Deena Gerber Transcript

Rosalind Hinton: This is Rosalind Hinton interviewing Deena Gerber at Jewish Family Services, which is 3330 West Esplanade, Suite 600, Metairie, LA. Today is Tuesday, December 12th, 2006. I'm conducting the interview for the Katrina's Jewish Voices project of the Jewish Women's Archive, and the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish life. Deena, do you agree to be interviewed, and understand that the interview will be video recorded?

Deena Gerber: Yes, I do.

RH: Why don't we begin with your background, when your family came to New Orleans, and your education and your Jewish education?

DG: OK. I was born in New Orleans. My father was from Lithuania, and emigrated from Lithuania to Mexico, and then in, I think, 1939, came to New Orleans. He had an uncle in New Orleans, that's why he came to New Orleans, and his uncle actually took him into his business, which was the fur business. And then when World War II came, he enlisted in the army, and he was in the infantry. And after the war, GIs were given first dibs at buying excess surplus material, and so my father and his cousin bought up all these plumbing supplies, and my father then went down to Mexico to sell them. That's what he did for a little business, and there he met my mother, who was a schoolteacher, from New York, and she was there on vacation, and they got married shortly after that, and that's how my mother moved to New Orleans. My mother -- she was born in Poland, but she moved to New York -- her parents emigrated to New York when she was an infant, and so she really grew up in New York City. I was born here, grew up here, I went to public schools--

RH: What part of town did you live in?

DG: We always lived by the lake.

RH: Oh really?

DG: Yeah, it's interesting, the house I had lived in when I was little bitty, has already been demolished, when I went by to see it -- it was on Fillmore Avenue and it was demolished. And then, when I was eight, my parents moved to Lake Shore, and my mother lived in that house until the storm. This year will be fifty years that she -- fifty years ago they bought that house. It was built -- it was the first part of that subdivision that was built, and it was before there was a levee, so her block is 13 feet above the street to keep from flooding. And the truth is, one block over, the Robert E. Lee shopping center, they had 11 feet of water, and she had not a drop in her house.

RH: I know exactly what you're talking about.

DG: But then, as the levees got built a few years later, the houses were -- the blocks were not raised, because it's a slab house, it's not a raised house, it's a slab house. But the whole block is raised. So as a kid, it was a lot of fun.

RH: So they were thinking about the water, when they designed the house.

DG: Oh absolutely. Yeah, as a kid it was fun to ride my bike, or my skates down the driveway, because it's really pretty steep.

RH: What was it like to just live in that neighborhood, growing up?

DG: It was a brand new neighborhood -- in some ways, it looks very similar now with lots of empty lots. There were always empty lots for us to play on. It was a nice neighborhood -- I mean, it wasn't where the Jewish community lived, and I always felt I sort of lived away from them. But, it was a brand new area -- my parents were the first people to buy their house, and... you know, it was nice; there was a shopping center

nearby, there was a grocery store there, and even when I was nine or ten, you know, I'd have to go to the grocery and get milk for the house, I could walk to the grocery, and it's a very nice neighborhood. It really -- was. And it still is.

RH: Did you go uptown for the synagogue?

DG: Yeah, my family was not at all involved in synagogue life when I was growing up. Just wasn't where their interests were. But -- and I went to school in Lakeview. My mother was a teacher, and she taught at the school that I went to. So, we went to school every day together. And then for junior high school, I already then went uptown to McMahon -- my parents felt that I should go to school with more Jewish kids. So, and then for high school, I went to Fortier.

RH: So, did you join some of the Jewish sororities, or things like that?

DG: In high school? In high school, yeah -- actually I was very active in Young Judea in high school. Very active in that, and that was really where I felt I belonged, I was president of my youth group. I'd go to the conventions out of town over holidays, and I went to their summer camp; I was very taken with their philosophy. But I think more so -- the philosophy came along; they had a specific idea about leadership training, and that even in high school we would be the leaders of the younger kids, and it was very much a peer-led organization. I liked that a lot. I also belonged to BBYO, and then I belonged to the high school sorority for a short period of time, but really my heart lay in Young Judea. And then, when I graduated college, I went to Boston University for undergraduate work, and I spent my junior year of college in Israel -- it was two semesters in those days, actually, I left in August, and I returned in August -- I returned to the United States the weekend of Camille. And I remembered getting to the airport in New York, and they said, "You're not flying to New Orleans today, there's a big hurricane coming." (laughter) And, then I worked in New York for a year after I graduated, and I was a secretary, in a private school, the lower school secretary in a private school. But the job really wasn't for me --

I'm a terrible speller. (laughter) I really am, and certainly in days before Spell Check, it was really an obstacle in being a secretary, so I ended up coming back home and going to social work school at Tulane. And I graduated social work school, and got married, and have been here ever since.

RH: What's your neighborhood, pre-Katrina, what was that like? Where you lived with your family?

DG: Well, I never really moved too far. I ended up moving to the other side of Canal Boulevard, we bought a house in East Lakeshore, which is really just about a mile from my mother's house. And it was a nice neighborhood, lawns -- a very manicured neighborhood, the neighborhood was really developed, maybe in the late 50's, but really more like a 60's neighborhood. And, I really didn't know my -- I mean, I knew my neighbors on both sides, but it wasn't like I knew all the people on my block or it was real neighborhood-y. And I moved in and had young children, so you would... there were a lot of older people on my block; there really weren't that many kids at all, there were very few people our age. But it was a very safe neighborhood, used to walk the dog, I don't know, as she got older and needed to go out, you walk her at one or two in the morning and never felt the least bit unsafe about it. And it was a very -- it was a pretty neighborhood; we never, ever flooded. You know, like during any of the May floods, my neighborhood never flooded. And I had a nice house, and I had redone things, and it was pretty. I was pleased with how it looked.

RH: Could you describe the Lakefront culture? Is it a kind of person that lives there, as opposed to Uptown?

DG: Well, it's one of -- yeah, it certainly is. I mean, it is, has always been the Republican stronghold of the city. And, pre-Katrina, my neighborhood was I think 99% white. (pause)

RH: Seems like it was a lot of the Lakefront area, too, is a pretty strong Jewish population?

DG: Yeah, there were quite a few Jewish people who lived on my street. I mean, there were -- on my block, besides us, there was one, two... maybe four or five other Jewish -- out of eighteen households, maybe five, or out of eighteen households, maybe six.

RH: So do you think that Jewish people who lived on the Lakefront were more Republican?

