

# English Transcript of Eva Nathan Testimonial

**Interviewee:** Eva Irma Nathan Rzadzinksa (59)

**Interviewed by:** Dr. Giovanna Urdangarain and Dr. Rona Kaufman

**Interview conducted at Hogar Israelita Nursing Home in  
Montevideo, Uruguay in January of 2019.**

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**Giovanna**

Hello, good morning, Eva. Nice to see you again and thanks again for giving us some of your time to chat.

**Eva**

Please, please.

**Giovanna**

Can you tell us your full name and where you were born and when you were born?

**Eva**

Eva Irma Nathan Rzadzinksa, I was born in Montevideo in 1960.

**Giovanna**

And could you tell us a little bit about your connection to this story of Holocaust survival and the Jewish community in Uruguay?

**Eva**

Not a Jewish community, no, not because my mother didn't give us a Jewish upbringing. And for many years she didn't speak at all. But when she spoke it, she spoke it only to me.

**Giovanna**

How old is your mom right now?

**Eva**

Ninety-six.

**Giovanna**

96. When do you remember her sharing her story with you for the first time? Because there's a book, no, that, that, that we know of from 2015 that she already told us that she wrote for you.

**Eva**

already 20 years

**Giovanna**

20 years. Was there anything that you remember that triggered your mom's need to tell, did anything happen?

**Eva**

No, but it was always implicit. And after many years I realized and understood the situation and her reactions, for example she was very strict as I told you with the food, you always had to save, you had to save--you couldn't eat what you wanted. You had to save for tomorrow in case there wasn't any tomorrow. So I would steal money from my father or my mother and I would buy food on the sly. And I would hide the food in my room and one time she found me and she got very angry and told me that he didn't want to live with a daughter like me.

**Giovanna**

How old were you at the time?

**Eva**

Very little--14, 15. Less. I don't know if it was developed yet.

**Giovanna**

Could you, did you have--how could you respond to that situation?

**Eva**

I couldn't.

**Giovanna**

You couldn't.

**Eva**

I couldn't. Of course, because she was so hungry and I let the food rot under the mattress. For her, it was the worst.

**Giovanna**

At that moment did she say why that seemed to her No, neither did she.

**Eva**

Over the years I understood.

**Giovanna**

Of course. And this conversation that you were telling me about when you were in your 20s, what was the context of that conversation, what made her start telling you what she had experienced?

**Eva**

Well, my father got sick and she started to open up with me as her only ally, my brother was far away and she felt the need not to lose the past.

**Giovanna**

Now you mentioned your brother. Your family, what was your family like when you were, when you were a child growing up?

**Eva**

My brother, my dad and me.

**Giovanna**

And where does your brother live?

**Eva**

In Israel.

**Giovanna**

How long has it been going on?

**Eva**

Forty years ago. More than forty years ago.

**Giovanna**

Over forty years old. When he left, how old were you?

**Eva**

13 or 14.

**Giovanna**

And he was older than you?

**Eva**

Yes, yes.

**Giovanna**

Did you have a chance to have a conversation with your mom and him at some point, or was it just you?

**Eva**

No, it was me.

**Giovanna**

Does he know the story today because of the book your mom wrote?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

When you talked to your mom, were you able to share that with him or did your mom share that with you in, let's say, confidentially?

**Eva**

Yes, confidential.

**Giovanna**

Was your father born in Uruguay or was there also--?

**Eva**

No, he was born in Germany but came here before the war.

**Giovanna**

Before the war. How did your parents meet?

**Eva**

My mother put an ad for English classes and my dad came, and well.

**Giovanna**

And the rest is history. Was he older than your mom?

**Eva**

Nine years.

**Giovanna**

Nine years. From what we talked to your mother the other day, we know what it was like, right? Her departure from her country and the fact that she didn't know exactly what had happened to her family until much later, right, can you tell us a little bit about what you remember or what they told you about that moment, about when she found out what had happened?

**Eva**

I wasn't there. I was no, yes. The only thing my mother tells is that when she found out that her parents were killed in Auschwitz, what I told you, she locked herself in the bathroom, she wanted to kill herself and my father let my brother in so he could see that she had a reason to live

**Giovanna**

How did you react when she first told you her story? What was it like for you to come into contact with her experiences?

