that city, Gregory, in Carac-, in Venezuela, where we stopped?

Well, we finally got in and did our thing, went on, and got to—oh, we went, also, to, did we stop in Curacao and Aruba with the boat? No. We just went through the Venezuelan coast. Then we got into Mara-, Maracay, uh, Maracaibo. And that was very interesting because the Caribbean and the—uh, what river is there? Or the bay? The two meet, the waters meet, and it’s very turbulent and very muddy as you go in—oh, Lake Maracay, of course. We went in there through this very turbulent water and got into Maracaibo, which is extremely hot, extremely hot. And by the time we reached Maracaibo, the boat was way up in the sky: all of this boat that had been under water when we were in—we had to step down the gangplank when we were in Buenos Aires, and it was like going three stories up by the time we got to Maracaibo. Papa met the gentleman from the conservatory there, who said, "What’s wrong with your leg?" What was his name? You don’t remember, huh?

Well, from then on, we went to Columbus, Colombia, excuse me. And what—I can’t think of these ports today. What’s wrong with me? What’s the seacoast town we arrived in? Well, we stayed at a hotel there, took the plane, and all of this brings us not to Bogota. We took the plane to Bogota. And as we passed over it, you see the little river, the Magdalena River, through the jungles on each side—very, very nice. We got to the Rio, to Bogota, and Papa deci—, we stayed in a hotel,
right across the street from the Presidential Palace, where, if we looked out the hotel window, the soldiers were marching, were marching back and forth on guard. Papa went by and stood there, and we started to laugh because it was, he started to laugh because it was so funny. And they started to laugh, too, because they began to feel rather funny themselves. But, the next day, I think, Papa went into the office of Jaime, Leon . . .

GS: . . . No, Jaime . . .

IS: . . . Hernandez, Jaime Hernandez, and said, "Well, I'm here. You have a job for me?"

And Jaime Hernandez said, "Oh, my gosh! But that was two years ago. I haven't got anything for you now. That was two years ago when I offered you this job, this job."

And, at that moment, the door opened, and Papa's friend Bucky Harris walked in. And he looked. He says, "Gregory, what are you doing? What are you doing here?"

And he said, "Well, I came here to get a job, but Jaime Hernandez says he doesn't have one for me. And we came all the way from . . . "

Well, I guess he explained the story to Bucky. So Bucky took one look. He says, "Jaime, my company will pay one half of Gregory's salary, and your company will pay one half of Gregory's salary. And we'll start him right away."

GS: No. And I go to the station, and he said, . . .

CS: . . . Oh, you went to the station?

GS: No, he said, . . .


GS: . . . He'll talk with Ramirez.

IS: Oh, OK. Well, see, I wasn't in on any of this. I was sitting at home. OK. Well, you tell the story because I don't know any more than that.

GS: Well, says he'll go to Ramirez. And Ramirez says, "Alright. Let him. I will pay it."

And, little by little, I took over all the programs because I, nobody knew anything there about music. Whatever they knew about music was very elementary. So
I showed them how to play the piano, how to arrange, how to arrange. And, most important thing I showed them, to come in on time.

CS: How did you show them how to come in on time?

GS: I was on time.

IS: Oh, he means not on time to the music, but on time to rehearsals.

GS: And Ramirez--when was that when Ramirez told me about, "I hate my countrymen."

IS: Oh, that was, that was much after that. First of all, the reason Bucky was there--Carmencita Prenee, the one we started this whole story, the reason we started this story was the singer, and he was in love with Carmencita Prenee.

GS: And she laughed at him, didn't she?

IS: Yes. And she didn't really want to have anything to do with him, but Bucky Harris was very hot for her. And, so, Papa started out, he had to write one arrangement a week for Carmencita Prenee. Well, they became overnight sensations: whatever she sang, they just, whatever she sang, the audience began to look, they looked, the audience began to look forward to these arrangements.

GS: Besides, I wrote a lot for orchestra.

IS: Wait. Not at the beginning. You, because you told me, "I am going crazy. I can't do this. We've got to get out of here. This is one arrangement a week. What am I gonna do? That's nothing." And then you went to Ramirez, and that's when you began to get the orchestra and everything, and you showed them, as you said, you came in on time, you had everything set up before the musicians arrived--the music, the stands, everything was prepared, no mistakes.

Anyhow, long about a year after that, or something like that, that was when we had the knock on the door, and a man comes in, "I'm the manager of the, your competition, the other radio station. How much do you make at Nueva Granada?"

And Papa said, "Well, I make so much." I mean, "So much money."

And he said, "Well, I will give you so much more." And
it was a considerable lump more, you know.

And Papa said, "Well, alright, but I have to talk to Roberto Ramirez first." So Papa went to Roberto Ramirez and, uh, said, "So and so came to the house, from the other radio station, and offered me so much money."

And Roberto Ramirez looked at him and said, "Alright, we'll pay you that."

But Papa said, "No. Retroactively, I want the salary, too."

So, for six--I think it was about six months--so, for six months that he had been working for Ramirez, he got retroactive salary, which, also--and the "aganaldo," which you get, every year you get an extra month. Like, instead of twelve months' pay, you get the thirteen months of pay.

CS: Hm.

IS: So, this must've been the second time: the first time, it didn't happen; he just augmented the salary. So, the second time, there was a knock on the door six months later. The first time, it was just a knock and he aug- , the augmentation of the salary.

Second knock, the man comes in from the other radio station and said, "How much are you making now? Do you remember be?" You know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. "I'm . . . ."

And he says, "Yes, I remember you."

"Well, how much are you making now at Nueva Granada?"

"I make so much."

"Well, we'll give you so much." And that was even a bigger boost than the first boost.

So Papa said, "Well, alright. But I have to go and speak to Enrique Ramirez." So Papa went to Enrique Ramirez the second time and said, "Alright. This man came again, and he's offered me so much to go to such and such . . . ."

GS: Not Enrique, Roberto . . .

IS: . . . Roberto Ramirez.

"And you have to go"--ach--"He wants me to go to the
other station."

And this time Roberto said, "I'll pay you the salary."

And Papa said, this time said, "Aha. But this time, it has to be with"—uh, what do you call it, the backtrack? . . .

GS: . . . Retroactive . . .

IS: . . . Retroactive salary.

So he paid for one year—what was it? One year, I think. So, one year retroactive salary, plus the augmentation of salary.

Then, the third time, there was a knock on the door. And the man comes again.

And he says, "No, I can't do it, but let me talk to Roberto. I don't think I can do it. I mean, I don't think I can do it, but let me talk to Roberto." So Papa goes to Roberto.

And says, "Look, Gregory, I can't do anything anymore. But I can give you another program with the full, full"—how many men were in the orchestra now? Like a symphony orchestra . . .

GS: . . . Forty. It couldn't be any more . . .

IS: . . . "The full salary. And you will get such and such salary. It's a big company that's giving this program."

GS: Tobacco.

IS: Oh, tobacco. Do you remember what tobacco? I don't remember.

"But it's a big company that, that will be putting on this program. And you will have it once a week, plus your other work that you have here."

And it was, it was a tremendous boost, just a tremendous boost.

And Papa said, "But Roberto, why do you do this? Why do you do this for me?" He says, "I'm a foreigner. Why do you do this?"

GS: In English, other . . .
IS: ... Yes, always spoke to Papa in Spanish.

GS: He speaks perfect English.

IS: So, he said, "Gregory, come with me." And he embraces Papa, walks from his office out to the . . .

GS: . . . Balcony . . .

IS: . . . To the balcony that overlooks the stage.

And he said, "You, Gregory have shown my countrymen how things are to be done correctly. You come here before rehearsal; you set up the stands. When, before you came, when there was music, there were so many mistakes. And they'd sit during the rehearsal correcting the mistakes in the music. When you came here, everything was perfect: you rehearsed, it was done; it sounded beautiful, it was new. You have shown my countrymen something they have never known before. You deserve it."

And this, those, that was one of the last times, I think, except at the dinner . . .

GS: . . . Who, the guy who was against me, I gave him . . .

IS: . . . Jesus, Jesus.

GS: I gave him all the music, too, Jesus.

IS: Jesus, no.

GS: Jesus Ventura.

IS: Ventura. That was another conductor, and he was very much against Papa at the beginning. And at the dinner that they had where they gave Papa the medallion, gold piece, with signatures. At the beginning, when he was against him, that was one thing. At the end, he gave Gregory, Papa, the Colombian flag and said, "We pray that you shall return again, and that we'll all be here to meet you." It was very, very nice.

Anyhow, by the way, I left out Recife. We were also in Recife on that trip with the boat. I just saw it here on the map. Oh . . .

GS: . . . And then, then, Carmencita went to Mexico, didn't she?

CS: You never told the story about that singer.
IS: Well, that's Carmencita Prenee. Yes, I did. She had, I said, Papa made one arrangement. Oh, yes, there's a story. Just a minute; I'll be back. (tape cuts)

IS: OK. Some of the arrangements she made, I mean, Papa made--remember "Agachate Su Sombrero"?

GS: No. Many, I made.

IS: And "Linda Capriccio"? (sings) By the way, in the Bolivar concert, Papa did something with "Agachate Su Sombrero." Yes. Didn't you? Yes. OK. That story about, that brought this all on, when we met Carmen, she told us--she was Negro, no? Or dark?

GS: Negroite.

IS: Ne-, Indian part, whatever. Anyhow, her father came from one of the islands of the Rio Magdalene--or, I think she said the Rio Magdalene. And so she wanted to go there, to visit the place where he came from. And she sat there with the Indios, and, she said, if you are a guest there, they do special things. So they decided that for this guest--and this, she was a guest--they would make this wonderful drink that they have. So they all sat around and chewed whatever the bean it comes from and spit it into the community, communal pot until it fermented. And, she said, of course, the first guest--I mean, the honored guest--is the first one that is offered this drink. And she said, "Marvelous drink." And she said that she almost died.

But I remember one time, it was so funny: she knew how to get into doors and things because, one time, my closet door was locked and I couldn't open it. And she said, "Oh, it's nothing." And she took a bobbypin and opened my closet door. She says, "I can open any door you give me." I'll remember that too. She was a very popular singer in Bogota.

GS: And she was in love with that Argentinean who left his wife. What's her name?

IS: Fernando, Fernando was his name. Fernando what?

GS: But what's wife? Martita? Martha?

IS: Martha.

GS: He left his wife . . .

IS: . . . his two children . . .
... And the children. He remained with her. She was always travelling to make money and bring it to him to live on. That's pathetic.

And that's how I met them in Mexico. I met, in Mexico, Bucky Harris. Bucky says, "Gregory, you know who is here?"

I says, "No."

Says, "Fernando is here."

I says, "He's alone?"

"No. He lives with, with"--what's her name? Carmencita, no?

IS: Carmencita Prenee.

GS: "You have to visit him."

So I went to visit him. So I went. So it was--what was that day that they have only liver?

IS: Liver? Friday? Or, no. It's Tuesday, or something like that.

GS: So he treated me to liver dinner. But he had liver every day because he could not afford anything else.

CS: Hm.

GS: But he tried to tell me that he had, just happened to be liver day. I don't care. Well, what happened with them, finally, Inge?

IS: I don't know. You, you, we never really knew what happened beyond that.

GS: She didn't go to Buenos Aires, no?

IS: No. They stayed, I think, in Mexico, the last you heard. I, but they were always together--Fernando and Carmencita.

GS: Yeah.

IS: But what was, he, when you came, he was also not very pleased with you because, and Bucky said he would go and you would stay, remember? There was a whole big scandal in Bogota because he wanted his--oh, he wanted another
conductor.

GS: He wanted the one, the feller they visited every night.

IS: . . . In the club.

GS: In the club.

IS: Yeah. He wanted him because that was their friend. And Bucky said, "No, that man goes and Gregory comes in." That was, it was a great big thing. I'm trying to find Camamu on here. I found it once on here, once before.

GS: . . . I forgot his name . . .

IS: . . . Mainly, because you were there, Cristina.

GS: Anyway, I feel very sorry for them. I did many arrangements for her--she was a nice soul. And he was very nice feller. Well, he wanted to take my job away and give it to his friend. And I told him . . .

IS: . . . Well, you can't blame him for that because . . .

GS: . . . I told Bucky. Naturally, Bucky says, "You're fired now. You don't collect anything." He was very chagrinned, but he remained together with Carmencita all that time. And I kept writing arrangements for her. And he, out of his meager salary that he collected--or something, I don't know--still paid me for the arrangements. It really was pathetic.

IS: Yes. Because she liked the, she never had arrangements like that before, see?

GS: No. It was pathetic because she was with him all the time, and she could not be with him anyway because she had to travel and make money and bring it to him to make live, for their living expenses.

And that's why, how I met him in Mexico. They were together, too, but she was never home. She was always travelling. And poor Fernando stayed home.

IS: She went, Martita, his wife, went back to Buenos Aires. She was in New York for a while.

GS: Yeah. Didn't she have some children, too?

IS: She had two boys--or they had two boys. And, uh, she
knew a lot of very important people, Latin American people in New York, you know. She, you know ... 

GS: ... Poor soul. I really don’t know, they’re alive or dead by now. He was not much older than I am.

IS: Who, Fernando?

GS: Yeah.

IS: He was younger. Wasn’t he younger? I think so.

GS: Yeah.

IS: Bucky was older, but I think Fernando was younger.

GS: Bucky died, anyway.

IS: Well, that’s the story of Carmencita Prenee—with the Indians and the royal, the ... 

GS: "Love is not a potato. You can’t throw that out of the window."

IS: Papa’s always saying that.

CS: That’s a Russian proverb?

GS: Yeah.

CS: How do you say it in Russian?

GS: "Lubov ni kartoshka, ni veevleshias vak’oshka."

CS: Hm.

7. "Waffles"

My father’s penchant for pancakes did not become a passion until Christmas 1987, when I was requested to stuff my suitcases not only with cans of cranberry, but also with boxes of Aunt Jemima’s Original Pancake Mix (and the original request was revised, in the summer of 1988, to include Aunt Jemima’s buttermilk recipe as well). In the fall of 1987, however, operation-waffle was not yet a well-established maneuver, and pancakes were not yet a welcome alternative to breakfast waffles (see "Cointreau" above). Thus, when W1 was recorded, in early October, my father had just maneuvered the breakfast course and conversation (pancakes) to his advantage:

IS: Now, the trouble with this pancake is it fell apart.
GS: Who cares?

IS: I'm glad. So we have no problems. There's jam, sweetheart, to go on it. You don't want it?

GS: You know, sweetheart, I don't want those things. I rather have waffles. If you can make for me waffles, that would be fine. (3/A)

With the recorder switched off, my mother and I doused the smoldering tempers, consumed the rejected pancakes, and reheated the stockpiled waffles, while my father switched the conversation from pancakes to waffles—and to his remembrances of Victor Young. With tempers and waffles cooling off, I remembered to switch on the recorder and taped W1. W1, on the other hand, was recorded after waffles—not hotcakes!—had been served.

W1: 2 October 1987 (3/A)

IS: Now, the trouble with this pancake is it fell apart.

GS: Who cares?

IS: I'm glad. So we have no problems. There's jam, sweetheart, to go on it. You don't want it? (tape cuts; see white napkin)

GS: You know, sweetheart, I don't want those things. I rather have waffles. If you can make for me waffles, that would be fine. (tape on)

Talking about waffles brings me to early days of mine in Chicago, Chicago Theatre, with Victor Young, God bless his soul. We going every day, myself with Victor Young together, every morning, we meeting to go to get hot waffles, hot waffles with bacon and eggs. Every morning we meeting, and every time he's eating waffles.

Then we going to Chicago Theatre, just across, where I'm playing, this time, in the pit and on the stage, my solo. And he, Victor Young, rehearsing the orchestra.

But before we come in for rehearsal, every time we going there, meet together, eat together. And he, every morning, he's eating waffles.

IS: Were those in those little white log cabin houses? I remember, they didn't have them in California . . .

GS: . . . No, probably big restaurant.
IS: No, but in New York, in the East Coast, they had those little white log cabin pancake houses and, in the morning, when it was dark and we had to rehearse, we used to always go to that. Is that where you went with him?

GS: Yes.

IS: In one of, where?

GS: Just across, close to Chicago Theatre, across.

IS: What did you have? Also waffles?

GS: That's all what you can have: bacon, eggs, waffles.

CS: Who was that?

IS: Chicago.

CS: Who? With who?

IS: Victor Young. Does Cristina know who Victor Young is? Explain to her this "gentleman."

GS: The Musical Director was Lipston.

IS: In Chicago?

GS: He didn't know what means "a capella," Musical Director.

IS: Tell Cris the story--about "a capella."

GS: During the rehearsal, we're discussing, musicians, we say, "a capella" this, "a capella" that. And the Musical Director says, "What the hell is this? You always talking 'a capella.' What's 'a capella'?" Mr. Lipston, the Musical Director of Chicago Theatre, didn't know what means "a capella."

IS: Does he go to Hollywood, too, ever?

GS: Yes.

IS: That's what I thought--ha!

GS: Not only he went to Hollywood, he was Musical Director.


GS: . . . Paramount.
IS: What about Victor Young?

GS: Victor Young was—everything! He could do anything he wanted. But he met that Ro-, Romanian publisher in cafe and invite him immediately to his house to sleep, to sleep with his wife.

CS: What's this? I was sleeping. Just a minute.

IS: Repeat that because that's a little strange the way that came out, Gregory. Repeat it so Cristina understands.

GS: There was a Romanian. He was not a publisher before because he didn't have any money. But they met in a cafe. Victor was with his wife, sitting in a cafe. He shows up. He must have convinced him that, that Victor invited him immediately to his house as a lover to his wife.

IS: He didn't invite him as a lover, though. He invited him to the house, and they became lovers. Wasn't that it?

GS: Same thing.

IS: Oh.

CS: It boils down to the same thing in the end.

GS: And he became quite a success, successful publisher. First of all, Victor gave him all the music that he wrote for the pictures . . .

CS: . . . Who was that guy? What was his name?

IS: Victor Young?

CS: No, the one who became the successful publisher.

IS: The Romanian? Oh, what was the Romanian's name? You knew it one time.

GS: Yes, I forget.

IS: When Victor Young died, he took over the publishing, wasn't it?

GS: Yes.

IS: With the wife or without the wife?

GS: I think she was dead already.
IS: Hm. See, Cris. Some people are lucky in life: they get everything; and when they all die off, they still get everything. Oh, God! Too poor, so he finds a place to live, has food and shelter, is given a job with Victor. Victor Young had a publishing company, didn’t he? Victor Young. Or he? . . .

GS: . . . Yes.

IS: And, and this fellow worked in the publishing company?

GS: Just took it over.

IS: Took it over. Then Victor dies, the wife dies, and he ends up with the publishing company. Poor little rich boy. Hm. Back to the waffles. He never had waffles with you, this Romanian? Did you know this Romanian publisher?

GS: Sure.

IS: OK.

W2: 25 December 1987

GS: Eating waffles, it’s like, brings to me those early days in Chicago Theatre with Victor Young. Victor Young—talented man, God bless his soul. He’s doing everything, that time, himself—arranging himself the music, rehearsing the orchestra, everything. And every morning, myself with him together, before we come in for rehearsal, we meeting,

"Good morning, Gregory. Time for breakfast. Ready to eat?"

"Ready," says.

"Let’s go."

And we going together, just across to Chicago Theatre, eating waffles, hot waffles with bacon and eggs together.

Every morning, the same story. Then, across we going to Chicago Theatre, where I’m sitting, playing in the pit; pit comes up, and I’m playing on the stage—all those solos, big paraphrases of mine. And he, Victor Young, he’s rehearsing the orchestra.

But that story of his—somehow, he was not so lucky in life. Just unlucky. Sometimes, in life, talent, it’s just not enough if you have no luck. So, one day, he’s
sitting in cafe, Victor Young with his wife together with him. And comes in a Romanian, by name of xxxxxxx,

"I want to publish your music," says to Victor.

"Fine, alright. Go ahead."

So he goes, does go ahead, publish; and out of nothing, the Romanian became suddenly a big publisher: he has nothing, and all of a sudden, he has everything--the publishing company and the wife of Victor Young on top it all. And when all of them gone, still, he's coming out on top: he's still ahead. Yes. Out of nothing. And that's the story.

8. "SPAGHETTI"

I heard this story many times during my stays in Spain--in fact, every time we went to Toni Dali's Ristorante Italiano (specialty of the house: spaghetti)--but because we were usually eating out, I managed to write down the story only once, when Maestro Octave Caleja was served spaghetti a la story at the house (S1). When questioned later about the story's protagonist, Jascha Heifetz, my father responded with a only a slender interest in spaghetti (S2). In an earlier interview (S3) recording responses to direct questions, spaghetti does not figure in my father's account of Jascha Heifetz's distasteful "reputation to being a great miser."

S1: 19 January 1988

GS: Seeing that spaghetti, that's my story of Heifetz, Jascha Heifetz, famous story.

OC: Famous violinist. You can tell us the story, now, Maestro?

GS: Well, I'm playing two pianos--me, together with Emanuel Bay, and myself--at that house, full house of people in Russian Embassy. Consulate General that time was fellow by name Trianovsky, Trianovsky.

And Heifetz, of course, everyone full of enthusiasm about Jascha Heifetz. Everyone wants Jascha to play. Such tremendous success he had: the full orchestra played for him "La Golondrina," that they never played only for President of the Republic. And they let loose to fly all those birds around the concert hall. So all that crowd is gathered now around, after the concert, party in full swing--drinking, eating, everything what they want, listening the music, two-piano music.
And they want, they love Jascha to play, "Play for us, Jascha." "Yes, play for us something."

They want something from the repertoire, something that they know . . .

OC: . . . Pieces, light, popular pieces . . .

GS: . . . Something light. Not the concert stuff that they don’t understand it even. Anyway, only Emanuel Bay doesn’t know how to play anything by memory. What to do?

So Jascha says to Mrs. Heifetz, to his wife, "Go immediately, you have to go home, go home straight to hotel, take a taxi, whatever is necessary, but bring back the music so, for to play, for Emanuel Bay to play the accompaniment."

So, alright. Because it’s not so easy to play, even for a fine pianist, to play everything by memory, to play all that repertoire.

So, afterwards, alright, few days has passed. And Jascha, it’s time for him to go home, leave Mexico. And saying good-byes, it’s, he’s making a farewell dinner, like.

So, he takes me, "Gregory, let’s go for dinner together before it’s time for me to leave," says. "You like to go for dinner?"

"Sure, I like to go. Alright, Jascha, fine. Let’s go."

So he takes me--Jascha, together with his wife (that’s where we have that photo taken, together sitting, eating together)--and we go to have spaghetti dinner! Like it’s something great. Jascha Heifetz. Fine violinist, great virtuoso. But doesn’t mean the character is, it’s something else. Could be great, but still bad character.

S2: 4 February 1988 (V2/B)

CS: Fritz Reiner, did he come into NBC?

GS: Yes.

CS: Did you watch him conduct, too?

GS: He was the one I went to Mexico, also, to listen to him.

CS: Oh, that’s right. Do you remember any stories? What was
the story about Fritz Reiner?

GS: I watched Fritz Reiner in Carnegie Hall picture. He conducted Jascha Heifetz playing the concerto by Tchaikovsky.

CS: Where did they make that picture? That was in New York?

GS: New York.

CS: That was the story? That was the story?

GS: I don’t know. The story about Jascha Heifetz, he was very stingy. Don’t you remember? He took me in Mexico to have dinner with him, to have spaghetti dinner.

CS: Yeah. And the sister of Heifetz, Tutti has here (referring to ISC notes) married the Shostinoff, Shostinoff.

S3: 5 January 1988 (R9/B)

CS: Vaughn Monroe? (reading name from printed description of Carnegie Hall movie)

GS: Conductor?

CS: I don’t know. The name is on the cover.


CS: Yes, that’s where these names are from. Jascha Heifetz?

GS: Well, you know about Jascha Heifetz. Plenty of stories, I could write a book about Jascha Heifetz alone. But strange that you told me, that you heard it on the TV or ...

CS: ... Tutti ...

GS: ... Or you told me? ...

CS: ... Tutti ...

GS: ... That he’s dead at 86. But you know the stories about him.

CS: I only have one, in Mexico.

GS: His, his wife, Florence Vidor, former wife, she told me she learned how to make Jewish cutlets and everything
else, for him. She learned how to cook. She told me that herself. He went to London and met the other, some widow of an English money man, and he sent her a, that he wants a divorce.

She said, she answered him, "Go ahead. You do whatever you like." She didn’t give him the divorce. She, he got it himself.

Then, in Greek Theatre, I met, he introduced me, when I played the show, in the Greek Theatre, in Los Angeles---I think it was Los Angeles. Yes, he introduced me to his wife, his second wife. I think he divorced her, too. And the last I know that he married his pupil, Seven-Day Adventist, his assistant, violinist. I don’t know anything about her. I know that he married her.

CS: What was some story that he was walking on the street and hurt himself, or something?

GS: Huh?

CS: He was walking on the street, and . . .

GS: . . . He fell down.

CS: Where was that?

GS: In a delicatessen store. He loved delicatessen—you know—especially that Jewish stuff. So he fell down, and he broke his rib. What do you break when you fall down?

CS: I don’t know. Maybe his rib.

GS: His rib. And he sued the, the owner of the restaurant. What came out of it, I don’t know. If he got money out of it, I don’t know. He had a reputation to being a great miser.

Sound (Words/Music)

1. "VALKYRIES"

On several occasions in 1987 and 1988, my father mentioned that hearing Wagner’s "Ride of the Valkyries" always reminded him of the early days of the October Revolution, when, as Manager of a theatre, he organized a program of bread distribution for the members of the Odessa Symphony Orchestra (including two of his good friends—flutist Aaron Gershunoff;
and the cellist brother of Aaron’s wife, Dora).

V1 (20 July 1988) followed one of the “music appreciation” sessions that my sister programmed for her children during their stay that summer. (On this occasion, the children were required to listen to a recording of "opera classics"; on other occasions, they were required to endure similar sessions of "piano appreciation," "reading appreciation," "ballet appreciation," and much more.) More or less similar versions were recorded as responses to direct questions (V3 and V4) and, in 1985, as a response to a breakfast conversation, between my father and my husband, that started as a discussion of the oil-soaked bread that sustained many Greeks during the German occupation (V2). In other words, sound (the mention of "bread" or the music of Wagner) seems to evoke this story.

V1 20 July 1988

GS: I always hear the Wagner famous (hums "Ride of the Valkyries"), and it reminds me the story—I told you already, long time—on Peresyp, on the Revolutionary days, already. Dark days in Odessa—there’s nothing to eat, just famine. And I was Manager of a theatre. There’s a new theatre just was built—beautiful theatre, on Peresyp, beautiful part of Odessa. And I’m Manager there. Somehow, I got that job, and I got the whole orchestra, Symphony Orchestra of Odessa—forty, maybe fifty men—come in, play concert. And I give them, every time, I give them bread. Not the tango bread—I told you, the brown, I used to buy at the Greek, Giorgala, store just there on the corner—but still good, very good, black bread.

I says, to orchestra, says, "There’s bread for you. Come in to play. There’s plenty of black, good bread."

So the come in, gave concert, played for bread. And that’s the story.

CS: Hm. So . . .

GS: . . . Because, as I told you, this is already terrible times in Odessa: they just killing for anything, anything to eat. It’s nothing to eat—no food, no bread, just nothing whatsoever. And the bread, whatever they have, they making that bread with green peas. And, as I told you, that’s the story again how they killed Dora’s brother—fine musician, he was. That was Revolution days again, and there’s no, nothing to eat, no bread, nothing. So musicians, many of them, they going outside, just outside Odessa to those little villages, peasant
villages, looking for food. And those muzhiks, just
peasant muzhiks, to them anything it comes from the city
look suspicious, look like Bolshevists, which, of course,
they didn't like Bolshevists. Just killed them out.
Killed out musicians, and killed Dora's brother, too.
Fine musician, he was, too; and Aaron, my, was good
friend of mine, and fine musician. But who, no one cares
for musicians that time, terrible time. That time, the
only important was food. Yes, was terrible time those.
That's the story.

V2: July 1984/date garbled (03/A)

CS: you can tell us now the story, again, about the bread
distribution.

GS: What's that?

CS: You were talking about the bread this morning . . .

CK: . . . The orchestra, the orchestra, when were playing in
Odessa . . .

CS: . . . Because I didn't get it . . .

CK: . . . And you were paying in bread, during, during the
Revolution.

GS: Ah, that was exactly, more or less, beginning of the
Russian Revolution. And everybody didn't eat very much
because there was very little food to eat. The
transports did not work.

Lenin came, came to power. Says, "This is a capitalistic
war. We don't want it. Let them fight by themself." Kerensky went to the front . . .

CK: . . . It was when he was proclaiming peace . . .

GS: . . . Yes, well, he didn't . . .

CK: . . . Trotsky . . .

GS: . . . Well, he says, but, he did not realize that without
. . . They sent Kerensky to the front, but the soldiers
started to walk away. Or they take a train . . .

CK: . . . And come back, yeah.

GS: No. Take a train, and push away the machinist, and start
to monkey around with their own, playing. They go so
fast, they go, naturally, they kill themself because they
could not manage the train. It happened many catastrophes with the train because soldiers didn’t know how to manipulate, and they didn’t want anybody else to do it. They thought that maybe it’s too slow.

Anyway, so, at that time, I was taking care of a theatre. And outside of the city, beautiful part of the city . . .

CK: . . . Odessa?

GS: Odessa. Going to, on a way to Cherson by car. And we had plenty of bread. And I told the Symphony Orchestra that they could come in and play for us to, if they want to get that bread. So about fifty of them came in. And I was taking care of baking of that bread, very good bread—you know, black bread, very good.

CK: Fresh?

GS: Fresh, hot. And after the concert, . . .

CS: . . . What did they play?

GS: Well, the only thing I remember at this time, of Wagner (hums "Ride of the Valkyries"). Inge, what do you call that, the? . . .

CS: . . . And this is where Gershunoff was in the orchestra?

GS: Huh?

CS: "The Valkyries." Gershunoff was in the orchestra, right?

GS: Gershunoff was playing, and . . .

CK: . . . Gershwin?

CS: Gershunoff, Gershunoff.

GS: Gershunoff.

CK: Ah, Gershunoff.

GS: Gershunoff, my friend—you know. He was playing in the orchestra, and also Dora’s brother, who was killed later on. I told you the story how he was killed in a village. Because they sent them to make propaganda for the government. And those muzhiks didn’t care about those things. You know how they are—the "muzhiki, muzhiki."

CK: "Muzhiki."
GS: They killed him. That's the story. What else you wanna know about?

V3: 29 December 1987 (R5/B)

CS: And then there's a story about how Dora's brother was killed?

GS: Yes.

CS: What happened?

GS: Well, that was during the Revolution, again. And here was not enough bread. So many of those musicians went to little villages around Odessa to buy provision. And the peasants killed them because the peasants were against the Bolshevists. Everything that would come out from a city was . . .


GS: The Bolshevists. And they didn't like, and they killed them. They killed Dora's brother, too.

CS: He was a musician?

GS: Yes, he was playing some instrument.

CS: Did you know him then?

GS: I remember him, but when I remember him he played cello.

CS: Hm.

GS: I suppose he was supposed, not supposed to--he did on his own. They went to get provision. It was bad time.

CS: Hm.

GS: Because when I was on Peresyp--on Peresyp, there was a theatre, on Peresyp, part of Odessa called Peresyp. And I was . . .

CS: . . . Aha . . .

GS: . . . And I was a Manager there. And I had the whole orchestra of Odessa, the symphony, come in to get bread. They all came in: I was giving away bread.

CS: How did that happen?
GS: I was in charge of the theatre. And they knew that in that part of Odessa, it's easy to get bread. And I got all that bread, and they came for a concert—they got bread.

CS: Instead of money, they got paid in bread?

GS: Yes.

CS: How did you become in charge of the theatre?

GS: I don't know, but I got in charge. You know me: somehow, I got in charge of that theatre.

CS: Which theatre was it? Do you remember?

GS: On Peresyp, there was a new theatre just built . . .

CS: . . . Hm. Is Peresyp a city or a section?

GS: No, part of Odessa.

CS: "Onperesev" is the name?

GS: Peresyp.

CS: Oh, Peresyp. What's "on"?

GS: On Peresyp, just . . .

CS: . . . In Peresyp, in that part of the city. Hm. And as Manager, what did you do? Did you also play?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And you had a full orchestra, or what?

GS: No, I don't remember how many men I had—or I played alone, or whatever it is. But it was under my command.

CS: Hm. When was this? During the Revolution? Around the Revolution, October Revolution?

GS: Revolution, because it was difficult. As I told the musicians, the whole symphony orchestra came . . .

CS: . . . Came where?

GS: To our place. And I gave them bread.

CS: Oh, you gave everybody bread even if you didn't play with them? Even if they didn't play with you?
GS: No. That just happened to be forty men, I think--how many men, I don’t remember exactly, but forty men that came, maybe.

CS: And you all played, the forty of you? All forty of you played?

GS: Yes. They all come in and play. They played Wagner, or something. Oh, they played "Valkyrie" (hums). They played this. I don’t know what else they played. They played other selections. But they got bread.

CS: Did you also conduct, or play?

GS: No, play.

CS: Who conducted the forty men?

GS: They play just like that.

CS: Oh, with a piano. Did you lead with a piano?

GS: Yeah.

CS: How long were you Manager of the theatre?

GS: Can’t tell you, Sweetheart.

CS: You don’t remember? After you left the theatre, what did you do? (omit story of Pagarelov and escape following)

V4: 5 September 1988 (N9/A)

CS: And then, you told me a story when you were Manager of a theatre someplace.

GS: That was on Peresyp.

CS: Peresyp.

GS: Peresyp is part of Odessa, down. Manager of a, of a, of a theatre. And that’s the first time I got the Symphony Orchestra of Odessa to come play for bread. I got them to play for bread.

CS: And they went all down to Peresyp?

GS: Was nothing to eat. Was expensive, on top of it. They got free from me.

CS: And they went several times there, right?
GS: Few times, I imagine, yes.

CS: And you remember what they played?

GS: (hums "Ride of the Valkyries") Wagner . . .


GS: I don’t know what else. All things like that.

CS: Meyerbeer, or something?

GS: "March" by Meyerbeer. (hums "March") Light things. Maybe more things, but I don’t remember now the titles.

CS: And how long were you the Manager of the theatre there?

GS: I don’t know, because I wanted to get out of Russia, too. And that’s probably where I met Pagarelov "ee" Obermann. And we decided we gonna leave the first opportunity. (omit escape story following)

2. "LAKME"

In July 1988--at a "piano appreciation" session for my niece and nephew--my father showed the children how the piano could be used to imitate different sounds, from storms and raindrops to drums and bells. Because the children seemed to enjoy the sound of the piano’s higher registers, my father followed Delibes’ "Bellsong" (from Lakme) with Liadov’s "Musical Snuffbox.” Following the session, he recalled the time when he first played the Lakme accompaniment, and the story of Chatelaine (11--recorded also as L2 and L3).

L1: 22 July 1988

GS: You know, Cristinuchka, such a long time have passed and, still, playing just now Lakme aria, it’s like no time, and I’m on that train--I told you--playing, travelling: from Odessa to Vapniarka; Vapniarka, Odessa; Odessa, Vapniarka. On that train together with those cooks from various restaurants of Odessa who want to leave Russia altogether. And those refugee artists together, they trying to escape. And among them, travelling with her husband together, is Chatelaine. Beautiful soprano voice. I never forget her--Chatelaine.

CS: Hm. Playing, on the train.

GS: Here, I’m playing for her accompaniment; she, she’s
singing with me Lakme aria, beautiful aria (hums "Bellsong"). And then she’s going off the train, on the market place, buying food for herself and her husband. Hollering there with those peasants, bargaining for the food. And, in no time, she’s back on the train, comes back singing (hums aria again).

Later, she’s not singing, because a long time have passed, and I met her again in New York—with her husband together. Of course, it’s different time altogether. But I never forget her—once minute she’s there hollering like a peasant; and next, then next minute, she’s back, singing (hums again).

L2: 26 October 1987 (5/A)

CS: And you were accompanying other instrumentalists?

GS: Yes. The only one I met—she was with us and also wanted to get out to United States—and I met her with her husband united, was Chatelaine.

She would go on the market place and bargain with, with what to buy food for herself and her husband—you know, on the train when we were travelling. Then she comes back and she sings (hums "Bellsong"). She surprised me all the time. She sang the—what’s that famous song from (hums aria again) Lakme (hums)? "Bellsong." She sang; she surprised me. And many years later . . .

CS: . . . She sang that when she went shopping?

GS: When she came back, shopping. She went shopping. She was bargaining with the peasants for food.

CS: Oh. That meant she was successful? Why did she sing the songs?

GS: She always sang—something. Her husband—I remember, later on, many years later, I met them in New York. Of course, she couldn’t sing in New York.

CS: Oh, she was a singer?

GS: Yes. Lakme—who else could sing Lakme, Cristina?

CS: And you accompanied her?

GS: Yes. I enjoyed that so much, to play those accompaniments—you know, for piano (hums another aria). It’s a very beautiful aria. But when you ask me questions, all those facts, they come together, and I get
mixed up in the dates and everything else.

L3: 29 December 1987 (R5/B)

CS: And who was Chatelaine?

GS: Ah, that's another story, very cute. Chatelaine was on the first train that we went from Odessa to Vapniarka, and all those places. She was with her husband on that train, trying to escape from Russia. She was a beautiful soprano voice. And that's, for first time in my life, I played the songs like Lakme (hums "Bellsong"). She would go holler with the peasants on the street, during the stops, buying provision. Then come back. And I was so intrigued. And I played the accompaniment, learned to play (hums aria again). That's Lakme aria.

CS: Is that also from Lakme?

GS: That's Lakme, that's aria from Lakme (continues to hum while answering).

CS: Was he also a singer? Was he also a singer?

GS: No. He was a businessman.

CS: But he . . .

GS: . . . He's married to her. And they wanted to get out of, out of Russia. I met them in New York, later.

CS: Hm. They did get out of Russia then?

GS: They did.

3. "RAIN"

On 27 August, 1987, the day of my first taping session, I made the following entry in my journal:

First tape session was a flop. After beautiful untapped (informal) "session," tried to reget stories on tape: a "mess." (Anyway, stories "unfinished," "unordered."). First informal session--patio, sitting--started from nothing; a comment on the possibility of rain.

At the time, I did not think about the possibilities for "order" inherent in stories triggered by sensory stimuli, and I finished my journal entry with comments on and summaries of
the untaped stories evoked by the "rain in the air" discussion as well as with complaints about the fact that those stories did not get told when, after my father had talked for about two hours, I asked him to "start over" and "repeat everything from the beginning" so that I could get it all on tape.

Despite its premature evaluations, my journal entry begins with the notation above and records the story sequence evoked by the talk of rainy weather: First, my father talked about the weather belief of the Russian peasants: "In Russia, they brought icons to the fields. Sometimes it rained; sometimes, no. But they thought it did rain because of the icons." Then, he told the story of the time when (perhaps, circa 1914), as a soldier in the Russian army, advancing toward Podgajcy, he fell asleep under a tree, in the rain, and was saved by an unknown soldier who woke him up and loaned him a jacket:

GS: I was walking through the woods, some music in my hand, when it started, little by little, to become dark. And it's raining--a little, slight rain, all the time. And I, I'm so tired all this time walking, so I sit down, lie down, under the tree--still raining, all the time, slight rain--fall asleep. I would fall asleep forever, just would be lying there dead, if that soldier didn't wake me up.

"Tavarische, shutisu mashasol?" ("Are you crazy?") "Ti zamioznish." ("You'll be frozen till morning.") And he gave me his coat, whatever he had. Says, "Give it to me back tomorrow. I see you tomorrow in Podgajcy."

But tomorrow never came again, and I never did see him again. Because that was the time, started the big invasion of Russia by Poland.

After telling this story, my father told about the time when (perhaps, circa 1915, when the Russians took Przemysl, Galicia), again as a soldier, he had a "terrible toothache" and, so, refused to join his Commanding Officer to check out a piano before giving a concert in Galicia:

GS: "Tavarische Commander, oo menya strasnya sudnaya bol." ("I have a terrible toothache.") "Zaftra poedom." ("Let's make it for tomorrow.")

"OK."

Again, tomorrow never came: a short time after refusing his "Nach Kompodiv," my father saw a horse bring back the body of the dead Commanding Officer, who had gone to Galicia alone and, "first in the line of fire," was killed by the advancing
Polish army.

In my journal entry for 5 December 1987, I made the following notation:

Advance preparations for Kanner and Company: cleaned and, after starting fire, practiced two pianos while Tutti shops for furniture--alone, in rain.' Papa worried: "Mama will catch pneumonia in the rain. We could postpone the guests." My "it's only raining lightly" leads to asleep under tree story (lead in: "I told you the time, in the woods: I was walking, and it's raining--a little, slight rain, like now.") and toothache story.

Although my father usually told the rain and toothache stories together (though the exception), he sometimes reversed the order of presentation. Thus, for example, on 31 August 1987, after ordering breakfast in a small Gibraltar cafe, my father and I talked while my mother literally ran out the cafe's door and down the city's Main Street to do her business as quickly as possible in order that my father not get overtired. My journal entry for that day contained the following observation:

Worried about Papa, but Tutti's the one who tires herself--running through the streets as per usual. Comment about "Tutti's tennies" and tired feet ("hope you wore your running shoes") led to recollections of Opa ("worst pain is foot pain"), how he was forced, as child, to wear the tight, pointed, stylish "Italian" boots that caused permanent damage to his feet) and observation of Papa ("worst pain is tooth pain"). Discussion that followed--of pain involved in my mouth reconstruction--led to toothache story and jacket-in-rain story; see placement. "Story of robbery" dominated all conversation after we got home from Gibraltar.

We came home from Gibraltar that day to find that, during our short absence, the house had been broken into and robbed. And conversation for the next few days centered around that event: with the help of neighbors, we pieced together fragments of overheard conversation, pieces of overlooked evidence, and bits of broken glass and wood to reconstruct the
story of the robbery (complete with two suspects and two false I.D.s, a motive and a getaway car) because, unfortunately, the local police force was of no help whatsoever. And, on 5 September, while my mother went into the city to try once more to enlist the help of the police, my father and I stayed home to await the repairman who was supposed to replace the broken glass door that had served as the robbers' point of entry.

My journal entry for that day rambled from point to point, but focused on my anger at having been violated by the suspected robbers—the renters next door for whom, a few days previously, my mother and I had prepared a buffet, and my father and I had given a "performance" (two-piano, four-hand): "we gave all—my hands shook as I played," I wrote in my journal, "and all was not enough—they took us for more." My anger took up a full page, at the bottom of which I noted, first, "no desire to write or tape," and, then, the following:

Visit to police—as wait for glassman—proved futile. Futile, also, to "control" when/where/how/why stories will start. Waiting for glassman, we started with Papa's admonition to "keep the animals away from the broken glass"; rambled from "good we weren't home to have broken bones" to "give the dogs a bone for being so loyal, but don't let them break their teeth on those things"; and ended with my mouth reconstruction story and his toothache/rain-tree story. Too bad I didn't feel like taping.

Those versions of the stories labeled RT1, RT2, RT3, and RT4 (where RT indicates the rain story preceded the toothache story) were taped in July 1984, October 1987, February 1988, and September 1988, respectively. Those versions of the stories labeled TR1 and TR2 (where TR indicates the reverse story sequence) were taped in December 1987 and July 1984, respectively. T was taped on 6 November 1987.4

RT1: July 1984/date cut off (05/8)

IS: OK. (tape cuts off and on). OK. Go ahead.

GS: Sometime, between 1918 and 1919, there was an advancement of the Russian Army against Poland. Everybody said, "Let's get Warsaw! Get Warsaw!" And I was just, joined the, joined the army as a cavalryman.

So we were going, advancing toward Austrian border, and we had to cross many forests. And I got sick, and I started to think about some musical problem. And I got
my, gave my horse to my friend—you know. And I, we were very, going slow. It was autumn, and I was going through that forest.

All of a sudden, evening—you know—starts. It gets kinda cold already, autumn; and it got dark. All of a sudden, in the forest, and rain.

Says, "I'm gonna stop and sit under a tree." I saw down in a little shirt—nothing on me but a shirt—down, on. My jacket, I left with my friend: it was hot in the day, during the day. And I was sitting under the tree, and, and fell asleep.

And somebody wakes me, "Tavarische, wake up! Are you crazy?" A soldier was going. "What are you doing here?"

I told him the story.

He said, "Get my jacket." He gave me his jacket, and he started to walk toward the village. The village, I think was—I forgot—Podgajcy, or something like that. He says, "You return me the jacket tomorrow morning."

"Alright." And I went to the, to the point where all the soldiers go there; I got myself something to eat, and fell asleep.

Early in the morning, the Division Commander, who knew me very well, "Alright, Gregory. Let's go and see the piano."

I had a toothache, terrible. And he had a "britchka"—you know, with horses. So I says, I said, "Tavarische,—I forgot his name. I says, "Nach Kompodiv,"—whatever you call the Bolsheviks—"I can't. I'll see it next time."

At that time, just about half an hour later, the horses came back, and the whole "britchka", without him. He was killed by the advancing Poles. That was the beginning of the Polish advance against, against Russia. And the General Wiegna came to help Poland, and that was . . .

CS: . . . Which general?

GS: General Wiegna, the famous General Wiegna. He came to direct the army, the Polish Army, against Russia . . .

CK: . . . Against Russia . . .

GS: . . . And we started to go back. We were running toward
the, I was running toward the, I didn't have any horse. We just, without anything, we are running against, toward the station. And I took the first train pass by. And I jumped on it. It was no people there, so I was lucky. I jump on it and I see, "Be careful! This is the car for . . . ."

CK: . . . Explosives?

IS: Smallpox or typhoid?

CS: Typhus?

GS: Typhus of the skin. Dangerous. So I stood all evening till I came to another station, hanging on the outside. I was afraid to go in. Till we came to another thing, got another train, and came back to Odessa. And I had, my, I was doing this (shakes head rapidly back and forth) . . .

IS: . . . Shaking so much.

GS: My head was shaking.

IS: Gerda had something like that.

CS: And this was during the First World War?

GS: Was 1918 and a half.

CK: 1918 and a half.

GS: 1918.

CS: Why were you going to see a piano in the middle of the war?

GS: We had to, we were going to give a concert, agitation against the--you know. That was some concert would be for me. I would never see you. So when we came back to Odessa, I decided, "This is the time for me to get out of this country." Then I organized, went to get organized . . .

CS: Tell Bino that. That's an interesting story. (omit stories of train and escape following)

RT2: 26 October 1987 (5/A)

IS: Does Cristina know the other story about when you were in the army? I don't know where you were--Serbia or Austria or someplace else--when you had a toothache and
you were supposed . . .

GS: . . . No. That was the biggest story. That's another one. That's when I was freezing, and I left my horse. I left my horse in the daytime, and it started to . . .

Autumn was coming. We were coming to a little city called Podgajcy. That was during the, uh, invasion of Russia of Poland. And the Russian people demanded, "Give us Warsaw! Give us Warsaw!" You know.

And we were, and I was in the wood. I left my horses with my, with my friends there, who were all horsemen anyway, and started to walk. And then, little by little, it became dark. And I'm alone in the woods, sitting under the tree.

And somebody passes me by, "Hey, Tavarische! Are you crazy? You're gonna be dead by tomorrow." He was going, he was going toward the little city I was going.

I says, "Well, I have nothing on me now."

And he says, "Take this." And he had the double suit, or something, double jacket. He gave me that jacket, "See you tomorrow."

Tomorrow never came, because that was the time when, when the horses came back, with my Commander dead, hanging on the horses. And that was the big invasion of that part of Russia by the Polish Army. I don't remember who was the Commander--maybe Pilsudski, I don't know. But that big, big invasion.

And I, I started, I wanted to get away from it, and I ran to the station. And the train come in. And I didn't care what train it was: I jumped on the train, and I jumped on the train, as I wanted to open the door inside. Was written, "Only for typhus allowed in this car." Said, "Typhus." I imagine was a, was a part of the . .

IS: . . . Quarantined. You said it was quarantined.

GS: Quarantined train. And I stood up outside, freezing to death . . .

IS: . . . Hanging on . . .

GS: . . . Hanging, till I came to a station where I took a train that took me to Odessa.
IS: You never found that man who gave you the overcoat, or the jacket?

GS: Never. No. They were all killed.

IS: Was that . . .

CS: (garbled)

IS: . . . Was that the same time where you also had the toothache and you were supposed to go someplace with your Officer, or Commander?

GS: That's the one. That's the story, the whole story.

IS: NO, no. But there was one where you had a toothache . . .

GS: . . . Yes . . .

IS: . . . And you were supposed to go with him in a cart. That was another thing.

GS: In a cart to see the . . .

IS: . . . Dentist . . .

GS: . . . The piano, and everything else.

And I says, "Tavarische Commander, I can't go today. Can I go some other time?"

He says, "Alright, Grisha."—whatever he called me.

That's the, that was the beginning of the whole Russian Brusilov invasion . . .

IS: . . . That's when he came back. Then, he came back dead that time. That was when you had the toothache.

GS: He didn't "came back." They brought him.

IS: Aha.

GS: They brought him back dead.

IS: Aha.

RT3: 3 February 1988 (V2/A)

GS: Russia was that time advancing, and I was in the army that time.
CS: Hm hm.

GS: We were advancing, past the lines. That's when I fell asleep in the, in the wood, and the guy brought me a jacket, at night. I would be dead, lying there. He woke me up. It was raining, too . . .

CS: . . . Hm. And you . . .

GS: . . . It was slightly, all the time, was slight rain, all the time.

And says, "Tavarische, Shu ti su masashol? Zamioznish." And he gave me his jacket, whatever he had on. We were all advancing, at the same line. Says, "You, you will return me my jacket tomorrow." . . .

CS: . . . Did you continue to advance, or did you stay under the tree?

GS: No, I went with him. We came to the little town---I forgot the name of it . . .

CS: . . . Was that Podgajcy?

GS: Podgajcy.

CS: Podgajcy.

GS: And from there on, the trouble started. The Russian Army was in, in, going back . . .

CS: . . . Retreating.

GS: Retreating. Because Commander of the Division wanted me to go and look over the piano. And I had a terrible toothache.

I said, I told him, "Tavarische Commander, nee sevodnya. Ya nee mogu. Prehboydeem mazoobee strashnaya bolyat."

He said, "Alright."

And an hour later, the horses brought his body, his dead body. And from there on, we started to retreat.

CS: That wasn't the same guy who gave you the jacket?

GS: No. That I never seen again.

CS: But I thought you continued to advance with him?
GS: Well, we advanced. And then we had to, then the horses, then the Commander of the Division wanted me to try the piano for a concert .

CS: . . . The same day as the advance, or afterwards?

GS: Afterday--I don't know.

CS: Oh. But during this general time?

GS: I had a terrible toothache, and I told him, "Maybe, Tavarische Commander, prehgoyleem. Ya strashnaya zudnaya bol."

"Alright, Grisha."

And that was the end, because the horses brought his body just about an hour after that, when I went to see the piano.

CS: You went, finally, to see that piano?

GS: I went, no. I never went to see the piano anymore. We were retreating. I was catching the train that was going, "Do not enter!"

CS: How did he have in his mind to see a piano under those circumstances?

GS: Well, Bolsheviks always make propaganda, no matter where they are. It was logical for me to see the piano for, for a concert where they're gonna make the propaganda. It's lucky for me I never did seen.

CS: Was this the Red Army, Bolshevik Army?

GS: Yes.

CS: You were fighting for the Reds that time?

GS: Yes.

CS: Everybody had to if you were put in the army?

GS: Were no Reds then. Only the October Revolution brought in Reds.

CS: This was before the October Revolution?
RT4: 5 September 1988 (N9/A)

CS: And then, when you were in the army, when you were in the army, it was World War I, right?

GS: Yes.

CS: And you were stationed someplace? They sent you far away from Odessa?

GS: They sent us to, to the Austrian front. I came to the little city of Podgajcy.

CS: Podgajcy?

GS: Pod-gaj-cy.

CS: Podgajcy.

GS: And I had to, I had my horse. It was hot in, in summer, so I left my horse with other people in the, in regiment, and went walking. As I was walking, the evening started, and I, it started a little rain. And I was so tired already walking, so I sat around the tree, under the tree. And rain was right going—tip, tap; tip, tap; tip, tap.

Finally, somebody woke me up, "Tavarische, shu ti su masashol?" ("Are you crazy?") "Ti zamioznish." ("You get frozen till morning.") So he gave me his coat. He says, "We are going to Podgajcy. I'll see you tomorrow. You will give me back my coat."

I never seen him, because that day started the big advance of the French—they had a French general who was commanding the, whatever happened of the Russian Army—and I never seen him anymore. Never again seen him..

CS: ... A French general was commanding Russian troops or French troops? ...

GS: ... No ...

CS: ... Or German troops?

GS: Russian troops, but French general.

CS: Oh, and they had an advance against the enemy? And he went in there, in the advance?

GS: He's the one when they came, the Commander of Division
says, "Gregory, we have to give a concert in the city."
I says, "Alright."
"They have a piano there."
I had a toothache. I says, "I'm not going, Tavarische Commander. Ya poyed-, I'll go with you tomorrow."
He says, "Alright."

Tomorrow never came, because the horse brought, the horse brought itself, and he was killed, by the coming troops. Was Ukrainians? I don't know who they were.

CS: Where was the piano? In a little village someplace?

GS: There's a little city, with a church there, and everything else.

CS: Was that Podgajcy?

GS: Podgajcy.

CS: That same city?

GS: Yes.

CS: But he wasn't the same man who gave you the jacket that time?

GS: Oh, no.

CS: No.

GS: Don't, forget about those things.

CS: But it was the same time, the same period of time?

GS: More or less--you know.

CS: When you were in the war?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And he was the Commander, the, when you had the toothache? He was the Commander of the Division?

GS: No, he was just a plain soldier.

CS: The man who told you, "We have to go look at the piano?"
GS: No.

CS: That was the Commander, wasn't it?

GS: That was the Commander, but the one who gave me his coat was one of the soldiers.

CS: Right--and the Commander was a Russian, right?

GS: Yeah.

CS: But you don't remember his name? You just addressed him, "Commander"?

GS: "Tavarische Commander" . . .

CS: . . . Hm . . .

GS: . . . Or "Nach Kompodiv."

CS: "Nach Kompodiv."

GS: Eh, the, "The Governor of the Division."

CS: "Nach Kompodiv"?

GS: Yes.

CS: Hm. And then it was from there that you had the retreat as well?

GS: That's the night. That's the day.

CS: The same day as which?

GS: Well, the horses brought the dead body--no, they didn't bring; yeah, I think they brought the body . . .

CS: . . . They brought the body, or they came empty?

GS: I really don't remember now. But I know that they, they killed him . . .

CS: . . . Hm hm.

GS: Now started again . . .

CS: . . . And that was near Podgajcy again, right? . . .

GS: . . . Now started again going back to Odessa . . .

CS: . . . And there was a general retreat? Everybody was
going back?

GS: Yeah. And I had a contusion. I was doing this. (shakes head rapidly back and forth).

CS: How did you retreat back to Odessa? On foot? On horse?

GS: On the train.

CS: There was a train from Podgajcy to Odessa?

GS: Near Podgajcy was a big railroad station . . .

CS: . . . Aha. And you jumped on the train?

GS: And that was for, "Do not enter! Tifoz." And I stood up all night long outside, till we came to Odessa.

CS: There was a, a platform or something where you stood on the outside, or . . .

GS: . . . No platform. On the train, when you go on the train, before you enter the train, don’t you see, you have to enter something? . . .

CS: . . . Yeah. That’s the steps or something . . .

GS: . . . Platform, a platform.

CS: "Plashod" or something? No.

GS: When you get on the train, here, on the streetcar, you go up, up—you stand. You don’t go in the car right away . . .

CS: . . . No . . .

GS: . . . There’s something . . .

CS: . . . Little steps.

GS: Not steps. But even before steps, you have to pay the conductor. There’s a place where you stand. You hold on. You stand. Same thing here.

CS: Aha. And you stood there the whole time because there was typhoid on the inside?

GS: Typhoid. That’s terrible. That killed millions of people in, in Russia.

CS: Oh, I remember now.
TR1: 29 December 1987 (R5/B)

CS: What about the toothache story, when you had a toothache?

GS: But that's already when I'm big boy, in the army.

CS: I know, but I only have parts of the stories. Some of them are incomplete. This is when you're in the army?

GS: In the army.

CS: You were drafted, or you joined the army?

GS: I think I was drafted that time.

CS: This was during the Revolution, 1917?

GS: Revolution, something to do with the Revolution, and we were making propaganda.

And the Commander of the Division says, "Grisha, vozmit na royal."

CS: What?

GS: "We have to examine the piano."

CS: Oh.

GS: I says, "Tavarische Commander, I have, oo menya strashnaya zudnaya bol." ("I have a terrible toothache." "Zaftra poyedem."

Says, "Alright."

He went. And they brought, the horses brought his body. Somehow, on their own, the horses knew something was wrong. And, and he was already killed. They brought his dead body.

CS: And his body was on the horse? He went to examine the piano by himself?

GS: Examine the surrounding, to see how it fits.

CS: Hm. Not just the piano—they were also looking at the area?

GS: Yes.

CS: What were they supposed to do there?
GS: Give concerts.

CS: Give concerts? Not fight?

GS: No, not fight.

CS: But it was in the army.

GS: Yes, I know. But, I mean, they have a lot of intermissions in the army.

CS: Did he play an instrument, this captain?

GS: No.

CS: Hmm. And then there's another story, a different story, when you left your horse in the daytime. And it was autumn, and you were coming to Podgajcy.

GS: Podgajcy. When I walked alone in the woods . . .

CS: . . . Yeah.

GS: I felt tired, and I left my horses with my friends—you know, they were on horses. And I was tired. It was evening. It was autumn. And I sat near, around the tree. And it was a little rain going down, and I fell asleep.

CS: Hmm.

GS: And then I was shaken up by somebody, "Tavarische, totye su ma masashol? Stavai!" ("Get up!") And I was walking with him to that little place called Podgajcy, where, "You give me your, find your regiment. And I'll see you tomorrow."

And I never did see him, because he probably was killed.

CS: Didn't he give you something?

GS: Huh?

CS: Didn't he give you something?

GS: His jacket.

CS: You didn't go on with him?

GS: No. He's went his own way, and I. He was another regiment; and I, another regiment.
CS: And he gave you the jacket so you wouldn't catch cold?

GS: Yeah.

CS: This was the invasion of what?

GS: That, I think that's the time when, eh, we had war with Poland . . .

CS: . . . Hm.

GS: And it was, eh, we were advancing before. A French general came in—I forgot his name—who pushed us back, with his army, whatever it is. And that was the famous, when I came to Odessa with contusion, when I have a shake.

CS: You had a shake?

GS: Yeah.

CS: What from?

GS: From flying, uh, flying, uh—what you call it, cannons or, what you call it, they put in the cannons?

CS: Oh, from the sound of all those, you weren't hit by bullets?

GS: No.

CS: But from the sound of all the . . .

GS: . . . Yes . . .

CS: . . . Constant cannon goings.

GS: Yes.

CS: And this was the same time that you jumped on the train to get to Odessa?

GS: Yes, I think so.

CS: And it was, uhm, typhus.

GS: "Do not, don't enter!"

CS: "Typhus only!" So you held on to the side of the train?

GS: Yeah. I stood outside on the . . .
CS: ... And your head was shaking.

GS: Yeah, I suppose so.

CS: And who was Pilsudski?

GS: Pilsudski was that famous, uh, dictator of Poland that time.

CS: And the Russians were against him?

GS: Yes.

CS: Hm. Or Brusilov invasion?

GS: Brusilov started an advancement against the Poles, but he failed. General Brusilov.

CS: He was a Russian?

GS: Yes.

CS: Was he your Commander?

GS: He was a Commander of the Army. He started against the Poland, but he didn't succeed.

CS: So this whole invasion that you were a part of was a failure?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And they all retreated? The Russians retreated?

GS: Yes, because, uh, the French came to help, uh ... 

CS: ... Poland.

GS: The Poles.

CS: Hm.

TR2: July 1984/date garbled (01/A)

GS: Well, Cristinuchka, I don't want to repeat myself. But I told you the story about, eh, how I saved my life not going to the village to play a Communistic meeting?

CS: No.

GS: Well, it was because I was friendly with the "Nach
Kompodiv," the "Nachalnik," of the whole division. We supposed to come in to a town and give, immediately, a concert for morale, for the Bolshevist morale of the taken village. And that was in Galicia. We just entered.

CS: ... When was it?

GS: Huh?

CS: When was it?

GS: That was in Galicia in, maybe 19-, 1940, or something like that. Maybe before 1940. No, maybe much, long before that.

CS: 1940?

GS: No, it couldn’t be, during the war with Stalin. It must’ve been early. Must’ve been 1918 or 1919, something like that. That’s it. 1918, when I left Russia, and, uh, we were supposed to always give a concert to bring up the morale, the Bolshevist morale of the people living in that village.

And the, the Commander of the Division says, "Gregory," ("Grisha," he called me) "Let’s go and see the piano."

I says, and I have a toothache, tremendous toothache, and I says, "Tavarische Commander, please leave me out of this now. I can’t."

Specially, we have to get, we have a "britchka"--you know what that is, with horses, uh, phaeton with horses, that’s shaking in those lousy roads there, in Galicia.

He says, "Alright."

And just half an hour later, the horses came without him. He was killed right by Poles--were waiting for him. And the killed the Commander, and horses came back. And that was the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine by the Polish Army, under direction of French General Wiegan, the same General Wiegan who was the hero of the World War Number I, whatever. I think they hung him--I don’t know. "Eshafot"? I don’t know if it was "eshafot" or just plain.

And, and that’s how I was going through the, I left my horse with my friends, before that, and I was walking through the forest. And was autumn, and I fell asleep. And I wanted, it started to rain, and I fell asleep under
the tree. And a man wake me up. And I saw a uniform of a guy.

He says, "Tavarische, are you crazy? You gonna freeze; till tomorrow, you'll be dead. Take my coat."

He gave me his coat, and, and together we walked through the village. It's quite a few miles, but says, "You return the, look me up." And he gave me the name of his regiment. "Return them the coat."

I never had the chance to return the coat to him because that, that's the time that the invasion started--because the Commander asked me to go to that village, and I didn't feel like going. And, all of a sudden, we started to run back to Ukraine.

Finally, we came to the station of Yermolinsee. And I took the first train, and I thought it's, it's strange the car was empty. That's full, the car was completely full with that, with "siphnoi typh," the typhus of the lice--you know, that very contagious. And I stood up outside, on the platform, with wind blowing in my face--but I wouldn't go in that room, in that car--till we came to another place, and I took another train to Odessa. And I was, and I was contusion. What's contusion? When you shake like this (shakes head rapidly back and forth).

IS: Contusion, contusion.

GS: I had my face doing like this for, for weeks after that, like this (continues to shake head) . . .

IS: . . . Like Gerda has--but she has it permanently--hm?

GS: Till I came home, and was like a miracle come, coming to my home. Well, that's one of the stories, the many stories, I told, could tell you. But that's one, one episode that stays in my mind.

T: 6 November 1987 (6/A)

GS: But, anyway, as I said before, after the Russia, Russia got the tremendous fiasco and lost her fleet, the Tsar was that time Alexander the Third, the father of, uh, Tsar Nicholas. Imagine that--serving in the army 25 years. "Nikolaeski Soldat," they called them.

CS: Were you expected to join the army?

GS: The Tsar's army? No. See, what happened, I was too
young when they already, when my time came in: I was only 17. They didn't draft anybody 17 years of age. They started with 19 or 20, I think. My eyes full of tears.

IS: From your stories, or from? . . .

GS: . . . No, from my cold.

IS: From your cold?

CS: So, the time that you were in the army, and you were riding a horse, was that because you had been drafted, or not? One time, you were in the army, and you were riding the horse.

GS: But that's later already.

CS: Were you drafted then?

GS: Yes; no. We were then on the march to take Warsaw.

CS: You were on the march to take Warsaw?

GS: Yes. That's what happened to me when, when I fell asleep in the woods . . .

CS: . . . This was the Tsar's army?

GS: No Tsar's.

CS: No Tsar's army? Whose army was it?

GS: Brusilov, General Brusilov, who joined the Russian Army again--, against the foreign invasions. That's how--remember I told you?--I had a toothache, and I asked the Commander of Division, he wanted me to take over, see the piano, in the village someplace.

I says, "Tavarische Commander, ya nee mogu. Ya strashnaya zudnaya bol."

"Alright, Grisha. Zaftra poyedem."

"Zaftra" never came because he was killed at the, with the soldiers, foreign soldiers. And horse brought his body. And that was the general, complete, disorganized general retreat. And I jumped on the train, and I wanted to go inside. There was a sign: "Nye haditte. Zarasnay. Typhus." Imagine me if I would catch typhus. From typhus of the, of the--what you call it?--of the "blaha," of the little, there was no escape. If you
could stand it. Sometimes people gave out to the, to the illness; but somebody who was fighting the illness was crushed.

4. "ROSARIO"

My father recalled Iza Kramer on several occasions and, despite melancholy or medicine, always seemed happy to tell me this story. In fact, on one occasion in particular—a cold day in November 1987—he told the story of Iza Kramer with a two-day old flu so severe it almost left him bedridden, and with a throat so hoarse it almost left him voiceless; yet, according to my notes, he seemed "happy to recall the name."

My father usually named both Iza Kramer and her friend, Nadyezhda Plivitskaya, to tell of the time when, as a bold and talented schoolboy, dressed in the telltale uniform of the Conservatory—an institution that, according to my father, did not allow students to engage in any sort of extracurricular activities, musical or otherwise—he "chiseled out" the home address of Iza Kramer, went out to her house uninvited, and interrupted the socializing of the two famous turn-of-the-century Russian singers to request an audition as piano accompanist. And while this story often seemed prompted by my father's interest in illustrating his intense and persistent desire, even as a boy, to acquire experience as a pianist (e.g., R3 and R4) or to demonstrate independence as an individual (e.g., R2 and R5)—or both (e.g., R6)—the name "Iza Kramer" was, interestingly, his inevitable response to an entirely different prompting: namely, "Rosario" (R1).

El Rosario, the name of an "urbanizacion" on the southern coast of Spain, first triggered the story of Iza Kramer in my parents' bedroom at about 2:00 a.m. on 26 September 1987, when I came home from a teachers' party—held at the Las Chapas home of Jalal H. for the staff of the Columbus International College—to find my father up and dressed, ready to call the "guardia civil" and scour the city in search of his delinquent, middle-aged daughter. While my mother undressed my father—who had "worried terrible" despite my call home earlier in the evening—I entertained my parents with detailed descriptions of all the foods and faces that I could recall. Then, while my mother made my father a midnight snack, I described the villa of the Registrar, Angela S.: less bold, perhaps, than my father, I had accepted Angela's invitation to go to Las Chapas together and to spend the few hours between school and party at her home in El Rosario. The mention of El Rosario evoked the story of Iza Kramer: coincidence reunited my father—who had gone to Buenos Aires on business many years after leaving Odessa—and the elderly singer—who had moved with her husband to Rosario, Argentina.
"Iza Kramer" came up again last year (summer 1988) when my parents decided to move to a house "without all those stairs." Since my father's illness, the ups and downs of the three flights of stairs separating bedrooms, living-rooms, and music-rooms have worried both my parents. Confined, at times, by illness to the upstairs bedroom, my father curses his decreased activity, calling himself "The Prisoner of Zenda." The warden, my mother, on the other hand—whose high blood pressure increases whenever my father gets worried or sick—sprouts several extra pairs of arms and legs to become, as she says, "a centipede on a pogo stick," bouncing up and down the stairs "100 times a day," in order to fulfill the combined duties of nurse and secretary, gardener and zoo warden, cook and housekeeper, etc., etc., etc.

Thus, a house-hunting expedition was scheduled for one fine summer's day; and with high hopes of finding houses with lower levels, the three of us awaited, with anticipation, the arrival of Ramon, my parents' favorite taxi-driver (combination friend, bon vivant, and family man). I had not anticipated my father's response to our taxi-tour of El Rosario: in Spanish, he told Ramon a shortened version of the Iza Kramer story, focusing on those parts of the story that might have interested his friend (e.g., the restaurant in Buenos Aires, the jewelry of Iza Kramer, and the incarceration of Nadyezhda Plevitskaya).

Since my father's most recent illness and "incarceration" this past spring, I have come to rely on a weekly "check-up" call to Spain, at around 2:00 a.m., Saturday mornings (8:00 a.m., Sundays, Spanish time). Two weeks ago (10/11 June 1989), after assuring myself that all was well healthwise, I took advantage of the telephone to check with my mother on the spelling of El (Al?) Rosario:

CS: Tutti, you know that "urbanizacion" where Angela lived, near school--is it Al Rosario or El Rosario? I need to know for the Holy Grail. (My mother and I have referred thusly to my dissertation for quite some time now: a few years ago, she wrote a letter advising me to "just write it already—it's not the Holy Grail!")

IS: For the Holy Grail? (laughing) You need this for your dissertation?

CS: Yes, it's important. Is it Al Rosario or El Rosario?

IS: El Rosario, of course.

CS: Not Al, not Al Rosario?
IS: No, no, of course not. Don’t you remember anymore? El Rosario, El Rosario.

GS: (shouting from the distance) Iza Kramer.

IS: No, no, Gregory. That’s something else. She needs this for her dissertation. She wants to know about El Rosario.

GS: (shouting again) That’s Iza Kramer.

CS: (half to herself) Oh, this is great. This is just perfect.

IS: Oh, my God! Papa’s confused again. I don’t know what he means, but it’s El Rosario, El, like the letter "L."

CS: OK, Tutti, that’s great—that’s all I wanted to know. But don’t worry about Papa: he’s not confused; he knows just what he means. I’ll explain it all in a letter. I’ll write, I’ll write you all about it. It’s really just wonderful—everything’s fine—but it’s hard to explain over the phone.

It’s just as hard for me to explain how I felt when I hung up the phone. My father’s unanticipated long-distance response—the two words, "Iza Kramer"—provided me with a piece of evidence doubly persuasive: first, it showed me, once again, that the sound of a word may occasion the start of a story; and, second, it reassured me—as, perhaps, few other words could have done—that over the phone and at 8:00 a.m. (an hour at which I, myself, do few things well and many things over), my father was doing just fine.

RI: 26 September 1987

GS: Rosario—that’s the story of Iza Kramer.

CS: Iza Kramer? I don’t think I know that story, but it’s late now . . .


CS: . . . Don’t you want to try and sleep?

GS: No, Cristina. You know I sleep very little now. Anyway, Mama is preparing for me something to eat, whatever it is.

CS: OK. Well, alright then.

GS: Well, Iza Kramer was the biggest star in the Opera
Theatre of Odessa--married, that time, to "redacteur" of the biggest paper, newspaper in Odessa: Odeski Novosti. Iza Kramer--who could touch her? No one. She was the biggest singer of operettas (hums), the most famous star, the most famous diva. And she has all the diamonds covering her, all the finest clothes, anything you can imagine.

Anyway, somehow--I’m now only student in Odessa Conservatory, and covering me, as I imagine myself, my dark uniform of conservatory, with the, the gold epaulets--and, somehow, I found out where she lives. And I come in, right to her home,

"Iza Kramer?"

"Da." ("Yes.") "What you doing here, Malchik?" Iza Kramer was the biggest star, and here I am, a little boy, making, unexpectedly, appearances in her home.

"I’m student in Conservatory, Odessa Conservatory. I study piano and composition. I heard you singing--fine, wonderful singing--in the Opera Theatre. And I would love, sometime, to accompany you." Here, she has the finest accompanists of the opera when she appears--Simsiss, Harshom, all the famous pianists--and I come in to play for her.

"So, you’re playing the piano. You want to accompany. Sit down at the piano; play me something." So she puts me some pieces. I sit down at the piano, accompany her, play everything she wants at prima vista. "You’re good," says. "Come in any time you want. You can come in to rehearse with me."

And, of course, I did--many times. At that time, when I played for Iza Kramer, she had a visitor just come in from France, from Paris: Plivitskaya, Nadyezhda Plivitskaya, the famous singer of the Russian folksongs. And she’s sitting there, together with Iza Kramer, drinking tea, the same as now. They talking together, about all the news, all the shows, all the stories from Paris--talking and talking all the time.

And some time, many years later, the same Plivitskaya was arrested by French police because she was a, a sweetheart of a spy. Somehow, she became involved with General Kutioptov, General Miller, all those guys making propaganda against the Russia. They sent her to that famous jail, St. Lazare, to die. And she was the most famous of all, of all singers of the Russian folklore. That’s the story of Nadyezhda Plivitskaya.
But the story of Iza Kramer—strange, in life, how things work out. Many years has passed, and I’m going from New York to Argentina, to Buenos Aires. And I supposed to bring regards from my friend Mischa Borr to the pianist, by name of Greenberg—he’s working, playing in ne of those fine, fashionable restaurants in Buenos Aires.

Says, "Grisha, when you’re in Buenos Aires, give my regards to Greenberg. He’s fine pianist, everything else, and I always think of him."


So, when I come in to Buenos Aires, I find that restaurant, fine restaurant. And I’m bringing regards to Greenberg, sitting down to eat, everything else. All of a sudden, appears a Russian, distinguished looking lady. Unexpectedly, she comes in right to my table, looks me right in my face. It’s Iza Kramer.

"Grisha, razvitee menani ooznaiesh?" ("Don’t you recognize me?") "Did I change so much?"

I look at her, recognize her, "Iza Iakovovna!" Of course, she changed after so many years, but what can you say to a woman? I says, "You’re the same, Iza Iakovovna, as I remember you in Odessa. What you doing here?" ("Sto ti delaesh?")

"I’m married now," says, "living in Rosario with my husband. He’s a doctor." She was married, that time, to a big doctor there in that little place. "If you’re in Rosario, look me up. I be glad to see you again."

Of course, I was glad, that time, to see her after so many years has passed, but I never went to Rosario. Somehow, I never had time. Iza Kramer—the biggest star in the Opera Theatre of Odessa, and she died in that little place, faraway place, Rosario. That’s the story of Iza Kramer.

R2: 4 October 1987 (4/A)

GS: And I don’t remember—at that time that I was always wandering, I met, I got, went as far as to find out where Iza Kramer lives. She was famous.