DG: Probably not... I don't know, I mean, I wasn't. I don't think so, I think it was -- I know--

RH: That would be anecdotal. (laughter)

DG: I think actually we moved there because we were looking for a house uptown and we really just couldn't afford what we wanted. It was less expensive, and we thought about moving to Metairie, but... actually, a specific house just came on the market, and it was that or Metairie, and we bought it because my husband was working downtown at the time, and I was working downtown, and it's certainly much closer to downtown than moving out to Metairie. It seemed less of a commute than going out to Metairie.

RH: How did you get involved in the Jewish communal services life?

DG: It was -- really just luck. What happened was, I was working -- older adults were always my primary interest, and I was working for an extended care facility. And the facility was sold -- it's right next door to Touro, and it was sold -- it was no longer an extended care facility, and it became a psychiatric hospital. And -- so I didn't want to work in that set-- I didn't want to do psychiatric hospital work. But working in extended care facility, I knew people who worked in nursing homes. And, so I took a job in a nursing home, and through that job I ended up getting a job at Willow Wood, the Jewish

nursing home at the time. I mean, there was several jobs in that succession. And then, when I got pregnant with my first child, I was looking for a part-time job, and I was talking to the woman who was the older adult worker at Jewish Family Service, and she said, "Well, I'm leaving, and it's a part-time job, do you think you might want to apply for it?" And that's how I got here.

RH: My word!

DG: Yeah. (laughter)

RH: You worked your way up. (laughter)

DG: Yes... (laughter) Yes. Well, I was part time until I came director. I was here on and off, and part time. I took about a five year hiatus when I had little children.

RH: What is the center of your family's Jewish life?

DG: My husband is much more of a synagogue-goer than I am. And he really took over the religious education of my children. And I would probably say my children probably thought they had a pretty religious education, I mean, they went to Sunday school, and Hebrew school, and Jewish summer camps.

RH: And, where are you affiliated?

DG: Oh, Shir Chadash, which is a Conservative synagogue.

RH: And, did they go to Camp Jacob?

DG: No, they ended up going to Camp Judea, the Young Judea camp, in North Carolina.

RH: Do you have any reasons why you picked that, or --

DG: No... well, I mean, they had friends who were going there, and it's sponsored by Young Judea, and that's the youth group I had been involved with in high school, and I liked their philosophy, and... my oldest son had gone to Jacobs one year, and... I don't know, he just didn't have a great experience, I think he was probably really too young, I shouldn't have sent him that way, I think he was too young to go away. But then he ended up going to Camp Judea because a friend went, and so my other kids went too.

RH: What's it like to be Jewish in New Orleans?

DG: I mean, it's pretty easy, you know -- I never experienced antisemitism... I never experienced it; if it was there, it just sort of went right over my head. In my grammar school, I was the only Jewish kid who I knew -- I was usually the only Jewish kid in my class, so I thought whatever my mother did, that other parents didn't do, it was because we were Jewish. (laughter) My mother used to line the pans with tin foil. And I used to think that that's what she did because she was Jewish. No, she just didn't want to scrub the pans (laughter), she didn't want the pans to get baked on.

RH: It's her own version of kashrut. (laughter)

DG: (laughter) Well, I don't know about that -- I mean, I never grew up in a kosher house. Although, my father was certainly Eastern European, and had an accent. So... and all their friends were Jewish. You know, it was -- I don't know, it's just the way I grew up, you know... I didn't feel excluded from anything, there was nothing that I wanted, or any group of friends that I wanted that I felt excluded from, or anything. Because of religion, certainly.

RH: Right, okay. What kind of encapsulates New Orleans for you? Like a vivid memory, or something that can kind of describe, or be a symbol to you?

DG: I think New Orleans for me was always an easy life. When I moved to New York, my father really didn't want me to live in New York. And what he told me, he said "Come

back to New Orleans. It's better to be a big fish in a small pond, than a small fish in a big pond." And, I think that that's -- ended up being true. You know, you could have traffic, but it wasn't like New York traffic, or Los Angeles traffic at the time, or now, Atlanta traffic. I mean, you know, it's an easier life -- it's a 20 minute city. You know, there were real problems there, but, it was an opportunity. I feel for my kids, while education was -- has real problems, for whatever reason, my kids really had wonderful educations here, in both public and private schools. You know, there's no great Jewish education. But my kids learned as much as anybody else. You could rise within organizations, you didn't have to be that wealthy. (pause) So, I guess that's what I think of it -- that's what I liked about New Orleans.

RH: Well, I guess now, we can kind of talk about the Katrina event, and kind of think about how New Orleans has changed. Easy is not how I would describe it anymore, (laughter).

DG: Uh, no.

RH: But talk a little bit about when you became aware of Katrina, and where you were.

DG: OK. That Friday night, we had company in from out of town, a friend of ours was visiting. And we were watching the ten o'clock news. Oh no, the first thing that happened was that Friday, we're getting ready to leave work, and one of the therapists came to me and said, "Deena, are we going to be open on Monday?" And I really never liked people who were weather-worriers. And I said to Meredith, "It'll be evident if we're open Monday." Thinking that of course we're going to be open Monday! And Friday night I saw on television, I said, "Well, you know, it's not coming here." Saturday morning I went to a Zen meditation class on the other side of the river, on the West Bank. It was the first time I had been to a Zen meditation class, and as I'm coming back, the tolls were taken off on the bridge, and there was a little sign that said, "No tolls due to hurricane." And I said to my friend who was my houseguest at the time, "Well, look at that! I better

go get gas in the car." And we went to the gas station, there was this huge line -- it must have been about noon on Saturday. It was a huge line getting gas. And I said, "Well, OK, I'm going to wait in the line and get gas, because the pumps go down." And I went -- and I decided to turn on the radio, and I went home and I turned on the TV. And actually, what got me to leave, was, there was a news conference with Nagin, and Blanco, and -- I forgot who else, other officials. And it was actually Nagin, when he said, "This is the time to get out." And he said something that really got to me -- he said, "If you live next door to an old person, go and tell them, they might not have their television on. That this is really going to be the bad one. It's really going to be bad." And just, something about his demeanor on television really made me feel that, oh, this is going to be bad. And the year before, with Ivan, was the first time I had ever evacuated. I had never, ever evacuated before. And when Ivan came, we were -- it took us seven hours to get to Slidell. And I just said, "I'm not -- I don't want to do that again. We really have to leave a little earlier." So -- I guess it was about noontime, I decided that I wanted to get everybody to evacuate. But then I had to convince everybody -- I mean, my husband didn't want to evacuate; I had to find him, he was out doing whatever he was doing, and I had to find him. And at that time, there was also my mother and my mother-in-law here, and my mother was 91, and my mother-in-law was 88, and I thought, "We really should leave, because if this is going to be so bad we won't have electricity for a few days." And the storm before Ivan, I think was George or something, my mother -- we lost electricity, and my mother really had like a heat stroke, and it was -- it was really pretty scary. And I didn't want that to happen again. So, I couldn't find my mother-in-law, I couldn't find my mother, and nobody wanted to evacuate, I had to convince everybody that we should, and I also had -- so, it was my husband and myself; I had two sons living here at the time -- grown sons, adult sons. And, my mother and my mother-in-law. And to convince them all -- and I said, "Let's just go to Atlanta," because my grandson -- another son and my grandson live in Atlanta, "And we'll go see the baby." The baby was five months old at the time. "We'll go see the baby." And also, I was also concerned that the Monday --