**Eva**

Very difficult, very difficult, very difficult. That's why I didn't read the book. Someday I'm going to read it.

**Giovanna**

You know anyway that the book surely tells, no, things that she already told you, right?

**Eva**

Of course. And there are things she doesn't tell in the book that I know.

**Giovanna**

That you know.

**Eva**

No, I can't read it. That's what happens in total war.

**Giovanna**

There's, you mentioned the conflicted, somewhat conflicted relationship with food, right? And how that's present in your life--

**Eva**

Always, always, to this day.

**Giovanna**

To this day she feels the concern that--

**Eva**

No, I have a conflicted relationship with food.

**Giovanna**

Did she know that?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

Were you able to understand the relationship between your relationship with the food and what had been your experience?

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

No, they've never been able to talk about that. Have you been able to, or have you had help navigating this issue with food with this history?

**Eva**

I went once, to an organization that helps people with anorexia and bulimia. But I didn't really like the way they treated me. They locked me up, no, no, no, no, I didn't like how they treated me and I was able to overcome it on my own.

**Giovanna**

Within, do you know if there is within the community, well-- you were explaining to me that actually because of the upbringing that you received, which was not within the Jewish community-- but you knew about your identity or no? Your Jewish identity?

**Eva**

When I was 15 or so.

**Giovanna**

Never before that time And your dad didn't identify as Jewish either?

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

Was he?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

Was it ever possible for you to ask them why they had not explicitly identified themselves as Jewish with you, with their children?

**Eva**

Because unfortunately my father, as a German, felt superior. He was even Jewish. But the family, not him, because they had a lot of money, and I remember that they always said that one of my grandparents' impediments for my mother not to marry my father was because they didn't know her family, so they didn't know what my mother would be like as she aged.

**Giovanna**

Did your dad have family here in Uruguay?

**Eva**

Yes, he came with his parents and a brother.

**Giovanna**

What part of Germany did he come from, do you know?

**Eva**

Frankfurt

**Giovanna**

And he came with a brother and his parents?

**Eva**

Yes, yes.

**Giovanna**

And do you know, do you remember or did you hear about what date?

**Eva**

They were in Italy, I know he played soccer there. It must have been in 1938.

**Giovanna**

You were telling me, well, the way they met had to do with something that had nothing to do with the community, which is something unusual, right? Because in many stories the spouses meet because they were introduced by someone else, in this case it was a coincidence, right?

**Eva**

It was a newspaper ad.

**Giovanna**

Yes. Did your parents ever think about going back to their hometown to visit?

**Eva**



Yes.

**Giovanna**

Did they?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

Do you remember more or less what were the impressions of that trip?

**Eva**

Hmm, well. They didn't go places, they didn't go to Auschwitz, they didn't they were just sightseeing. My mother wanted to see the house where she grew up.

**Giovanna**

Was she able to do that?

**Eva**

She could.

**Giovanna**

I remember what we talked to your mom about her family-- did she at any point in her life locate any distant relatives? No one.

**Eva**

Not her immediate family.

**Giovanna**

Close, of course, central. What do you remember, Eva, obviously apart from this problematic relationship with food that has a clear, right? A relationship with what she lived through of not having, of not having food security, right? From day to day life, in relation to other things? You had mentioned something to us about the concern she already had about you being a woman, right?

**Eva**

I always dressed as a boy.

**Giovanna**

Up to what age did that happen?

**Eva**

Up to 17, 18 years old.

**Giovanna**

And, at some point you wondered why that was, didn't you?

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

Did you realize it at a certain age?

**Eva**

I was ashamed to be a woman.

**Giovanna**

you?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

And you were never able to have a conversation with her about why she was dressing you as a boy.

**Eva**

Yes, but she couldn't say. She was afraid, of what would happen to me

**Giovanna**

That something would happen to you, as a woman?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

In the photo, I think, that I sent you by WhatsApp that the was one of the

**Giovanna**

I thought it was two kids, is that you and your brother in that picture?

**Eva**

No, they are my brother's children.

**Giovanna**

They're your nephews, right. And the decision to dress as a boy was your mom's, wasn't it?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

What about your dad?

**Eva**

He didn't influence it.

**Giovanna**

No.

**Eva**

No, I grew up very wild --- we lived in the Meadow and I liked to climb trees. I didn't, I didn't... in fact, when I grew up, I tried to hide the fact that I was a woman.