I came to that flat and says, "I’m a student, Conservatory student, and I would like—I heard your opera singing." She sang already (hums). She sang in the opera. Iza Kramer was a famous star, and here I’m
a little boy making appearances in her flat.

She says, "What you doing here, Malchik?" ("Malchik" is little boy in Russian.)

I says, "I heard you singing, and I love it. I would like, every time, to come in. Maybe you need some accompaniment?"

And she put some romances, and I played--you know, at prima vista--all of it. And she says, "OK. You're doing very fine."

At that time, when I played for her, she had a visitor from France: Plivitskaya, Nadyezhda Plivitskaya, the most famous Russian prima donna of the Russian songs, folklore. We have her picture on the music. And she also visited fairs that time, Paris that time. And she came to give her impression of Paris to Iza Kramer. That was in her flat; and that, they talked about it. Didn't pay much attention to me altogether, but I played the piano for her.

So, after the whole conversation, Iza Kramer says, "OK, Grisha." (She called me Grisha, I imagine.) "You can come to rehearse." And here she had the finest pianists—Simsiss, Harshom—and two best pianists she had as accompanists when she appeared. Harshom—I don't remember his first name; Simsiss—I don't know. They all soloists also. He was an operatic pianist and left Russia, Odessa, during those bad times, to escape, run away. Constantinople—I don't know where they went...

IS: ... But you played for her?

GS: Sure, all the time. Then I met her in South America. Don't you remember?

IS: I don't remember, but you told me. Tell Cristina because she doesn't know.

GS: Many years after, I was in New York; and friend of mine, Mischa Borr, says, "Grisha, you're gonna be in Buenos Aires. Give my regards to my former pianist, Greenberg." I don't remember his first name. He played in some fashionable place. "I always think of him and like to see him some day."

So I came to Buenos Aires and went to that place. And, accidentally, Iza Kramer was there. And she heard my name, that I brought regards, so she went to me and says,
"Grisha."

I say, "Who?" She changed after so many years.

"Iza Iakovovna, Grisha. Sto ti delaesh?" ("What are you doing here?")

"I have a job."

"I'm married now," says, "and live in Rosario." That's where she died, too. "My husband is a doctor." Dentist—I don't remember what it is. "He's a doctor. And I'm glad to see you, naturally. If you're in Rosario, don't forget to look me up."

I didn't have a chance to go to Rosario . . .

IS: . . . So it was an accident that she was in Buenos Aires then? She lived in Rosario. It was really an accident. Is she the one who said, "Have I changed much?" Is that the lady?

GS: Yes. "Grisha, did I change?" I didn't see her for so many years.

IS: You still didn't (garbled) recognize her?

GS: Of course, I recognize her. But she's different; she changed. What can I say? She's a woman. Says, "Change? Not at all." Of course. "Before me I see the same Iza Iakovovna as I know in Odessa."

R3: 26 October 1987 (5/B)

CS: Did you ever hear that before? (referring to previous story of coupletistes)

IS: No. Many of these things I haven't heard of. Many names I haven't heard of. No. Many, many, many . . .

GS: . . . That's how I, my desire to accompany brought me to Iza Kramer, who was the famous diva. She was that time married to the, to the editor of a big, biggest paper in Odessa: Odeski Novesti. She was married to him, and she was singing in the opera—but the operettas—you know—like "ah-hta-tsa" (hums song from Der Zigeunerprimas). Operettas, Kalmann, in the Opera Theatre.

And many years later, in Buenos Aires, I had greetings from Mischa Borr to the pianist, Greenberg. And I saw a lady just coming in to Mr. Greenberg, saying hello. And he showed her me. That's, was Iza Kramer, the most
famous star in Odessa. Here she is, far away in Argentina.

She looked at me, "Grisha, did I change a lot?"

I said, "No."

She was a greatest star—Iza Kramer. Who could compare with her? She had diamonds. And I came to her house.

I says, "If you need an accompanist, please call me."

"Well, play me something." So I sit down at the piano, accompany her. "You’re good. You can always come here and rehearse with me."

That was many years before. And, finally, accompany her in Russia—and, then, outside of Russia. Cristina, but it’s so vague in my mind, all those things that happened. The only thing I know, in Buenos Aires—she was living in Rosario. She was married, that time, to one of the doctors there. And that’s why I met her at that restaurant, that restaurant where I brought regards from Mischa Borr to the pianist, Greenberg.

R4: 6 November 1987 (6/A)

GS: (omit preceding discussion of family move to Paris; here, "Paris" seems to evoke story) And my desire to accompany, to play the piano, I found out where the famous star, Iza Kramer . . .

IS: . . . This was in Paris?

GS: No, no. In Russia, in Odessa. She was married, that time, to the newspaper: Odeski, Odeski Novesti, the biggest Russian paper. She was married to, to editor of that paper. And I didn’t see her for many, many years.

Then, I started to play accompaniments with her. She brought out her whole family from Russia to France—to, first to Odessa, then, everyplace she travelled.

And many years—I told you already, but I’ll repeat again—many years after, I’m in . . . Where am I, Inge, in South America?

IS: Buenos Aires.

GS: Huh?

IS: Buenos Aires.
Buenos Aires. I had some regards from Mischa Borr to the pianist who played in that--Greenberg, very fine pianist, he, he played in that restaurant, or whatever it is. I had to deliver my regards from Mischa Borr to him.

And just at that time, I saw that the Russian, one lady, runs right to our table, just looks at me. "Grisha, razvitee menani ooznaiesh?" ("Don't you recognize me?")

I looked at her. Naturally, I recognized: Iza Kramer. She changed.

She asked me, "Did I change so much, Grisha?"

What can you tell a woman?

She was married, that time, to a doctor in Rosario, not far from Buenos Aires, a big doctor. When she died, before she died, she wanted to see her daughter. The daughter lived in, the daughter lived in New York, so the daughter wanted to take a flight to Buenos Aires. Then came the news that Iza Kramer died, so there was no sense for the daughter to fly to Buenos Aires. That's, that's the story about Iza Kramer.

And the same place with Iza Kramer, I saw her friend. And they were talking, talking, all the time. And that was Plivitskaya. Plivitskaya was the famous singer of the Russian songs. She was a friend of Iza Kramer, and she was telling Iza Kramer all the news about Paris. They were talking all the time. And, well, you know that whole story about in Paris: my father said, "No. French is not for me!" And we went back to Russia.

R5: 6 November 1987 (6/B)

When I came back to Odessa, I was chiseling out to go to Iza Kramer house and play for her.

She says, "What you doing here?"

"I study piano," I says. "I'm a, I study piano and composition in Conservatory, in Odessa, and I would like, sometime--maybe you need an accompanist?"

"Oh. Play me something." So I sit down at the piano, play some piece for her. "Sounds pretty good. You can come in any time you want. If I'm home, I'll play with you."
At that time, she had a lot of guests in her house; and once, specially, the famous Russian singer of folksongs, Plivitskaya. Plivitskaya used to tell her the story about Paris, and she would listen to it enchanted. The same Plivitskaya died in the same prison . . .


GS: . . . Because she was a sweetheart of one who was a spy, according to French police. So they put her, she never got out of jail.

R6: 8 January 1988 (R11/A)

GS: You know how I used to go to Iza Kramer’s house. I went there once. I knew she was married, that time, to "redacteur" of Odeski Novesti, the newspaper. And I went to her house.

She says, "What you doing here? Who are you?"

I said, "I know you singing, and I play piano. And I wish I could sometimes play accpaniment for you."

"Go 'head. Sit down at the piano. Play me something." So I sit down, and she put some music on. And I read it. "Aha! You’re good. You can always come on certain, certain days I’m free. You can sit down here, and I’ll play over some new songs with you."

And I did it. And sometimes—I told you—she—I told you—a famous singer, Russian songs, Plivitskaya. I have her songs, her, beautiful covers: Nadyezhda Plivitskaya. She sang Russian songs, beautiful. And they were friends together.

Later on, many years, when she was arrested, when she died in jail in Paris—-I don’t remember, I told you about her. She was involved in some generals’ schemes: General Kutiopov, General Miller, all those anti-Soviet people who tried to make propaganda against those, Russia, at that time. And she was involved, Plivitskaya. And she died in jail, St. Lazare—-whatever it’s called—the famous jail. And in Paris.

But when I knew her at first, Iza Kramer, she used to, and she would sing some songs of the day from Paris, and then surround with her, doing the cancan—-or whatever you call it—"canacan," cancan, would be in Russian. I have the magazine, too, quite a large magazine. You’ve seen them, cristina.
CS: Which one is it?

GS: The, where they describe Iza Kramer, star of singing. But that was done after her die, after she was dead.

5. "ACCIDENT"

From late November until mid-December 1987, the story of Melodie Nakachian—the five-year-old daughter of multimillionaires, a Lebanese businessman, Raymond, and a Korean singer, Kimera--dominated Spanish TV. Melodie had been kidnapped on her way to school by a team of Spanish and French hitmen, apparently known to the family, and developments in the story were followed daily—in newscasts and newspapers, at kiosks and street corners—with the passion usually reserved for three recent hits of Spanish TV: "El Precio Es Justo" ("The Price Is Right"), "Uno, Dos, Tres" (One, Two, Three”), and "Los Ricos Tambien Lloran" ("The Rich Cry Too")—an early morning soap opera).

Previously unknown to Spanish viewers, Melodie’s mother—billed as an opera singer—appeared suddenly in videos that aired continuously; so, inevitably, perhaps, my parents got caught up in the story. Besides, the phantasmagoric air of the abduction—underscored by legends about the unknown business of the father (who made his fortune the camouflage for an obscure background) and the unusual eye-shadow of the mother (who made her face the background for a colorful camouflage of butterflies and flowers)—seemed to evoke conjectures as strange as the story itself.

In preparation for the story’s denouement, the police departments of several cities, trying to acquire a missing professionalism, had loaded special forces and machine guns into unmarked cars that scoured the coast of Spain, virtually 24 hours a day, for the hitmen’s hideout. But the involvement of a virtual stranger to the story—a veritable deus ex machina—made Melodie's discovery as extraordinary as her disappearance: On her ordinary shopping rounds, a devout and dutiful local lady found a wallet, which she promptly turned over, unopened, to her parish priest; he, in turn, brought the wallet to the police. Upon opening the wallet—unknowingly dropped by one of the kidnappers while shopping for groceries for his victim—the police discovered not only the man’s name and address, but a recent photograph and ransom note as well.

All’s well that ends well: the police located Melodie and captured the kidnappers who had stayed in Spain, Melodie’s father contacted his criminal acquaintances to help capture the foreign hitmen for the police of Spain, and Melodie’s mother resumed her operatic career to help establish the
Melodie Foundation for the Victims of Kidnapping. But the conjectures continued long after Melodie had been reunited with her family. Aficionados of the Spanish hit had difficulty distinguishing good guys from bad guys, deciding who was the "victim": the story’s end seemed a lucky break for the unprofessional police, but an unlucky accident for the professional criminals.

At present writing, my interest in Melodie’s story seems a lucky break: walking home from school on 23 November 1987, I thought about the ungraded papers and blank tapes that awaited marking, and the long-awaited Thanksgiving break that promised time "to get everything done," as I wrote in my journal later that day. I had promised myself a nap as soon as I got home; but when I arrived, I found my parents waiting lunch for me, anxious to hear about the day’s activities at school. Shelving thoughts of work or sleep, I entertained my parents with reports on the progress of my least responsive students—the "molto ritardandos," who slept in class after disco-ing till dawn. General talk about school and education led my father to comment on The Education of a Princess: A Memoir by Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia, and my mother to comment on the ineducability of the youngest of her three undisciplined dogs—a frog-prince in sore need of schooling. Finally, conversation turned to what had become an expected lunchtime topic of inexhaustible interest: Melodie’s story and the latest clue in the schoolgirl’s mysterious disappearance. Despite my exhaustion, my father’s unexpected response—the Crimea story (Al)—must have aroused my curiosity because I noted the pre-story conversation in my journal as follows:

("Words" clue memories? Hears "accident" and tells story)

IS: So it was just an accident—imagine that—just an accident that he lost his wallet.

CS: Can you imagine how he must’ve felt? All that planning, months of planning, and he botches the whole thing by losing his wallet. I mean, why take it with him? He could’ve ...

IS: ... I know. He could’ve just taken the money and left the wallet at home, or emptied the wallet and just kept money on him—you know what I mean. Just taken money with him ...
CS: . . . Yeah. Stupidity of the highest order—"molto, molto ritardando." I'd hate to be him.

IS: Bad enough to get caught, to go to jail, but his buddies—Oh, my God! They must be angry. Just an accident, a freak accident.

My father referred to the Crimea story that followed the 23 November conversation (A1) only three more times. In response to my request, he told the story again the following day (A2); and in answer to my questions, he referred to it again on 27 December 1987 (A3). His last reference to the story did not occur until the summer of my sister Toranna's visit in 1988 and, unfortunately, did not get recorded—except in my journal and in passing.

Except for the last week of their stay, my sister and her children passed a relatively problem-free summer vacation in Spain. But for many months to come, the problems of their last week would provide material for a story as dramatic as Melodie's abduction. The Monday before leaving Spain, Toranna gathered money, credit cards, airline tickets, three passports, two children, and one sister; and together, the four of us headed, on foot, for downtown Fuenteiro to make the necessary flight confirmations and last-minute purchases. As we were walking, a hit-and-run driver pulled up to my sister, grabbed the strap of her purse, and proceeded to drag her down the street, knocking my nephew off his feet at the same time.

Although the purse-snatching incident lasted only a few seconds, the psychological and physical bruises stayed for some time. The children refused to go into town for the remainder of their stay; and my sister (bandaged from shoulder to wrist) and I made the necessary two dozen trips into the city alone—to the doctor, the police, the Consulate, the airline, etc., etc., etc., where we were daily provided with new forms to complete and circulate from one office to another. Despite the fact that we had provided the police with descriptions of the assailants and the first few digits of their license number, the days passed without news of captured criminals. On foot—and in vain—we returned to the scene of the crime in search of clues, and searched through the garbage of every dumpster in the city in hopes of finding Toranna's discarded purse and a favorite family photo. A trip to the lost and found proved equally futile; and Toranna left, a week later, with a sense of loss and with a sworn statement to pay Uncle Sam $250.00 for "negligent travel" (i.e., travelling without passports) upon arrival in the States.
During the weeks following Toranna's departure, the story found a place in family conversations though we had lost hope of finding the criminals or the purse. Imagine, then, our surprise when, ages later, the police called to say that the passports had been recovered: Found, by accident, they had been slipped anonymously under the door of police headquarters. I headed immediately for the police station, where--after endless interrogation--the officer on duty determined that Toranna was indeed my sister, that she had indeed left Spain, and that she would have entrusted me with the family passports had she been in the country. Still, the officer hesitated to hand over the precious documents: He gave me the passports--without so much as a single paper to sign--only after I gave him my word that I would return them to their rightful owners.

When I returned home--and despite the early Los Angeles hour--my father insisted on calling Toranna to tell her the good news himself. My mother spoke next; again, the conversation must have intrigued me because it entered my journal as follows:

IS: Imagine finding your passports, of all things--just an accident, a lucky accident.

GS: Inge, give it to me back. I forgot to say something.

IS: Just a second, Sweetheart. Papa wants to talk to you again.

GS: (taking phone) What I wanted to say, Torannuchka? Oh, yes. Yes, you know that was just an accident they found those things--like the time, you know, I supposed to go to Crimea, and accidentally, just an accident, I don't go. I wouldn't be talking to you now, you know, if I would go because . . .

IS: . . . Not now, Gregory. Oh, my God! This is no time for stories. This is long distance--it costs a fortune.

GS: Yes, well, Torannuchka. God bless you. Take Mama again. She wants to say good-bye.
The journal entry closes with self-recriminations to the effect that, at all costs, I should have urged my father to talk about Crimea: apparently, in the excitement of recovering the passports and calling the States, I did not follow up on the Crimea story when my mother finally put down the phone. Fortunately, I had no later occasion to mention the word "accident"; unfortunately, I had no later occasion to hear the Crimea story.

A1: 23 November 1987

GS: Just an accident. Just like the time--accidentally--I supposed to go to Crimea. And I don't go--just an accident, I don't go. Imagine what would happen to me if I did, would go. I would be sick. I would be dead. Who knows? I know I wouldn't be sitting here with you now.

Here, I'm sitting in my house, guy comes in, says, "Gregory, how you like to go to Crimea?"

"Sure," says. "I like that fine."

"Fine, good. Take 5,000 rubles advance, and come to the ships." And he tells me the day, the time, everything else--I don't remember now.

Was terrible times already in Russia, dark days in Odessa. So I took his advance: it's a lotta money. But when time comes to leave, to go, I couldn't go through the streets, city streets of Odessa. Already there's bullets flying on the streets, people dying right and left, already that time. Everything is under the army siege, military cordons, and it, it's just impossible to go right through, pass through the streets, go to those boats. And was just at that time, the General Wrangle was taking out his army, whatever's left of that, by boat to Crimea. But the sickness in those boats, those ships, when it's so many people for long time together, it's impossible: people dying just like flies. Just impossible. If I would go to Crimea, I would be just dead. Lucky, just lucky for me, I didn't go. Just an accident, I didn't go.

A2: 24 November 1987 (P2/A)

CS: Can you tell me again the story about Crimea that you said yesterday--the job you had in Crimea?

GS: Who?

CS: The job you had in Crimea? Yesterday, you told me a
story about Crimea.

GS: Oh, yes. We were supposed to go: I accepted an advance. It was dark days in Odessa—I told you already. People were killed in the street. And I wanted to go: he gave me 5,000 rubles advance. But when I tried to get, go through the city, I couldn't, just couldn't pass anybody. Everything was military cordons—you know. So, and then they found out that the ship, they got all kind of illnesses on the ship from so much, so many people together . . .

CS: . . . Hm hm . . .

GS: . . . You realize what it could be on the ship when it's people together? I'm talking about "tzinga"; "tzinga" is the one that have bad teeth. They got bad teeth, but all—really—sicknesses that get into you when you're together in a society of all people, don't wash theirselves for a long time, or they didn't have a bath, same type. Well, I would never see Europe. Now, I would never be born: I would be probably dead—I don't know.

See, was the time when the, when Wrangle, General Wrangle was taking out his army from Odessa by boat to Crimea, at the same time. So they had to go to Pringipa Island, in Turkey. And they were whatever remained of the army of Wrangle. The Pringipa Island is in the Turkey.

But we were supposed to go, Europe. Probably would be— I don't know where it would be evacuated, in a time like this. But I didn't go. But, luckily, I didn't go. That's the story I wanted to tell you.

A3: 27 December 1987 (R2/B)

CS: Who was the man who offered you once 5,000 rubles to go to Crimea?

GS: To go?

CS: To go to Crimea?

GS: Oh, that was a Revolution days—I told you. I wanted to go, but all the roads were, to the ships, were closed in Odessa; so I couldn't go. So he left me with 5,000 rubles, whatever they were.

CS: You didn't get sick that time?

GS: No. But I just couldn't go. So he left the 5,000 rubles . . .
CS: . . . Hm hm. And what did he want you to do?

GS: To go there as a pianist.

CS: To Crimea?

GS: To Crimea.

CS: What did that man do? Was he a musician?

GS: I don't know. He must be a manager or some kind of, he came to my house . . .

CS: . . . He came to the house?

GS: Yes. Says, to, says, "Gregory, would you like to go to Crimea?"

I said, "Yes."

"How much you want advance?"

I say, "Give me 5,000 rubles."

"Fine." Money started to go down that time.

CS: Hm. But when you escaped, you only needed 500 rubles?

GS: What?

CS: When you left Russia to escape . . .

GS: . . . Different kind of money. That was devaluation of the whole darn thing. The money went up and down. Was not the same Nikolaiech money. See, I had, in Russia, I had Ekaterinski, Ekaterinski, with a portrait of Catherine the Great. That's a hundred dollar bills.

CS: And in Romania? When you needed the 500 rubles to leave the country? You needed 500 rubles; Obermann needed 500 rubles; and Pagarelov needed 500 rubles.

GS: Yes.

CS: They were different rubles?

GS: Yeah. Well, it was devaluation.

CS: When was that? After that?

GS: After. Devaluation. Terrible times--just like with the
cigarettes.

CS: Did you ever see that man from Crimea again?

GS: Never.

CS: Never? You don’t remember his name?

GS: No.

6. "HOUSES"

In an interview for *Sur in English* (12-18 December 1986), Professor Manuel Compos described the contents of my parents’ house as follows:

The rooms and passages of the house are full of objects, each with a story behind them. There are photos signed by Grofe, Reiner, Chaliapin, Montoya, Stravinsky. . . . two grand pianos, covered in books and scores, instruments. Downstairs, there’s a cellar containing cabinets full of music . . .

Apparently, he found a kind of grace crawling under the three grand pianos, the three-legged dinosaurs almost obliterated by the ever-encroaching band of timpani and trumpets, bassdrums and bouzoukis, cymbals and flutes, and more; a kind of grace crouching on the no-less-than fifty standing cabinets, the savage metal giants bulging with one of the most gargantuan collections of music on file. Apparently, he found a kind of charm squirming under the hundreds of rare editions of scores, books, and records, stored in stacks on every available shelf; a kind of charm squatting on the thousands of artistic mementos--the photographs and figurines, letters and medallions, artworks and awards--stuffed or stuck, horizontally or vertically, on every available plane. Apparently, he found a kind of artistry in what I have always considered and described as--in plain English--the most complete and chaotic accumulation of dust collectors in existence.

For as long as I can remember, I have described my parents’ home with unbelievable unkindness: utter confusion. And for as long as I can remember, I have considered my own confused existence essential for the well- and well-ordered being of my parents: with utterances of disbelief at the disarray, I have always seen my missionary visits home as occasions to bring light--bouncing from glistening knick to gleaming knack, from shimmering bric to sparkling brac--to homo artisticus. But to date, my indefatigable efforts have only
brought grease to a well-oiled existence: for as long as I can remember, I have watched with folded dustcloth as each newly cleared and shining surface is immediately piled with scorepaper by my father or spread with oilpaint by my mother.

When I arrived in 1987, time spread before me, oozing like melting butter on wholewheat. I had six whole months, and I had plans: every gee spic, and every gaw span; neat every nook and clean every cranny. My cleaning plan seemed blessed: dividing the six main rooms of the house (living-dining room, library, kitchen, bedrooms) by the number of months worked out to one room per month. (The catroom and bathrooms would be worked into weekends; the basement—housing the fifty metal file cabinets and requiring fifty months minimum—would be worked into another visit.) On 23 August, the second day of my visit, I informed my mother of the perfect symmetry of my fall-winter cleaning scheme, indifferent to the asymmetry of context: while seated at the kitchen table watching my mother and I make dinner, listening to my mother and I make conversation, my father suddenly "interrupted" the discussion:

CS: So, by the time I leave, the house will look perfect. I'll clean one room a month while I'm here.

GS: One time, I asked Stravinsky, "Igor Fyodorovich, what you think of your teacher, Rimsky-Korsakoff?"

Stravinsky told me, "My teacher, Nikolai Andreovich, only could build rooms, but not houses."

Of course, I didn't tell him anything that time, but Stravinsky took Cog d'or from Rimsky-Korsakoff.

And indifferent to the course and content of previous conversation—to the formal perfection of my plans for order—my father broke into the discussion to tell of his break with Stravinsky (H1), a story he told again, during my visit, only in response to direct questioning (H2 and H3).

H1: 23 August 1987

GS: Stravinsky had his house, that time, on Swal Street, in Beverly Hills. Was bad times for him: he just came in, and he needed work, needed money.

Just that time, Sam Goldwyn calls me, "Gregory, I have a picture for you—big, Russian picture. But we need someone to come in. Who can we bring in?" They want always to bring in someone from someplace, someplace else. They think so, sounds better to say, "We bringing in so and so, straight from Moscow, straight from Paris, specially for the picture."
Says, "Mr. Goldwyn, we have a fine Russian composer, by name of Igor Stravinsky. Would be perfect for the job."

"Fine. Where is he? When can he come in? How soon he can be here?"

"He’s here, right here, here in Beverly Hills. I can bring him in, to the studio, tomorrow."

"Too bad," says, "would be fine, would be better if we could bring him in. Alright, fine. Call him. Get him. Come in with him to the studio tomorrow; sign the contract. $16,000 he’s gonna get." $16,000! My goodness! Was a lotta money that time, and was bad times then for Stravinsky.

Alright. So, I call Stravinsky on the phone, says, "Igor Fyodorovich, I have a picture for you—$16,000!"

"A picture? $16,000? My goodness!" Was so happy. "Come to the house, Gregory, Grisha. Come over right away. We gonna have a drink. Come."

So I came in, to Stravinsky house, and we start to drink, celebrate, talk about the picture. He wants me to tell him everything about, what’s all about, everything else. I tell him, "Goldwyn wants "Inter-", to have playing throughout the picture, "Internationale." Was composed by Frenchmen, two brothers, French brothers, by name of Degeytor: one wrote the lyrics; one, the other, wrote the music, the other one.

Stravinsky says, "Internationale? I won’t do it. I won’t touch that dirty music. Let them hire a band, but I’m not gonna put my hand to it. I don’t want it. Let them hire, give the picture somebody else."

I says, "But Igor Fyodorovich, even Sergei Vasily" (Rachmaninoff) "just played concert for the victims of the war. Was the time, wartime, when Russia was popular—specially in time of Hitler invasion of Russia without declaration of war.

Stravinsky, he says, "Nothing doing. I don’t care what Rachmaninoff does. I won’t do it. Let them do the picture without me, hire somebody else. Tell them to get somebody else.

So I says, "You see? That’s why they call you "Belaguardyayetz." I called him "belaguardyayetz"—we call "belaguardyayetz," "chornosotnyetz," somebody who
he's against the foreigners, against the Jews, against everybody else. Says, "You see, Igor Fyodorovich? They're right: you're "Belaguardyayetz."

CS: Hm. You said those things?

GS: Sure. You know me when it comes to, what's right, it's right. So, next day, I see Boris Morros. Comes in right away, immediately, to my office, "Gregory, what happened with you and Stravinsky? He came in to the studio, but he brought in Tanzmann instead of you." Tanzmann--I forget his name--Tanzmann, was fine composer, French composer of "Triptych," other fine compositions.

Anyway, happened that, finally, Stravinsky, he decided he wants the picture, but he doesn't want me the Musical Advisor. Instead of be grateful to me I get him the picture, instead of go with me to the studio, sign the contract, he brings in Tanzmann to be his advisor. Alright, sometimes happens that people be that way, do those things.

I told Boris Morros the story--what happened before. I says, "So what can I do about, Boris? I recommended him to Goldwyn. I did everything what I could, him to write the picture. What can I do if he doesn't want to work with me? He does what he wants. And Tanzmann is, anyway, fine composer. Anyway, what's past, it's gone--those things happen in life."

Few hours have passed, and Louis Milestone calls me, "Gregory, what happened? Stravinsky doesn't want to work with you on the picture."

I told him the same story, what happened, everything else, "What can I do, Mr. Milestone? He doesn't want to work with me anymore."

"Ta hell with him!" says. "You gonna work; don't you worry. You gonna hear from me."

Finally, Sam Goldwyn calls me himself, "Gregory, what's this I hear? What happened with you and Stravinsky?"

Again, the same story from beginning. I says, "Mr. Goldwyn, I did everything what I could, Stravinsky to write the picture. I recommended him to you. I tried to convince him, write the picture the way you want it. If he wants to work with Tanzmann, what can I do about? Tanzmann will do perfect job, fine job, fine work."

Says, "Gregory, you gonna work on the picture. Stravinsky
lost the job. I'm gonna call you later."

Some time have passed. Later, some time later, but same
day, phone rings, "Gregory. Sam Goldwyn. I have a
composer who just came in--his picture is not ready yet.
I told him the story about you and Stravinsky, everything
that happened. I told him the story about you--what you
done, your work, everything else. He wants very much to
work with you. Work with him--he's a nice feller, by name
of Aaron Copland."

And that's the story. That's how came about the end of
my friendship with Stravinsky and the beginning of my
work, that time, with Copland.

H2: 31 December 1987 (M2/A)

CS: What was the time, you told me one story about Stravinsky,
that in the picture, the movie picture . . .

GS: . . . Oh, that was later.

CS: In Paramount, I think.

GS: No, that was . . .

CS: . . . Columbia?

GS: I got a picture for him.

It was bad times for him. He just came. He lived on Swal
Street . . .

CS: . . . Swal?

GS: Swal, yes, Swal, in Beverly Hills.

And I just got a picture. And I called him on the phone.
Oh, he was so happy.

"Come, Gregory, to the house."

So I came. We started to drink. And, at that time, it
was, Goldwyn wanted to have "Internationale" throughout.

He says, "I'm not gonna do it, touch it. Let them hire
a band, or something like that. But I'm not gonna put
my hand to that darn dirty music."

So I told him, I says, "That's why, you see, they called
you "Belaguardyayetz." I told him "Belaguardyayetz"--
belong to "Chornaya Sotnya--"Belaguardyayetz."
Well, but, anyway, so, instead of be grateful to me, he took his old acquaintance. He was a fine composer, that time, in Hollywood, Frenchman. He was a composer of "Triptych." You ought to know. So, instead of bring me to, to the studio, sign a contract, he brings him as his advisor.

So Boris Morros immediately comes, says, "Gregory, what happened to you? He brought in, he brought in Tanzmann."

CS: Who?

GS: Tanzmann--I forgot his first name. Well-known composer in France, composer of "Triptych" and many other compositions.

Says, so I says, "Boris, what can I do? I recommended him, you know. But he does whatever he pleases."

Then Goldwyn called me, "What do I hear, Gregory? Why don't you . . . "

So I says, I told him the same story.

He says, "Gregory, here is the story. You work on the picture. I have a composer who just came, and his, the picture is not ready for him. His name is Aaron Copland. Work with him—he's a nice guy."

So I said, "Sure," I would.

That's how I started to work with Copland, and Stravinsky just lost the money.

CS: He brought, why did he bring Tanzmann? To be what?

GS: Instead of me.

CS: As what?

GS: His Advisor and Arranger.

CS: Ah. And what is a "Belaguardyayetz"? Is "White Guard"?

GS: I called him "Belaguardyayetz." I says, "You are Belaguardyayetz."

CS: What does that mean?

GS: "White Guards." All belong to the "Chornaya Sotnya," "Belaguardia," same darn thing. All are against . . .
CS: ... "Chornaya Sotnya"? All are against what?

GS: All are against Jews and foreigners.

CS: Oh, "Chornaya Sotnya" was "Black Hundred"?

GS: "Chornaya," yes. Well, we call somebody "Chornosotnyetz," "Belaguardyayetz," "Chornosotnyetz."

CS: It was "Black Hundred"?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Anyway ... .

GS: ... And that was the end of our friendship with Stravinsky.

CS: You knew him before then, too?

GS: Ah, yes. He used to come to the house to look over my library, to dig in the library. And he liked the cooking, also cooking: Zoe was a cook.

CS: Hm. Was he married that time?

GS: Yeah, French woman.

CS: Hm. And did he have any, he was having difficulties, or he had no jobs, or what?

GS: No. I fixed him a job for $16,000.

CS: Which was the job for $16,000?

GS: The one, he refused to do, "Internationale."

CS: "Internationale."

GS: Instead of me, he brought Tanzmann to the studio, presented him as his assistant. And then Boris Morros called me, and Goldwyn called me, and everybody else wanted to know why I'm--Milestone called me--they wanted to know what happened to me, why shouldn't I be on the picture. So I told them the story. He says, "Ta hell with him!"

CS: Who was Goldwyn?

GS: The greatest--you see his name on the pictures.
CS: That's Sam Goldwyn?

GS: Sam Goldwyn.

CS: He was the owner of the whole business? Paramount Studio, or MGM?

GS: One of the big . . .

CS: . . . Sam Goldwyn, Goldwyn Metro . . .


CS: That must be, uhm, MGM. This wasn't at Paramount, then? This was at MGM?

GS: Well, I don't know where he was that time.

CS: You didn't just work at Paramount? You worked at other studios, too?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Hm. And Milestone was who?

GS: Milestone was the . . .

CS: . . . Who was, is that Jack Milestone?

GS: No, no, Jack. Louis Milestone.

CS: And what did he do?

GS: He was a big producer on pictures.

CS: Oh.

GS: General Died at Dawn, old—what's that French picture, the famous one? All Quiet on the Western Front.

CS: Oh, yeah?

GS: Oh, one of the big, not producer—what you call it?

CS: Director?

GS: Director.

CS: Did you meet all these people while you were working at Paramount?

GS: Huh?
CS: Did you meet all those people while you were working at Paramount?

GS: Yes, yes. At Paramount.

H3: 4 January 1988 (R8/A)

CS: But the time that Stravinsky wouldn’t write the, the "Internationale" into picture . . .

GS: . . . That was very late.

CS: You said somebody, Milestone, called you on the phone, and somebody else called you on the phone.

GS: Boris Morros.

CS: Sam, Sam Goldwyn.

GS: Sam Goldwyn, himself.

CS: He must have been one of the heads . . .

GS: . . . He was the big boss.

He says, "Gregory, what happened with you and Stravinsky?"

I said, "Mr. Goldwyn, I did everything I could to, to, to write the picture. But he said, but instead, he brings in the French composer"--what’s his name?

CS: Tanz-, no, Tanzmann . . .

GS: " . . . Tanzmann, as his assistant. So what can I do? I tried my best to sell him to you, to sell everything what you wanted to do."

Then he calls me back, "Gregory, Aaron Copland’s here. His picture is not ready. So, I told him about you, about everything what happened. And wants very, was very happy to hear that you’re gonna work with him on the next picture."

So, see? He got the picture.

CS: The Russian one. What was the name of that picture?

GS: I have some music from the picture . . .

CS: . . . You don’t remember the title of it?
GS: I wrote the whole score.

CS: You wrote the score? What did Copland do?

GS: Orchestrations. I was keeping, working in the studio yet. See, the studio closed because they didn’t need any Music Department. Little by little, they abolished all those musical departments. But they kept me on the salary of $150.00 a week—I don’t remember how much, that time. You understand? (omit continued discussion of changes at Paramount, during course of which GS changes last few lines of dialogue above as follows: "Copland wrote the piano part. I wrote the orchestrations.")

Sight

1. "FINGERBOWL"

Although my mother’s cooking has improved immeasurably in recent years, her development as a cuisiniere has evidenced a certain unevenness: ingredients necessary to the mastery of the culinary art, yet difficult to measure by spoon or by cup, have been partially mixed in, totally mixed up, or just left out altogether, with the result that my mother’s repasts have often tested both the palette and the patience of her gastronomic guinea pigs. Thus, for example, by skimping on plates ("Why wash two when you can wash just one?") my mother has frequently succeeded in spoiling two dishes with one blow: crisp souffled spinach and soft sauced cauliflower—fairly decent fare when served separately—slosh in a single bowl, where tastes and textures struggle unsuccessfully to survive intact. Similarly, my mother’s meals have sometimes shown a certain lack of tact in their sense of taste: by pouring on seasonings ("Variety is the spice of life!") my mother has often concocted menus offensive to good taste—to both tongue and eye. But a mastercook—who can make a good meal great and a bad meal, good—knows that fine dining pleases senses other than taste. To date, no such knowledge has favored the flavors of the foods fixed by my mother, whose apprenticeship, thus far, has not attended to the quality that, perhaps, most distinguishes haute cuisine from home cookery: artistic presentation.

Thus, one day soon after my 1987 arrival, I was doubly shocked: after fixing a delicious lunch of glazed Dutch ham and German potato salad, my mother presented my father and I with three large bowls: the first contained clear water; the second, powdered sugar; and the third, fresh strawberries
(which had been scooped from a large, yellow wooden crate that squatted precariously on a small, red leather footstool—intended for my father’s swollen legs, but enjoyed, most often, by the family’s feline swellheads).

Apparently, this was not my father’s first experience with one of my mother’s swell dessert ideas: At my mother’s command, "Well, enjoy!", my father immediately took up a strawberry while I, incredulous, watched his movements: After tugging at its tiny brown-green leaves, my father lowered the ripe, red ball slowly into the bowl of water, where it bobbed until he was able to force the fingers of both shaky hands to fish the fruit out. Then, holding fast to the slippery strawberry, my father dipped it stiffly into the sugarbowl, turning and twisting the sweetened sphere until it—and the table—were completely coated with white. Finally, my father was ready to "enjoy" the first bite of a dessert that was bound to take longer to assemble than to assimilate.

For as long as I can remember, I have thought of my father as a man more likely to command obedience (from "his musicians"—as a conductor—to his own fingers—as a pianist) than to obey commands; and I was astonished—and indignant—with the inelegance of the sugar-coated strawberries and commands that my mother had served. How could she demand that a man as old and as ill as my father fix his own dessert? As adamant as I was angry, my mother insisted,

IS: It may not be elegant, but it’s efficient. Papa has more work, but I have less—and that’s good for both of us: he has his head and his hand muscles to work; and since he uses only three mixing bowls, I have less water to heat, fewer dishes to wash, and, so, no high blood pressure to boot!

For me, my mother’s response was no less astonishing than my father’s: whenever my mother brought out her bowls of water, sugar, and strawberries, he brought forth his story of Efrem Zimbalist and Mischa Elman (F1)

Although I have always liked the way the fingerbowl story ends, I had never noted the way it begins (F2)—not, at least, until that summer. But as summer turned to fall—and fresh strawberries disappeared from the marketplace and the kitchen table, so—and despite other discussions of Zimbalist and Elman—the story disappeared from my father’s repertoire. It must have been fresh in his mind, however, because I heard it again one evening in winter, when Octave Caleja (Conductor of the Malaga Symphony Orchestra) made one of his very welcome, but invariably unannounced appearances at my parent’s house to eat and to talk—better, to listen, to my father’s stories of music and musicians.
On that December evening, however, Octave had something special to talk about and insisted that we go someplace special to eat. After driving along the seacoast dining strip in unsuccessful search of a restaurant not requiring reservations, Octave finally decided to go inland, where he found an English brasserie, The Beefeater, specializing in braised spareribs. My father, as usual, indulged his passion for pasta (an untidy passion that meets, nonetheless—and despite her meticulous manners—with my mother's nudging approval: although spaghetti tends to produce smudged and spattered shirtfronts—as well as "Spaghetti"—it presents few problems of cutting or chewing. But the rest of us ordered the specialty of the house: strips of saucy spareribs that defied all attempts at tidy dining.

Toward the end of a savory, but somewhat slovenly meal, all around, Octave presented us with three pieces of news: a divorce, a marriage, and an adoption. (He announced that after leaving his present wife, he planned to marry his childhood sweetheart and to adopt her seven-year-old son.) As we filled our grime glasses to drink to Octave's future happiness, the waiter presented us with three bowls of water, three sterling mini-cisterns spilling over with that elemental liquid—one full bowl for each full beefeater. I looked first at the fingerbowls and then at my father; he had turned toward me, and we both burst out laughing, while Octave and my mother sat upright in righteous confusion.

Whether the (unrecorded) half-Spanish, half-English version of the fingerbowl story that followed was offered for the sake of righting a wrong or telling a story, I don't know. I do know that Octave, comforted to learn that the laughter was not meant for him and his somewhat unusual news, loosened his belt and leaned back in his chair, to listen, in comfort, as his usual story-teller told about the infamous faux pas of a famous musician, out of his element when dining out.

F1: 3 September 1987

GS: That reminds me the time, the story, Zimbalist story, when he and Mischa Elman were young men—famous violinists already that time, both of them, but still young. Efrem Zimbalist. Would be already about 100 years old if he would be still alive. He was about 95 when I saw him for the last time in Reno. He wouldn't see nobody, but when I gave my name, presented myself to the woman there, he came to the door himself in a chair, wheelchair. Could hardly walk that time already. Could hardly hear, but I think he could hear me, yes, could hear me fine: he laughed when I reminded him the story.
Anyway, he told me the story himself, many times, and I think it's a cute one. One time, when he and Elman were young, the Fifth Avenue crowd, all those big shots, invited them to a big fancy affair at Hotel, Hotel Astor. Both of them, they were already famous that time; and that fancy crowd, they like to show how they appreciate the artists, the musicians, everything else. So they invite all famous people to their dinners, whatever you call them.

Zimbalist and Elman were already, that time, fine musicians, extraordinary violinists. Zimbalist, he's one of the earliest pupils of Professor Auer, Leopold Auer, in St. Petersburg. And Elman, too; he's the one, in early Revolutionary days, his father had to get special permission from Plehve, in Moscow, to stay in the city so the little boy could join the conservatory, play the violin. Fine violinists, virtuosi. Extraordinary violinists, both of them, already that time.

Well, Zimbalist tells me the story. Says, "That's the time we invited to dinner at Hotel Astor, both of us." Says, "Imagine. Here we are, two little Russian Jewish boys; and all of a sudden, we eating dinner at the same table together with all the aristocrats."

So, there they are, Zimbalist and Elman together, seated at the big table in Hotel Astor, surrounded by all the aristocratic Fifth Avenue crowd--sitting, eating, drinking. Everything fine: fine food, fine wine, everything else. But all of a sudden, they see the waiters--dressed up waiters, in fine, fancy uniforms--and the waiters are bringing in water, bowls of water, to wash their hands, dip their fingers.

Of course, Zimbalist and Elman, they never seen something like that before. They didn't know what for was the water. They didn't know to wash their hands in the bowl, just dip their fingers. They just didn't know what to do. So Zimbalist, he's a cautious type: he's waiting, watching, looking to see what all that fancy crowd is gonna do. And then he's gonna do the same thing, like everybody else. But Elman, he's not the same type. He's the kind who just can't wait for anybody: he sees the water, grabs the bowl, drinks it up.

And that's the story, kinda cute one, Zimbalist story.

**F2:** July 1984/date garbled (O3/A)

**GS:** Efrem Zimbalist is a famous violinist. He lives now in Reno; he's 96 years old. He's one of the earliest
students of Professor Leopold Auer In St. Petersburg.

Well, he tells the story; he told me the story, told many times, when they were young. He was a young boy; he was already famous violinist. And Mischa Elman--also was a famous violinist.

And the Fifth Avenue crowd--you know--the 500 or 300--what you call it? The aristocrats invited them all to a big affair once. And they were sitting, eating, everything else, and all of a sudden they brought water to wash their hands . . .

CS: . . . A waterbowl.

GS: So, Zimbalist didn't know what to do, but he was waiting. Zimbalist, the violinist.

And the other violinist--also, the other is there--was Mischa Elman. Mischa Elman was very, he was a very temperamental boy . . .

CK: . . . Aha . . .

GS: . . . A la you . . .

CK: . . . A la you . . .

GS: . . . Grabs the glass and drinks it.

And that's the story.

CK: Elman or Zimbalist?

CS: No, Elman. Elman couldn't wait any longer, got the glass and drank it. And it was water, to wash your hands with.

CK: Water?

CS: Olden days, they used to bring a water dish to everybody, with lemon or rosewater or something like that. You can tell us now, again, the story about the bread distribution.

2. "LENNIE, LENNIE, LENNIE"

One evening in the early fall of 1987, Madrid TV broadcast "Lennie, Lennie, Lennie," a special celebration of Leonard Bernstein's music. And although the show, featuring many of Bernstein's most popular melodies, did not seem to affect my father particularly as we watched--he was relatively
silent throughout the broadcast--a few hours later, my father had a story to tell about Bernstein and a characterization to make about himself, while my mother and I made a late-night snack. (L1).

Interestingly, a short while later (on 17 September), my father characterized himself in terms similar to those used in L1--but this time, while discussing not Leonard Bernstein, but Benny Goodman (whose theme song, "Let's Dance," my father composed): "I was just a greenhorn, just a refugee from Russia. I did such unusual things--coming to the States and teaching them to sing "Otchi Tchornyia. It's so silly."

Additionally, while Bill Wieman, who figures importantly in the Bernstein story, comes up time and again in the transcripts (e.g., O1/A, O5/A; and see M2/A below), my father never again mentioned Bernstein in connection with his old friend at Witmark, Remick, Chappell. However, my father apparently told the story to Maestro Octave Caleja, during an early morning telephone conversation (1 or 2 December) a few months later. While still in bed, I overheard (and eavesdropping on conversations had become a tactic, as effortless as unethical, of my story-tracking efforts) my father and mother disagreeing: According to my father, "Bernstein was a genius." According to my mother, "He was lucky." When I got up and went downstairs, according to my journal, my father greeted me with, "I told Octave the story about Bernstein."

L1: 8 September 1987

GS: I want to tell you now something about Bernstein, Leonard Bernstein. You don't know my story of Bernstein. I, did I ever tell you?

Wieman calls me in, says, "Gregory, Bernstein is giving us trouble again. You have to come in, do the job yourself."

I says, "Sure, fine. What is it, Bill?"--whatever I call him.

Says, "You have to throw away his music and start again, from beginning, do the arrangement yourself."

Wieman gave to arrange Bernstein something from a record, phonograph recording. But he lost patience listening to that recording. He couldn't help it: he's a composer, fine composer himself, and he wrote his own stuff. Fine compositions.

So Wieman calls me in, "Gregory, you have to correct
Bernstein mistakes. Just, you have to throw away his music, do the arrangement yourself."

So I did, naturally. They paid me, and I did it. It wasn’t fault of Bernstein, naturally. He just was a composer. But it was left to me—I was just a little immigrant boy from Russia, just a greenhorn—to learn to arrange. That’s, just, that’s what I wanted to tell you about Bernstein. That’s the story about Bernstein.

L2: 31 December 1987 (M2/A)

CS: And when you wrote these for Harms, you went home and wrote at home? You didn’t have an office at Harms?

GS: No, I wrote at home—I don’t know. I would need a piano to write.

CS: This was the piano that you had, that you bought together with Borisoff? He had the same?

GS: Yes, with the piano, I used it probably. Because pianistic runs—you know—you have to try them.

CS: Hm. And when you were at RKO, did you have a desk there, or an office?

GS: Yes, an office.

CS: And you worked there?

GS: Sometimes I worked there, but, yes, I did work there.

CS: Did you have a piano there, too?

GS: Yes.

CS: In the office?

GS: Yes.

CS: Hm. Is that the story when some guy brought in a drink in the morning or something?

GS: Oh, Bill Wieman. And I had to buy a bottle every time.

CS: Yeah. What’s that story?

GS: That’s Bill Wieman. I worked in the office. But 9:00 a.m. says, "Go downstairs and get a bottle." So I used to go downstairs, get a bottle. Then he would come in, and I would, "Take a shot!" I would go in the bathroom
and start to gargle.

CS: Gargle.

GS: Gargle. "My, my goodness," he says. "You did drink a lot."

CS: But you didn’t drink it.

GS: No. (laughing)

CS: Bill Wieman?

GS: Yes.

CS: That’s not the same as Wieland?

GS: No, Wieland. Bill Wieman, he’s a publisher.

CS: Which office was this?

GS: Huh?

CS: Which office was he at, Bill Wieman?

GS: In New York.

CS: Which office?

GS: Well, see what’s there written, on every copy (referring to piled pieces of music).

CS: This is Harms.

GS: Yes, Harms is New York, sure.

CS: And Bill Wieman was at Harms?

GS: Yes.

CS: Hm.

GS: He was, at, he had Witmark, Harms, and another one—there’s three publishers together.

CS: And they were all his?

GS: Huh?

CS: Bill Wieman had Witmark?

GS: Well, he was in charge, of new material, yes.
CS: And so when he, when you wrote this, things like this, you would go to the office and write them there?

GS: I was sometimes, yes, he wanted, he insisted I should write in his room. He liked my presence.

CS: Hm.

GS: So I wrote there. Like "I Got Rhythm," I wrote there. I remember many things that he wanted me to write. I was sitting in his office.

CS: And he had a piano there?

GS: Yes. Piano is nothing those days. You talking it's a big thing, piano. Nothing.

CS: And you wrote "I Got Rhythm," you wrote there?

GS: Yes.

CS: For what? For piano?

GS: For piano solo. Piano solo, he liked that very much. Any guest publisher would come in, he said, "Gregory, play 'I Got Rhythm'" . . .

CS: . . . Who was Wieland, then? (omit discussion of Wieland following, in which, again, Bernstein does not figure)

3. "LANTERN"

In the Germanic tradition of Oma and Opa (Gertrude and Kurt Lubahn, my grandparents), our family has always celebrated Christmas on 24 December. Of course, the preparations for the day’s events always began much earlier (e.g., we bought the tree on the twenty-first, and my mother attached the lights the next day; my sister and I hung the regular ornaments, leaving the "heirlooms" for my mother; my grandfather draped the tree with tinsel, strand by separate strand). However, for my sister and I, Christmas Eve had three distinct parts: the special meal (thank heavens the turkey dinner, with its endless preparations, took place on the twenty-fifth!), the Christmas songs (an endless succession of German and English lyrics, sung by all while Papa played the piano), and the unopened presents. Of course, for my sister and I, the grand moment of the evening arrived only when—dishes done and songs sung—my mother brought out her scissors and boxes (to collect the carefully folded wrapping paper and ribbon for use again next year), seated us all
around the tree, and announced that it was time to open the Christmas presents.

One by one, the presents were opened--ooohed and ahed--as the evening got older. One by one, the traditions were altered or abandoned as the participants got older. (Thus, for example, one Christmas, my sister and I were allowed to place the precious heirloom ornaments; and another year, my meticulous grandfather--much to our amazement--began tossing the tinsel on the tree by the handful. Another Christmas, the grandchildren began to hang the regular ornaments, and a choo-choo train was allowed to encircle the mountains of presents below the tree.) But eventually--Oh, life! Oh, death!--there were fewer places laid at table, fewer voices raised in song, fewer packages wrapped in mystery.

By 1987--with each of us wrapped up in our separate lives, and separated by so many miles--it had become customary for the Christmas festivities to involve only my parents and myself. And by that time--with my father entrenched in the trappings of life in old age--it had become possible to notice the shifting emphases placed on the three important customs of family Christmases. Thus, for example, while, as a child, I had suffered through the Christmas Eve meal and songfest, as a young bride (eager to display my newly acquired domestic skills), I had looked forward to helping with dinner, and later still, I had most valued singing the German lyrics that brought back memories of Oma and Opa.

Now, however, I could not help remembering the importance, for my father, of every event of every day; so, too, my mother. And together, we made a "big deal" out of everything. Thus, for example, we went on a tree expedition in our own backyard (where we chopped down a tree by topping a juniper, ending up with about six feet more of merry Christmas than we had anticipated). And we decorated not just tree branches, but lamps and clocks, tables and chairs, dogs and cats--and wrapped even the boxes of milkbone, cans of cranberry, and hunks of halvah I had smuggled through customs. And, on Christmas Eve, we made the most of every moment of our customary holiday practices, savoring every morsel, every melody, guessing and marveling at the contents of every gaily wrapped package.

It was in that spirit that we did not unwrap--but, rather, unveiled--a special "house" present that I bought for my parents: a Lladro statue that I considered special not for its sentimental value--and, here, I had miscalculated the effects of this gift--but because it was, to my way of thinking, extraordinarily beautiful and extremely expensive. In fact, because I had to spend my school salary in Spain, I had decided to buy something extravagant for my
parents—something they might think twice about buying for themselves—and ended up ordering the statue in duplicate, so that my sister and her husband could display one of Spain’s highly praised porcelains as well.

In truth, I did not expect my father to do more than mumble "Beautiful, Mama"—his highest commendation for my mother’s own artistic efforts, in clay, oil, watercolor, etc. But I did expect a colorful display of emotion from my mother—because of both my mother’s character and the piece’s quality. Made in two pieces, by hand, the statue consisted of a twenty centimeter tall old-fashioned lamp-post and a somewhat shorter lamplighter—an old, mustached fellow whose cloak, scarf and cap, together with the piece’s grey/grey-blue tones, suggested the wintry winds that must have made it difficult to raise and direct the torch, which strained just short of the lantern itself.

Well, I did not have to wait long for my mother to react, and she did not disappoint me: the oohs and ahs started even before the unveiling had finished; and, as anticipated, she could not stop exclaiming over the beauty of the piece, turning it now this way, not that, to admire it from every angle, in every light. But I had not anticipated my mother’s emotional reaction: the statue reminded her of Opa (her father) because his childhood home in Germany was lit by gas lanterns and candelabra. And, through tears, my mother related one of Opa’s fondest memories—how, as a boy, he had watched and followed, fascinated, the old man whose job it was every night to hand-light the two to three hundred candles of each of the chandeliers suspended throughout the twenty-room house in Kiel. Then, from the large house in Germany where my grandfather had grown up, my mother’s recollections moved to the small apartment in San Francisco where she had grown up: she remembered Opa’s secret Christmas preparations, all of which took place behind the living-room doors, locked until 24 December, when they were ceremoniously opened by Opa, to reveal the shimmering Christmas tree—a blaze of light, whose shining ornaments reflected the flames from the one hundred or so small candles burning among its branches.

Even tear-filled, my mother’s eyes—unlike my father’s, which dimmed, closed, or turned away altogether when he told of events "faraway in my mind"—shone brightly as she spoke. And, in passing, it inflames me now to reflect on the cavalier attitude with which, often, I (mis)treated my mother’s story-telling, jotting down in my journal the key words or idiosyncratic phrases that would enable me to recall, usually, the gist of the story’s content, but, less often, the story of its teller. With my father, on the other hand, it was another story altogether: treating his words almost with reverence, I tried to take them down at all costs (writing
down phonecalls with his friends, private conversations with his wife, random comments with me—even those made while, as I typed transcripts, he sat nearby me or leaned behind me, trying, I think now, just to feel close by), which meant that I often abused my mother in her role as listener, motioning her for silence with a shake of my head or sending her for paper with a wave of my hand. And, whenever my father spoke, my hand flew—over paper towels or napkins, writing or music paper—until, often anticipating my needs, my mother brought the lined yellow paper that I preferred for note-taking.

It is noteworthy, perhaps, and regrettable, perhaps or perhaps not, that, on Christmas Eve 1987, I took up a piece of wrapping paper to take down just words and phrases of my mother’s recollections and only as much of my father’s response to the Lladro statue as I could squeeze on the back of the Christmas paper, apparently preferring, for once, incompleteness to inconsiderateness, for my mother was clearly enjoying listening to my father talk about an episode in his life that he had never before mentioned. It is worth mentioning, too, that my father did not respond with his customary "Beautiful, Mama," upon seeing the statue, but only much later that night commented, "Very fine, Mama, very fine." His immediate response (L1), which followed my mother’s recollections of Opa, seems to have been triggered by the sight of the statue; and despite the summaries that replace verbatim transcriptions (at indicated points), my mother’s words are interesting because they refer to an episode absent from similar versions. In fact, despite the many references to the care and resourcefulness of one of the story’s characters (cousin Edith) occurring throughout the transcripts, my father’s only other mention of the lantern episode occurred a few days after Christmas (L2).

L1: 24 December 1987

GS: That’s the story, again, of Mogiliov. Seeing that, seeing, I see myself, together, in Mogiliov, faraway Mogiliov, Mogiliov Podolsk. I’m together with the troupe, playing, cold. Tremendous cold. Winter. Cold winter—impossible to imagine. And here we are, all of us, troupe of artists, everything else, looking how to stay warm, how to stay alive, how we can keep, not freeze to death in those faraway places. It was hard even to get that time food, keep us alive, what to eat, what to drink, everything else—just hard times. So, we thought what we can burn, to stay warm. And we see those lanterns, wooden lanterns, hanging there on the streets, lighting the street.

"Who needs them? Who needs to see on the street? Take them off!"
So, "Let's go! Get them home!"

So, just we took them off, chopped down from, hanging there, we took them off, carried them through the streets to our apartment, hotel, whatever it is, just break them off. And here we have wood, for fire, wood. Because wood, those times, that it's so hard to get anything like that, we would just freeze to death.

IS: (IS interjects that she never heard this story before. And when GS says, "Couldn't be," she insists.)

GS: I told you before how--it's same thing--was bad times. And we took those things, material, draping, whatever it is, hanging there, on the walls.

Says, "Take them off! Everybody get them home!"

So we took them off from the walls, took them home. And it was fine material, fine. And Edith, cousin of mine, took that, made for me fine clothes. Was nothing. Just nothing. Just bad times. Without her, I don't know, I wouldn't be alive. I would be just dead.

IS: (IS asks about Edith; claims not to know this story.) Tell me more about Cousin Edith. (Notes discontinue.)

L2: 2 January 1988 (R6/A)

GS: I have to tell you all the times, during Revolution, the transport was bad, there was no place to go. People preferred to stay home.

CS: This is when you had a little orchestra of ten or twelve?

GS: I organized a little group, and we played around, and we stole all the things from the Governor Palace and made ourself pants and jackets. We tore from the wall.

CS: When you told me that story, the last time, you said you were playing in the Governor's Palace. You mean you were playing as a child, playing games?

GS: No, no games. We played jobs sometimes in the Governor Palace. And I, also, so I saw all those things there hanging on the wall.

I said, I told to my friends, "This is for us! We have to get it. Otherwise, somebody else will get it."

See, we were waiting for an opportunity--uh, my back.
Uh, we had an opportunity to come in, and, again, so we tore off from the wall as much as we could take. It was good material. Edith, Edith, whatever you call her, sewed for me shirts and pants—I don’t know how much she did.

CS: So you went back a second time to the Governor’s Palace, after you played there once, music?

GS: Yeah.

CS: You performed there, in other words. You weren’t playing games. You were playing the piano.

GS: Yeah.

CS: And then you went back another time?

GS: We were few times playing there.

CS: And did you wait for the people to go away?

GS: No, we didn’t. My group knew what to do, so they all tore, did the same thing as I did.

CS: And nobody saw you doing it?

GS: Huh?

CS: And nobody saw you doing it?

GS: Everybody saw us doing it. Everything was—you still don’t realize—was bad times. Just like, I told you that somewhere we took off the lantern and made wood out of it.

CS: Hm. No, you didn’t tell me.

GS: In Kaminetz Podolsk, or somewhere, from the streets, we, we cut off the—you know—the night lanterns that hang on the streets, we took off them. And that’s enough wood for us to stay warm in the house. That’s another episode somewhere far away.

CS: Do you want to turn the chair around?

GS: No.

CS: This was in Kaminetz Podolsk?

GS: That was in Mogiliov.
CS: Mogiliov Podolsk. And in the Governor’s Palace, was the Governor living there?

GS: No. They all ran away out. They was running out of the country.

CS: So nobody was living there now?

GS: No.

4. "EDISON"

On 29 November 1987, I got a ride home from school and arrived home early to find my mother still clearing away the breakfast table and my father still running around in his bathrobe. Glad for the extra time, I took a Spanish siesta and woke up just before dinner to discover what I have since found to be a typical situation in this part of Spain: no warning, no electricity. No stranger to such circumstances, my father suggested that we run over our two-piano repertoire in the half-light. Halfway through St. Saens’ "Variations on a Theme by Beethoven," the lights flickered on and off for a few times before going out altogether. Out of my element, I asked my father to do the "dishrag trick" that I remembered from my childhood: happy to oblige, he played Chopin after I had covered the piano keys with dishcloths that my mother brought in by flashlight. When my mother returned to the kitchen to remove food from the dripping electric freezer (automatic defrosting systems were/are still a luxury here) and to transfer dinner to the burning gas stove, my father told of his red-faced audition in the blackened Edison Theatre, punctuating the story—or, better, recreating the experience (under the circumstances, as impossible to record as to forget)—by playing the French tunes that he had learned by heart to land the job more than three quarters of a century earlier. (See Appendix C, "Edison," for versions of this story—but not triggered by sight or, perhaps, non-sight—recorded during the course of interviews.)

Later that evening, we ate and talked by candlelight, and, my cryptic opening notes of the next day suggest a disordered conversation that, only now, seems coherent: "cat and "April Showers" curtain, leads to Harms, leads to ASCAP, leads to story (Sousa was first to join ASCAP, ‘and Victor Herbert was probably on the same train’)." My mother discussed her decision to take down her new shower curtain (printed with Louis Silvers’ famous song, "April Showers") in order to spare the cat the trouble of knocking the curtain down several times a day. My father entered the discussion with apparently random comments on the early days of T.B. Harms Music Publishers and the American Society of Composers,
Authors and Publishers (I have since learned that Harms, Inc., a member of ASCAP, published "April Showers" in 1921) and on the "old days of Chicago Theatre," where my father played and knew Sousa ("But he was an old man already, falling apart").

5. "EIFFEL TOWER"

Like Spain’s infamous wooden matches—"Strike, shine, shone!"—January 1988’s last days spent themselves, it seemed to me, in ineffectual bursts of energy whose brave, but brief flashes burned out almost before they appeared, leaving, in their wake, a myriad of misfired activities whose stiffly posed participants evoked, in splintered gestures, only the appearance of life—fleeting and futile—devoid of an imaginative spark.

My father’s eyes sparkled on the morning of 25 January, a case in point: he had decided to join me on my last day at Columbus International College and, despite my mother’s protestations of "It’s too early! It’s too far! Go back to bed!", etc., had begun to dress and ready himself from about 5:30 a.m. Since he already had difficulty even sitting up without my mother’s help, my father prevented my mother from sleeping with a constant barrage of requests for advice and assistance. After several hours of concentrated effort—which produced a mis-buttoned shirt and a mis-knotted tie—he announced that, with pants and shoes, he would be ready for the trip to school.

Now, for me, the daily venture to college was indeed a trip: after a 25-minute walk from my parents’ home in Mijas to the bus depot in Fuenjirola, I travelled another hour by bus to Marbella (barring, that is, unannounced schedule changes, weather delays, or cigarette stops), where I deboarded, on southern Spain’s main highway (known as "Europe’s most dangerous freeway") by jumping 2 1/2 feet or so straight into a ditch that never seemed to drain of the previous month’s rainwater. Splash by muddy splash, the number of school papers lost in the leap acquired significance for me: less than three meant a relatively good day. The number of mud spots settling into my skirts became, I suspect, an indication of my moods to my students, who I reached only after walking another fifteen minutes, over hill and dale, through debris and dirt, from the highway to the classroom.

An interesting trip for me, my trek to class would have meant, for my father, an incredible journey. Already unable to walk (even slowly) 50 yards without fatigue (without rest stops every few feet), to climb stairs without support, to enter or exit cars without assistance, my father clearly would have been bested by this adventure. But dressed, finally, in
his "Sunday best," and eager, as always, for someplace to go, my father finally accepted my mother's suggestion: After school, I met my parents at the Banco de Bilbao, which, with its soft seats and souls, had become my father's favorite rest stop. While he sat and watched the people or read the paper, my mother literally ran through town, doing the necessary errands at the post office, the "farmacia," or the supermarket, often returning after hours to pick up the protege of the Bank Manager, who, with locked doors and open heart, allowed my father to enjoy his comfortable seat until long after closing.

From the Bank, we walked a few short blocks to Dany's, a seaside restaurant; and, after lunch, we walked again, to the taxi stand. And even though my father had double help every step of the way--standing up at the Banco de Bilbao, sitting down at Dany's, walking through town leaning heavily and stopping frequently, getting in and out of the taxi--he confessed, at home, that the walk from the restaurant to the taxi "was too much." He "slept by fire after dinner," according to my journal, and I, no less affected than my father, "slept upon arrival."

In preparation for the arrival of Maestro Caleja and his new sweetheart, pianist Rodica Dan--and my father's inevitable, "Shall we play something for our guests?" (for me, always an unnerving query)--the preceding days found me moving my fingers indefatigably over the keyboard, practicing piano in excess of my usual two hours a day (and noting in my journal: "Did five hours--I see the practicing as a means of establishing trust/confidence necessary to do taping"), caught in a crescendo of motion and motivation that, finally, played itself out: my 25 January journal entry notes, "Didn't practice today--this after several days of real practice in anticipation of Octave and wife and kid last night. But he didn't mention playing." So, although "he" (my father) and I had most industriously played through our usual two-piano, four-hand repertoire for several days prior to Maestro Caleja's visit, most unusually, we did not perform.

The "rehearsal" of 26 January resembled those of the previous days, but only to a point: while it involved, again, the ineffectual energies of the ensemble, it eventuated an unexpected performance by one of the players. On that day, the trio went in to Fuenjirola in order to claim a package--expected--at the post office: This time, I remained at the Banco de Bilbao with my father while my mother "ran" her regular errands in town and her special post office task. (In this part of Spain, going to the post office means moving from line to endless line in an almost eternal effort to catch up with forever disappearing postal officials, ghost-like participants in the mysterious ceremonies associated with
matching up papers and passports, packages and people. Indeed, people here—especially those who have lived elsewhere—find it miraculous that parcels and letters are ever delivered to or from Spain.

From the look on my mother’s face when she returned several hours later, we knew that her mission had been accomplished. And at home for lunch, a short while later, we learned that though the post office trip had left no time for other errands, my mother had managed a quick stop at the "papeleria" to pick up the latest house magazines, which usually came out at the end of the month. For several months, we had been talking "house plans": my parents’ decision to build a new house whose most important feature would be a negation, "No more stairs." Positively consumed by this project, my mother and I spent hours designing the house and describing it to my father, who, typically, would look up from his book and over his glasses, "Fine, Mama; whatever you like," and then promptly resume his reading. Particularly pleased with our new reading material—because we expected an important visitor later that evening, Celia, the "property lady"—my mother and I, bursting with excitement and energy, spent the afternoon collecting all our old magazines (which included back issues of Nuevo Estilo, Casa Viva, Maison et Travaux, Maison et Jardine, Art et Decoration, Decoration Internationale, Schoner Wohnen, and Architectural Digest—our imagination was not limited by language) and spreading them out on the dining-room table together with our new additions.

Celia arrived at about 8:00 p.m.—while my father and I were playing through our pieces and my mother was sorting through her magazines—and began to spread her surveys and her suggestions across the crowded table. But after several hours of cluttered conversation—the available plots were too small or too large, too near or too far, too cheap or too expensive, without neighbors or streets, water or electricity, etc., etc., etc.—Celia put away her plans, leaving us with a promise to return when she had found the perfect piece of land.

My father’s interest in and understanding of the house plans was perhaps somewhat imperfect, but his knowledge of Spanish was not: and although his participation in the conversation might not have allowed him to be creative or original, his fluency and vocabulary enabled him to translate my mother’s enthusiasm into words, and he entered the discussion whenever my mother’s expressive abilities failed her. On the whole, then, my mother, as originator, and I, as backer, were most eager to see the house project get started; and we saw the activities of the afternoon and evening as anything but successful. While we expressed our frustration—aggravated because, without a car, we were dependent upon
"property people" like Celia, one of several who had come and
gone without results—my father said nothing and silently
shuffled with the house magazines still filling the table.
Another day, another disappointment: once again, it seemed,
our bright expectations were not to be fulfilled.

Unexpectedly, as my mother and I reviewed our notes—with
less accuracy, perhaps, than animation, my father's voice
sounded (ET1). Interestingly, despite the many French
overtones that resound throughout the transcripts (see, e.g.,
4/A and R11/A, my father referred to the toy train prank just
once—in a directed interview that followed ET1 a few weeks
later, just before lunch, with a "break" to take a new
assortment of three large pills and to readjust himself in a
new, but slightly low chair. My own adjustment to the
circumstances of what my notes describe as a "bad tape—he's
up all last night, second time in five days"—was, apparently,
to try to make my father feel better by making references to
an assortment of old papers, programs, magazines, photos, and
other printed materials.

ET1: 26 January 1988

GS: I just remember two of us, me and my cousin, how we going
there and, every day, and putting our trains, toys,
little toy trains under the wheels of the cars, electric
cars.

And conductor, he's looking us very angry, "Get away from
there Malchiki" . . .

IS: . . . Go where, Greg? What are you talking about? What
little cars?

GS: Here, look the picture (indicates Yves Saint Laurent
advertisement on back of Decoration Internationale,
showing the lower half of the Eiffel Tower and a
disproportionately large YSL bottle with "Paris" engraved
on the front).'

IS: That's an advertisement, Greg, just an advertisement, for
perfumes, or something.

GS: No; yes—and all those advertisements we collecting,
going round, here and there, here and there, hundreds of
advertisements—we don't have, that time, those things
in Russia yet—taking them home, to our flat, our
apartment, whatever it is.

CS: (according to my notes, I interrupt my father to ask him
to repeat himself)
GS: Well, I just look this over now, and I remember two of us in Paris, me and my cousin, we used to go there to Eiffel Tower, other places too, everywhere in the city Paris. And we were collecting together all those fancy advertisements, "affices," free advertising, full of color, advertising for all kinda fancy products we never seen before. By the hundreds, we collected them, hundreds of them. And we were taking all those "affices" home to our place, our flat. We never seen such things like that before, never, never knew such things could exist. Was no such thing like that in Russia, nothing, like that, nothing. For us, was something altogether unknown.

Then, together with my cousin, we used to go, everyday, put those little train toys of ours, cars, under the wheels of the electric cars. Weren’t supposed to do those things, would be very dangerous too, if.

And then we would watch when the train comes, what happens. And when the train would passed, the conductor looks us--some look, too, boy, very angry look, says, "Go away from there, Malchiki, boys!"

But boys, we did do, like to do, those crazy things.

ET2: 16 February 1988 (V7/B)

CS: Then, I have a piece of paper that says that when you were in France you remember how you and your cousin used to go to the Eiffel Tower and place little toys under the wheels of the cars, under the wheels of the electric cars?

GS: No, we played jokes that the conductor didn’t like. We would put our little trains on the, on the rails and see how the train goes over them . . .

CS: . . . And smash them? Did the train smash them?

GS: Naturally.

IS: Oh, dear. Did the conductor notice what you were doing?

GS: Yes, he looked, he gave us dirty looks.

CS: Oh. This was the Gavrille, right?

GS: Gavrille, yes. Gavrille Wasserfuhrer.

CS: Right.
6. "ASTAIRE"

After watching the *Fred Astaire Spectacular* in the early afternoon of 28 January 1988, my father came down from the upstairs TV with a story on his lips that I seemed especially intent on squelching. (According to my journal, my mother called me, "Stop typing and come quick. Papa wants to tell you a story." So I left my transcriptions in the library to join my parents in the living-room.) Apparently, seeing the TV special caused my father to recollect an episode in his screen career involving Eugene Poddany (my father’s former music copyist and piano/composition student), Eugene’s father, and Fred Astaire (in the movie *Second Chorus*).

My father’s involvement in the musical episode, both serious and humorous, was twofold: he wrote an orchestration for a Russian episode in the film, and he created a Russian-looking ensemble to satisfy the big whigs’ desire for a group that looked both large and real. In particular, studio higher-ups wanted extras who would look good dressed in Russian garb, standing behind large bass balalaikas, for an effect that would add a touch of authenticity to the production. Towards that end, my father and Eugene produced Poddany Senior, a bass balalaika player who, contrary to expectations, faked the basses throughout the filming (a turn of events corrected, later, with my father’s music).

On the day of the Astaire story episode, however, my father’s intention was one-fold: despite the incessant interruptions and questions (that clearly reflect, at points, the listener’s own interest in famous names), my father’s interest in the episode seems to have focused on the "victorious" face of Poddany Senior (so pleased to have been complimented on his playing by the important studio people), which he fills out in the short story that seems to have come to him as he watched the Astaire show (FA1). And although I did not come to the taping with any degree of sensitivity, the transcripts show my father’s interest, for he refers to the look on Poddany’s face three times:

GS: The, the people from the studio, "Oh, that was marvelous." And Poddany looked victoriously at all of us--you know--that he won . . .

But I remember the face, the bass player face, when it was so fine. He looked at me with, victoriously . . .

But I’ll never forget his face so, like victoriously, looking at us that he played so well that they said, "Fine, fine, fine."
Interestingly, the only other reference to Poddany (FA2) occurs in a tape made after lunch a couple days later when, while going through a music cabinet with my father, I ran across a Gregory Stone score written for balalaika and domra, and questioned my father directly about a possible relationship between that music and the Astaire orchestration.

FA1: 28 January 1988 (V1/A)

CS: You wanted to tell me something about Second Chorus? Well, I think it’s called Second Chorus.

IS: Jawohl.

GS: Anyway, Boris Morros called me on the phone and says, "Gregory, we have a Russian episode with Fred Astaire. Get extra musicians. And most important, get a Russian bass--so they look like a Russian bass--you know, that big balalaika basses.

CS: Hm.

GS: So I got, called up Poddany on the phone, Eugene’s father. He came. And then Boris Morros looks, "Sounds," they listen to some tapes and Boris looks, comes to me, says, "Gregory, he doesn’t play one note. It’s all wrong basses. He plays only wrong basses."

CS: Was that Eugene Poddany?

GS: Yes, that’s the father.

CS: The father or the young boy?

GS: No, father.

CS: Father, aha.

GS: He says, "What can I do?"

And after the takes, somebody from the studio, he says, "Marvelous." The people from the studio, "Oh, that was marvelous.” And Poddany looked victoriously at all of us--you know--that he won.

CS: They didn’t change it?

GS: No.

CS: Was he playing correctly, or not?

GS: Not, not one note.
CS: Why? And that was his instrument? It wasn't his instrument?

GS: Well, the big balalaika bass, he had it. But Boris Morros comes to me, says, "Gregory, but he didn't play anything. All false basses." Boris says, "Grisha, he's not playing."

CS: So then Boris Morros knew something about music after all.

GS: Who?

CS: Boris Morros.

GS: Sure, he was, my goodness . . .

IS: . . . So what happened? OK. Where does Fred Astaire come in?

GS: That's the Russian episode, the slow movement, sounds like "Two Guitars," "Dark Eyes." Something like that effect I wrote the orchestration.

CS: Did he dance to it or no?

GS: No, I don't think he danced. He sang to it.

CS: Oh, he sang to it?

GS: Yeah, yes.

CS: Did you meet him?

GS: Yes, talked to him.

CS: Fred Astaire?

GS: Sure.

CS: What was he like?

GS: Fine gentleman. He didn't, eh, know anything about it. He thought it was marvelous. So what can I tell you?

CS: This was a special on TV, on Fred Astaire?

GS: No. This was a special today, yes.

CS: It's over?
IS: It's over. Well, it said the end of Part I; and now something else is on, so Part 2 must come another time—but when, I don't know.

CS: Hm. Why is it that Poddany's father did not play the right basses?

GS: He didn't know, he could hardly read music.

CS: He played by ear?

GS: Sure. Everything was by ear or false basses. You still don't understand it, Cristina?

CS: There were no, well, there were other musicians also playing?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Ah. So he didn't play together with the others.