that Tuesday, the day after the hurricane actually hit, I was supposed to fly out Monday night, because my son was having knee surgery, and I was going to go help with the baby; I said, "Well, if it's such a bad hurricane, the airport might be closed." So, you know, we all left, we took two cars, with our three days of clothing, and we drove to Birmingham, because one of the -- I told my mother-in-law, I said, “Oh, we'll go through Birmingham,” and then she could see her brother, who had been ill. Anyway, we couldn't get a hotel reservation in Montgomery. I didn't -- I thought it would be really difficult for them to drive, my mother and my mother-in-law, to really go the whole way, because I was really expecting it would take us a long time to get out. Maybe not seven hours, but a long time to get out. We left at 7:00 at night -- no traffic. No traffic. The contra flow was already in effect. And we went up to Birmingham and spent the night in Birmingham, and then went on to Atlanta the next morning.

RH: So you stayed with your son?

DG: No, no, no, we stayed in a hotel. He had made reservations for us -- he doesn't have a, he has a small house, so we... and, my middle son, his fiancé was in Miami at a wedding, so she joined us then, instead of flying back -- she was supposed to fly back to New Orleans on Sunday, and so instead she flew to Atlanta. So we were staying in a hotel, a Holiday Inn Express, you know where he lives, and watched it on TV. Unbelievable.

RH: So, talk about what you saw on TV, and how...

DG: I just couldn't believe it. I mean, you know, the Holiday Inn Expresses, they have this little area with the television, and breakfast comes with, you know, one of those toaster breakfasts that come with your meal, and -- I just couldn't believe it, but actually, the worse day -- that Tuesday, my son had the surgery in Atlanta, and I'm in the waiting room of the hospital, and it's on television. And I just could not believe what was happening. I couldn't believe it. (pause)

RH: Were you like wanting to tell everybody else in the waiting room?

DG: Oh, I did, I did. And the looting, and the chaos that was happening. It made me so sad.

RH: Were you concerned about your house?

DG: No. I didn't in a million years think that I would flood.

RH: Even after they started to show parts of the city?

DG: Yeah. Yeah. I didn't think I'd flood. But I was very consumed with watching television, and being online, and on, you know, e-mailing people; I guess it was by Wednesday, when we thought that maybe we wouldn't go back for months or something like that. Or right -- I don't remember exactly the timeline now, but I wondered if I had flooded -- I really didn't think about if I had flooded or not. I really didn't think about it that much. I live across the street from the attorney general, of Fody. And I had seen something online about his office put out a bulletin. And they gave an email address for his office. So my husband said, "Email him, and see what he knows about our house." So I just sent an email to this general office address, and I said I live across the street from Mr. Fody, does he know what happened to our block? Tell him it's Deena Nabe Gerber. So the next day I got an email back from his office, (laughter), and he certainly knew what had happened, and he said that we got a little water, but our neighborhood was really OK. And then of course the aerial pictures came, and people told you how to-- by the time I saw aerial pictures, my neighborhood was not flooded, but I could see that it had been flooded. People told me that -- we have a pool -- that if the -- that if you could see the pool, the outline of the pool, you weren't flooded, but if the pool looked black, it meant you were flooded. And that's exactly how my pool looked.

RH: How about your children and your mother and your mother-in-law?

DG: Well, by the Thursday after the storm, when we realized we weren't going back in three days, my mother-in-law left Atlanta and went out to Colorado where her daughter lives. And my husband and I and my mother, we got an apartment really near my son's house. My youngest son moved into my oldest son's house -- the one with the small house. And my middle son had just gotten engaged the month before. So I said, "Oh, well you know, you're already in Atlanta, we're not going back for a week or two" -- this is what I thought -- "Why don't you all go up to New Jersey and make the plans for the wedding? And you can, you know, take care of those kinds of things," because the wedding was scheduled for October of '06, and, you know, they could go look at places, and do that kind of stuff. And so they went up to -- they drove, you know you're a third of the way there, in Atlanta, and we -- we drove out in two cars, so he had his car, and we had our car. And, so they drove up to New Jersey, and stayed there, I guess for about a week and a half. And then, both of them, they were really lucky, they're both attorneys, and they both had the option of going to Dallas, for -- and working out of Dallas. And they stayed in Dallas -- my, she's now my daughter-in-law, until Thanksgiving, and my son until February.

RH: Well, it sounds like you just kind of took it in stride, in some ways.

DG: Well, you just look and see what happens, I felt like it would unfold. I mean, right away, I was talking with people from the office; the -- I got calls from Association of Jewish Family and Children Service. And, from the Atlanta Jewish Family Service. So, I started getting into that circle about what to do. I can't exactly remember when that -- it was before Labor Day, that I got my first call -- the bookkeeper here called and said, "What are we going to do about payroll?" Because, you know, payroll was supposed to go out at the end of the month. And we do payroll internally here. And I was very anxious to get people paid, because either the world was coming to an end, and everybody needed their money for the last few days, or the world wasn't coming to an end, and everybody needed their money. But we couldn't access the computer, and we

couldn't -- and Whitney, we do it with Whitney Bank, and one of the things they learned, their New Orleans office, their New Orleans system got shut down. She evacuated to Lafayette, and walked into the Whitney Bank, and said who she was, she showed her business card, and then there was a call at that time while she was there from the guy who we happen to deal with here. And so she talked to him, and he vouched that she was who she said she was, and -- so, it was sort of consuming, but that we got out checks to people, I mean, the Whitney Bank was wonderful, and we ended up sending cashiers' checks to people. Well -- so then, I got online, and I said, "I need to send out checks to everybody -- if you hear from anybody, who's ever email address I did have, I contacted, and pretty soon, everybody contacted me about where to send their checks. That got everybody in touch, but I was talking to people, all the time.

RH: Are there any other people you were trying to find, through the storm friends, housekeeper, anything like that?