**Giovanna**

Growing up, was there ever a conversation with your mom as a child? I imagine that--

**Eva**

No, my mother worked a lot. It wasn't until we were adults and without my father that we were able to talk.

**Giovanna**

How many years has it been, Eva, that your mom has been in the home?

**Eva**

One year.

**Giovanna**

One year. And until then you lived together?

**Eva**

No, she was in another home for eight years.

**Giovanna**

The fact that you didn't have, at some point did there start to be communication with the community or--?

**Eva**

Yeah, we would go to the groups so that she, she-- I would go with her.

**Giovanna**

And was that a concern that she expressed at some point?

**Eva**

When she was older, yes, she felt, she felt Jewish.

**Giovanna**

How many years, more or less, how old was she? Do you remember when she started to feel that way?

**Eva**

70.

**Giovanna**

Seventy. When she arrived here last year

**Eva**

It wasn't her own decision. It was my brother's. My mom wanted to stay where she was before because it was a few blocks from where I lived and I went there in the mornings and afternoons.

**Giovanna**

When we talked about identity, the other time we also talked about this not necessarily having a Jewish upbringing, not-- how do you identify yourself today, in terms of nationality, in terms of?

**Eva**

I don't like religions, because religions separate people and don't unite and I consider myself a citizen of the world, with Jewish origins, yes of course, because they didn't let me know my grandparents. But no, I'm not a fanatic, far from it.

**Giovanna**

Do you practice religion?

**Eva**

No, no.

**Giovanna**

When you found out that you belonged to the Jewish community around the time you were a teenager, you mentioned that before, didn't you?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

What was your reaction--did you seek information about what had happened to the Jewish community?

**Eva**

No, mostly my mother did

**Giovanna**

You had conversations with her?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

When your mom sought to begin that connection, what organizations did she turn to? Did she start by going to a synagogue or by contacting others?

**Eva**

No, groups of, of, of activities within the Jewish club.

**Giovanna**

Did she ever explain to you why at that time she wanted to connect with other people in the Jewish community at the age of 70?

**Eva**

But she did continuing education for senior citizens, which didn't have many Jews. It was as part of some post-retirement activities.

**Giovanna**

Yes. And this-

**Eva**

Not so much for Judaism per se-

**Giovanna**

but through the activities.

**Eva**

But whenever she spoke of the Holocaust, she cried.

**Giovanna**

What, aside from these two specific experiences, Eva, what do you think, what made your childhood and adolescence the way it was as the child of a survivor?

**Eva**

I don't think she should have had children. We had it very difficult, very difficult. Very strict, my mother. My father wasn't present,(was a zero to the left?)and she was very strict with everything. Very strict and she never gave us affection.

**Giovanna**

Your brother left, you told me, many, many years ago, right? And obviously I'm not going to ask you, I'm not going to ask you to speak on his behalf, but was the relationship the same whether you were a woman or a man, because you pointed out earlier that there was a special, a special concern for you, because you are a woman, was she equally strict, or was your brother treated with the same discipline as well?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

Did you have any opportunity to talk to other children of survivors in Uruguay?

**Eva**

No, no.

**Giovanna**

Do you know if there are groups of children of survivors that work on these issues? Would you be interested in knowing if such a group exists?

**Eva**

Yeah! Right.

**Giovanna**

When we talk to Holocaust survivors or people of your mother's generation, but who came after the war, we hear, this issue of not being able to talk for many years and the children actually in Uruguay as far as I know have not talked specifically about things like you mentioned. What do you think are the difficulties in doing that and what do you think are the benefits of being able to tell about your experience as a second generation?

**Eva**

Benefits, nothing can change the past. I set out to make my mother love me a little, or show me a little. In these, these years.

**Giovanna**

Did your relationship change after she--?

**Eva**

Yes, we got along very poorly, then we got along very well. But my mother is very selfish, no, I didn't get married, no she didn't want me to leave her alone. I didn't fulfill my career, I didn't pursue my career.

**Giovanna**

What did you study?

**Eva**

Physical education. I took care of my parents because it was what a single daughter should do, should, should do. And I didn't realize that they could have put in some help and I could have gone on with my life, no, I didn't realize.

**Giovanna**

How old were you when your dad died?