GS: He played together.

CS: I mean, he made disharmony.

GS: Yeah, just crazy. "The only thing is a big bass, there was," Boris says . . .

CS: . . . You mean, it looked good on the screen . . .

GS: . . . "I like to have a Russian big bass."

CS: It looked good . . .

GS: . . . Yeah . . .

CS: . . . And sounded terrible. But they used it in the movie, anyway?

GS: Yeah.

CS: What studio was that, Paramount?

GS: Ah, I suppose, Second Chorus—I don't know.

CS: Did you ever watch Fred Astaire dancing?

GS: Naturally, Sweetheart. You ask me such silly questions.

IS: They're not silly when you don't know studios, Gregory. (omit discussions of studio sets, of other actors)
CS: Did Fred Astaire dance to this Russian number?

GS: No, he didn’t have to. He sang.

CS: Oh, he sang.

GS: Sang.

CS: In Russian, yes? He sang in Russian?

GS: No, he sang in English, but the music was suggesting Russian, Russia. I did it.

CS: Do you remember the music?

GS: Huh?

CS: Do you remember the music?

GS: If you play for me.

CS: I know, but can you play for me?

GS: No.

CS: You wrote it. Is it downstairs in the library? Do you have it downstairs?

GS: No.

CS: No. It’s at Paramount, or lost. You wrote it though, right?

GS: Hm. But I remember the face, the bass player face, when it was so fine. He looked at me with, victoriously.

(omit discussion of Poddany’s family)

CS: Was Poddany from Russia?

GS: Well, the name suggests Czechoslovakia, but he is Russian.

CS: Hm.

GS: But I’ll never forget his face so, like victoriously, looking at us that he played so well that they said, "Fine, fine, fine."

Boris comes to me, "Grisha, he’s not playing one note. It’s all false, false, false."

"What can I do, Boris? You said the best bass player
with the big Russian bass."

CS: You mean there wasn't a better bass player?

GS: No, there's not one.

CS: Nobody else had a bass? How big were those basses?

GS: Tremendous. They're from here up to, practically to the top.

CS: To the ceiling?

GS: No, here (indicates height of about 6 feet, where Christmas cards are strung across room).

CS: To the cards.

GS: Yeah.

CS: It's about 2 meters. (omit discussion of bass balalaika players in Russian dance group) You stand up to play these things?

GS: Well, you have to stand up to play it, naturally.

IS: You cannot sit down and play it. Oh. OK. It's like a bass violoncello?

GS: You know, they're, well, not that big, they're larger than ... Anyway, it was a funny episode.

Boris Morros comes to me, "Grisha, he's not playing one note."

I says, ...

IS: ... So tell me more about Fred Astaire, Gregory. Did you watch him dance when he danced for the picture.

GS: He did not dance for this picture.

IS: Of course he danced someplace in the picture.

GS: I know, but not for this ...

IS: ... Not for your episode, now. Sang. But did you ever watch him dance?

GS: Naturally, yes. Sure, sure.

IS: On the set?
GS: It's alone, also with some, some woman.

IS: Some woman had to be, but who? Was it Eleanor Powell, Ginger Rogers, no?

GS: Ginger Rogers.

IS: Oh, it was Ginger Rogers, oh. In 1942, more or less?

GS: Yes. Aha. They gave her, she wasn't there, but they gave Eleanor Powell a huge ovation. They stood up. The had standing, they stood up for her, for Eleanor Powell.

IS: But not Ginger Rogers?

GS: No. I think Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers had a bigger name, but they stood up for Eleanor Powell nevertheless.

CS: Did you see Ginger Rogers today?

GS: No, she was not, she didn't come. Only on dancing, yes, Flying Down to Rio, and Showtime, or whatever it was called, marvelous films, marvelous dancing, individual, in his style, peculiar, strange.

FA2: 30 January 1988 (M6/B)


GS: For balalaika.

CS: And "dumcha"?

GS: Domra.

CS: Domra? What's that?

GS: Well, an imitation of balalaika.

CS: Hm. Domra primo, alto, and basso, it says. Why did you write this one?

GS: For the orchestra.

CS: In New York?

GS: No, Hollywood.

CS: Is this for the same one what you said the other day for the Fred Astaire picture? They were looking for the bass balalaika.
GS: No, that’s not for this occasion. But, more or less, it was. We played that in, more or less, at Poddany’s home, we played that in Poddany’s house.

CS: The whole Russian orchestra?

GS: We had all the Russian orchestra.

CS: And the whole orchestra came to the house?

GS: No, I came to their house, across the street from me. (tape cuts off and on)

CS: And the orchestra used to meet there? The Russian orchestra?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And that was the old man who had the bass balalaika?

GS: Yes.

Touch

1. "CYMBALIC NEW YEAR"

Although, in a sense, many of my father’s stories may have been triggered by touch (see Chapter III, A, on "multi-sense" stories), few seemed to involve only that sense. In fact, only two—"Cymbalic New Year" and "Rachmaninoff"—seem to have been evoked primarily by moving fingers touching forgotten memories.

In the first case, New Year’s festivities twice triggered the story that twice went unrecorded. New Year’s 1988 found us at a dinner (given by neighbor Josefina), to which my father insisted that we cart along the pair of cymbals remaining from the Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra days. With only a few minutes remaining in the old year, my father lifted one cymbal against the second, held by my mother. The din triggered immediate responses among the dinner guests. My father responded with a Spanish version of his youthful adventures as a cymbal player—a story he insisted I translate into French for the sake of the visiting French fiancee of Pedro, Josefina’s youngest son.

The next year found us at a New Year’s bash (given by my mother) in the upstairs bedroom, to which my father had been
confined. This time, my mother and I hauled the cymbals upstairs together with cotton-covered drumsticks. After insisting that my father cover and close his eyes, we brought the cymbals to the bed and surprised him with the drumsticks, which he happily struck as the clock struck 12:00. Again, the story of the off-beat cymbalist followed on schedule. Again, it went unrecorded—except in my impressions and memories. (For my father’s impressions of his cymbalic career, see Chapter II, A and Appendix C, "Cymbals."

2. "RACHMANINOFF"

As I entered the house after my second day of teaching at Columbus International College, my mother rushed me into the kitchen where she and my father had been waiting for me with some impatience. In my absence, The (long awaited) Package had arrived, and my parents were eager for me to open it in their presence.

Many months before leaving Columbus, Ohio, I had joined a book club in order to buy a special present for my father—something that he had wanted for a long time: Will and Ariel Durant’s eleven-volume The Story of Civilization. Before boxing up the Durant set, I tucked in yet another volume—a collection of Rachmaninoff’s piano compositions—because my father had asked me to bring copies of Rachmaninoff’s piano transcriptions of Kreisler’s "Liebesfreud" and "Liebesleid." Since the package was not light, I had sent it by "banana boat" (my mother’s expression) at least six months prior to leaving for Spain. Needless to say, I was not a little surprised to discover, upon arrival, that the books had not yet shown up. And after my father’s repeated, "They must be lost. You’ll never see them again," I was not a little glad to find that the box had finally made it not just to Spain, but right to the door, and (this being Spain) to the right door—if almost eight months after I had mailed them.

After examining, one by one, the Durant volumes—which, as expected, brought a great deal of pleasure—my father turned his attention to the Rachmaninoff album. As he started to turn its pages, he started, unexpectedly, to talk about his remembrances of Rachmaninoff: "I remember when I heard Rachmaninoff in Chicago, before I knew him. He played Mozart sonata—with too much accompaniment in left hand. He had very powerful hands."

Moving the fingers of his right hand over the imaginary keyboard on his knee, my father looked over "Liebesfreud" and "Liebesleid," stopping to comment on his meeting with Rachmaninoff and Dr. Sergei Bertensson." (Unfortunately, my journal notes of 22 September 1987 are incomplete here and
"'Liebesfreud'/'Liebesleid,' leads to meeting with Rachmaninoff and Bertensson, who he calls an 'evil genius.' Tutti interrupts to say, 'Just because you gave him rare books, it ain't Bertensson's fault.'") Putting aside the Rachmaninoff book my father continued with his story of Rachmaninoff (R1). The only other (very unlike) references to Rachmaninoff (R2 and R3) were taped in 1984 and recorded in a journal entry on 5 December 1987 (R4).

R1: 22 September 1987

GS: I told you, didn’t I, my story of Rachmaninoff? I remember those parties, whole Russian colony was there, the whole crowd, all the Russian crowd. And always they’re playing same thing, the pianists, what else--of course, they play their own music, great music, two pianos or one piano, whatever it is. Horowitz, Rachmaninoff, all the great pianist of the old school are there. And they’re playing the "Suites"--two-piano, four-hand--great, of Rachmaninoff, or the "Liebesfreud," "Liebesleid"--all their repertoire.

And then, it’s not my fault. I just have that knack--improvise, accompany, reading at prima vista. So, when it’s time for something new, for playing something new, something it’s not in their repertoire--somebody wants to sing, play violin, trio, whatever they want, "Gregory. Get Gregory. Let Gregory come in: he’s the only one can do it." So, of course, I do play. What else can I do? Because it’s in my blood. That’s all to it. I play. That’s the story.

R2: July 1984/date cut off (01/A)

CS: Now, what was the story about Rachmaninoff and his sweetheart?

GS: Oh, well, that’s famous prima donna, Nina Pavlovna Koschetz. She was a beautiful woman before she met him, but kind on the fat side. But she appeared in many operas as a star. She, when, there were many operas presented in Russia--you know, first performance, and they gave her parties. She learned them.

CS: What was her name?

GS: Nina Pavlovna Koschetz. You find her in the Rachmaninoff books, of the songs. I saw her first time in America, when she sang in the concert when Glazunov came to the United States. She sang in his concert.

IS: That was the mother, Greg, wasn’t it?
GS: Yeah, that’s the mother. And the next time, she got married in her own house to the European actor, Lederer.

IS: Francis Lederer? Oh, my goodness!

GS: And, at the same time, Margo got married. Oh, no, Margo got married to Lederer. She was married to Leonoff, the wife, singer. Mrs. Koshetz was married to a Russian singer, Leonoff. And Margo was married to Lederer, in the same house, double wedding. (omit discussion of wedding and cooking)

CS: And what happened, now, with Rachmaninoff?

GS: Ah. Rachmaninoff called Mrs. Koshetz, “She’s my ‘Naina’—‘Naina’ is the famous star, heroine, in Ruslan and Ludmilla, by Glinka. He didn’t have any women: she was probably his first woman in the life, woman in life.

CS: Who?

GS: Nina Koshetz.

CS: So?

GS: So what you want?

CS: What’s the story?

GS: There’s no story. Get that book, and you’ll see that he dedicate the songs to her, and he tells the story about Nina Pavlovna Koshetz.

R3: July 1984/date garbled (02/B)

CS: What was, when, wasn’t when Rachmaninoff died in Hollywood, didn’t you go to the funeral?

GS: Yes, I did go. But Shura Cherkaska kissed his hand. And that famous conductor from England with the Italian name—I forget him, Sir, he’s knighted. He was conducting the symphony, too, in Europe.

CS: He’s a composer as well?

GS: I don’t know if he’s composer. He conducts. But he conducted the philharmonic for a long time. (omit attempts by CS to identify conductor)

CS: Who went to the funeral, Rachmaninoff’s funeral?
GS: Well, only him, of people that I know, shura Cherkovski, myself, Dr. Bertensson, Meremblum, all the Russian colony was there.

CS: Was he, had they expected he was gonna die? Did they expect him to die?

GS: Yes.

CS: Cancer, he had cancer?

GS: Cancer of lungs.

CS: Did he smoke a lot?

GS: And how.

CS: Hm. Did you ever meet him?

GS: Sure, sure. I told you how I presented my, his composition to him.

CS: No, I don't remember that.

GS: Well, Dr. Bertensson told him that I am the only one who has this work, so he says, "Please, ask Mr. Stone to bring that to me. I want to see it."

Well, I was sitting, after the concert, he was signing the autographs for the people. And how he remembered my name: I put music in front, like this. He looked. "Ah, Grigori Alexandrovich" . . .

CS: . . . What was the music?

GS: His own compositions, printed, operas.

CS: From where? Who?

GS: I had it from Russia.

CS: Aha. And they weren't available in the United States.

GS: No, I don't know. I got Russian editions, old ones, The Miserly Knight, Francesca da Rimini, Aleko, symphonies, oratorios.

CS: You gave them to him?

GS: No. He signed it. I left them in university.

CS: Oh, you gave those to university, too?
GS: Yeah.

CS: And what was he like? Did you talk to him?

GS: Strange individual. Yeah, talked to him. I was at the house many times. He played with Horowitz on two pianos.

CS: Really? What did they play?

GS: "Suites." The one you wanted to play.

CS: Ah, his own music?

GS: Yes.

CS: Hm. And he was strange?

GS: Huh?

CS: He was a strange person?

GS: No. He was not strange. They called him, she called him Volodya, Horowitz. I insisted to Volodya he should play his own tango. He played his tango—very complicated, I remember. (omit discussion of what Horowitz was like)

CS: Who was a better pianist, Rachmaninoff or Horowitz?

GS: Rachmaninoff thought Horowitz is better than him.

CS: What did Horowitz think?

GS: Well, he think, just like Rachmaninoff said, about the two pianists, who are the best pianists on the same street. Josef Hofmann. He dedicated his second concerto to him, the famous one, he dedicated to Hofmann. And the third, I don't remember. And Hofmann had very small hands, and they have to build a piano bigger, the keyboard. And, so, he thought of Hofmann the greatest pianist in the world. They belong to older generation, pupil of Anton Rubinstein yet. Hofmann was pupil of Anton Rubinstein. I was at the concert in New York, when he played his sixty years in United States.

CS: Hofmann?

GS: Hofmann.

CS: That's in Los Angeles? And what did Rachmaninoff say? He thought Hofmann was the greatest pianist?
GS: Yes. Oh, they always together. Hofmann was for him, is the last word. And the "Preludes," also, many of them dedicated to Hofmann. Hofmann always played the G minor—you know (hums).

CS: Did you ever talk to Hofmann?

GS: I may have, accidentally, in NBC. In summertime, he didn't play at all: he was fixing cars.

CS: Really? Was his hobby?

GS: Hobby (laughing). How he could play concerts, I don't know, in wintertime. But in his book, he writes about he's just about on the stage, going on the stage, and worrying about how, before, going over the Schumann sonata, which is very difficult one, in his mind, he forgot. Well, you, I'll figure out something. But when he came on the stage, he played all the notes. Sometimes the fingers take you out of all the troubles. That's in his book.

CS: And Rachmaninoff? Was he satisfied in Hollywood? What was your impression?

GS: He had a beautiful home.

CS: A big house. Did he make a lotta money?

GS: Millionaire. His concerts alone—my goodness! His records. He was a miser, though. He leave very little tips.

CS: How do you know?

GS: Because Dr. Bertensson told me.

CS: How does Bertensson know?

GS: Well, he used to go with him everyplace. Just like Heifetz. Very few, they valued money very much because they didn't make it. Rachmaninoff had to teach piano when he was a young man, make a living like that—you know—in Russia, go for summertime somewhere in the estate in Russia and give lesson to some lousy people who don't know how to play.

CS: Ah.

GS: And the students—it upsets people. They figure out, well money is everything because we better save money and do whatever we can to make money.
CS: How was his English, or did you talk to him only in Russian?

GS: Oh, no. He speaks good English.

CS: When you talked, you talked in Russian?

GS: Yes. Perfect Russian. Don't you remember the story of him with him and Ormandy? He was a great admirer of Ormandy. That's mutual. Ormandy played all his compositions. Once, he invited Ormandy to come to his, 500 miles away, Philadelphia, Ormandy should come to his house. Ormandy made a trip by car. He walks in.

"Oh, how are you? Sit down. Here's the music." Not asking, "How your trip?" Crazy.

CS: Rachmaninoff said to Ormandy?

GS: Yes. He didn't give him a chance to wash his hands, to go to the bathroom, nothing. He says, "Sit down. Here's the music." See? That's the Russian, crazy--only his music on his thoughts. That was his "Fantastic Dances," three "Fantastic Dances." Ormandy writes it in his impressions about him. Crazy. Only a Russian could do things like that, all concentrated on one darn thing, waiting for 500 miles, thinks that a guy comes in and that's all that's to it.

CS: Did you ever show him any of your music, piano music, or anything?

GS: My own? No. Only Prokofiev we played the quartet for him, which I wrote for him on "St. Louis Blues." What else on your mind, Madame?

CS: And how else did he spend his money, Rachmaninoff? If you say he had so much, how did he spend his money?

GS: I don't know.

CS: Did he buy paintings or anything?

GS: I don't know. Well, I didn't see any paintings, but he probably saved a lotta money. You see, the body was taken back to Russia for burial, but it was first buried in New York, somewhere, in the States, where the Russians usually have a lot of their places (garbled).

CS: Did he buy expensive cars?
GS: He had a car even in Russia, the first car.

CS: Oh, really?

GS: Yes, a big car. I told you already. He had a car in Russia. Like Chaliapin. Chaliapin also had a first car in Russia. In a way, they are so far away from civilization, no roads, and they ride those cars (laughing). It's a crazy idea. A lot of adventures of mine . . . (omit escape story following)

R4: 5 December 1987

CS: (from journal entry) At piano, looking for something for us to play, sees Rachmaninoff album: "Did I ever tell you the story--saw Eugene (can't decipher) on the street, Verski Saad; and it was Hofmann playing with Klemperer that night. So I got a ticket. I sat one row in front of Rachmaninoff. I can see his face from where I'm sitting. He listens, alright, to the program. Doesn't like it--I can see it in his face. So he walked out after the intermission."

1. On Victor Young (1900-1956), American-Polish composer, conductor, violinist, see ASCAP Biographical Dictionary, p. 558.

2. Notice that although my father remembers Peresyp as "beautiful," Timofienko, p. 18, does not: "North of the city center on the lower sandy shoreline, the Peresyp district, with its railroads and warehouses was built . . . known for its harsh living conditions."

3. Russian businesspersons, Leon and Joelle Kanner; writers and relations of Paramount Studio founders, Jesse and Pat Laske; and Conductor of the Malaga Symphony Orchestra, Octave Caleja were invited for dinner a few days later--and the number of invited guests exceeded the number of comfortable chairs.

4. On Alexei Alexeievich Brusilov (1853-1926) and his participation in the invasion of Galicia (1915) and possession of Rovno (September 1915), see Encyclopedia Britannica, volumes 4 and 14.

5. On different occasions, my father answered direct questions about Iza Kramer and Nadyezhda Plivitskaya by adding several details to the story: First, he added a third name, Cherniafskaya, "another famous accompanist of the opera," to
the group who played "for all the stars from the theatre": "Simsiss, Harshom, and Cherniafskaya was, everyday you can see their names in the affices." (R4/B) Second, he named (and hummed a song from) one of the operettas that established Iza Kramer's fame: Der Zigeunerprimas. (8/B) Third, after speculating on the name of the newspaper of which Iza Kramer's husband was Director (Poslaydni Novesti or Odeski Novesti), my father added that Nadyezhda Plivitskaya--"a typical singer of the Russian people . . . songs of the soil"--brought Iza Kramer news "about all the styles of Paris." (R9/B) Additionally, after naming Generals Kutioopov and Miller, he added that Nadyezhda Plivitskaya--a singer of "naredneeyeh pesnee," of Russian folksongs, and not of couplettes--who was involved with "all those reactionary ones," was arrested "while they run away": "they condemned her in St. Lazare; . . . she died in St. Lazare; . . . those guys, they ran, left her behind." (8/B) Finally, my father named Josef Zimanich, "a friend of Iza Kramer for years," in discussing the aborted attempt to fly Iza Kramer's daughter from New York to Buenos Aires before the singer's death: "When Iza Kramer died, we were decided the girl to fly to Buenos Aires. It was too late--she was already dead. That's the story. Josef Zimanich, that's right." (4/B)

6. See Bolus, pp. 36-38, and Semana, pp. 3-6, for official accounts of Melodie and her family.

7. The Benny Goodman discussion continues as follows: "Poor Benny Goodman. He was chained to that family. He never had any children of his own, and he took care of those children, the ones he married into. He didn't have his own family. Was just a poor little (Jewish?/can't read) boy from Chicago and married into that family. And here I come in, to Chicago Theatre, writing those big paraphrases. Adolf Hoffman was chief arranger and first cellist of Chicago Theatre--had to arrange my stuff. (omit list of titles/discussion of paraphrases/transcriptions following)"


11. See Bertensson.
THAT'S THE STORY: WORDS AND MUSIC BY GREGORY STONE

Volume II

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Cristina Stone, M.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1992

Dissertation Committee:

D. Barnes
P. Mullen
A. Shuman

Approved by

P. Mullen
Department of English
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .................................................. viii

APPENDICES

A. Life Story Documents .......................... 463
   Vita: Gregory Stone ................................. 464
   Reno Philharmonic Symphony
   Orchestra Program List ............................ 468
   Life Story as a Model of
   Adaptation ............................................. 469

B. Vivid Impressions: Chapter III ............... 470

C. Story Versions: Chapters I and II ............ 479

D. Life Story Transcripts ............................ 565

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................. 788
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Life Story as a Model of Adaptation</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

viii
APPENDIX A

LIFE STORY DOCUMENTS
VITA: GREGORY STONE

1900 (1899?)
Born Gregory Gagelstein
Odessa, Ukraine (20 July)

1901 - 1922
First Piano Lesson: Sarah Silberstein
(1905/1906)

France Trip: Bernard Hagelstein
(1906)

First Job: Polyakin Music Store
(1909/1910)

First Conservatory Class: Biber Galperin
(1910/1911)

Accompanist: Edison Theatre
(1910/1911)

Germany Trip: Ivan Knorr, Stern
Conservatory
(1910/1911)

Cymbal Player: Army Band
(1911)

First Appearance as Conductor:
Odessa Conservatory of Music
Vitold Malishevsky; Pietro Cimini
(1913)

Death of Father: Abady Gagelstein
(1913)

Accompanist: Tanzmeister Holochov;
Colonel Polkovnic Tesevitch, Cadet Corps
(1913/1914)

Cavalryman: Russian Army
(1914/1915)

Accompanist: Lochman, Ambalzaki Cafe
(1915/1916)

Accompanist: Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre
(1916/1917)

Graduation: Conservatory of Odessa
(1916)
Organizer: Troupe to Fight Army Desertion
(1917)

Death of Mother: Anna Nadel Gagelstein
(1918)

Escape: Russia (Odessa - Vapniarka - Kiev - Mogiliov Podol; Border Crossing to
Romania)
(1918)

First Job Romania (Kishinaw):
Pavilion; Nobility Hall
(1918/1919)

Accompanist: Fanicu Stefanescu (Kishinaw)
(1920/1921)

Marriage: Zoe Vinoceur (Galatz, Romania)
(1922 - 1945)

Accompanist: Grigori Dinicu (Bucharest)
(1921/1922)

Performance: American Consul Romania
(Visa)
(1922/1923)

1923 - 1944

Arrival: New York (From Constantsa,
Romania)
(1923)

Composer/Arranger/Pianist: Various Radio
Programs, Theatres, and Publishing Houses
(New York and Chicago)
(1923 - 1929)

Chief Arranger/Pianist: RKO (New York)
(1930 - 1933)

Composer/Arranger: Paramount, Fox,
Columbia Studios (Los Angeles)
(1934 - 1936)

Composer/Conductor: Max Reinhardt's Faust
(Los Angeles and San Francisco)
(1937)

Composer/Arranger: Longines Symphonettes
(Los Angeles)
(1939 - 1940)
Composer: Catalogue of 300+ published pieces (solo, orchestral, choral) (1923 - 1944)

1945 - 1968

Conductor/Solo Pianist (Mexico City) (1945 - 1946)

Composer/Conductor/Pianist (South America) (Conductor General Electric Symphony, Argentina; Musical Director Hielo y Estrellas, S.A.; Concert Pianist, Brazil; Musical Director Nueva Granada, Colombia) (1946 - 1951)

Marriage: Ingeborg Lubahn (Maracay, Venezuela) (1948 - present)


Arcari Foundation, First Prize ("Concerto Breve") (1956)

Piano Teacher: Los Angeles Conservatory of Music (Los Angeles) (1957 - 1960)

Founder: Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra (Reno) (1968)

Conductor: Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra (Reno) (1969 - 1979)

Appreciation Award, City of Reno (U.S.A.) (1973)

Man of the Year in Music, Nevada Music Teachers Association (U.S.A.) (1978)

Critics Award, Founding Professional Symphony in Nevada (U.S.A.) (1979)
Retirement: Mijas, Costa del Sol, Malaga, Spain (1983)

Picasso Award, City of Malaga (Spain) (1984)

Admission, Knights of the Templar (England) (1985)

1991 Died Malaga, Spain (11 June)

For chief collaborators, see reprint Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra Program list this Appendix and ASCAP Biographical Dictionary, p. 489.
PARTIAL LIST OF ARTISTS WHO HAVE PERFORMED TRANSCRIPTIONS AND COMPOSITIONS BY

**GREGORY STONE**

* MISHA ELMAN
  ZINO FRANCESCATTI
  DALE PRESTON HALLACK
  GEORGES LAPENSON
  ANTHONY GALLA-RINI
  BORIS MORROS STRING QUARTET
  John Pennington
  Jack Pepper
  Philip Kahgan
  Alexander Borisoff
  DOROTHY REMSEN
  ROSCHA SEIDEL
  EFREM ZIMBALIST
* ETHEL BARTLETT and RAE ROBERTSON
* CHRISTINA CARROLL
  IGOR GORIN
  MARIA JERITZA
  CHRIS LACHONA
  MARIA MARTINO
  JAN PEERCE
  LAWRENCE TIBBET
  STAN BURK and THE SIERRA BOYS CHOIR

*ROBERT RUSSELL BENNETT, W.O.R. ORCHESTRA
  DR. FRANK BLACK, N.B.C. ORCHESTRA
  RICHARD P. CONDIE, RENO PHILHARMONIC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
  ALFONSO D'ARTEGA, NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
  DR. OTTO KLEMPERER, LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC
  PETER MEREMBLUM, CALIFORNIA JUNIOR SYMPHONY
  JEAN PAUL MOREL, NEW YORK CITY SYMPHONY
  MISHEL PIASIO, LONGINES SYMPHONETTE
  SIGMUND ROMBERG, CONCERT ORCHESTRA
  LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI, N.B.C. ORCHESTRA
  ALFRED WALLENSTEIN, N.B.C. ORCHESTRA
  VICTOR YOUNG, LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC

*COMPOSER OF BENNY GOODMAN'S THEME SONG
  "LET'S DANCE"
  COMPOSED AND DIRECTED MUSIC TO GOETHE'S "FAUST"
  PRODUCED BY MAX REINHARDT
  RECIPIENT OF ARCAI INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR
  "CONCERTO BREVE" (Accordion & Symphony Orch.)
  COMPOSER OF ACADEMY AWARDED SHORT
  "HEAVENLY MUSIC" M.G.M.

... "The music is really beautiful and surely very impressive. The choir sounds excellent..."
  from Professor Max Reinhardt's résumé on the music to Faust by Gregory Stone.

... "What you unfold in those transcriptions appears to me to be the very kernel of modern pianist—a recognition of the very soul and nature of the instrument..."
  Percy Grainger on George Gershwin transcriptions by Gregory Stone.

... "I have fingered the American Concerto. It is very well written for violin and very difficult too. In one word, a beautiful piece..."
  — from Zino Francescatti's letter to Gregory Stone.

... "I have never forgotten your marvelous concerto for piano and strings. Did you ever orchestrate it as you thought you might...I shall be going to Europe in the late fall and would be glad to promote it..."
  — from Raymond Lewenthal's letter to Gregory Stone.

MOTION PICTURE SCORES AND ARRANGEMENTS CONDUCTED BY
  CONSTANTIN BAKALEINIKOFF, R.K.O.
  ALFRED NEWMAN, FOX
  EMIL NEWMAN, FOX
  CHARLES PREVIN, UNIVERSAL
  NATHANIEL SHILKRET, M.G.M.
  MORRIS STOLOFF, COLUMBIA
  IRVIN TALBOT, PARAMOUNT

SONGS ESPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR
  MILIZA KORJUS
  MARIA MARTINO
  LILY PONS
  ERNA SACK
LIFE STORY
AS A MODEL OF ADAPTATION

MEMORY'S "LOST AND FOUND"

REMEMBERING
(searching for names, dates, places)  RE-MEMBERING
(reconstituting significant others, events)

BODY MovEMENTS/GESTURES

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS/
EYE CONTACTS

VOCALIZATION
(story-tellings)

VOCAL MARKS
(sound imitations)

"DISTILLATION
OF EXPERIENCES"
EXPERIENCE
OF "EPIPHANIES"

STORY ENDINGS
(stopping: interruptions, questions)  STORY BEGINNINGS
(starting: sensory stimuli)

DYNAMIC FORCES : OUTWARD ARROW
CONSERVATIVE FORCES : INWARD ARROW

Figure 1
APPENDIX B

VIVID IMPRESSIONS:
CHAPTER III
Sensory stimuli seemed often to introduce unexpected and unelaborated vivid impressions, expressed without ceremony—with the fixed eyes and stilled hands that for so long I mistook for indifference. And, on those occasions, my father did, indeed, seem to be indifferent to the conversational context at hand. Thus, for example, one evening in late 1987 (3 December), as my father sat at the piano apparently lost in musical thought, my mother placed some chestnuts on the round grill of the open fireplace while she and I discussed the most important event of the day: Leon Kanner had called twice in anticipation of his upcoming visit with the Laskes (see Chapter III, B, "Rain"). As a result, our conversation centered around what to serve and where to seat the guests. Suddenly, from the piano—and from out of the blue-reverie (or so it seemed to me)—my father asked, "What's that smell, Mama, smells so good?" After my mother's response—she had discovered imported chestnuts at the "Supermercado" and had decided to try roasting them "like in the song"—my father spoke again:

"Ah, yes, the chestnuts, comes to me now, the chestnuts. I forgot how they called; I remember how they're selling those chestnuts, hot; on every street in Odessa they selling those things, roasting those chestnuts over open fire, little fire. And people like them because they're hot, in wintertime, cold wintertime. So they buy them, hold them in their hands, keep warm their hands that way. Don't forget, it's quite cold in Odessa, in winter!" ("Chestnuts")

Although my mother tried to get my father to repeat or develop the impression, he did not do so; however, when asked whether or not he remembered buying the chestnuts himself, he answered, "Probably I did do so," insisting, however, that he couldn't recall their taste.

Similarly, on several occasions (noted in journal on 30 October 1987), at the taste or smell or sight of fish, especially herring—"the fish that used to swim"—my father recalled watching his mother return from the open air market, laden with food:

"I never forget the smell of all that fish. Mother goes to the market, buys all the provisions and, coming home, all the cat population of Odessa coming to greet her, following from the market place to our home, all the way down to Matrusky Spusk, because she's feeding them all the time all that (sorts of? can't read) fish. And the
cats, of course, they just love it; they eating it all up. The cats just loved her because, after all, it's not so easy, that time, to get food, and not only the cats. Who's gonna do it, feed all those animals, when so many people are, go without food? Nobody. Nobody does it. Nobody would do such a thing." ("Fresh Fish")

My journal entry of 25 August 1987 opens with the notation, "Tears from Tutti first thing in the morning--over silk white and purple blouses," and continues with the description of the argument I had with my mother and the impression it evoked in my father. I spent the entire morning berating my mother for twice mistreating expensive presents, two silk blouses: one, white--bought many years earlier by my sister; the other, purple--brought more recently by myself. On both occasions, once presented with the gifts, my mother showed her gratitude and appreciation by immediately and enthusiastically donning her new apparel--and, then, gaily proceeding to go about her daily activities in her gala attire: In the white silk blouse, she swept the chimney; in the purple silk blouse, she mowed the lawn. As on similar occasions, my father seemed touched not by the flood of tears, nor by the drift of dis-conversation, but, rather, by the sound of words. And the unkind words of my summary notation on what I must have interpreted as a lack of human kindness read as follows: "Tutti's crying and all he can do is talk about Chinamen crying 'silk.'"

"I hear them crying 'Sholk, Sholk, Nada Sholk,' those Chinamen with long black braids and those funny looking hats. They were wandering all through the streets of Odessa, and crying, all the time they cry, 'Silk, Sholk, Nada Sholk.' Such funny, you would laugh. I never forget them." ("Chinamen: Silk")

I could not forget--although I might have liked to--one of my first experiences with these impressions: When I arrived in Spain in 1987 (22 August), I found my father fully engaged with music, literally seated before score paper, wasting his eyes, on my view (he already had cataracts), arranging and orchestrating pieces for an upcoming seaside concert (7 September) to be conducted by Octave Caleja, Maestro of the Malaga Symphony, and to be staged by Toni Dalí, tenor-owner of Ristorante Italiano. Somewhat hurt at/jealous of my father's involvement in his writing, I was gratified when, finally, he took time off to listen to a tape I had made in Greece of almost a dozen of my own meager compositions. I was quite proud of this effort--having written both the ballads and the Greek lyrics--for which I had engaged and rehearsed a soprano and an baritone, and played the piano accompaniment myself--and hoped for my father's positive assessment of the compositions, the singers, the performance
as a whole. So, I suppose, I was somewhat miffed with my father's response at the recording's conclusion: with extra time at the end of the tape, the soprano and I had recorded Puccini's "Un Bel Di," a showpiece for both performers that, I thought, would gain approval even if my own works did not. Needless to say, I could not have anticipated my father's response: when the aria ended, rather than pausing to marvel at my recent achievement in Greece, my father plunged into his friend's misfortune in Romania, almost seventy years back:

I remember Bucharest, as I see myself, in cafe, together with Lipschutz, Sol Lipschutz. He was playing bass in the opera orchestra. And appearing that time was the famous Italian diva, was coming in specially to sing all the famous Italian operas--Madame Butterfly, Traviata, La Bohème--all the famous ones. But those Romanians, very nationalistically, I would say, they made her to sing them, not to sing them in Italian, to sing them in Romanian, translated into Romanian. So, here we are in cafe, sitting together--Lipschutz, myself, together with musicians--eat, drink, talking about merits or non-merits of translating all those operas into Romanian. And Lipschutz was of opinion it's wrong. Says, "No." Says, "It's not right. They're crazy, make her to learn all that new language--specially Romanian language--when she's here only three or four days. Crazy." Just at that time, they come in, gendarmes, dressed, grab him by the arms, drag him outside to the court where is Romanian flag. And they just pushed him down on his knees, make him to kiss the Romanian flag. Imagine! Was such dangerous times, just crazy. Those Romanians could do anything what they want with you--making arrests, kill you on the spot. Or they sent you back to Russia on pretense that you're provocateur. ("Flag")

Another journal entry (19 September 1987), which, again, cannot pretend to get to the exact source of my father's impression, opens with, "Something on radio brought back name of Conservatory street" (a street name that, despite numerous discussions of the Odessa Conservatory and endless interrogations about the addresses of family and friends, never enters the transcripts), and continues as follows:

"Comes back to me now, Novaselskaya Ulitsa. Novaselskaya Ulitsa. That's where we have our Conservatory. Novaselskaya Ulitsa. There we have our pianos, Pleyel, Pleyel pianos, with the built into them, built right into them, there, on the sides, those little candles-like. So we can practice there, morning to night, right there at Conservatory. Novaselskaya Ulitsa we called it. You probably find the street even today, if you look." ("Conservatory Street")
The journal entry continues with a cryptic notation of what my father recalled having heard on the radio—"Pesard singing, 'Toreador en Andalucía'"—that invites speculation, but not precision, as to the sound that might have triggered my father’s recollection.

A vivid impression involving a triggered gun and a roll of money was my father’s interrupted response, again, apparently, to the sound of a word. The morning (about 9:00–11:00 a.m.) of 14 November 1987 found my parents and I preparing for a trip to Europa, the new "Hipermercado"—supermarket—where one could find not just every imaginable food, from Argentinean beef and Portuguese abalone to Zanzibarian bread and Italian ziti, but every possible appliance, from AEG to Zanussi, along with a huge selection of tools and toys, dishes and dresses, sofas and ceramics. Having done the family shopping for years, my father always enjoyed going to Europa even though many times (as on this occasion), pre-trip preparations tired him so much that by the time we got to the store, we had to seat him in one of the sale chairs while my mother and I shopped. On the morning in question, my father sat ready at the kitchen table, waiting for the taxi to arrive and for the pre-trip operations to end. My mother had to secure the dogs—a procedure involving, first, generously scattering doggie treats on the living room’s marble floors; then, quickly closing its French doors; and, finally, delicately balancing a bundle of canes and umbrellas against the door handles, which the guard dogs, more intent on spring than protecting the house, had become expert at unlocking. My own preparation involved safeguarding my money through camouflage: seated at the kitchen table, I proceeded carefully to fold my Spanish bills into tiny squares of paper that I then tried to squeeze into a matchbox about 1 1/2" wide, 2" long, and 1/2" deep—no easy task, especially when coins had to be crammed in as well. Deep in thought, I supposed, my father sat quietly at the table. Rarely quiet, my mother came in to announce that the dogs had been successfully contained and, surveying the situation, to suggest, "Why don’t you just cut the money off around the edges? That’ll do it!" My father’s response followed:

Not far, I see myself already close, quite close to the border. And here we are playing, cafe, night, playing, as we usual do, at night. One night comes in an officer of the army. Says, "Play me this." Named some song—probably gypsy, gypsy song. Alright. We play. Another song, piece, whatever it is: "Play this." OK, again we play. Again. Goes on like this all the night long. He’s drinking, already drunk probably, having a good time, making us to play—this, that, whatever he wants to. And every time we play, he takes out from his
jacket, porte-monnaie, whatever he has there, all his money, rolled up money. He had a big roll of money, all connected together, the paper, not yet cut money. And every time, together, he takes out that big, long, big knife of his to cut that money. Every time, cutting the money and then throwing it to me. I never seen so much money. My goodness. So, of course, I take it, put it in the piano, the strings there, collecting it there till I go home. All of a sudden, comes up to me with a gun. The guy points it to my head, just close, to the side, "'Davai denye nazad!' Give me back the money!" What I could do? He's an officer of the army. He would kill me there, on the spot, anything like that. So I take out all that money from the strings, give him back, everything. What else I could do under those circumstances, those bad times? They would kill you for nothing if they wanted to." ("Uncut Money")

Perhaps my mother and I wanted to ask questions, but the taxi driver--honking outside--did not want to wait for answers; and, what with helping my father down the steep front steps and into the low front seat, we turned our attention elsewhere. My journal notes, too, do not return to the pre-trip impression; rather, they focus on the Europa trip: after reading newspapers in the sale chair for over an hour, my father decided he was ready to shop. So, together with my mother and I, he, first, went down the aisles suggesting items we might have forgotten and, then, stood in line at the meat counter for 45 minutes to get fresh bones for the waiting dogs.

Although I close my 25 August 1987 journal entry with the words, "Pauses do not need filling: if I wait, he usually goes on," the next day's entry testifies to the proverbial power of loud-speaking actions: "Spent morning and early afternoon cleaning outside patio, plants, barbecue--pulled out his words like weeds and ruined all the stories. Moved into dining room, breakfast, Russian shelf to continue destruction." Unfortunately, the journal entry records only the "Russian shelf" episode: whatever stories or impressions may have been triggered by my outdoor activities were swept away like so many dead leaves. The Russian shelf episode left an impression on me, I guess, because it includes my father's rare reference to a samovar among the paraphernalia of his train trip to France.

As mentioned elsewhere, every trip to my parents' home entails a never-ending clean-up campaign: on this, the fifth day of my stay, I was already in the middle of the action. By mid-day, I had manoeuvred broom and sponge from the outdoor patio to the neighboring dining area--location of both the breakfront (crowded home to an assortment of china, crystal,
and bibelots soon to be evacuated to mop-up headquarters in
the kitchen before assignment to new shelf positions) and the
Russian shelf (penthouse--i.e., the top of the eight-foot
breakfront--to which I had assigned part of my parents'collection of Russian dust-collectors, from tiny painted eggs
and egg babushkas to variously shaped moveable toys of
weighted string and carved wood, plus the biggest offender of
all--a huge dust-prone, rust-prone Russian samovar that,
vodka-filled, invariably contributed to the joie de boire at
parties). Filling the dining-room table with the residents
of the Russian shelf was slow work: my father watched, with
only an occasional, "Be careful, Cristinuchka," as I
continuously ascended first a chair and then the table,
removing the treasures one by one and placing them temporarily
on the two timpani flanking the breakfront until I could
retrieve them upon my descent. I retrieved the samovar last,
and as I sat taking apart and polishing its pieces, commenting
all the while on the ingrained grit and grime, my father
suddenly spoke:

"I remember myself on the train, four of us--Father,
Mother, my cousin, myself--on the train going to France,
visit Father's brother in France. Mother would not go,
refused to go without, insisted we take with us the
little boy cousin of mine. So we take with us the little
boy cousin of Edith, Wasserfuhrer, Gavril Wasserfuhrer
(sic, son of Edith). And we take with us the samovar,
traditional Russian samovar, for tea. And here we are
on the train, enjoying our tea, enjoy our samovar,
everything else, like we do it at home. Imagine! Just
imagine! "Samovar"

The imaginative failure of my journal never ceases to amaze
me: this day's entry concludes with, "Tried to talk in
evening outside--nonsense talk about trips, flights, etc.
(i.e., people, chit-chat talk, impressions--no 'stories')
Interesting, though, his trips--e.g., flight over volcanoes
from Quito to _____?"

It is unfortunate, I think, that so many such blanks
punctuate my father's life story. But looking for "stories"
often meant overlooking so much else--with the result that
impressions of the sort recorded above, scattered and
summarized, often included my imprecise contextual clues, but
usually excluded my father's precise words: for example,
"Moroccan sugar --recalls grandmother" (18 November 1987);
"Ice-cream out--Pressas gossip--and he brings up 'First time
I seen ice-cream, as I remember, was in Odessa, and I'm
playing all those parties, big ones, in those Russian
aristocratic houses. The women, like aristocrats, the women,
they were dressed to kill, with decollete, all of them, with
all of their diamonds." (27 August 1987); and "Tutti to
Josefina to discuss dress, no-book discussion leads to book discussion, reading Titanic leads to Sarah Silverstein--took him to silent flick Titanic, photographed in new suit." (5 September 1987)\(^5\). And even though the old notes served suitably well as suggestions for directing the course of later interviews, it was never possible to recapture the quality of those original impressions--tenacious enough to make their way into any context, yet too fragile to countenance repetition.

1. Although my father mentions Lipschutz throughout the transcripts, he never again referred to this episode. An earlier 1984 tape (01/A), on which I had asked my father to repeat the morning story (told in my absence and without contextual notes) that had so impressed CK, includes an elaborated version of this impression that even names the Italian singer, Elena Egonée.

2. I was clearly more interested in my father's grocery store actions than in his pre-trip words: already unable to walk or stand for any length of time, my father nonetheless waited in line to buy dog bones. In all the years of my parents' marriage, my father has NEVER stood in line—a constant source of consternation for both his wife and his children. He never butts into lines of waiting people; rather, he befriends managers and supervisors, of banks and stores, so that as soon as he enters a place of business, he is warmly welcomed and ceremoniously escorted not just to the front of the line, but usually to the back of the building, into some private office, where he conducts his business at his leisure.

3. Compare R4/B and R6/B.

4. Although my parents and I rarely ate out together, on the day in question, my father insisted on taking me to Giovanni's for ice-cream because, apparently, he had been inviting our neighbors--Carmen and Don Luis Pressas and their youngest son, Paci--there on a regular basis. My mother took charge of the conversation, telling me how Paci, more than a little bit chubby, would first order a huge ice-cream dish and, after his parents had eaten their sandwiches, would then promptly request--and consume--a couple of sandwiches or hamburgers himself.

5. On this occasion, my mother went to neighbors Manolo and Josefina da Bono to discuss what the latter should wear to the upcoming night out at Tony Dali's Ristorante Italiano. Anything but a clothes-horse, my mother returned tired of attire talk, appalled at the lack of reading material at
Josefina's: "No books whatsoever" other than the Bible and the textbooks of daughter Maria Jose. A "book talk" followed, during which my father moved from his present reading material, The Titanic, to his past. He recalled being taken by his piano teacher, Sarah Silberstein, to see the silent picture Titanic, and he remembered being photographed in his uncomfortable new suit. Compare 1/B, 5/A, and R2/A. Interestingly, 7/A, which records his recollections of being photographed on important occasions, contains no reference to the Titanic outing.
APPENDIX C

STORY VERSIONS:
CHAPTERS I AND II
1. "POLYAKIN"

CS: What was the stories that you used to tell, when I was a little kid, about phoning the fire department?

GS: Oh, when I'm a boy, I used to make pranks: I call up the fire department. I worked in a music store.

CS: You worked in a music stores?

GS: Yes.

CS: When?

GS: When a little boy.

CS: Doing what?

GS: Yeah, well, just packing, unpacking records, music.

CS: How old were you?

GS: It's all good times, so we all got together, and one day I called, we, I called on the phone the fire brigade. Said, "Who called?" "Somebody from your store." "Who could that be?" "Grisha." "Get him out." So I lost the job.

CS: Oh. I don't understand. You mean you reported a fire, and there was no fire?

GS: The store. No fire.

CS: How did they find out it was you?

GS: Well, because nobody else was in the store who would know, so they got wind of it, that I did it. Then the other boys, "Eh, Grisha did it."

CS: And you lost the job?

GS: Yeah.

CS: How old were you?

GS: Well, that must have been when I was about, that's before the Conservatory, that. Maybe I was ten years of age. It's just one of those in between things that I did.
CS: And did your father allow you to work, have a job?

GS: Who?

CS: When you were little, or if . . .

GS: . . . Oh, they didn’t care about that. They go to the store because I’m, at that time, I would pass every music store in town, look at the vitrines, and say, "Oh, that I like to buy." I bought a lotta music I couldn’t play: French edition, English edition, German edition . . .

CS: . . . Just to buy it?

GS: Just to buy it and enjoy it. Because to me it was so wonderful, like I have communion with another world altogether.

CS: What did your father say?

GS: He didn’t say anything. Well, the same thing, he couldn’t say anything about the books that I exchanged for magazines and other books, don’t you remember? I told you that story already, that I exchanged my books for older editions. Had a hell of a time to find it, in my books.

CS: You mean textbooks?

GS: Textbooks.

CS: To find the pages?

GS: Find the pages. It was there . . .

CS: . . . And what did you exchange them for?

GS: So I could buy a lotta magazines.

CS: Such as?

GS: All kinda junk. (Bothersome fly interrupts story--unique in its tendency to include other pranksters--which doesn’t continue, and talk moves to overall organization of stories; 01/B)

2. "MAMA! MAMA!"

CS: And Nazhenskaya Ulitsa was also an apartment?

GS: What’s that?
CS: Nazhenskaya Ulitsa?

GS: Kniazhenskaya. That's where we had an apartment, and that's where the "Sama Obarona" comes in, and during the Pogrom, to get food, and mother provide them food, and father was there too.

CS: Did they have meetings there, too?

GS: Meetings? In our house?

CS: To discuss things?

GS: Yes, discussing things, what to do bad to all those "Razbonekekee" or, how you call them? How did I call them?

CS: Ditches? Sewers?

GS: No. How did I call the people?

CS: "Pogromchiki."

GS: "Chornosotinski"--right in those canalization.

CS: Did they meet at night time in your house?

GS: Whenever they need a chance to discuss something. Don't forget, you're talking to me, that's, I was just a little boy.

CS: Yes. And you were probably watching and listening.

GS: Yeah.

CS: But you didn't understand all of it.

GS: No, I knew about "Pogromchiki" because, I told you, once Mother came out of the house, and the "Pogromchiki" saw her and run, ran to her, and she hid herself inside somewhere, and I screamed, "Mama! Mama!"

CS: And she went into a side street?

GS: Yes, I suppose.

CS: And they didn't see her?

GS: No. They were robbing the, the stores that time. Robbing. Because it was government permission to rob the Jews, rob anybody. Understand?
CS: Hm.

GS: That was, that was one of the reason that Father took us to the church and baptize us—you know.

CS: Supposedly, you would be safe after that?

GS: Yes, we are now belong to the priest.

CS: Did that mean you were protected?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And, also, you could travel without any restrictions?

GS: Perfect.

CS: After you were baptized. Before, no?

GS: Before, no. (R5/A)

... ...

GS: I was born in Odessa. My father was a, a merchant, second guild. Were big stores all around town. And ruling the Pogroms, our house was a house where all the Defense League came in, got—I still remember it vaguely. They came into our house; they get a hot plate to eat, then go again on the street to catch the killers and kill them, and they put them right in the—where they have the reservoir . . .

CS: ... The sewers . . .

GS: ... Sewers.

CS: What do you mean by the killers? The killers of what?

GS: "Chornosotinski," the "Black Hundred."

CS: OK, but what were they killing?

GS: People—Jews, Tartars, and Gypsies . . .

CS: ... Hm . . .

GS: ... Sometimes even Russian, the Russians who got involved, and they escaped.

CS: What were these "Self-Defense" people?
GS: The Jewish League. I remember, vaguely, my mother was running to the store. All of a sudden, I saw that, a whole bunch of those wild "Black Hundred" going, and they nearly would catch Mother. I says, "Mama! Mama!" And she came around and escaped them.

CS: How old were you?

GS: How old can I be? A little boy. Because Pogroms were in 1905, after Japanese War.

CS: Hm, and you were about 5 years old.

GS: Yes. Russia lost the War. They had to blame somebody as a scapegoat, you know. The Japanese not only beat Russia, but sank the whole fleet, the Russian, all the Russian--Inge, Cristina--all the Russian ships were sunk in the Soshima Strait. (6/A)

. . . .

CS: Alright, let's go back to the two streets. There was Nazhenskaya Ulitsa . . .


CS: Knia-? . . .


CS: OK.

GS: That's where I was living.

CS: Were you born in that house?

GS: Well . . .

CS: . . . Did they, did your parents ever tell you where you were born?

GS: I must have been born in Odessa, probably there.

CS: In a house or in a hospital? Do you know?

GS: Not in a hospital.

CS: Not in a hospital? In the house, probably.

GS: Yeah.

CS: Did your mother ever talk about it?
GS: No. The only time this came about, during Pogrom—I told you. She was running to save the stores, and there's "Chornosotinski" after her. And she hid in, in a little passage someplace . . .

CS: . . . Alley . . .


CS: And they protected all the stores? They watched the stores?

GS: Watched all the stores, and kills them, "Chornosotnya," and "Chornosotinski," and put them right in the, in . . .

CS: . . . Ditches, sewers . . .

GS: . . . Sewers.

CS: Alright, that was the first street. (R4/A)

3. "SELF-DEFENSE LEAGUE"

CS: And of the people, earlier, now, you told me, of the people who were in the Self-Defense League . . .

GS: . . . Used to come to my house, and my mother would serve them sandwiches and everything to eat, tea; and then they would go outside and kill some more "Chornosotins," and put them right in the canalization.

CS: And you knew some of them who had died, who were killed, from the Self-Defense League?

GS: Self-Defense League? No, I don't think, I didn't see anybody killed. They killed the "Pogromchikis."

CS: None of your . . . ?

GS: . . . No . . .

CS: . . . Self-Defense Leagues were killed? No?

GS: Maybe some were killed, but I . . .
CS: ... You don't remember, or you don't remember any story about them. (R7/B)

... ...

GS: I told you our house was a house of Self-Defense League: they used to collect there, get hot food and everything else, then come on the street and kill the "Black Hundreds."

CS: Oh, "Chorni," what are the "Black Hundreds" again?

GS: "Black Hundreds? are the ..."

CS: ... "Chornaya" what? ...

GS: ... Government instigated ...  

IS: ... Rabble ...

GS: ... Rabble, against Jews, against Tartars, against anybody that are not Christian. (7/B)

4. "SIBERIA"

GS: And we came back to Odessa just in time of the series of Pogroms against the Jews and all the foreigners. Only those could go back to their own places, the ones who proved that they lived in the pale. In the pale, they used to call, in the pale because they returned to their homes. Others were sent on the long trips to faraway places--I don't even know where--sometimes even to Siberia. How old was I there? How old was I? Six or seven. Huh, six or seven. (3/B)

... ...

CS: Did your father want to go to France to avoid being in the army for 25 years, or ...

GS: ... Oh, no. That's different epochs. There were no such thing then. You talking about being 25 years in the army in the olden days, during the Tsar.

CS: But you told me when he came back from France, it had changed, it was no longer required to be 25 years in the army.

GS: Well, just presume that ...

CS: ... That's not the reason he went to France, to avoid the army?
GS: NO, NO. He went to France to visit his brother. And at that time, they just took off from the train, they took off his brothers, that they were Revolutionaries.

CS: The same train that you were on?

GS: Yeah.

CS: As you were traveling to France? And your cousins (sic, uncles) were with you, the two Revolutionaries?

GS: Yes, but they were taken off the train by police.

CS: You mean, he was taking the cousins (sic, uncles) to go to France, too?

GS: Well, but I don’t know where they wanted to go ... 

CS: ... But they were on the same train with you?

GS: Yes.

CS: When you had the samovar?

GS: Yes. They didn’t go with samovar, they didn’t go with samovar. We did.

CS: Oh, you went. But they were with you, no?

GS: Yeah. They took them off, and they sent them to Siberia.

CS: So you saw them being taken off the train?

GS: Yes.

CS: They were young men, young boys?

GS: Yes, very young. And we heard, after many years of Revolution, we found out that they got married there in Siberia. They had their own families, but I don’t know anything about.

CS: Did, then, he went to France just to visit his brother, or was he also getting away from the Pogroms?

GS: Well, he wanted to go ... 

CS: ... To live there?

GS: To live there. My father didn’t, "I never learn any French. French is not for me." And his brother says,
"Wait a second," uh--whatever he called him--"Abe. Give yourself time." He says, "No, no, my dear brother. I can never learn French. I'm gonna go back home." That's when we went. That's when the comet, Haley's comet, appeared, when we came back. 1910, 1909, the comet appeared with us. And we were living in a big, big open house, and we saw the comet every night. (R6/B)

. . . . .

CS: That's not the reason he went to France, to avoid the army?

GS: NO, NO. He went to France to visit his brother. And, at that time, they just took off from the train, they took off his brothers that they were Revolutionaries. (for more on the Nikolaeski Soldat and his 25 years of army service, see 6/A and V2/A).

. . . . .

CK: This happened after the Battleship Potemkin and all those things?

GS: Oh, the Potemkin went after that.

CK: Yeah.

GS: The Potiomkin is already Revolution.

CK: Revolution, the first attempt of the Revolution.

GS: No. Potemkin was in 1917.


GS: No.

CK: 1907.

GS: No, much farther, much later.

CK: '16?

GS: No.

CK: Ho old were you when your mother was being chased?

GS: I must've been about six, before we went to Paris. (04/A)

. . . . .
CK: What I want you to tell me is this: Before the Revolution, the Tsar was against your family, against your brothers (sic, uncles)?

GS: . . . Yes . . .

CK: . . . Who were sent to . . .

GS: . . . Siberia . . .

CK: . . . Two brothers . . .

GS: . . . Two brothers of my father . . .

CK: . . . Two brothers of your father.

GS: They were students at university . . .

CK: . . . Involved in anti-government work . . .

GS: . . . Anti-government work, activities. They were revolutionary.

CK: Yes. Now . . .

GS: . . . My father didn’t know anything about, of course.

CK: Your father was a merchant, and he was responsible for the rest of the family, maybe, so he didn’t want to get involved.

GS: No. He just didn’t care about it. (05/8)

5. "FAMILY"

GS: I, first of all, since I was so known to the Bolshevikists—the years were revolutionary year—I decided I wanna get out of Russia.

CK: Why did you fell that way?

GS: Ah, I felt, it was a famine, not, nothing to eat, very much—even I had everything, as I told you, I had all the food, everything else—I decided I’m gonna get out of Russia.

CK: Were your father alive?

GS: No. He’s dead.

CK: He was dead.
CS: He died in '18, 1918, wasn't it 1918?

GS: No. 1913.

CK: 1913, ah, died. He was not alive during the Revolution. And your mother?

GS: 1918 . . .

CS: . . . 1918, during the Revolution. They were young, huh?

CK: . . . During the Revolution.

CS: They died young, eh?

GS: Yeah. My father was 44 years old, and my mother was about, maybe, 49.

CK: What they died from?

GS: Father died from mastoid. What's that?

CS: Ear infection.

GS: Ear infection. And Mother died also, some trouble she had, heart trouble.

CS: Was your father a musician, too?

GS: No.

CS: Nothing? I know, but I thought he . . .

GS: . . . He played flute in the band.

CS: Flute?

GS: Father, in the band, you know.

CK: So, after they died, you were alone.

GS: Alone.

CK: Before the Revolution.

GS: Alone. (04/B)

. . . . .

GS: Father? I remember when he got ill, and I went to see him. He was already dying. It was at night, there, and
I went into the room. He was lying. He recognized me. And I felt his pulse and everything else. And next time I've seen him, he was lying dead already in the morgue, there, where they were collecting, uh, like a morgue. (11/A)

. . . . .

CS: I always forget: how did your mother die?

GS: She died in a hospital, on the bed. And they called me to come to her. And she was already dead. And I came in there.

CS: But what was the reason?

GS: She has asthma.

IS: Asthma? Asthma? Like Opa? Son of a gun, hm. Where were you when they called her, or when they called you?

GS: I was in the marketplace, taking care of the merchandise.

CS: And you didn’t even know that she was sick?

GS: No, I knew that she was sick, but . . .

CS: . . . She wasn’t in the hospital then?

GS: When I called her, they took her to the hospital.

CS: Aha. I wonder if, they have medications now, if they would help her.

GS: Yes, now. After all, we were a well-to-do family. I remember, we used to go every year to, to the grave of her parents, to Cherson. Cherson is on the Dnieper, is falling, the Dnieper is falling into the Black Sea. And she was in Cherson visiting her relations, always there.

CS: Is it far away from Odessa?

GS: No, it’s overnight.

CS: Overnight by train?

GS: By boat.

CS: Do you remember the place that you visited there with her?

GS: Vaguely, Mama, yeah, yes. But, you know, so many years
How would you characterize your father? What would you say the most important things about him? Did you inherit any characteristics of your father?

I don't know; I have no idea. I know that he was a very good businessman because we went to "Traktir" together—he always was in Varanskaya. Varanskaya is the, for better people. (omit talk of food and magazines consumed there) My father, yes, was a successful businessman at that time. And I, when we went to Paris, Mother saved a lot of money from every day. She used to take out gold pieces. I don't know how many she got, but she had enough money for us to go to Paris and come back again ...

How about ...

She was the brain of the whole expedition, I would say.

Was, how about your mother? What were characteristics that you remember?

She had Tartar blood in her, from her mother's side, not her brother's side ...

Father's side, you mean.

Her mother's side had Tartar blood. Where she got it from, I don't know. That's probably, I have the same from her, the Tartar in me. (R11/A)

And then, before that, you were traveling with your parents, when your father ...

... was traveling in the Regiment.

Some regiment. Why was he in the Regiment? He was a soldier?

No, I think he was out of the army. He was traveling on his own.

For business?
GS: He was in a "Dragoonsky Astrahansky Polk."

CS: What was that?


CS: Aha.

GS: Before, then, as a businessman, I think he was buying manufactured goods, he went many places in Poland. He was born in Poland, anyway.

CS: Where was your mother born?

GS: I think she was born in Cherson.

CS: In Cherson. And was he born in Lodz?

GS: Hm?

CS: Was your father born in Lodz or Warsaw?

GS: Oh, NO, NO. My father was born in Warsaw.

CS: Warsaw.

GS: Can you make something out of that mess?

CS: I don't know.

GS: You see, you touch some things so far in my, I cannot manage to put them in the right place, because it's 70, 80 years ago.

CS: I know. I understand that. I can't remember what I did yesterday. (R4/A)

... ...

CS: Why was he travelling around like that, in a "telega"?

GS: I don't know. He, I don't know why, because he served in a "Dragoonsky Astrahansky Polk," and he played flute. And that's why they probably, he was mobilized to go, and my mother followed him. (R7/B)

6. "CYMBALS"

CS: Then I have a story when you were in some band, or the army, I don't know what, and you were playing cymbals.
GS: Oh, that's long time . . .
CS: ... It's before?
GS: Before.
CS: But I don't know what the story is.
GS: Well, I mean, I had to, to join the army, to do something--it was obligatory.
CS: You were drafted?
GS: Yes. And we walking on the street, and I was supposed to lift those cymbals, but they, supposed to hit those cymbals, but they were so big I couldn't carry. I was not, I was always off beat.
CS: On purpose or by accident?
GS: No. Really.
CS: You were off beat?
GS: Offbeat. So finally says, "Let him go! Don't bother him!" (R5/B)

7. "INFLUENCES"

CS: You remember having any pianist, famous pianist, who you admired when you were a child or you wanted to be like?
GS: Josef Hofmann.
CS: Josef Hofmann. When you were a little boy?
GS: I went to his concert.
CS: You went to his concert? He came to Odessa?
GS: Yes. He was famous, all over Europe.
CS: And he came to play in Odessa?
GS: Sure, many times.
CS: Oh, really? He was a little boy then, too?
GS: Well, he is small in stature, anyway. He was the favorite pupil of Anton Rubinstein. He came many times. They all adored him in Odessa.
CS: And you saw him when you were a child?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Where did he play? In the Opera Theatre?

GS: Uh, well, I imagine, the theatre, closed place.

CS: Not the Opera Theatre?

GS: I don’t know. It was a closed place. I don’t know.

CS: You saw him several times?

GS: Yeah. Every time he came, I was there.

CS: When you were very little? When you first started to play piano, or later?


CS: There was nobody before that, who you wanted to play, maybe you saw a concert, and you said, "I want to be a pianist."

GS: Well, the old man De Pachmann was there.

CS: Vladimir De Pachmann?

GS: Yes, very old, yes. He used to say, "Can anybody play like this?" during the performance.

CS: During the, did you see him, too, perform?

GS: Yeah, yeah. Turned to the audience, says, "Can anybody play like this?"

CS: He said that to the audience?

GS: Yes.

CS: When you were there?

GS: Yes. Vladimir De Pachmann. He, also, was born in Odessa.

CS: I thought he was in Poland.

GS: No.

CS: No. He was born in Odessa and lived there all his life?
GS: Well, not all the time. Whenever he had concerts. Why do you worry about Poland? Gimpel was from Poland.

CS: Gimpel was from Poland?

GS: His brother, both of Gimpels were Polish.

CS: Hm. And you saw De Pachmann when he was an old man, play?

GS: That's when he turned to the audience and said, "Can anybody play like that?" He was a famous Chopinist.

CS: I know. Do you remember what he played?

GS: Vladimir De Pachmann? He played all Chopin, studies and waltzes and things like that.

CS: You were a very little, small boy when you saw him?

GS: No. I was already, I imagine, ten years old, nine, ten years old.

CS: So you already played the piano?

GS: Yeah. (R7/B)

.....

8. "THE CITY SINGS"

CS: (omit recitation of Oobayko's "Zhenskaya Lubov") You still remember the words of all those songs?

GS: I used to remember because I used to sell them. They all complain because, all the actors complain, "We only here a few days, and the whole city sings our songs." They never knew there was a guy in Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre that sits day and night and memorizes all those words and sells it.

CS: How did you go about getting music and then selling them the next week? You took the books home the next day?

GS: No. Those, the books, the ones I took for Oobayko, has nothing to do with the books that I, in the theatre.

CS: How did you get the music, from the music in the theatre? you played in the theatre from music, right?

GS: And, naturally, I memorized all of it.
CS: You memorized it while you were playing?
GS: Yes.
CS: And then you went home at night time . . .
GS: . . . Copied the music.
CS: How did you copy it? From what? You mean, from memory?
GS: By memory.
CS: Not from the music in front of you.
GS: Yeah, well, I knew it already.
CS: From your head, though, you copied it?
GS: Yes, and sold to the guys who sang in Odessa--the local talent.
CS: Did you make several copies of each one? They had no photocopy machines?
GS: No.
CS: So what, did you make several copies to sell several copies to each person, or you sold it some major dealer?
GS: NO, NO. I sold quite a few copies to different people.
CS: But did you make more than one copy of every song?
GS: Yes.
CS: The vocal line and the piano accompaniment?
GS: Whatever it was necessary. (8/A; and see, also, V3/A, for the only version that collapses three days into two).
9. "FLUTES"
CS: Who was Kokolny Tesevitch?
GS: Polkovnik Tesevitch, aha.
CS: Oh, what was his name?
GS: Paw, Pawl-kawv-nik.
CS: Polkovnik?
GS: Yes.
CS: Tesevitch.
GS: Yeah.
CS: Who was he?
GS: He, on the Head Cadet Corpus.
CS: The head of the cadets?
GS: Yes.
CS: Director or something?
GS: Yes.
GS: . . . Without permission, to study them. And my luck was, I took many, because you usually take one flute to study, but they coming in together.
CS: Oh, they were packed together?
GS: Yeah.
CS: In the same, two in one box? A regular flute and a soprano flute or something?
GS: Hm hm.
CS: You were going to return them?
GS: What do I need them?
CS: Ah. And you took them for one night, or how long?
GS: I don't know for how long, but they come in to arrest me.
CS: To arrest you?
GS: Well, some police came to arrest me because they complained--the guy who was supposed to take care of the flutes said, "I didn't touch them. He did it! The fellow working in the Corpus." So they, so they arrest me.
CS: Police actually came?
GS: Yeah.

CS: Were you living by yourself then, or were you living with the five sisters?

GS: I lived with, uh, with the wife of the, of the one who used to take care of me.

CS: Oh, your mother's sister.

GS: Yeah.

CS: Aha. And they find out about it, too.

GS: Who?

CS: The aunt, "tyotya."

GS: Yes. And one was always telling me, "Flaytitchky, flaytitchky, flaytitchky." She was always sarcastic about it, Clara.

CS: The one you wrote the letters for . . .

GS: . . . Many letters, for her boyfriend. Ahhokoloki.

CS: What is Ahalkolaki?

GS: That's where he was serving.

CS: Ahhalkalaki?

GS: Yes, in caucuses. And I wrote love letters for her. She could not even write anything. (omit continued discussion of love letters for Clara and notation that Holochov's wife--not Holochov--"took away my contract"; R4/B)

10. "BASSARABIAN BUDILNIKI REVOLUTION"

CS: Kishinaw?

GS: Kishiniov, in Russian. Now, it's capital of Moldavia, the Bolshevik capital of Moldavia. (omit discussion of violinist friend Sascha Lukas) And I started to work immediately, but I lost my voice. But I got the best job in town with a Romanian who played, spoke Russian brokenly, but he spoke Russian. (He was married to Gulescu's sister; the famous violinist Gulescu, it's his sister, so he loved me.)

CS: What was his name?
GS: Dialkitsano--I forget his first name. I played with him, in "Blagarodnaya Sabrania," the Nobility Hall, in wintertime; and in summertime, in the garden. Played with him, and summer came in, and I played in Nobility, in the garden. And they gave us, fed us "Budilniki," hamburgers. I says, "I don't wanna eat hamburgers." I could hardly speak any Romanian. So the boss wanted, I wouldn't play. They played without me, the orchestra: I wouldn't play the, eat "Budilniki." So the owner comes, "What happen? Why the pianist doesn't play?" Says, "He doesn't wanna eat that." "Give him whatever he wants!"

CS: What is it that you wanted to eat?

GS: A la carte (laughs) like the guests. Imagine the nerve of mine . . .

CS: . . . When was this? How old were you then? . . .

GS: . . . People sent, me, well, I must've been young--18, 19.

CS: They could send you back if they wanted to?

GS: He could send me back to Russia (laughing), over the border. (V4/A)

. . . .

CS: Then there's a story about someplace when you were in Kishinaw and you refused to play because of the food.

GS: Hm, yes.

CS: What's that story?

GS: Sascha Borisoff got that job, in a park, outside of . . . It is summertime, I think. And there was about 30- or 40-man orchestra, and I, they used to bring us "Budilniki." You know, cutlets, you know. And I didn't like those things. It was bad times, that time. So I refused to do it, refused to play it. And the boss came, "What happened?" And they told me (sic, him) that I don't wanna play. He looked at him, at me. He said, "Give him everything what he wants!" He could've sent me back to Bassarabia.

CS: What did you like to eat?

GS: They gave us "Budilniki"--you know, cutlets, you know.
They would just make them up.

CS: So what did you want to eat?

GS: A la carte.

CS: What does a la carte mean?

GS: Anything on the menu.

CS: Ah, I see. So you could choose every day a different menu, if you pleased. I see. Why could he have sent you back?

GS: He had the power. Imagine me, going something against the Romanian official like that, who has the, his own place. And here I revolt. He’s a Bolshevik.

CS: He was a big guy, an official there? And he had this restaurant? Was this the "Blagarodnaya Sabrania"?

GS: Yes, like "Blagarodnaya Sabrania," something like that.

CS: Like it, but it was different? Not the same one?

GS: Yes.

CS: And what did you do in the orchestra?

GS: Nothing, they were . . .

CS: . . . I mean, what did you do? You played piano, right?

GS: Yeah, anything.

CS: Solos or playing with the orchestra or what?

GS: Playing with the orchestra, but I played all the melodies and everything else.

CS: Hm. So if you weren’t playing, they would notice it, right?

GS: Yeah. (V2/A)

. . . .

IS: When you were there, Gregory, was it, after you were there for a while, the season changed? You arrived, and it was cold. And you were also there in nice season or spring or summer or . . .
GS: ... Well, in Kishinaw, already, it was, I played in "Blagardnaya Sabrania." That was summertime.

IS: Ah, what's ... 

GS: ... In Kishinaw.

IS: So that's very beautiful?

GS: That's the time when I refused to play. They serve me food ... 

IS: ... Oh, Cristina doesn't know that story with the hamburgers or whatever.

GS: You know, I'm a, I'm a terrible guy because musicians—we're about 25 musicians there in the orchestra. They used to get "Budilniki," have to eat "Budilniki," you know, ha- ... 

CS: ... Hamburgers?

GS: Hamburgers. And I didn't wanna eat hamburgers. So I decided I'm not gonna play the piano. And, all of a sudden, the orchestra plays without me. And the proprietor, who's a very strict Romanian—ooh, ooh, he could send me back to Russia in no time. "What happened? Why Grigori, Grigorash, you're not playing?" "He wants a la carte." "Give him! He deserves it!" So here I'm sitting in a la carte, eating my beefsteaks, and the musicians eat their "Budilniki."

CS: Did they become angry with you?

GS: No, they couldn't. They probably hated me—after all, they didn't like anything what's authority. But this Romanian, he could've sent me out.

CS: This was after you had crossed the border sometime?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And they could still send you back?

GS: Well, that was in a big city.

CS: This was Kishinaw. What reason would he have to send you out?

GS: ... Huh?

CS: How could you send, he send you out?
GS: By "Arrest him!" By police.

CS: Call the police? For not eating? Just for not eating your food? Or he would make some pretext?

GS: No. For making an agitation.

CS: Hm.

GS: Always can find an excuse. (omit following Cointreau story; 11/B)

11. "STEFANESCU"

CS: Why, you said, when you were in Romania, you were worried about returning to Stefanescu, back to Kishinaw, because your papers were not in order?

GS: Yeah.

CS: What papers? What were these papers that had to be in order?

GS: Official papers, our visas. See, when I left, when I left Kishinaw, my passport was not in good shape.

CS: You needed a passport to go from Kishinaw to Bucharest?

GS: Yes.

CS: From one city to the next city?

GS: Not city. You come, crossing two provinces--one is called Romanian, and the other one, Bassarabian.

CS: Kishinaw was Bassarabia?

GS: Bassarabia.

CS: And you needed a passport to go from Bassarabia to Romania?

GS: Well, Romanians probably didn't need any passport, but I would need . . .

CS: . . . But foreigners did. And when you crossed from Russia to Bassarabia, you had no papers?

GS: No, not good, not good conditions.

CS: The papers, the smugglers did not provide you with?
GS: They didn't care what papers I have as long as I have the money.

CS: Identification, but they didn't give you false identification papers? . . .

GS: . . . No . . .

CS: . . . For the money?

GS: No.

CS: So you had nothing.

GS: No.

CS: You crossed, and you had no identification papers.

GS: No. Those days, they have Nonsen passport.

CS: What?

GS: Nonsen.

CS: Nonsen?

GS: Yes. Nonsen was a famous, uh, Norwegian who did so much for the refugees. So we had his passport.

CS: Hm. Nonsen passport. You had one of those?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Did the smugglers give it to you?

GS: No, we just, automatically, we got them.

CS: In Romania? In Bassarabia?

GS: I got it through the Consulate. I got a visa to go to United States. (omit visa story following; R1/B)

. . . .

GS: So I was tired of everything. I went back to Kishinaw. And Stefanescu was there, the violinist, Fanicu Stefanescu. I helped him to play all the classical music. He was a sensation. And I decided, "Well, it's about time to get out of Romania." I haven't any passports, nothing; my passport was no good. I went to Bucharest, again. (garbled) Just a day after I came,
Panicu came again with his pregnant wife. Says, "How could you leave it for me like that?" I says, "Panicu, you played before without me. You had pianists just as good as I am. Get everybody who know how to play Romanian music, everything." "Yes, but I want you."

CS: Hm.

GS: I had to leave everything again, go back to Bassarabia, again cross the police. And at the station, they would not even let me pass. But the police, the police at the station, looked at me, says, "Panicu, what are you doing here? Total 'lyoubia ashtata usted' in Kishinaw."--"The whole world is waiting for you in Kishinaw." (10/B)

.......

CS: Then, from Kishinaw, you went to Bucharest?

GS: Not right away.

CS: How long did you stay in Kishinaw?

GS: I had to play with Panicu Stefanescu. He liked my piano playing, and I wanted to get away from him. So I, once, I went to get Borisoff's brother, the pianist, John Borisoff, to stand by, and I went to Bucharest. And he came immediately, with his wife, that she was, uh, she was pregnant, to take me back. My papers were not in order. And they nearly arrested me on the border when I came back. Because when you come from Romania back to occupied country, Russians, Russians would start to, Ungaynee, Ungaynee--that's the border--(garbled; stops with my interruption; 11/A)

.......