DG: We actually emailed -- there was really nobody we were really worried about after a few days. We really heard from everybody, even people who had stayed, we knew that they were OK. Email was really a godsend. And, I sent out an email to everybody, almost everybody in my address book -- I had a Yahoo! account, so, sent out an email to everybody that just set, "The Gerbers are OK, we're in Atlanta, and who came out?" You know, we were together, and I heard from almost everybody immediately.

RH: So, you started to get into work mode, what... what was your thinking, what was happening then?

DG: Well, I was -- you know, that the agency had to respond, you know, it -- we had a... I didn't know what was going to happen, but I knew that I had to get to work. And part of it was getting out this payroll, that -- just was lots of phone calls, I mean, they wanted to help us, but they needed to know we were who we said we were, and -- so there were lots of faxes going back and forth. And people were coming to Atlanta, and I guess

Federation doing their -- I felt I needed to do something in Atlanta for the New Orleans people, that I was the outpost there -- I wasn't going to Houston, or anything -- and talk to the people from Federation, just sort of trying to get people in touch with each other. Our Lifeline program, I was very concerned about our Lifeline program with our elderly people.

RH: So explain that to me.

DG: It's an electronic emergency response system where you push a button and it goes into a call center, and it's a very frail group of clients that we have. What would happen with the system, and I got... oh, I know. Our office email was up, too, the whole time. So I could check it from wherever, from Atlanta, and that's also how I got in touch with people -- people from work, they would just -- or from national organizations, I don't know if you're checking your email or not, but get in touch with this, and from Lifeline systems they contacted me. And we decided that -- I mean, they were wonderful. They did not turn off the system at all. Of course, it doesn't work if you don't have electricity, and if don't have a telephone, but for whoever did have it, they kept it on the whole time.

RH: So like if you got to another city, and you had electricity --

DG: No, you, you --

RH: -- Or it sort of had to be in the locale in New Orleans.

DG: Yeah -- I mean, if somebody took their unit with them. They were wonderful when people called up the Lifeline company and said, "You know, I left my home, I left everything, and my mother doesn't have her Lifeline," they sent them a unit. They sent them a new unit. We lost actually, of our, about 400 units, about 160 were lost to the flood, were in homes that were destroyed, in Lakeview, Chantilly, Ninth Ward.

RH: So, this program, like a lot of your programs, isn't necessarily just the Jewish community?

DG: No, no. It's for the -- we're a United Way agency, and as such all of our programs are open to the entire community. All of our programs actually accept direct financial assistance.

RH: OK. So, you kind of noticed that other Jewish service people were in Houston, and Baton Rouge; you were here in Atlanta?

DG: Yeah. I talked to all the staff. I was talking to the staff all the time.

RH: OK -- how big is your staff here?

DG: It was 19 people before the storm. And I was talking to almost every - in fact, the first text message I ever got was from one of the clinicians -- I'm sitting in Walgreen's, in Atlanta. And all the sudden, my cell phone starts doing this strange thing, and I said (laughter), "Oh, I'm getting a text message." And this woman sitting next to me -- she was also from New Orleans. She calls over her son, and she goes, "You help this lady here, she doesn't know what to do with the text message." (laughter) And, so I had really -- because she had lived in Saint Bernard Parish and I knew that that was really very flooded. And through the text messaging, she was OK.

RH: Did a lot of your staff lose their homes?

DG: Out of a staff of 19, three returned to their homes.

RH: Only three returned?

DG: Mm-hm.

RH: Wow. So, it was pretty devastating to your staff?

DG: Yeah. Pretty devastating to the staff. Some people lost everything, we had three who really lost everything, and the rest were people like me -- I certainly didn't lose everything at all. But I was out of my house for 15 months.

RH: What part of the Jewish community did you start to connect to in Atlanta?

DG: I encouraged -- and they wanted to do it too -- Federation had their email listserv up and running real early. So, the Federation in Atlanta did a brunch -- they sent out an email and there a brunch on, I guess it was the Sunday after Labor Day, at the JCC. And there were a lot of people there. A lot of people who I knew.

RH: Do you know when that was?

DG: Was it the Sunday after Labor Day? Or the Sunday after that, I'm not sure.

RH: OK, in September.

DG: In September, yeah. And I saw people who had been clients, I saw people who had been donors, you know -- it was really, it was wonderful seeing people. You know, it really -- there was a very special moment about those times, of really connecting with people, and feeling very warmly.

RH: A little less isolated.

DG: Oh, yeah, seeing people... and, I was very, very anxious to get back to New Orleans, and see what had happened to my house. And so, we ran into somebody there who we know who knew a policeman who we would be able to get in with, because you couldn't get in at that time. And, you know, so we made connections like that. And sure enough, when we came home -- I think it was like 15th or 16th of September, and this policeman met us, and brought us into the city, and --

RH: Really?

DG: Yeah.

RH: So, did you just come for a look?

DG: I had to come and see what happened.

RH: What did you think about when you saw it?

DG: Oh, it was unbelievable. I just couldn't believe it.

RH: Some of the city must have still be underwater.

DG: No, no. It was -- the east was still underwater. And the Ninth Ward was still underwater. But Lakeview was already dry. And Uptown was dry. It was just unbelievable. The streets in Lakeview, but most of the streets were cleared, or at least the main thoroughfares were cleared. And went to my house, and saw that I had flooded, and I was -- this friend, who had been the house guest that weekend, went with us, because she was living in Atlanta, and we picked up her son, and a friend of his, and we came in and we took out the carpets from my house, and took out the furniture, and got the walls opened up. Because I read that that's what you were supposed to do.

RH: You mean kind of take the sheetrock out?

DG: Yeah, yeah.

RH: -- and get to the studs?

DG: Yeah, yeah.

RH: So, how much -- you had, how much water?

DG: Six inches of water in the house.

RH: And, it didn't sit?

DG: It did not sit, no, it was in, and out. I think -- people have told me that maybe there was water in it for a day, max.

RH: Huh.

DG: I'm really very high. I knew I was high, because I paid -- I was in a low flood insurance rate. And we drove -- our cars were fine -- at that trip, we drove out -- there were three other cars that we had here. And we drove out all the cars, and brought them back to Atlanta.

RH: How long did you stay?

DG: We ended up staying with some friends -- we couldn't stay in New Orleans. Well, first of all, I had no electricity, and no water, and no (laughter) -- no anything. But we stayed with a friend in Metairie -- no, I don't even want to say that -- we stayed with somebody who I knew, for three days, and brought five houseguests to this person, and we stayed there (laughter), and we stayed for three days. And by that time already we had opened up the office in Baton Rouge. And then I went to Baton Rouge, and I found out very quickly that this building -- that our office was OK. I didn't know how OK it was, but that this office was OK. And I came up to the office.