**Eva**

Twenty and a few.

**Giovanna**

You were very young. Did you know about your mother's story at that time?

**Eva**

Yes, yes.

When you said that your father's attitude had been a bit passive, let's say in those years, how do you interpret that attitude? Because he would have also listened. Do you know for sure that she told him what she had lived through in the same way she told you?

**Eva**

No, no. She told me more. More after my father died and we were alone.

**Giovanna**

How did your mother experience your brother's going to Israel because she didn't practice the religion, right? And the going to Israel, this one, I don't know if it was due to a contact, did your brother practice Judaism?

**Eva**



No--

**Giovanna**

No.

**Eva**

No, my brother had hooked up with a woman who was in Macumbas and things like that. And then the military coup came, and well, we went to Argentina, and my mother knew that the career my brother was doing in Israel was at a very good level and so she sent him to Israel and today he's a great scientist.

**Giovanna**

What did your brother study?

**Eva**

Agronomy.

**Giovanna**

Does your brother return to Uruguay regularly?

**Eva**

Sometimes. He's very cold.

**Giovanna**

Did you have a chance to talk to your brother about the, about the things that you saw in your relationship with your mom, did you talk to each other about that?

**Eva**

Very little, very little.

**Giovanna**

You were telling me he's a few years older than you?

**Eva**

Five years.

**Giovanna**

When we talked about the book the other day, the publication of the book, you were telling us that the person who wrote the book from listening to your mom's dictation was someone your brother had recommended.

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

From there.

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

But the interest or willingness to publish the book came from your mom and then he found out about it? What was that process like?

**Eva**

Yes, that, yes, yes, yes. It was my mom's and he thought it was the most, the best thing she could do with her life story.

**Giovanna**

Did he read the book?

**Eva**

Yes, all my nieces and nephews read it.

**Giovanna**

Yeah. You said that when you first talked to your mom, you understood a lot of things

**Eva**

Of course.

**Giovanna**

-- of how she had been before, but she didn't have that conversation with your brother?

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

So, thinking about your process and his, do you think there were differences in understanding your history? Or was the fact that he was already living in Israel?

**Eva**

He didn't stop, Yes, yes.

**Giovanna**

If you had to I know it's a difficult question to answer, but from your place, isn't it? As the daughter of a survivor, if you had to share a reflection on, on what are the strategies to, to live with that situation and to work on that relationship with parents who survived the Holocaust? What do you think are those strategies that you put in place, for example?

**Eva**

I don't think my mother was fit to have children. Nor my father. They didn't give us the minimum of affection, they didn't say, they didn't touch us, no, there was no contact. My mother simply wanted to have a family because she didn't have a family, and so we came, but. I know that deep down she wanted to, but even she, her generation, didn't say "I love you, you're important", to this day.

**Giovanna**

Did you perceive that as a difference with other families in Uruguay?

**Eva**

Of course, of course. Big difference. Of course, of course.

**Giovanna**

Were there--do you remember there were other children from, well--you didn't identify yourselves as a Jewish family at any point and you attended public school, you and your brother, in the neighborhood, but the last name obviously is an unusual last name, let's say, were you ever asked at school where your parents came from?

**Eva**

German, German. Don't forget I went to a Lutheran school and they taught German.

**Giovanna**

Oh, because you studied at the San Pablo School, which is a Lutheran school in Montevideo. And in that context, you talked, you studied--do you remember studying the Holocaust in high school or not?

**Eva**

No

**Giovanna**

No, it was never mentioned? But the war, yes? The world war? And did you talk about that at home at any point were you ever around that topic enough to talk about it?

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

Did you notice while growing up that there was a big taboo about something?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

How did this collide, let's say, against that silence? I imagine that you would ask, for example, about your mother's family: about your grandparents, about whether your mother had had siblings, did that question, that conversation happen?

**Eva**

They were always evasive. They never shared, but later, of course, we did find out.

**Giovanna**

But as a child you don't remember

**Eva**

No

**Giovanna**

try to have this conversation. Did you have an uncle, or more, on your dad's side?

**Eva**

One uncle and one uncle on my mom's side.

**Giovanna**

That he lived here in Uruguay?

**Eva**

Yes, but he was, uh, the uncle on my mom's side was very, he was very integrated in Uruguayan society. He drank mate--that was a nice memory. Very, very, very, very expressive.