GS: (omit preceding story of first time he saw white bread)
Anyway, we, after staying there, we, finally, three of us, decided we are going further to Kishinaw, which was the center of Bassarabia that time--Obermann, Sascha Borisoff (sic, Amerikov/Pagarelov), and myself, always together.
We came into a theatre. It was evening, and I was wearing white shirt. And we came in front of the theatre. All of a sudden, they, Azsrofsky, the first cellist of the Odessa Theatre, runs out, "I haven't got a pianist! My pianist was supposed, I engaged, he didn't show up. He must have run back to Russia, or something, but he's not home, no place." That was Jules Berg, you know. "And I need a pianist."
"Well," he said, "Don't worry about a pianist. Here is
Gregory. He'll play for you." And I went on the stage, and I played the accompaniment. The Sascha Borisoff was turning page for me. That was my experience in Bassarabia.

And, somehow, I met the leader of the orchestra, Fanicu Stefanescu. Oh, oh, I used to play substitute at the London Hotel, where he was the leader—but I never played with him because they didn't need a substitute. I was always there. But, one day, I got Sascha Borisoff, Sascha Borisoff brother come in, "And then you stay and be my, something happen, you play piano."

When Fanicu came in the morning, looked at him, says, "What you doing here?"

He says, "I'm substituting for Gregory."

He says, "What happened?"

"He left for Bucharest."

"Aha." Fanicu closed his violin and took the first train to run after me to Bucharest. And, finally, caught me in Bucharest, in a hotel, and says, "Gregory, Grigorash," they called me in Romanian, "Why do you have to do such a thing to me?"

Says, "Fanicu, I am not, I don't want to play all my life in a restaurant, gypsy restaurant. I just don't want to do it."

"But you have to come with me back because, without you, I cannot play."

"Fanicu, my passport is not good."

"I don't care. Let's go back!"

And we came back to the border; and at the border, we came out at the station. And gendarme came out and looked at my passport and says, "You cannot go back to Bassarabia. Your passport is not valid. You have to remain here."

We came out of the station, and the gentleman who saw Stefanescu, "Fanicu, what you doing here? The whole world is waiting for you in Kishinaw!" And when he heard the story, he says to the master of the station, says, "Let him go! I guarantee."

So I went back to play with Fanicu and other leaders.

(3/B)

12. "DINICU"

GS: I came to Bucharest and saw Grigori Dinicu. Grigori Dinicu liked me. I played for him. I could play all the accompaniments of his violin solos that he didn't expect anybody to know. He was very much satisfied with me. And I told him I would like to settle in Bucharest. And there was a Russian bass player in his orchestra who, who, who, he, he, he found out that I wanna settle. He said, "Grigori, you're welcome here to stay, but if you're gonna make any changes in the orchestra, they're
gonna kill you, the gypsies."
Because I came to Bucharest with my compositions, and I
told Grigori that I would like to make the orchestra the
way I like it.
He says, "Yes, do whatever you please."
Grigori Dinicu didn’t have any objections for me to
change the orchestra.
And I started to monkey around there till I got, till the
Russian bass player told me, he says, "Grigori, we heard
that you’re gonna change the orchestra. And, as I told
you before, the gypsies will kill you if you make any
changes that they have to leave the orchestra." (R1/A)

GS: (omit preceding Stefanescu story) So I went to Bucharest
again, without sending any substitute, nothing, to
Panicu. This time, I came to Grigori Dinicu. And I
played for Grigori Dinicu. He says, "You’re the one I
want!" Because he pick up the violin, plays "Caprice
Viennois," "Tambourin Chinois," "Liebesleid," "Liebesfreud,"
and I played by memory. Says, "You, you
will play with me." So I told him, "Grigori, I have to
go back yet." "Alright. Anytime you wanna come back,
let me know." So, in the meantime, some of the musician,
a Russian musician, found out that I wanna make some
changes in the orchestra. Told me, "Look, Gregory, we
love to have you. You’re a nice guy; we love you. But
if you have any ideas of changing the personnel of the
orchestra, or fire somebody, they’ll kill you. Better
don’t start." So, I figure out to myself, "Why do I need
it, all that trouble?" And I decided, "It’s not for me."
And I went back to Kishinaw, to Galatz—I think we had
a job to play in Galatz, which is on Danube, nice place.
(tape cuts; V4/A)

GS: Because Dinicu wanted me to organize an orchestra, and
the bass player from Bucharest says, "Grisha, Grigorash,"
he called me, "You are welcome to join us. I know that
Grigori wants to reorganize an orchestra according to
your play. OK. But if you, don’t; but if you think of
firing any of those old musicians, they gonna kill you."

CS: Hm.

GS: So, I was tired of everything. I went back to Kishinaw.
(omit Stefanescu story following; 10/B)
13. "LONGINES"

CS: "Hora Burlesca," for violin and piano, by Gregory Stone, edited and fingered by Michel Piastra. When did you write, how did you write this one?

GS: I don't know. What year was this?

CS: It says, I can't read these: MCMXLI.

GS: '41.

CS: 1941?

GS: That's what they wanted to play . . .

CS: . . . Witmark . . .

GS: . . . in Carnegie Hall. And my "Rhapsody in Blue." I suppose he wanted to play an extra number. He played this.

CS: Who?

GS: Piastra.

CS: That's what I was asking you before--some story about Carnegie Hall--and you said there's no Carnegie Hall.

GS: No, he--there was a concert--he was my evil genius and a good man. He wanted to play "Rhapsody in Blue," but was, there was no arrangement of "Rhapsody in Blue"--understand?--for violin. So he called me to, from New York, "Come, Gregory. I need you." So I came to New York to make, uh, "Rhapsody in Blue" for violin and symphony orchestra. And then he says, "I need an encore, too." And that's, so I did it. What's this number?

CS: "Hora Burlesca."

GS: "Hora Burlesca." I did another number for him as an encore . . .

CS: . . . And then . . .

GS: . . . He had two numbers to play . . .

CS: . . . And then he played it?

GS: Yeah. I was there. I just telling you. I was at the concert . . .
CS: . . . This was at Carnegie . . .

GS: . . . The Frenchman conducted--I forgot his name; you know his name, too.

CS: Jean Pierre (sic, Paul) Morel?

GS: Morel.

CS: Jean Pierre Morel. This was Carnegie Hall?

GS: Yes.

CS: In New York?

GS: New York.

CS: The theatre, right?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And you went to the concert?

GS: It's a concert hall, not theatre. Not always--you mix up the theatre, for some reason, I don't know. Forget about the theatres. They don't play any roles.

CS: And you went to the performance?

GS: Yeah. I was in the audience. I had to take a bow. And in the audience was sitting mother of Gershwin. She was alive.

CS: Mother of Gershwin?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And Gershwin too?

GS: Gershwin was dead.

CS: Oh, he died before his own mother, George Gershwin?

GS: Sure, yes.

CS: Did you know his mother?

GS: Can I know everybody? She was there in the audience. I met her. (M2/B)

. . . . .
CS: Oh, here's "Longines Capriccio." It says, "A tribute to the program of the world's most honored music." What was that program?

GS: Longine Program.

CS: What was that?

GS: I wrote the piano arrangement for that, piano solo.

CS: What was the Longines Program?

GS: You asked me many times already.

CS: I know. I keep getting confused if it was Chi- . . .

GS: . . . Longine, Longine Program was a program that Mr. Cartoon said, "Gregory is writing Longine Program all the time; and Piastrò just conducts, and doesn't butt in. If he doesn't like it, let him get out."

CS: That's the one where Sol Spiegel was copying? . . .

GS: . . . Copying . . .

CS: . . . And sent you back the, uh, . . .

GS: . . . All my scores . . .

CS: . . . Scores. Do you have those scores?

GS: Probably have some of them, I don't know. I sold them in Mexico. I had big programs on it, based on my scores. But, you know, people don't return scores. Some of them were lost or not returned.

CS: What did you do? You arranged classical compositions for different combinations?

GS: Yes. That was a big job. Yes. I arrange all those compositions. Remember, very first, when I started to write, I wrote it, a lot of things for strings, band, and Spiegel copied all the parts—God rest his soul. Then they have to play, to Mexico, every place they play that. And many scores were returned, and many didn't return. But, uh, I collected a lot of money out of it because they played on various program in Mexico City.

CS: What kind of pieces were they?

GS: You can see it.
CS: It doesn't say.

GS: That's not, what's the other one?

CS: No.

GS: No. That's just arrangements of the same thing.

CS: Were they classical pieces?

GS: Yes.

CS: Arranged for smaller groups?

GS: For, yes. I did all the arrangements.

CS: Special arrangements?

GS: Yes.

CS: For a reduced orchestra?

GS: Various combination—-I would not know now. But they played that, up to 40 men. So you'll find them downstairs. (M2/B)

. . . . .

GS: (omit preceding Bratslavsky/Odessa story) Piastro played in a concert. Spiegel called me on the phone and says, "Grisha, you better come to New York because they wanna substitute. They want me to copy some music that you did not write—it's another arranger." But that's another time, and didn't go because 45 minutes you have time to rehearse and play, and 15 minutes to record. And what was recorded was not good. Because myself and Spiegel, we were on another floor and listening to what happen—at NBC, they have many studios. And I cued in on the other studio, and I knew that—I heard them play: the music was too difficult; it was not done right. May be good arranging, but they couldn't do it, but was not good writing. They couldn't do it in that short period of time. Because Mr. Cartoon came out and said, "No. As long as Gregory is willing, let him do all the music all the time. Nobody should interfere." Mr. Cartoon—I forgot his first name—Mr. Cartoon. I have a printed copy . . .

CS: . . . And Piastro used to record, rehearse, or record the Longines Symphonettes in New York, in NBC?

GS: Yeah. Well, that's after me, after I left.
CS: No, when you were still there?

GS: The only way he conducted Longines Symphony, because I was there, and Spiegel used to send me back the scores I sent to him.

CS: Right.

GS: He says, "Gregory, don't give him the scores. I'll make up, I'll make up a copy." You know. And Piastro could not understand how, from that copy, he could, thought I could write that music . . .

CS: . . . And when he, when Piastro used to conduct the orchestra, it was in New York? When he used the scores that Spiegel made? It was in New York when he used the scores that Spiegel made? . . .

GS: . . . The piano conductor . . .

CS: . . . And you wrote the music from Chicago?

GS: No, I was in California.

CS: Oh. And he didn't like the fact that you were sending them long distance, so he brought another arranger, got another arranger, who was in New York, on the spot? . . .

GS: . . . And Spiegel wrote me a letter or called me on the phone--I don't remember which--says, "Gregory, I don't wanna write. They have another arranger, and I don't, and they wanted me that I should copy his music, and I refused."

CS: Hm. So you went immediately to New York. By train?

GS: Yeah, by train we went. And I went to another studio, and I learned, I heard the, how they rehearsed. I told you; it wasn't good.

CS: And that was the same Piastro who wanted to play "Rhapsody in Blue" for violin?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Afterwards? After he made the business at Longines?

GS: That, I don't remember. I know it was--he could not live without me. He was my evil genius and good genius. He wanted, he came, I had to come to New York and arrange
the whole "Rhapsody in Blue." The "Rhapsody" is written for piano, as you know.

CS: Hm hm. And he played the "Rhapsody in Blue" with the Longines Symphonette?

GS: Also under direction of, of that conductor, French conductor.

CS: Morel?

GS: Morel.

CS: So he was a violinist as well as a conductor, Piastro? Piastro was also a violinist?

GS: Yes, very good one.

CS: And he was Russian, too?

GS: Hm?

CS: He was Russian, too?

GS: Yes.

CS: You didn’t know him in Russia before?

GS: No, I never knew him in Russia. (R9/A)

14. "COLOMBIA"

GS: "Here, Mr. Stone raises his hand. He wants to tell us something." I did not stay in my spot, my chair; I just went to the stage and told her and the whole audience, "Brahms never wrote this. It was written by a Russian composer"--whom did I tell it was written? . . .

CS: . . . I don’t know . . .

GS: . . . "The melody was taken by Prince"--such and such, I forget; you have it in the program--"to Vienna. It was never heard of; it’s not by Brahms." Oh, it’s a big scandal started. They already forgot about the orchestra sitting there and waiting for the cues. I immediately sat at the piano and played the Russian version. (hums) Cristina, you know the finale of the Brahms Symphony. But I immediately, in my mind, I already played it on pentatonic scale, Russian style (hums)--something like that; I don’t remember now. And after I was finished, she looks at me and she says, "You’re something." And at that time, I forgot all about my Turkish origin. I
should've told her that I'm part Turkish. She was Turkish. That's the only thing that I regret, that I never had a chance to tell her that I'm Turkish. (omit recited "Severim" verse of mother) "Baktum," you know. Well, that, I don't know, Cristina, what else?

IS: When you left, she said, "You're certainly . . .

GS: . . . Something."

IS: What did she say, "You're certainly something"?

GS: And I didn't have a chance to tell her about my Turkish origin, or Tartar.

IS: Anyhow, the students got all excited, it seems, Cristina, about this, when Papa started telling them where it's taken from . . .

GS: . . . Many came to my concert. But there's not enough people to go, in Bogota, to symphony concerts--you know, people don't go there. (V7/B)

15. "TRAKTIR"

CS: And you remember what your grandfather did when he used to visit? What your grandfather did when you were there?

GS: I don't remember anything. I imagine, I don't remember. I remember more my grandmother more than my grandfather.

CS: Why more than your grandfather?

GS: Yes.

CS: Why?

GS: Uh, I don't know.

CS: Maybe she was home all the time and your grandfather went, did they have things, cafes, cafeterias for the men?

GS: Called "Traktir," "Traktir." The men used to go there. They had "baranskaya" for the noble people and just the regular one. Many people. And that high chair. And I loved those big magazines, tremendous Russian magazines. They were large. He put me in a big high chair, gave me one of those magazines, and big magazines, and I was happy.

CS: This was your father or your grandfather?
GS: That's my father.
CS: This was "Traktir," it was called?
GS: "Traktir," it's called in Russian.
CS: It was a cafe?
GS: Cafe.
CS: And what did he do there?
GS: Me?
CS: Your father.
GS: Sitting and drinking vodka and drinking vodka, and having herring—you know, typical morning thing. The same thing like the sisters of Doris, Dora, Dora: when they came, they wanted the herring in the morning. In the morning, he had it, in the morning.
CS: And this was, he was not allowed to go to "baranskaya"?
GS: Who?
CS: Your father.
GS: Why not?
CS: Well, I'm asking you. I thought . . .
GS: . . . Sure, of course, he could go anyplace there. That's for them, for the guys who sell and buy.
CS: Oh, for the merchants, for traders, and the "Traktir" was for . . .
GS: . . . "Traktir" was for everybody, and then they divided them: "baranskaya" . . .
CS: . . . In the same "Traktir" they divided them, the rooms?
GS: Yeah. Not divided them. They whatever they wanted to be. There was a big machine that played all the songs, those days, big, gigantic machines—you know—that played the songs . . .
CS: . . . Laterna? Like a laterna?
GS: It's a big machine. I don't know if they make them now.
Nickelodeon sort of thing. The big machines. And they play all kinds of tunes: "Marusa Travilusta" (sings), then every Russian song.

CS: And women were not allowed in these places?

GS: Who?

CS: Women, in these "Traktirs"?

GS: Why should women, we are not be allowed?

CS: Women, I say.

GS: Oh, no. Women, as a rule, didn't have anything to do with men. (6/B)

... ...

CS: And your grandfather? Do you remember anything particular about him? Did he eat a lot or drink a lot or sing or dance or anything that impressed you?

GS: No, I remember, no, no, my father. They used to go to "Traktir"—you know that—and order breakfast full of herrings and things like that, but that was my father and his friends. And I was sitting in a high chair with my big magazines—Budilnik, Satyricon, all those big magazines. And I was on a high chair. And they drank vodka and had their breakfast—whatever they call it. (R7/A)

... ...

IS: (omit interrogation of GS on who sang couplettes where and when) Did your Tante sing couplettes? (shakes head "no") So where, at 5 years old, did you hear couplettes? Did people sing them, or what?

GS: No. My father used to take me to the "Traktir."

IS: What's "Traktir"?

GS: Tearoom.

IS: You heard couplettes in the tearoom?

GS: No. That's where he used to put me in a high chair, and I was reading those Russian magazines—I told you already.

IS: OK, but where did you hear the couplettes?
GS: They also played them in "Traktir," on the machines. They were big machines, and those machines played various songs. (sings "Marusa Travilusta") (omit discussion of song sung by Jack Palance's mother) . . . Big machines. And the figures were turning around, and the figures were turning around. Someone was beating the drums (pounds on table); the whole thing was moving. Those machines--I don't know if they make them now--tremendous big machines built into the wall.

CS: I don't know what you're talking about, what kind of figures . . .

GS: . . . Moving figures, right in the machine.

CS: You mean, like people?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Out of wood or something?

GS: I don't know how was made. I was always enchanted to see it.

IS: You mean like the clock towers in Germany, where the figures move round the clock, or something?

GS: Yes, yes, big, big figures.

CS: And it was in the, as large as that wall, for example?

GS: Yes, yes. It had to be a big wall, like from that end to this end.

CS: And how did the music come out?

GS: I suppose they have those big records, special records that go in.

CS: Like phonograph records?

GS: Yeah, not phonograph records. Those large records. Before phonograph records came out, there were big records that were not played on the machine.

IS: The cylinders, like cylinders, no? The cylinders that played with little bumps on them.

CS: Like a music box, but a large music box?

GS: Huge.
CS: And did they have speakers for the music to come out?

IS: Nobody cared about speakers in those days, Cristina. They just had music and they listened. And they didn’t need quadraphonic . . .

CS: . . . I mean, how did it come out? Where did it come out of?

IS: Just from the sound itself, right there, and people listened. They didn’t have to have things blasting at you the way they do now.

CS: Was this loud?

GS: Yeah, it was plenty loud for them.

CS: You could hear it in all the "Traktir"?

GS: In the "Traktir," sure.

CS: Did you have to put money in the thing? Was it like a jukebox?

GS: NO, NO, you don’t pay. You belong that cafe. You belong to the "Traktir." You’re entitled to all the pleasures of the . . .

IS: . . . I saw these things, Cristina, in a miniature scale, in the museum in Pennsylvania, near Berkeley, or in Berkeley. And they had all sorts of old music things with figures moving.

CS: That’s what Papa just said: "figures moving."

IS: Exactly. They turned it up. They wound it up, with a key, or something. Was it a key? You didn’t see that. I saw the curator of the museum wind it up with a key, and everything would start: the figures would move, the music would start, and everything was fine. But they were not as large as the ones we saw in Goslar.

CS: That’s were I remember . . .

IS: . . . OK, Goslar had them, and I’m sure they had things with sound also, but there was no amplification. It was just made in such a way that people could hear. We’ve gone overboard on some things, because they did it years ago, hundreds of years ago . . .

GS: . . . I have a magazine--did you see my magazine with
Edison there, with his invention? That was the year that they invented the sound. Before him, there was no sound in the motion pictures.

CS: The picture you saw—The Titanic—when you saw that with your teacher, was that with sound or not sound?

GS: No. That was only photographs.

CS: Oh. Still photographs.

GS: If they played, it was probably played up to the phonograph. It was not connected in any way. (8/B)

16. "COUPLETTISTES"

CS: Can you tell me again about the couplettiste, Oobaykov?

GS: Who?

CS: Oobaykov, Oobayko.

GS: Oobayko. That's the famous couplettiste. Well, he sang couplettes (half-sings "Zhenskaya Lubov"). "Zhenskaya lubov, Adeen adman. Zhenskaya lubov, Vledeeet f'karman." That says, "Woman's love . . . "

CS: . . . Where did you know him?

GS: In Odessa.

CS: How?

GS: He was appearing in our theatre, Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre. And I had to write for him one number in a book. Imagine me carrying all those big volumes, and stopping at every block! I don't know how they entrust those things. I could lose the book, one or two.

CS: Why did you have to write them in the book?

GS: They all orchestrations. Every number is in the book. It's a series of numbers in the book.


GS: Oh. "Zhenskaya Lubov, Adeen adman. Zhenskaya lubov, Vledeeet f'karman." OK? (8/A)

. . . . .
CS: Would you say these again so I can make sure I have them correct?

GS: (omit several attempts to get words right) "Men seky chalk severem chalk youlim var, Haran gamyeni eel sevesem eli buzum baktum."

CS: And this one?

GS: "Me vishli kwam v saka paradnesti, Vstaram vide da alskazaty, I a nasha ruska zhadnasti, Ya hachu um ruskazaty."

CS: If he recited it, did he have a musical background?

GS: Yes, all the time.

CS: Hm. Was a traveling reciter.

GS: Yeah. They go from city to city, in Russia. Oobayko was famous, but he didn’t always travel with the same musicians.

CS: He traveled by himself?

GS: Yeah, he had books.

CS: And when he got on stage, he didn’t use the books?

GS: NO, NO. I used the books because if there was, there’s a orchestra, I wrote the orchestration, or copied the orchestration and then sold it.

CS: Did he get dressed up to recite?

GS: NO, NO.

CS: I mean, in costume, or . . .

GS: . . . NO, NO. His costume was like, like a Russian working man.

CS: Like Thessaloniki, not Thessaloniki, Theodorakis. In that funny . . .

GS: . . . No, that’s not the same thing. He looks like, he looks like a Russian peasant.

CS: And who went to see him?

GS: Millions of people.
CS: But I mean, all classes of people, or only the men?

GS: All classes, yes--I don't know, who liked them.

CS: Men and women both?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And it was like a regular performance?

GS: Yes, in the theatre.

CS: Not in a cafe, and they were eating at the same time, or . . .

GS: NO, NO, NO.

CS: Oh, in the theatre. Hm.

GS: None of them I heard in cafe, except if I tell you something. (8/A)

. . . .

GS: Oobayko. What's his first name? I forget. Yuli?

CS: You didn't tell me.

GS: Yuli Oobayko.

CS: Yuli?

GS: Yuli.

CS: He was the couplettiste?

GS: Couplettiste.

CS: And you were supposed to copy some, copy something into his books?

GS: Into his book. I carried those books, all thirteen books, way back home from the theatre.

CS: Was this also from the Whodozhenski Theatre?

GS: Whodawzhestvehnee Theatre, that's where I appeared.

CS: Were the books heavy?

GS: Naturally.
CS: Thirteen books. How big were they?

GS: Very large . . .

CS: . . . Like this? . . .

GS: . . . I stopped every block . . .

CS: . . . How heavy were they?

GS: I don't know. Thirteen—all the instruments: strings, woodwinds, brass.

CS: And what did you copy in the books?

GS: I copy in the books the songs that he liked. I forgot which one, one of the songs that he liked to sing.

CS: When you say you copied it, you mean you wrote something for him and you wrote it into the book, or you copied it from someplace else?

GS: No. I did it by memory. I copied something that I arranged in my head, and he liked the song, and I copied . . .

CS: . . . And you had to write it down in his books so you, he could have them. And each book indicated what?

GS: Each book had many numbers written in, by other people.

CS: Oh, so why did you carry all the books home?

GS: We, but how would I do it? How will I put it down?

CS: In the one book that was empty.

GS: NO! There was no empty, there was instruments.

CS: Each book had a different instrument, or something?

GS: Yes.

CS: Oh, each was a part.

GS: Yes.

CS: Like one book was the piano, and one book was . . .

GS: . . . Clarinet.

CS: Hmm. (R5/B)
CS: (tape cuts off and on/getting words from V3/A) The one you just sang now . . .

GS: . . . Where is it? You didn’t write it, yet?

CS: No. Where is your copy? The other one, alright. (I hand him first, although I had requested a different copy.)

GS: (recites) "Pridetyol na rus,
On bomboy chrez germani pod plomboy,
Bzyalson iz prastakov,
Na pladit balshevиков,
Fsyeh nigrai moo?
Krichali on zhес razu prinachali,
Selk shisinksi na varetz,
Ai da Lenin, maladyetz.
Lenin vazhnaya persona,
Eh zhelnyel heskals balkona,
Stal on rechi gavarit,
Lu chestnoi vo fyou divity,
Russki slushit, lud nohochen,
I rabochki ne rabochki,
Fsyak stayal razinya rot,
Nu a Lenin znaty arot.
Eh, rebyata du lazhу yа,
Bay praklayta burzhuyeh,
Yesli bidish fkkramalyeh,
Pryal vmore su’il vous plaitez.
Fsyaw sburzhuya zabiraitye,
Stof ni brozhet ni kalyetz."

(Twice you say that line, actually, the one before: "Fsyaw sburzhuya zabiraitye."

CS: Yes, I know.

GS: "Ai da Lenin, maladyetz." It’s up to you.

CS: Is that how it sounded when he recited it?

GS: Yeah.

CS: He didn’t have music?

GS: He’s got music. He had music.

CS: He had music that you accompanied to?
GS: Yeah, he had orchestra.

CS: You don’t remember it?

GS: He had books. Remember—I told you—I took those books home, and I was worried I could not carry them.

CS: And what about the other one, "Daizhe nu Tavarische"?

GS: That’s Pavel Troisky.

CS: How does that go?

GS: He came to Odessa, and I was invited to his hotel. And we composed that "Nastnyet vremnya skora"—I don’t remember if that’s the beginning—"Nauka prochudiot." You know, "Nauka," knowledge, "Ibez barbay ispora, grazdansa propadiot."

CS: Did that have a melody?

GS: Yes.

CS: How did it go?

GS: I’ll play it for you. It’s not so easy for me to get over there. (tape on and off while he moves from window chair to piano bench; he plays—improvises—there’s no music)

CS: How does the other one go? It was the one, wait, I’ll tell you, that was done by the Jewish guy, about the wedding?

GS: What Jewish guy? What’s the name of it?

CS: I’ll tell you. "Raspaygane"?

GS: Huh?

CS: Wait a minute. "Razdolsky."

GS: "Razdolsky," maybe.

CS: "And he sang, he, I’m gonna sing a song for you about a Jewish wedding. I have a desire only to sing." (explores keys till piece comes back to fingers) "And the dance was become ‘zaharka,’ and even the mama was moving and dancing."

GS: Aha. (plays again from beginning.) What was there?

CS: Wait a minute. Let me stop this. That’s the one you
just played. (omit continuation with recitation of lyrics cited in text) Did you play the part about the money, the dowry?

GS: Oh. (plays again.) "He got the 'wechsel.'" More or less, this is correct. My goodness.

CS: Alright. We'll write it down tomorrow.

GS: What?

CS: We can write that one down tomorrow. And there was another one here about "bublika."


CS: But that's all I have. Alright, we'll get this one tomorrow. (V5/B)

.......

CS: You were gonna tell me that one, you said, has to do with the Kshesinski Palace or something.

GS: Ah, wait a second. I have to concentrate. "Pyeletyo na ruska plombi," ("Plomba," that means he was tied to a train someplace.) "Na Ruska plombabya, Shot Kshesinsky podvayets, Ruski slushit lod ahochit, Eh, rabochi ne rabochi, Syak stayala zyen arot, No a Lenin anya arot, No a Lenin znya arot, Eh, rebatay eh braktak bilquil, Eh, ti videsh krakmaner, Kok sos bihu nabarash, Ni broshit ni kalyet, Ai de Lenin, maladyet.

CS: That's the one you just did there. You said there was another one.

GS: Well, he come, came to Russia under, uh, a secretly, from Germany, "pod plomboy."

CS: That part, that's different. How does that go again?

GS: (omit repeated recitation) Did you get it all?
CS: (laughs) I didn’t get it. That means you have to write it down again. Was there another one you were gonna say?

GS: . . . "Lenin, plombayi" . . .

CS: . . . That’s new, not on the old one?

GS: (keeps repeating same verse)
"Matilda hi Kshesinskaya," had a palace. He took it over.
"Stalin rechit gavarit." (omit repeated lyrics cited in text)

CS: Are those all different or all the same?

GS: All the same. That was the same one again from the beginning. (omit Dobreennyen discussion used in text) Kerensky, too.

CS: Kerensky was another one?

GS: No. We glorified him, in the songs, they put the, in the . . .

CS: . . . The coupletistes glorified . . .

GS: . . . Oh, the Kerensky, who came, the provisional government. (continues with Kerensky discussion) (V3/A)

. . . . .

GS: Once, I had to take Oobayko’s books, big books, twelve big books, and I had to carry them—I could hardly carry them—because he wanted me to copy some—I forgot what number I was supposed to copy . . .

CS: . . . Who wanted you to copy?

GS: Oobayko was the famous coupletiste. Came out on the stage and telled couplettes: (recites) "Weeshee komiwets paradnosti,
Starow wee dike skazatz,
A nash Ruska zhadnastine,
Hochu maraskazatz,
Zhadna, zhana, slovi,"--little--"slovi." Talked about Russian ideal, how people, "ahadni," I mean, want to get, "zhadni" is, what is the word, Cri-. . . . ?

CS: Unified?

GS: No. "Zhadni," wants to get something, like our cat.
CS: Grab something? Take something?

GS: No, the other word. "Azadhnist" is when you have desire . . .

CS: . . . Steal?

GS: No, steal. Desire to grab, but there's another word.

CS: Possess? Control?

GS: No, another one. I don't remember.

CS: What's the rest of the story, translated, your couplettes?

GS: Well, he sang about, he was talking about "zhenskaya lubov."
"Zhenskaya lubov,
Po Kavish adeen adman.
Zhenskaya lubov,
Vyedeet karman."
"Human love is only a fake. Woman's love is only a fake, only looks in your pocket." He was a famous one. And how could I carry those books, I can't understand. Of course, nobody could steal, but it was heavy. (5/A)

. . . .

GS: Not far from my house, where I lived, live there, lived a very, he was not too old, who wanted to become a couplettiste. So he needed my help. Somehow—I don't remember how—he got to me. He lived not far from me. His name was Cesar Corado. So I fixed for him his music, and he sang all those things, couplettes, against the Turks:
(recites) "Hochim hiber hochim,
Zubitochin na Odessa,
Russi hochit sa glazitsa,
Nameeberef hochubay,
Eta nasha zagranitsa,
Eta nasha hajeebay. (holds out hands)
The Turks, they won't agree to the Russians. They wanna give up, they don't wanna give up Odessa.
"Eta nasha zagranitsa," ("This is our foreign land,")
"Eta nasha hajeebay." (recites again)
"Hochim hiber hochim,
Zubitochin na Odessa,
Russi hochit sa glazitsa,
Nameeberef Hajeebay.
Eta nasha zagranitsa,
Eta nasha hajeebay." (holds out hands and starts
humming)

CS: Did he sing those, or did he half-sing?

GS: Half-song.

CS: When you wrote the accompaniment, what did you write?

GS: I had a melody in.

CS: You had a melody in the accompaniment?

GS: Yeah, something.

CS: But he played, in between singing and . . .

GS: . . . Yeah . . .

CS: . . . Talking . . .

GS: . . . Reciting . . .

CS: . . . Reciting. From memory?

GS: Sure, well, that's his . . .

CS: . . . Did he always use the same words, the same sounds or notes, or did he change?

GS: I don't remember how many, I don't remember how many songs I fixed for him, but quite a few he did. He had to travel from city to city. He had to use the same thing.

CS: He did or he didn't? Did he change them slightly, in other cities?

GS: Well, I don't know what he did.

CS: In Odessa, did he change the words ever?

GS: No, in Odessa, he stuck to the same thing.

CS: And he was an old man, and he decided he was going to travel?

GS: Yes. He and his daughter, his wife, lived not far in their own house. I still remember that little house of theirs, not far from us, where I lived.

CS: What was it, a house or an apartment?
GS: A house, separate house.

CS: Separate house.

GS: Small.

CS: A garden?

GS: I suppose so, I don’t remember exactly. But he lived there with his wife. I just visualize now. Cesar Corado.

CS: Did he leave Russia, too, or did he stay? Or do you know?

GS: They all left Russia. They wouldn’t stay there.

CS: He fled, too?

GS: I suppose so.

CS: So, you know where? (shakes head "no") Who knows? And when he travelled from town to town, his wife went with him?

GS: Yeah.

CS: What did they do with the house when they travelled?

GS: I suppose so, I don’t know.

CS: Did he have a piano or anything there?

GS: Yeah.

CS: His own piano? (nods) And you rehearsed together? (nods) Wasn’t he the one who was in the, something, in the army, or some former official someplace, you said?

GS: He was a governor.

CS: Governor? Of where?

GS: Somewhere in Russia, faraway somewhere, I don’t know.

CS: But he came to Odessa to live because it’s warm climate . . .

GS: . . . Yeah, and settled there. What he did after that, I don’t know. I know he travelled, settled, with his wife.
CS: He didn’t have any children? Hm. How did he lose the job as a governor?

GS: Lose?

CS: Did he lose the job as a governor?

GS: I don’t know, sweetheart. If he had a name, he wouldn’t lose. (8/B)

.......

CS: Alright. When we stopped, you were telling me about somebody called Grigori Stelyarof.

GS: Grigori Stelyarof is director of symphony orchestra. Also, the fellow who wrote all the numbers of Oobayko, Oobayko, the famous couplettiste.

CS: He was a friend of Gershunoff?

GS: Who?

CS: Gershunoff?

GS: Nothing to do. It’s so far away, I already leave Gershunoff.

CS: You said that it was a friend of Gershunoff.

GS: Who?

CS: Stelyarof.

GS: Stelyarof was a conductor of symphony orchestra, and they played in Odessa in the orchestra. It was cold winter, and Stelyarof was making all the time stops. So Gershunoff told him, "Look, if you came to study here, we are dying here from cold, and you’re studying now your scores." You understand?

CS: Hm.

GS: They played in theatres, probably was cold theatre, too.

CS: And Cesar Corado, what do you remember about him?

GS: Cesar Corado lived not far from us, from me. They had their own little house. I still remember that street. And I met them. Very sympathetic, he and his wife. She spoke Russian with an accent, but he was pretty good with his. So I wrote for him couplettes so he could go on the
stage and make some money, which he did. Recites:
"Hochim hiber hochim,
Zubitochim na Odessa.
Rus ni hochit sa glanitsa,
Na oubeebit zashobay.
Etat nasha zagranitsa,
Etat nasha hajeebay."
That's one of the songs that I wrote for him. You must realize that I caught him (garbled) in time, and it was really terrible times in Odessa. There was hardly any food: privileged people got food--like me, the double rations, because I knew how to play "Internationale."

CS: And Corado was poor?

GS: Huh?

CS: Cesar Corado was poor?

GS: He was not poor. They had their own little house. He was former, not president, former governor of a state, and just happened that they were in Odessa, in their own house, and it was bad times to travel. He couldn't go anywhere except Odessa and surrounding little cities.

CS: Why?

GS: I have to tell you all the time. During Revolution, the transport was bad, there was no place to go. People preferred to stay home. (R6/A)

........

GS: Ah, by the way, then comes in, in Odessa comes the famous couplet singer who run away from Moscow and Petersburg and came south--they all ran south--Pavel Troisky. He got me to the hotel of his and he sang a song, and we published a copy, with my music arranged--I don't know if I have a copy, maybe. Says what's gonna happen soon: "Daizhe Nu Tavarische I Bolsche Nichevo" ....

CS: Can you still sing it?

GS: (recites) "Nastalnyet vremya skora,
Nauka propadiot,
Astanetze tavarische,
I bolsche nichevo." (omit lyrics cited in text) Against the Bolsheviks.

CS: What was it, again?
GS: (recites) "Nastalnyet vremya skora, Nauka propadiot," ("Nauka," knowledge, "will go away.") "Astanetze tavarische, I bolsche nichevo. Eh, daizhe nu tavarische, I bolsche nichevo." So they sang, "Ah, daizhe nu tavarische," ("Give your wife, tavarische"--and "bolsche"--"not enough.") And I wrote it, and it was published. (hums) Pavel, Pavel Troisky.

CS: Was he reciting or singing or in between, half-reciting, half-singing?

GS: Half-reciting, half-singing.

CS: Did he also play an instrument?

GS: Who?

CS: Pavel Troisky.

GS: He played guitar.

CS: Guitar. But you played piano as well, you accompanied him as well, or he played by himself?

GS: No, I played. I heard him play guitar, and I wrote it out.

CS: This was in the theatres or in cafes?

GS: That was in the theatre, theatre.

CS: And he was from the north?

GS: Yes. They all escaped from Bolsheviks, from St. Petersburg, from Moscow. He ran out south.

CS: And he recited all his songs from memory?

GS: It was a very difficult time because when, if you came to Romania, people don't understand Russian. He sang in the garden. Most of the people are Romanian. But he tried his best to, in broken Romanian language, to do what he could. He did very well.

CS: This was when you were in Romania or in Odessa?

GS: Romania, yes. (8/A)
CS: They all played in the theatre? (nods "yes") And the other one you said, Piotr Troisky, Peter Troisky . . .

GS: . . . Pavel Troisky.

CS: Pavel Troisky, that’s right. He was the same type as this guy (sic, Oobayko)?

GS: Yes. And I wrote down his music and it was published: "Ah, daizhe nu tavarische," I bolsche nichevo. Nastalnyet vremya skora, Nauka propadiot." (Says, "Soon time will come in and all will disappear, and who will remain? Tavarische. So better give away your wife to the tavarische, and that’s all."

CS: Hm.

GS: Ahead of time.

CS: And others of his couplettes, he was also a couplettiste, right?

GS: Yes.

CS: You remember any of the other ones?

GS: I don’t remember. He was suffering a lot, because--you see--he was in Romania already, and had to speak the language, and he didn’t know, so he tried to adopt the Russian words into few Romanian that he know. But it was difficult for him to find them.

CS: Why was he in Romania?

GS: He ran away from Russia.

CS: Hm. Do you know where he was from, from the north or someplace?

GS: I didn’t remember where he’s from, but I met him in Odessa, where I wrote down the music.

CS: Was he an old man already?

GS: No, not yet.

CS: How about Oobayko?

GS: Who?
CS: Oobayko.

GS: Oobayko was an older man.

CS: Do you remember what he looked like?

GS: Working man.

CS: Beard or no beard?

GS: No beard. (suddenly recites entire LENIN piece, omit these lyrics cited in text) 
"He came to our (garbled),
He took away the Kshesinski Palace,
And sat there,
And started to agitate the people."

CS: Lenin, you mean.

GS: Lenin. That’s what he said. (omit repeated recitation) 
"I declare to you,
Beat the damn boozhooli,
Everything take away from the bourgeois.
Neither the 'brochki' or 'koltsa,'
Ai de maladyets." That’s what he sang.

CS: This is Oobayko who said that?

GS: Huh?

CS: Oobayko, this is one of his couplettes?

GS: Yes, Oobayko.
(omit repeated lyrics of "Lenin Vazhnaya persona")
"If you see 'krakmal,' when"--you know how you put
'krakmal' in a shirt, to make it stiff--"If you see
somebody in 'krakmal,' right in his, hit him right in the
face.
Neither 'brochki' or 'koltsa'"--ring--
"Ai de Lenin, maladyets." Still don’t understand? This,
that’s comedy.

CS: Oh, this was a semi-serious one?

GS: Yeah, well . . .

CS: . . . Sometimes he was, make comic couplettes, and
sometimes serious? Or they all were comic?

GS: More or less, all of them comedy.
CS: But caricaturing the famous people, in the government, for example?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And he never used stage scenery or costumes?

GS: Well, that was done in the theatre, or whatever cos-, whatever scenery they have in the theatre, they have to use . . .

CS: . . . Because he travels from one place to the next place. He was popular?

GS: Very much.

CS: He charged money to see him? You had to pay to see him? You had to pay to see him?

GS: To come in, in the theatre, yeah.

CS: Did they have any couplettistes who went to cafeterias, cafes, or places like that, or only in the theatre?

GS: No. The only time, that I met Borovsky, that he came to see us in the cafe--I played in the Cafe Ambalzaki, on Gretcheskaya Ulitsa--he came, and I heard him talking. He was in the army. He told the whole story to my violinist, and . . .

CS: . . . But Borovsky didn't tell couplettes.

GS: NO, NO.

CS: I meant if there were any couplettistes who went to the cafes?

GS: Many people did go, but not musicians.

CS: But couplettistes?

GS: Couplettistes, the one who by profession couplettistes? They were the ones working there.

CS: In the cafes?

GS: Too. Wherever they have a chance.

CS: Wherever they could, the theatre or the cafe.

GS: Still didn't get it?
CS: Well, I’ve heard of coupletistes who go into cafeterias and play. I’ve never heard of one, except maybe Japanese, I think, who go to the theatre and give an actual performance in the theatre.

GS: Well, that was the theatre where they all appeared. (8/A)

17. "TANEMEISTER HOLOCHOV"

CS: Did they do polonaises and mazurkas and all those things?

GS: Well, polonaise, as I told you before, is a dance that you can go, through, "en filade," of all the rooms of the palace. That’s why I didn’t like him to play, the pianist who played the Chopin polonaise like that. Chopin polonaise, really polonaise (hums) in the royal ball, where they danced, and women held their hands, and they go through all the palace, walking and walking and walking, all the aristocrats. That’s just the aristocratic—not dance, I would say—aristocratic march, through the palace. It’s generated a form, naturally. That’s why it’s called polonaise, Polish. And then mazurkas, naturally, as you know, I played mazurkas when we have little ball and they invited me to play the piano. I always remember how they were all dressed: the lady was all dressed to kill with all the diamonds in Odessa—diamonds, anything, on the hands. Millions of dollars, Cristina. The only thing I remember there, diamonds and the ice-cream that I ate in that house. Home-made ice-cream they made—you know, whatever they did, they were serving. And I would play the piano. And, naturally, I got paid for the job; it’s a job.

CS: Before the Conservatory?

GS: No, during the Conservatory.

CS: Were you allowed to do it?

GS: No, of course not.

CS: They didn’t know about it?

GS: Nobody knew.

CS: Your fellow students, did they know?

GS: Well, I don’t know if they, they never cared. Anyway, I did, I collected money for it, and I played all the dances in the private houses for the, and the most important thing is to play all those dances for them.
They knew all those salon dances, and they danced them. (02/A)

. . . . . .

GS: Then I played for, at that time, I also played in "Blagarodnaya Sabrania." "Blagarodnaya" means the noble hall, Nobility Hall. And there I--nobody could see me. The little girls and boys, they used to dance, students of the Holochov School, didn't see me because I was in the side, and they were on the stage all the time. And then, after the dance, after the lesson, I used to go outside, inside, invite some girl to dance. Little girls were sitting with their mothers. And the mother was looking over with a lorgnette. And they let the girls go. I danced with them. And then we danced, of course, we danced all the Russian dances: pas de quatre, pas de patiner, mignonne, hovanuchka, Hiawatha. I could sing them all.

CS: Hiawatha?

GS: Yes. (sings Hiawatha, then hovanuchka)

CS: Those were dances?

GS: Folk dances; not folk dances--salon dances. (5/B)

. . . . . .

GS: (omit preceding "Flaytitchky" story) Holochov is the Tanzmeister where I used to play classes for him and then dance with the little girls all the time--you know, at the Hall, "Blagarodnaya Sabrania," only for noble born, nobility.

IS: The aristocracy.

GS: And I lost the privilege to go there.

IS: But what were you doing there? She wouldn't know that.

GS: What?

IS: At this, at this Tanzclass . . .

GS: ... Play piano. But they didn't see me; it was behind the stage. Then, I would come out on the stage, get invited any girl I liked, and dance with her. The mother would look, with lorgnette, over me, says, "Alright. Go ahead." I knew all the Russian dances: you know, pas de quatre, pas d'espagne, holsokoketsa. So I lost the
job.

IS: Wasn’t it the daughter of the man who hired you who saw you dancing with these?

GS: Not the daughter. She was the sweetheart of one of the Holochoy friends—I don’t know—relations, saw me. And she told Holochoy that I am dancing there. So that’s how I lost the job there, too. He called me, says, "Grisha, do you realize what you’re doing? You’re dancing with the nobility. Not that you haven’t got nobility—you don’t even belong here." Anyway, I lost the job; I lost the contract. (4/B)

... ...

GS: (omit preceding "Flaytitchky" story) No, then came Holochoy’s wife, took away my contract.

CS: Holochoy’s wife? Not him?

GS: No. Because Holochoy was my, my boss, and she took away my contract.

CS: He was the Tanzmaster, he was the Tanzmaster, right?

GS: Yeah.

CS: That’s when you played in, at the...

GS: ... In "Blagarodnaya Sabrania," and I invited little girls to dance with me.

CS: And you weren’t supposed to do that?

GS: No.

CS: But you were playing behind the screen?

GS: Yes.

CS: Behind the curtain, or something? ...

GS: ... And then I would come out ...

CS: ... And there were other musicians there, too?

GS: No.

CS: Just you, and you played the dances.

GS: Well, the band played there, too.
CS: Oh, there was a band?

GS: Military band.

CS: Behind the curtain?

GS: No, after the entrance.

CS: Outside the curtain. And why were you behind the curtain? Why were you behind the curtain?

GS: Because that's where we had classes. Behind the curtain, there was a little, uh, place where they, where we, were classes.

CS: Music lessons?

GS: No, dancing classes.

CS: Oh, dancing classes. And you were taking dancing lessons, or you played the piano?

GS: I played the piano.

CS: For the people taking the lessons?

GS: Yes.

CS: Behind the curtain?

GS: That's right. And, then, after that, I would come out---nobody knew who I am--invite little girls to dance.

CS: On the other side of the curtain?

GS: Yes.

CS: And what was happening at that side of the curtain?

GS: What other side?

CS: Where you came out, from behind the curtain.

GS: Nothing. There was no continuation.

CS: Oh, you mean the same girls who were taking the lessons . . .

GS: . . . No. I, I don't know what happened to the girls who took the lessons. They went also to dance, I don't know. But I went immediately out and start to invite little
girls to dance with me.

CS: There was a party on the other side?

GS: Was a "Blagarodnaya Sabrania." People used to come there; people used to come there for entertainment.

CS: What's a "Blagarodnaya Sabrania"?

GS: The noble, Nobility; it was like a Hall.

CS: A dance hall?

GS: Not dance hall. You might call it—well, yes, a . . .

CS: . . . And on one side was this, and on the other side was the dance lessons?

GS: On the stage, behind, were dance lessons.

CS: And down below, in the pit . . .

GS: . . . Not pit. There was no pit.

CS: But it was a separate room?

GS: Yeah.

CS: A separate room. And you left the dancing room to go to the dancing room where they were having their . . .

GS: . . . Dancing . . .

CS: . . . Dancing, real dancing . . .

GS: . . . Real dancing.

CS: While the other band was playing?

GS: The band, the band used to play. From, from the top, they had a big band playing.

CS: Didn't the band interfere with the piano playing on the other side of the screen?

GS: The band played on its own--fox trots.

CS: But behind that, you were playing the piano.

GS: Before, I played the piano.

CS: Before the other?
GS: I played for the little girls, and invite them to dance. And after invite them to dance, there was entertainment. And the band started to play on top, somewhere . . .

CS: . . . Aha . . .

GS: . . . And everybody started to fox trot . . .

CS: . . . Aha . . .

GS: . . . Whatever they knew about fox trots. They danced, alright. And since I was involved in, in a business like that, Holochov took away my contract . . .

CS: . . . To accompany the dance lessons . . .

GS: . . . Everything.

CS: Also the Corps? To play at the Corps?

GS: My, my reputation was smeared.

CS: Because of the flutes or because of the dancing?

GS: Because of the flutes.

CS: So, then you also lost the job to play at the dance lessons. This was all at the same time?

GS: Yeah, I suppose it was. I returned the contract, and that was . . .

CS: . . . You weren’t supposed to dance with the little girls, why?

GS: No.

CS: Why?

GS: What have I got to do? I’m not a nobleman.

CS: It was only for nobility?

GS: Yes.

CS: Absolute nobility?

GS: Yes.

CS: Aha. (R4/B)
18. "EDISON"

GS: Then, I played in a motion picture theatre. And I went, I learned a few pieces, and I went to the motion picture. I went to motion, near us was, uh, Edison, called Edison Theatre. And I walked in. Says, "You play the piano? Alright." Just at that time, unexpected, says, "Sit down and play." And I couldn't find the keys in the darkness. So he says, "You're not ready. Come in in a few months, and learn some pieces." And I learned that pieces—"Liquette," "Tobagan," all that pieces that were in the style, "Kikapoo." And, eh, practiced. What else, I don't know. (P2/A)

......

CS: What was the time when you played in a, you went to get a job at a movie house or something like that? You auditioned for somebody—I don’t remember entirely.

GS: No. I went to the motion picture theatre and sat in the first row, and the friends there, and the pianist there. I says, "I can play something." "Well, come on! Sit down and play!" So the picture started, and I got lost. I couldn't play (hums "Liquette"); I was supposed to play something that I memorized—"Liquette" or "Croquette" or something French. So he looked at me and says, "You're not ready yet. Come in in a few months." Then he became my helper, because I was better and they engaged me to play. Yes. The name was Bratslavsky.

CS: Bratslavsky?

GS: Bratslavsky.

CS: He was older than you?

GS: Yes, much older, much older. And he became my helper.

CS: You got an actual job in the music house?

GS: Yes.

CS: Paid job?

GS: Paid job.

CS: Were you little or old or do you remember?

GS: I must have been about 11—no, between, that was the second time—15, 16.
CS: And the first time you went there?

GS: First, that's when I first went to get a job, yes, that's much before; the first time was much before. I was 11 or 12 when I came the first time with him. And I remember because the man liked me very much, the fellow who put in machines. And they all were laughing because I didn't do it right.

CS: Turning the machine?

GS: And they all complained, "Ah, who's that guy?" They complaining that I don't . . .

CS: . . . You had to turn it or wind it by hand to make the motion pictures go . . .

GS: . . . It has to be rhythmical.

CS: Hm. And you couldn't do it right?

GS: No.

CS: Why were you doing it at all?

GS: Because the man who get the machine liked me very much; he let me do it.

CS: Oh, he let you try it. Not for a job.

GS: No.

CS: Just to see if you could do it. This was the first time, when you were 11?

GS: No. That was the second time.

CS: When you went for the job? The first time you went there, you just went . . .

GS: . . . I played only one picture. I knew only one number, "Liquette." And I was not so good because I couldn't found the keys.

CS: Why couldn't you find the keys?

GS: Dark.

CS: Oh.

GS: You know, all of a sudden, got dark, and he says, "Sit down! Play!" And I couldn't find the keys, I couldn't
find the . . .

CS: . . . It got dark because they were showing the movie? They turned out the lights? Yes?

GS: No, well, it was not necessary to play then.

CS: But, I mean, they turned out the lights in order to show the picture, no? And that’s why it became dark?

GS: No. They turned down the lights in order to show the picture . . .

CS: . . . And you couldn’t find the notes . . .

GS: . . . At the beginning. Later on, of course—I told you—he became my help.

CS: And then you went four years later and applied for a job . . .

GS: . . . And got the job.

CS: With the same piece, "Liquette"?

GS: "Liquette"?—well, maybe, other pieces, all the French pieces: "Tobagan," . . .

CS: . . . You mean four years later you played the same piece? (IS laughs)

GS: Pieces. Yes.

CS: The first time, you knew only one piece, right?

GS: Well, the second time, when I was, I knew many, all the French repertoire (hums)—anyway, all the French, because French was very popular.

CS: Hm. And you had to play by memory?

GS: Yeah, well, I knew those pieces.

CS: But you couldn’t use music because it was too dark, right?

GS: The first time, then I knew the numbers by memory anyway.

CS: And did you watch the movie while you were playing?

GS: Yes, sometimes. I was great improvisor. I could improvise anything. Just sit down, I could make any
improvisations, I could make.

CS: At 16 you could do that already? (nods "yes")

GS: Yes, I did.

CS: And you played pieces to correspond to the picture?

GS: Yes.

CS: Like what?

GS: We had a composer by name of Prisovsky. He wrote a lot of pictures like that. And my student, the one, Jesus- -Inge, Jesus played one of those pieces. (hums) I have the copy. All dramatic situations. I have that piece; I have the original edition.

CS: No kidding. Remember any of the movies that were playing then?

GS: In those days? I don't know—Gloria Swanson.

CS: Was Rudolf Valentino popular then?

GS: Yeah, I suppose so. Max Linder, Max Linder was popular.

CS: He was German? . . .

GS: . . . Comedian.

CS: Was he a comedian?

GS: No, he was aristocratic. Oh, all the pictures with him were great success. Max Linder. Oh, they show Max Linder. (8/B)

. . . . .

CS: Then, I have the story when you auditioned for the job at the movie theatre, that you went two different times.

GS: The first time, He asked me to sit down at the piano, and I couldn't find the keys in the dark. He says, "Oh, you come another time." The next time, I came in, and I already found the keys, everything. And the third time, he was not there because I took over his place.

CS: There were three times that you went?

GS: The third time, I was already the pianist—-he didn't have a job.
CS: You took his job? At the piano? Oh.

GS: Bratslavsky. Is it there?

CS: No. Oh, yes--Bratslavsky. And the second time, what happened?

GS: I found the keys already.

CS: And you got the job or not?

GS: Yes. That time, I got the job away from him.

CS: I don't understand. What was the third time, then?

GS: That's what I mean--the third time, I was alone . . .

CS: . . . Oh . . .


CS: Oh, I see. How did you hear about that opening, in the? . . .

GS: Huh?

CS: Did you hear about that, that there was an opening in the movie house for a pianist, or you just went there on your own?

GS: Nobody pays a darn. Nobody put anything, those days, in the paper about that. You hear it.

CS: And he was looking for a pianist that time, or you went there, or? . . .

GS: . . . I went there on my own . . .

CS: . . . But you knew he was looking for somebody?

GS: I don't know what it is, but they took me. (R9/A)

19. "PROFESSOR POLFIOROV'S LECTURES"

GS: When Professor Polfiorov came to Odessa to, for lectures, I got in somehow. And I was sitting behind Professor Lipschutz--the same Lipschutz who died later in, in Hollywood. His brother, in Buenos Aires, told me that Lipschutz is dead. The brother is dead. And I was sitting with him somewhere, and I was listening to the lectures of Polfiorov. He was telling lectures, that
time, of music of Debussy and French modernistes. And I was listening all the time.

CS: Where was that?

GS: That was in Odessa. I must have been about, after we came back from Paris.

CS: What was he? What was this man’s name?

GS: Professor Polfiorov.

CS: Polfiorov.

GS: He was lecturing. I got in. You know me: when it comes to music, I get in.

CS: You weren’t supposed to be there?

GS: No.

CS: Why not?

GS: Only, he was talking to Lipschutz. And I got in, because I know Lipschutz. Lipschutz, after all, worked for me, later on, later on.

CS: Yeah, but that time you didn’t know Lipschutz?

GS: Yeah, but he knew that I am interested in music. He always walked around with a big portfolio, and had probably one page of music there.

CS: Which one was that?

GS: Lipschutz.

CS: He was from Odessa?

GS: I’m talking Odessa.

CS: But Lipschutz was from Odessa, too?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Oh, and he’s the same one you later worked in New York?

GS: He was working for me.

CS: What did he do?

GS: Uh, Lipschutz, I fixed him the jobs in Hollywood because
he was a famous bass player . . .

CS: . . . And New York, also?

GS: . . . He came to me in Palmer House and wanted to borrow some money, to go to Buenos Aires, and I didn’t wanna give him any money. And I said, "If you come back, I’ll help you. But money, no."

CS: Is he the same one who played on the cello record? Did Lipschutz play on the cello record?

GS: No.

CS: No. And this Polficorov, he was a professor at the Conservatory?

GS: Not in our Conservatory. He’s from the Center somewhere. He came . . .

CS: . . . Oh, from St. Petersburg, or someplace?

GS: Moscow, Russian, Moscow, St. Petersburg—I don’t remember. But he just came for lecturing.

CS: And the lectures were for the teacher only, or . . .

GS: . . . For teachers only . . .

CS: . . . And Lipschutz was a teacher there?

GS: Yeah.

CS: In Odessa, those years?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Ah, and he escaped, too. Hm. And you sat in the audience? You got in there somehow?

GS: You know me.

CS: How did you get in?

GS: I got in. That’s all is to it, by hook or crook. (R11/A)

20. "UNCLE"

CS: And by the time your mother died, you didn’t have the stores anymore?
GS: Oh, no. As I told you, we were selling on the street.

CS: . . . In the open-air market?

GS: . . . Open-air market . . .

CS: . . . No more stores . . .

GS: . . . That was before. The stores came later. You're not, you still don't, the stores came later.

CS: Yeah, but your mother died when you were 13 or something . . .

GS: . . . Yes, but we had stores. We had, we lived in apartment before that, in our own apartment, on Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa.

CS: When you were a little boy, you saw your mother going to the stores, her stores, no? And you cried, "Mama!"

GS: Yeah. That was when we lived on Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa.

CS: Then you already had stores?

GS: Yeah.

CS: But, but when she died, you were selling in the open-air market?

GS: Ah, yes, that was different times. Yes, that was in open market, on the streets, street, and selling . . .

CS: . . . So, you didn't have stores anymore?

GS: No.

CS: Why did they close?

GS: I don't know, economical situation of my father.

CS: Bad business, and you were also selling at the market?

GS: Yeah. I helped there.

CS: Did they have stalls that they set up, or tents?

GS: Tents, were that.

CS: Once a week? Or every day?
GS: Every day.

CS: Every single day? And your father, where was he when your mother died?

GS: My father died before your mother.

CS: Oh, your father died before mother.

GS: Sure, four years before. He died in a, I remember him lying there--it's not like a morgue, I don't know. Because there's a lot of people, and they were screaming because just they performed an operation on a young man, and he died . . .

CS: . . . Hm . . .

GS: . . . During the operation. I don't know what he had; he had some kind of a appendix, appendix operation . . .

CS: . . . Hm . . .

GS: . . . And he just died. And it was screaming. His mother came, and his sisters came, and my father was lying there already . . .

CS: . . . Dead?

GS: Yeah, well, he was dead.

CS: And he died of the ear infection, right?

GS: Yes, he died--That's fly, isn't it--he died of the "gnilakrovia," they call it. What's it, "gnilakrovia"? "Gnilakrovia," that means the blood was corrupted--how you say "gnila," when you buy an apple, how you say?

CS: Rotten? Rotten?

GS: Huh?

CS: Rotten?

GS: Rotten, I suppose. "Gnilakrovia"--that, I remember, it was written there on a piece, on a paper we got it from . . .

CS: . . . From the hospital?

GS: Yes.
CS: He died in a hospital?

GS: Yes. I visited him in the hospital, and he died in a hospital. And they took him to the, where that woman was screaming.

CS: Hm. And your mother also died in a hospital?

GS: Yes, but much later.

CS: Later. Of asthma, right?

GS: Yes.

CS: And by the time you got from the market, she was already dead?

GS: Yes.

CS: They didn’t call you?

GS: How?

CS: Came to tell you?

GS: Some people who worked there.

CS: At the hospital?

GS: Yes.

CS: Hm.

GS: She always was wearing a, some contraption against "grizha." What’s a "grizha"?—the one that comes out and presses?

CS: Hernia?

GS: Hernia.

CS: Your mother?

GS: Yes. She used, she bought things that was pressing down her stomach.

CS: Hm.

GS: See, that I remember.

CS: But she didn’t die of that?
GS: Huh?
CS: She didn’t die of that?
GS: No.
CS: But she was always wearing those contraptions?
GS: I don’t know if she wore that when she died . . .
CS: . . . Hm. And that’s when you went to live with your uncle, or the house of your uncle?
GS: Apartment of my uncle.
CS: Apartment of your uncle, the aunt who used to live with you.
GS: Huh?
CS: This is the same aunt that used to live with you, that, who was married to the old man? One of your mother’s sisters? She used to take care of you and come and stay with you?
GS: That was in apartment.
CS: But now, when your parents died, you went and moved there? And lived with the five cousins, yes?
GS: I remember where I was dying . . .
GS: . . . When my uncle died. I was there lying. I had "kataralnia zhiltuxa." "Kataralnia zhiltuxa," didn’t I?
CS: You said you had "karanaya" . . .
GS: . . . "Kataralnia zhiltuxa." I was yellow. I was near dead myself.
CS: This is when your uncle died, in the same room?
GS: I was there lying with him.
CS: This was at his house, your uncle’s apartment?
GS: Yes, his, yes, the apartment where all the sisters lived together.
CS: And your parents were already dead?
GS: My father, he was dead already. And my mother was dead, too.

CS: And, then, you were living with this uncle and the aunt. (R5/A)

21. "LOCHMAN"

IS: When you lived in the apartment by yourself, did you go for groceries, shopping, by yourself, or what?

GS: I told you. I went to live with my aunts.

CS: Cousins, I thought.

GS: Cousins.

CS: Edith, Bettie, and all of those, they lived together?

GS: Yes.

CS: Then why did, when you worked at the Ambalzaki Cafe, Lochman . . .

GS: . . . He gave me the job; he was the contractor.

CS: Why did he find you by yourself when you were sick? I thought you lived with your cousins.

GS: Because he went to the theatre; I wasn’t there. The cafe, he didn’t find, "What happened?" Says I didn’t show up. So he went back to the house. He found me practically dying . . .

CS: . . . But not alone.

GS: Alone.

CS: You were alone then?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Not living with your cousins?

GS: Not yet; that’s my apartment. (8/B)

. . . .

GS: When Lochman gave the job, he came to my apartment. I was alone, in my own apartment. It had nothing to do with, that was after . . .
CS: ... After the uncle? ...

GS: ... After, after I had the job, got myself a job. I got a job, and, huh, I played—I don't remember. I played in cafe—which one?—was Ambalzaki.

CS: Ambalzaki, you said.

GS: I don't know. And, and, all of a sudden, he comes to the place where I work, and I'm not there. So he got scared and rushed home. And I was, he found me lying there practically dead in my apartment ... .

CS: ... That's when you ...

GS: ... My own apartment ...

CS: ... That's when you had typhus?

GS: Was it typhus?

CS: You said "brushnoi" typhus.

GS: "Brushnoi typh."

CS: "Brushnoi typh." This was after, you left now the cousins, right? You left the cousins and you went on and got your own apartment?

GS: No, "brushnoi typh." I travelled and I worked in Galatz, in Romania. And I know I got there "brushnoi typh" because Zoe took me to their father place in Mendik.

CS: Mendik is the place where her father lived?

GS: Yes. He was vinoceur, winemaker.

CS: Romania, then?

GS: Yeah, but that's much farther, already, you go.

CS: So, with Lochman, it wasn't typhus?

GS: With Lochman—I really don't remember. I know I was very sick. And I must have played then that time. I was under his protection then because he gave me the job. And I used to come to his apartment and make arrangements, write arrangements for him.

CS: Where?
GS: Kolodyizhnee Priulov.
CS: Kolod- . . .
CS: Kolo- . . .
GS: . . . It's just near the Gretcheskaya Ulitsa, and he lived together with his mother. They say when he died, they found a lot of gold, but I don't know.
CS: Was he stingy?
GS: I don't know if he was stingy, but accumulation of a lot of money . . .
CS: . . . Hidden in the house?
GS: Yes. Somebody told me--I forgot who.
CS: Hm.
GS: I'll never forget him, because if not for him, I probably would be dead. Nobody would know anything about me. You see, it's difficult for me to coordinate all those happenings. (R5/A)

22. "QUARANTINE"

GS: And that was the general, complete disorganized general retreat. And I jumped on the train, and I wanted to go inside. There was a sign, "Nye haditte, zarasnai typhus." Imagine me: if I would catch typhus, from typhus of the--what you call it?--of the "blaha," of the little, there was no escape. If you could stand it--sometimes people gave out to the illness, but somebody fighting the illness was crushed. (6/A)

. . . . .

CS: This was the invasion of what?
GS: That, I think, that's the time when, eh, we had war with Poland.
CS: Hm Hm.

GS: And it was, eh, we were advancing, before, a French general came in--I forgot his name--who pushed us back, with his army, whatever it is. And that was the famous, when I came to Odessa with contusion, when I have a
shake.

CS: You had a shake?

GS: Yeah.

CS: From what?

GS: From flying, uh, flying, uh--what you call it, cannons? Or what you call it, they put in the cannons?

CS: Oh, from the sound of all those, you weren't hit by bullets?

GS: No.

CS: But from the sound of all the . . .

GS: . . . Yes . . .

CS: . . . Constant cannon goings . . .

GS: . . . Yes . . .

CS: . . . And your head was shaking? . . .

GS: . . . Yes . . .

CS: . . . And this was the same time that you jumped on the train to get to Odessa?

GS: Yes, I think so.

CS: And it said, um, "Typhus," . . .

GS: . . . "Do Not, Don't Enter" . . .

CS: . . . "Typhus Only," so you held on to the side of the train.

GS: Yeah, I stood outside on the . . .

CS: . . . And your head was shaking?

GS: Yeah, I suppose so.

CS: And who was Pilsudski?

GS: Pilsudski was that famous, uh, dictator of Poland, that time . . .

CS: . . . And the Russians were against him?
GS: Yes.

CS: Hm. Or Brusilov invasion?

GS: Brusilov started an advancement against the Poles, but he failed--General Brusilov.

CS: He was a Russian?

GS: Yes.

CS: Was he your commander?

GS: He was a commander of the army. He started against the Poland, but he didn't succeed.

CS: So this whole invasion that you were a part of was a failure?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And they all retreated? The Russians retreated?

GS: Yes, because the, uh, the French came to help, uh . . .

CS: . . . Poland . . .

GS: . . . The Poles. (R5/B)

23. "FLYING BULLETS"

CS: Then there's a story of how you used to go home during the Revolution . . .

GS: . . . Oh, that's another time. I was playing Whodawzhestvehnee Teatra, and I, at night—that time, Revolution, wartime, I don't remember, it was war—and I was going through the big masses of land till I came to my house, and the, we had "dehmavayakra," the house—they knew; they opened the door for me, the gate. I would go, walk in.

CS: Was it dangerous, that time, to be walking?

GS: Yeah. There, it was shooting, all the time, from one side, all the sides . . .

CS: . . . Russians shooting?

GS: Yeah.
CS: At each other?
GS: Yeah.
CS: Bolshevists?
GS: Yes, all kind of different parties.
CS: Night time, daytime, they were constantly shooting?
GS: Well, in daytime, there was no, I wouldn’t know; but night time, when I had to cross the street—the theatres were open. (R7/B)

... ...

CS: Did you generally walk around, or did you have transportation?
GS: Yes, it’s a big city, Odessa.
CS: But you didn’t take a carriage or something like that?
GS: Oh, no.
CS: Usually walked everyplace?
GS: Walked. Nobody ever did anything; everything was on foot.
CS: Hm. And what was the Kusolzhensky, Husolzhensky ...
GS: ... Whodawzhestvehnee. Who-daw-zhest-veh-nee Teatra. That’s where I sold, all the big stars, used to come from the Center, and they were complaining, "What happened? We’re only"—I mean—"We’re only a few days, everybody sings our songs."
CS: This was on Ekaterins—? ...
GS: ... Ekaterinskaya? No, it was not Ekaterinskaya. Ekaterinskaya, maybe that was Ekaterinskaya Ulitsa. Whodawzhestvehnee Teatra. And I used to walk at night—I told you—and there was shooting on the street, and I was singing to myself, and going through all those places, crossing all those ... And nothing happened to me, Cristina. (R5/B)

24. "KAZANJI"

CS: I have here the Russian roulette story, but it’s incomplete. You were on a train someplace traveling?
GS: Oh, that's when I was already grown up.

CS: But this was not the same train as with the cooks?

GS: Oh, NO, NO.

CS: This was another train?

GS: Kill me if I would know. I was probably making money traveling between one point to another. That's the guy and, with, that's the guy--Kazanji was his name.

CS: You were speculating or something?

GS: I didn't have to. I don't remember, Cristina . . .

CS: . . . Or playing? . . .

GS: We were playing.

CS: Was this the same train when you put your hands up and burned them?

GS: Something to do with this, with that train, and I burned my fingers. And then they brought me to that place where I was supposed to play, and I played with my burned fingers. Because I had to accompany a troupe, see, so would be stuck if they have no accompanist. That you have to improvise yourself, to figure out all those combinations--I don't know--but I remember they brought us to that place, warm, nice place, and I . . .

CS: . . . And Kazanji was a tap dancer or a ballet dancer?

GS: Who?

CS: Kazanji.

GS: Kazanji was a dancer in our troupe.

CS: Tap dancing?

GS: Tap dancing.

CS: Not ballet?

GS: NO, NO. Holochov was the professor . . .

CS: . . . Tanzmaster. And you told him in Russian what? "Deresem durakavalet" or something? "Don't be a fool!" How do you say that? "Stop being a fool," you told him?
GS: "Peristan durakavalyat!"

CS: What was that?


CS: What had he done?

GS: Huh?

CS: What had he done that you told him that?

GS: He was shooting at my leg.

CS: At your leg or at your head?

GS: First, at my leg, head. Then, at my, well, if he shoot me at the head, I would be dead now. He was shooting there; it didn't work. And I was practicing the piano . . .


GS: . . . Yes, and . . .

CS: . . . The train had a piano?

GS: We had a piano there--I don't know, I cannot tell you why. That has nothing to do with the train in Zhmerinka.

CS: No, a different train, before.

GS: And, uh, why we travelled, I cannot tell you either. I know must have been some kind of a business we have. Anyway, and I told him, "Stop, durakavalyat!" And he was, keep on shooting, shooting, shooting, and finally he shot his foot.

CS: Was that the end of his career as a dancer?

GS: Cristinuchka, I wouldn't know. No, I don't know. Probably killed himself, cured himself, in short time, six months or something like that. I don't know. I could not follow the career of so many people. (R5/B)

25. "HAFEL"

CS: How old was your mother then?

GS: I don't know, well, exactly. Again, I can't tell.
CS: I thought she was in her thirties when she died.

GS: Huh?

CS: Wasn't she in her thirties when she died?

GS: Thirty years of age? No, no, older, no, much older. Don't forget--I told you--she was following my father way, when he was in the army.

CS: No, you never told me that.

GS: Yes, I told you.

CS: No.

IS: You told me; you never told Cristina. You didn't tell Cristina. She doesn't know any of these stories.

GS: I told you?

IS: Yeah.

GS: They were travelling. He was with the regiment--was he out of the regiment? I don't remember. But we were traveling. We stopped someplace, and it was cold. And the, and the heat from the enamel walls created that smoke, that deadly smoke.

CS: The heat from the animal walls? Enamel, oh, enamel. You were inside.

GS: Enamel.

CS: Ah, you mean you were inside, and it was closed. Carbon monoxide. You were alive when she followed him?

IS: No.

GS: Yes.

IS: You were alive then?

GS: Sure. (omit discussion of Cherson trips)

CS: But when was he a soldier?

GS: When I was a little baby, then, very little, as I remember, very little. That's when we had those "hafel."

IS: The tile stove.
GS: And that's nearly, we all died.

CS: Hm. What's that?

IS: The tile, the enamel, or the tile stoves that they have. Oma had the same thing. You had to leave windows open; otherwise, the carbon monoxide would get into the room, and everybody would simply fall asleep, from the smoke, or from the burning up of the oxygen. The stove would consume the oxygen, and everybody would tighten the windows to keep the cold out. And it must be a wee bit cold there in Russia, Mother-, right, in Mother-? . . .

GS: . . . Apartment.

CS: So, what happened? She closed the windows?

IS: She had the windows closed, Mother, or what?

GS: Well, somebody had windows closed. Lucky for us, lucky for me, somebody opened the window, I imagine, and we all got out, and continued our . . .

IS: . . . Living . . .

GS: No, we were going someplace.

CS: This was on a train?

GS: No train. Was all land. It's all frozen in winter time. You see that land; it's completely frozen. So frozen that it becomes like, like black. And many lost their life. Somebody told us, that time, a couple just got married, and they got into the ice . . .

CS: . . . The ice broke?

GS: The ice broke. I remember those things. That's the story about ice.

CS: Where did you stay then, in an inn, when you were doing your traveling? Or in a hotel, or where did this happen when you almost died of asphyxiation?

GS: That was some kind of hotel, small place.

CS: Yeah, huh. And this was when she was following your father?

GS: Yes.

CS: And why did she follow your father? Where was he going?
GS: They were going together. She didn't wanna lose track of him. He was a soldier yet.

CS: And he was commissioned to go different places?

GS: Neither that. He was going on his own. I don't know--what he had, who gave him the start to go--but I know we traveled. So, when I came back, I was a little boy. Then we came back to the same flat.

CS: In Odessa?

GS: In Odessa. (4/A)

...

CS: Then, there's another story when you were, your father was in the "Polk," in the regiment, and you stopped in a hotel and there was a gas-burning stove, "kafel" ...

GS: ... And that's when we nearly died. The last minute, my father woke up, or my mother--I don't know--and took everybody outside.

CS: This was someplace outside of Odessa, right?

GS: Yes.

CS: Travelling?

GS: Travelling.

CS: By train or ...

GS: ... No ...

CS: ... No, not by train? ...

GS: ... By horses.

CS: By horses? Sitting on a horse or in a? ...

GS: ... Inside ...

CS: ... Like ...

GS: ... A "telega" ...

CS: ... "Telega." Why was he traveling round like that in a "telega"?
GS: I don't know. He, I don't know why, because he served in a "Dragoonskaya Astrahansky Polk," and he played flute. And that's why, probably, he was mobilized to go. And my mother followed him. (R7/B)
APPENDIX D

LIFE STORY TRANSCRIPTS
LIFE STORY TRANSCRIPTS

Due to formal and moral restrictions, this Appendix provides only a sampling of the transcripts available upon request (including tapes 1-11, R1-R11, M1-M7, V1-V7, P1-P1, O1-O6, and N1-N9).

The names of participants are abbreviated as follows: GS (Gregory Stone), IS (Ingeborg Stone), CS (Cristina Stone), TW (Toranna Stone Wermes), CK (Constantine Karmas), and OC (Octave Caleja).

TAPE 1/A (27 August 1987): outdoor patio, before dinner

GS: (unless otherwise indicated: eyes directed downwards at patio floor; right leg crossed over left; hands folded) I would like to tell you the story of my life since year 1905. Since I was born at the beginning of the century, I was five years old. OK? At that time, we lived in Odessa, beautiful, southern Palmira, as they called her. And those were the dark days of Pogroms. And our apartment used to be a meeting place of the "Sama Obarona," "Self-Defense Group." The "Self-", uh, "Self-Defense Group," "Sama Obarona," used to catch the "Black Guards," "Chornaya Sochenski," and kill them and throw them into water--what you call those ditches?

CS: Sewers?