RH: Is there anything you needed to get?

DG: Yeah, the checks.

RH: (laughter)

DG: I needed to get the checks to do the next payroll. And, some other... I mean, I saw that it was really OK, I knew we would come back soon.

RH: So, did you go up to Baton Rouge at that point?

DG: Yeah, I went to Baton Rouge at that point, and Anne Freedman had already opened the office with the help of United Jewish Communities, and Association of Jewish Family Service, and the Rabbi there, she had opened the office, and people were coming in, and at that time we were giving out gift cards that people were sending, and we were also just talking to people. People needed to talk and tell their story. Everybody needed to talk. It was a very different kind of social work.

RH: So tell me about that a little bit.

DG: In some ways the hurricane was a leveler. And it seems so unbelievable and so unreal, that people had to talk about it. It was also a leveler, that you had the therapist-client relationship was something totally different. I mean, as the therapist, you had to be present, and listen to people, and use all your skills, but you could also commiserate, in a way that you can't really otherwise. And also, it's just not appropriate otherwise. I mean -- you had to know what happened to the other person, too. You wanted to know.

RH: So you had to share.

DG: You had to share. (pause) So I went up to Baton Rouge, and stayed in Baton Rouge a few days. My husband, who had come -- his office, also, was fine -- he went up to his office, and checked on things, and it was fine.

RH: He's an attorney?

DG: He's an attorney, right. His records got all flooded, because they were in another -- in a storage unit, that the roof came off. So they -- all got mushed. But, his office was fine, and then he drove one of the cars back -- you know, we had to have drivers, to drive all the -- our friend drove a car back, and Abe drove a car back, and, I guess, David drove a car back. And I had our car back -- we had taken -- I stayed here another day,

and worked here in the office, just trying to check messages, and... the telephone worked. This building was not touched. The other buildings in this complex were. But this one wasn't.

RH: Interesting.

DG: You know how it was a little hard to find? Well, the wind didn't find it either -- that building that's in front of us, sort of shielded us.

RH: So that the wind kind of came right off the lake?

DG: Yeah.

RH: Hit it first, instead of this one.

DG: Right. I mean, they had terrible damage. Windows blown out, offices got soaking wet from -- the windows. Mine was just the way I left it that Friday.

RH: Really? Because you have a corner office, so --

DG: Yeah, yeah.

RH: That might have been surreal, to see, just to --

DG: It was! The best thing about it, was, actually, it was the only place that I knew in the area that didn't smell.

RH: (laughter)

DG: It wasn't moldy. (laughter) I used to come here just to breathe.

RH: Wow. So, did you help set the office up in Baton Rouge, or did you --?

DG: No. Anne did it with Sandy Levy -- Sandy was really instrumental in getting it all together, she really is a mover, in getting it all together, and Anne was too. When I got there it was already done. And we had talked a lot on the phone about what would be the parameters of our service, and what would we do, and I sent out an email to the staff about we needed another person there. And Sarah Keith responded that she would come. I mean, she had an aunt who lived in Baton Rouge, so she could stay with her aunt, and... It was interesting -- the two people who really worked there the most were the people who lost everything.

RH: Is that right? Which is Anne --

DG: Anne Friedman, and Sarah Keith.

RH: Hm. Wow.

DG: And they really worked hard, and got that office up. But I was -- I must have... I came, I was there that week, and then I came back a couple weeks -- a week later, we came back a couple weeks. And I actually moved back to New Orleans around October 7th, came back with a-- that's when we moved back here.

RH: What's it like to try to run an agency for a population that's scattered all over the country?

DG: (pause) You know, you can't -- I didn't really think about that. I just thought, OK, who's going to present themselves, can we reach out to people, and let people know we're here, and just deal with it one step at a time.

RH: And so how did you decide to reach out to people?

DG: Well, what happened in this time is United Jewish Communities had collected money, and they -- there was a long process, but the decision was made that we would

give out grants of $700 to Jewish people who... who had suffered a loss due to the hurricane. They didn't have to be their last penny, they didn't have to prove need. I really saw it almost as an entitlement. That if you went through this... so, we had $700 to give out, and the word spread fast, and we were busy here... unbelievable. And people who didn't know where to turn... and what I think I'm the most proud of in our reaction, is that we really just didn't give out the money. When someone would come to apply, they would really have a session, and could talk about what happened.

RH: So this was here in New Orleans?

DG: In New Orleans. And we'd process them from other places, if people were other places, they could get it too. I mean, you had to say, that I need this money, I lived in New Orleans, I suffered a loss, and I need it.

RH: So how many staff did you have?

DG: By October, I said -- we paid everybody through September. We get paid twice a month, on the 15th and the end of the month. So we paid everybody through September, and I said, "We've got to come back to work on the -- that Monday." I think I said 10th, the 10th of October I think. Or Tuesday, I think maybe we opened on a Tuesday. I said, "We've got to be back here on Tuesday if we want to get, you know, the next check." And everybody -- not everybody came back, at that time -- some people didn't. But whoever could, came. It was really an emotional meeting. We met in this room, and I thought, well, we really should touch base with each other before we just get back to work, and instead of taking what I thought might be an hour meeting, we stayed here I think until 1:00, and everybody just had to tell their story about where they were, what they did. All of the staff got out in time. (pause)

RH: So, they all evacuated?

DG: Mm-hm. They all evacuated.

RH: We've learned that 90% of New Orleans did evacuate.

DG: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I think that that was really remarkable.

RH: So, you were able to kind of do a one on one session with each person who came in?

DG: With every single person. Hundreds of people. Every staff person -- I mean, every clinician, that's what they did -- and, I had three volunteers, who were all social workers. Well, one was a past employee here -- and all people who I knew, and whose work I knew. And -- so they came and they helped.

RH: Did you guys have a discussion about what you were -- how you would manage people as they came in -- I mean, what you would talk about, or you just knew?

DG: Well, everybody was a professional, so we talked about, you know, see what they need, you got about half an hour with them. I mean, can't really stay longer than a half an hour. And, you know, just try to -- see if they have any other needs, that we can help them with.

RH: Can you kind of, tell us what -- since you had your finger on the pulse, in some ways, of the community, what were some of the things that were their concerns?