**Giovanna**

And did you have frequent contact with him?

**Eva**

Yes, yes.

**Giovanna**

He was coming to visit you, you were going to

**Eva**

We would go. He was very poor.

**Giovanna**

It's the guy, right, that your mom commented that when he came in and did he have kids?

**Eva**

He has kids, yes, yes.

**Giovanna**

That they were your mom's first cousins?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

So as second uncles of yours, let's say. Did you have contact with them as well?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

The relationship

**Eva**

And they did receive a Jewish education.

**Giovanna**

And with this uncle at some point, I'm not really aware of the dates at this point to know if the question I'm asking you was possible let's say, but did you get to talk to him at some point about what had happened with your mom's family?

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

Because you didn't want to because you knew it was a subject that, that your mom wasn't going to want?

**Eva**

Yes, my mother would get very upset every time she was asked a question. So I didn't want to see her upset.

**Giovanna**

When you say she would be upset, you say that she felt bad, etcetera, being her daughter as a child and as an adolescent, how would you define your physical state of health at that time when you were a child and a young woman, physically were you in good health?

**Eva**

Always, yes, I worked a lot.

**Giovanna**

Was the intrafamilial relationship that you mentioned earlier in terms of how they express affection or not, was that the same in this uncle's family that you mentioned?

**Eva**

No, in this family affection was expressed.

**Giovanna**

Did you sometimes ask about that because you tell me you saw the difference with other families?

**Eva**

No, I took it as it was.

**Giovanna**

It was, it was your reality, let's say. Were you able to talk to her about it as an adult?

**Eva**

Yes. She told me that her mother also raised her that way. I mean, she repeated the pattern

**Giovanna**

Yes, the model, the pattern. So, let's say that in that conversation she doesn't say that the way she raised you was a result of her experience in the Holocaust, but something prior to that?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

What about your dad, who hadn't been in the war?

**Eva**

My dad was very depressive, very bohemian, he did what my mom told him, he had no willpower. My mother always had a very, very strong character.

**Giovanna**

The other day we talked about this question, remember? a colleague of mine who is also a sociologist from Uruguay, but who lives in Los Angeles and studies these issues, she asked me to share this question, so I'll extend it to you as well. What do you think made your mother survive the way she did, what things did you see in her during your life, what do you think helped her to survive everything that happened to her?

**Eva**

Intuition. And to this day she herself does not forgive herself for having survived.

**Giovanna**

She always felt guilty, and in relation to the fact that she left?

**Eva**

And she left her whole family.

**Giovanna**

Do you know if she sought help at any time, psychological help to be able to handle all that?

**Eva**

No, I don't think so, I don't think so. I did look.

**Giovanna**

And was that something that was beneficial for you, were you able to, did you find a listening ear, because the topic that is also talked about, this, a lot is not only about seeking help, but that it's about finding person who can really listen, right, to the witness, let's say, how was your experience?

**Eva**

No, not very much because I understood that I had and have things, but I'm not very, I'm not very communicative. Actually, I thought it was good to tell you what I've told you because I think it's a consequence of how my mother treated me.

**Giovanna**

The relationship with your mother, as you were telling me before, changed.

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

And what made that change possible because that was a very hopeful aspect?

**Eva**



That I became her caretaker, once my father passed away, that I would dedicate myself one hundred percent to her.

**Giovanna**

Deja, how did you manage to dedicate yourself 100% to her?

**Eva**

I was with her all the time--day and night. In fact, I didn't even notice when I couldn't take it anymore. She would call me every hour, at night, to get her up, take her to the bathroom. She wouldn't let me administer her medicines. She took a lot of medicine, she slept a lot. I dressed her, bathed her.

**Giovanna**

Were you working?

**Eva**

No, no.

**Giovanna**

Did you spend 24 hours a day taking care of her?

**Eva**

100%

**Giovanna**

For how long?

**Eva**

15 years.

**Giovanna**

When did that, that system, shall we say, of care change?

**Eva**

It hasn't changed much because I'm still the only one who comes almost every day. When my brother put her here he said it was so that I could have a life. But I still keep coming back because it's like an umbilical cord that I can't cut.

**Giovanna**

But now are you working Eva, or not?

**Eva**

Very little.