GS: Sewers. At that time, my father decided it's about time to leave Russia and go to another country to look for happiness, in another country. And his brother, or one of his brothers, lived in Paris. So my mother, my father, and myself and my cousin were on the way to Paris. We even took along a samovar. We came to Paris, and my first impression was that, of the kind of service we got in our apartment, Rue de Temple, quatre-vingt-cinque. It was immigrant headquarters, the whole section, and my uncle was very generous. He did everything for us. And, but my father, from the very start, had antipathy for French language. He says, "My dear brother," he told, "I'm sorry, but I'll never be able to master French." "But give yourself time. I mean, after all, you can't do it just at once." "No, no. I know my ability. I know my capacity of, it's not for me." "OK. What you wanna do?" "I wanna go back to Russia." And here we are, after such a long trip. We are ready to go back to Russia. Just before we left, my cousin broke some important piece of toilet and my, in my uncle's home, and disappeared. We could not find him till all day long; finally appeared just before the train pulled out of the station. And here we are back on our
way back to Russia. Finally, we came to Russia. As I said before, it was the time of the pogroms, and "Black Guards," "Chornaya Sochenski," operating the whole darn thing. Despite all this, my mother and my father opened another store or two and started their business as usual. Still, we used to collect our correspondence. We sent our letters to Paris, "poste restante Paris." I never forget those phrases, "poste restante Paris." When, coming back to the story of Paris, I remember how we arrived in Paris. The first thing that I saw at the corner, a musician who played "Machise" (sings). It was a big style to play that song. As I said before, now we are back in Russia. We came back to Odessa. I joined my classes. And on my mind there was always Europe with its freedom, with all its capacity to do anything you want, in a free surroundings, in a free country. So I decided I'm going to try again. I went to Glympedeserter. There was an agency that were fighting deserters. And since they knew me, I said, "I would like to take a train and make propaganda for the Russian Army." "Oh, my goodness. Certainly we give you the train. We give you everything, every capacity." And here I have a train. And, again, I have all those cooks from various famous places in Odessa who wanted to escape Russia and come back, go back, to their own country. The only, about my plan only knew the Obermann, my violinist; Amerikov, my balalaika player. They knew about my plans. We, one day (I was supposed to stop the train): We going from Vapniarka, and from Vapniarka back to Odessa; Vapniarka, Odessa; Vapniarka, Odessa (gestures back and forth three times with right hand). One day, I "forget"--I didn't. On purpose, I did not give an order to connect our train back to Odessa. So the train pulled us as far as Zhmerinka. Zhmerinka used to be the center of all the railroads going to Europe. And in Zhmerinka, I saw the blown-up bridges. And I used to go everyday to, to "Voksal," we call it, where people used to go, walk around, just look around. And waiting for the opportunity. And then a guy came to me, heard me play and said, "Listen, Tavarische, I know that you have a purpose to be here. We have a train. If you and your troupe would join our train, we going to Kiev and back; Kiev, back; Kiev, back. And you can speculate as much as you want. And maybe one day you'll be able to do what you want." "OK." We agreed, and we started to travel with him that station and Kiev, station and Kiev, station and. The station was Mogiliov. Finally, one day, Commander came and says, "Tavarische, I have to say good-bye to you. We finished our job, and now you're on your own. Do whatever you please." And here we are, troupe of ex-chefs, of the famous restaurants; Pagarelov, the balalaika player; myself, the pianist; Mimi, the
banjo player; and the Turk; and the Romanian who played violin. I must have somewhere a picture of us, a photo. I don't know where. But, anyway, we are back in Bucharest. I have a fine job now, to play in the club, and I made a lotta money. But still on my mind was again the same story: how to get out of Russia, this time, of Bucharest. And after playing a lotta concerts, a man came to me, says, "I know you that you're not gonna stay here. You want to do something." As I said before. "You want to cross the border? Prepare the money, and we'll get you across." So, I had 500 dollars, as I said before. And my colleagues also have, Pagarelov has, here we had all money. And one night the guy appeared in our flat, flat, says, "Let's go." We took all our belongings and start to follow him. We followed him and little by little, another part of a crowd joined us. Finally, we had quite a few hundred people. And we came now outskirts of the city. And, uh, finally came to a little stop where the border of Mogiliov is very, you can step over (makes small circular movement with right hand). So, well, we all stepped over, and we were already in Romania again. This time, since propaganda is so dangerous on Romanian side and on Russian side, we were waiting till morning till we get horses. And we started to go on the way to Bucharest again, or Bassarabia, that time. And we came from running after the car. I completely lost my voice. Finally, we arrive in that hotel. In hotel, we stayed for a few days. In few days, I found all my friends: Sascha Borisoff; his brother Borisoff, John Borisoff; and many other friends. And I started to play with Faniuca Stefanescu, no, Dialkitsano, in, with that famous club, "Blagarcnaya Sabrania." I played there for a few months. And, finally, Faniuca Stefanescu also didn't have anything more to do. He dropped out. And here I remain with my troupe. And city called, yes, Mogiliov. At that time, some of the troupe would like to go back to Odessa. And many decided that they wanna stay with me and cross the border to Europe. Since we all had the train; I had the train yet, as I said before. The smugglers came to me, asked me if we had enough money to cross. I told them, "Yes." Now came our decisive step: to get out of Russia. Again, the same story started very beginning. We had to start with the same train story, again running to the border, and back and forth. Finally, this time, we came to the border. The train pulled us to the border, and the door opened of the car. And the Cheka, which was famous for killing all, everybody dissatisfied with regimen in Russia, opened the door. "Ah, spekulanti." I said, "Tavarische, ni spekulanti. Artisti." "Artisti?" And he started to cross himself (crosses himself three times). "We are dying here from boredom." "Alright, tavarische," says,
"Vozmite nashi veschi." ("Take our belongings.") So they helped us to take our belongings, brought us a piano, gave us all the money that we had before. And we stayed in that city. And, I have to repeat myself many things, don't I?

CS: No, as you please.

GS: And stayed and stayed and stayed. Finally, it was the end of it. I have to go back to Bassarabia again because I took the troupe from there. Many wanted to come back, and I had to bring them back. Alright. I bring them back. And now, Sascha Borisoff and myself, sitting in one of the garden, fashionable garden, in Romania, I think it was. I forgot what part. It was Romania, it was. It was Bassarabia, anyway. And here a woman with two little babies on her shoulder joins us. Marusha, his wife, came from Russia with two babies on her hand: Luba, Lubushka. I forgot the other girl's name. The other one is a doctor now. Anyway, we still again back in Russia. This time, I had a lotta dissatisfied people who wanted to go to the States, or to Europe, and I got them. I still have the train. We came to, I think, to a little city where I met Sascha Borisoff, his brother--my partner in crime at Bublichki, Sascha Lukas, Lukashevsky, he called that time--and we had a job to play in Bucharest. And finally finished up in--what's that city, city on the Black Sea? We finished in that city on the Black Sea. And from there, I took, we took the Haberline ship. That was Constanta, and we were on the way to United States, finally. We came to United States. I started to play in Hotel Majestic. And then my friend Wieland--you heard the name Wieland. I think his wife is hanging now--his picture with his wife. He was an extraordinary violinist, played piano, was an extraordinary musician. He got for me a job in Cafe Samovar, in Chicago. I got in Chicago, and the musicians were there on the notice. They were supposed to finish the job. So I went to Petrillo, to union. "Here I was invited to have a job, and now I'm fired. Could that be done?" Says, "It cannot be done. You cannot be fired, and they have to pay you for the time they engage you." And here those guys have to pay me cash, the money. So I got that money. I still would like to get something to do that I like. I met Leopold Spitalni, who know my facility of writing, yet, from before. Says, "I have a job for you. Join Chicago Theatre. You don't have to play anything. Join Chicago Theatre. You have a good salary, do anything you want." And here I like, the pit used to come up, and I would have to play a piano solo, which I always played something new. And then I used to write the arrangements. And Adolf Hoffman, the big shot,
the first cellist of the Chicago Orchestra, had to arrange my music, the way I liked it. But still, I didn’t want to play in the orchestra. One day, I made my own strike: I didn’t play the orchestra--orchestra was playing for me. I did millions of runs on the piano; I did all the things to show that I’m the soloist with the orchestra, that nobody plays but me. Finally, the manager came to me. Says, "What’s matter with you?" "I’m not playing in the orchestra. I’ll do it all the time the same way. You can’t pin me down to play in the orchestra." So he, so he talked with Spitalni, or Lipston--what’s that big? Lipston says, "Let the prima donna out, out of the orchestra." They still had to pay my salary, and I’m out of the orchestra. And I started to write special arrangements for the Chicago Theatre. Victor Young, very talented man, god bless his soul. He was my friend, and he also was my nemesis. Nemesis. Every day we used to meet early in the morning to get hot waffles, hot waffles with bacon and eggs. Then he had to rehearse the orchestra, and I would play my solos with the orchestra. Alright. I still was dissatisfied. I still did not wanna do what I did. I gotta job myself in another theatre, motion picture theatre. Played a few days. And after a few days the leader says, "Look, you just did so much marvelous few days. Now you don’t play. You hardly play." It was difficult for me to play. Says, "Because it’s very difficult for me to play that much as you want." I quit the job. I quit the job. At that time, in the lobby of Hotel Commodore, there’s a fine orchestra. The leader was Bernard Levitov--a good violinist, but a maniac. Dressed in a frock, he was conducting a little group of musicians. I looked, says, "I’m gonna join that group." I joined that group, but Levitov again demanded I should play the um-pah-pah, with (sings), with the left hand, the bass, for a Strauss waltz. I looked at him one day. Says, "Mr. Levitov, it’s not for me. I’m going to, I’m going with the gypsies." "Ah, with the zigeuner." "Yes, the zigeuner." Harry Horlick. Gave me a fine job, 150 dollars a week. And I joined him. And here I’m from Atlantic City. We played the job there before, come to New York, and I started to play with Harry Horlick. Harry Horlick gave me 150 dollars a week. And then we went on the road to travel for the A and P Gypsies. He had to deduct 50 dollars every week. After playing five weeks, he deducted 250 dollars. And the job did not materialize any more. There’s no more job. And here I remained with Leopold Spitalni, writing back in Chicago, writing music for, for--my name appeared as, "created by Leopold Spitalni, with special arrangement by our own Gregory Stone." Just at that time, I thought I have to go to look for something else. I went to Las Vegas, organized my group
in Las Vegas. Conductor was our, only wanted to get me into the pictures, so he could brag he had Gregory Stone with him playing. But in the last minute, when he was snapping the picture, I was hiding, so he never could take a picture of me (looks at CS, who smiles). So, after Las Vegas, I came back to L.A., and by that time, having enough money in my pocket, I decided to buy a house. And it was Mrs. Foster who was selling the house. And, at the last minute, the one she sold the house didn't have enough money, and she turned to me around, says, "Mr. Stone, the house is still for sale. Would you like to buy it?" Says, "Yes, I'm buying the house."

And I bought that house, Van Noord Avenue. On Van Noord Avenue. I think you were little children, and mother was. You saw the first time television. "Ah, television, television," you used to tell me. Finally, I had stopped in the Hotel Aloha, with you and the kids, with you and mother. But here I had a contract to go back to Dominican Republic, 2,000 dollars a month, big money. I didn't take it. Here I had a job to go to. Yes, I wanted to go to Washington because that guy had a job there and he wanted me. In the last minute, that his pianist, who just joined him not long ago, had her furniture moved to Washington. And, "For her sake," he told me, "I can't take you now, but keep on and maybe someday we get together." In the meantime, I started my dealing of writing music for Kalmus, and I really don't know now, Cris Dnuchka, how we got here (looks at CS). How did we get here? Yes, again, it was again in Miami. Miami, we decided it's no good for me. Mother will tell you after what happened in 1949. I met mother in '48, '49. Oh, yeah. I met her in Ciudad Restrepo. I, Dominican Republic. She was taking care of you. Toranna was not born yet. She was taking care, and we were discussing the lady that she is in correspondence yet now. Mother would know. With his wife. And you know, there's no climate in Dominican-- always rain. Then, finally, we finally moved to United States. Mother will explain how we met United States. And how his daughter gave birth to a baby and died, gave birth. And how I met them before, and that little city we were. And the pianist Serkin-- remember Serkin? He played Beethoven sonata that time, on the pause, I mean in the public. You know, that sonata-- tremendous. And he played with Casals all the time. And how all, about 150 students, of Casals, all over the Europe, played, came to him for his debut, and they all played under him. You know? That was touching, touching to watch them all play. Here me, the other skaters who came to the same city, and tried to skate, but they were not big enough to skate, to cover up so much ice, you know. Him, his wife--I forgot his name, mother would tell you the name of the
skater—that's where I met Seidmann, Seidmann. He's the one who used to play with Grigori Dinicu in Bucharest, and then he came also to United States and wanted to play also with me, and comes to that city, and dies (looks at CS). And his sister, that he hated, she took over all the money, everything that he left. And me and Bunchook—the two brothers Bunchook—took his body, put it in a tuxedo, and put it in the coffin. He was lying in the coffin, and I looked at him and said, "What a darn fool you are. While the girl was giving rendezvous, appointment to her boyfriend in the lobby." That covers enough? Or there's something more I left out?

CS: No, we can stop now if you don't want to go on.

GS: OK.

GS: (later that evening, at Steinway piano, GS starts by playing first piece he wrote as child)

CS: Do you remember any of the etudes?

GS: Wouldn't be good because there are octaves running around, and passages which I can't play any more (attempts to play).

CS: No?

GS: No, that gives you an idea. Then, of course, I killed the opera, the opera Eugene Onegin. And the director, Malishevsky, said, "Grisha, you're still the best because you play the best. They are worse than you are." So I constantly performed various operettas, things that was on the repertoire in the conservatory. And that was up to 19, after my mother died and father was no more. I decided I'm gonna go, go leave the country, never come back. So I went to. We played jobs that time, at the American Consulate. Quite a lot of jobs. I played that jobs, and during the intermission, I looked for a place where I would find a piano, and found a piano, and sat at the piano and started to play. And without realizing that someone was listening to me—there was lady in the dark there, listen to me. Finally, the light came up. Says, "You play very well. What you do? Where are you studying?" I says, "I really now study in Conservatory, but I would like to go out of the country, go someplace else." "Have you got any relations in United States?" "No." "Come to the Consulate tomorrow." I came to the Consulate tomorrow, next day. She was there with her husband, who was the Consul. He gave me the visa, and I didn't pay even the fee that I'm supposed to pay for the visa. He got a letter of recommendation to the Ellis
Island, Ellis Island--you know, that famous when you come in. That was when Zoe was with me. So we made a trip to United States. There where I meet all my friends. Oh, it's mother. What's she doing outside? Flowers. It's mother. There's a lotta small episodes that I have to tell you; in between, they go. But I cannot do it at once Cristinuchka. It's too much at one time.

CS: OK. It's dinner time anyway.

GS: Huh?

CS: It's dinner time.

TAPE 1/B (20 September 1987): Steinway window chair, before dinner

GS: (unless otherwise indicated: eyes directed downwards toward floor radiator, arms crossed) I was 13. The war started 1913. Between 1913 and 1914, I was in Berlin. And I studied there with the Professor--I don't remember. All, probably, will come to me. I was admiring the Germans the moment I heard the march, "Unter den Linden," or anything like that. They would run on the street Aminobaxpa. That's the time when--I told you--I came to the Russian restaurant. They looked me over; the boss looked me over. Said, "Amerikanitz. Charge him double!" I liked the girl, and I took her home every night. And I had to sing to her songs like "Holde Maria," "Herrlich Zuruck," Nur Eine Nacht Sollst Du Mir Gehoren." And she had to listen to me, when I spoke perfect Russian, and I could tell all my stories in Russian. And, the last night, when I had to leave Berlin, she was so mad at me. Says, "How could you tell me those things--you, knowing Russian; you Russian? The proprietor, when he found out that I'm Russian, he put champagne on the table as much as we wanted. I cursed, I cursed him in--like you know how to do it in Greek, I did it in Russian! (looks at CS) I came to the States. What was there? War again, or something. Because--I already told you--my cousin, my cousin, the one who sold salt, she made so much money on selling dead cigarettes, you know.

CS: Hm.

GS: She really did took care of me: washed my things, and I went to live with them. So silly for me to live alone in a big flat. Then, on top, on top of it, I had a scarlet fever, or something like that, I don't remember. I was lying with the same room, with my father, with the father, with the brother of my mother, who was dead already. It didn't bother me. But I had "krapnaya likratka," you know--when you itch. And that bothered
me a lot. I was abandoned boy. I bought a lot of music. Near the Conservatory was a store--I forgot the name of it--where they sold all kind of music. And I bought all kind of music, even the music I couldn’t play. But I was in awe before it. And I took it home, that music. I looked it over, everything else. At that time I don’t think I had a piano, but I still took lessons from teacher. And using her piano. I forgot. See, all those things are cookeyed in my mind now. But I told you some things already before (looks at CS).

CS: Hm.

GS: My teacher was Sarah Silberstein. And I remember, together, in my new suit, we went to see Titanic, Story of the Titanic. The Titanic just sank. When was that? I don’t know. Must have been 1914 when that big oceanliner went down, hit a iceberg and sank in a half an hour. And Karpaty, also a big ship, was behind it, and didn’t know anything about because they didn’t have time even to send out an SOS, whatever they have. Boats, they thought would be ridiculous in a ship like Titanic to put out 50 or 75 or 100 boats in an ocean near Newfoundland, where the weather is below zero anyway. Nobody has a chance to outlive, to outlive that kind of a weather. And one of the officers already tried to go to get himself, to get himself saved, but one of those boats was stopped by a guy. Says, "You can’t go. You go with me. Otherwise, I shoot you right here." So he had to follow this boy, this man, back to the cabin he just left, where he told him, "Leave me here."

CS: Hm.

GS: He told him to leave him there in that cabin. "And go save yourself. You still have time." And the officer ran back and saved himself. He tells the story about 50 years later. He jumped in one of those boats, sailboat. That story appeared, I think, somewhere in press. I forgot. So it comes back to New York. I’m back in New York.

CS: Hm.

GS: Back in New York, there was an organization AYAX, who took anyone who has need of it. And Zoe, my wife, she called on her friend from back home, years ago, to come to get us. And I had money, and I had from my own pocket, paid the taxi driver to take us to Brooklyn. And he took us to Brooklyn to the house of this man, who was married, his wife. I remember, because his child had--(looks at CS) what’s that, that famous illness that everybody had
those days?

CS: Polio?

GS: Polio. There was a violinist who used to come to see me from Moscow. He was a relation to that man with the polio child. He wanted to play with me, but I was already high up and started to work again at NBC, writing arrangements. Was that time when I wrote an arrangement for Irving Berlin.

CS: Huh?

GS: Didn’t I tell you about Irving Berlin? (looks at CS, smiling)

CS: Uh uh.

GS: Oh. My leader was Milton Schwarzwald. His son was my student. He’s still alive now, Milton Schwarzwald. He had a program on the air, and when he found out that I was the same pianist that used to play in the Chicago Palmer House, says, "Gregory, you must play piano in the Orchestra, solo or whatever you want to do, because my pianist is going on the road, and I really need you more than any." So I started to play the RKO Hour with Milton Schwarzwald (sings "Hello, Hello, RKO"). That’s the famous theme song. Well, I, in three years’ time, I made 36,000 dollars. They paid me by cash, the RKO. 36,000 dollars. Just imagine how much money that is, for playing that hour! And all was cash proposition because those days they paid cash. And that brought me where? I bought a home in Brooklyn, near Aaron Gershunoff. He had next to me a house. So we’re neighbors. And Dora Gershunoff was a friend of Zoe. Does it make any sense to you?

CS: Yes.

GS: Well, Jeanette and Maxime Gershunoff, they used to go to school together from the same address—maybe before even, I don’t know. They were great friends; they still great friends now. Maxime Gershunoff became the right hand of Sol Hurok, the famous producer. Max was a—what you call it, those men, what you call them, just had it?

CS: Impresario?

GS: Homosexual. I just sent him music. You know that; we sent him music.

CS: Hm.
GS: That music is published, so I sent them. What his name, he brought him the music in New York. The fellow I’m waiting now for the call. What’s his name?

CS: Caleja.

GS: So where are we now?

CS: Well, we can go to the ’20s if you want. You remember what music you wrote in the ’20s? Before you came to the States, did you write any music?

GS: In Mexico.

CS: Before you came to America, I mean, first time.

GS: I told you, I wrote those little waltzes and things (looks at CS).

CS: Other than that? In Romania?

GS: In Romania, yes.

CS: Do you remember what?

GS: "Hora," I have it here. "Hora Lui Dinicu." He played that. He liked it very much. And he had an idea. One of these days I should come and reorganize his orchestra, his group. At that time I was in Kishinaw, playing with the famous gypsy violinist, Fanicu Stefanescu, who thought I’m a genius. I wrote for him a lot of songs, a lot of gypsy music. But one day I decided it’s not good enough for me to play all my life with the gypsies. I’m gonna go to Bucharest. And this time do something with Grigori Dinicu. So I left Sascha Borisoff brother. I have his music here too, belong to him. He was John Borisoff. I left him as a substitute, took the train, and tell John Borisoff, "Don’t hurry. Come in at the last minute." And Fanicu says, "What you doing here?" He says, "Well, Grigori went to Bucharest and asked me to be here to play for him." Well, Fanicu closed his violin, took the first train, and with his pregnant wife, went to get me in Bucharest. Came to Bucharest hotels. Everybody takes the same hotels, the refugees, I imagine, when they’re refugees. Came hotel and says, "Grigori, what did you do that for? You can’t do that to me." I says, "But you had other pianists before." "No, I need you." Well, he had to drag me back to, and here my papers were not in order. I knew I’ll be stopped at the border. And that what happened. We came to the border town, and the gendarme came to the trains and says, "Oh.
You have no papers. Get out!" I get out of the station with Fancu and his pregnant wife, and there people look, saw them and says, "My goodness, Fancu. The whole world is waiting for you in Kishinaw. What you doing here?" So he explained the story to the, to the mananger of the station. "Let him go." So, and they let us go, and we came back to Bassarabia. And I started to play again with Fancu.

CS: So, other than that one, you didn’t write any music in Romania, other music?

GS: That’s what I’m telling you, trying to tell you. Well, I don’t know. No. Well, the whole idea was that family of, Zoe’s family, her sister, insisted I should marry her, I should marry Zoe. In Galatz, where we played outside on the street practically, we had a nice ceremony performed. I don’t know where, outside. And all of a sudden, I get that tremendous pain, and they put me in cool sheets to take me home. And I developed dangerous illness, I forget. The doctor said after you have that illness again, never. And I was lying down and facing the cemetery in Kishinaw, in that part of the city. And, naturally, Zoe took care of me. And after that illness, we went back, we went to Mendik, where her father was the, where her father was the vinoceur, vinoceur of the factory, the one who does something with wine, raises wine. You have to watch out so it doesn’t go higher. If it goes higher, it becomes ether. And he was the manager of all that factory. So they brought me there after the illness, and I started to recuperate there and, finally, we decided we’re gonna go to Bucharest. Children was never born yet. Zoe was pregnant with Jeanette. Finally, in New York, back in New York. I don’t know how that happened: Zoe gave birth to the little girl, Jeanette Mayagotia; but we called her Jeanette Stone, Hagelstein, I don’t remember. Does it make sense?

CS: When did you change your name, or why, rather?

GS: Oh. That was happening when I played that job in Chicago, somewhere. First job. 62 dollars a week job. That’s the lowest part. And I played with Helena Moniac. And she was the one says, "Gregory, you cannot have a name of Gagelstein, things like that. Call yourself Gregory stone. It’s easy." And she baptized me with that name. Helena Moniac. I don’t know; it’s so many years ago. Anyway, and that’s where I start to play jobs. And then the second job I play in Palmer House.

CS: Then you came to America in 1923? And after you got
here, what was the first thing you wrote? Do you remember?

GS: Wrote?

CS: Music, I mean.

GS: Soon after that, I became immediately the Chief Arranger of RKO and A and P, and many big organizations.

CS: But how did you get the first job? You just walked in off the street?

GS: I told about Schwarzwald. Had a pianist, he says he heard me play in Palmer House on the piano. And he told me, "Gregory, I really need you because this pianist is leaving. He’s got another job on the road." So, I used to start to play with Schwarzwald. And that’s where I started to make arrangements. And that’s where Irving Berlin came to me, first time he heard. Schwarzwald wanted him to listen to "Irving Berlin a La Liszt," which I wrote for piano and orchestra. And that’s when he invited me to his office to see how it is. When I came to his office, he’s got a piano that’s transposing because his, the tonality of the piano does not correspond with his voice. So he has it. So I says, "How do you do then? Send your arrangement to the arranger?" He says, "I whistle." And he shows me how he whistles—beautiful. And the arranger wrote down immediately from that whistle, his music. And harmonization in those days were, what you call it, standard. Everybody used to harmonize the same way—the chords, those progressions how the American chords go, those progressions—you know, I showed to you once. So that’s how I met Irving Berlin. And that’s how I met also, the same story with, wrote big paraphrase on other songs written by famous composers. I think Charlie Donaldson compositions (sings). Then it goes into allegro (hums "William Tell"). "Yes Sir, That’s My Baby"—together. That’s all. That was the overture I made on, what was the composer, Donaldson? See, that was my forte (looks at CS, smiling). A greenhorn all of a sudden makes all those paraphrases. A greenhorn, like you once paraphrased, you said to me, "Russian immigrant," whatever you said.

CS: Is that what I said? Hm.

GS: "Pretty good for the Russian immigrant" (smiling).

CS: Oh.
GS: But it was really true because what the hell, all those things came only in the last minute, and that's when I, Schwarzwald, started to write. And they, we had a full, full equipment of arrangers there, sitting arranging music; and they came to me for ideas, for introduction, for modulation, things like that. I used to just dash it out for them. Charlie Cooke was a fine arranger. He lived with his white copyist. She was his sweetheart. He was a fine arranger. He would come, "Gregory, I need you." "What's the matter?" "I'm writing an overture for Roxy" (or some big theatre) "And I need something." "What do you want?" "I need an introduction; I need a modulation; I need this." I just wrote, and they copied that and they orchestrated it. It's nothing to me. I don't know why they came to me, all those things.

CS: Where did you get all the ideas from? You didn't learn them in Russia?

GS: No, but I learned harmony and counterpoint.

CS: But that has nothing to do with those ideas.

GS: That's what I mean. That's the same thing that when the Director of Conservatory gave me to conduct Eugene Onegin, and I killed the opera, he says, "You're better than somebody else because you're better. That's the same story, because you're better.

CS: Did you listen to the radio when you first came here? The radio? The radio, yes. Radio was powerful, but not to the extent like now. I visualize those radios in hospital. I was lying in hospitals so many times, Cristinuchka, I don't remember now. But that's the time that they had to put something in my stomach because my stomach could not function. You remember that story. I was destined to die, but I didn't. THAT'S THE STORY. And then when Mother came along in Buenos Aires--I met her in 1948, wasn't it? When you were, you were born were born what, what year were you born?

CS: 1949.

GS: Yes, I met her in '48, when she was pregnant with you in the show, with the ice show. When I conducted the show, I was worrying that she's gonna have, because we're not, nobody was supposed to get married in the show, as you know. Anyway, we overcame that. Then you were born in Buenos Aires. And for 100 dollars, measty hundred dollars, I had a ticket from Buenos Aires, way out, to the city on, not Bogota, before Bogota there was a city there, in Colombia. I think on that voyage, our voyager
of the trip came to me says, "We are stopping here in Trinidad. You better have your papers reexamined because you cannot follow with your papers as they are, further." So I came to the Consulate. Consulate looked over--He was outside--looked my face. Say, "You cannot go. You have to stay here till I get permission from, from the government in Bogota to let you in." "Where shall I go here?" "Well, I can't help you anything." Says, "Let me have your passport. You're a musician? Are you playing an instrument?" "Yes, I'm a pianist. Conservatory educated." "Come in. Come in." Inside of the office there were two pianos. "Sit down and play." I played at prima vista, you know, something for him. He called in his wife; she took care of you, took you away. No, you were not born yet. Oh yes, you were born. She took you in her arms and said, says, "She cannot follow you when you're giving a concert tonight." I gave a concert, the music I had on hand. And they let me proceed. I came to Bogota and walked in the office of the guy, of the manager, says, "Oh, Gregory. What you doing here?" "Well, You asked me to come in. You have a job for me." "Gregory, that was four years ago. I have nothing for you." At that time the doors open; Bucky Harris--the one I dedicated many things, you know him, my "Boogie Woogie," "Mexican Boogie Woogie," dedicated to him--"Gregory, what you doing here?" So I said, "Well, he invited me four years ago, and now he hasn't got a job for me." "You give him a job." And I go to the radio station, and I had half of the money from them. And that's how I got first job in the radio station. The next day, we wanted to go and cash our checks. And there were, that night, before night, there was a martial law declared because they killed the president, not the president himself, but somebody who was running for the office of the President. So, the next morning, we wanted to get our money. Through the city full of barricaded streets and soldiers, we came to the bank, and the bank was open. I come in. "Oh, Mr. Stone. What can we do for you?" I says, "I have a check." "Come on, let me have it." And he cashed me the check of 2,000 dollars, I don't know how much money. And I came home, and I told Inge. And she says, "Did you rob a bank or something?" Makes sense? I forget.

CS: Hm.

GS: So I played at the job for, I don't know, for six months. And six months later, somebody comes in. Says, "I represent another radio station. How much money you making on the station? Whatever you make, I'll make double." He offered me a big sum of money for playing at the other station. So I accepted. As I accepted, the
Director of the station says, "What he offered you?" So much. "I’ll give you the same. I’ll give you the same and maybe more later." They had tobacco factory, a big tobacco place, tobacco program. Meantime, life was very tough. We used to record the music in the morning because everything was closed because of the martial law at night. Couldn’t last very long that way, till they called me from the American Embassy and says, "Look, as long as we, as far as we are concerned, you overstayed your visa, and you are not an American citizen, and we don’t want you to be so. But I like to save your citizenship, and you have to get out the first thing you can get." So we took the first ship to get out. We went through, to the airport. The only thing I had, my accordion. I don’t remember--this accordion? No, another accordion. And the guy who carried that accordion lingered very much. He wanted to steal that accordion. He says, I says, "Give me that accordion. I’ll take it myself." And I put that accordion myself on the plane, to his annoyance. Imagine, how there they play tricks! On the last moment they can do a lot of things, swipe something from you, without your knowledge, with your knowledge, you know. You’re lost. And I came to New York. And mother was pregnant. You were supposed to be born. You were not born yet, so she went to San Francisco and took money from the bank and went to join me back in Buenos Aires again. And that’s where we took the train, the boat for 100 dollars, all over to, to what you call it, to Bogota, before the Bogota. Finally, we came to New York and settled to New York, and when we settled in New York, they sent me contracts from Bogota. I couldn’t take--it’s not so easy to leave United States, you know. We stopped on some hotel--I don’t know, you, Toranna was born? I don’t remember. Aha. Charlie Manyanti, my friend who died not long ago, who I gave lesson on countpoint and he gave me lessons on accordion and bought me first accordion for 500 dollars, he was instrumental for me to get a job, the job in that little city that we came, near it’s near, alright, we came there. And I started to teach. Milton Mann. And Milton Mann says, "Play me something." I came in and there was a big fire the night before. So I picked up the accordion. I played for him.

IS: You can wind it up. I’ve got food on the table.

GS: What does she want?

CS: To finish this story.

GS: Anyway, I says, "Alright." "I’ll give you a salary." I don’t know. And his wife, mother-in-law says, "Give
him, pay him the way he wants it." 150 dollars a week. She insisted I should collect 150 dollars a week. And here I am with a broken-down car, going long distances over the, over the lousy roads, to give lessons to some lousy Mexican establishment, somewhere out of that place. And I did it. Let's go.

IS: Wind it up.

CS: OK, Tutti. We're through.

GS: Cristinuchka, I don't feel good. I don't know what's wrong with me, but I don't feel good.

CS: Maybe you ate something.

TAPE 3/A (2 October 1987): kitchen table, breakfast

GS: (humming Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto; looking downwards, toward refrigerator) Who could have written such a melody? He doesn't have to worry about, his name forever will live, especially among pianists. Anyone who tries to play his "Variations on a Theme of Paganini." He had arguments with Koussevitsky about greatness, supposed to be greatness of Debussy; and Koussevitsky always defended Debussy. He couldn't say anything about Debussy was great in his own way; with his little piece, became sensational all over the world. What's the piece, Inge (looking up, towards IS)?

IS: "Claire de Lune."

GS: "Claire de Lune" (looking downwards again). The whole world, all the pianists, no matter where they are, what part of the world they live, if they play the piano good enough, they play the Rachmaninoff "Variations on a Theme of Paganini." And if they don't, they're not good pianists. Claudio Arrau, for some reason known only to him, thought Rachmaninoff is a pianist; but as a composer, he's like a motion picture composer. But I assure you, he could never escape the charms of the "Preludes" of Rachmaninoff if he studied in Berlin, which he did. And I doubt very much if he still sticks to his opinion that Rachmaninoff is a pianist, good pianist, but as a composer is only a motion picture composer.

CS: What does Scriabin and the violin have to do with the piano?

GS: Scriabin was a great pianist (looking at CS).

IS: Who?
GS: Scriabin.

IS: Oh, No, I'm thinking of the violinist. You know, the Basque. You know, the Basque pianist, Paganini. Who's the guy from the Basque country Paganini was.

GS: From the Basque country? Navarra.

IS: Yes, Ok. Then I'm on the right track.

GS: Oh, somebody called our pianist, who appeared with me at the concert, what's his name, the pianist who appeared with me?

IS: Which one? Oh, the pianist from Valencia; the one who died. He hated the name of ... Jean Marie called him a Basque, and he was very, the one, Jose Iturbi. Jose Iturbi, and Marie Jean, not Jean Marie. Now, the trouble with this pancake is it fell apart.

GS: Who cares?

IS: I'm glad. So we have no problems. There's jam, sweetheart, to go on it. You don't want it? (tape cuts)

GS: Talking about waffles brings me to early days of mine in Chicago, Chicago Theatre, with Victor Young, God bless his soul. We going every day, myself with Victor Young together, every morning, we meeting to go to get hot waffles, hot waffles with bacon and eggs. Every morning we meeting, and every time he's eating waffles. Then we going to Chicago Theatre, just across, where I'm playing, this time, in the pit and on the stage, my solo. And he, Victor Young, rehearsing the orchestra. But before we come in for rehearsal, every time we going there, meet together, eat together. And he, every morning, he's eating waffles (eating).

IS: Were those in those little white log cabin houses? I remember, they didn't have them in California . .

GS: ... No, probably big restaurant.

IS: No, but in New York, in the East Coast they had those little white log cabin pancake houses and, in the morning, when it was dark and we had to rehearse, we used to always go to that. Is that where you went with him?

GS: Yes.

IS: In one of, where?
GS: Just across, close to Chicago Theatre, across.

IS: What did you have? Also waffles?

GS: That's all what you can have: bacon, eggs, waffles.

CS: Who was that?

IS: Chicago.

CS: Who? With who?

IS: Victor Young. Does Cristina know who Victor Young is? Explain to her this "yentleman."

GS: The Musical Director was Lipston.

IS: In Chicago?

GS: He didn't know what means "a capella," Musical Director.

IS: Tell Cris the story about "a capella."

GS: During the rehearsal, we we're discussing, musicians, we say "a capella" this, "a capella" that. And the Musical Director says, "What the hell is this? You always talking 'a capella.' What's 'a capella'?' Mr. Lipston, the Musical Director of Chicago Theatre, didn't know what means "a capella."

IS: Does he go to Hollywood too, ever?

GS: Yes.

IS: That's what I thought--ha!

GS: Not only he went to Hollywood, he was Musical Director.


GS: . . . Paramount.

IS: What about Victor Young?

GS: Victor Young was--everything! He could do anything he wanted. But he met that Ro-, Romanian publisher in cafe and invite him immediately to his house to sleep, to sleep with his wife.

CS: What's this (laughing)? I was sleeping. Just a minute.

IS: Repeat that because that's a little strange the way that
came out, Gregory. Repeat it so Cristina understands.

GS: There was a Romanian. He was not a publisher before because he didn’t have any money. But they met in a cafe. Victor was with his wife, sitting in a cafe. He shows up. He must have convinced him that, that Victor invited him immediately to his house as a lover to his wife.

IS: He didn’t invite him as a lover, though. He invited him to the house, and they became lovers. Wasn’t that it?

GS: Same thing.

IS: Oh.

CS: It boils down to the same thing in the end.

GS: And he became quite a success, successful publisher. First of all, Victor gave him all the music that he wrote for the pictures . . .

CS: . . . Who was that guy? What was his name?

IS: Victor Young?

CS: No, the one who became the successful publisher.

IS: The Romanian? Oh, what was the Romanian’s name? You knew it one time.

GS: Yes, I forget.

IS: When Victor Young died, he took over the publishing, wasn’t it?

GS: Yes.

IS: With the wife or without the wife?

GS: I think she was dead already.

IS: Hm. See, Cris. Some people are lucky in life: they get everything; and when they all die off, they still get everything. Oh God! Too poor, so he finds a place to live, has food and shelter, is given a job with Victor. Victor Young had a publishing company, didn’t he? Victor Young. Or he? . . .

GS: . . . Yes.

IS: And, this fellow worked in the publishing company?
GS: Just took it over.

IS: Took it over. Then Victor dies, the wife dies, and he ends up with the publishing company. Poor little rich boy. Hm. Back to the waffles. He never had waffles with you, this Romanian? Did you know this Romanian publisher?

GS: Sure.

IS: OK.

GS: You didn't like my playing of accordion (looking toward refrigerator).

IS: What do you mean, I didn't like your playing the accordion?

GS: I played that program, that concert.

IS: Which concert was that?

GS: With Victor Young.

IS: And I didn't like you playing accordion, or what?

GS: Well, you didn't like the accordion, or something there was you didn't like.

IS: Where was this? In Chicago?

GS: In Chicago.

IS: I never knew you in Chicago. That wasn't I. I never knew you in Chicago, Gregory.

GS: But that is not in Chicago; that was in . . .

IS: . . . Aha . . .

GS: . . . What, what you call that?

IS: Where?

GS: Reno, Nevada.

IS: You didn't play accordion in Reno, Nevada.

GS: Once, I played, and you didn't like it.

IS: You had nothing to do with Victory Young in Nevada,

GS: I borrowed the accordion from the guy who had the store. Where was that?

IS: Had to be in L.A. because in Reno you had two accordions. You had a Giulietti, you had your Honer, and you had, maybe even three . . .

GS: . . . He had a store.

IS: Maytan had a store, and you didn’t borrow anything from Maytans.

GS: No, no, no. He had a store, and I borrowed from him the accordion to play the job.

IS: That had to have been in L.A.

GS: L.A.

IS: Yeah, because you didn’t use your accordion.

GS: No, it could not be in L.A.

IS: I don’t think you hardly ever lifted up your accordion in Reno.

GS: . . . You sure it was not in? . . .

IS: . . . Chicago? No, I didn’t know you.

GS: No.

CS: Santa Ana.

IS: Oh, Santa Ana maybe?

GS: Santa Ana, I played that night when they had a fire.

IS: That was, yes, that was for that studio, Milton Mann, but that had nothing. This was afterwards that you did that for Victor Young or before that?

GS: After.

IS: Ha, I don’t even know that.

GS: You come in by train with the kids . . .

IS: . . . To Santa Ana, yeah. Oh, that was big train ride
for us.

GS: Cristina doesn’t remember.

CS: I remember.

IS: Papa went from Santa Ana to L.A. to make phone calls. Remember? We decided to take the kids on a train ride, and we went from, we took the train from Santa Ana down to the terminal in L.A. to make a dozen phone calls here and there, whatever it was, and the children had their train ride, and I went into the train place, had a nursery for youngsters. And there was a little dark, a little negress was there, or black child, or whatever, and when you came home--our neighbor’s name was Janet, the oldest little blond child was, was Janet, remember this little negress there that was about the same age as Janet--so when you came home you said, "I liked playing with the purple Janet." Everybody that age was a Janet to you, I guess.

CS: No, I remember some, maybe it was an airplane terminal, where we played with these wooden square things that had letters going all around.

IS: No, that was at that train terminal.

CS: Oh, it was the train terminal.

IS: Yes. They had little baby beds and rocking chairs.

CS: And there was a chocolate machine where they made hot chocolate.

IS: Oh, I don’t remember that.

CS: And that was so exquisitely exciting to get chocolate from the chocolate machine . . .

IS: . . . Oh, that we could have had that, yes . . .

CS: . . . While we were waiting.

IS: That’s interesting. I forgot about that, but that’s true. And we took the train back home, and you had a good time. And purple Janet, the blond . . .

CS: . . . I remember one thing. I don’t think I couldn’t have been more than two or three years old, and I was walking with Papa. It was like a big lot; I don’t know what was out there, and lots of lights coming down. All lit up, and I don’t know where it was . . .
IS: ... In Santa Ana, maybe.

CS: I don’t know. I was two or three years old, two years old?

IS: It could’ve been Santa Ana, but where?

GS: Just imagine me giving lessons to Milton Mann students, and water on the freeway was up to the--how I made it, I don’t know.

IS: He used to give lessons in some far away little Mexican hamlets. That was when we had the happy car. Do you remember the happy car? Do you remember the happy car, Gregory? I didn’t even know you knew how to drive, and when we arrived at the train station in Santa Ana, there was Papa with the car. My mouth fell open. I mean, I had never known that he was able to drive at all. In my wildest imagination I couldn’t imagine him driving. So he had bought this, what he later termed the happy car. And the reason was every time you would start, suddenly it would jiggle and wiggle and bounce and bump. And you kids looked at each other and said, "Oh, this is a very happy car: it’s dancing."

CS: What was that? What make was that?

IS: What kind of car? I don’t know, have no idea.

CS: Was it dark blue, or something?

IS: Green or blue.

GS: I picked it up from the lot.

IS: It was one that danced. Oh, that was funny. And Papa took that all over when he was teaching.

GS: And once we were on the freeway, the little car, I think, somebody hit us. And the guy was drunk. And he wanted to pay us money, to give us money not to call up the police, nothing.

IS: Do you remember that?

CS: No, I remember New Year’s Eve or--what was it?--New Year’s Day. We were parked.

IS: That was something else. Yeah, oh, that was, we were . . .

GS: . . . And Toranna says, "Don’t drive Papa."
IS: No, that was when we were parked. I had to get, pick up the Christmas cards, or something to mail. I had to mail something. We were parked across the street from the, from the apartment, and . . .

CS: . . . I thought it was Chandler Blvd.

IS: No, this was on, we lived on, uh, Burbank Blvd.

CS: Yeah, but I thought we were parked on Chandler Blvd.

IS: No, no, across the street . . .

CS: . . . Delivering Christmas presents or something.

IS: No, across the street from our house. And we were parked, and you were sitting there waiting. And I think I just got into the car, and this drunk from the back of us came and knocked the car into the field, and I just grabbed you two back quickly, you know, away from the, just instinctively. And you started screaming and crying, both of you, hysterically, got out of the car, and Papa wanted to go some place. And from then on you kept on saying, "I want to walk with my feet." You were not going to have anything to do with, you weren’t hurt, except the car was damaged. That’s when he tried to bribe you because he had been drinking and he was really pie-eyed. I remember that.

GS: And Torannuchka says, "Don’t drive too fast Papa, don’t."

IS: That left, when you were small, that left an impression on you.

CS: I remember when we used to walk to Peppers.

IS: Peppers was the name of that market--Oh, my God!

CS: And we passed the crazy man’s house.

IS: Hm.

CS: The funny man.

IS: The funny man, and Papa would tell you about the house with three stilts and legs. You used to entertain. Do you remember these stories?

CS: Not really. But weren’t they true?

IS: Ha, ha, ha!
CS: You mean they weren't true?

IS: How old are you, Cristina?

GS: He lived on that empty lot.

IS: You used to entertain.

CS: What were those stories you used to tell us, flying watermelons or something?

GS: I don't know, but he lived on that empty lot.

CS: Yeah.

GS: That guy.

CS: Yeah.

IS: A shack.

GS: A little shack.

IS: And, I don't know why it was on stilts; you said something about it built on stilts, uh . . .

CS: . . . What did you used to tell us?

IS: Oh, fantastic tales he used to tell you.

GS: I probably invented stories.

CS: Don't you remember them? (shakes head no) You don't remember any of them?

IS: Oh they were such marvelous stories, Greg. They came home and they would say, "We saw the funny man today," poor souls.

CS: What was funny about that man?

IS: Do you remember what you told them, some of the stories you invented? They were marvelous because they were always very impressed.

CS: I thought it was something about flying, flying fruit or something, flying watermelon?

IS: Fruit, watermelon with wings, and--oh, Gregory, you used to invent the most marvelous stories for them.
GS: And I was tired of it. "You never go anyplace," you tell me. "You never go anyplace; you only make promises, never go." And that's the reason that I . . .

CS: . . . Stopped . . .

GS: . . . Decided to go to--where did I decide to go to, Reno?

IS: Reno.

CS: Yes, but go back to the funny man because all my life I thought they were true. And I told Toranna recently when I was there.

GS: You always believed in my, the one I gave you.

IS: The jellybeans.

CS: Of course.

GS: The caramels.

IS: The jellybeans.

CS: And I tried to tell Toranna about this crazy man who used to, she said no.

IS: She didn't remember?

GS: He lived there.

IS: I still remember the little shack he had.

CS: I know. We used to see him in his shorts and longish kind of hair.

IS: Yes.

CS: He would come into the store, Peppers. I was scared to death when I saw him.

IS: Yes.

GS: He was in the store, naturally. He used to go shopping.

IS: Yes.

CS: But I don't remember what you used to say about him, the specific things.

IS: You used to invent stories, like. I don't know what.
All these things he did at night time.

CS: Like what?

IS: I don’t know. He cooked over a pot outside and had his fire. I don’t know what, it was just all invented. Fairytales. Fairytales, probably Russian fairytales that Papa was putting onto this poor old soul who really was a very independent little soul with his poor old house.

GS: And one thing you decided. "Papa, you say you’re gonna go someplace. You never go anyplace." Yes. So we decided to go this. Where did I go?

IS: Reno.

GS: That’s when we decided to go to Reno.

IS: And you asked Fred De Salvo, "Can I start a symphony orchestra here, Fred?" And he said, "If you can’t, nobody can." Those were the words. That’s all. We sold the stores; we sold the house.

CS: I remember all that, but what I don’t remember is the damn funny man.

GS: And when we came to the house, Toranna says, "This is the house." She pointed to the yellow house, our house.

IS: She thought it was the yellow house. That’s what she told me because she thought surely it couldn’t be that lovely one at the end of the street.

GS: I wonder how it is now, all those things there.

CS: I don’t know. Back to the funny man and his shack. All my life, I thought that really existed. It was on stilts. Was it really on stilts? All my life, or did Papa just say it was on stilts, was walking on stilts?

IS: He walked around on stilts, or the shack walked around on stilts.

CS: No, I just.

IS: Something happened to the house at night time, or something. You used to invent the most marvelous stories, Greg.

GS: Yes, It’s true story that he lived there.

IS: Yes, but she doesn’t want the true story; she wants to
know the story that you used to tell them and she believed to this day.

GS: I don’t know.

CS: The true story (laughing); the true story. Oh, I can see him still, and I can see him in that little grocery store, and I can see his little shack, and I can see the field all the way around him. Yes, he probably grew melons. Melons, he grew melons, something about watermelons. Did you used to tell us something about his watermelons?

GS: Cross the street was an empty lot, and there was something.

IS: The radio station.

GS: No, no, no. Empty lot across the street. They were not building anything there. You were going there to collect something.

IS: Oh, that was on the other side. Ah, where they built the junior college, that used to be an apricot field with loads and loads of apricots. And when Oma and Opa came, Opa would say, "Look at those lovely apricots." So we went across the street and we picked. Nobody, they were just dropping off the trees, and nobody gave a tinker’s hoot whether they fell to the ground or didn’t fall to the ground. So we went and got the most beautiful apricots, and Papa used to sit at the window and say, "It reminds me of a train station, when we would go to the train station." Santa Ana, do you remember? Burbank Blvd.

GS: Hm.

IS: When we lived in the triplex there.

GS: Hm.

IS: You used to sit in the kitchen window and look out at the apricot field there, and it was lovely. Springtime, ripe in Autumn, just beautiful. And then down came everything, and they built the junior college--at first with Quonset huts, and then after the Quonset huts, a couple of years later, they built the campus. That was a shame though, you know. The apricots just falling there and nobody, so many poor people in the world really, and you think of it. They probably still have the same thing happening in the States. Why are you so hot, Chaika?
CS: I wish you could think of the funny man stories. That bothers me because I thought those were all true, and I tried to explain to Toranna--isn't that strange?--when I was there just now and she says, "You don't know what you're talking about."

GS: I told them the story about walls made of chocolate.

IS: Oh, yes. Those stories. What was that one again? I don't remember now but, Oh, Gregory. It was a princess who had, one wall of her house was made of chocolate. She was bad. She was sent to her room, and she loved nothing better. And the other walls, the other rooms, walls were made of Peppermint. And the little boy drummer, Ambrosio, the little drummer boy. Do you remember that story?

GS: No.

IS: Don't you remember that? What was that one? He liked to drum. Yeah, I'm writing that up. He liked to drum, didn't he?

GS: Yeah.

IS: But why? Mother and father did something. The neighbors couldn't stand it, complained. Mother and father went out.

CS: What happened?

GS: So he started to drum.

IS: But why?

GS: Because he was forbidden to play.

IS: No, no. It was some dangerous thing that happened and then he started to drum.

GS: Fire.

IS: Yeah. And he started to drum at the top of his, what are they called, mallets? Do you remember that now?

GS: No.

CS: What about Johnny Mouse and Tommy Mouse.

IS: That I don't remember at all. Johnny Mouse and Tommy Mouse was (sings), I only remember the beats, the drums, the beats, the same beats. I remember I would be cooking
and, all of a sudden (drums on table). And you three—I'd turn around, and everybody's beating on the table. And then you, you'd stop—Something about Johnny Mouse and Tommy Mouse who went to visit their girlfriend, and one strummed the guitar. Do you remember any of that, do you remember?

GS: Vaguely.

IS: And a cat, oh yes. But I don't know what the cat was doing besides looking at the mice, the mouses, the moose, the mice. You don't remember those stories? Darn it. They were such great stories.

CS: I loved the Johnny Mouse and Tommy Mouse because it was so noisy.

IS: I know it was. I used to laugh my head off because everybody would be boom, dadada boom, dadada boom, boom, boom.

CS: I don't remember the story any more, but I remember the drum beat.

IS: And they went with their guitar, with their girlfriend, and they sang songs. And that's were the strum, this was that banging, it was the strumming of the guitars.

CS: Oh, I thought it was . . .

IS: . . . And then the cat would come, but I never knew what happened after the cat came. I never got to the end of that story. You don't remember either?

GS: No.

IS: You don't remember either? Gee, you can't invent something for me? I want to be entertained. Oh, the cat looked in the window, and they couldn't go home, or something. I could say, just strummed more guitar. You remember the story with the princess and the walls? All I remember she was bad, and she was sent to her room, and there was nothing she liked better. And you two loved this. Oh, I know. Oh, you two.

CS: Oh, I know. I used to think about if only the house were full of chocolate. One wall, Papa would say, was marzipan, and one was chocolate. And ice cream. And one was peppermint, and something else I can't remember. What a house, can't we move there?

IS: And she would go and lick the walls because she was so,
she loved to be sent to, she loved to be punished because she was always sent there. Was that a Russian fairytale or something? A Russian fairytale or yours?

GS: Don’t remember.

IS: I’m sure it was Papa’s. I don’t remember it. Nobody would have walls. That’s Papa’s invention, I’m sure. I’m sure Johnny Mouse and Tommy Mouse were also Papa’s invention, and the little drummer was also his.

GS: I think some Pushkin in it. Some Pushkin.

CS: In which one? In which one?

GS: Well, you didn’t tell about the goldfish. Did you ever hear that one? Goldfish fell into the net of a fisherman.

CS: Hm.

GS: And she begged the fisherman, "I’ll do anything you want me. Just let me go free." So he let her free and came back home, and his wife was sitting near that poor place of theirs, abode, whatever you call.

IS: Hut.

GS: And he told her the story, and she says, "Go back and tell her that I like this, to have something." And he went back to the fish, to the little goldfish. She came out. And told her. And she says, "Go back." He went back, and all of a sudden, he sees that his wife is sitting like a baroness. She’s got all the maids around her, everyone to take care of her. Well, the final of the story says, oh the final story. It’s not all yet, but the final story, she wants to rule over everything now.

CS: Hm.

GS: So he went to call out the goldfish and told her the story. She didn’t say anything. "Good-bye," like. He came back home, and he finds himself in the old shack.

CS: Hm.

GS: Like he started, with his wife. That must be also from Pushkin.

IS: I think you told me one time it was Pushkin. It’s like the three wishes, where somebody has a sausage on their
nose, and the last wish is left, and the woman wants it to have the sausage removed from her nose.

CS: The other story, too, you used to tell us about some sea captain, or something, that was forced to pay a tariff for his boat, or something like that, and he didn’t want to pay the tax, and so. What was that one?

GS: Well, that’s also the story of Jules Vernes.

CS: Jules Vernes.

GS: He didn’t wanna pay to go across, that’s Istanbul, Constantinople. He didn’t want to pay the duty to go because says, "I won’t pay the duty." Around the world, the other way, he came back, and he didn’t pay the duty.

IS: Didn’t he have to pay the duty? Didn’t he have to cross the bridge coming back though? I think he came back years later, old, and something like that, and he found out from somebody, the next day the duty had been lifted. Oh, it was a twist at the end of the story, somehow, I remember, so he made the trip for nothing, not for nothing, but you know.

GS: Ah, yeah, interesting. The Basque stories I have here too.

CS: Which Basque stories?

GS: We have a book.

CS: Written in Basque or written in Spanish?

GS: Written in Spanish.

CS: Oh, and they’re similar to these?

GS: No, no. The story starts that they gave him, that they, he was supposed to take care of a girl, of a neighbor. So instead of taking care of her, he raped her.

CS: Hm.

GS: And she became his girl, like his wife—I don’t know, those days. And this doesn’t start like that. He was supposed to take care of her and one day, instead of taking care of her, he says, "I feel like. I need you. I want you." So she says, "All right, you can have me." That’s when he raped her, and she’s supposed to be friend of the house.
IS: You mean he's supposed to be a friend of the house.

GS: Yes. And that was, continued for a while, and then he went on a long trip. He left her behind, and when he came back, she was dead already.

CS: Hm.

GS: And it's like a true story. That's real Basque book, the one I have here. And they were not Christians, Basque, they were pagans those days.

IS: But they became Christians.

GS: By force.

CS: Hm.

GS: They didn't want to be Christians.

CS: Hm. How many centuries ago?

GS: Well, if you take that book, you probably find out. Well, it must have been, it's not long. It's about 150 years ago, or something like that.

CS: Hm.

GS: And they were Spanish citizens, citizens of Spain, I think, for generations. I always see something flying here.

IS: Well, you folk may continue with your story telling. I'm going swimming.

GS: You going swimming now?

IS: I'm hot. I'm just all wet. It's a hot day. Besides which, the digger in the audience is not digging.

TAPE 3/B (3 October 1987): kitchen table, after lunch

GS: Maybe we should go better play (conversational, looking at CS).

CS: Play now? I haven't practiced yet.

GS: So what?

CS: Alright, if you want to.

GS: Where do you want to start?
IS: She has to get something done, Gregory, for her school.

CS: I want to start from the beginning again.

GS: I don't know what was the beginning.

CS: The very beginning. The story you told me before, from the very beginning, the trains and everything else, because I don't have all the details right.

GS: You mean when we, when first, when I was born?

CS: The whole story, whatever you like, the whole story.

GS: (looking downwards, toward refrigerator) Well, as I remember myself, a maid was carrying me around in her "brassas"--what's?--in her arms. We were quite well to do people. My father was a owner of the stores around Odessa. And after the pogroms, he decided that there's no place for us in Russia. And since he had an older brother in Paris, France, we all decided on the long journey to Paris. When in Paris, while myself and my cousin having a good time running around, running around the Eiffel Tower, collecting all kind of advertising, which would be new in Odessa, we rented an apartment on Rue de Temple. That's where all the emigres used to live. That's where the first I hard (starts singing) "Machise," "Machise." And we, we were amazed by the electricity, by the electrical lights of the cafes on Montmartre. No matter how much well, and my father tried, he said, "No. French language is not for me!" And he decided on the long journey back to Russia. We were detained by my cousin dropping a night, a night--how you call?--"Toilet," in the toilet, and breaking the toilet. That's near we stopped on going back to Russia. But at the last minute, while waiting at the main station of Gare du Nord, Gare du Nord, I think it's called, he appeared. And we finally were on our long journey back to Odessa. Traditionally, also, we carried the samovar, which we had tea, to the amazement, hilarity of the passengers and station, look in people. And we came back to Odessa just in time of the series of pogroms against the Jews and all the foreigners. Only those could go back to their own places the ones who proved that they lived in the pale. In the pale they used to call, in the pale because they returned to their homes. Others were sent on the long trip to far away places, I don't even know where to, sometimes even to Siberia. How old was I there? How old was I?

CS: Six or seven.
GS: Huh?

CS: Six or seven.

GS: Oh, that's six or seven. Well, I started again taking lesson from Biber Galperin Sicamirovich, Miranovich, I forget now, till I was about I think I was about 9 or 10 years of age because then, I knew, we saw Haley, the comet; we saw Haley's Comet, and that must have been around 1910. We have that verified, I think we have it in the book. Haley's comet appeared; we saw it on horizon everyday. And we still did not cut off our relations with friends. We used to send cards. I remember they received letters on postcards, on "poste restante de Paris." And here we received they sent. As I said before, my father started his business of storekeeping, change, I don't know change. I told you our flat was the place for the "Self-Defense" people. They used to catch those hooligans, Russian hooligans, and throw them in the canalization.

CS: Hm.

GS: I don't remember if I told you that. They threwed. Our flat was the place of all the "Sama Obarona," "Self-Defense" people. They used to come in and get their hot food and everything else, and go back to the posts, of catching the hooligans, "Chornaya Sotnya," the "Black Hundred." I continue my study in the Conservatory, which, at that time, was called Odessa Music School before Malishevsky. Vitold Malishevsky was the Director of the Conservatory. Somehow, the Director of the Conservatory got a liking to me: I always wrote impossible solutions to musical questions in harmony. But he says, "Alright. You're doing very fine. Don't worry." Finally, when he gave me to conduct, in the opera Eugene Onegin, I killed it: with so many cues that one has to give to the chorus, to the soloists, to the orchestra, I was stuck. And I told him, "Vitold Yosefovich, Why do you give me? I spoil everything." And he says, "Don't kid yourself, Grisha. You're doing better than anybody else. You are the best." And that was, continued for a while. I conducted all the first performances of the operas—he gave me. My other teacher was a conductor teacher, Cimini—I forgot his first name. He was already a middle-aged man, but he knew all the Russian operas by memory. He could conduct! And he also was my continuous teacher when I came back to the States. And he giving me still lesson. He was married to a Russian, fine soprano, called Zakrefskaya. He took her to United States. He would be now, maybe 120 years of age.
now, or something like that, I imagine, not less, even more. And he came to my apartment, and we started all anew. I liked him very much. He was the first one to conduct in Hollywood Bowl Russian operas—Prince Igor, Eugene Onegin, I don't know, many others, I suppose. Little by little I, because of my nature, I suppose—I don't know how I got it—like you said, you said to me once, "You showed them something!" You told me, "Pretty good for the Russian emigre," something. Well, for no reason at all, I became Chief Arranger for RKO (sings theme, "Hello, Hello, RKO"). That was a famous program on the air, and I used to write arrangements ("When Donaldson Meets Rossini on Broadway"). Of course, Donaldson was not the name, but his music, yes. "Love Me or Leave Me" (sings). That was Donaldson. I wrote an overture, "William Tell," based on using (sings "Love Me or Leave Me") and something else (also "William Tell Overture"). That's how, later on, I met Irving Berlin. Mister Schwarwald, my Musical Director, invited him to hear my paraphrase, "Irving Berlin a la Liszt, a la Franz Liszt." Irving Berlin came, and he was very much surprised at what he heard. Said, "You come to my office." I came to his office. He had a transposing piano because the key that they played does not fit his voice, so he had a transposing switch. I says, "Fine, Mr. Berlin. But how you gonna do, tell it to your arrangers?" "Oh, to my arrangers? As you know, I cannot sing. I whistle to them over the phone."

CS: Hm.

GS: He whistles the tune, and they arrange everything. Everybody can do it—if I can do it with Mr. Gould.

CS: Hm.

GS: Now, jumping back to Odessa. In Odessa I met a gentleman who called himself Amerikov. (His first name, what's his first name?) He called himself Amerikov because he went to America; and he got stuck, and his mother was ill, so he went to Russia to see her. And he got stuck in Russia and could not go back to America. And I met him in Odessa. We played together, and we made a pact together, three of us—the violinist, Obermann; myself; and he, Amerikov—that we gonna stick together and one day again we'll right across the border. And he, going back, out of Odessa, and going back to United States. Was easy for me because at that time in Odessa there were a lotta cooks. People worked in various famous restaurants in Odessa—Franconi, Rabina—who then dreamt to get out of Odessa and go back to their country because life was very tough. All the bourgeois cafes and things
like that were closed. At that time, I got ill. I got, first of all, I got—my father and mother took me in a bath, hot bath—and I got what was, scarlet fever I had. And after scarlet fever, I got typhus, typhus. All inside, all, it comes out of the bite of a certain flea—must have bitten me, and it remained. Anyway, and I’m just like a—I look myself that time in the mirror, and I’m like dead. And I didn’t show up that time on my place where I played. And I played that time on Ambalzaki, Cafe Ambalzaki, one of those few things that were still open in Odessa—Cafe Ambalzaki—with a violinist, very good one, Kopfhecker, the guy who kills heads. We, Kopfhecker, we play there. At that time, the first time, I met Jascha Borovski. Jascha Borovski used to come. He was in uniform of a director of the band. He told the story. I was listening to his stories. He was telling the story to my violinist. At that time, that episode with Jascha Borovsky, till later, of course, Odessa was a God-forsaken city, full of various diseases, people running away. Guy comes in and gives me 5,000 rubles to go with him, uh, to Crimea. At the last minute, I could not go: I was in bed. His money was lost. As would happen, what happened to me, you wouldn’t be sitting here with me talking if that would happen. I don’t know what would happen to me. I was not married. Coming back to Odessa, we had a secret pact, three of us—Obermann, Amerikov, and myself—that we gonna get out of Odessa sooner or later. I went to the Gubkomdeserter ("Gubernskaya Kamisia Pobarvhehs Deserthursum"), the office that was fighting the desertion in the army and told them—they knew me because I was, used to play the "Internationale," on the piano, better than anybody else; I used to get double ration of everything—and I told them, the Committee, that I would like to have a car or two cars to make propaganda. They says, "My goodness. You’re the one that we’re always looking for. Go ahead and do it. We’ll help you." So they supplied me with the train (I don’t know, a few cars) full of refugees—the cooks from various places and all places who wanted to get out of Russia. And this time, finally, came a date that he did not give an order to unchain our cars from the big train. And the train pulled us out to Zhmerinka, pulled out to Zhmerinka. Zhmerinka was the biggest port between ports, connecting Odessa with all the Russia. And just in the morning, somebody was knocking (Knocks three times). Was the Cheka, Cheka that was center of killing everybody—all the speculators and everybody else. Anybody they wanted to. And they looked inside of the car and says, "Ah, speculators. Arrest them!" "Oh," I says, "Tavarische, not speculators. We are artists." "Artists? My goodness! We are dying here from boredom." (crosses himself three times) And they
helped us with all that money that was lying on the table—dollars and all kind of money; and sacks full of sugar that was so expensive in that part of Russia. They put us in the best hotel at that time, and brought the piano. And I started rehearsing. And pretty soon we gave a big concert. In the city of Mogiliov, Mogiliov Podolsk. And few days, sometime later, a gentleman came to us and says, "Look, I know you don’t come in to our city to give concerts. You want to cross the border, don’t you?" I says, "Yes." "Have you got any money?" "How much you need?" "500 dollars." "Fine, we have 500 dollars." Three of us had to put 1,500 dollars, which we had. He says,"Now, we call you anytime, in the daytime, at night—he ready." One day, we were just eating. A knock at the door (knocks). "Open the door." And they were there. "Ready? Let’s go." We hardly could took our things. I had a coat on; I nearly froze. I had a coat on, but I was still cold. And we went, we go through the city, but not through the main streets, around, around. And one of the babies started to cry, and he said to the lady, "You better quieten the baby. If not, I’ll have to kill you or get you out of here." Finally, we got to the Dnieper, very narrow at that place. We just stepped over; we were already in Europe. And early in the morning, he put us on, Amerikov remembered that he had an uncle that lived not far away. He said, "Let’s go." Early in the morning, was cold, winter, winter, and I was very shabbily dressed. And I could not even sit down on the "britchka"—whatever they produce us—and I was running after her because I was afraid I’m gonna be dead. And we were running. Finally, in the evening, in the evening, we came to a little place where there was a little hotel, like. We came that hotel, and they knew we come from the other side. But I didn’t tell them where we came from. The first time we saw white bread and all the bourgeois food that we were accustomed to have in Odessa. After staying sometime in that little city, I gave a concert. People even couldn’t cross the street: it was such fat earth. Anyway, we, after staying there, we finally, three of us, decided we are going further to Kishinaw, to Kishinaw, which was the center of Bassarabia that time—Obermann, Sascha Borisoff, and myself, always together. We come into a theatre. It was evening, and I was wearing white shirt. And we come in front of the theatre. All of a sudden, they, Azsrofsky, the first cellist of the Odessa Theatre, runs out: "I haven’t got a pianist! My pianist was supposed, I engaged, he didn’t show up! He must have run back to Russia, or something, but he’s not home, no place!" (That was Jules Berg, you know.) "And I need a pianist." "Well," he said, "Don’t worry about a pianist. Here is Gregory. He’ll play for you." And I
went on the stage, and I played the accompaniment. The
sascha Borisoff was turning pages for me. That was my
experience in Bassarabia. And, somehow, I met the leader
of the Orchestra, Panicu Stefanescu. Oh, oh, I used to
play substitute at the London Hotel, where he was the
leader—but I never played with him because they didn't
need a substitute, I was always there. But, one day, I
got Sascha Borisoff, Sascha Borisoff brother come in,
"And then you stay and be my, something happen, you play
piano." When Panicu came in the morning, looked at him,
says, "What you doing here?" He says, "I'm substituting
for Gregory." He says, "What happened?" "He left for
Bucharest." "Aha." Panicu closed his violin and took
the first train to run after me to Bucharest. And,
finally, caught me in Bucharest, in a hotel, and says,
"Gregory, Grigorash," they called me in Romanian, "Why
do you have to do such a thing to me?" Says, "Panicu,
I am not, I don't want to play all my life in a
restaurant, gypsy restaurant. I just don't want to do
it." "But you have to come with me back because, without
you, I cannot play." "Panicu, my passport is not good."
"I don't care. Let's go back!" And we came back to the
border; and at the border, we came out at the station.
And gendarme came out and looked at my passport and says,
"You cannot go back to Bassarabia. Your passport is not
valid. You have to remain here." We came out of the
station, and the gentleman who saw Stefanescu, "Panicu,
what you doing here? The whole world is waiting for you
in Kishinaw!" And when he heard the story, he says to
the master of the station, says, "Let him go! I
guarantee." So I went back to play with Panicu and other
leaders. Meantime, I still had my connections with
Bucharest because they had a Russian bass player who I
liked and he liked me very much. I got to him again in
Bucharest, and he said, "Grigori, if you, we love to have
you here, but you cannot make any changes in the
orchestra because if you make any changes, the gypsies
will kill you." Says, "Ta hell with all that darn
thing!" I did go back to Bassarabia, naturally, because
all my things were there, music, whatever I had saved.
And this time for good. I says, "I'm gonna get out. I'm
going go Bucharest." And I got another job to play with
the Belgian leader who swore, and the gypsy violinist was
there, and the guitar player who played banjo now, and
myself—of the old orchestra—and that Belgian guy. We
could not speak any other language, but he stuck to
French. He used to be a sensation there. Finally, for
some reason, he had to leave and get a better job, I
don't know, but we remained. three of us. I told you
how I got the visa, without pay, for myself, for
Obermann, for Pagarelof (who did not use the visa), for
Zoe. Now we are in, back in Odessa, in the train. And
this time, I told the order not to stop the train, I repeat myself. In Zhmerinka, the Cheka opened the door and says, "Ah, speculators! Get them!" And I told them, "Artists." So they got us room in hotel, well the piano. We rehearsed there. Still, I used to go to the station and sit there. And the captain of the train says, "Why don't you go, take your troupe together, and give us some concert here on the train? And we'll take you to Kiev and back again. You can speculate as much as you want." We took him by his word; we did it, and finally we came for the last time. It brought us back to (tape cuts off).

TAPE 4/A (4 October 1987): kitchen table, before dinner

CS: Yeah, well that's part of it too. We have to write down the word. What was it called in Russian?

GS: "Kataralnia zhiltuxa."

IS: That's yellow fever then, huh? No. What could it be? Jaundice, was it jaundice? Gregory, what was the name of it?


CS: And where were you?

GS: In Ukraine. And with the doctor, the German doctor came during the war, naturally. I forgot what year it was exactly. But anyway, he came and he told me, "You have 'kataralnia zhiltuxa'."

CS: How old were you?

GS: I must have been about, I don't know, 14, 15, or something.

IS: Were your parents alive yet?

GS: No, I wasn't home even. No, my father dead, long time. My mother died.

CS: I always forget: how did your mother die?

GS: She died in a hospital, on the bed. And they called me to come to her. And she was already dead. And I came in there.

CS: But what was the reason?
GS: She has asthma.

IS: Asthma? Asthma? Like Opa? Son of a gun, hm. Where were you when they called her, or when they called you?

GS: I was in the market place, taking care of the merchandise.

CS: And you didn’t even know that she was sick?

GS: No, I knew that she’s sick, but . . .

CS: . . . She wasn’t in the hospital then?

GS: When I called her, they took her to the hospital.

CS: Aha. I wonder if, they have medications now, if they would help her.

GS: Yes, now. After all, we were a well-to-do family. I remember, we used to go every year to, to the grave of her parents, to Cherson. Cherson is on the Dnieper, is falling, the Dnieper is falling into the Black Sea. And she was in Cherson visiting her relations, always there.

CS: Is it far away from Odessa?

GS: No, it’s overnight.

CS: Overnight by train?

GS: By boat.

CS: Do you remember the place that you visited there with her?

GS: Vaguely, Mama. yeah, yes. But, you know, so many years now.

CS: You say it was on the Crimea?

GS: No, Crimea is far away. Oh, Alright. It’s Dnieper.

IS: Was it cold, or warm, or what kind of weather, climate, or . . . ?

GS: . . . Hot.

IS: Hot?

GS: I remember how we used to throw the watermelons from one to another, those working men in the port. They stood
in one line, throwing watermelons, one to another, till it came to, I don't know how far they had to do it. In the center of the city, there were trucks, or something, that had to pick up, picked up those watermelons. Imagine that? That's how they made a living.

IS: I saw that in Argentina. And I also saw them carrying bananas on their heads, on the boats.

GS: But those watermelons, some of them very large, too.

IS: That's in the Ukraine, huh, where it's so rich? What do you remember, what kind of houses where your mother visited her relatives?

GS: Very good houses, because her parents were well-to-do people.

CS: Oh, your mother's parents. Do you remember them?

GS: A little I remember, way down in my memory. We used to go by boat, I told you. Todleben was the boat. I already told you that before.

CS: No.

GS: Todleben, Todleben was the boat. In German, German boat. And I remember, the boat was aristocratic.

CS: But do you remember your grandparents, that was your mother's parents? They were alive yet?

GS: My grandfather, I think, I went to his funeral as a little boy.

CS: The Dnieper, you went up there?

GS: No, that was in Odessa.

CS: Aha. Do you remember your grandmother?

GS: Vaguely, vaguely.

CS: Why was his funeral in Odessa?

GS: Huh?

CS: Why was his funeral in Odessa?

GS: Who?

CS: Your grandfather.
GS: Well, we lived there.

CS: He lived with you too?

GS: No, I don't think. We had a flat, a very nice flat. I told you, as I remember, our house was a house of the "Self-Defense League." During the Pogrom, they used to kill out all those, all the, all the "Chornaya Sotnya," the "Black Hundred." They used to catch those "Black Hundred" on the street and put them in a canalization, you know, drown them dead. Uh, the "Sama Obarona," they just leave them.

IS: What are "Black Hundred"?

GS: "Pogrom-Makers." Mostly pogrom was making against foreigners. Foreigners were either Jews, or there was other, small nationalities, that they have no protection.

IS: Like the Chinese, like the chinese that sold . . .

GS: . . . Anybody that was there. Could not escape the Pogrom. So, in our flat, we, they used to come in. They got hot sandwiches, and coffee, and whatever--no coffee those days, tea, you know. And they found, and they used to go back on the street and kill, and kill out those Pogromists, and kill out and catch those "Pogromki." Because I remember, as a child, my mother was on the street, was going the store, and all of a sudden, I saw some of those "Pogromki." Says, "Mama! Mama!" and she saw them and she hid herself into something.

IS: They came on horseback or what?

GS: Huh?

IS: On horses?

GS: No, just walking. The only horses could be, only the police had horses.

IS: But who, not the Pogromists? The Pogromists?

GS: The "Pogromki"? No, they all walked.

IS: Were there many of them at one time, then?

GS: Sure, always.

IS: Armed?
GS: Big groups, armed. Make, make their own, they didn’t have modern armaments. They had knives and things like that. They kill on the spot, and kill on the spot, you know.

IS: Rocks?

GS: Huh?

IS: Rocks? Stones?

GS: I don’t know, remember about rocks, because they didn’t have to throw. They would be walking all the time.

IS: And they just captured somebody, grab somebody and just kill them?

GS: Yes.

IS: And what started them? Who were these people, I mean?

GS: The government, the Tsaristic government.

IS: But not the police, or soldiers.

GS: No. The police was just an intermediary, like; they could not. The order came to let the "Pogromchiki" out of jail, go ahead, let them kill the Jews or anybody else. They let them out.

IS: Did they wear uniforms? No, huh? Just a band of ruffians, ruffians.