DG: Where they would live, how they would live. I think it was very, you know, sort of like Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it was really there at that basic level. Nobody was living -- nobody was living in their previous living arrangements. Those people whose houses were OK, had other people living with them. I had said -- I remember thinking at the time, "Now I know what the saying 'a sight for sore eyes' is." Because it was so good to see people, and hug people. And it wasn't this peck on the cheek, it was like these hugs that you gave people. And I used this phrase several times, and people would always say, "Oh, that makes me feel good." So what's your plan d'jour? You know,

because you -- everyone would come and say, “Oh, my son here, or I need to make a plan, I can't make a plan;” so just, “What's the plan d'jour? And tomorrow you'll have another plan. And you can't make more of a plan than today.” You know, people were coming in, looking at their houses, see what was left. Where are they going to move, where are they going to stay. What could they salvage. Getting a pod. (pause)

RH: Getting a FEMA trailer?

DG: Well, this was even before FEMA trailers were really coming down. To see what they could do. What was the lay of the land here?

RH: Is there anything that surprised you?

DG: (pause) In some ways, the whole thing surprised me. What is it when a whole community just is washed away? It was -- there were things that were nice, how everybody sort of pulled together. It was really nice to be part of the Jewish community -- it really was. I felt very special. I felt... relieved. I don't know that other groups had that kind of support. I really don't know, maybe they did and I just don't know about it. But, there was support being -- you want to move to Kansas City, you want to move here... ? People wanted to help. It was so weird when people would offer to give you things. I remember when I was in Atlanta, you know, I bought things -- you know, I certainly wasn't -- my credit card would work. But somebody said, "What do you need?" And I said, "You know, I need old towels. Not new ones, old ones, so that I can just put things someplace." And, it was so weird taking -- and then, people would call up wanting to give donations, or things... I fielded a lot of calls in those days. It was nice how much people really -- I really understand... I guess, what surprises me now, is what it really means to give to others in need, and I understand it in a new way. And I'll only give money, not things.

RH: Let's take a short break here.

DG: OK.

END OF PART 1

RH: ... interviewing Deena Gerber. And you were just talking about, that you've kind of gained a new meaning of what it is to give. And, I'd like you to elaborate a little bit on

how you would only give money. What do you mean?

DG: Well, first of all, I know when people send stuff, some people send really nice stuff, and some people really just get rid of what they had. How hard it is to manage stuff, to go through stuff, to organize it, to sort it, so that you can give it out. It really is -- I mean, we had stuff here that was just like -– this room that we're sitting in, was just piled with stuff. You know, it was just hard to get to it, hard to give it out, and I don't know that it went to those who really needed it. I also know... but some things were nice to get, you know, like last year at Chanukah time, they sent Menorahs. And that was really nice, because, I mean, I didn't have one, you know it was nice to have one. And, those things... but sometimes there's so much stuff that comes that the managing of it is really hard. Really hard.

RH: And did you find that people really could use really more just, the cash? Or the gift card?

DG: Yeah. The gift cards. Gift cards were the best.

RH: Oh yeah?

DG: Yeah. Or at least, in our community it was, because it's hard to take cash. Gift cards -- you know, you get a gift card for a present. You're used to getting that, for a gift for something. It was very -- hard, to be on the other end. It really is. In the March before the storm, we went on a mission to Cuba. And we had taken medical supplies to Cuba -- Jewish Family Service did a mission. And all the sudden I felt like I was those people in Cuba. It was very... weird. And I also learned what a burden it is to always be grateful. But you have to be, because really it's people's kindness, but sometimes it's just really hard to be grateful. I am grateful -- but to always express it.

RH: Can you give an example of something that--?

DG: People would come through, and, you know, or they would call, and -- they want to help, and you have to be grateful, because that's how people know that it's meaningful, but it's just -- sometimes your loss can get just... or at least, my loss would seem so overwhelming, that I'd just -- it was a lot to deal with people. Well-meaning people, who really wanted to know the real story. It was just hard.

RH: What did you end up losing at your house?

DG: The walls, the floors... the walls and the floors, the furniture. (pause) That's basically what I lost.

RH: Mm-hm. But you were out of your home for 15 months.

DG: For 15 months, yes.

RH: Where have you been living?

DG: I lived for a while at my son's apartment, and then at my mother's house -- it was not hurt. Because my mother moved to Atlanta in this. She did not return to New Orleans. Neither of my sons were back -- are back, and my mother isn't back. She's not coming back.

RH: Hmm. How does that feel?

DG: Well, it feels very weird. We took an apartment together in Atlanta where we stayed for -- well, we were actually there for six weeks, but we had the apartment for two months, and my youngest son who was living in New Orleans, when Abe and I came back here, he moved in the apartment with my mother, and this is how the community helped, and my mother said, “OK,” she was going to stay in Atlanta for a little while. People were extremely nice, and businesses were nice... like, we took this apartment in Atlanta, we didn't have to put down a deposit, we didn't have to sign a lease. I don't

know if they ran a credit check or not. My husband took care of that, so perhaps he signed it. But I don't know. But, we could just stay there month to month. And my mother thought, well, she'll stay in Atlanta a little bit longer until things got settled. And I went to Jewish Family Service and thought well, where would be a good place for my mother to live? At the time we thought, well maybe an apartment like near the JCC. But she went and looked at retirement communities, and she looked at a couple of them, and she actually moved into a beautiful place in Atlanta. A retirement -- it's a retirement community, but it's a 13 storey apartment building. And, she has her own apartment. And she has a kitchen, but she gets 30 meals a month included in her rent. So, she usually takes dinner every day.

RH: So, had she thought of doing that?

DG: Never! (laughter) Never, never in a million years. If you had told her on August 26th that she was going to move to Atlanta, she would have said you're nuts. (laughter)

RH: Or to an assisted living kind of a setup, or --?

DG: Well, you know, she was still living in the same house that she had lived in at the time for 48 years. And, it was getting -- there were some real problems with the house. It needed some work, plumbing work especially. And it was just too big of a thing. She had been thinking about, what was she going to do, how long could she live in her house? She was driving, up until then, you know, and how much longer could she really drive, and -- you know, those certainly were thoughts that she had talked about. You know, she had talked about places in New Orleans, about maybe Lambeth House, she had some friends who had moved there. Or Woldenberg, she knew people who had lived there. But she wasn't -- she said she just had too much stuff to think about moving.

RH: Well, how has your life changed in this past 15 months, because you've talked about some other friends, close friends, family, that have left?

DG: Well, certainly my family has shrunk; I had two sons, a mother, and a mother-in-law here, and now -- my mother-in-law came back in July. She stayed in Colorado until July. She lives in an apartment complex, and out of 300 apartments, nine have wind damage. And hers was one of those nine, and it really -- everything just takes a long time. But, so it wasn't ready until July and she came back in July. But --

RH: And your two sons?