**Giovanna**

And, you were saying that you had not, that there was no opportunity for you to practice your profession.

**Eva**

No, I take care of dogs, that I that I... that I... I love dogs, and I do cleaning, I couldn't... I didn't get up to date with my profession.

**Giovanna**

Did you do your degree in physical education?

**Eva**

Here.

**Giovanna**

Here in Montevideo and you, at that time, your plan, what was it? To work in high schools with, with kids?

**Eva**

With children with disabilities, I enjoyed that.

**Giovanna**

Did your mom ever ask you not to pursue your profession or was that something you felt was a decision you had to make?

**Eva**

No, I felt it was a decision I had to make and she didn't object.

**Giovanna**

She accepted-

**Eva**

Yes

**Giovanna**

Go live in a, in a, this, a home, when--?

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

And that wasn't your decision as you mentioned before?

**Eva**

The first time, yes.

**Giovanna**

The first time, yes. It must have been a difficult conversation too, I imagine, that one after so many years.

**Eva**

That's when I turned to a psychologist for help, because I still feel guilt. That's why I come every day, to make sure she's okay. And for myself. I wanted to give her everything that life took from her.

**Giovanna**

Did you always feel that responsibility?

**Eva**

Yes, yes.

**Giovanna**

How do you think that you, that sense of responsibility was conveyed, because she didn't tell you that directly or did she?

**Eva**

No, no. But a friend of mine mentioned it once when they were trying to find a Jewish boyfriend. He told her that I had to take care of my parents as a woman. Like they used to.

**Giovanna**

And, when you say that they tried to find a Jewish boyfriend, was she also someone from the Jewish community, a friend of your mother's or a friend of the family?

**Eva**

They sent me to one of these groups of Jews.

**Giovanna**

Your parents. But, at that time, how old were you?

**Eva**

25, 26.

**Giovanna**

So it was a first contact with the community?

**Eva**

Yes, yes, yes, yes. But it wasn't talked about, the Holocaust `.

**Giovanna**

But, up to that point you hadn't grown up in contact with the church or anything.

**Eva**

No, no.

**Giovanna**

How does this

**Eva**

The church yes, I did handicrafts in the church of carnefitas

**Giovanna**

Ah, but I mean with the synagogue or with the church, not with the Jewish religion.

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

And when they sent you, as you were saying just now, to these groups, what was the purpose? Did they tell you?

**Eva**

Get a Jewish boyfriend.

**Giovanna**

Oh. And, it just came up overnight, was it something that surprised you, because if you hadn't grown up in contact with the Jewish community all of a sudden, did you ask why?

**Eva**

The thing is, I had a black boyfriend, an American... who played basketball.

**Giovanna**

And so, they decided

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

But, at the same time when you met someone I saw the comment that you had to dedicate yourself to caring for

**Eva**

I didn't even marry, I never went to one. I always understood that if that was what they wanted, well, I was going to make the effort but I never joined any group. Never. I never joined one. They even sent me to Israel. And oh yes, it was nice, but I, as we Uruguayans are known to be, I went to another place, I went to work in another --- and that's how I got integrated.

**Giovanna**

And how long were you in Israel?

**Eva**

One year.

**Giovanna**

And how old were you at that time?

**Eva**

Twenty few also.

**Giovanna**

Was your brother there?

**Eva**

Yes

**Giovanna**

Did you go with your brother?

**Eva**

No, no, no, no, my brother wanted me to wash clothes, do the cooking, no, no, no, no, no, I didn't want to be with my brother.

**Giovanna**

And the purpose of this trip Because at that time your father, your dad was living...

**Eva**

Yes

**Giovanna**

And they stayed here

**Eva**

yes

**Giovanna**

What, what, what was the purpose of this trip according to them for you, what were they looking for in the act of--

**Eva**

I suppose they wanted me to search for my origins

**Giovanna**

And did you find them? Did you feel like you were getting back to your origins?

**Eva**

I like the country life. Because I went to Israel it could have been anywhere else I also like the country life.

**Giovanna**

Did you learn to speak Hebrew?

**Eva**

No

**Giovanna**

How did you communicate?

**Eva**

In English

**Giovanna**

Your brother, when you went to Israel already your brother had long since been or all

**Eva**

He was finishing his degree

**Giovanna**

Have you talked to your brother Eva about what it meant to you growing up as the daughter of a survivor?