GS: Yeah.

IS: I’ll be darned. So your grandfather didn’t live with you in the same place in Odessa?

GS: No, my mother’s brother lived and died together with me in the same room. I told you already once. He was on the other bed, and I was in the other bed. I had "kataralnia zhiltuxa," I think, that time.

IS: No, the one you said was like poison ivy.

CS: Oh, yes. What was the other one in Russian?

GS: Anyway, I don’t remember, but I know that we were in the same room. He was already dead. They got, they come in, get him out of the house.
CS: What did he die of?

GS: I really don't know exactly, what could he die of?

CS: Not of old age?

GS: I really don't know. He must have been, he must have been about 90 years of age that time.

CS: 90? And that was the brother of your mother? And he was that much older than her? How old was your mother then?

GS: I don't know, well, exactly. Again, I can't tell.

CS: I thought she was in her thirties when she died.

GS: Huh?

CS: Wasn't she in her thirties when she died?

GS: Thirty years of age? No, no, older, no, much older. Don't forget--I told you--she was following my father way, when he was in the army.

CS: No, you never told me that.

GS: Yes, I told you.

CS: No.

IS: You told me; you never told Cristina. You didn't tell Cristina. She doesn't know any of these stories.

GS: I told you?

IS: Yeah.

GS: They were travelling. He was with the regiment--was he out of the regiment? I don't remember. But we were travelling. We stopped someplace, and it was cold. And the, and the heat from the enamel walls created that smoke, that deadly smoke.

CS: The heat from the animal walls? Enamel, oh, enamel. You were inside.

GS: Enamel.

CS: Ah, you mean you were inside, and it was closed. Carbon monoxide. You were alive when she followed him?

IS: No.
GS: Yes.

IS: You were alive then?

GS: Sure.

CS: You were a little boy when she did this. I didn't know that either.

GS: Sure, sure. We were, he was out of the army, or still with the army, I don't remember. Sure, because we were well-to-do, as I told you. We were, she was travelling always in Todleben to meet her relations in Cherson. Cherson is on the Dnieper, falling in the Black Sea.

CS: I thought you said when you were a little boy your father had a business. How could he have been in the army and had a business at the same time?

GS: That's later on. It's much later when we, when the salt, when he had, uh, when we came back from Paris. That's what happened. We started another business again.

CS: So, but he had a business before he left for Paris.

GS: Yes. And was not so lucky when he came back to the business. Didn't go.

CS: But he had a good business before you went to Paris?

GS: Yes.

CS: But when was he a soldier?

GS: When I was a little baby, then, very little, as I remember, very little. That's when we had those "hafel."

IS: The tile stove.

GS: And that's nearly, we all died.

CS: Hm. What's that?

IS: The tile, the enamel, or the tile stoves that they have. Oma had the same thing. You had to leave windows open; otherwise, the carbon monoxide would get into the room, and everybody would simply fall asleep, from the smoke, or from the burning up of the oxygen. The stove would consume the oxygen, and everybody would tighten the windows to keep the cold out. And it must be a wee bit cold there in Russia, Mother-, right, in Mother-? . . .
GS: . . . Apartment.

CS: So, what happened? She closed the windows?

IS: She had the windows closed, Mother, or what?

GS: Well, somebody had windows closed. Lucky for us, lucky for me, somebody opened the window, I imagine, and we all got out, and continued our . . .

IS: . . . Living . . .

GS: No, we were going someplace.

CS: This was on a train?

GS: No train. Was all land. It's all frozen in winter time. You see that land; it's completely frozen. So frozen that it becomes like, like black. And many lost their life. Somebody told us, that time, a couple just got married, and they got into the ice . . .

CS: . . . The ice broke?

GS: The ice broke. I remember those things. That's the story about ice.

CS: Where did you stay then, in an inn, when you were doing your travelling? Or in a hotel, or where did this happen when you almost died of asphyxiation?

GS: That was some kind of hotel, small place.

CS: Yeah, huh. And this was when she was following your father?

GS: Yes.

CS: And why did she follow your father? Where was he going?

GS: They were going together. She didn't wanna lose track of him. He was a soldier yet.

CS: And he was commissioned to go different places?

GS: Neither that. He was going on his own. I don't know--what he had, who gave him the start to go--but I know we travelled. So, when I came back, I was a little boy. Then we came back to the same flat.

CS: In Odessa?
GS: In Odessa. I didn’t wanna stay myself in my flat, so I moved to their house.

CS: Who’s their?

GS: In Odessa. I mean, my family, since I had my own apartment.

CS: But this has nothing to do with when they came back when he was a soldier.

GS: No.

CS: You went back to, with father and mother then.

GS: Yes, and we were sitting. What were we talking about?

CS: When you came back with father and mother. When she was following him and he was a soldier.

GS: Alright. After that. 1913 he died.

CS: Hm. But he had a business before that.

GS: Yes.

CS: Went to Paris.

GS: Didn’t like it.


GS: Flopped.

CS: That wasn’t so good.

GS: Yes.

CS: Also textiles? Textiles again?

GS: Always the same. We used to go to Lodz. He used to take me along to go to Lodz. Lodz was the city of manufacturing.

CS: Poland?

GS: Yes. Bugaslavsky’s mother is from there.

CS: So.

GS: Yes, we came back, and I stayed with, with my, there were five sisters.
CS: Who, your mother’s?

GS: On mother’s side. I stayed at the flat.

CS: This is after your parents died?

CS: After father died? And mother was still alive?

GS: Mother died too. There were five sisters, and one brother went to London, so must have been before. Then, all of those things happened at beginning of the century, as I can figure out. The sisters—Edith, Clara, Olga, Anna, I can’t think of the last one. Since we had money, since—and now I jump episodes. The wife of my mother’s brother used to take, come in and take care of me when we had a store. She would buy me things and bring to the house—different kind of food and sweet stuff—and she stayed with me.

CS: She was your aunt, right? The wife of the brother in London?

GS: No. Mother’s brother.

CS: But I thought he was in London?

GS: No, that was, one of their sons went to London afterward, when the was older. Her son.

CS: Oh.

GS: She used to bring all that stuff, I remember, all the sweet stuff, all the fish, cumbriand, you know, all kind of.

CS: Sweet stuff like fish?

GS: No, sweet stuff. Fish was cumbriand, red stuff, the one you like.

CS: Oh, caviar.

GS: Yes, all those things were very cheap. Like nothing. Just go to the market place and buy whatever you want. There was no price on those things. And she, and she stayed in our, in my flat, nice flat.

CS: Hm. What was the boy’s name? You had four girls, what was the boy’s name? You had five girls and one boy.

GS: Yeah, I can’t remember. The one I met, who went with me to Paris.
CS: Oh, that was the same boy that later went to London?

GS: Not London.

CS: You went to Paris, but where?

GS: George, what is George?

IS: Samuel? Leonard?

CS: No, that was his father's side, Tutti, when they went to Paris.

IS: Oh, I didn't know.

GS: What?

IS: Father's side went, went to Paris. Or was it mother's side, the boy that went to Paris?

GS: Yes.

IS: What yes?

GS: I don't know. You must have somewhere a picture, a photo of five, three, or four together, with me. And I'm like crying. I didn't like that.

IS: Never saw that Greg.

GS: Maybe you find it. That was the time when we travelled, no, back in Odessa.

CS: But that boy that went to Paris was not the same boy you were talking about that went to London?

GS: No, no, no.

CS: No, two different families.

GS: In London we had myself, my mother, my father.

CS: To London, Paris you mean.

GS: Yes. My cousin.

CS: And who's the cousin, the name of the cousin?

GS: I think it was Sol. I'm not so sure. That's when we stayed at Rue de Temple, quatre-vingt-cinque. Rue de Temple quatre-vingt-cinque. That's all the immigrants stayed when they come in usually.
IS: And that was father’s brother that’s in Paris, huh?

GS: Yes. And that’s what I got the recollection when they crossed the street in the cafe at night. Odessa didn’t have any electricity yet in the houses. And here we see cafes. They have electricity, and people sitting down, I suppose. What could they drink that time? Beer or wine, I imagine.

CS: Anises.

GS: Wine.

IS: Champagne.

GS: What champagne, poor people of Paris? And this guy cross the street played a game with us, some kind of a game that we played, paid him penny and he gave us something. Must have been some kind of a game that he played with us. The fellow who sold, some foreigner, he always got something. We always got something, but he probably got the most of it.

CS: You gave him a penny?

GS: We paid a penny, but . . .

CS: . . . And then what happened? What did you pay the penny for?

GS: Uh, we got that, we paid a penny, we got some present, I don’t know what kind of a game.

CS: A prize.

IS: A trinket.

CS: You didn’t have to do anything to get the prize? Just pay the penny?

GS: No, I suppose he gained at the end, whatever it is.

CS: I’m sure he did. I wonder what you had to do.

IS: What kind of a game, was it a physical game or . . .

GS: . . . No, no. Something with his hand.

IS: Like a magic game?

GS: Some kinda that stuff.
IS: Aha.

GS: That’s when that time I heard (sings) "Machise." It was then a big success. Then "Liquette" (sings), then . .

IS: What was "rue de quette"?

GS: "Liquette." And that’s how we came back to Odessa, and I was very much anxious. I loved to play the piano. And I played with my teacher at the house. Then I decided to have a piano, so I rented a piano. In my place, in my flat, all by myself in a flat. I rented the piano; I had the piano. And then, later, when the powers of the city came into other hands, they came into the house, and they took back the piano. It was not mine; I only rented it. Why did I tell you this?

CS: oh, because you wanted to play piano, you said.

GS: Yes, so I rented that piano. My house was practically empty. My father flute, broken down flute, was there, and a piccolo was down there, and many other small things on top of the commode. And, so naturally, I would not, since I had that typhus. How did they discover that I had typhus? I played in the Cafe Ambalzaki, Greek. And Mr. Lochman was an impresario. And he took care of me: he paid my salary, whatever he collected there. And I used to come to his house. He lived Polodisni Priulov in Odessa, Polodisni Priulov, with his mother in the same two rooms. And I used to come in and arrange some music for him that I--Imagine me, arrange music for him. I still visualize that Polodisni Priulov. When they, when he died during the famine in Odessa, they got him out of the house, and they told me, and they found a lotta gold under the bed. He was very rich man. That's the contractor I worked for, Lochman.

CS: He's the one who found you when you had typhus? How?

GS: Yes, I didn't show up to play. So he wanted to know what happened to me. So he went to the flat and saw me lying down.

CS: Hm. Did he get a doctor for you or what?

GS: I don't remember the details of those things, but he did take care of me, and everything else.

CS: And why did you have that apartment by yourself?

GS: It was my apartment, father and mother apartment.
CS: Oh, that was the same one you lived in before they died?

GS: What?

CS: You said you had a flat by yourself.

GS: Yes.

CS: Why did you have one by yourself?

GS: But who? It belonged to me.

CS: But had they already died, your parents, died?

GS: Father died in 1914. Mother died 1916, something like that, '17, I don't know, '18. I don't know exactly because I played.

CS: So you stayed in the family apartment? That was the same apartment that you used to live in when your parents were alive?

GS: Yes. It was Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa, Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa. I don't remember the number.

CS: This is the same place you lived in when your parents were alive too?

GS: Yes, that was our flat.

CS: Then why was there so little in the apartment, you said—only so few things, only a piccolo and a piano, you said?

GS: Oh, that's another place.

CS: Then what is the other place?

GS: The other place is after the Revolution already.

CS: Why did you have the other place?

GS: What other place?

CS: The second place.

GS: The first place I described to you that was when I was about 16 or 17, when I played for Mr. Lochman. He came and found me in my flat, lying down, and he, because he was contractor on the job, as I told you, and I didn't show up . . .
CS: ... But that was the same house you grew up in, wasn’t it?

GS: No.

CS: No?

GS: Where I grew up in a house, the only things I remember, the maid carried me around. I was little.

CS: You don’t remember the house?

GS: It was on Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa.

CS: That was the same place that the guy found you?

GS: NO, NO, NO . . .

CS: ... He found you . . .

GS: ... And the maid carried me around, because my mother was very much busy in the store, and she had a lot of confidence in the maid, I suppose. Then, on my own, I always used to go on my own, you know. I wanted to see the city. Once, they found me far away in other part of the city, and they guessed I probably belonged to somebody in the other part, and they brought me back. See, I was always a wanderer, somehow, must have been.

CS: Your parents were still alive?

GS: Yes, that’s the time when they had a store.

CS: And you just wandered off to the other side of the city?

GS: Yes.

CS: Doing what?

GS: Just walking around.

CS: Was it far away?

GS: Well, Odessa is a very big city: you can go far.

CS: How old were you?

GS: A little boy. It’s before my Conservatory days--before everything . . .

CS: ... so . . .
GS: Before we went to Paris.
CS: So you were about six years old?
GS: Something there. But I had that revolutionary spirit in me. I wanted to see, the city Odessa. And then, that I remember, and how the maid used to carry me around.
CS: Who found you, the time you walked away?
GS: Somebody probably knew me from the other side of the city, and they took me back home.
CS: And the second flat, when did that come in?
GS: Hm?
CS: The second apartment?
GS: Which second apartment?
CS: You had the one on Manezhnaya Ulitsa, was one. That was the house where your parents lived.
GS: Yes.
CS: After that, you had an apartment by yourself someplace.
GS: Manezhnaya Ulitsa, Manezhnaya, Manezhnaya.
CS: And why did you have this one by yourself?
GS: It belonged to me, that apartment.
CS: How?
GS: We moved, must’ve moved, that time, and they let me that apartment.
CS: Your parents?
GS: No, let’s see. Yes, I remember that apartment.
CS: What I can’t understand is why you had an apartment yourself if your parents were still alive.
GS: Was not my apartment, was my father and mother apartment.
CS: The second one?
GS: No, Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa.
CS: Manezhnaya?

GS: Manezhnaya, no. That was already Revolutionary days of Russia.

CS: And your parents were dead.

GS: Yes, and I used to go through a big place at night. There was shooting on the street. And I was singing to myself, and I came to those gates and rang the bell. And they opened the gate. They saw me, and they let me in. It was already bad times in Odessa.

CS: This is the gates of the apartment?

GS: No, to the whole, gates to the whole square of the apartments.

CS: Oh, it was like a complex of apartments?

GS: Yes.

CS: Was the one, Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa, was that a house or apartment?

GS: Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa was an apartment belonging to us.

CS: It belonged to you, or did they rent it?

GS: They rented it, I suppose. That I remember.

CS: And this one, belonged to them or you had to rent it?

GS: Which one?

CS: The second one, Manezhnaya Ulitsa.

GS: Manezhnaya, Ulitsa, I had to rent it.

CS: You had to rent it? Where did you get the money to rent it?

GS: That was when I already played and make money. That's when Lochman found me practically dead.

CS: You were already earning a living?

GS: Yes. Through Mr. Lochman engagement. And I played on Cafe Ambalzaki, on Greek, on Gretcheskaya Ulitsa. on Greek street.
CS: How old were you when you started to earn a living?

GS: Like that, playing?

CS: Yeah.

GS: Well, I imagine, I would be 17 or 18.

IS: 17 or 18, if his mother died.

CS: But you were no longer in the Conservatory then?

GS: No, after, no longer. No longer at the Conservatory, no. Because that's after I conducted there, my opera Eugene Onegin, and I killed it. That's where my teacher said, "Don't be concerned, Grisha. You did better than the other guys."

CS: Did he pass you anyway?

GS: Huh? Pass me. Because I conducted other operas.

CS: But this is the final.

IS: Do you know the story of this? Tell her the story about how you did it. That's so funny.

GS: Well, Eugene Onegin is a very difficult opera: there are choruses, there are ensembles, there is overture. You know, it's difficult music. But I did. So, the first time, after the rehearsal, it came to the performance. To give so many introductions--to the chorus, to the soloists, to everybody--I got kinda lost. I didn't do such a good job. And so I told the professor, "Witold, Witold, Victor, Witold Yosefovich," "Yes?" "Witold Yosefovich, I killed it." He says, "No. You did better than anybody else." And so I conducted the other operas too. So I conducted Rusalka, Eugene Onegin, and "Rusalka," and "Rusalka" is--what is it, "Rusalka"? Losing the word, charms man. Oh, mermaid! Mermaid. Anyway . . .

IS: Tell Cristina about your unusual tremolo, when you had your first recital.

GS: Oh, yes. On the same time, I always wanted to make money. In Odessa, there was a famous actor, Glagoin, Glagoin. He presented always unusual operettas, unusual foreign stuff. I forgot his first name. Glagoin. His wife was Valerskaya. And he presented, and I always wanted to play. They used to make me up, and put me on the stage, and I played the piano, whatever was required.
And I don't remember—at that time, that I was always wandering, I met, I got, went as far as to find out where Iza Kramer lives. She was famous. I came to that flat and says, "I'm a student, Conservatory student, and I would like—I heard your opera singing." She sang already (hums). She sang in the opera. Iza Kramer was a famous star, and here I'm a little boy making appearances in her flat. She says, "What you doing here Malchik?" ("Malchik" is little boy in Russian.) I says, "I heard you singing, and I love it. I would like, every time, to come in. Maybe you need some accompaniment." "Aha. OK. Sit at the piano." And she put some romances, and I played—you know, at prima vista—all of it. And she says, "OK. You're doing very fine." At that time, when I played for her, she had a visitor from France: Plivitskaya, Nadyezhda Plivitskaya, the most famous Russian prima donna of the Russian songs, folklore. We have her pictures on the music. And she also visited fairs that time, Paris that time. And she came to give her impression of Paris to Iza Kramer. That was in her flat; and that, they talked about it. Didn't pay much attention to me altogether, but I played the piano for her. So, after the whole conversation, Iza Kramer says, "OK, Grisha." (She called me Grisha, I imagine.) "You can come to rehearse." And here she had the finest pianists—Simsiss, Harshom—and two best pianists she had as accompanists when she appeared. Harshom—I don't remember his first name; Simsiss—I don't know. They all soloists also. He was an operatic pianist and left Russia, Odessa, during those bad times, to escape, run away. Constantinople—I don't know where they went . . .

IS: . . . But you played for her?

GS: Sure, all the time. Then I met her in South America. Don't you remember?

IS: I don't remember, but you told me. Tell Cristina because she doesn't know.

GS: Many years after, I was in New York; and friend of mine, Mischa Borr, says, "Grisha, you're gonna be in Buenos Aires. Give my regards to my former pianist, Greenberg." I don't remember his first name. He played in some fashionable place. "I always think of him and like to see him some day." So I came to Buenos Aires and I went to that place. And, accidentally, Iza Kramer was there. And she heard my name, that I brought regards, so she went to me and says, "Grisha." I says, "Who?" She changed after so many years. "Iza Iakovovna. Grisha, Sto ti delaesh?" ("What are you doing here?") "I have a
job." "I’m married now," says "and live in Rosario." That’s where she died too. "My husband is a doctor." Dentist—I don’t remember what it is. "He’s a doctor. And I’m glad to see you, naturally. If you’re in Rosario, don’t forget to look me up." I didn’t have a chance to go to Rosario ....

IS: ... So it was an accident that she was in Buenos Aires, then? She lived in Rosario. It was really an accident. Is she the one who said, "Have I changed much?" Is that the lady?

GS: Yes. "Grisha, did I change?" I didn’t see her for so many years.

IS: You still didn’t (garbled) recognize her?

GS: Of course, I recognize her. But she’s different; she changed. What can I say? She’s a woman. Says, "Change? Not at all." Of course. "Before me I see the same Iza Iakovovna as I know in Odessa."

TAPE 4/B (4 October 1987): kitchen table, before dinner

GS: No. She lived in New York, yes. And the guy who brought me money for, from English publishers—what’s his name?——and I have an audition with the orchestra in hotel. I was not supposed to be doing that thing (conversational tone, eye contact, unless otherwise indicated).

IS: Oh, you mean in Los Angeles.

GS: Yes.

IS: Not Guy Lombardo. Who was that, the one, the one that made famous, what song did he make famous Gregory? Was it Rachmaninoff or Tchaikovsky, something, the one, he had an orchestra?

CS: Who was that?

GS: And he was very much against me doing anything there without his permission.

IS: But what does he have to do with New York and the daughter of Iza Kramer?

GS: Must have been something. I don’t know. Who brought me money for my, for my orchestra, to me. He’s the guy who brought me money for my English publisher, and a friend of Boris Morros.
IS: The one who was married to Rose, you mean the one who made the four records or something?

GS: What's his name?

IS: I can't think of his name right now. I think I know who you mean. She was working. He worked for Boris Morros for years.

GS: Yeah.

IS: And he was married to a woman by the name of Rose, and you'll think of his name a little while later.

GS: Alright. Anyway, he brought me money for my . . .


GS: Zimanich. First name I don't remember, Joseph.

IS: Joseph Zimanich.

GS: Joseph Zimanich.

CS: What has he got to do with the daughter of Iza Kramer?

GS: He was a friend of Iza Kramer for years. Oh, when Iza Kramer died, we were decided the girl to fly to Buenos Aires. It was too late. She was already dead. That's the story.

IS: Joseph Zimanich, that's right. Cristina still didn't hear your story about your first concert, with the tremolo.

GS: Oh.

IS: That's funny.

GS: I developed a tremolo from scared.

IS: Yes, you were frightened to death, you said.

GS: Yes, I was frightened.

IS: Your legs were . . .

CS: . . . When was this?

GS: That must have been late, that must have been 1917 or 18.
CS: I mean, what were you doing?

GS: I played around in Odessa.

IS: I thought it was your first concert, you told me, in the Conservatory?

GS: I know, but at that time, I played around in Odessa, you know, everyplace.

IS: Well, how come you got so scared then?

GS: Well, first performance.

IS: And what happened exactly?

GS: Nothing, I started, scared (garbled).

CS: What did you play?

GS: Oh, my paraphrases that I always made (looking away). "Minuet" by Paderewski, my paraphrase, and Chopin paraphrases. I always had something.

CS: This was for the concert, or this was playing around in Odessa?

GS: No, that's, that was for the concert.

CS: And you were allowed to play your own paraphrases? It wasn't for the school? You didn't have to play traditional pieces?

GS: Well, maybe some traditional. See, you stop me, and I forget. That was the Conservatory days, Revolutionary days, after the revolution.

CS: I thought you were a little boy when you first had the concert when you got so scared.

GS: How could I be little boy? (looking at CS)

CS: I don't know. A recital, not a concert, a recital maybe. And you said you played, your foot developed.

GS: I still had to be of age.

CS: I don't know.

GS: Just cannot be, you can get those things when you are 17 or 18 or 19.
CS: I thought you were a little boy and you were shaking and . . .

GS: Was Conservatory days, but not that much, not yet in the Conservatory. We didn’t have a Conservatory (looking away and downwards). At that time used to call "Musikalni Uchiliitsa." And then it was transferred into Conservatory. He transferred that, Malishevsky. He got permission from Rimsky-Korsakoff to change all the schools as he sees fit. In Odessa, then Kiev, Kharkov, change all those schools into conservatory. They were musical schools.

IS: I’ll be darned.

GS: So, that’s the story. And I always remember Biber Galperin, my teacher, because everybody used music--she never used any music. Was it a trio or quartet or quintet, whatever it is, she was sitting on the stage without using one sheet of music. Such a memory she had! She died in London. I don’t know, maybe she was about 97, 98. I wasn’t in London.

CS: She was a good teacher?

GS: Fine teacher. She’s the one who I came to her flat, found her flat and said, looks me, "What you doing here Grisha?" "I have playing sonata, Beethoven sonata, and I cannot play it." . . .

CS: . . . Oh, that’s the one . . .

GS: . . . "So? When is your school? When is your lesson?" I says, "Tuesday." "Alright. Wait till Tuesday." "No, I want it now." She looked me, "Alright, sit down." I think it was "Moonlight Sonata," difficult--you know--the second allegro part is difficult--you know. I played for her. "Grisha, you’re a bad boy, but I’m going to punish you." And I became deliverer of her love letters to her many boyfriends.

CS: You remember any of her other students that she had?

GS: Plenty, sure. They all in.

CS: Do you remember them?

GS: Yes, in New York. You stopped me: now I got stuck again. Wait a second. What was I talking about (looking at CS)?
CS: Love letters, you delivered love letters.

GS: Aha (looking away and downwards). Coming to the love letters, I have to go back to my days when I was about 12 or 13 years, after we came back from Paris, In Odessa. I imagine, some of my sisters-in-law could hardly read or write. And I used to write love letters to their boys—they’re far away in Hokoloki, in Caucasus. And I would write love letters for her. I say, in letter, I say—"How does it sound to you?" "Good, good. Send it to him."

CS: These were your sisters-in-law?

GS: No sisters-in-law.

CS: From Zoe’s side?

GS: Father’s side, father’s side.

CS: Sisters-in-law? How could that be, sisters-in-law?

GS: They’re children of the, of my mother’s brother’s children.

CS: Ah, cousins.

GS: Cousins. So I wrote those letters. When I wrote in Hokoloki, I use my phraseology: "I love you. I wait for you day and night. I hope you will come soon." (garbled) They liked it very much, especially Clara. And she, really, becomes later on, my enemy. Many years have passed, and I used to go to that house because my former pupil used to live there, the first pupil, Sarah Silberstein. So I used to come there. She saw me there. "What you doing here? "Why?" Because I played in the Cadet Corpus, Cadet Corpus every day. We used to travel with Holochov, the Tanzmeister, and all those (garbled) And there was a orchestra class, band class, and I liked the flutes. So I took a few flutes, and clarinets, and many other things, and put it in my package and took it home. I was not supposed to do it without permission. Naturally, they, the Colonel of the school liked me very much. He told me, "Why did you do that? Why didn’t you ask permission to do that?" "Well, forgive me." "For this, you cannot be in that class anymore. You’re out of that class altogether." Polkovnic Tesevitch, his name. "Alright." I got punished, and I, Holochov found out that story and said, "Grisha, I cannot employ you." Holochov is the Tanzmeister, where I used to play classes for him and then dance with the little girls all the time, you know, at the Hall, "Blagarodnaya Sabrania," for
noble born, nobility . . .

CS: . . . The aristocracy.

GS: And I lost the privilege to go there.

IS: But what were you doing there? She wouldn’t know that.

GS: What?

IS: At this, at this Tanzclass.

GS: Play piano. But they didn’t see me; it was behind the stage. Then, I would come out on the stage, get invited any girl I liked, and dance with her. The mother would look, with lorgnette, over me, says, "Alright. Go ahead." I knew all the Russian dances: you know, pas de quatre, pas d’espagne, holsokoketsa. So I lost the job.

IS: Wasn’t it the daughter of the man who hired you who saw you dancing with these?

GS: Not the daughter. She was the sweetheart of one of the Holochov friends--I don’t know--relations, saw me. And she told Holochov that I am dancing there. So that’s how I lost the job there, too. He called me, says, "Grisha, do you realize what you’re doing? You’re dancing with the nobility. Not that you haven’t got nobility--you don’t even belong here." Anyway, I lost the job; I lost the contract.

CS: Why did Clara become your enemy?

GS: Oh, Clara. Many years after that--I told you, I used to write letters for her, and she knew the story about that flutes, that I lost the job because I took flutes home. That flute story she knew, and she used to pick on me always, "Playtitchky, Playtitchky, Playtitchky." ("Little flutes, little flutes, little flutes") when I used to visit my former teacher. That’s what happened. Clara, Bertha, Edith, Anna, and the fifth, I don’t . . .

CS: These were cousins or? . . .

GS: . . . Cousins (looking towards CS).

CS: Cousins, not the sisters of your mother. These were your cousins? They had the same names though, Clara, Anna.

GS: No, they were unmarried, unmarried name. They would have
to carry my uncle's name. If they married, they would have to . . .

CS: . . . But they were the children of your mother, aunts. Clara was your age, right? A little girl?

GS: No, I was older than her.

CS: So they were the children, they weren't the brothers and sisters. But they all had repeated names. And what happened as a result? You were thrown out of the Corpus? What did they call this thing?

GS: The school, the Tanzschool.

CS: Not the Tanzschool. This, that you were in here, you were in some Corps.

GS: Yeah, they annulled my contract, and I lost everything.

CS: You were on a contract to be there?

GS: Yeah, we was a contract with Holochov, the Tanzmaster.

CS: And what did you do for that job?

GS: Some mail? (as IS brings in mail)

IS: Yeah, all cards (tape off so IS and GS can read mail).

GS: Oh, here's another fly.

IS: I'll get it. You go on, the story, and I'll get the fly. Here is one.

GS: You missed her.

IS: I'll watch the fly. You go tell the story. Look how many helpers you have. We're all fly catchers. Push the little, the other one in, the other window.

CS: What were you saying, Kirsten Flagstad what?

GS: You have it in the book. Kirsten Flagstad. Edward McArthur was her accompanist for many years, and he and I, we played two pianos for some NBC program, and then he went to take the (garbled). How he said, he came to, once, to Flagstad, and played for her, and she said, "You play very well, and when I need you. I'll call you," she told him. So, you will get the story from the book. He just died now. I can't find that magazine. I had it somewhere. Inge, you didn't throw it out?
IS: I didn’t throw it out, no. (tape cuts off and on)

GS: Here’s another one.

IS: Fine, what’s the story about how you played with him? I’ll get the fly.

GS: She’s gone. She’s gone. She developed a knack.

IS: What’s the story about how you played with this McArthur, or McArthy, whatever?

GS: I just had a job with him, to play in NBC, on two pianos. And Peletier was the conductor, the, Peletier, you have to find his name, Vincent, Vincent Peletier.

CS: Vincent Peletier.

GS: He was conducting on the hour, and he conducted us, that’s all. Rose Bantam, Rose Bantam was his wife, I think. We all appeared on that program.

IS: Go ahead.

GS: I don’t know. What do you want me to say?

IS: I thought you wanted to tell something that you forgot.

GS: Oh, the whole idea, what means her name, what’s her name, Kirsten Flagstad. That she demanded, that she would not appear in any performances if Edmond McArthur doesn’t conduct. And they had to agree with that, and she meant business. In other words, the advertising company would lose a lot of money if Kirsten Flagstad would not appear. To me, she had a strange voice, but apparently very good for Wagnerian operas. What do we eat, Inge?

CS: How soon till dinner, Tutti?

TAPE 5/A (26 October 1987): kitchen table, 7:45 p.m.

IS: (request for stories about father of GS and the "Traktirs" partially cut off) about when your Papa used to take you to Russian tea rooms.

GS: No. He used to seat me in a special chair and have those big Russian magazines to read. You know, since, I don’t know if I could read at 5 or 6, but I loved the illustrations in that big magazines (opens both arms). That was in "Traktir," tea room, that all the merchants used to go. And that’s where father used to put me, in
that special seat, high chair, like (gestures upwards with right arm). That's probably how I got love to read so much.

IS: And only 5 or 6, huh?

CS: I thought he used to take you to the Turkish baths as well?

GS: No. That was Mama (maintaining conversational tone, eye contact, unless otherwise indicated).

CS: Somebody used to take him.

IS: The Turkish baths, do you remember that?

GS: With Mama.

IS: Who took you to the Turkish baths?

GS: Papa used to take me. No. Mama used to give me money to go to the Turkish baths with her, but I was too old already.

CS: How big?

GS: I don't know. When the girl opened the door, looked at me, she did a gesture towards me, my, and says, "He doesn't belong here."

CS: Why did she give you money to go to the Turkish baths?

GS: Well, you have to go, you can't go, without any money, to the Turkish baths.

CS: Oh, you mean you went by yourself, or with your mother?

GS: I went with my mother.

CS: But she bribed you, I thought she bribed you with money.

GS: Yeah, that's . . .

CS: . . . Why did she bribe? That's when she gave him money.

IS: Why did she bribe?

CS: So that he would go with her to the Turkish baths.

GS: She didn't wanna go alone. A boy with a woman to go to the Turkish baths. You better be careful.
IS: What about the, does Cristina know when she carried fish from the market?

GS: What's interesting about it?

IS: Well, these are all little stories about your childhood.

GS: All the cats used to come to meet her because she had so much food, was waiting half way. We lived that time on Matrusky Spusk, Street, called (looking away and back again).

CS: I thought you lived on, which one was the Ulitsa?

GS: Hm? Kniazhsenskaya Ulitsa, but this was before. Later on.

CS: Where was this?

GS: Matrusky Spusk, and that's where I got my first suit. I didn't like to go. We went with my teacher to see the Titanic. They just sank Titanic, and we went to see the picture.

CS: And you didn't like going in your first suit?

GS: Yeah, well, I felt so awkward with the new suit on. You know how kids are.

CS: This was with Biber Halperin?

GS: Oh, that was before that time.

CS: With which teacher?

GS: After that was with Galperin.

CS: What teacher did you go with to the Titanic thing? Was that a music teacher?

GS: My music teacher, the one I used to go to her house to play, the . . .

CS: . . . . What was her name?

GS: We played. I paid her one ruble for a lesson and also practiced the piano as much as I want. Her name was Sarah Silberstein, my teacher.

IS: Do you remember anything, Gregory, about your home? I've
never heard anything.

GS: This is another home.

CS: I don’t know, what street was that again? Mac something, like a Scot’s name.

GS: This was Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa.

CS: No, before that.

GS: Before that, that was Matrusky Spusk.

CS: Was that also in Odessa?

GS: Everything in Odessa.

CS: Was it a house or an apartment.

GS: Apartment. It’s all house filled up with apartments. That’s the first time when I saw cometa, cometa Galey. Haley’s comet.

CS: From the house?

GS: Yes, when I was 8, 9 years old.

CS: And you were on the street?

GS: I saw it (looking away and back again). You could see it right from the horizon, the comet.

CS: Did you get up early or late at night to see it or something, or? . . .

GS: . . . No, it was all day, all the time there. The comet was not moved. I mean, I don’t know how long it stayed there, but we looked day and night the comet.

CS: You could see it? In the daytime, too?

GS: I think it was supposed to have come very close to the earth that time.

IS: Yeah, Papa said it was spectacular, he said, the whole thing lit up. And this time you couldn’t even see it.

CS: Who lived in that house?

GS: What house?

CS: The first one.
GS: What's first one?

CS: What was the name of it again? Mac something?

GS: Matrusky Spusk. That's the one, I told you, I had an apartment. We had an apartment, and we had, I had privilege to play for a dollar, or for a ruble, whatever you call it, to practice my piano and also have a lesson. I was dying to be at the piano all the time, but we didn't have a piano yet in my house.

CS: Who lived with you then?

GS: Matrusky Sputsk?

CS: Yeah.

GS: My mother, and my father.

CS: Your mother and father and nobody else?

GS: No.

CS: Do you remember the apartment at all?

GS: Yes, it was a nice apartment, on the high elevation. And, then, when I moved, finally, when my mother died and my father died, I moved to live with my uncle, apartment, who had five daughters, wife and myself. And when he died, in the apartment, I was still lying next to him; there was no other place to go. And I had the "karapnaya likratka"—what's that, Inge? You get covered up.

IS: Scarlet fever.

GS: No. "Krapnaya."

IS: Measles, chicken pox, mumps, poison ivy?

GS: Poison ivy.

CS: How did you get poison ivy?

GS: I don't know.

CS: Was there a garden there, or something?

GS: Oh, yeah. Yes. We had plenty of gardens.

CS: I didn't know they had poison ivy in Europe. That was the uncle, the brother of your . . .
GS: ... Brother of my mother.

CS: When did he die? How old was he?

GS: I don’t know.

CS: But your mother died when you were about 16, and you said you moved with your uncle after your mother died.

GS: That was, happened much, I was ill. And I played Ambalzaki Cafe, Mr. Lochman, impresario. He paid me, and I played in that cafe, with a violinist and a bass. And we made quite a lot of money there. But, all of a sudden, I developed into, typhus--I don’t remember ...

CS: ... Typhus, I think you said.

GS: No, typhus was too, too dangerous.

CS: I thought you had it, where everything turns to paper, or something.

GS: Oh, "typh." This is "brushnoi typh," stomach typhus, not the other one, intestinal typhus, yes. And he came to the place, and he didn’t find me. I didn’t show up. And he ran home, home to my house. And I was alone there. There was nobody. It was an empty apartment ...

CS: ... You weren’t living with your cousins and? ...

GS: ... Not yet. And he immediately brought me food. And, I remember, I looked the mirror: I was like a dead ...

CS: ... Hm ...

GS: ... Dead man. But, you see, I was destined to live. Isn’t that something (garbled), Cristina?

CS: It’s not impossible.

IS: You know the Russian roulette story?

CS: I’ve forgotten it.

IS: Oh.

CS: I haven’t heard that in years.

IS: Oh, gosh. Tell her about, the train, when you got the
train.

CS: Was that the same train with the chefs, when you were going to? . . .

GS: . . . We had a train. Well, that was, I don’t remember exactly, was the train I got from the government or was another train that I was joining the troupe that gave me an idea to get a train. That’s the guy who shot me in my feet.

IS: Well, he played Russian roulette and pointed to your head.

GS: Yes, but finally.

IS: He did it a couple of time.

GS: Yes. And, finally, he decided to shoot me through.

IS: Not you, him.

GS: Yes, shot himself through.

CS: Tell, say it again. Wasn’t he a dancer or something?

GS: Yes.

CS: Tell me, tell the whole story again because I haven’t heard it for five years.

GS: At that time, we were travelling. That’s the reason I cannot tell you exactly, I still don’t remember, was it my idea having a train, or I joined that before, or after, and we were travelling. And we came in my, I was practicing piano, in my coupe, whatever they call it. And he walked in and started to play around with me. Put his revolver against my temple, temple, few times, here and there. I says, "Peristan durakavalyat!" ("Stop being a fool!"). And he, still he insisted. And, finally, he shot himself against his foot. Spinning the revolver, as I recall, because the revolver was old-fashioned, you know, that revolves and opens up and closes up.

CS: Was he able to dance afterwards?

GS: Yes, well, time have passed, after, he got well again. At that time, and was popular, he was, what do you call that, dancing like Fred Astaire, what do you call that?

CS: Tap?
GS: Tap, tap dancer. And that's the reason, I cannot remember different story. Because, as I remember myself in Odessa, I had one, two people were, knew my desire to get out of the country. That was the balalaika player, who was in United States, but because of illness of his mother, he had to return to Russia and could not get back again; and Obermann, violinist, good violinist. So we decided, we had like a pact. We gonna get out of the country. And that's, well, started my troubles, different place. How we got to the border, finally, we got train, moving.

IS: Then it must have been on that first trip, Gregory, where you also, where they had to get out of the train and chop wood.

GS: Yeah, get out of the train and chop wood.

IS: Tell Cristina that part because I don't think she knows that story.

GS: I didn't wanna go . . .

IS: . . . Everybody chops wood . . .

GS: So they told me, "If you don't chop wood, you're not gonna eat." So I said, "Well, if I chop wood and I won't eat, I won't play." It's also a long story. So they got convinced that they could not play around with me.

IS: Well, first, they had you chop wood. They made you chop the wood, didn't they?

GS: Hm.

IS: And then Papa didn't. Tell her what you did.

GS: I killed all the numbers.

CS: How so?

GS: I played for one guy, half a tone lower; the other one, higher. They didn't know what's all about: they hear the melody comes out correctly, but it's in another key.

IS: That's all?

CS: Did you use music then?


CS: And you were accompanying other instrumentalists?
GS: Yes (looking away and downwards). The only one I met—she was with us and also wanted to get out to United States—and I met her with her husband united, was Chatelaine. She would go on the market place and bargain with, with what to buy food for herself and her husband—you know, on the train when we were travelling. Then she comes back and she sings (hums "Bellsong"). She surprised me all the time. She sang the—what's that famous song from (hums aria again) Lakme (hums)? "Bellsong." She sang; she surprised me. And many years later . . .

CS: . . . She sang that when she went shopping?

GS: When she came back, shopping. She went shopping. She was bargaining with the peasants for food.

CS: Oh. That meant she was successful? Why did she sing the songs?

GS: She always sang—something. Her husband—I remember, later on, many years later, I met them in New York. Of course, she couldn't sing in New York.

CS: Oh, she was a singer?

GS: Yes. Lakme—who else could sing Lakme, Cristina?

CS: And you accompanied her?

GS: Yes. I enjoyed that so much, to play those accompaniments—you know, for piano (hums another aria). It's a very beautiful aria. But when you ask me questions, all those facts, they come together, and I get mixed up in the dates and everything else.

IS: Does Cristina know the other story about when you were in the army? I don't know where you were—Serbia or Austria or someplace else—when you had a toothache and you were supposed . . .

GS: . . . No. That was the biggest story. That's another one. That's when I was freezing, and I left my horse. I left my horse in the daytime, and it started to . . . Autumn was coming. We were coming to a little city called Podgajcy. That was during the, uh, invasion of Russia of Poland. And the Russian people demanded, "Give us Warsaw! Give us Warsaw!" You know. And we were, and I was in the wood. I left my horses with my, with my friends there, who were all horsemen anyway, and started to walk. And then, little by little, it became dark.
And I'm alone in the woods, sitting under the tree. And somebody passes me by. "Hey, Tavariische! Are you crazy? You're gonna be dead by tomorrow." He was going, he was going toward the little city I was going. I says, "Well, I have nothing on me now." And he says, "Take this." And he had the double suit, or something, double jacket. He gave me that jacket. "See me tomorrow." Tomorrow never came, because that was the time when, when the horses came back, with my Commander dead, hanging on horses. And that was the big invasion of that part of Russia by the Polish army. I don't remember who was the commander--maybe Pilsudski, I don't know. But that big, big invasion. And I, I started, I wanted to get away from it, and I ran to the station. And the train come in. And I didn't care what train it was: I jumped on the train, and I jumped on the train, as I wanted to open the door inside. Was written, "Only for typhus allowed in this car." Said, "Typhus." I imagine was a, was a part of the . . .

IS: . . . Quarantined. You said it was quarantined.

GS: Quarantined train. And I stood up outside, freezing to death . . .

IS: . . . Hanging on . . .

GS: . . . Hanging, till I came to a station where I took a train that took me to Odessa.

IS: You never found that man who gave you the overcoat, or the jacket?

GS: Never. No. They were all killed.

IS: Was that . . .

CS: (garbled)

IS: . . . Was that the same time where you also had the toothache and you were supposed to go someplace with your Officer, or Commander?

GS: That's the one. That's the story, the whole story.

IS: No, no. But there was one where you had a toothache . . .

GS: . . . Yes . . .

IS: . . . And you were supposed to go with him in a cart. That was another thing.
GS: In a cart to see the . . .

IS: . . . Dentist . . .

GS: . . . The piano, and everything else. And I says, "Tavarische Commander, I can't go today. Can I go some other time?" He says, "Alright, Grisha."--whatever he called me. That's the, that was the beginning of the whole Russian Brusilov invasion . . .

IS: . . . That's when he came back. Then, he came back dead that time. That wa when you had the toothache.

GS: He didn't "came back." They brought him.

IS: Aha.

GS: They brought him back dead.

IS: Aha.

CS: Hm. Did you desert the army then?

GS: No, I didn't desert the army. That was the beginning of our adventure, three of us decided that we gonna leave the country and go to United States. Or, and that's the, I had to give an order to unchain our car, and I didn't unchain the car. And that, the train pulls us to Zhmerinka, the biggest point, there with blown-up bridges there. And that's when they opened the door and they say, "Ah, speculators. Arrest them! Cheka!" I says, "Tavarische, we're not speculators. We're artists." "Artists?" And he starts to cross himself (crosses himself three times) "We are dying here from boredom." That's when they took us, all our money, everything that we had on the table. He says, they would kill the speculators, but not us. And took us to hotel. They brought us a piano, and we started to rehearse for a big concert. That was before our final, my final jump, to the United States, United States we went to. That was the story, then, again. See, I jump stories. I played in the American Consulate a concert.

IS: Well, first of all, you played there. No, I mean before you got there, before you crossed the border, Gregory. It's a long time before you got across. But you said somebody was sitting in the audience all the time, every night was watching you.

GS: Yes, one of the commanders on the train. They speculate, used to speculate.
IS: No, not that. You said there was somebody else, and finally he approached you and said, "I know what you really want to do."

GS: Yes, he was the Commander of one of the trains.

IS: The train, or one of the ones going across the river?

GS: No, train. And they used to speculate, coming back to Kiev, buy sugar, buy food, buy this and bring them.

IS: But you said there was this other fellow, you said, was in the audience. And, you said, he came up that time and said, "Do you want to leave?"

GS: Oh. That's the contrabandiste. That's already those guys who are taking people over the border. That's another time.

IS: But that was that, when you were playing with the artists, when you were there.

GS: Yes. We didn't even know what to do, what's gonna happen to us. So, finally, the guy came to us, says, "You have any money on you?" "Yes, yes, yes." "Well, be waiting." "How much?" "500 dollars." "Every one of us?" "Yes. Well, be waiting. Be sure that when we come in, you're ready to go." And that's when we started to cross the river, that night, in . . .

IS: . . . But you said, tell her how the whole thing, the knock on the door, and all of that business.

GS: Yeah, well, they knocked on the door. They come in, and we started to go all around the city till a lot of other people came, more and more and more, because the Bolsheviks were transporting a lot of their own Communists to the other countries, you know.

IS: Aha.

GS: So they needed our protection, like. And we were going through villages and villages, and, finally, the out of town, far away Mogiliov Podolsk. Says, "Here we gonna cross the border." And that's where we cross the border. All of a sudden, we are in a peasant hut, like. There, we stayed overnight, till Pagarelov . . .

IS: What about when you crossed and the baby cried? Tell Cristina that.
GS: Well, that's the time happened that they, "Everybody quiet!" When we crossing, they should be everybody quiet. Well, they gonna have to kill somebody.

CS: Hm.

GS: Well, they would. "Otherwise I would kill. I don't care who it is."

IS: Who, you?

GS: No, the guy who was in charge of our expedition. And, uh, we crossed that, that border. And, all of a sudden, Pagarelov says, "My father used to have a, used to live here, 25 years ago. Let's go to see him." He left, his father, grandfather, whoever it was, left that country. But that gave us a big boost. And, little by little, we came to the city of Kishinaw.

IS: But before that, that was when you were looking for this man, this man's uncle, you told me, and you went in an open sled.

GS: Yes.

IS: OK. When you went in an open sled looking for him, what had happened? Tell Cristina that.

GS: Yes, well, I nearly froze to death. When I came, when, finally, we arrived to the little hotel, and they put me, and they gave me something to drink, and everything else, and I told them about what I have, says, "Well, tomorrow."

IS: First, they said you can't be cured. You won't talk again.

GS: Yes, well, that's private opinion.

IS: Then you met this peasant woman. And she, what did she do?

GS: Goggle Moggle, she made.

IS: Yes. Goggle Moggle.

GS: Goggle Moggle.

CS: But the time that you took the horse and you took the train, you never got in trouble with the government?

GS: That was in the army. Everybody was retreating at that
time.

CS: Oh, it was a general retreat . . .

GS: . . . It was a chaotic, disorganized retreat.

CS: It was a retreat.

GS: Yes.

CS: And nobody got in trouble for . . .

GS: . . . No, everybody retreated wherever they could. I went back to Odessa. The general died on the horse. I went back to Odessa.

CS: And you said, before, that you forget all the facts, and they get mixed up.

GS: The what?

CS: The facts, and they get mixed up.

IS: Your facts get mixed up.

GS: Yeah.

CS: You forget the facts.

GS: Finally, we came to Odessa. And I brought with me money and I gave it to one of my cousins, Edith. There was--she took the money and bought all the cigarettes--there was shortage of cigarettes, and she sold the cigarettes. And we lived on that. So much, so many cigarettes. They didn't care, the cigarettes were fresh or no fresh. They wanted to smoke.

IS: When was that time when you joined the army and then said you were a musician, and they said you had to join a band?

GS: I joined, I did. I told them what I want.

IS: No, I thought, I thought when you first joined, they, they made you join the band.

GS: I, I mean, walking on the streets yet; that's long before.

IS: . . . She doesn't know that story.

GS: I had to join the band. I don't know, it was a force
majeure that I have to play the cymbals. And I hold that cymbals in my hand, and I nearly broke the whole band in two because I played against the rhythm. I was so bad. So, he says, "Let him out, please. He never be a drummer, or a cymbal . . ."

IS: . . . Bandman.

CS: This was the regular army?

GS: No. All those things happened during the Revolution. This is before the Revolution. That must’ve been 19, that must’ve been after Paris, so it must be after the comet, so it must be about, when I was about 12, 13 years of age.

IS: He decided the cymbals were too heavy to play, so he played off beat.

CS: Were they taking 12- and 13-year-olds into the army?

GS: Yeah, they take anybody . . .

CS: . . . So young? . . .

GS: . . . It was not forceful. I wanted to do it myself, to join, because where you can get food? In the army, you can get a ration. That was the story. All that time was people worrying about how to get food, how not to stand in lines. That’s the whole, the most important thing what’s on everybody’s minds. That’s why, how, they killed the whole, the whole orchestra of musicians, went to little villages of Odessa to look for food, and the peasants were so against the city folk, they arrested them and they killed them. That’s how they killed Dora’s brother.

CS: Because he went into a village to look for food?

GS: Yeah. All the musicians went.

CS: Did they go, just to go? Did they play there, make music?

GS: Who cares? I mean, the peasants didn’t care for music. That’s the story.

CS: That’s what surprises me about when you went to the board of agitators, or whatever it was, why they would be concerned, during war time, that you should go with musicians, and a piano, and all this stuff.
GS: They were interested to make revolution, no matter how. At that time, they sent us, everybody who wanted to go and fight for revolution was a welcome guest. They did everything for me. They gave me a train, a lot of people, the chefs of various restaurants who wanted to get out of Russia, and they were cooking in our train. They did everything for us in order to get out of Russia. That was the story. I told you that part already. You have to combine all those things together and make something. Now, I don’t know. Anything else?

IS: You remember anything, I’ve already, always heard stories about things that happened outside of your home. Do you remember anything that ever happened inside your house, with you mother and father? Her cooking, or anything like that? Or does, did that all escape you? You know, the things you did as a child with your parents.

GS: Yes, my mother was cooking for my father all the time, in the house . . .

IS: I realize that, but I mean, do you remember anything . . . .

GS: . . . I remember those episodes.

IS: Well, what about them?

GS: What’s there to know about?

IS: The kinds of things she cooked, how she cooked, how she dressed--what sort of smells you remember, what kind of food. Was it borscht, or . . .

GS: . . . I don’t know. Just cooking.

CS: Was it the first house that you had a maid, you remember, carrying you about?

GS: Yes. My mother was, hired a maid to carry me. I was a little baby. And she had a boyfriend who worked on the port of Odessa, and she brought home all kinds of things that we know, appreciated--"tangier," "baklava," things like that.

CS: What’s "angier"?

GS: "Tangier" is also a round one, very sweet.

CS: A candy? Cookie?

GS: No, a fruit, oriental. And brought it from the port.
I still remember the conversation, in French, and all kinds of nationalities, was at the port. They spoke different languages. Of course, to me, it was nothing. I could not understand anyway. Some things . . .

CS: ... The maid used to take you to the port?

GS: Yes. She did carry me, yes. Food was the most important thing. A lotta people working in the port, carrying "karpuzzi"—what's that?

CS: Melons.

GS: Melons. They could eat all the melons. I think they receive about five kopecks a day, and they had to throw all those melons to the city.

CS: You mean one to each other, to each other, passing the melon?

GS: Yes. That, also, was a big thing. The Greeks had the biggest little store where they sold those things on the boulevard.

IS: Tell Cristina how you enjoyed fire engines when you were young, and what you did in the store.

GS: Oh, yes. I was working already in a store. All of a sudden, I decided I'm gonna play a trick. I opened, called on telephone, says, "Fire!" "Who's calling?" They knew the telephone. There were not so many telephones in Odessa. And they knew where they installed the telephone. They come in, and that's when they told me I cannot work there. I was working in a music store, Polyakin Music Store, very good one. All the records I could play there, everything else.

CS: That's where you called the fire engine?

IS: The fire engine came, ha!

GS: No.

CS: Oh, it didn't come?

GS: No, because they knew it was a fake.

CS: What was your job there?

GS: Selecting music, for publication, what they had there in the store for sale, all different things.
CS: Did you have customers?

GS: I was not a customer there.

CS: Did you have customers, you had to sell to them?

GS: Yes, I showed them the things.

CS: What was popular then?

GS: Oh, popular, I really don't know, I really don't know. That was not in Paris time, when they played "Machise." That was after that. "Machise" was after that. So it was, many things there.

CS: Was that before or after, when you copied all the music that the chansonettes sang, when you had them copied, wrote them down that night, you heard them?

GS: No, that's after.

CS: You mean the chansonne was after?

GS: Yes, well. Yeah, well, I played in the theatre, Whodawzhstvehnee Theatre, Ekaterinskaya Ulitsa—-I bet it's still there. And we had all the biggest show, coming from the Center, St. Petersburg, from Moscow, and everything. And they used to come in, and I was so anxious to get the music. I The first night—-they played a whole week—and the first night, I copied it, one number. Finally, at the end of the week, I had everything copied. And the next week, the artists used to come in and buy from me—-city artists—and buy from me. I used to sell them the orchestration. And the people from the Center say to me, "My goodness, we only here one week; now everybody sings our songs." Understand, Cristina, the story? I fooled them. I had a talent for all those darned things. Whodawzhstvehnee Theatre. That must have been when I was 15. That's probably the time, also, when I got ill, and Lochman bought me food and everything else.

CS: That was a different theatre. That was Ambalzaki, wasn't it?

GS: Ambalzaki was a cafe.

CS: Cafe, I mean.

GS: No, this was a theatre, Whodawzhstvehnee Theatre. All the biggest acts from all over the Europe or Russia used to go to that place.
CS: And you used to go there as a . . .

GS: . . . I used to work there.

CS: Oh, you worked there. Accompanying?

GS: Yes.

CS: And then at night time you used to write down from memory what you played.

GS: That was at night time that I wrote down all those things, not in the daytime. It was a night show.

CS: But you played without music there, right?

GS: Yes, well, I copied all music already there.

CS: Oh, they brought their own music, printed copies, and you copied them?

GS: Yes.

CS: Were you able to take the copies home to copy?

GS: Yes, and I don’t, I wonder sometimes. Once, I had to take Oobayko’s books, big books, twelve big books, and I had to carry them—I could hardly carry them—because he wanted me to copy some—I forgot what number I was supposed to copy . . .

CS: . . . Who wanted you to copy?

GS: Oobayko was the famous couplettiste, came out on the stage and telled couplettes: (recites) "Wesheh komiwets paradnosti, Starom wee dike skazatz, A nash Ruska zhadnastine, Hochu maraskazatz, Zhadna, zhana, slovi,"—little—"slovi." Talked about Russian ideal, how people, "ahadni," I mean, want to get, "zhadni" is, what is the word, Cri- . . . ?

CS: Unified?

GS: No. "Zhadni," wants to get something, like our cat.

CS: Grab something? Take something?

GS: No, the other word. "Azadhnisti" is when you have desire . . .
CS: ... Steal?
GS: No, steal. Desire to grab, but there's another word.
CS: Possess? Control?
GS: No, another one. I don't remember.
CS: What's the rest of the story, translated, your couplette?
GS: Well, he sang about, he was talking about "zhenskaya lubov."
   "Zhenskaya lubov,
   Po Kavish adeen adman.
   Zhenskaya lubov,
   Vyedeet karman."
   "Human love is only a fake. Woman's love is only a fake, only
   looks in your pocket." He was a famous one. And how could I
   carry those books, I can't understand. Of course, nobody could
   steal, but it was heavy.

CS: What was in the books?
GS: Numbers of his, that he sings—-not all of them.
CS: Oh, he sung the couplettes?
GS: Huh?
CS: He sung the couplettes? He sang the couplettes?
GS: Yes.
CS: Oh, he was the famous one who came, and you took his
   books and copied them for people, you mean?
GS: Yes.
CS: And he sang the couplettes with music, or what?
GS: He had it there.
CS: What kind of music?
GS: Well, that time, there was a famous friend of Gershunoff,
   Grigori Stelyarof. (as tape cuts off: He, maybe, sometimes, he did
   travel with him, but, uh ... ).

TAPE R1/A (25 December 1987): kitchen table, 5:00 p.m.
CS: The first thing I wanted to ask, after you escaped from
Russia, after you escaped, who was the first person that you told the story to, because when you first escaped, you lost your voice, right?

GS: That was in Kishinaw, yes.

CS: And you didn’t get your voice back until you were in Kishinaw.

GS: Yes, in Kishinaw, I got it because I got a goggle moggle from my house-, housewife. She cured me.

CS: In Kishinaw.

GS: Kishinaw. (turning away, looking down towards floor, hands folded, twiddling thumbs from time to time) And there I started to play the first job. I played a job, it was wintertime, and I played the first job in Pavilion--Pavilion, it’s called--with a gypsy violinist, Dialkitsano, Dialkitsano, it doesn’t make any . . . He spoke Russian because he was in Russia before, playing, broken Russian. And after that, I remained there in Kishinaw, playing with Faniciu Stefanescu. Faniciu Stefanescu, who I was teaching all the classical music that he didn’t ever know, knew in his life to play. Like Kreisler pieces, and gypsy pieces, Russian gypsy. He learned very fast. And the moment he got a hold of it, in his hand, he would teach it, the interpretation, the whole group. I was tired, naturally. I wanted to get to Bucharest to see Grigori Dinicu, who I didn’t see yet. So, one day, I called John Borisoff, the Russian, there ask him to come as a substitute for me. He came as a substitute. And Faniciu saw him, says, "Where is Grigorash, Grigori?" "He’s in Bucharest." Faniciu dropped the whole darn thing, took his pregnant wife, and they take the train off to Bucharest. In Bucharest, naturally, they found me. And says, "Grigori, why do you have to do it?" I said, "Faniciu, but I, you played before with other pianists. Why, all of a sudden, do you want me?" "No, I don’t want anybody else--you." So I was forced to go. And when we came to the border town, the gendarmes came to the train and saw me--you have to cross the border between Bassarabia and Romania. And the gendarme looked at me and says, "You have no passport. You better get out!" So I got out together with Stefanescu. And then, station master saw Stefanescu, says, "Stefanescu, what are you doing here? The whole people are waiting for you in Kishinaw." When he found out the story about me, he says, "Let him pass! ‘Par garantia mia’," my guarantee. So, again, I go back in Kishinaw. This time, I didn’t tell anyone when I wanted to go to Bucharest: I just took the train and went to
Bucharest. I came to Bucharest and saw Grigori Dinicu. Grigori Dinicu liked me. I played for him. I could play all the accompaniments of his violin solos that he didn't expect anybody to know. He was very much satisfied with me. And I told him I would like to settle in Bucharest. And there was a Russian bass player in his orchestra who, who, who, he, he, he, he, he, he, he, I found out that I wanna settle. He said, "Grigori, you're welcome here to stay, but if you're gonna make any changes in the orchestra, they're gonna kill you, the gypsies." Because I came to Bucharest with my compositions, and I told Grigori that I would like to make the orchestra the way I like it. He says, "Yes, do whatever you please." Grigori Dinicu didn't have any objections for me to change the orchestra. And I started to monkey around there till I got, till the Russian bass player told me, he says, "Grigori, we heard that you're gonna change the orchestra. And, as I told you before, the gypsies will kill you if you make any changes that they have to leave the orchestra." So, I again, again, I have no place where to go, what to do. I was alone in Bucharest. Zoe was not with me. So I went back to Kishinaw, and, all of a sudden, I got sick. I got ill. I got "kataralnia zhiltuxa," yellow, the hellow illness—I don't know if you know anything about that. My face turned yellow, skin was yellow. So, after playing there, Zoe took me home to her parents, her parents. He was a vinoceur, winemaker, in Bassarabia, far away from civilization. Called Mendik. "Mandak," it's spelled. Well, again, the same story starts to repeat. I can't stay in Bassarabia forever. I wanted to go someplace. So we decided we're gonna go, this time, directly to Bucharest. We came to Bucharest. And there was five-men orchestra. I played the piano; the gypsy violinist played gypsy music, gypsy; the Italian played banjo; the third, Turk, played saxophone; and I played piano. The language among us was French, yes—I told you. The Belgian was the drummer. Have to be five people. The Belgian only swore, specially in French. He swore, and everything else, but he had to leave, had another job back in Belgu. So he left us, and we had a drummer who was a Negro from United States, married to a Russian woman. He was playing with us on the job, on the drum, very good drummer. Had a typical American drum beat; he knew how to play drums. Now, how did I get out of Bucharest, went to United States? Aha! We went back to my father-in-law, and he gave me 40,000 pesetas, drachmas—not drachmas--leis, to take along with me. Says, "Don't worry. Don't ever return it to me because I speculated on your money that you used to send to us. So that's your money." So, so, I remained in Bucharest, playing in a first-class restaurant, night restaurant. And I liked to play it
very much. But, all of a sudden, I never knew the Americans. The Americans used to come in the club—oh, the Americans! I like them. All of a sudden, among the Americans, a couple gets up—when we play a classical selection, they dance. They don’t care what do we play, how we play, we play. We make ritardandos, they make ritardandos. We make accelerandos, they make accelerandos. Says, I ask, "Who are those people?" He says, "Americans." That’s how I knew Americans. And we were five people playing there—as I told you: the drummer, this time American drummer; I was the pianist, two; the gypsy violinist, three; the Turk played the saxophone; and Mimi, played banjo. Now, how did I get out of Bucharest? Aha. All of a sudden, we got a job in American Embassy. Nobody could go to America, those days—that was forbidden territory. But we had a job in Embassy. And Embassy is a big place, American Embassy. And during the intermission, I have nothing to do. I was looking around to find a piano; I knew they must have pianos beside the one I played on. Yes, I found a piano and started to prelude, without realizing that somebody is always listening to me. And that was a lady. She says, "You play very nicely. Are you from Romania?" "No, I’m Russian." "Would you like to go to United States?" I says, "Sure." "Come, tomorrow, to the Consulate. We’ll see what we can do for you." That time—as I said before—was a prohibitive time to get a visa to go to United States. I came in, and she was waiting for me. And the Consulate was very nicely inclined toward me. He says, "Here’s my wife, and she has told me all about you. Here’s your visa. You don’t have to pay a penny. Here’s a letter of recommendation to the— to the famous island, where they stop you. So we got that visa, and I went with, I still had a job to play in Constanta, Romania. (garbled) On the Black Sea, and because the ships stops there. Was a ship, Faberline. It was always mystifying me: everywhere was written, "No Smokin." I said, "What do they want from poor immigrants to have a smoking? Lucky they have a suit on." I thought "smoking" is a smoking, to wear. And, anyway, so, then we started on our long trip by boat, and we came to United States. Came to United States. I went to the Union, Musicians’ Union. That was in German section, on 86th Street. They’re such strange people there, old Americans, musicians (garbled). I never could understand. Their faces didn’t look like musicians. They look like business people. Well, somebody gave me, says, "You play piano?" "Yes." "Come in to play with me tonight. We have a job." I think it was Majestic Hotel first. I came to play Majestic Hotel. I could not understand that every night there were new musicians. So, in my broken Italian and English, and
whatever language, I asked the violinist. He says, "Well, there's a law. If the leader does not like them, he doesn't have to pay them." So he never paid them because every day there were new musicians. So, he put their money in his pocket. I found out that he also played viola in the symphony orchestra--schiemiel. He exploited poor musicians. And I, I got a call from Wieland--you know, his wife picture hangs in the lobby, together. My old friend Wieland, said, "Gregory, I have a job for you in Chicago. Come over." So, naturally, I went to Chicago. And I met there--I could hardly speak any language except broken German, Russian, and English--and I start to play with, I had a job to play with Helena Moniac, a Bohemian. I suppose, now, she must have been a Bohemian. And I played her the show for 65 dollars a week, was the cheapest salary that musicians could ever get those days. I played with her, and I played, naturally, very well. And the people found out about me. I got another job to play, where I got bigger money. Then comes the third job: the Pantheon Theatre, on Sheridan Road, in Chicago. I played there, started to play there with Ralph Ginsberg. The funny part, the Negro, the Negro waiters called him "gins burg" because it's spelled like that. And I played with, start to play with "gins burg" or Ginsberg, in Palmer House. And I still have, am member of Chicago local, naturally, and I came in the lobby of the Palmer House. I saw Ginsberg. He says, question he asks me, "You still belong here?" I says, "Yes." He says, "Come on and play right now. I don't want any substitute from anybody. You come in and play. My pianist had to go." Scheimann, he was. Abe Scheimann was the pianist. And I took Scheimann place at the Palmer House, with Ralph Ginsberg. I played a whole season with him. We went on the road, around Chicago. I never seen so many mosquitoes. They were biting night and day, day and night. I came back to chicago from our travels around Chicago, and I was offered a job to go to Atlantic City with a jazz band. I took the job. Petrillo was President, Edgar Benson was the contractor and conductor. It's a big orchestra we played. It had a lot of my arrangements. We played all my arrangements, the printed ones. Uh, that was in Atlantic City. The job did not, we stayed there for a while--I don't know how many weeks we played. When the job ended, and I didn't know what to do. To go back to Chicago? All of a sudden, I got an idea. I knew Harry Horlick. He's New York. So I send him a wire. I says, "Harry, I'm here." Because I met Harry before. I don't know how I met him before. "If you want me, you better come get me." The next day, he come in with his friend, the flute (garbled) player, and engaged me for 110 dollars a week to play the A and P Gypsies once a week
and write only one arrangement. That was my beginning in my engagements with Harry Horlick, the A and P Gypsies. But, somehow, I had to pay him: I took 500 dollars advance, and I had to pay him back 50 dollars a week. We were going on a tour with him, with a little group, again, that did not materialize. And, uh, I still owed him 300 dollars. But there was no job, so I decided, again, to go back to Chicago. And, back to Chicago, that's the first time that I heard Rachmaninov play. I didn't know him at all--only admired his playing. He gave a recital. I never knew him, and no sense for me to be introduced to him because I didn't have any music with me. All my music was in a storage, or someplace. I had to come back to Paramount Studios, where Boris Morros was the Musical Director. He was a good genius for me, and also a bad genius. He put me--oh, yes! I did not, I forgot to tell you the story about Richardson, the millionaire, who liked my arrangements. I met him. I did all the arrangements. And he liked me so much that he always stayed in New York over the weekend only to be with me. And we made a recording of his pieces. See, I, it's all mixed up. But that's what it is. I don't know, recorded music, a whole session we recorded. David Group (garbled) was the contractor. How did we get back to the (garbled) again, Cristina?

CS: You were going to Paramount Studios. First, you left out the part about Richardson.

GS: Oh. Richardson got me job in Paramount. He didn't want me to leave, but he says, "Well, if you insist, I'm gonna call Boris Morros. And Boris Morros will give you a job." And Boris Morros says, "I called him on the phone." Says, "Yes, go ahead, Gregory. I spoke with Richardson. He wants you to be in Paramount. Come and be in Paramount. I have a job for you. Big money." I collect, I think, I collected 750 dollars a week, something like that. That's how I started to work in Paramount Studios. Richardson was in New York all the time. Well, the Chicago job also ended, and I decided, Rucksly (garbled) called me on the phone, or something. Sascha Borisoff called me on the phone, says, "Grisha, I have a job for you in New York. We have a restaurant, and it looks like a good job. So come over." I came over, and the restaurant was not that a good job because we had to finish up very soon, also, that time. So I played in New York at the job on Michigan Blvd. The restaurant was called Samovar. We were on the notice, too, so I had to quit. We had to quit. And I went to Petrillo. They sent me two weeks' money before I got the job. So I got the job. They wanted the money back, or part of the money. So I went to Petrillo. Petrillo
says, "No. That's your money. You stick by it. They have no right to that money." So here, again, Petrillo was alright with me this time. I got the money. Where are we now? In Chicago?

CS: New York.

GS: Well, I know, again, that Wieland sent me a telegram. He says, "Gregory, I have another job for you. Come over to Chicago." So I come to Chicago. He meets me. Says, "She is here." "Who is she?" "Jurasky wife. Left her husband in Galatz, Romania." He was living with her there. "And came to Chicago. And took all the possession with her--her gold, and silver, and diamonds. And left her husband." And she was in Chicago, on the first floor. And I was on, living with Wieland, on the third floor. Were you born already? No. How is it that we are back in, in vente-vente-quatre Charles Street, Alviar Hotel? You were born in Buenos Aires. We got to Buenos Aires, already. How's that?

CS: I think you left something out.

GS: Huh?

CS: I think you left something out.

GS: Yes. How did I got to Buenos Aires? After all, must have stopped someplace. How is she? (referring to sick cat, Impromptu)

CS: I think we should take a break. She's sleeping.

GS: Well, you have plenty of material to start with. (tape off for about five minutes, and on again)

CS: (repeating words of GS in order to get them on tape) You just said you "didn't finish up one space--Buenos Aires."

GS: What I did not finish telling you about, my way how I got to Buenos Aires, where you were born. Somehow, I don't know how, we left it out. Mother has to figure, figure out the way. Inge, how did I got to Buenos Aires? I'm telling Cristina the story (changing to an maintaining conversational tone, frequent eye contact during questions/answers)

IS: You were in New York.

GS: Yes.
IS: And you wanted to flee from Zoe. Oh, no. You were in Los Angeles, and you were mad. You wanted to, you were mad, and you wanted to, to flee from Zoe, or something.

GS: Aha. That's right, too. So I went to, so Borovsky took me to the airfield, air terminal. And I went, and I went to, I want to get out. Aha! I says, "I wanna buy a ticket, the farthest place in the world."

IS: Yeah, that's what you told me, Greg.

GS: I went to the, to the Pan American. I looked at the place. Says, "Buenos Aires. That's where I wanna go." And I got a ticket for Buenos Aires. That's where you were born.

IS: That was much later.

GS: Yes, but how else, how did I get out there again?

IS: I don't know. Did you know people in Buenos Aires before you went there? Did you know people that you? When I met you, you were conducting the General Electric Symphony.


IS: . . . Ah . . .

GS: . . . And Ben Molar.

IS: You knew him there? No. You met him there, through Lebendigger, Gregory. Lebendigger had a musical--what do you call it?

GS: Yes, Fermata.

IS: Fermata da Brasil. Publishing company, no?

GS: Yes.

IS: And that's where you met Brenner.

GS: Yes.

IS: Through Ben Molar. I mean, through Lebendigger.

GS: When, I see, I didn't stay in Buenos Aires long.

IS: Yes you did. You wrote a picture there.

GS: Yeah, but how did I get back to the States? Was some
reason.

IS: Well, did you?—no. Were we down there with the skating show already when you were there? Was that the time?

GS: I don’t know. You were there, I know, because I went to see the skating show.

IS: Alright.

GS: That was in Easter, when I, that I came to Buenos Aires.

IS: Then you went to Rio de Janeiro, Greg.

GS: Rio de Janeiro.

IS: Our show was folding up at that time. We were skating.

GS: And, and I had a job in Rio de Janeiro, or what?

IS: I think our show, you didn’t see our skating show, Greg.

GS: Yes, I saw.

IS: No. You saw the ice-skating rink up at Gymnasio Escrime.

GS: No. I saw her falling on ice—Anita Flynn.

IS: Oh, that’s right (laughing). No, that was later, that was later, in Caracas. She fell on ice in Caracas.

GS: OK. Alright. Now, how did I get to Hotel Alviar. You were born, Cristina.

IS: That was later. This is the first time you were there, Greg. This was when the show was folding up, and you, you went to Brazil, and you appeared as a pianist in Rio de Janeiro, and that’s the business with the ticket. Then George Grey or Elizabeth Chandler wanted, we were practicing in Gymnasio Escrime, the skating, you came. We met in the elevator there.

GS: I know, but when, but when? . . .

IS: . . . With the violinist. When the show was folding up. In ’47 or ’48. ’47.

GS: That’s, you’re talking about Buenos Aires.

IS: Yes. We met in the elevator, and we were with Elizabeth Chandler, and we were going upstairs to, we were going upstairs to practice skating. And you went up there with Elizabeth Chandler, and you went . . .
GS: ... And I invited you to the show.

IS: And you went, you invited Anita and I to the Symphony concert, the General Electric Symphony concert at the radio station.

GS: But also Chandler, too.

IS: You invited Chandler, too, at different times. And then she became mad at me for, for gate-crashing, quote, quote. And you had invited me and Anita to come to the, to come to the Symphony concert at the radio station.

GS: Alright. What happens then?

IS: Then you went, we were going to Caracas, and you, I think, in the meantime, you went to Brazil because .

GS: . . . He offered me a job. But that's not enough, or something.

IS: But you played piano there. But I don't, I wasn't there.

GS: I just played piano, but not for money.

IS: Not for money?

GS: No. I'm just want to show them how I play, but they couldn't give me .

IS: . . . I thought you played a performance there, for them, and the conductor was jealous, or something?

GS: Oh, that's another time. That's Brazil.

IS: That's, I'm talking about Brazil. What are you talking about? Our show was folding, we were packing and ready to move from Buenos Aires back to Caracas. And you were, you invited us to the, to the Symphony concert, from, when we were in the elevator, you invited Anita and I to the Symphony concert.

GS: In Buenos Aires.

IS: In Buenos Aires. And then you came, when we left, you came to the airport. And you were talking to Elizabeth, I think. And she, I guess she wanted to have, to engage you or something, or wanted to engage you, but nothing. She needed, I guess, Viegas permission. I don't know what happened there. I have no idea.
GS: You took the plane to New York.

IS: No. We took the plane back to Caracas, and then you decided, from, you were alone in Rio, in Buenos Aires, and you decided to go to Rio de Janeiro on your own. And then you were gonna buy a ticket. You decided, also, to go to Caracas because they had offered you a contract. And you went in to buy a ticket, and . . .

GS: . . . And they told me, "We have a ticket for you here."

IS: "But we have,"—that's right—"We have a ticket for you there."

GS: Who did it, Inge, you?

IS: No. I had nothing to do with it.

GS: George?

IS: Yes, I'm sure it's George, for Mr. Viegas.

GS: Aha! So, from Brazil, I went . . .

IS: . . . To Caracas.

GS: To Caracas. The year, I don't know. From Caracas, where to?

IS: Well, from Caracas to Maracaibo, to Maracaibo.

GS: Aha! I start travelling with the show.

IS: To Curacao, to Aruba—or Aruba, Curacao. No, Curacao, to Aruba. Or, maybe . . .

GS: . . . And you were not pregnant yet?

IS: No! I didn't even know you.

GS: And we came, we came to what town?

IS: Where are we? I don't know where we're stopping at now. Where are we?