DG: One stayed in Atlanta right away. He was supposed to be starting Loyola, getting a graduate degree at Loyola, and at the time if you were admitted to college or university in Louisiana, you could go anyplace. And he ended up going to Georgia State, and he liked it. He liked Atlanta. His apartment where he was living here had flooded, it was in the Broadmore area. And so, he didn't have an apartment to come back to. I mean, certainly under dire circumstances he could come and live with us, I mean, he could always -- but, you know, it was a...

RH: It was a moment to make a break.

DG: Yeah. And actually, people who he had gone to summer camp with, he connected with them in Atlanta, and he got -- somebody had a room in a house, and so he got an apartment there. Not an apartment, a room in a house. So he ended up staying there, and he's actually been a tremendous help to my mother. He's a very kind person, he has really been very supportive of my mother. And my other son, who's married and has a baby, has been supportive of my mother.

RH: And then the son who's -—

DG: Who got married, they... she had been in a -- when they came in and took out their car, her car -- she had parked her car at work, in a high-rise lot downtown, before she left. And when they came back to get it, on the way back to Dallas, she was in a bad car accident. And, seatbelts and airbags worked, and only her arm wasn't protected by the

seatbelt and the airbag, and it got just crushed. And she was in Natchitoches, and they took her to the hospital there, and they said that they couldn't do the surgery, so they had to take her by ambulance to Shreveport, and she had surgery on her arm, and had some tins and plates put in. And then -- so she was really pretty shaken from that. And, you know, the thought of going through more hurricanes and stuff... and then, they had had some bad experiences -- various bad experiences. She found it very depressing here. She found it very, very depressing to like come out to where we're living, and go out to Lakeview, and things like that. So, when they got married -- they got married in October, they lived here until October, and they got married in October, and then they decided to go to Argentina for four months, that life was short, so they're now six weeks into their Argentine experience, and then they're going to come back and they're going to live in the New York area. They've both taken the New York bar, so... so they've gone.

RH: They probably wouldn't be gone if not for the storm?

DG: Oh, I'd say it's probably a 50-50 chance, I don't know.

RH: So is that hard on you?

DG: Well, I certainly miss them. I mean, it's certainly -- makes my life smaller. You know, everybody's birthday, we'd get together, or an anniversary, you know, or -- so you have more people's birthdays to share, you get together more often.

RH: Right, right. So, were there any services that you've been to? Did you go to the High Holy Days last year in Atlanta, or here? I think you were probably back by then.

DG: Last... the first year after the storm, for high holy days, we actually went to Greensboro for Rosh Hashana, because my daughter-in-law is from Greensboro, and they do a baby blessing for any children that were born the previous year, so we went up to Greensboro for Rosh Hashana. That was weird, you know, you drive five hours to services, go to services -- well, no, we spent the night, went to services, and then drove

back that afternoon, to Atlanta. And then for Yom Kippur, we were in New Orleans already. Actually, when I opened up the office, I opened up between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, knowing that there were a lot of days off coming, because we were off for Shavuos, and Simchas Torah, and Shmini Atzeret. And I thought that it would be good to start, and yet for the staff to have lots of time off. You know, because you just needed time, so it was a good time to begin. So, I did chose that time.

RH: Kind of gather the community, but have a little space too.

DG: Right, right. Try to find where you're going to live. I mean, in those days it was really hard, because the grocery stores would close by five o'clock, you know, so few grocery stores were open... you know, it was really like living in a different world. There were no streetlights. When you would go into Orleans parish, it was black, and dark. You know, you had to drive with your brights on... it was really a different world. Of course, this year I was here.

RH: Did you go to -- did Shir Chadash have a service? Because they had damage -—

DG: Shir Chadash had a service on Yom Kippur -- yeah -- oh, and it was very interesting, because it had flooded, and the National Guard I think came in, and hosed down the cement. I mean, they took up the carpet -- I don't know who took up the carpets in the pews, I'm really not sure who did it. But I know they said the National Guard came in then and hosed it down, because the walls are brick. So they made it sanitary, and on the cement floor, they put up folding chairs. It was really very sort of touching and nice. A few friends had gotten together, and we went out all together to dinner, Andrea's did something, and the floors were cement.

RH: So you had your break-fast at Andrea's?

DG: No, this was right before. And then break-fast, they did -- somebody in the congregation flew in all this food from Houston, and they did it in the synagogue, the

break-fast -- with really good food. And that was very nice.

RH: About how many people, do you remember?

DG: I don't know, maybe there were 200? I don't know.

RH: That's a nice size.

DG: Yeah. I really have no idea.

RH: (laughter) It's a fog.

DG: Yeah. I mean, they certainly didn't have to open up the whole sanctuary, you know, it was just... I guess it was open because -- no, I think it was closed. But it was very nice, you know, really. It was very touching.

RH: What's been your most important work over the past 15 months?

DG: Probably just keeping the agency up and going. Providing, I think, support, for the staff, so that they can do their job. The staff -- everybody was fragile, everybody... you know. I think providing a place so that the staff could work without giving up, was what I did.

RH: Mm-hm. So, without giving up, that's pretty strong. It's like a lot of obstacles to do your job.

DG: Right.

RH: So you just try to get through as many of those, and make it as easy...

DG: Right, right.

RH: Can you name some of the obstacles?

DG: Well... I didn't press people to work as late. I did reduce some of the production requirements, because it was just impossible. I tried to make sure that, you know, let people know that it was OK if you had to go -—

RH: A little flex time? (laughter)

DG: Yeah, you just had to do it, I mean -- you know, those were the days that no matter what, you kept your cell phone on because if your insurance adjuster called, you went. (laughter) And, trying to make it so that it was as easy as possible. I didn't want the staff to quit -- to quit their jobs and go on to another job. (laughter) I really -- I wanted to keep it stable, I felt that that was really important. Trying to find new people, you know, for the slots that were open.

RH: Has it been hard to find people?

DG: I think I've been lucky and I've found really good people, but I certainly didn't have the number of applicants -- the number of good applicants that I'm used to having.

RH: Hm. And, you've worked with the elderly population, and some of the most vulnerable. I wonder if you could just talk a little bit about that, and, tell -—

DG: They really have it tough. I mean, we -- I'll never forget, a homemaker went to one client's home, and the client was on the floor. And, couldn't get through to 911. I mean, she tried on her cell phone, there was no land line at the time. And, she was just beside herself on what to do. She called the office, and we called 911, but this was Jefferson Parish, as opposed to Orleans Parish, and to patch through, and it took so long for emergency care to come, and then he -- he ended up passing away. You know, complications, and it's not to say that it wasn't his time anyway. We had clients who were in the hospitals and had to be evacuated, and were in the airport for days, and they didn't know where they were going until they got there. And coming back, their access to care, you know, emergency rooms are hardly viable options anymore. Their friends are gone,

and many of them feel very, very lonely and isolated. Much more so than before, and they don't know where they would go to start over.