**Eva**

No

**Giovanna**

Do you know what he thinks about that?

**Eva**

No

**Giovanna**

You've never had a conversation

**Eva**

Yes, once I told him that he had to tell the children, I wanted them to know what we didn't.

**Giovanna**

And what was his response?

**Eva**

Yes, yes, yes, that he agreed. He was a good father, and he is a very good father.

**Giovanna**

What other aspects of your experience do you think are important to know or share?

**Eva**

I once asked my mother why she was so stubborn. She never listened to me. And she told me that if she wasn't so stubborn she wouldn't have survived. But, we grew up very lonely. My mother was the one who maintained the family

**Giovanna**

Did your dad work?

**Eva**

No, he was very bohemian. He was very fond of soccer, but he didn't make a living off of soccer, no one did.

**Giovanna**

And your mom, as she had told us since she arrived in Uruguay she immediately--

**Eva**

She worked a lot --- she supported the family.



**Giovanna**

At the time, this wasn't common in Uruguay, was it?

**Eva**

No, it wasn't common, it's a --- (that's her stubbornness)

**Giovanna**

How did you live, your experience in contact with others, did you interact with other families of friends of yours in elementary school?

**Eva**

I had no friends

**Giovanna**

Because they wouldn't let you or because you didn't reach out at the time?

**Eva**

I didn't come out of my shell. I was very introverted. I lied a lot.

**Giovanna**

If you had to tell us or describe your childhood and adolescence? Someone who didn't know you in that period? What would you remember, how would you describe their, those stages of your life?

**Eva**

The only thing I remember is always wanting to eat and not being able to. Always, always.

**Giovanna**

In that routine that you're mentioning and no no no I don't want to, I want to ask, to the extent that you're comfortable with this situation, how was it a routine of a lunch or a dinner at your house? Because you were telling me that

**Eva**

You couldn't leave food, you ate all of it, even if you didn't like it.

**Giovanna**

You had also referred before to the amount that you sometimes felt

**Eva**

Yes, but we had to leave enough for tomorrow.

**Giovanna**

And, at that moment, well, this is a speech that actually also sounds familiar when sometimes you come from families that have gone through situations, no, of poverty so it sounds familiar in a personal context the concern of wasting food if it's left on the plate and in the conversation that your mom had with you years later, were you able to tell her about your difficulties with her, with the food issue with handling the things that you got to do what you had to do because of that situation?

**Eva**

But she didn't feel responsible

**Giovanna**

No, she didn't see the connection between

**Eva**

No, and I saw it over the years.

**Giovanna**

Your mom is now 96 years old and well, she wrote this book so, this, revealing, let's say for her family and as she said the other day she did it for you to know her story, right? Did she feel, did she tell you at the time if she felt responsible to share that beyond her children?

**Eva**

No

**Giovanna**

Or do you understand the to be, in some way, a request for forgiveness for you and your brother?

**Eva**

No, it was not an apology. It was a document to get the word out.

**Giovanna**

At some point did you have the, a conversation about the things that had, here you had been impacted, let's say painfully or hardly, by the way she raised you?

**Eva**

Yes, yes. But it was very painful for me, to tell of the suffering, and the way I was treating myself too.

**Giovanna**

When you talked about it, did it affect her?

**Eva**

Yes, yes.

**Giovanna**

What silences, if any, do you think still exist between you and your mom? And what, what possibilities, what things do you think could have been done to avoid those silences? If possible, what do you think?

**Eva**

There were no dialogues in my childhood. She was introverted, I was introverted, my brother was introverted we were a dysfunctional family.

**Giovanna**

Did you have contact with your dad's family?

**Eva**

They believed they were superior.

**Giovanna**

Than your mom?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

They never accepted that, that marriage?

**Eva**

They didn't accept it, but with time... when they got to know my mom and understood that she was a good person, and she worked hard, they accepted her.

**Giovanna**

You were telling me before that with your mom's uncle you didn't see the same pattern, shall we say, of relationship. At some point in your life, did you talk to them about what your experience had been like?

**Eva**

No

**Giovanna**

Growing up with your mom?

**Eva**

No, no, no.

**Giovanna**

Do you know if she ever talked to her uncle about what happened to her?