GS: Cristinuchka, to you Mama (toasting).

IS: Hey, you didn't click glasses.

CS: Let's start at the beginning.
GS: WHAT'S THE BEGINNING? (becoming more and more impatient)

CS: At the beginning, again. After you left Russia, did you
tell anybody that you escaped? At first, you couldn't
tell anybody you escaped because you had no voice, right?

GS: No, I got, I got the train. I wanted to go and do
propaganda for the Bolshevists.

CS: Right.

GS: So they gave me a train . . .

CS: . . . Right. And you went from Odessa to Vapniarka; and
back and forth; and back and forth; Odessa, Vapniarka;
Odessa, Vapniarka, no?

GS: Yes.

CS: And then from Vapniarka . . .

GS: . . . To Zhmerinka.

CS: To Zhmerinka. You didn't unchain the train in Vapniarka,
right?

GS: Well, now I had full train, full of people, all the
speculators there . . .

CS: . . . And Zhmerinka is where the Cheka came in.

GS: Yes. That time.

CS: Zhmerinka, not Mogiliov?

GS: No. Zhmerinka.

CS: OK. And from Zhmerinka, some of them went home because
they got tired of waiting, right?

GS: No. They all went with me to Mogiliov.

CS: They all went there?

GS: Yes. And then many of them decided to go back . . .

CS: . . . from Mogiliov. And the "Voksal" where you used to
go, the "Voksal," was that in Zhmerinka or Mogiliov?

GS: WAIT A SECOND! Then, in Mogiliov Podolsk, a guy came up
to me, says, "Look, you play accompaniment here very
fine, but you don't wanna stay here. You wanna get outta
here. Where do you wanna go?" I says, "I wanna cross the border." "Alright. You have money?" I says, "Yes." "500 dollars?" "Yes."

CS: Was it dollars they asked for then or rubles? Where would you get dollars from?

GS: Rubles, whatever it is. Rubles, yes.

CS: Not dollars?

GS: No.

CS: And this guy who approached you, he approached you in Mogiliov, not in Zhmerinka?

GS: No.

CS: And the "Voksal," where did you used to play in Mogiliov?

GS: There was a theatre there.

CS: Hm. Outdoor or indoor theatre?

GS: Indoor.

CS: Indoor theatre? With a movie?

GS: No, just a concert hall. But that's, I didn't play very much there. I decided I'm--was I sick, already? I don't know.

CS: You were sick before.

GS: Before. So, this time, I was alone. I didn't know anybody. Zoe was not with me, and mother was not with me either.

IS: I hope not (laughing).

CS: And, from Mogiliov, you went to Kiev, and back and forth, right?

GS: But I was just travelling around.

CS: But back and forth, from Mogiliov to Kiev, back and forth, speculating. And when you crossed the border, it was from Mogiliov, right?

GS: No, but you bring in Mogiliov again. We crossed the border when the Cheka came up and said, "Speculators!" And we had a (garbled). "We're dying from boredom."
CS: But that's not when you crossed the border into Romania?

GS: Mother will have to enlighten us on that subject.

CS: Zhmerinka was the railroad center, right?

GS: Zhmerinka. That's where they, they died from boredom, and we brought sugar and everything else . . .

CS: . . . And they got you a piano.

GS: Yeah. We saw the bridges blown up in the air in Zhmerinka. There, we could not cross the bridge.

IS: No kidding?

CS: Which bridges?

GS: Pontoon bridges, I suppose, was hanging there.

CS: Hm.

GS: Because we wanted to get out of . . .

CS: . . . Zhmerinka.

GS: Zhmerinka. We gave, made a concert for those guys, and they gave us everything.

IS: Now. (tape cuts for dinner break)

TAPE R1/B (25 December 1987): diningroom table, dinnertime

GS: (as tape turns, "I just went to visit, but where I am now?"; unless otherwise indicated, conversational tone, eye contact throughout)

CS: I don't know.

GS: Inge, how you? You have to tell us.

IS: What am I supposed to tell you?

CS: From Mogiliov you went to Kiev, didn't you?

GS: Many times.

CS: And back and forth, and back and forth, speculating and playing as well, no?

GS: Just speculating.
CS: Just speculating. And in Mogiliov?

GS: I told you, they had a big theatre there.

CS: This was after Zhmerinka? When you left Russia for the last time, what city were you in?

GS: Odessa.

CS: No.

IS: On the border, she means.

CS: On the border, before you went into Romania, before the smugglers came in. Where did the smugglers come?

GS: They were in Mogiliov.

CS: In Mogiliov. So that was after Zhmerinka. And the guy who approached you and said, "You want to, I see you here every day, I know you want . . . "

GS: . . . That's in Mogiliov.

CS: In Mogiliov the guy approaches?

GS: Yeah.

CS: OK. Then, after that, that night you were sleeping, and you heard a knock at the door.

GS: Yes. And they come in. We were sitting--Amerikov, Paqarelov, the balalaika player; and violinist, Obermann; and myself.

CS: You were sitting or you were sleeping?

GS: No. We were sitting: it was not that late.

CS: And they came, and they asked you if you have the money.

GS: Yes. "Get ready. Get out right now."

CS: Then that's the night you paid them?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Not beforehand?

GS: No.
CS: And you took your "chamadan" and some manuscripts?
GS: Yes, I had some manuscripts with me, whatever I had.
CS: ... And the little suitcase. And you started walking through the city.
GS: Through the city, a lot of people join us.
CS: Other people they had contacted.
GS: Yeah. Finally, we came to the border.
CS: The border was between Russia and Romania, right?
GS: Hm.
CS: And this was in Mogiliov? And this was the Dniester?
GS: Dniester River.
CS: Not Dnieper?
GS: No.
CS: Dniester.
GS: Dniester falls in on Dnieper.
CS: Hm. And this was the Dniester. And you crossed. And it was winter, right? And you crossed in a ...
GS: ... And I was in a, in a peasant hut.
CS: After you crossed, though?
GS: Yes.
CS: First you crossed the river, and the baby cried.
GS: Then we decided--yes, the baby cried. Then we decided, Pagarelov said to us, "I have a relative here who lived 25 years ago. Let's go look for him."
CS: At night time? At night time? You were supposed to go look for him at night time? In the middle of the night?
GS: No. Well, by that time, it already got ...
CS: ... It was dawn already?
GS: Yes.

CS: So you walked the entire night and took the canoe.

GS: No, we had, we had a peasant "telega."

CS: What?

GS: Peasant "telega"--you know.

CS: "Telega"?

GS: "Telega" with horses.

CS: The same night you escaped?

GS: It was already morning.

CS: I thought you had a droshky the next morning.

GS: It’s not droshky. We couldn’t have a regular, fine droshky.

CS: "Telega"?

GS: "Telega." Just a peasant wagon.

CS: But I thought you called it a droshky the other day.

GS: Maybe it’s a droshky, you can call it droshky.

CS: But it wasn’t fancy?

GS: NO, NO, NOTHING.

CS: And there was hay in this one.

GS: Yes.

CS: The next morning. But you didn’t sleep that night in the peasant hut?

GS: No.

CS: You never slept.

GS: Never slept.

CS: You just kept walking. After you crossed the river in the canoe, you walked, and then they brought a . . .

GS: . . . Yes. Finally, we came to, at night we came to a
little, a little city, with hotel, everything. That's the first time when I saw white bread.

CS: You never saw white bread before in Russia?

GS: No, for a long time.

CS: Did they have it in Russia?

GS: Now?

CS: Then, when you were in Odessa.

GS: Hm, hm.

CS: No?

GS: They make bread out of green peas.

CS: In Odessa, during the Revolution? And so you never saw white bread before?

GS: Well, I saw white bread before the Revolution. I was, don't forget, I was born there.

CS: So, before the Revolution, they had white bread. But then they didn't have it for many years, and you saw it again in this hotel.

GS: In the little hotel.

CS: And you hadn't slept at all the whole night--you were walking and walkin.

GS: Anyway, the police was very strict. In Mogiliov Podolsk, many people had visas from United States, could not, didn't have patience to wait. They tried to cross the border; they were dropped right on ice, and died right on ice.

CS: They were shot at, right?

GS: Yeah. The Dniester was frozen.

CS: They tried to cross the frozen river?

GS: Hm.

GS: And they were shot at by Romanians?

GS: From both sides.
CS: By Russians and Romanians. How did you know that the guy who approached you wasn’t an informer and wasn’t going to turn you in to the police?

GS: No, because I knew him, what he was doing in the city.

CS: You’d seen him before?

GS: Yes, because I played quite a lot of jobs in Mogiliov Podolsk.

CS: Not only the theatre?

GS: Well, many jobs, yes.

CS: And he was always around?

GS: Yes.

CS: And you knew that he would approach people?

GS: He approached me. Says, "Have you got any money? You wanna cross the border? You don’t belong here: you wanna get out." I says, "Yes."

CS: How was he dressed?

GS: Regular, he was dressed.

CS: Like an ordinary person, not a government . . .

GS: . . . NO, NO.

CS: So you went across the border in the canoe, in the boat, right? And it was already past midnight. And then you went from, you got out of the boat . . .

GS: . . . Yes, by, by that "telega," they took us 25 miles here, where Pagarelov’s relative supposed to live. And we came there. Was nobody there that time. But we stopped in hotel, and that’s the first time I saw white bread.

CS: There was no peasant hut?

GS: On our way back?

CS: Leaving Russia, leaving, after the water, after you crossed the water . . .

GS: . . . I was in the peasant . . .
CS: ... Peasant hut? Whose was the peasant hut?

GS: When we crossed the border, we were in the peasant hut.

CS: And why did you go to the peasant hut?

GS: Well, where would we stay? We crossed. We were waiting till dawn.

IS: Now, how do you find, I mean, how did you find the peasant hut, Gregory?

GS: I wasn’t finding anything. There’s a lot of people around me who did find it.

IS: Oh.

GS: The one who crossed, who wanted to kill the guy with the baby.

IS: She found it?

GS: He.

IS: Oh, he.

CS: And they put you, all of you together, in a peasant hut.

GS: Yes. And the Bolsheviks very much interested to have a lot of their agents cross the border. So they didn’t pay very much attention, so much attention who crosses the border.

CS: So you stayed in this peasant hut. Did you sleep there or eat there?

GS: Sleep there—I think, I don’t know—if I ate there.

CS: No food. And then, in the morning?

GS: We started to go for 25 miles.

CS: To the uncle’s house.

GS: Yes.

CS: That’s when you were running?

GS: Yes. We didn’t find anyone.

IS: But you found a hotel.
GS: Yes. And . . .
CS: . . . And you . . .
IS: . . . Where did this happen with the shoes, the boots? . . .
GS: . . . White bread . . .
IS: . . . Where you fell in, with the piano, when you played a concert?
CS: That was someplace else.
IS: Ah. But when did this happen, someplace in here?
CS: Wait a second. Let's get this straight, Tutti. Then, from the, in the hotel, how long did you stay in the hotel?
GS: I don't remember how long, but we were anxious to get out.
CS: But you had no voice, now.
GS: No.
CS: And from there you went to the pharmacist house.
GS: Yes, we stayed there for a while.
CS: And he had a piano. But you still had no voice.
GS: No.
CS: And then, from there, you went to Kishinaw—Obermann and Amerikov still with you.
GS: Yes.
CS: How did you got to Kishinaw, by another carriage, "britchka," or something?
GS: Well, there's a lot of transportation.
CS: But you weren't running this time?
GS: No.
CS: But still you had no voice?
GS: No.
CS: And you had no voice until you got to Kishinaw.

GS: That’s right.

CS: And then there was a woman who had flats, who was a landlord, or something.

GS: Yes. That’s where we stopped.

CS: And she made the goggle mobble.

GS: Yes.

CS: So, until you got to Kishinaw, you had no voice since leaving Russia?

GS: No.

CS: So, who was the first person you told the story about how you escaped? When were you, when were you able to tell somebody about it? Do you remember if you told anybody?

GS: When is that?

CS: After you got your voice back. Sometime in Kishinaw, you got your voice again, right?

GS: In Kishinaw, I saw the whole Sascha Lukas family--Marusa and Luba. Everybody there. He . . .

IS: . . . And the other little girl? . . .

GS: . . . He brought in all the family.

CS: Were you able to talk that time?

GS: Well, naturally, whatever I could (making gargling sound), at that time.

CS: Did you tell, did you talk about how you escaped, about how you left and took the canoe, took the boat?

GS: I don’t know if they were interested in that, I don’t know.

CS: You don’t remember who you told the story to first?

GS: Why? Why it’s interesting?

CS: I’m curious to know who heard the story for the first time. It must have been an exciting story to tell.
GS: Well, I must have told it. I told it, I think, in Kishinaw, when I started to work.

CS: You started to work, but you had no voice in the beginning.

GS: Yes.

CS: So you couldn't tell anybody anything.

GS: Whatever voice I had. I worked with Diolkitsano, a gypsy who . . .

CS: . . . Who?

GS: Diolkitsano, Romanian gypsy, who spoke Russian with the broken accent, Romanian. And that's where I, first, to play job with him, in "Blagarodnaya Sabrania."

CS: "Blagarodnaya"?

GS: "Sabrania." That's where I played the job. He was there playing violin.

CS: Did you tell him the story?

GS: Yes, I suppose so.

CS: Had he also escaped?

GS: He came from Russia a long time ago, yes. He was Romanian.

CS: Hm. And after Kishinaw, did you tell the story to anybody else?

GS: Where am I?

CS: In Kishinaw.

GS: WAIT A SECOND! Where am I now?

CS: Kishinaw, with Diolkitsano.


CS: Also in Kishinaw?
GS: Yes.
CS: That's the first time you met Wieland?
GS: Yes, I think so, after Odess, yes.
CS: You knew him in Odessa, too?
GS: Yes.
CS: At the Conservatory? He was a student?
GS: Yes.
CS: Violinist?
GS: Viola player, violinist.
CS: And then he's the same Wieland in New York, who you used to go and work for?
CS: I thought you worked for him.
GS: No. We were friends.
CS: You didn't work for Wieland?
GS: No, the only time . . .
CS: . . . But he's the one who phoned and said he had a job for you someplace.
GS: In Chicago.
CS: Chicago.
GS: The job did not materialize for a long time.
CS: No, but you knew him already from Odessa?
GS: Yeah.
CS: Is he alive, Wieland?
GS: No.
CS: No?
GS: Both of them are dead.
CS: Both, who?

GS: Kira, his wife.

CS: Oh. Alright, now we’re in Kishinaw. And what happened to Amerikov and Obermann? Did they play in the "Blagodorняя Sabrania"?

GS: I don’t know if they play there. I supported them, I suppose.

CS: Oh, you gave them money? They had no jobs? Amerikov was the balalaka player?

GS: Yes. Finally, he decided to go to Berlin . . .


GS: . . . Where he married a German woman and started publishing company, music. I have that music here.

CS: Is he alive, Amerikov?

GS: No.

CS: Was he older than you? You have that music here? You have his music here yet from his first publishing?

GS: Yes. He sent it to me.

CS: Was he older than you, Amerikov?

GS: Oh, sure.

CS: And what about Obermann? He didn’t play in Kishinaw?

GS: I don’t remember if, maybe he played little bit in Kishinaw. He was a good violinist.

CS: And then he went to America?

GS: Yes.

CS: Did you know him also from Odessa?

GS: Yeah.

CS: He was a student?

GS: We all got together to get out, our scheme.

CS: How did you meet those people, Amerikov and Obermann?
If Amerikov was older than you, then he wasn’t a student.

GS: No. I suppose I used to go to cafes to find out about musicians, everything else. And we got together, Obermann and Pagarelov. We decided we gonna stick together and get out of Russia.

CS: Hm. And . . .

GS: . . . And I got, that time, the coupe, whatever . . .

CS: . . . Those, those cooks that you took on the train. They all wanted to leave Russia.

GS: They all wanted to leave Russia because there was nothing else.

CS: But wasn’t it suspicious to the the GP. What is it called, GUP?

GS: But they, I went to the "Gubernskaya Kamisia Pobarveh Desertirsum"--the Government Committee to Fight the Desertion--and they gave me the train.

CS: But weren’t they suspicious that you would put all these cooks on the train who wanted to leave Russia?

GS: Why not? They have nothing to do with them; they not interested about cooks.

CS: Or they just? . . .

GS: . . . No, no.

CS: You took them to cook for you?

GS: Huh?

CS: You took them to cook for you?

GS: Yes.

CS: Yes. So they didn’t suspect that they wanted to leave. They just thought they were the cooks for the train.

GS: Hm.

CS: How did you know?

GS: The cook didn’t have to tell them whether they’re going forever or no.
CS: No. How did you know the cooks wanted to leave?

GS: Because I used to go to Rabina, Franconi, and Ambalzaki, all the cafes. We were talking about it.

CS: And you knew that they wanted to get out.

IS: That's for immediate consumption (referring to food).

CS: Alright. Then, who was Mimi the banjo player?

GS: He was playing with us in Bucharest.

CS: In Bucharest.

GS: He's from Russia.

CS: Did you know him in Russia already?

GS: I never met them.

CS: Dinicu, did you meet Dinicu only in Bucharest?

GS: Yes, the first time.

CS: You didn't know him from Kishinaw.

GS: No, he's not in Kishinaw.

CS: So, when you went to Bucharest, you didn't know you would meet Dinicu?

GS: No.

CS: Who was the Turk? Is that Mimi?

GS: No, saxophone player. We were saxophone player, gypsy violinist, I played the piano, Mimi played on banjo, and somebody played the drums.

CS: Drums. All of this in Bucharest, right? In which hotel or which theatre?

GS: No, hotel. Was, I can't, one of the biggest hotels.

CS: Londres? Was this Londres? Savoy?

GS: Huh?

CS: There's always a big Savoy everywhere. Londres.

GS: Octave would tell me the hotel.
CS: Hm. That's true. Obermann and Pagarelov did not go to Bucharest? You said you saw them for the last time in Kishinaw?

GS: No. Obermann went with me.

CS: To Bucharest?

GS: To the States.

CS: But not...

GS: ... Pagarelov decided to go to...

CS: ... To Germany.

GS: To Germany.

CS: Pagarelov is the same thing as Amerikov, right?

GS: Yes.

CS: What was his first name?

GS: What's the name of Pagarelov, Inge?

IS: How do I know? I wouldn't know, Greg.

GS: Vladimir.

CS: Vladimir? What about Obermann?

GS: Simeon.

CS: Simeon?

GS: Simon, Simeon.

CS: Hm. Were they Jewish, both of them?

GS: No, well, Obermann was. And Pagarelov, no.

CS: And Sascha Borisoff you knew from Odessa?

GS: Yes.

CS: Was he your age, the same age as you?

GS: He may be one or two years younger than I am.

CS: How did you know him in Odessa?
GS: Oh, well, from Conservatory in Odessa.

CS: He was in the Conservatory? You weren't relatives?

GS: No, no.

CS: But you knew him. He played violin?

GS: He played cello.

CS: Oh, Sascha Borisoff played cello.

GS: Yes.

CS: And he also escaped, but before you? You said you saw him, and you were sitting in a garden.

GS: He was our leader. He got the job for us. He was sitting in a garden with me. All of a sudden, a woman comes in with two girls, carrying them in her arms. That was Luba, and I forgot the other girl.

CS: This was in Romani, right? In Kishinaw?

GS: In a garden in, in a garden in Bucharest.

CS: Bucharest?

GS: No. Open garden.

CS: Kishinaw?

GS: That's where she brought her first two children to us, out in that garden.

CS: You were surprised to see them?

GS: Well, I may have been surprised, but Sascha—that was his wife, Marusa.

CS: He hadn't seen them until they came into the garden?

GS: Hm?

CS: He had not seen them until they came into the garden?

GS: Yes.

CS: He hadn't seen them? They came straight from Russia? And John Borisoff was his brother?
GS: Yes.

CS: And he was the one you used, you told to substitute when you were going to . . .

GS: . . . Their name was not Borisoff. Was Fuchs.

CS: Fuchs?

GS: Fuchs.

CS: Oh, they changed their name. Why did they change their name?

GS: Well, it's much better to have . . .

CS: . . . Were they Jewish, Sascha and John Borisoff?

GS: Sascha was, yes.

CS: Jewish, hm. OK. And Helena Moniac was the one who told you to change your name, right?

GS: She just called me Mr. Stone.

CS: Just like that?

GS: I played a job with her in Chicago for 65 dollars a week.

CS: Ha. And Petrillo was who?

GS: President of the Local of Musicians.

CS: In Chicago?

GS: In Chicago.

CS: And Spitalni?

GS: Spitalni was my conductor at Chicago Theatre, who gave me first break. Says, "Created by Spitalni; orchestrated by Gregory Stone."

CS: What did he say?

GS: On the screen. All the overtures that I wrote. He never gave credit to anybody, but to me he gave credit.

CS: What screen?

GS: Screen credit.
CS: This was music for . . .

GS: . . . On, it was on the screen.

CS: Music you wrote for pictures?

GS: No, for the theatre.

CS: Oh, they had a screen in the theatre. It wasn't a movie?

GS: It was a movie theatre, but it was not Hollywood.

CS: And you wrote arrangements?

GS: Yes.

CS: And they played them while the movie was showing?

GS: Yes.

CS: This was silent pictures?

GS: Yes, was silent pictures, yes, but was not silent pictures already. Pictures changed. They had orchestra in the pit and orchestra on the stage.

CS: Hm. Two orchestras?

GS: Playing for vaudeville show.

CS: Ah, for a show, a live show.

GS: Yeah. And I was a pianist both ways.

CS: On the stage . . .

GS: . . . And in the pit.

CS: What's the difference?

GS: Nothing. I just got more money.

CS: And then there was a screen where they gave credit to the people?

GS: Spitalni gave me credit.

CS: Just a while screen, a big white screen?

GS: Big Screen.

CS: Hm. And you had written music for the shows?
Arrangements? Hm. Leopold Spitalni?

GS: Leopold Spitalni.

CS: He's not alive?

GS: No.

CS: And who was Adolf Hoffmann?

GS: The first cellist of the Chicago Theatre.

CS: Chicago Theatre or Chicago Orchestra?

GS: Chicago Theatre, but he played in Chicago Orchestra before.

CS: He was just playing cello there?

GS: Yeah. I started to write arrangements. He was orchestrating them.

CS: And Lipston, who was Lipston?

GS: General Musical Director of all the theatres.

CS: What was his first name?

GS: Ah.

CS: Irving?

GS: No, Louis.

CS: Louis Lipston? Is he the "a capella" man?

GS: He didn't know what means "a capella" (laughing). "What you talking about 'a capella'"? Musicians had, of course, a picnic. Musical Director doesn't know what means "a capella" (laughing).

CS: Did he know anything about music?

GS: Yes, he, he was a violinist.

CS: Ha. And Bernard Levitov?

GS: Was a, had Hotel, Hotel Commodore.

CS: He was the owner?

GS: In the lobby of Hotel Commodore, he had a group. That's
where he insisted I should play a concerto. "Ah. You join my orchestra. You have to play a concerto." So I bought a Rimsky-Korsakoff concerto, that time, orchestration and parts, and we had very good group because we had, Biedermann played the missing parts from the piano part of the concerto; Sascha Lukas played violin; and his, he had a partner, I forgot his name, Hungarian who played the first violin; Sascha played second violin; Losh played viola; and Wagner played the cello—Wagner, just a name like that; and Chelovk, we called, we called him Chelovk, the bass player, Russian. That was our orchestra, very good. And Levitov imagines that he plays the big symphony orchestra (raising arms as if conducting).

CS: Oh, is he the one that wore the tails all the time?

GS: Hm?

CS: Is he the one who wore the tails?

GS: Yes.

CS: That came out in the tails?

GS: He was a good violinist, by the way, but he conduct the orchestra for us.

CS: And Harry Horlick, who was that?

GS: Is name is Garlick.

CS: Garlick?

GS: Garlick.

CS: Was he Russian, or Romanian?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Or Romanian?

GS: Russian. He's from Caucasus, Tiflis.

CS: Hm. But he changed his name to Horlick.

GS: He got the A and P Gypsies.

CS: What are the A and P Gypsies?

GS: A and P stores.
CS: Grocery stores?

GS: Yes.

CS: Same ones that were in Los Angeles?

GS: Yes. He, they get an orchestra. He sold them an idea to have an orchestra, or somebody sold them the idea. They took him along, and he got the job for 21 years.

CS: 21 years? What did he do?

GS: Conduct the orchestra, play violin solos.

CS: And they have full orchestra?

GS: Well, later on, they had a full orchestra, or 40 men. Before, they had only, they played trio or quartet, whatever it is.

CS: And he’s the one you went to Atlantic City with?

GS: I didn’t. He just came to Atlantic City, to engage me, as an arranger for A and P Gypsies, to write one arrangement a week for 110 dollars.

CS: And you wrote those arrangements? Like what? Anything you wanted? You remember any of them?

GS: Yes, I still have some.

CS: You didn’t play the piano?

GS: Yes.

CS: You also played the piano?

GS: We had also another pianist. There were two pianos.

CS: Hm.

GS: But I insisted to play the first piano.

CS: And you travelled around?

GS: No. That was a stationary thing.

CS: Where was that?

GS: In New York.

CS: Not in Atlantic City?
GS: Oh, no.
CS: And how long were you with the A and P Gypsies?
GS: You mean with Levitov?
CS: No, Harry Horlick.
GS: I was there quite a long time. Then I was fired.
CS: Why?
GS: Because I didn’t show up on the job. I was asleep.
CS: You overslept?
GS: So the cello player played the piano--Mazouki.
CS: Just like that? Mazouki? What’s that?
GS: Mazouki played by ear to fill up the time for me, for not showing up on the job. He played the piano that time.
CS: Mazouki was his name?
GS: Yes.
CS: Oh. That was in New York?
GS: Yes.
CS: You went there when you woke up? What happened?
GS: He, I didn’t play any more with Harry Horlick. He fired me.
CS: After such a long time? Why were they called the A and P Gypsies?
GS: A and P are the stores.
CS: But what about Gypsies? Why did they call them Gypsies?
GS: They like the name together with the stores. Somebody gave them the name.
CS: Were they Gypsies?
GS: No. That was we.
CS: Were you really gypsies?
GS: Was I a gypsy?

CS: No.

GS: No. So the other ones, also not.

CS: They weren’t gypsies. Who was Seidmann?

GS: Siedmann? Was a bass player who died in Chicago.

CS: I have his name on one of the tapes. What did he do?

GS: He was a rich man. Made money out of music. Wanted to, to come to Hollywood, or something like that, but he didn’t. He died in Chicago. Jascha Bunchook or Tsenia Bunchook or, brought a tuxedo and put him in tuxedo and they buried him.

CS: Who was Bunchook?

GS: There were two brothers, both cello players.

CS: OK. Then we have to go back. What was the "Sama Barona," "Sama Barona"?

GS: "Sama Barona." "Sam Obarano," "Sama Obarona," you don’t pronounce it. In our flat, people used to get together and get sandwiches and everything else. My mother would do it. And then went on the street to defend the stores, Jewish stores in Odessa, and kill out the whole "Pogromchik," the "Pogrom-Makers," the "Chornaya Divitsia," "Chornaya Sochinsky."

CS: "Chornaya Sochinski," you said? "Chornaya Sochinski," something like that?

GS: "Chornaya Sotnya."

CS: "Chornaya Sotnya." Ho do you say the other one, "Samo"?

GS: "Sama Obarona."

CS: One word?


CS: League.

GS: They’re coming to my house. My mother gave them.

CS: They worked during the night?
GS: Who did?

CS: The "Sama Obarona."

GS: "Sama Obarona" was the job to get the criminals on the street and kill them and throw them in the canalization.

CS: Did they do this for a long time?

GS: During the Pogroms, yes.

CS: This was when you were a little boy?

GS: Yes.

CS: But you remember it?

GS: Yes. I remember those "Pogromchiki" coming on our street, and I saw mother coming out, go to the store. I say, "Mama! Mama!" And she looked up and saved herself from those . . .

CS: . . . They just killed randomly, anybody?

GS: Yeah. "Pogromchik." The government knew about it; they didn't bother. The less Jews and New Christians, whatever it is, they didn't they like it.

CS: Why, you said, when you were in Romania, you were worried about returning to Stefanescu, back to Kishinaw, because your papers had to be in order?

GS: Yeah.

CS: What papers? What were these papers that had to be in order?

GS: Official papers, our visas. See, when I left, when I left Kishinaw, my passport was not in good shape.

CS: You needed a passport to go from Kishinaw to Bucharest?

GS: Yes.

CS: From one city to the next city?

GS: Not city. You come, crossing two provinces--one is called Romanian, and the other one, Bassarabian.

CS: Kishinaw was Bassarabia?
GS: Bassarabia.

CS: And you needed a passport to go from Bassarabia to Romania?

GS: Well, Romanians probably didn’t need any passport, but I would need.

CS: But foreigners did. And when you crossed from Russia to Bassarabia, you had no papers?

GS: No, not good, not good conditions.

CS: The papers, the smugglers did not provide you with?

GS: They didn’t care what papers I have as long as I have the money.

CS: But they didn’t give you false identification papers?

GS: No.

CS: For the money?

GS: No.

CS: So you had nothing?

GS: No.

CS: You crossed, and you had no identification papers.

GS: No. Those days, they have Nonsen passport.

CS: What?

GS: Nonsen.

CS: Nonsen?

GS: Yes, Nonsen was a famous, um, Norwegian who did so much for the refugees. So we had his passport.

CS: Hm. Nonsen passport. You had one of those?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Did the smugglers give it to you? Or who gave it to you?

GS: No, we just, automatically, we got them.

CS: In Romania? In Bassarabia?
GS: I got it through the Consulate. I got a visa to go to United States. But I must have had that passport there too.

CS: Before. A Nonsen passport.

GS: Yes.

CS: I don’t understand why, if you paid the smugglers 500 rubles, they didn’t give you some false identification, something.

GS: They didn’t bother. Their only thing, job was to take us over.

CS: To take you across, and that was the end.

GS: That’s all.

CS: But you had the Nonsen passport from Russia, yet?

GS: Yes. It was not effective, I don’t know.

CS: You had no other passport from Russia?

GS: Nothing.

CS: Because you were Jewish?

GS: I still have . . .

CS: . . . Or just because they didn’t have passports? . . .

GS: . . . They didn’t have any passports.

CS: You still have what?

GS: I still have it.

CS: This passport?

GS: My passport, yes, I still have from Chicago, passport.

CS: The old one, but . . .

GS: . . . Yes . . .

CS: . . . Not the Nonsen one.

GS: No.
CS: And the Romanian woman from the Consulate, she gave you a regular passport?

GS: She gave us a visa.

CS: A visa? And she put it on the Nonsen passport?

GS: No. Just a visa, special document, from the Embassy.

CS: And a recommendation letter.

GS: Yes, sure.

CS: You, and you landed in Ellis Island.

GS: Yes.

CS: Did you stay there?

GS: Huh?

CS: Did you stay there?

GS: No.

CS: You didn’t go through the quarantine, all that stuff?

GS: No, no, very little.

CS: Hm.

GS: Because we travelled second-class, or something like that.

CS: On that, the Haberline, or Faberline.

GS: Faberline.

CS: Faberline. You left Constantsa.

GS: Constantsa, we left for United States.

CS: How long did the trip take?

GS: Ten days, I think.

CS: Only ten days?

GS: Hm.

CS: Did you have beds, or you were standing? How was the trip?
GS: Fine, naturally. It's a regular ship.

CS: You had beds?

GS: Yes.

CS: You went second-class?

GS: Yes.

CS: And there was a first-class and a third-class? Hm. Alright. Now, these places that I don't . . .

GS: . . . Did you go to see (meaning sick cat, Impromptu). . .

CS: . . . I gave her some duck liver.

GS: She's alright?

CS: Well, she smelled . . .

GS: . . . Isn't it crazy, the story of my life?

TAPE R2/A (26 December 1987): fireplace, afternoon

CS: Let's see. We have, we did Stefanescu, Cheka. The Cheka, you said, came on board in Zhmerinka, the Cheka, right?

GS: Yes (maintaining eye contact, conversational tone until indicated point)

CS: In Zhmerinka. Who was Wieland?

GS: Huh?

CS: Wieland?

GS: Wieland was my old friend from Odessa.

CS: What was his first name?

GS: We went to the same Conservatory.

CS: And the Conservatory in Odessa, before it was a Conservatory, it was called . . .

GS: . . . "Musikalni Uchilitza."

CS: "Musikalnoye Oochilische."
GS: That's gymnasium, or something like.

CS: And then Malishevsky changed it?

GS: Uh, Malishevsky was Rimsky-Korsakoff pupil, and his name was . . .

CS: . . . Vitold.

GS: Vitold.

CS: And he changed it to the conservatory?

GS: Yes.

CS: And who was Cimini?

GS: Cimini was the director, conductor of the opera, one of my teachers, too.

CS: Conducting teacher.

GS: Conducting.

CS: And he was the one who later went to America?

GS: Yes, he left Russia. His wife was a singer, Zakrebskaya.

CS: Zakrebskaya.

GS: Zakrebskaya. I think I told you already.

CS: Yeah.

GS: He was teaching me also, continuing in Hollywood, or where we were, I imagine, in Hollywood.

CS: Hm.

GS: He continued. Now, I don't need any lessons, but for old sake, I did take lessons.

CS: Hm. And which was the cousin of yours who sold the cigarettes? She took the cigarettes.

GS: Ah. Edith.

CS: That was Edith? And when you left your parents' place, you went and moved in with this cousin?

GS: Yes. I left my place, went to live with my cousin,
Kozinsberg (garbled), I forgot the name.

CS: Five, wasn’t it?

GS: Five, five girls.

CS: They had no mother there?

GS: Who they? Well, their mother was with me. I don’t know, we probably have better financial circumstances because she used to come to my house and stay with me.

CS: The mother of the girls?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And the girls stayed there by themselves?

GS: Well, it’s a big apartment they have. They have enough room in that apartment. They lived ten. Then Olga’s fiance came out of somewhere dying. He must have been hit during the invasion somewhere, and he came to die home.

CS: In your house?

GS: In their house.

CS: Oh, in their house.

GS: I was with them. When he died, I was with them. And, uh, after that, I decided, my mother was dead, my father was dead. I was alone in the world. So I decided it was better for me to get out of the country altogether. And, I think I told you, I went to the "Gubernskaya Kamisia Pobarveh Desertirsum." (turning away, looking down towards floor)

CS: How was that again?

GS: "Gubernskaya Kamisia Pobarveh . . ."


GS: . . . "Pobarveh Desertirsum." And since they knew me—I played all the concert, I was the one who played on the piano. Always they needed somebody to play "Internationale," and I played the "Internationale" that time at that, the concert, so I came that time. I told them I would like to take, uh, "kollektiv" and go and make propaganda for the Bolshevists, against the desertion of the army.
CS: How did you know them? You used to go to the meetings? You used to go to the meetings of the "Gubernskaya Kamisia"?

GS: No, but everybody in town knows where it is. It’s just like, smaller than El Coto.

CS: Where you lived, you mean?

GS: No. You got me. Because the dates are confusing me in my mind now. I know I asked them to get a train; so, so, I get a troupe out of Odessa. I make propaganda. So I took Franconi, Rabina, Ambalzaki, I took all those chefs with me because they all wanted to leave Russia altogether. It was nothing else to do. It was in the Bolshevist hands, so they gladly join me. They gladly join me, and they went on a tour--AS I TOLD YOU. We travelled as far as Vapniarka, and we used to come back again. Finally, I decided it’s no use; we have to do something. So I did not tell the, unchain the, our car, and we went straight to Zhmerinka. Zhmerinka, I TOLD YOU THE EPISODE. They, the Cheka came in to, saw us, our car full of sugar, monies on the tables, everything else, says, "Speculators. Cheka." I says, "Tavarische, we’re not speculators. We’re artists." "Artists? My goodness!" Starts to cross himself (makes sign of cross). Says, "We’re dying here for entertainment. We’ll do everything for you. What do you want?" "Well, give us a, first of all, hotel." So they took us to hotel. They brought the piano in the hotel. We rehearsed in the hotel, all the program. In the meantime, I used to go to the railroad station, and there I met one of the guys, who said, "If you have nothing else to do, we take you back and forth." I don’t know why he should tell me to do those things. Must be something happening before. But that’s dark in my mind. Why should he take us back and forth for nothing? I think we did a concert first for them, for the train. That was "blindake"--what you call the train that has, you can’t shoot through it?

CS: Armored.

GS: Armored train.

CS: It was an armored car?

GS: That’s what, we gave a concert for them.

CS: You have a concert in Zhmerinka?
GS: No, also on the train, going on those little places with the train. We stopped between Zhmerinka and where? This is not Zhmerinka. This is something, we already were in Zhmerinka. That’s far from it. That’s already somewhere, and there must be a reason why should they take us to Kiev and back and forth. We must have given them a concert, somewhere there--either on the train or around the train somewhere. And that’s in gratitude they told us, "We take you anyplace you want now. You can speculate now, back and forth, from here and Kiev, between here and Kiev, go back and forth." And so I, so we did it, did it.

CS: Kiev and where?

GS: Huh?

CS: Kiev and where?

GS: In that little station that, near Mogiliov Podolsk.

CS: And Mogiliov? Kiev and Mogiliov, you went back and forth? (GS nods)

GS: Ah, somewhere I got ill, that, I had "kataralnia zhiltuxa." My face was yellow. Jaundice--what do you call that?--jaundice. I ate something, and it affected me.

CS: While you were travelling on the train?

GS: Yes, something, apple, something raw. So I told you about Kaminetz Podolsk? (looking up, then away again)

CS: No.

GS: Kaminetz Podolsk. That’s the city near Mogiliov Podolsk, another city. I was there, and a German professor was trying, was trying to cure me my illness. And he did cure me, I suppose, because I’m here alive. I imagine, and he, I don’t remember when we were travelling, and I, in the last minute, I hold, I held that, and I burned my fingers, my hands. Where was that? I forgot. I told you that already.

CS: You didn’t tell me where.

GS: We, we were coming in city somewhere, where I had to perform with the troupe.

CS: The same troupe with the cooks and everybody?
GS: No, no, that was another time, then. That was another time because that was, I went, there was a restaurant, I remember, and I played in that restaurant. The troupe performed. See, Mamsie, I don’t know—that’s 70 years back (gesturing at head).

CS: Kaminetz Podolsk was?

GS: Kaminetz (looking away throughout questioning)

CS: Kaminetz.

GS: Podolsk.

CS: Kaminetz Podolsk was after Zhmerinka?

GS: Yes.

CS: But before Mogiliov Podolsk? Between the two?

GS: No, they’re all around there, those little cities.

CS: And what did you do in Kaminetz Podolsk? The train made a stop there?

GS: No, Kaminetz Podolsk had nothing to do with the train, Cristina.

CS: But didn’t you get there by train? Didn’t you go there by train?

GS: Yes, I imagine, but I don’t know the circumstance.

CS: Maybe the train just stopped on the way someplace else?

GS: That’s another time, another time, Cristinuchka. I can’t remember. You’ll have to improvise something there—I don’t know how, but something.

CS: What about Sarah Silberstein?

GS: Sarah Silberstein, my first teacher, my piano teacher.

CS: She was also named—wait a minute, oh no. Sarah Silberstein was the first piano teacher, right? She was the one who took you to the Titanic?

GS: Yeah, the picture, motion picture. We went to see the picture Titanic. I was seeing there (garbled). They took pictures. We saw it.

CS: Hm. And Biber Galperin?
GS: Biber Galperin was my Conservatory teacher.

CS: And her name was Miranovich, Sicamiranovich?

GS: Oh, no, that's another one.

CS: Who is Miranovich, or Sicamiranovich?

GS: Huh?

CS: Miranovich?

GS: No, you change around.

CS: But Biber Galperin was in the Conservatory (GS nods). And accordion, when did you learn to play accordion?

GS: That's later, many years later.

CS: You didn't play when you were a little boy?

GS: No.

CS: Never?

GS: I played mandolin.

CS: Mandolin?

GS: And I started to write arrangements for other students, in their books, my arrangements. Anything on anything that came to my head.

CS: Hm. For mandolin?

GS: For mandolin.

CS: How did you learn to play mandolin?

GS: I suppose I picked it up in the childhood; everybody has an instrument.

CS: Before you played the piano, then?

GS: Yes, before.

CS: And when you used to play the "Internationale," you said, they gave you a double ration of everything?

GS: Yes, because I'm the only one who knew how to play it. See, I'm so, I was so curious. I was reading books and
getting together material. I knew about composers of "Internationale"—Degeyter, I think it was, the two brothers, Degeyter. They composed the "Internationale," isn't it?

CS: I don't know. And they would call on you, or you went to the meetings?

GS: Well, I was around. It's such a small community, and they knew that I could play. So whenever they had a concert, they'd call me, and I would play and I get a double ration of something. It was bad times, that time. People were starving. I was the lucky one. We went to Governor Palace, and we cut out from the wall all the, uh, what's on the wall?

CS: Wallpaper?

GS: Not wallpaper. It was a special material.

CS: Tapestry? Material?

GS: Special material. And we brought, took, stole it from there and made ourselves shirts and things like that.

CS: When was this? That was during the Revolution? When you were a little boy?

GS: No, I was already 14, 15—I cannot put it, I don't remember how, but we were in that Palace.

CS: In Odessa?

GS: In Odessa.

CS: You and who else?

GS: Well, I don't know. There are so many students. At that time, I didn't know anybody.

CS: Oh, and you just went there on your own?

GS: Yeah, played.

CS: Oh, you played there? In the Governor's Palace?

GS: Yes, and we stole everything from the, from the walls. It was good materials. So my, Edith, whatever I called her, made for me shirts.

CS: You weren't caught?
GS: No.

CS: Other people were doing it, too?

GS: Yeah.

CS: You did it after the concert, after you played?

GS: No. We were there—I don't know the circumstance. I don't, it's difficult to remember. I remember we were there, we got that material, and it was used for a good use.

CS: And you weren't paid for the concert, other than that?

GS: I don't remember. Money didn't mean anything that time.

CS: Oh, so you just took the material anyway. And nobody saw you taking it?

GS: Others, other people, who did that thing, the same thing.

CS: The other musicians, too?

GS: Whoever was there. I was not the only one. It's a big, big Palace, and there, a big wall (opens arms). I mean, I couldn't take all the material.

CS: And there was an audience sitting there?

GS: Nobody was there. It was no concert. We were just, I can't think of, so many years ago, Cristina. I know we were there, and we cut that material and took it home and used that for a good use. And I had shirts, and whatnot.

CS: Hm. Was that before the Pogrom?

GS: That's after the Pogrom. The Pogrom was in 1905, 1904. That's when my father took the whole family to have us baptized. So we could have the guy who examined us, says, "Who are you?" "Pravaslavni." How you call "Pravaslavni"?

CS: True believer.

GS: True believer. "True believer"? "Yes." "From what? Yudaltz? From Judaism?" So I got tired of it, and I went to, to the priest, the Catholic, all of us, we went to Catholic, and got Catholicism, took Catholicism, the Catholic religion. They came back and again asked us same question, "True believer?" "Yes." "From Jews?" I says, "No, from Catholics." So they left us in peace
(dismissal gesture with right hand).

CS: You mean, every time that you went to the church, they would ask you the same questions?

GS: Yeah. It's not in the church, it was . . .

CS: . . . Why did they ask you those questions?

GS: I don't know. Times were very bad, and everybody was under suspicion.

CS: Oh, and it was bad for you to be, even a true believer, but from Judaism was bad?

GS: Yes. Because the Jews were hiding under it. I remember 1905 we were walking on the streets and singing was there that time. We went to university, Revolution was in full swing. Russia was happy. Finally, time came for freedom.

CS: 1905?

GS: 1904, yes, 1905. That was Revolution.

CS: 1917 was the Revolution.

GS: That's long time, that's October, that's long time after, that's October.

CS: Oh, what Revolution was this?

GS: The very first that hit us in Odessa. A, but I remember we went to university. Inside there was a lot of talking. I was a little boy.

CS: And your parents took you? Your parents took you?

GS: Well, must have been. My father was still alive, and my mother still alive. But we went ourself. You know how the Tsar came to Odessa, and I went on the street to holler, "Hurrah, hurrah!" You know.

CS: The Tsar visited Odessa?

GS: Yes.

CS: When you were little?

GS: Yes.

CS: Before the October Revolution?
GS: Naturally.

CS: And you went to . . .

GS: . . . To see the crowd. They all, the street was all crowded, and Tsar went through main straight in those equipage, in those equipage, and those, and his . . .

CS: . . . Entourage.


CS: Your father also went?

GS: We also all were there.

CS: Was everybody pro-Tsar then, in favor of the Tsar?

GS: Everybody in favor that should be quiet, so shouldn’t be no Pogroms. Nothing else. So, naturally, they all went, to have some kind of defense, under the Tsar or under any kind of authority.

CS: And the pale you talked about, the pile or the pale?

GS: Oh, the pale was . . .

CS: . . . What is, what is pale? Is this a Russian word?

GS: No, pale is a, pale must have been the, the people lived in the pale, or outside of the pale. Those who lived in the pale had to stay in the pale. That’s like a segregation (opening arms wide). Naturally, the Christians could get out of the pale and travel anyplace they want.

CS: The Jews couldn’t?

GS: No. They had special permission from the government. They always were under some kind of obligation to the government, to the officials, to the authorities around them, wherever they lived.

CS: Was your house in the pale?

GS: No. We lived in, when I was a little boy, we lived on Kniazhenskaya Ulitsa, an apartment. It was a big city, Odessa. And one of my aunts lived not far away from me. I used to go there and play that piano. Piano was very lousy, I remember. But I used to go there to play. That’s before, I don’t know, maybe before the time I was
taking lessons or during the time. This is difficult to assert now.

CS: So you didn’t live in the pale?

GS: No.

CS: This was the sister of your mother, a sister of your mother? One of your aunts, who had the piano?

GS: My father.

CS: Oh, your father, of your father. So he had this sister, and the older brother in France.

GS: Yes (looking away). He had sisters. I don’t know how many he had, sisters in Odessa. I remember one. And I don’t remember any more. I know, because she was great admirer of Gloria Swanson. And we used to go the pictures of Gloria Swanson, that time. Gloria Swanson then became a big star, I suppose.

CS: And she used to go to see her?

GS: No, no, see her. We used to go to the theatre.

CS: Oh, she took you too?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Silent picture?

GS: Silent, naturally. So many years, I can’t fit, put many things together. I told you so many episodes, but I don’t know how to connect them.

CS: But they’re all connected, you said.

GS: Yes; no. When I talk to you now.

CS: Aren’t they all connected?

GS: I was there, but I don’t know exactly the time.

CS: Is that important?

GS: You said you’re doing the job. I don’t know.

CS: I know, but I’m asking you. Is that important for the job, about the time?

GS: No, no (shaking head). You can, you can use your
imagination for those things.

CS: It's not important to you, the time?

GS: No, no, no (shaking head). Who cares?

CS: What about the names of the people? Is that important?

GS: Names? It's all forgotten (shaking head).

CS: So what is important out of all of this?

GS: Your fantasy.

CS: I mean, to you, what is important (laughing)?

GS: Nothing.

CS: Nothing? Well, there's a connection, there must be a connection between all the episodes.

GS: Yes, well. They interweave, episodes, but that's further on. Was just like, "American, charge him double!" That's altogether different episode. That's when I was about 31 years of age.

CS: Alright. Back to, let's go back then. When you went to France and you said that they took a samovar along, was that unusual?

GS: (laughing) What ta hell! Naturally, unusual. Russian people don't travel with the samovar.

CS: Why?

GS: Why should they travel with samovar? They go to a luxurious "wagon lit," restaurant, and they have all the tea they wanna drink.

CS: Then why did you take, why did your parents take the samovar?

GS: Because we were old-fashioned people.

CS: Ah, and you made tea there on the train?

GS: Yes. We got hot water at the station, at the railroad station, had tea.

CS: And did people laugh?

GS: I imagine they would.
CS: But you didn’t notice?

GS: I didn’t care. A little boy like me, what ta hell do I care they were laughing at me or not? There’s not one sensitive in my memory except when it came to getting double ration, and I had to play. That was important because we had to live, we had to eat (looking at CS; conversational tone)

CS: Tutti, did you ever hear . . .

GS: . . . And I get, when I got cigarettes, stale cigarettes, and people smoked stale cigarettes, and my aunt, and my cousin made a lot of money out of it. People didn’t care what cigarette they smoke, stale or whatever.

CS: Did she unroll them and then put the tobacco together? Did she take aprt the old ones like this and collect all the . . .

GS: . . . No, no, we have regular cigarettes.

CS: But she collected the old ones, too, right?

GS: Yeah, but they all were cigarettes.

CS: I know, but, I mean, did she take them out of the paper and then put all the tobacco . . .

GS: . . . Nothing of that, no . . .

CS: . . . Together, and then roll them again?

GS: Nothing, again. She didn’t do a darn thing about it.

CS: She just sold them the way they were?

GS: Just, she, yes.

CS: Where did you find them?

GS: Black Market.

CS: Used cigarettes like that?

GS: I don’t remember how I got the cigarettes. Must’ve been Black Market or my, I got my double ration, and I got those cigarettes from the cooperative.

CS: They weren’t used?
GS: yes, some of them were used, too. They never were opened, out of a package.

CS: Oh, no?

GS: No.

CS: But they were old?

GS: Old. But people didn’t care. They smoke anything. What would you do if you had nothing else to smoke?

CS: What I always do: I take the lousy cigarette, like this, and I smoke it. Or I take all of the old ones, like this, and I take all of the paper off and I put it down and . . .

GS: . . . That’s, but you’re alone. Just imagine people who have, who buy cigarettes somewhere on Black Market, on the street somewhere. What do they care? They get to smoke a cigarette, cigarettes, in, well, remember, I told you, when I was travelling myself, uh, mother was here, and I travelled to—what country did I travel, Inge?

IS: Gregory, Bogota, and I was in Los Angeles or Reno.

GS: Uh, we travelled, and people used to buy one cigarette.

IS: Then we were in Reno when that happened.

GS: And I was not in, that was not in Reno, the one cigarette on the street.

IS: No, no, I was in Reno, and you were in Bo-, Ibagay.

GS: Ibagay. People bought one, two, three cigarettes. So cigarettes were important to people to smoke.

CS: Did your parents smoke?

GS: My father smoked, yes.

CS: Not your mother?

GS: No.

CS: Women probably didn’t smoke.

GS: No.

CS: Did you smoke that time?
GS: I don’t, I really don’t remember, because my smoking started in, I remember it was in Bogota, because musicians used to tell me, "Maestro, perque used toma, fuma tanto?"

CS: But you didn’t smoke before then?

GS: No.

CS: In Russia?

GS: I don’t remember that I paid much attention to that. It was not in my nature to, I smoked because I was Director of the orchestra, so I smoked.

CS: Hm. You said the, Franconi, Rabina.

GS: Huh?

CS: Franconi, Rabina, and all those cafes?

GS: No. Ambalzaki, Franconi, Rabina—I told you—I told you—I don’t remember any other.

CS: That’s all you told me.

GS: That’s the three cafes, the most important in the city. There was "Conditerei" Liebmann. You see, I used to go buy all the sweet stuff, just like here we have.

CS: And the Ambalzaki was the only one that remained open, after the Revolution?

GS: This is a long time after.

CS: But it was the only one that remained open, or did they all close, or what?

GS: Now, you’re jumping now.

CS: Well, I’m jumping because I’m trying to get, I didn’t get on the first tape, I was confused on the first tape, but you can stop if I’m jumping too much.

CS: I was playing Ambalzaki (looking away, again, and downwards). Lochman got me the job, and I didn’t show up on the job, and he rushed home, and found me lyin down, in my apartment, practically dead. So he revived me. I don’t know how he revived me, what he did, but, anyway, and I started to work again. And then, all of a sudden, I hear a voice. I played with a violinist called Kogekker.
CS: What was his name?

GS: Kobgekker.

CS: I thought it was Kopfhacker?

GS: Kobgekker.

CS: Kobgekker?

GS: He played with me. And, all of a sudden, I was sitting at the piano preluding, I hear a voice. And I looked up and saw somebody in uniform of military uniform. He was telling the Kobgekker what he was doing. And that was Jascha Borovsky. The first time that I’ve seen him. He was in the army. That’s how I knew him first, the very first. I never knew him before. Lochman saved my life.

CS: And at that time, was the Ambalzaki the only cafe that was open?

GS: No, I imagine other cafes were open too. If it was free to go open, they’re all open.

CS: Hm. Did the Ambalzaki close sometime?

GS: I don’t think so.

CS: Not during the Revolution?

GS: Well, if that’s closed, they probably all were closed.

CS: And when Lochman found you, what did you have then? Scarlet fever or typhus?

GS: Typhus.

CS: Typhus?

GS: Of the abdomen. "Brushnoi typh."

CS: What?

GS: "Brushnoi typh."

CS: And when did you have scarlet fever?

GS: That’s when father and mother put me in a "vanna"--that’s called "vanna."
CS: Cold?

GS: In water, you know. We had in the house.

CS: A tub?

GS: Tub.

CS: You had a tub in the house?

GS: Yes.

CS: A wooden tub?

GS: I don’t know what kind of a tub.

CS: For the bathroom?

GS: In the bathroom, I suppose.

CS: Did you have a regular bathroom, or did you have like in Greece, a place outside of the house?

GS: No. It was inside of the house that we have a bath, a "vanna." Either they specially went and bought a "vanna," I don’t know. They bought a "vanna," and they used to bathe me there, in the "vanna." You’re talking way back. You know how many years that back? 80 years.

CS: Were the rooms in the house separate where you lived with your parents? A living room, a salon?

GS: Apartment houses.

CS: Again, the apartment houses. Were the rooms separate? Were there many rooms?

GS: I would not remember that.

CS: You don’t remember?

GS: But, I imagine.

CS: Or a kitchen?

GS: Well, probably was a kitchen there. That’s where the "Sama Obarona" used to come and get that food.

CS: Into the kitchen?

GS: In the house.
CS: Was it one room, one large room?

GS: A whole apartment.

CS: But with separate rooms?

GS: Yes, I imagine.

CS: Not one big room?

GS: No.

CS: And did they have the, the bathrooms, were they part of the house and everything else?

GS: No, they . . .

CS: . . . Or were they outside?

GS: Outside.

CS: Oh, like in Greece. In the villages, all the bathrooms are outside, and you have to go outside. In the snow and the rain, you had to go outside to the bathroom? (GS nods) And there was no plumbing, no modern plumbing?

GS: There was plumbing, but nothing. Once I had to do something. I sit down in a what you call it? Every house had a little—you buy it (tape cuts).

TAPE R2/B (27 December 1987): dining room table; afternoon

GS: . . . And then would throw out what was in the "topf."

CS: You mean a night "topf"?

GS: Night "topf."

CS: And you used that during the night, and then in the morning you would empty it?

GS: Yeah.

CS: But, in addition to that, there was a house, outside, I mean, a place outside to go to the bathroom that you also went?

GS: Also, yes.

CS: Little room, hm. Alright. Who was Charlie Cooke?

GS: But that's already late, in the RKO days. Charlie Cooke
was a colored arranger, working for RKO in the same
department with me. Good musician, but he could not do
the tricks that I could do. If I have to write, he needs
an introduction, modulation, anything else, says, says,
"Gregory, do something for me." I say, "What do you
need?" "I need a modulation. I need this or this." To
me, it's nothing. He lived with his own copyist. His
copyist was a white lady. He was a black. Was very
dangerous time, that, those days, in United States, to
live with a Negress.

CS: This was when you were Chief Arranger at RKO? What was
RKO?

GS: RKO was the, RKO, that were theatres, RKO, that time, all
over United States.

CS: A chain of them?

GS: Chain, theatres.

CS: But this was in New York where you were?

GS: What?

CS: When you were Chief Arranger?

GS: Yeah?

CS: It was New York? It was theatres, like movie theatres,
where you go to watch a movie, or you mean a theatre?

GS: Legitimate theatre. You can watch a movie, and after the
movie there would be a show on the stage.

CS: First a movie and then a show?

GS: It's always timed correctly, because people used to come
specially to see the show, see the movie, whatever they
want to see.

CS: And they had live music? With an orchestra?

GS: No. Those days, every theatre had its own orchestra, own
group, and buy its own music, and set it according its
own desires, to fit the picture, those days. Charlie
chaplin or Max Linder, or whoever it was, the picture,
they were trying. Who's that?

CS: Oh, that's a cat. And you did the arrangements for the
show?
GS: Yeah.

CS: What did you arrange?

GS: Nothing, I was, we were just putting them together, and see what comes first, what comes second, because music, we bought the music right from the publisher, right on the, in the, from Broadway, I don’t know where, we bought that music.

CS: So you didn’t have to write any music?

GS: No, not that time. Just arrange it in the books according to our own wishes.

CS: And then you played it?

GS: Yes.

CS: You played piano?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Did somebody conduct?

GS: No orchestra. That’s little groups.

CS: Oh, and any kind of music.

GS: Any kind of music. I don’t know what they put it in there. If it was a caravan, they put the picture, and they find a number called "caravan." It didn’t fit the picture altogether, but they put it in anyway because the name was "Caravan," because the name was "Caravan" (laughing).

CS: I see. And how long were you there?

GS: Where?

CS: RKO.

GS: Oh, that’s closed up in ’36, 1936.

CS: Why did they close?

GS: Well, I don’t think, changed the policy, I don’t know why, because all the theatres, musicians, were out already. They didn’t need any more musicians, or something like that, but they paid out our salaries, everything else. I got all my cash.
CS: Who got you that job?

GS: Hm?

CS: Who got you the job?

GS: Oh, I was big man already.

CS: How did you get the job?

GS: 1929, was the big crash.

CS: Yeah.

GS: And I just came from Atlantic City to New York. And I called Spiegel, my copyist, God rest his soul, on the phone. Says, "Spiegel, I’m here in town. Would you come to the house?" So he immediately, naturally, came to the house. "What we gonna do?" "Oh, well, you’ll get plenty of jobs here, Grisha, don’t worry." So we get job from Louis Katzmann. Louis Katzmann was an arranger, that time. He came later on to Hollywood to look me up and get work from me. He was dying already. It was hard for him. "Louis Katzmann has a lot of jobs." And I went to see Louis Katzmann. He was a friend of Mischa Patchook, the old country.

CS: He was Russian?

GS: Yes. So, I, Louis, I says, "What can I do here?" "Ah, yes. I know. Mischa told me about you. You can come in. We have work for you." What’sa matter with these dogs? Are you making tea? What’s it, coffee?

IS: You want tea?

GS: I wanna drink something.

IS: Just a second (tape cuts 5 minutes for tea and marzipan break).

CS: Alright. We were talking about Louis Katzmann.

GS: Many years after he came to Hollywood to me to look for work, he really deserved. Burned my lip.

IS: It’s hot. Don’t drink it yet. You want cold water in it?

GS: I didn’t have anything for him to do. I remember, we lived cross the street from Garden of Allah (looking away).
CS: From where?

GS: Garden of Allah. But I didn't have anything for him, nothing. Cross the street from the Marsden apartment.

CS: But Louis Katzmann was the one who gave, who helped you go get the job at RKO?

GS: No. What you want?

CS: Louis Katzmann. How did you get the job at RKO?

GS: Well, Sol Spiegel, 1929, when I came back to New York, he told me, he says, "Grisha, we have plenty of work here in town." They needed arrangers as much as they need the copyists. That was in 1929. Maxim Sabalevsky was working, that time, for Victor Young. Victor Young was, made the arrangements himself. He was not a big shot that time.

CS: How did you meet Victor Young?

GS: In Paramount. He was arranging overtures for the stage band.

CS: I thought it was before then, when you used to have waffles with him.

GS: Yes, well, that's . . .

CS: . . . Well, was that in Los Angeles that you had waffles or in New York?

GS: No, New York.

CS: Then you must have met him before Paramount.

GS: That was in Chicago that I met him.

CS: At the Chicago Theatre?

GS: Chicago Theatre.

CS: What was he doing?

GS: Arranging for the stage band.

CS: And what were you doing?

GS: Playing the piano in the pit. And, occasionally, the pit would go up and I play, I'll play the piano solo.
CS: But it was in New York that you used to have waffles?
GS: No.
CS: Chicago?
GS: And he's the on who had a Romanian publisher. He's the one that his wife had a sweetheart . . .
CS: . . . A Romanian publisher? Who was the Romanian publisher? . . .
GS: . . That organized Victor Young Music in a publishing company. Had the publisheing company and had his wife, too, on top of it.
CS: You remember who he was?
GS: No, but it's on the copy of music, you'll find his name.
CS: It's on a copy? Which copy?
GS: Any piece by him. Any of his pieces.
CS: They're all published by the same man?
GS: Yeah.
CS: Oh.
GS: He had a company, and he had his wife, too.
CS: And what was the time that you met Irving Berlin?
GS: Oh, that's, we're already, I was the Chief Arranger of RKO.
CS: Uh, when you were with Victor Young, you weren't at RKO?
GS: No.
CS: That was the Chicago Theatre?
GS: Yeah. RKO, when I was already a big man.
CS: Aha.
GS: Schwarzwald heard, I was playing jobs all around town, and Schwarzwald just happened to conduct my arrangement I made for us on, I forgot what number, but very cleverly I did. "Love Me or Leave Me," "Blue Heaven" (hums), "My
Buddy." Those three songs together. "Yes Sir, That's My Baby." Was a sensation. That's when Schwarzwald called in Irving Berlin to come and hear my arrangement. Al Colombo was the Chief of the Music Department.

CS: At RKO?

GS: Hm. Cristina, I'm, I see that, I remember all my arrangements there. Where, I wish, where could I find them? Who has them?

CS: You don't have any of those?

GS: Some, few.

CS: Is the Donaldson one from when you were there?

GS: Hm?

CS: Is the Donaldson one from when you were there? Donaldson and Rossini together?

GS: I don't know if I have it here, I have a few.

CS: (retrieving copy of Donaldson arrangement from library and showing it to GS) Is that from RKO?

GS: Yeah (returning to conversational tone, eye contact)

CS: And the other?

GS: Well, the others, I don't know.

CS: Who was that, Donaldson?

GS: Donaldson was a very popular writer in Chicago.

CS: Did he write anything I know?


CS: Oh, that was Donaldson?


CS: What was the RKO Hour? Was it the same RKO where you were the arranger?

GS: Yeah.
CS: What was the RKO Hour?

GS: That’s what it is.

CS: Those shows after the movies?

GS: (humming RKO theme song) "Hello, Hello, It’s RKO." I got 36,000 dollars there every, a year. No, altogether.

CS: That was a radio show? I thought you said at RKO, when you were arranger, you played piano after the movies, and then they had a show.

GS: No. You’re mixing up that with Chicago.

CS: When you were Chief Arranger of RKO?

GS: That was in New York.

CS: Yeah, but you said you didn’t have to do anything, you just had to arrange the music and put it for the movies, like "Caravan."

GS: Yes, had to arrange the music.

CS: There was also a radio program?

GS: Big radio program, the biggest.

CS: Is that what you were arranging for?

GS: Yeah.

CS: You arranged for the radio program?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Well, what was the show then, the shows that were after the movies?

GS: You’re talking back to Chicago.

CS: Well, what was RKO then, RKO was only radio?

GS: RKO was the biggest company of the theatres, RKO.

IS: They had a circuit of theatres, Cristina, called, a company of RKO. And these theatres were all over the United States. And the people that, they had RKO films in the theatres, they had musical, theatrical vaudeville acts in the theatres, live performers, whatever, and they
went from one RKO theatre to another. The RKO Radio Hour from New York, emanated from New York, was one of the big radio hours. There was no TV outside of . . .

GS: . . . And Schwarzwald got musicians from the theatres.

CS: From which theatres?

GS: First. RKO theatres all over the United States.

IS: The circuit.

CS: This is Milton?

GS: The circuit.

CS: This is Milton, his name was?

GS: Milton Schwarzwald.

CS: And he was the head of RKO?

IS: This was a huge enterprize at that time.

CS: And he was the head of RKO?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And you were arranging music for RKO?

GS: I was the Chief Arranger.

CS: For the radio?

GS: For everything, whatever they had.

CS: Just in New York?

GS: I didn’t have to travel. It was Publics Theatres, under guidance of the Publics.

CS: What is Publics?

GS: Yes, Publics.

IS: It emanated from New York, Cristina. That’s where the headquarters were. They had an RKO theatre in San Francisco that was . . .

CS: . . . . And did they play the same music at all the theatres in America or different music?
GS: Different.

CS: And what you arranged, you arranged for the radio?

GS: I arranged for that theatre in New York.

CS: In New York. And then what did you do for the radio?

GS: The same arrangements were for the radio.

CS: They rebroadcast the same shows or they broadcast them live from New York?

GS: It's hard for her to get that concept, somehow or other.

IS: Cristina, they had a, the headquarters. If they needed music for something on the stage, in the United States, then that was made, probably, unless the individual artist had their own, was made in then, that, in New York, and sent to wherever it was needed. But the Radio Hour was a separate part, it was part of the big enterprise. But it was a separate radio hour, an individual thing in itself.

CS: What I'm trying to figure out, Tutti, is what Papa did. He wrote arrangements for the Radio Hour?

IS: Did you write only for the Radio Hour, or did you also write for the circuit of RKO movie theatres?

GS: The all circuit, went to the whole circuit.

IS: For everything, in other words, Radio Hour . . .

CS: . . . What were you called?

GS: They used my arrangements for every place. The printed them, separate them. They did it on their own. And some musicians lost their jobs because of my arrangements--they couldn't play them.

IS: Aha. So wherever it was needed, wherever the music was needed, was where Papa, as Chief Arranger, had to fit in the bill.

CS: When they made the radio broadcast, did you also play the piano? Or did they have a regular radio pianist?

GS: I played on the air.

CS: You played on the air, too?
GS: NBC.
CS: NBC?
GS: Well, that's where it emanated.
CS: RKO and NBC are the same thing?
GS: RKO is a program. NBC is the big build ing there.
CS: Oh, and the RKO broadcast from the NBC building?
GS: Yes.
CS: Aha. So you also played the piano on the air?
GS: Yes.
CS: Those shows were live?
GS: Live shows.
CS: Who conducted them?
GS: Schwarzwald.
CS: Ah, Schwarzwald always conducted.
GS: And he wasn't there: Gershunson.
CS: Gershunson, your friend?
GS: Hm.
CS: What was his first name?
GS: Joseph.
CS: Joseph Gershunson. Was he also from Odessa?
GS: No, he was from Kishinaw.
IS: Does Cristina, did you ever tell her the story when the World War II broke out, and you were sitting there at the piano?
GS: Oh, yes.
IS: Tell her that. That's kinda wierd and different and interesting.
GS: That's Pearl Harbor. I just came to New York, on Friday,
and I met Spitalni. He tells me, "Gregory, what you doing?" "I just came to New York." "You better stick around. I want you to play the piano. My pianist is going someplace, and I want you to play the piano." So I rehearsed with the orchestra on Friday, and on Sunday we couldn’t get on the air because that’s when Pearl Harbor.

CS: I thought when I thought when World War II started you were trying to make some kind of Japanese concert, or something?

GS: No.

CS: No? You were in New York when the war broke out with Japan?

GS: Yeah. Hm. Alfred Newman called me. He says, "Gregory, I need you." I said, "Yes." I come in. He said, "We have a Japanese picture, and I would like you to write some Japanese music." He knew that I monkey around with all those Eastern, Western civilizations. I said, "Alright. How much will I get?" "Well, you’ll get union prices." I says, "No, I don’t want to. I don’t want to work for the union price." Yes, Bimbo (referring to dog). "What do you mean you don’t want to?" "Well, you need me. You call me because you need me. Pay me my price. I want a thousand dollars per minute"—or something like that. He says, "I can’t do it, Gregory." "Well, I will not write." So, he says, "Let me consult my people." So he called and says, "Alright, Gregory, they’ll pay you your price, under conditions they wanna hear it first on the three pianos." So I got Rabinowitz, Emmanuel Bay, myself, to record. We recorded three pianos, and my piano is moving. Their pianos are stationary, and my piano is, are moving. I wish I could get that picture.

CS: Did they like it?

GS: Like it very much.

CS: When was, what was this for?

GS: Inge, what was that for?

IS: I don’t know, Greg. I didn’t know you. You don’t mean Greenwich Village, with Carmen Miranda?

GS: Was that? Yeah.

CS: But that’s another thing. This is not in New York with
the NBC or the RKO.

GS: Where did we recorded it?

IS: You did this in Hollywood. Greenwich Village was the name of the picture, I think. And there were three pianos. That's what you're talking about?

GS: Hm.

IS: And you were in the center, and the two, Emmanuel Bay on one—and who was the other pianist?

GS: Max Rabinowitz.

IS: Yes.

CS: Emmanuel Bay.

IS: Yes.

GS: And myself.

IS: Yes. And you were in the center. I remember seeing it on TV, but that had nothing to do with NBC or RKO.

CS: It was Alfred Newman, you said.

GS: Alfred Newman.

CS: But what did it have to do with Japan?

GS: Oh, Japanese pictures, I wrote music.

IS: Aha. But you were telling her the story about when the war, you were preluding on the piano in the NBC studio.

GS: That was Spitalni.

IS: Alright. But you didn't finish that story. You were sitting there playing, or something, while they were, the radio program was going on.

GS: No. They were rehearsing, and I was preluding. And, all of a sudden, conductor looked at me, says, "You keep quiet!"

IS: No. That was another thing, Greg. This is for the, you were playing at the piano, and the program was on, and they cut off the program.

GS: That was Pearl Harbor.
IS: Yes, alright. This is what you were telling her. And you were sitting at the piano, and you had to continue playing the piano because an announcement, an official announcement, was coming through the air.

GS: Yeah.

IS: And they cut off the program that was on the air, and you were sitting there at the piano where you had just been playing and practicing, and you were going, so you preluded or whatever you call it, you improvised, and then they made the announcement that Pearl Harbor had just been bombed.

GS: Yeah, well, I was not alone in the studio.

IS: No, but you were the only one playing the piano when they, when they cut off the program.

GS: Yes.

IS: And they, they told you to continue playing the piano until the official announcement came through from Washington, D.C.

GS: From Roosevelt.

IS: Yes, well, now, the other things had nothing to do with this, with the original story of Pearl Harbor business.

GS: No, but the whole idea is somehow connected, Inge, because when I was travelling in, to New York, was terrible travelling, they took people off the plane and put them on the train.

IS: On the train, you mean.

GS: And took me a long time to get to New York. Finally, I got to New York, and I met by Speigel. Speigel said to me, "Gregory, I refused to do copying, but they rehearsing the program for the NBC." Hear that, Cristina?

CS: I don’t know.

GS: They were rehearsing the program for NBC. So says, "Let's go. We can go to another studio and listen to the rehearsal." So, and we listen to the rehearsal, and I listen to the music. I says, "Look, whoever did the job on arranging, very fine man. But they’ll never make it in three-quarters of an hour." And they had to, they
practiced three-quarters of an hour, and they recorded 15 minutes, Cristina.

CS: This was for Longines, wasn’t it?

GS: Longines. And I told you, him, when I heard it, "Sol, they’ll never make it." Finally, they did make it, but that’s when Mr., but terrible. That’s when Mr. Cartoon came to me and said, "Gregory, I don’t care where you are"—in presence of Piastro—"You have to do our program." And I continued to do the program of . . .

CS: . . . Longines, right?

GS: Longines.

CS: Not RKO?

GS: No, Longines. Finally, they came up to a standstill because they need me, they didn’t need me any more. Piastro, they made the conductor, and they used the printed music of Boosey and Hawkes.

CS: Longines was in Chicago, though, wasn’t it? (GS shakes head) No? New York? Let’s stop for a second. The first job you got in America was in Chicago, right? For 65 dollars a week?

GS: Helena Moniac.

CS: After that was the Palmer House?

GS: I got a job immediately in Chicago Theatre.

CS: Chicago Theatre, not the Palmer House? After the Chicago Theatre?

GS: After the Chicago Theatre, did some travelling. I got to Sheridan Road, in Chicago.

CS: What was that?

GS: To play with Ralph Ginsberg.

CS: That was the Palmer House.

GS: Palmer House.

CS: After that, in Chicago?

GS: After Chicago, you tell me. I can’t think of it.
CS: Just those three in Chicago? Only those three in Chicago?

GS: What's three?

CS: Helena Moniac, Chicago Theatre, and Palmer House. After Palmer House?

GS: Wait a minute! After Palmer House, Spitalni took, put on the screen, my name as an arranger. Leopold Spitalni.

CS: Did you know Ina Maraiva in Chicago?

GS: Not in that time.

CS: Who was the man who lived up in the mountains where he was supposed to compose? You told me, you knew somebody who lived up in the mountains, somebody big gave these four people or something houses up in the mountains to write?

GS: Oh, that was in Chicago, before the crash.

CS: I know, but who were they?

GS: That was Mr. Agler.

CS: Who was Mr. Agler?

GS: President of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, or something like that. Had a big position.

CS: But who were the people who were composing?

GS: No composer. He was no composer. He used to bring me cigars because I play quartets with him.

CS: Oh. But there was somebody who, outside of Chicago, they were given some houses where they could write some music or do . . .

GS: . . . Oh, yes.

CS: Who was that?

GS: Wieland got the house. Kira, the one who hands up, and Wieland, they used to get all the Chicago, they got all the best musicians, quartet. Gordon, Gordon Quartet, it was. Jack Gordon Quartet. And they all had houses, four houses on the hill, so they could practice and play.

CS: Mr. Agler did that?
GS: Yeah.

CS: Did you know who, or, sure you knew Wieland.

GS: Yes. And Mr. Agler used to bring me cigarettes, or something.

CS: So then you did smoke before South America?

GS: Yes. Mama knows that I smoked. Didn’t we smoke, Inge?

IS: Sure. But I knew him in South America, Cristina, so, before that, I wouldn’t know. Yes, but I remember Papa telling me that when he wrote music, he would have the cigarette in his mouth, and the whole thing, it was so quiet, that the whole thing would be one long ash. And then he’d take the very end and put it in the ashtray, the whole thing, without moving it from his mouth (laughing).

CS: Where was the Hotel Majestic?

GS: New York.

IS: Caracas.

GS: No, New York.

CS: Before Chicago or after Chicago?

GS: Before Chicago. That’s when I came from Europe. I had my first job to play there.

CS: First job in America?

GS: Yes, more or less.

CS: And after Hotel Majestic?

GS: Then I played in motion picture theatres, I forgot.

CS: And after that?

GS: I don’t know. Inge, you better help.

IS: What? I didn’t know you.

CS: Well, maybe I’ll find it from my notes. What is "Hora Lui Dinicu"?

GS: Dinicu?
CS: Louis Dinicu.

GS: Not Louis Dinicu.

CS: What's Dinicu's name?

GS: Grigori.

CS: But you said . . .

GS: . . . Grigori, Grigorash, they used to . . .

CS: . . . But you said there was some hora, but what is "Hora Lui Dinicu"? Something you wrote?

GS: Oh, "Hora Lui Dinicu."

CS: What does that mean?

GS: Hora, "lui" means, the dative of "who." "Hora lui Dinicu."

CS: That's the piece that you wrote?

GS: Yes, I have it here (humming).

CS: But you wrote that in Romania?

GS: Yes.

CS: Who was the man who offered you once 5,000 rubles to go to Crimea?

GS: To go?

CS: To go to Crimea?

GS: Oh, that was a Revolution days--I told you. I wanted to go, but all the roads were, to the ships, were closed in Odessa; so I couldn't go. So he left me with 5,000 rubles, whatever they were.

CS: You didn't get sick that time?

GS: No. But I just couldn't go. So he left the 5,000 rubles.

CS: . . . Hm hm. And what did he want you to do?

GS: To go there as a pianist.
CS: To Crimea?

GS: To Crimea.

CS: What did that man do? Was he a musician?

GS: I don't know. He must be a manger or some kind of, he came to my house . . .

CS: . . . He came to the house?

GS: Yes. Says, to, says, "Gregory, would you like to go to Crimea?" I said, "Yes." "How much you want advance?" I say, "Give me 5,000 rubles." "Fine." Money started to go down that time.

CS: Hm. But when you escaped, you only needed 500 rubles?

GS: What?

CS: When you left Russia to escape . . .

GS: . . . Different kind of money. That was devaluation of the whole darn thing. The money went up and down. Was not the same Nikolaiech money. See, I had, in Russia, I had Ekaterinski, Ekaterinski, with a portrait of Catherine the Great. That's a hundred dollar bills.

CS: And in Romania? When you needed the 500 rubles to leave the country? You needed 500 rubles; Obermann needed 500 rubles; and Pagarelov needed 500 rubles.

GS: Yes.

CS: They were different rubles?

GS: Yeah. Well, it was devaluation.

CS: When was that? After that?

GS: After. Devaluation. Terrible times--just like with the cigarettes.

CS: Did you ever see that man from Crimea again?

GS: Never.

CS: Never? You don't remember his name?

GS: No. Why do they look so at me (referring to dogs)? Do they need something to eat, Inge? Did you feed them?
IS: I haven't fed them, no. Isn't that sad.

TAPE R4/A (27 December 1987): fireplace, late afternoon

GS: That's, I think it, that was in Kaminetz Podolsk where the doctor saved me.

CS: The German doctor?

GS: Yeah.

CS: It says yellow jaundice.

GS: Well, they call it different. Also known as "zhiltuxa" or "kataralnia zhiltuxa," all the same. Catarrh of the stomach.

CS: That was the German doctor then, right? And your parents were already dead? Who brought the German doctor?

GS: Ah, we had a troupe, we travelled, with the troupe, at that time. Kaminetz Podolsk and Mogiliov Podolsk. We travelled with the troupe. That's when I, that I put my hands on that thing, that thing in the train, and burned my fingers.

CS: Hafel?

GS: No, holding those—you know, on the train, they have those big things, they have those big things that, it's an old-fashioned train, "tiblushka" (garbled), it's not for passenger train. And I touched them, and I got burned. And they took me that night to the restaurant, and with my burned hands, I played.

CS: You played anyway? This was on the train?

GS: But the train stopped, and I did this (pushes outwards, in air, with both hands, palms open). And that time I hit that, that . . .

CS: . . . Your hands hit the iron?

GS: The iron, whatever it is.

CS: Was it a boiler or something?

GS: What makes, gives out, gives out warmth.

CS: The heater?

GS: Heater.
CS: To make the train go, or inside?

GS: No, inside the, train, go, didn’t bother about the train. The trains goes on its own powere. We, they were in "petrushka" (garbled). They were in a, well, we were in a--what do they call that train, for animals, I don’t know what for (looks away)?

CS: When you were travelling in those little border towns?

GS: That was much after that.

CS: You mean before that?

GS: No, when we go back and forth, Vapniarka--no, that was, that when, Zhmerinka.

CS: When did you burn your hands?

GS: Much farther.

CS: Before?

GS: No.

CS: After? What was that story, when you burned your hands?

GS: I think it was, city was Rovno (becomes conversational, eye contact).

CS: Rovno?

GS: Rovno, "Belinski Guberni." That’s where I played in that restaurant, I suppose.

CS: And this was on the train where you took, with the cooks and everybody else?

GS: No (waves emphatically with right hand).

CS: No?

GS: Hm, it’s not that time. The cooks, I took, when we were travelling. That’s the time. I didn’t want to do anything, any work. Everybody used to come out and do something in the field, and I wouldn’t do it.

CS: Gather wood, you mean.

GS: And they insisted, and we stopped somewhere playing, and I killed every number.
CS: Which train was this? This was not with the cooks?

GS: No.

CS: A different one?

GS: Different time.

CS: Then I'm confused.

GS: Huh?

CS: I'm confused. Which other time were you on a train?

GS: The first time I was on a train when we left Odessa, "razdyelniye," and, uh, we went to, when I asked the government to give me the train, that was in Odessa. And that time, we went to Vapniarka, were going back and forth. Finally, I gave an order not to unchain our car, and we came to Zhmerinka. Zhmerinka, we went to another city which, near the border. That's why the police came to, Cheka came to, to find out who we are, and we were speculators. We had full speculation things, that was the first time. (IS turns on record player and CS calls for her to turn it off)

CS: Tutti! Yeah, go ahead. That was the first time?

GS: What is it?

CS: Nothing, Tutti was confused. But that's the first train ride or the second train ride, when you burned your hands?

GS: That was another episode, somewhere in Ukraine (looks away).

CS: Why were you in that train?

GS: I don't know. We were travelling, giving concerts, and things like that, Cristina.

CS: In any case, it wasn't the same train with the cooks?

GS: No.

CS: And you were on some other train, giving concerts that time, by yourself?

GS: No, with a troupe.
CS: Was it the Kappell Meister?

GS: No, no, we were just a few people, I imagine. We were going to Rovno. And we stopped on Rovno, and that’s where I played again in the club. How long I played in that club, I have no idea. I know, from there, we travelled. Another time, when I told you, we, I had to have 500 dollars in our, that was different, that was in Mogiliov Podolsk, when we took the troupe and the cooks. Some of them came, went back to Odessa. Some of them remained there, or tried to get out on their own. And I was there playing in the theatre, and, and the typhus was in full swing. People died right and left (looks at CS and then away, again). And I remember because there was a troupe, a Jewish troupe, and she was with her husband, and she lost him right there, in Mogiliov, or something. And she buried him right there.

CS: Why were you going through Rovno, it was called?

GS: Rovno was the city not yet occupied by Austrian Army.

CS: And you were with a troupe of other musicians?

GS: And I met the Austrian officer who could play with me—was it a trio? I think. We played, not Tschaikovsky—I think we play Mendelssohn.

CS: You and an Austrian?

GS: Yes.

CS: And who else?

GS: Duets.

CS: Duets, not trios?

GS: Maybe trio, too. I can’t remember the cello player. Uderman was the cello player, I think, Uderman, I think.

CS: Ugelman?

GS: Uderman.

CS: Uderman. This was in Rovno?

GS: In Rovno. You have to connect that. I don’t know.

CS: was this when you were still in the Conservatory?

GS: I’m out of Conservatory, long time ago (dismissal gesture
with right hand).

CS: Why did you leave the Conservatory?

GS: Well, that, first time, as you know, we organized the 
troupe to fight the desertion in the army. So I got the 
train, I got the car, and everything.

CS: But that was afterwards. This Rovno was before, you 
said. Rovno came before you organized the train.

GS: No, Rovno came after. Rovno came after. I'm no longer 
in Conservatory.

CS: But it came after the cooks?

GS: After Kiev, after we were speculating on the train, and 
it brought us back to where we started from, where all 
the bridges were blown up.

CS: Zhmerinka.

GS: No, farther than that, farther than that. Zhmerinka is 
nothing.

CS: But you said the bridges were blown up there.

GS: Yes. But we were already forgot about Zhmerinka, forgot 
about everything else. We were now trying to get out on 
our own to Europe, or whatever it is.

CS: And what is "razdelnaya"?

GS: "Razdyelnuye." It's at the station, near Odessa, where 
the trains are getting different directions; 
"razdyelnuye," to divide.

CS: It's not a city?

GS: No, just a station.

CS: And where you burned your hands was in Rovno?

GS: Rovno.

CS: Rovno.

GS: "Belinski Guberni."

CS: And after Rovno, where did you go?

GS: To Kishinaw.
CS: Kishinaw? To Stefanescu?

GS: Hm?

CS: To Stefanescu, that time?

GS: I didn’t start to play yet.

CS: But that’s the time you would start to play?

GS: No, that’s the time, that’s the time I went to Kishinau, the first time I went. I met a Romanian violinist who was in Russia, and he spoke Russian, broken, broken Russian. His name was Dialkitsano (leans head on right hand).

CS: What?

GS: Dialkitsano.

CS: Dialkitsano.

GS: Dialkitsano. He’s the one I played with him short time. He was married to a sister of Gulescu, a famous gypsy violinist in Russia, Jean Gulescu. Well, anyway, we played in "Blagarodnaya Sabrania."

CS: In Odessa?

GS: No, how could it be in Odessa?

CS: In Romania.

GS: Forget about Odessa, no more Odessa.

CS: But you met him in Odessa, you said.

GS: Who?

CS: Dialkitsano.

GS: But that’s just short time. I didn’t meet him in Odessa, no. I met him in Kishinaw, "Blagarodnaya Sabrania."

CS: The first time you were in Kishinaw?

GS: Yes.

CS: Twice, then, you were in Kishinaw?

GS: Yes. How many times, I don’t remember. I played with
him short time, and I don’t know what happened to him. I don’t remember what happened to him. The gypsies were always fighting among themselves. Anyway, . . .

CS: . . . Then you went to Rovno?

GS: Rovno?

CS: After Kishinaw?

GS: Yes, I went to Rovno, Rovno, "Belinski Guberni."

CS: How did you get there?

GS: By train.

CS: From Kishinaw you went to Rovno?

GS: Yeah. My picture, first, I see in (gestures with right hand open)—what’s the city where I lost my voice (touches throat with right hand; becomes conversational from this point on)? I saw then—what’s his name? The whole his family he brought from Russia.

CS: Borisoff.

GS: Not Russia. Lukas, Lukas, Lukashevsky. His name is Lukashevsky. He brought his family, whole family, the whole family, out of Europe, and they were standing out. That’s when I had also, they were treating me with the goggle moggle.

CS: But that wasn’t Rovno, that was Kishinaw.

GS: Kishinaw.

CS: Rovno wasn’t, it wasn’t one of those stops that the trian made, with the troupe, when you were speculating?

GS: No, that was in Zhmerinka.

CS: How did you get to this place then? Why did you go there?

GS: I have no idea. We were there.

CS: Not the whole troupe, though.

GS: No, that’s nothing to do with the troupe, Cristina.

CS: But it was after you got the train, the train with the cooks?
GS: Yeah, that's gone.

CS: They already went back home, those cooks.

GS: Either home, or they ran out.

CS: Where did you say good-bye to all those people?

GS: Mogiliov Podolsk. Some of them decided to go back to Odessa, and some of them remained there.

IS: Did they know that you wanted to leave? Did those cooks know that you wanted to escape?

GS: Yes, because they also wanted to escape.

CS: But they decided not to.

GS: Some of them.

CS: Is Rovno, is that? . . .

GS: ... Rovno, another episode happened. From the Center, from Moscow, came a famous gypsy—-not gypsy--a song, who sings songs, Russian songs, like gypsy songs. He came to, and I played accompaniment for him, in, and I played accompaniment for him in, and also he wanted to cross the border. He ask me question about that, and I didn't know what to tell him about it. And he took a peasant to take him over, and they caught him at the border. And lucky for his name, that they knew him, from Moscow, that famous gypsy singer, so they let him go. That's another episode that I didn't tell you.

CS: Was that in Rovno? Tutti, he's coming (referring to dog). Was that in Rovno? Was that in Rovno where the guy was shot, where he tried to escape?

GS: Yes, yes.

CS: It was in Rovno.

GS: Hm, I can't, hm.

CS: Well, you said good-bye to all of the troupe in Mogiliov, right?

GS: Yes.

CS: Then you must have gone to Rovno afterwards.
GS: Well, maybe.
CS: No?
GS: I suppose so.
CS: Not with the troupe anymore.
GS: No.
CS: But by yourself, by train, right?
GS: Yeah.
CS: But you don’t remember what for? Why you went there?
GS: Well, I wanted to get out.
CS: Is that on the Romanian side, or is it on the Russian side?
GS: No, that was on the Russian side, but still there.
CS: Close to the border?
GS: YOU CONFUSE ME COMPLETELY.
CS: Well, I only ask because I never heard this name before.
GS: Who?
CS: Rovno.
GS: Rovno, "Belinski Gubernaya." That’s a big city.
CS: I never heard it, you never mentioned it before.
GS: Well, we come to talk about it.
IS: I never heard it either, Cristina. What’s the name of it?
CS: Rovno.
GS: "Belinski Gubernaya."
CS: But that’s where you burned your hands, you said.
GS: Burned my hand, and I played there in restaurant.
CS: On the train, you burned your hand on the train.
GS: Yes, and I played there, in a little, I remember, it was nice place, we played. How I got out of that job, I don’t know. But I could get out, because we were in all the neutral territory.

CS: And then you went back to Mogiliov after that.

GS: New York?

CS: Mogiliov.

GS: Mogiliov, no.

CS: No? You didn’t go back to Mogiliov? Sometime you had to go back to Mogiliov because you escaped from there, no?

GS: I don’t remember, but I, my father-in-law, that was Zoe’s father, well, I told you that he was a winemaker.

CS: Yeah.

GS: But that’s long time after. But before I brought him—what did I bring him? Salt. Because there was shortage in Mogiliov. He was in Mogiliov, that time, shortage of those products.

IS: Was he a speculator?

GS: No, no, no. He lived in a nice home.

CS: He was in Mendik, you said.

GS: Hm?

CS: Mendik?

GS: No, after Mendik, I imagine. I don’t know where that falls in because they had a nice home, apartment, where they lived.

CS: In Romania?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Was Zoe from Romania?

GS: Yeah.

IS: Wasn’t it Bassarabia, that time called Bassarabia, or was it Romania?
GS: Bassarabia was part of Romania.

CS: But that's where he lived, Bassarabia?

GS: Yes.

CS: Well, sometime you had to leave Rovno to go back to Mogiliov because you escaped from Mogiliov, right? Didn't you escape Russia from Mogiliov?

GS: Yes.

CS: At that point.

GS: I don't know who--remember, I told you how the officer says, "Better make it quiet, the baby"?

CS: Yes.

GS: But that was another time.

CS: But that was afterwards. You must have gone back to Mogiliov at some time.

GS: No, I don't think I did go to Mogiliov.

CS: You must have, from Rovno. You didn't escape Russia from Rovno, Rovno. You didn't leave there, did you? When the smugglers came to your apartment, what city were you in, when you had to have the 500 rubles ready, and the came and knocked on the door?

GS: Yeah.

CS: What city was that?

GS: That must have been Mogiliov.

CS: Mogiliov. So you left from there. So sometime you left Rovno, and you went back to Mogiliov. Anyway, what happened to the Conservatory when the Revolution started? Did it close down?

GS: No.

CS: No, it didn't close? It continued playing? You continued to go to school?

GS: When I was there, yes.

CS: When you were there, and then you just left?
GS: Yes. When Revolution, when was all free, they took the piano away from my apartment.

CS: Why? You had rented an apartment, no, a piano, right?

GS: And when everything was alright, they came in and took the piano away?

CS: When everything was alright? What do you mean?

GS: Well, I don’t know, that time, that they could do that. Must have been, the right was on their side, to come in and take my piano.

CS: Why? Who came in?

GS: From the people I rented the piano from.

CS: But you paid every month or every week or something.

GS: Yeah.

CS: And, all of a sudden, they came and took it? Why did they come and take it?

GS: It didn’t belong to me.

CS: But you were still renting it.

GS: Yes. I don’t know. I mean, those things are closed, I mean, completely out of my memory. I can’t think about this. I don’t know how that happened that they did take my piano, must be time that it was free to do it.

CS: Was this when you were out of the Conservatory?

GS: Yeah.

CS: When did you leave the Conservatory?

GS: 16, 17, I imagine.

CS: Oh, so they took the piano when it was Revolution, probably.

GS: Yes, yes, well, I don’t know when it was. It was free to take it, so they took it without warning (waves with right hand). They just came in. And because the father—now I can’t think about the name. I met the boy in New York, again. He was playing across the street from Carnegie Hall, there was a Russian restaurant. He played there, and he came to see me, again. Or I came to see
him—I don’t remember. And we were quite friendly. That is his father who had the company of pianos.

CS: That time, in Odessa? In Odessa, he had the company?
GS: In Odessa.
CS: And his father’s the one who came and took your piano?
GS: Yeah, his, yes.
CS: You don’t remember his name?
GS: I must have it someplace, written.
CS: Did he ever explain to you why his father took the pianos?
GS: He took pianos from everybody who had it. I’m not the only one who had a piano.
CS: And he just took them all back?
GS: Yes.
CS: What did he do with them?
GS: I have no idea. He’s in that, he was in that business, Cristina, I don’t know.
CS: But that’s very bad for business to take a piano back that somebody still wants to rent.
GS: I don’t know what rules they went by. I know they took. Now, his son was playing piano in New York, and the funny part, he played piano with Alex Braun.

IS: You’re kidding. I was just thinking of Alex Braun. And my reason of thinking, I was wondering if he ever went to the restaurant, the Hungarian restaurant in New York, where they had the violins and things playing. Oh, that’s strange. I was just thinking of Shony.

GS: Why did I bring in Shony Braun now?
CS: When somebody was playing piano or something with him.
IS: The same pianist was playing piano with Alex, or his brother was playing piano.
GS: Aha. Yeah.
CS: Well, let’s go to the time when your father was
travelling and your mother used to follow him, and you also went along.

GS: Yeah, I was the only child.

CS: You were a baby. What was that story? What was the story?

GS: I told you already, Sweetheart, I can't, I only remember that the told, the lady my mother hired her to come to my house while she was in the store, to take care. There were five sisters. She didn't care to stay with her husband there in that house, her apartment. She stayed with me, and my mother paid her to stay with me. It's so far in my childhood.

CS: That was your aunt?

GS: That was my aunt.

CS: The mother of Edith, Clara, Olga, Bertha.

GS: Yeah, that was them, all.

CS: This was your sisters, your mother's sister? What did you call her, Tyotya?

GS: Tyotya.

CS: Tyotya, just Tyotya, no name?

GS: No.

CS: Do you remember her name, your mother's sister?

GS: She was Nadelman.

CS: Nadelman?

GS: Nadelman, Needleman.

CS: Nadel?

GS: Nadelman, whatever she change.

CS: She was married, right?

GS: To that old man she didn't like.

CS: She didn't like him?

GS: She didn't like him. She stayed with us.
CS: She came to your house permanently? She lived there? Or she came every day and then went home at night?

GS: No, she stayed with us. No, stayed with us, stayed with me. I'm sure she didn't go home.

CS: She didn't like her husband?

GS: No.

CS: Why?

GS: As me another?

CS: You didn't know why? He was your uncle, right?

GS: She used to bring me milk, butter, everything, you know, in the house. My mother was in the store.

CS: Hm. Is that the same uncle who you were in the same room when he was dead?

GS: Yeah.

CS: He was older than her?

GS: I suppose. Maybe she was married to somebody. It was arranged by her parents, for the money or something, I don't know.

CS: And that was the same on who died in the bed and you were asleep. Hm, I see.

GS: Is that a fly there on the book?

CS: No. And then, before that, you were travelling with your parents, when your father . . .

GS: . . . Was travelling in the regiment.

CS: Some regiment. Why was he in the regiment? He was a soldier?

GS: No, I think he was out of the army. He was travelling on his own.

CS: For business?

GS: He was in a "Dragoonsky Astrahansky Polk."

CS: What was that?

CS: Aha.

GS: Before, then, as a businessman, I think he was buying manufactured goods, he went many places in Poland. He was born in Poland, anyway.

CS: Where was your mother born?

GS: I think she was born in Cherson.

CS: In Cherson. And was he born in Lodz?

GS: Hm?

CS: Was your father born in Lodz or Warsaw?

GS: Oh, NO, NO. My father was born in Warsaw.

CS: Warsaw.

GS: Can you make something out of that mess?

CS: I don't know.

GS: You see, you touch some things so far in my, I cannot manage to put them in the right place, because it's 70, 80 years ago.

CS: I know. I understand that. I can't remember what I did yesterday.

GS: I can't even play the piano. I don't remember things.

CS: Alright, let's go back to the two streets. There was Nazhenskaya Ulitsa . . .


CS: Knia-? . . .


CS: OK.

GS: That's where I was living.

CS: Were you born in that house?
GS: Well . . .

CS: . . . Did they, did your parents ever tell you where you were born?

GS: I must have been born in Odessa, probably there.

CS: In a house or in a hospital? Do you know?

GS: Not in a hospital.

CS: Not in a hospital? In the house, probably.

GS: Yeah.

CS: Did your mother ever talk about it?

GS: No. The only time this came about, during Pogrom--I told you. She was running to save the stores, and there's "Chornosotinski" after her. And she hid in, in a little passage someplace . . .

CS: . . . Alley . . .


CS: And they protected all the stores? They watched the stores?

GS: Watched all the stores, and kills them, "Chornosotnya," and "Chornosotinski," and put them right in the, in . . .

CS: . . . Ditches, sewers . . .

GS: . . . Sewers.

CS: Alright, that was the first street. The second street was Manezhnaya.

GS: Manezhnaya Ulitsa.

CS: Which house did you live in first?

GS: At Kniazhenskaya.

CS: That's the first one?
GS: Yeah, Manezhnaya after.

CS: And you lived in Manezhnaya by yourself?

GS: By myself. And I used to play in the theatre, and come at night, go through that--the people was scared stiff. There was shooting on the street, and I went through those big places, went right through, into my house. And the "Sama Obarona" of the house opened the gates for me, and I went into my apartment.

CS: They had "Sama Obarona" also watching the apartments?

GS: Yes.

CS: Protecting the apartments?

GS: No, not apartments--the whole house.

CS: The whole complex.

GS: Yes.

CS: There were other apartments in the same building? Other people lived there? Why was there shooting on the street?

GS: There was a Revolution--everything happened those days. You have to figure that out yourself. I don't know how to tell you, where, but it was, I played in Whodawzhestvehnee Teatra . . . (omitted repeated attempts of CS to get pronunciation straight) . . . Na Ekateriniskaya Ulitsa . . .

CS: . . . While you were in Manezhnaya Ulitsa?

GS: I lived there.

CS: But you played in Ekateriniskaya . . .

GS: . . . And I had to go through night, not worried that something's gonna happen to me--who knows? They were shooting from right to left.

CS: You played in Whodawzhest- . . .


CS: I thought you played in the Ambalzaki?

GS: That's cafe that I played.
CS: Oh, in addition.

GS: Lochman, no, Lochman saved me.

CS: With Lochman. And Lochman, he lived on Polodisni Priulov. What is Polodisni?

GS: Polodisni, no, you don’t pronounce it.

CS: Priulov.

GS: I don’t remember the street. Now you got me. He lived there with his mother, and I used to come to the apartment and write for him arrangements. I think that’s how I met him, write for him arrangements.

CS: What is the Whodaw-? . . .

GS: . . . Whodawzhestvehnee Teatra.

CS: What did you do there?

GS: Piano playing.

CS: Piano playing? In the evening?

GS: (as tape cuts) I hope you can make something out of that mess.

TAPE R4/B (27 December 1987): fireplace, early evening

CS: That’s the first time what?

GS: That’s the first time when all the troupe came in, various artists came, and they said, "My goodness, we’re only here two days, and everybody’s singing our songs." They didn’t know that I was staying up at night, and copy all the parts, listening to all the songs, and copy them down (maintaining semi-conversational tone throughout, but obviously tired).

CS: Then you didn’t, that’s not the time you played in Ambalzaki?

GS: No, that’s . . .

CS: . . . Ambalzaki was afterwards. Ambalzaki with Lochman was afterwards.

GS: I don’t remember. No, Ambalzaki was where Lochman fixed me the job there, or just an interlude. And I didn’t
show up one day. He went to look for me, and I was lying.

CS: But that was just one job, at Ambalzaki.

GS: Yes.

CS: And then you stopped. But you were regularly at the Whodaw- . . .

GS: . . . Whodawzhestvehnee Teatra.

CS: You were regularly there.

GS: Yes.

CS: Hm. And that's when you, when you were living by yourself in Manezhnaya Ulitsa.

GS: Yes, and that's where they found me.

CS: And that's where Lochman found you, Manezhnaya Ulitsa.

GS: No, Manezhnaya Ulitsa he didn't find me. I was there, alright.

CS: Where were you when he found you? A different address?

GS: He found me, maybe so, I don't . . .

CS: . . . But not there?

GS: He found me in an apartment. I was by myself.

CS: So you must have moved from Manezhnaya Ulitsa, you must have moved someplace.

GS: Yes.

CS: Who was Glagoin?

GS: Glagoin i Valerskaya, two great Russian artists of the, of the drama, comedy theatre. They used to, I used to, ah, Glagoin i Valerskaya--that's his wife.

CS: Valerskaya was also the wife of Cimini, wasn't she?

GS: No.

CS: But it's the same name. Who was Valerskaya?

GS: Valerskaya was Glagoin's wife. Cimini married the star
from the opera in Odessa.

CS: But didn't she have the same name?

GS: No, no. Zakrefskaya.

CS: Zakrefskaya. And who was Glagoin?

GS: Glagoin i Valerskaya, they had a theatre--"Ruskii Teatra" they called it--and I used to perform there. They make me up, and I, they used to make me up, and I play the professor, with a beard and everything.

CS: You acted?

GS: Acting.

CS: You were acting or playing the piano?

GS: Yes.

CS: Or playing the piano?

GS: And acting.

CS: You were acting?

GS: Well, they put me on the stage.

CS: In what kind of plays?

GS: From the repertoire.

CS: Russian plays?

GS: I don't remember--Russian, French plays.

CS: Did you memorize the parts?

GS: I didn't have to.

CS: But what did you say?

GS: I played the piano.

CS: You played the piano. You didn't act?

GS: No.

CS: Oh. Alright. But they put make-up on and costumes on. Who were the other actors? They were acting around you while you played the piano?
GS: They were many.
CS: This was a job?
GS: Yeah, Glagoin i Valerskaya.
CS: And you were alone on the piano, or there were other musicians?
GS: Alone.
CS: Alone. Hm. Who was Kokolny Tesevitch?
GS: Polkovnik Tesevitch, aha.
CS: Oh, what was his name?
GS: Paw, Pawl-kawv-nik.
CS: Polkovnik?
GS: Yes.
CS: Tesevitch.
GS: Yeah.
CS: Who was he?
GS: He, on the Head Cadet Corpus.
CS: The head of the cadets?
GS: Yes.
GS: . . . Without permission, to study them. And my luck was, I took many, because you usually take on flute to study, but they coming in together.
CS: Oh, they were packed together?
GS: Yeah.
CS: In the same, two in one box? A regular flute and a soprano flute or something?
GS: Hm hm.
CS: You were going to return them?
GS: What do I need them?

CS: Ah. And you took them for one night, or how long?

GS: I don’t know for how long, but they come in to arrest me.

CS: To arrest you?

GS: Well, some police came to arrest me because they complained—the guy who was supposed to take care of the flutes said, "I didn’t touch them. He did it! The fellow working in the Corpus." So they, so they arrest me.

CS: Police actually came?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Were you living by yourself then, or were you living with the five sisters?

GS: I lived with, uh, with the wife of the, of the one who used to take care of me.

CS: Oh, your mother’s sister.

GS: Yeah.

CS: Aha. And they find out about it, too.

GS: Who?

CS: The aunt, "tyotya."

GS: Yes. And one was always telling me, "Flaytitchky, flaytitchky, flaytitchky." She was always sarcastic about it, Clara.

CS: The one you wrote the letters for . . .

GS: . . . Many letters, for her boyfriend. Ahhokoloki.

CS: What is Ahalkolaki?

GS: That’s place where he was serving.

CS: Ahhalkalaki?

GS: Yes, in Caucuses. And I wrote love letters for her. She could not even write anything.
CS: They didn't go to school, those girls?
GS: No.
CS: Nothing?
GS: Nothing.
CS: So what happened when the police came?
GS: They arrest me, and they let me go.
CS: They took you down to the court house?
GS: Yeah. Arrest me, and let me go.
CS: Immediately, at the house? And took the flutes away?
GS: Yeah.
CS: And they, he called you in, Polkovnic, spoke to you?
GS: Because I played in the Corpus. No, then came Holochov's wife, took away my contract.
CS: Holochov's wife? Not him?
GS: No. Because Holochov was my, my boss, and she took away my contract.
CS: He was the Tanzmaster, he was the Tanzmaster, right?
GS: Yeah.
CS: That's when you played in, at the . . .
GS: . . . In "Blagarodnaya Sabrania," and I invited little girls to dance with me.
CS: And you weren't supposed to do that?
GS: No.
CS: But you were playing behind the screen?
GS: Yes.
CS: Behind the curtain, or something? . . .
GS: . . . And then I would come out . . .
CS: . . . And there were other musicians there, too?
GS: No.

CS: Just you, and you played the dances.

GS: Well, the band played there, too.

CS: Oh, there was a band?

GS: Military band.

CS: Behind the curtain?

GS: No, after the entrance.

CS: Outside the curtain. And why were you behind the curtain? Why were you behind the curtain?

GS: Because that’s where we had classes. Behind the curtain, there was a little, uh, place where they, where we, were classes.

CS: Music lessons?

GS: No, dancing classes.

CS: Oh, dancing classes. And you were taking dancing lessons, or you played the piano?

GS: I played the piano.

CS: For the people taking the lessons?

GS: Yes.

CS: Behind the curtain?

GS: That’s right. And, then, after that, I would come out—nobody knew who I am—invite little girls to dance.

CS: On the other side of the curtain?

GS: Yes.

CS: And what was happening at that side of the curtain?

GS: What other side?

CS: Where you came out, from behind the curtain.

GS: Nothing. There was no continuation.
CS: Oh, you mean the same girls who were taking the lessons . . .

GS: . . . No. I, I don't know what happened to the girls who took the lessons. They went also to dance, I don't know. But I went immediately out and start to invite little girls to dance with me.

CS: There was a party on the other side?

GS: Was a "Blagarodnaya Sabrania." People used to come there; people used to come there for entertainment.

CS: What's a "Blagarodnaya Sabrania"?

GS: The noble, Nobility; it was like a Hall.

CS: A dance hall?

GS: Not dance hall. You might call it--well, yes, a . . .

CS: . . . And on one side was this, and on the other side was the dance lessons?

GS: On the stage, behind, were dance lessons.

CS: And down below, in the pit . . .

GS: . . . Not pit. There was no pit.

CS: But it was a separate room?

GS: Yeah.

CS: A separate room. And you left the dancing room to go to the dancing room where they were having their . . .

GS: . . . Dancing . . .

CS: . . . Dancing, real dancing . . .

GS: . . . Real dancing.

CS: While the other band was playing?

GS: The band, the band used to play. From, from the top, they had a big band playing.

CS: Didn't the band interfere with the piano playing on the other side of the screen?

GS: The band played on its own--fox trots.
CS: But behind that, you were playing the piano.

GS: Before, I played the piano.

CS: Before the other?

GS: I played for the little girls, and invite them to dance. And after invite them to dance, there was entertainment. And the band started to play on top, somewhere . . .

CS: . . . Aha . . .

GS: . . . And everybody started to fox trot . . .

CS: . . . Aha . . .

GS: . . . Whatever they knew about fox trots. They danced, alright. And since I was involved in, in a business like that, Holochov took away my contract . . .

CS: . . . To accompany the dance lessons . . .

GS: . . . Everything.

CS: Also the Corps? To play at the Corps?

GS: My, my reputation was smeared.

CS: Because of the flutes or because of the dancing?

GS: Because of the flutes.

CS: So, then you also lost the job to play at the dance lessons. This was all at the same time?

GS: Yeah, I suppose it was. I returned the contract, and that was . . .

CS: . . . You weren't supposed to dance with the little girls, why?

GS: No.

CS: Why?

GS: What have I got to do? I'm not a nobleman.

CS: It was only for nobility?

GS: Yes.
CS: Absolute nobility?

GS: Yes.

CS: Aha. But when your father used to take you to the . . .

GS: . . . Kadetsky Korpus?

CS: No, when he used to take you to the . . .

GS: . . . Vayenaya Uchilitsa?

CS: Where's that?

GS: Well, same vicinity. Kadetsky Korpus, Vayenaya Uchilitsa were the same vicinity of each other.

CS: What was on Vayenaya Uchilitsa?

GS: Vayenaya Uchilitsa.

CS: What was there?

GS: The cadets.

CS: No, when you were a little boy, and who used to take you to the "traktir"? He used to take you to the "traktir"?

GS: "Traktir."

CS: Those were also for the noble, the noble "traktirs."

GS: No, nothing to do with it. That was just plain people.

CS: Oh.

GS: And they had separate rooms for . . .

CS: . . . For noblemen?

GS: Noblemen, no. For their own clientele.

CS: Oh, but it's a different story from the . . .

GS: . . . No. That's when, they, figures moved around there.

CS: Sarah, Sarah Silberstein was your teacher, right?

GS: Beginner teacher, my beginner teacher, beginner.

CS: Not your pupil. Once you told me she was your first
pupil.

GS: I was her first pupil.

CS: You were her first pupil, alright. And who was Nadyezhda Plivitskaya?

GS: Plivitskaya. That's the lady, long time after that, I accompanied—remember, I told you, I accompanied Iza Kramer? She used to come to the house of Iza Kramer. We were talking about Paris, about different, and she used to, she was the famous singer of Russian songs. And she was a typical Russian singer. She was the one who died in Paris many years later. Remember, I told you, she was involved in some kind of, with General Kutiopov?

CS: Oh, with the spy.

GS: Poor woman.

CS: And Simsiss and Harshom?

GS: Simsiss was a famous accompanist of the opera; Harshom was another famous accompanist of the opera.

CS: And they used to accompany Iza Kramer?

GS: They used to accompany all the stars from the theatre. And the other one was, the one I told you, she was a real estate lady in, in, uh, Reno, where, Cherniafskaya.

CS: Who was that?

GS: Accompanist, too. Simsiss, Harshom, Cherniafskaya was, everyday, you can see their names in the affaces.

CS: Chernof— . . .

GS: . . . Cherniafskaya.

CS: Did they come to Iza Kramer's house and accompany her?

GS: No, there were concerts. Why should they come? Maybe they had rehearsals, I don't know about those.

CS: After that time that you went to Iza Kramer's house and you said you wanted to accompany her . . .

GS: . . . Yeah . . .

CS: . . . Did you go there again, and you accompanied her?
GS: Yes.

CS: Did she give you tea or anything?

GS: I don’t remember. Of course, maybe. She was married, that time, to a director of the newspaper.

CS: Yeah.

GS: I forgot the name of those things.

CS: Odes- . . .

GS: . . . Odeski Novesti.

CS: Yes, that’s what you told me. And this Nadyezhda was always there?

GS: Nadyezhda Plivitskaya, she used to come to her house. They were friendly.

CS: What was the time when you got the tremolo in your foot? Sometime you got a tremolo in your foot, you couldn’t stop shaking your foot?

GS: When I played?

CS: I don’t remember.

GS: Oh, well, I, when I played the accompaniment, all of a sudden I got tremolo in my foot because scared, from the scare.

CS: Who were you accompanying?

GS: I don’t know now. That’s in Conservatory days.

CS: Oh, it was at school?

GS: I still was in the school, was another time.

CS: This "Blagarodnaya Sabrania" (omit repeated attempts of CS at pronunciation). This was with the Tanzmeister, yes?

GS: Holochov.

CS: With Holochov. But you also played in some "Blagarodnaya Sabrania" in Romania?

GS: Oh, that’s another one.
CS: What's the difference?

GS: The names.

CS: Only the names were the same?

GS: Namesake.

CS: But it was also a nobility, only for the nobility?

GS: They called it like that, but everybody could come in there.

CS: Aha. In Romania, you mean.

GS: Hm.

CS: And you said your mother was from Cherson?

GS: Cherson.

CS: That was the place you went on . . .

GS: . . . By boat.

CS: By boat.

GS: In it was very nice. We had a very fine cabin because we had money.

CS: You didn't take a samovar?

GS: No (laughing).

CS: No.

GS: No, no, Cristina. This is a different episode.

CS: I thought maybe it was traditional to take a samovar along.

GS: They probably had samovar on the boat, if you wanted to tea, to drink tea.

CS: And in Cherson is where you saw the watermelons being thrown? At the boat, you saw them throwing the watermelons?

GS: Oh, that was in Odessa.

CS: Oh. That was in Odessa? Before you took the boat?
GS: They were throwing from one place to another.

CS: And in Cherson, once you arrived there by boat, did you have to take any, did you have to take a carriage or anything to your grandparents’ house?

GS: I wouldn’t know. I imagine some routine was established those days.

CS: But was it far away, I mean, from the water?

GS: No.

CS: It was close to the water?

GS: It’s a small town, Cherson.

CS: It was on the sea?

GS: It was on Dniester.

CS: The river. Dniester. The same Dniester that you crossed later?

GS: That must be on the sea, because it falls into the sea.

CS: Well, when you left Russia, it was also the Dniester, wasn’t it?

GS: Yes.

CS: You had nothing to do with the Dnieper.

GS: Dnieper, no.

CS: It was always the Dniester, also in Cherson?

GS: Yes, that’s different kind of, just namesake.

CS: Did you ever take boat rides on the river?

GS: I don’t remember, Mama.

CS: No? Was their house on the seacoast, or was it further away?

GS: Further away. It was a city. It was a little city.

CS: Cherson was a little city?

GS: Yeah.
CS: Did you know everyone in the city?
GS: You ask me questions now!
CS: I'm trying to figure out how little it was, if it was a hundred people where you might everybody, or . . .
GS: . . . Thousands of people . . .
CS: . . . Or if it was a thousand. Thousands of people, hm. You had any friends there that you played with?
GS: My mother had family there. I imagine I played with little kids.
CS: But you had no special friend or relative other than . . .
GS: . . . No, I would not know.
CS: The time in the, where you, uh, where there was a "hafel," a "hafel," you said, it was a tile oven or something.
GS: Oh, "kafel."
CS: "Kafel."
GS: That was, nearly we fell asleep forever.
CS: Where was that?
GS: That was when we travelled with, with my father and mother.
CS: When he was travelling?
GS: Yes.
CS: But it wasn't on a train?
GS: No, no.
CS: Were you travelling by train then or on horse?
GS: It's hard to say, Cristina.
CS: The "kafel" was in a hotel or some place?
GS: "Kafel" was in a wall, to give heat.
CS: But it wasn't in your house?
GS: No.

CS: Some place on the road where you stopped, in some hotel?

GS: Some kind of "gastinitsa," I don’t know.

CS: And they shut all the windows? Somebody shut the windows?

GS: I don’t know how we nearly got, they took us on the street (making gasping sound while speaking).

CS: Oh, they took you all outside.

GS: I think it’s enough for tonight?

CS: Yeah, just one minute. I have to ask you one thing here. I don’t know these people. Who is Vincent Peletier, McArthur, and Rose Bantum?

GS: Oh, that’s our, that I played the piano; and this guy, the accompanist of theirs. They hired me to play, to write an arrangement, and I got 150 dollars. He was complaining it’s too much money, Peletier. Peletier and Rose Bantum, I think, were married that time. She sang.

CS: This is in New York?

GS: That was in New York.

CS: And what’s the story?

GS: No story. I just played with him. The guy hired me. I was playing the piano for that, to make arrangement for 150 dollars, for Peletier.

CS: You were playing two pianos?

GS: Yes.

CS: With McArthur?

GS: McArthur.

CS: Is this the same McArthur that you told the story about Kirsten Flagstad?

GS: That’s the one.

CS: Hm. Oh. There’s no story, though. Alright, we can stop. It must be dinner time (tape off and then on
again, during dinner).

IS: It's going. This was in Bogota, when you were invited to conduct the 25th Anniversary Concert for the Symphony of Bogota, Bogota, Colombia--"como se llama"?--How do they call it?

GS: I don't remember.

IS: I don't know; it's on the thing. We'll get that later for you. OK. Tell her the story about the university.

GS: Now, the secretary came to get me to the university . .

IS: . . . Yeah . . .

GS: . . . of this . . .

IS: What was he? What did he have to do with, the fellow you met, what did he have to do with the Symphony? Board member or what, of the Symphony? Or he was a professor or what?

GS: I can't . . .

IS: . . . He had something to do with the University Symphony, that was for sure.

GS: Yeah. And he sent his secretary to get me to the university. I went to the university, and they left me in the public . . .

IS: . . . In the audience, yes . . .

GS: . . . To listen to the concert . . .

IS: . . . Describe the conductor . . .

GS: . . . All of a sudden, . . .

IS: . . . Describe the conductor. That was funny.

GS: Well, the conductor was conducting Tchaikovsky like Brahms and Brahms like—that I'm gonna tell you the story . . .

IS: . . . But you said he conducted like a ballerina, he was tippy-toeing . . .

GS: . . . He was jumping around . . .
IS: . . . From one end of the stage to the other . . .

GS: . . . And I'm in the public. All of a sudden, I raise my hand . . .

IS: . . . No. Intermission comes. Intermission, and some damsels are on the stage . . .

GS: . . . Yes. Oh, they're damsels on the stage. They talk about affinity of Brahms to something--What did they . . . ?

IS: . . . I wasn't there . . .

GS: . . . They're talking about Brahms' affinity to some other composers. I couldn't stand it. I raised my hands. So the girl, or the secretary, says, "Oh, Maestro wants to say something." I didn't say anything; I just moved from my chair and went on the stage. And the house is full. So I said, "There's nothing, everything is wrong what you say about Brahms. The melody he took was brought to Vienna by the Russian diplomat--forgot his name, now; I have it someplace. Oh, so everybody starts to applaud the moment they hear "Russia": they're all Communists there, in Bogota. And I rushed to the piano; and, immediately, I improvised how it would sound in Russian; the Brahms. I suppose I did it well.

CS: Hm.

GS: And so all the people in the audience applauded: the moment they heard about Russia, everything's fine. And I left the stage. He also wrote about it: Beccera knows about it. Beccera . . .


GS: . . . He heard about all that episode. He immediately knew that I would do something like that, that I'm the only one who would do something like that.

CS: Hm.

GS: And, of course, it was me to go on the street and take pieces of everything and give it to, give it to the animals.

IS: But go back to the stage. What was it that you had played? What was it that they had played and you said the ladies were talking and talking such quatsch about Brahms? A lot of baloney, you said, they were talking. And you, finally, you couldn't stand it, and that's why
you raised your hand. But what was it that they had been playing? Do you remember?

GS: Yes. I improvised on the Russian melody--I can't think of it now, this. It was taken by Prince Razumovsky to Vienna. He got it from the archives, Prince Razumovsky.

IS: How did Brahms get it? The Prince brought it to Brahms or what?

GS: No, that was a mistake, and Brahms never got it. It was Russian melody that they found in the archives, then discovered that it was a Russian melody.

IS: And what did the women say? What were they talking about?

GS: They're talking about greatness of Brahms in comparison with Beethoven.

IS: Oh, they were talking about how he wrote, created the melody?

GS: Yes.

IS: And that's what you couldn't stand? Aha.

CS: Was the conversation in Spanish?

IS: Yes, Bogota.

GS: Yeah.

IS: That's what it was. They were talking about the greatness of his inspiration. Finally, Papa was listening and listening, couldn't stand what they were talking about, said, "Wait a minute," and raised his hand, said, "Wait a minute"; let me tell you where it came from." That was the whole gist of this thing.

CS: Was that the same Razumovsky quartets?

GS: Yeah, the melody. But they didn't know anything about Razumovsky quartet. Razumovsky quartet was that Prince Razumovsky got it from the archives of Beethoven. Beethoven loved money; for money, he did everything, as you know. Wrote all kind of junk, including "Yehal Kozak za Dunai."

CS: What?

GS: "Yehal." (hums piece) I have all the Beethoven works
here, all of them. The English publishers loved Beethoven, that he could write anything, so they sent him all kind of orders. And he fulfilled all the orders, which was just exactly what the students of university wanted to know. Beethoven wrote Italian songs, Ukrainian songs, so many things that you wouldn’t believe that a great genius like him, but he wanted to make money.

CS: Hm.

GS: That’s all that’s to it. And, uh, what else did I, that was the story—was galore in Bogota, in all Colombia, about me.

IS: Does Cristina know the story about your emerald and the lost passport and Amina, how all of that blended together?

GS: No, it’s all . . .

CS: . . . Was that the same time?

GS: It all started, Cristina, I think, was coming to us, and she said—I told you, I bought the whole library for 550 dollars. You were there.

IS: That was in Reno. That has nothing to do with being in Bogota. I’m talking about, does Cristina know when you bought the emerald, the ring, and you lost your passport and Amina came to meet you. You had been conducting, and the flute player who was from Ibagay told Amina about you conducting, and she came up from Ibagay to meet you, and she calls you on the phone and says something like "I’d like to meet you."

GS: At that time, I lost my . . .

IS: . . . And you said, "I can’t meet anybody. I have lost my passport. I have lost my diamond." He went with Antonio Beccera to look for a diamond ring for me—you know Papa’s routine, "We have no time or we have no money"—but with Antonio, he went from store to store to look and study each emerald to see that it was pure and the best that he could find for the price that Papa had set. OK. They finally got an emerald ring for me, which I didn’t know about. He comes back to the hotel, and in the morning, he has to leave for the airplane, this lady calls on the phone because she’s been wanting to meet him, and Papa tells her, "I can’t meet you. I have lost my passport and some other things." He didn’t tell her what because he didn’t know this lady. So Papa . . .
GS: ... I was staying in hotel before she ...

IS: ... Yes, yes, but in the meantime, this is what happened, you told me. You listen carefully now, maybe something happened. You listen carefully because this is what you told me. So she said, "But I would really like to meet you, Maestro. I've heard so much about you. Blah, blah, blah." "But I've lost my passport." "Don't pay attention. I know the"--whoever it is, she had to know the general who's in charge of people leaving. "He will procure for you a new passport." It happened that the man was also a Mormon--was he a Mormon, or the Consulate of the United States was a Mormon, or her general friend was a Mormon, something like that. It was some connection with "The Thirteen Articles of Faith." And she says, "I will get you the generals, and they will allow you to leave the country without the passport, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." So, anyhow, Papa goes to the hotel, puts on his jacket, and lo and behold, the passport and the emerald had fallen into ...

GS: ... My sleeve.

IS: Sleeve of the jacket. So, in the meantime, this poor damsel is waiting downstairs, and is going to take, either bring, the generals came, these generals came.

GS: Yeah.

IS: These generals came to the hotel to help Papa with his passport and emeralds, etc.

GS: Officers came in.

IS: Whatever it is. They're all in the hotel waiting, and Papa's passport is in his sleeve. So she decides that she will take him, Papa, to the airport, and explain what she wanted. And she had the best "conservatorio" in the whole country of Bogota, in Ibagay, and wanted Papa to come to, they had a chorus there, and she wanted to bring the chorus to Washington, D.C., to the White House, and to the United Nations, and Papa was supposed to "finar," to polish the chorus. While she talked to him from Bogota to the airport, she talked cold turkey to him, you know, all the way up there, you know, and she'd really gone out of her way to help Papa, and, uh, anyhow, she did get you back to Ibagay, though. Her talking did a lot of good. Whatever it is, she had a contract, she sent you the contract.

GS: She got me back?
IS: Yes, you went back to Ibagay for six weeks, and she wanted you to stay there in Ibagay, yes.

GS: Oh, she wanted you to come.

IS: Yes.

GS: To get a house.

IS: She was helping you to find houses, and you said some of the houses were like palaces, and they’re, they’re so beautiful.

GS: For 50,000 dollars.

IS: 50,000, 75,000 dollars, houses like palaces, with fruit trees and everything growing along the side, but Papa said he couldn’t stand the poverty all around there, in the street.

GS: Buying cigarette by one, one at a time.

IS: But while he was there for six weeks, polishing up and writing music for the chorus, writing music for the orchestra, or whatever they had, uh, she kept on running around saying, "gue dicia," "Oh, Maestro, what happiness, what happiness."

GS: I wrote the first one without any words. Just "a capella." You ever hear it?

IS: Yes, I think so.

GS: But I haven’t got that.

IS: But we call that the emeralds and the generals episode. It was the second time you went to Bogota. You came back to Reno, and you said, "I don’t know what to do." And she sent you the contract, and you said, "It’s for six weeks. It sounds very interesting. It may be something." And I said, "But this thing in Washington and United Nations." I thought he had to go, then it turned out that these poor little people in the chorus didn’t have winter coats for Washington or the United States. They couldn’t go. They couldn’t leave. They were used to tropical climates. They didn’t like, they didn’t like the whole thing. And the chorus just couldn’t afford to go. So Papa, at the end of six weeks, that’s when he bought the, the two necklaces, the gold necklace with the little emerald on it: one for Oma and one for me. And one was supposed to be for you, and one for Toranna. And that was stolen.
TAPE R5/A (29 December 1987): new chair fireplace, 3:00 p.m.

CS: By the way, I dreamed about, I dreamt about somebody named Levitov last night. I don't even know the man.

GS: Levitov was my leader, in Palmer House, in the lobby—no Palmer House, in Hotel Commodore. We had an orchestra there. He conducted. He always imagines he conducts a symphony orchestra (conversational tone throughout unless otherwise indicated).

CS: Hm. This is when you played Rimsky-Korsakoff, no?

GS: Well, . . .

CS: . . . You had to play a concerto.

GS: That's the one, wanted it, yes. And I played. I bought the orchestration, Carl Fischer, that time. I paid, I think, 10 dollars, set of parts. I still have the original edition somewhere, together mixed up with the, because I bought a lot, after that, from Kalmus, additional parts. That was my first debut in United States as a classical pianist with orchestral accompaniment.

CS: Let me show you also what I found here, in the New Students' Outline Series, in the astronomy book, on Haley's comet (reading from Spitz and Gaynor, Dictionary of Astronomy and Astronautics, p. 182). On Haley's comet. It says, "Its last return was in 1910."

GS: What you talking about?

CS: The comet.

GS: Oh, Haley comet.

CS: Haley comet.

GS: Oh, that's what I saw.

CS: "Its last return was in 1910. It was discovered in September 1909. It became conspicuous in May 1910 and was followed until June 1911, when it was beyond the orbit of Jupiter." So it must have been around 1910, although I don't know in what part of the world it was visible at different times. We'd have to check the records to find it.

GS: Well, I was, I was in Odessa.
CS: After you came back from France.

GS: Yes, that's where we saw it.

CS: And, then, in this book--Alexander Dumas, did you ever read it? Adventures in Caucasia?

GS: Yes, I remember I had a book like that.

CS: He's in the Caucuses someplace, and at 7:30 . . .

GS: . . . Yes, nobody spoke any language . . .

CS: . . . He had an interpreter with him.

GS: He thought he's gonna find somebody whose gonna speak languages. They spoke all kinds of dialects, but not European.

CS: It says, . . .

GS: . . . Where did you dig out? Do you have that book?

CS: Yeah, I just found it this morning by accident, and I thought I would look at it. I haven't read it, but I was looking through it, and it says, . . .


CS: I'll give it to you afterwards.

GS: I don't need it (NB: GS takes up immediately and reads that night).

CS: It says, "At 7:30, the Governor's droshki was at our door." the droshki of the Governor, "preceded by two torchbearers, their pistol butts and dagger hilts gleaming at their belts in the fitful light. Two mounted cossacks with swords, etc., etc., one on each side of the carriage." A droshki. And they, he talks about the droshki later on. And then he says, "While waiting for our 'telega'" . . .

GS: . . . "Telega" is a bigger thing. Droshki is only for two or three. Droshki, you can sit down inside, and that's all is to it.

CS: Did Obermann and Pagarelov sit inside a droshki?

GS: Uh, difficult for me to tell you now. I think Pagarelov
was with me all the time, till we separated later on in Kishinaw, I think—oh, no, in Bucharest, or somewhere else.

CS: But they were sitting down on that, that time when you left?

GS: Yeah.

CS: So it was a droshki, you think, not a "telega."

GS: "Telega."

CS: It was a "telega"?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Is this for animals usually?

GS: Peasant, with hay.

CS: Peasant cart?

GS: With hay, usually carry hay.

CS: Hm. But they sat inside.

GS: Yeah.

CS: Alright. Then, I have in this, from this tape, stories that are incomplete. For example, your mother used to give you money to go to the Turkish baths.

GS: Yeah.

CS: Why did she give you money?

GS: It’s not free.

CS: And she used to send you by yourself?

GS: Yeah, well, I was a big boy already.

CS: But she didn’t go with you? Or you went with her?

GS: No, well, was, the story was that she always tooke me, wanted to go me, to go with her to women quarters, but, finally, the woman who opened the door for us saw me naked practically, looked me over, "No, he doesn’t belong here anymore. Get him to the men."

CS: Tutti said that she used to bribe you, or something.
GS: She used to bribe me to go with, to the women.

CS: You didn’t want to go?

GS: No, not to the women, no. And, instinctively, I wanted to go to the men, which, finally, I did.

CS: Then I have the name Matrusky Spusk.

GS: Hm?

CS: Matrusky Spusk, Matrusky Spusk.

GS: Oh, Matrusky Spusk. That’s where I lived.

CS: That was the first house, right?

GS: Yes, Matrusky Spusk was the house where we had apartment. That’s where mother used to come out and bring all the food for the cats, and they were waiting on the street for her.

CS: You had no pets in the house?

GS: Pests?

CS: Pets?

GS: No.

CS: A dog or a cat?

GS: No.

CS: Did they have pets those days?

GS: I really don’t know. I suppose they did, but we didn’t have any.

CS: Hm. Did you have a garden there?

GS: Where?

CS: Matrusky Spusk.

GS: It’s a big open court (gestures widely with right hand).

CS: For all the apartments?

GS: And all the apartments around it. And the middle is empty. It’s nothing. Just vast space, tremendous space,
and the apartments facing each other like this (draws square on right leg).

CS: Hm. Like a square? They all faced the courtyard?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And Nazhenskaya Ulitsa was also an apartment?

GS: What’s that?

CS: Nazhenskaya Ulitsa?

GS: Kniazhsenkaya. That’s where we had an apartment, and that’s where the "Sama Obarona" comes in, and during the Pogrom, to get food, and mother provide them food, and father was there too.

CS: Did they have meetings there, too?

GS: Meetings? In our house?

CS: To discuss things?

GS: Yes, discussing things, what to do bad to all those "Razboneekee" or, how you call them? How did I call them?

CS: Ditches? Sewers?

GS: No. How did I call the people?

CS: "Pogromchiki."

GS: "Chornosotinski"—right in those canalization.

CS: Did they meet at night time in your house?

GS: Whenever they need a chance to discuss something. Don’t forget, you’re talking to me, that’s, I was just a little boy.

CS: Yes. And you were probably watching and listening.

GS: Yeah.

CS: But you didn’t understand all of it.

GS: No, I knew about "Pogromchiki" because, I told you, once Mother came out of the house, and the "Pogromchiki" saw her and run, ran to her, and she hid herself inside somewhere, and I screamed, "Mama! Mama!"
CS: And she went into a side street?

GS: Yes, I suppose.

CS: And they didn’t see her?

GS: No. They were robbing the, the stores that time. Robbing. Because it was government permission to rob the Jews, rob anybody. Understand?

CS: Hm.

GS: That was, that was one of the reason that Father took us to the church and baptize us--you know.

CS: Supposedly, you would be safe after that?

GS: Yes, we are now belong to the priest.

CS: Did that mean you were protected?

GS: Yeah.

CS: And, also, you could travel without any restrictions?

GS: Perfect.

CS: After you were baptized. Before, no?

GS: Before, no. Before, we were in a pale, "cherta osedlosti."

CS: What is that?

GS: "Cherta osedlosti."

CS: "Cherta" . . .

GS: . . . "Osedlosti."

CS: "Osedlosti." What does that mean?

GS: "Cherta" is this (draws line on right leg), and that’s what supposed to do there (garbled).

CS: Like a boundary?

GS: That’s there we can live and no place else.

CS: And what’s "osedlosti"?
GS: "Osed" is to sit down, Russian, "osed"; "osedlosti," the word "osedlosti"--that, you have to look up.

CS: And is "pale" an American, an English word?

GS: Pale.

CS: That you keep saying.

GS: Oh, the pale. That’s English word.

CS: And, afterwards, you weren’t in the pale anymore?

GS: No.

CS: Being in the pale, what did this mean? What were the consequences?

GS: Well, we had to live in, not, we can’t, couldn’t get out of the pale, that we were supposed to live and not go anyplace else.

CS: Was Matrusky Spusk a pale?

GS: Who?

CS: Matrusky Spusk. Was that in the pale?

GS: No, no, no. That was already, after Pogroms, we were living anyplace we wanted to live, anyplace.

CS: Before, where were you living?

GS: Odessa was not in the pale. Odessa was a big city. We could live anyplace in Odessa. You’re talking about before Odessa. You’re talking about Matrusky Spusk and everything else. That’s after, but . . .

CS: . . . But you said . . .

GS: . . . The Pogroms. Well, anyway, the pale is a segregated part of the state or anyplace where only foreigners, new Jews, gypsies, could, had to live.

CS: Before you were baptized, you had to live there?

GS: No.

CS: No?

GS: No.
CS: You said that before you were baptized, you had to be in the pale.

GS: Not me, but most of . . .

CS: . . . Your parents?

GS: Of the people have to be there. We lived in the city. See, the pale usually concerns all the people who used to live in villages. The Jews had business to do everyplace with the Christians, and they lived in villages. But that’s, that has nothing to do, but that’s another part of the story, you may say, because since the Jews could not travel anyplace else, they had business with the peasants, they bought from them, they sold them, it’s a regular business, was transaction among the Jews.

CS: And they went back to their own place?

GS: Then they went to their, yes, that was, they lived in villages, and after the transaction, they went to their room, to their little place that they build, whatever they could, and the Christians remain where they are. Don’t have to worry about anything.

IS: Did you ever live in a pale?

GS: No.

CS: You said that before you were baptized, you were in the "cherta, cherta osedlosti."

GS: "Cherta osedlosti." But we could not, you see, I lived in Odessa, and I was born in Odessa, and we didn’t have any pale. As I try to explain to you, pale only concern all the Jews, all the foreigners who lived near the peasants in villages. The peasants lived in their own villages, and the Jews and the peasants and the gypsies had business to do with the Jews all the time. And they would come to the village, do their business, then they have to return to their place where they live. But we never lived in a pale because we were always in the city Odessa, where I was born, is a big city. There’s no pale there.

CS: Then what’s the "cherta osedlosti"? You said you were there before you were baptized.

GS: Yes, but I don’t remember those things, that I was there, Cristina (looking away and downwards). When I was a little boy, my father was doing business with everybody, and we were going to that "Traktir." He put me in a high
chair. And I loved those big magazines—Satyricon, Budilnik, all those book, big ones. Satyricon was a very big, large copy, full of illustration magazine. Budilnik was the same thing. Probably was many others, but I loved those things. I could, I could not, I don't think I could read yet. And I was enjoying reading those things. My father made business at the "Traktir." No, he ordered "silyotka" (herring), butter, cheese, salami, everything they ate, friends, all those things. Friends with him, they were eating and drinking a lotta tea. That was the Russian custom. And I would be sitting in that high chair and enjoy myself reading, uh, the magazines: Budilnik, I told you—what I said?—Satyricon. Satyricon. There were others too.

CS: That's how they transacted their business?

GS: Who?

CS: In the tearoom, your father?

GS: Yes, yes. It's a "Traktir," a place where all the merchants get together and drink vodka, and buy that, eat herring, all the "zakuskas," everything else—that's "Traktir." Salud, Mama. But that, there was nothing to do with "cherta osedlosti."

CS: Why did you mention that then?

GS: I really don't know. I mentioned that because was probably on my mind, what was before, but we never lived in "cherta osedlosti (looking back towards CS)."

CS: Even before you were born? Your parents never lived in a pale or anything like that?

GS: I don't think so. Maybe, I would not know, I would not know. I mean, because they always lived in a big city. Odessa was a big city, and there was no "cherta osedlosti" in Odessa. And he was born in Warsaw. And there is no "cherta osedlosti" in Warsaw.

CS: So then what was the purpose to be baptized?

GS: The Pogrom.

CS: And you wouldn't have been bothered afterwards, when they were, for example, they would go into the stores, and robbing Jews or killing Jews, and if you were baptized, you would be left alone, or you thought you would be left alone?
GS: Sure. It was protection of the church.

CS: Was it the case that the Jews who got baptized were protected, had no more trouble?

GS: Yeah, many of them, sure.

CS: Your father?

GS: Like in the Spain, in Spain, during Revolution in Spain, 15th century, 14th century, they all, "maran," they called themselves "marans" in Spain. And they, before even the "marans" time, they still had secret meetings in Spain because the church, the Catholic Church, was very much against them.

CS: And was it the case that your father had no more trouble afterwards?

GS: No.

CS: No more trouble? Did his Jewish friends get angry at him for becoming a Christian? Because he got baptized, and they stayed Jewish, or whatever?

GS: Could have been so, but many of them also baptized.

CS: Did the same thing?

GS: Many of them.

CS: But you don’t remember any of them becoming angry, or the family becoming upset?

GS: Yes, I suppose they would, the ones who wanted to preserve the traditions.

CS: The traditional ones.

GS: The original, it could have been, yes, but I would not know.

CS: Was your grandfather alive then? Your mother’s father? In Cherson, of your mother?

GS: No, lately I remember there was a funeral, and it must have been my grandfather was, was who died that time. That’s so far back.

CS: And you said the funeral was in Odessa.

GS: Yeah.
CS: They brought . . .

GS: . . . Him to Odessa.

CS: Who? Your grandfather?

GS: I don’t remember.

CS: Or it could have been in Cherson?

GS: Cherson. My mother, as I told you, every six months she went to Cherson, in a first-class boat, was called Todleben, or anybody like that, something. And travelled overnight trip. I remember because sometimes it was very shaky, and I was scared. Then we come from Odessa right into, Black Sea falls in, in, in Dniester. On that part, river was Dniester, those days, I would not even know.

CS: You don’t remember that your grandfather was upset that your father got baptized or anything like that?

GS: No, I would not understand it, anyway.

CS: No, probably not. And when your parents died, your mother died in a hospital, right? And they called you?

GS: Yeah (shakes head "no").

CS: While you were at the store?

GS: They call me at, was in the market place selling, and I rush to the store, and they took already her, in a (garbled)—I really don’t, I would never find my mother grave. I would not know now, since Romanian were there, and they were so cruel and destroyed the whole city, I wouldn’t even find my father, I don’t think so. They probably destroyed everything. Don’t you remember those descriptions of the Romanians destroying Odessa? They thought they gonna get Odessa as part of Romania. Didn’t work out that way. It was Russia all the time. All those cities, like Sevastopol—whatever you call it—those on the Black Sea, those are big military cities, were that time and now too, maybe.

CS: Hm. What you were selling on the market when they called you?

GS: Those things that we used to buy, when we go on the trip to Lodz, buy manufactured goods.

CS: Textiles?
GS: Textiles.

CS: And you were selling them in your father’s store?

GS: No store, not store (looking away). That was an open, on the free market place. We didn’t have the store. The store came when we came from Paris, my father bought stores, it’s . . .

CS: . . . That was before, when you came from Paris, that was earlier.

GS: When we came from Paris, my father took over a space--I forget now how you call that, "tergovirinek," I don’t know. And we had stores there, like anybody. Motion picture theatres, stores, everything, that’s, I probably would find it right now, the place, if I would be there, where it was. Odessa was a big city. Cafe Rabina, Franconi, Ambalzaki, Girgala--I don’t remember, they used to make even brown bread. We called that tango bread--I forgot something, it was a brown . . .

CS: . . . Tango bread?

GS: Yes, tango, and I used to buy it in a, on the corner store, there was Giorgala, where we used to . . .

CS: . . . Giorgala was the store at the corner?

GS: Yeah, and . . .

CS: . . . Not a cafe?

GS: No. The Russians don’t go any place. Either they go to the "Traktir," the merchants, or stay home. They don’t, they’re very, very--what they say? Kept themselves segregated. They didn’t bother to go anyplace. Wives cooked for the husbands, and that’s all is to it. See, you still don’t realize, you cannot visualize how life was those days. Odessa was a big city. Of course, I was so little, I wouldn’t know. So my father had a store. We did business in the store. Then we went to our apartment, on our street where we lived. And, uh, so I cannot tell you exactly what’s, I remember that I played around on the street near our store, or I used to skate. You know, I had a skate, not, uh, ice-skating, the other kind, you know, roller-skating, on both feet.

CS: On both feet?

GS: Both feet.
CS: You used to skate?

GS: Sure, I skated. And then I liked very much sport. And I like it very much, sport. And I remember, later years, I used to ... For ten cents, I could get a bicycle and go for few hours, two hours, I don't know how long, around Odessa. It was beautiful streets. Of course, that, very few ... there was hardly any--what you call that?--traffic, now ... .

CS: ... Ten cents: You mean ten kopecks or something?

GS: Ten kopecks.

CS: For two hours, and you could bicycle ride?

GS: Yeah.

CS: Hm. Was your apartment above the store, like they have in Greece sometimes, the store's down below and the family lives above the store?

GS: No. Have nothing to do with the store. We close the store and went to a street, our street where we lived.

CS: And by the time your mother died, you didn't have the stores anymore?

GS: Oh, no. As I told you, we were selling on the street ... .

CS: ... In the open-air market?

GS: ... Open-air market ... .

CS: ... No more stores ... .

GS: ... That was before. The stores came later. You're not, you still don't, the stores came later.

CS: Yeah, but your mother died when you were 13 or something ...

GS: ... Yes, but we had stores. We had, we lived in apartment before that, in our own apartment, on Kniazheskaya Ulitsa.

CS: When you were a little boy, you saw your mother going to the stores, her stores, no? And you cried, "Mama!"

GS: Yeah. That was when we live on Kniazheskaya Ulitsa.
CS: Then you already had stores?
GS: Yeah.
CS: But, but when she died, you were selling in the open-air market?
GS: Ah, yes, that was different times. Yes, that was in open market, on the streets, street and selling . . .
CS: . . . So you didn’t have stores anymore?
GS: No.
CS: Why did they close?
GS: I don’t know, economical situation of my father.
CS: Bad business, and you were also selling at the market?
GS: Yeah. I helped there.
CS: Did they have stalls that they set up, or tents?
GS: Tents, were that.
CS: Once a week? Or every day?
GS: Every day.
CS: Every single day? And your father, where was he when your mother died?
GS: My father died before mother.
CS: Oh, your father died before your mother?
GS: Sure, four years before. He died in a, I remember him lying in there--it’s not like a morgue, I don’t know. Because there’s a lot of people, and they were screaming because just they performed an operation on a young man, and he died . . .

CS: . . . Hm . . .

GS: . . . During the operation. I don’t know what he had; he had some kind of a appendix, appendix operation . .

CS: . . . Hm . . .
GS: . . . And he just died. And it was screaming. His mother came, and his sisters came, and my father was lying there already . . .

CS: . . . Dead?

GS: Yeah, well, he was dead.

CS: And he died of the ear infection, right?

GS: Yes, he died—That's fly, isn't it?—He died of the "gnilakrovia," they call it. What's it, "gnilakrovia"? "Gnilakrovia," that means the blood was corrupted—how you say "gnila," when you buy an apple, how you say?

CS: Rotten? Rotten?

GS: Huh?

CS: Rotten?

GS: Rotten, I suppose. "Gnilakrovia"—that, I remember, it was written there on a piece, on a paper we got it from the hospital . . .

CS: . . . From the hospital?

GS: Yes.

CS: He died in a hospital?

GS: Yes, I visited him in the hospital, and he died in a hospital. And they took him to the, where that woman was screaming.

CS: Hm. And your mother also died in a hospital?

GS: Yes, but much later.

CS: Later. Of asthma, right?

GS: Yes.

CS: And by the time you got from the market, she was already dead?

GS: Yes.

CS: They didn't call you?

GS: How?
CS: Came to tell you?

GS: Some people who worked there.

CS: At the hospital?

GS: Yes.

CS: Hm.

GS: She always was wearing a, some contraption against "grizha." What's a "grizha"?--the one that comes out and presses?

CS: Hernia?

GS: Hernia.

CS: Your mother?

GS: Yes. She used, she bought things that was pressing down her stomach.

CS: Hm.

GS: See, that I remember.

CS: But she didn’t die of that?

GS: Huh?

CS: She didn’t die of that?

GS: No.

CS: But she was always wearing those contraptions?

GS: I don’t know if she wore that when she died . . .

CS: . . . Hm. And that’s when you went to live with your uncle, or the house of your uncle?

GS: Apartment of my uncle.

CS: Apartment of your uncle, the aunt that used to live with you.

GS: Huh?

CS: This is the same aunt that used to live with you, that, who was married to the old man? One of your mother’s sisters? She used to take care of you and come and stay
with you?

GS: That was in apartment.

CS: But now, when your parents died, you went and moved there? And lived with the five cousins, yes?

GS: I remember where I was dying . . .


GS: . . . When my uncle died. I was there lying. I had "kataralnia zhiltuxa." "kataralnia zhiltuxa," didn't I?

CS: You said you had "karatnaya" . . .

GS: . . . "Kataralnia zhiltuxa." I was yellow. I was near dead myself.

CS: This is when your uncle died, in the same room?

GS: I was there lying with him.

CS: This was at his house, your uncle's apartment?

GS: Yes, his, yes, the apartment where all the sisters lived together.

CS: And your parents were already dead?

GS: My father, he was dead already. And my mother was dead, too.

CS: And, then, you were living with this uncle and the aunt.

GS: When Lochman gave the job, he came to my apartment. I was alone, in my own apartment. It had nothing to do with, that was after . . .

CS: . . . After the uncle? . . .

GS: . . . After, after I had the job, got myself a job. I got a job, and, huh, I played--I don't remember. I played in cafe--which one?--was Ambalzaki.

CS: Ambalzaki, you said.

GS: I don't know. And, and, all of a sudden, he comes to the place where I work, and I'm not there. So he got scared and rushed home. And I was, he found me lying there practically dead in my apartment . . .
CS: . . . That's when you . . .

GS: . . . My own apartment . . .

CS: . . . That's when you had typhus?

GS: Was it typhus?

CS: You said "brushnoi" typhus.

GS: "Brushnoi typh."

CS: "Brushnoi typh." This was after, you left now the cousins, right? You left the cousins and you went on and got your own apartment?

GS: No, "brushnoi typh." I travelled and I worked in Galatz, in Romania. And I know I got there "brushnoi typh" because Zoe took me to their father place in Mendik.

CS: Mendik is the place where her father lived?

GS: Yes. He was vinoceur, winemaker.

CS: Romania, then?

GS: Yeah, but that's much farther, already, you go.

CS: So, with Lochman, it wasn't typhus?

GS: With Lochman--I really don't remember. I know I was very sick. And I must have played then that time. I was under his protection then because he gave me the job. And I used to come to his apartment and make arrangements, write arrangements for him.

CS: Where?

GS: Kolodyizhnee Priulov.

CS: Kolol- . . .


CS: Kolo- . . .

GS: . . . It's just near the Gretcheskaya Ulitsa, and he lived together with his mother. They say when he died, they found a lot of gold, but I don't know.

CS: Was he stingy?
GS: I don’t know if he was stingy, but accumulation of a lot of money . . .

CS: . . . Hidden in the house?

GS: Yes. Somebody told me--I forgot who.

CS: Hm.

GS: I’ll never forget him, because if not for him, I probably would be dead. Nobody would know anything about me. You see, it’s difficult for me to coordinate all those happenings. Because, I don’t know, I must have been born in 1899.

CS: Why?

GS: Because.

CS: 1899?

GS: 1899.

CS: Why?

GS: Because, uh, my father had a place in synagogue, a special place, with his name, Gagelstein, on, written on the chair (uses first finger of right hand to write name on thigh; then looks away). And only people who have money have places like that. So it must have been, it must have been that place he have, was, I--understand?

CS: But what does that have to do with the year you were born? The fact that he had a place in the synagogue?

GS: Because I remember that we used to go to pray for his, uh, there’s a ritual you have to observe to . . .

CS: . . . But what has that to do with the date or year that you were born? Why was . . .

GS: . . . I could figure that out. Comet 1909, and we were in Paris, so it must have been . . .

CS: . . . Comet was in 1910.

GS: Huh?

CS: The book says the comet was in 1910.

GS: Yes, so we was, were, so we just came back from Paris.
CS: Yeah.

GS: Yeah, 1910.

CS: Yeah.

GS: And, uh . . .

CS: . . . It became conspicuous in May of 1910; it was discovered in September of 1909, and it became conspicuous in May 1910. I don’t know in what part of the world, I don’t know.

GS: Remember where we were when it was discovered, when we came back from, from? . . . (tape cuts off)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


788


Clark, Ralph W., ed. *Introduction to Philosophical Thinking:*


Geertz, Clifford. "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of


Gottschalk, Louis; Kluckhohn, Clyde; and Angell, Robert; eds. The Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology, and Sociology. New York: Social Science Research Council, 1945.


Myerhoff, Barbara, and Metzger, Deena. "Listening to the Silent Laughter of Mozart." Semiotica 30 (1 & 2; Special Issue: Signs about Signs: The Semiotics of Self-Reference, 1980).


Peck, Robert C. "Psychological Developments in the Second


Rabinowitz, Peter J. "Telling the Story of Sonata Form," paper presented at the *Conference on Narrative Literature*, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, April 8-10, 1988.