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

He was your grandfather's brother

**Eva**

My grandfather

Giovanna:

Not your dad.

**Eva**

(My father was envious) that he received money from Germany for the, for the relatives who were killed

**Giovanna**

That maternal uncle.

**Eva**

Mhm.

**Giovanna**

And he had come before the war, before the rest. Someone, like him, who had come before the war even after the war and his relatives had died either, had no right to compensation from the German government.

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

We talked about no, no, you don't know if there are groups, but it's an experience that you would be open to talking to other children and survivors?

**Eva**

Yes, yes.

**Giovanna**

So how, did you seek help on this specific issue, not of the, of the relationship with food, did you at any point seek information about, about, about growing up as a survivor's daughter, do you know if it's something that is written.

**Eva**

No.

**Giovanna**

What, would you be interested in having access to information like this?

**Eva**

Yes, yes.

**Giovanna**

Is there anything else you would like to share with us? We are, as you said, it's the second generation, it's a generation that still speaks little. In the United States there are fictional stories written even by children, right? Of survivors who have fictionalized their experiences and, remembering in particular a story, now I don't remember the title or the author but he says that he always asked to go to summer camps, and this in English the word camp, in reality the father of the Holocaust survivor that when he heard the word camp, which in English is the same as concentration camp, that provoked him, of course, the children asked him if they could go, like their friends, to the "summer camps," right?

### **Giovanna**

And his father would hear "camp," and that disturbed him horribly and he would get very angry, etc., right? There are these things, no, literary, for example, written by that generation, but, I feel that we don't know much about the experience in the United States, we don't know much about the experience of the Jewish community in Uruguay, and even less about the second generation. And since we are going to share this material and this project with us, with this academic community, let's say there, what else do you feel you would like people to know or people who listen to you to know?

### **Eva**

My mother was very critical of me, and she should not have had children, later I forgave her of course, but the child still, still hurts.

### **Giovanna**

Do you think you

### **Eva**

A lot of things, a lot of little things, a lot of little things that --- she didn't know how to handle. Or understand she was very busy, a father didn't --- income to the house and she was worried about bringing income, I understand her.

### **Giovanna**

How much do you think, of what you experienced as her daughter before this whole conversation and this stage of talking to her, how much do you think was due to her experience as a survivor and how much to other factors that had to do more with her life in Uruguay with her particular situation, because in it, in the relationship with food is, is very clear, isn't it? The, the, the, the link with that previous experience? What other things in her relationship with her children by you later when you told me that you understood how they bonded, what other things did you see that were directly related to her experience in the holocaust?

### **Giovanna**

Or to her experience of her passage, right? Through Siberia, etc., at a very young age, no?

**Eva**

Education, in general, we receive. The lack of affection, the emptiness.

**Giovanna**

When you referred to education, to what specific aspects?

**Eva**

Discipline.

**Giovanna**

Discipline. How did, how did your mom discipline you and your brother?

**Eva**

Very strong.

**Giovanna**

With physical punishment?

**Eva**

Yes.

**Giovanna**

And that's something she had experienced as a child at home?

**Eva**

I think she did. She believed that we would be what she couldn't be. She wanted to be an archaeologist.

**Giovanna**

And that's why she encouraged studies?

**Eva**

Totally.

**Giovanna**

She told you that it was important to study, and so on. And then however, when you finished, she supported you during the time you were studying for your degree?

**Eva**

No, she wanted it to be something else.

**Giovanna**

What did she want you to study?

**Eva**

Law, or medicine

**Giovanna**

Physical education did not seem to her

**Eva**

No, no, no

**Giovanna**

that, it didn't seem valuable, or important

**Eva**

I didn't know what to do and I was good at sports, so I got the chance to be a physical education teacher.

**Giovanna**

If you had a final message, Eva, for, again, for the people who are going to listen to this there, a message that is very, very resonant with what you said that at least in the case of your mom, you feel that, that she couldn't be a mother, that she wasn't ready to be a mother because of what happened to her?

**Eva**

No, she wasn't ready.

**Giovanna**

A consequence of what happened to her.



**Eva**

Who is ready? No one, there's not a school that prepares mothers to be mothers.

**Giovanna**

But in your mom's case, you believe her experience scarred her in a particular way.

**Eva**

Yes, of course.

n a particular/special way..."