RH: So, are there any new programs for mental health, or for outreach, or anything? Or, just trying to keep the things going?

DG: No, there's nothing... trying to keep going with what you have.

RH: You had good programs before, they were solid, and you just –-

DG: Yeah, I think we had very solid programs before. I think, in some ways, you could look and say we're doing the exact same thing that we were doing before, but in other ways, I think from where I sit, we are with a much more acute caseload than we were before. We're now, at this point, really bursting. Our people really are very, very full. And we do have to refer some of the clients out, people who call us for help, that we just can't help because we don't have the time. There's nobody here. I just had another turnover, and so she was winding down, and I finally hired somebody -- because I was looking for one thing, and when I couldn't find that, I hired something else -- I think I hired somebody very good, but it's not exactly replacing what I had. And, you know, so she starts next Monday, so we're down one social worker right now. People are calling all the time.

RH: Well, and that also means -- I'm sitting here at the Human Resource level -- you're having to shift job responsibilities, or change the focus a little to match the people, to -—

DG: Right, right.

RH: So, you're kind of, always thinking, I would think. (laughter)

DG: Oh yeah. I mean, I feel strongly that you have to go with people's -- with their strengths, I mean, you... I can't replace the person who left. I can only fill her job slot.

And, I think I got a wonderful person coming in, she comes with fabulous references, but she's a brand new social worker. And so, I can't expect her to know something that somebody with fifteen years of experience had done.

RH: What is your philosophy of management? How do you motivate your staff?

DG: I try to make expectations very clear and very concrete. And, then I try to find out what they're most passionate about, and help each person make that happen in their practice, or whatever their job responsibilities are, but I find I'm most successful when I'm very concrete, and I can say, I expect you to -- whether it's a social worker -- to have 24 kept appointments a week. Very concrete like that. I expect 20 Lifeline placements a month. I expect that our team suicide prevention program will be in 30 schools. The more concrete I can make those expectations, the easier it is for me.

RH: How has the teen population been?

DG: Like the adult, the problems are more severe. Cutting is a little deeper, anorexia is a little more prevalent. You know, whatever the problem was... in some ways, the problem –- you got to think about what happened, mentally, like what happened to the furniture. If your house flooded, and you came in, all the sudden your refrigerator was in the foyer. It's not that you didn't have a refrigerator before, it's just in the wrong place. And sort of like you had your problems before, but they were, to some extent, manageable. And now, they're really pressing in new ways. In our -- our adolescents, some of them don't have the parental involvement that they had before, just because their parents are so preoccupied. You know, and -- we're very full in our adolescent, and young adult population. But they don't want to talk about Katrina -—

RH: Is that right?

DG: They say, you know, OK, let's not talk about it -- I don't want to talk about it either. But whatever their problems are, you know -- we can look and see that it is exacerbated

by their problems at home. Living in a trailer. We have one kid, he's living in the house, his parents are living in the trailer... you know, he's not living like in a house that's all put together, or else his parents would be living there too.

RH: Right.

DG: People living with other family members, you know, we had a lot of that.

RH: Are there -- is there more poverty?

DG: Certainly people who were -- what has happened is rents have skyrocketed. And people who were living on fixed incomes are really -- I mean, they just can't make it. You know, you don't have hardly any five-, six hundred dollar a month apartments that are decent. New Orleans, I think, prior -- one of the things it had is low cost housing. Lots of low cost housing. And, that has made things harder for people. So I think certainly -- and then people having to replace everything. And even people who thought that they had gotten good insurance settlements, finding out that they weren't so great. Because costs have gone up so much. Construction costs.

RH: Are there some other problems that you might be able to tell me about, that I might not be aware of?

DG: Well, the real problems, I think, for many people, is housing, and where are they going to live. And then feeling uprooted. The intensity of problems. I may have said that before, I think that that's the big difference. People just feeling more on the edge; the lack of medical care. We had a client -- she was having active suicidal ideation, we convinced her to go the hospital. After three hours in the hospital of not being seen, she wanted to leave. The hospital didn't want her to leave, so got a physician's commitment ordered. So she couldn't leave, she would have been arrested if she left. After 30 hours, of not seeing anybody, we were finally able to intervene, and get her -- because the physician's commitment is 72 hours, but after 30 hours of not being seen -- they did take

away her meds, when she walked in, so she wasn't even given her regular meds... I mean, the lack of mental health options in this city... I know somebody else who's child was really having a crisis, and they really wanted to bring the child back here, and they called me, and I said, "Don't. Don't. Even if you get the child in a hospital right now, what's -- you can't get... there just isn't the mental health care. It is really, really a crisis."

RH: Is there anyplace to even put the mental health care, if you understand -- like if somebody gave you some money (laughter) for mental healthcare... ?

DG: Well, I think to recruit doctors, and to do some mental health clinics, and to increase the clinics that are around, and to bring more doctors here. It is -- I mean, this is really like a third world country when it's medical care. I mean, I'm sure you guys think about that too.

RH: Well, you talked to some doctors, and they're being under-utilized, because of the kind of doctors they are, and like pediatrics, there's only a third of the kids back, and... you know, it's kind of like in the wrong places or something, (laughter), that's part of it.

DG: Right, yeah. I mean, mental healthcare, there are just so few psychiatrists. And, I know my mother-in-law was telling me, her doctor left, and he referred all of his patients to someone else in his practice. And now just the other day, she got a letter that she's leaving and going to Houston. You know... primary care doctors.

RH: Really.

DG: Really hard. And, and the other help in the hospital -- you know, somebody here had surgery. And when she was ready to go up to a room, they brought her up to the room, and there were no sheets on the bed. It took hours for them to find sheets for the bed. Probably what had to happen is a wash had to get done, and there just weren't people to do it.

RH: So, you hear about these stories, from -- these are your clients, and then they come in, and –

DG: Staff.

RH: Staff, mm-hm. What has the Jewish community -- you started to talk about this a little bit -- what has it meant to you during this experience?

DG: Well, I think -- I think the national Jewish community put their arms around us and gave us a big hug. And it was a very warm feeling. Financially -- we are existing today, we are a resource, because of United Jewish Communities. Plain and simple. I was able to keep the staff together, keep going... you asked me, what's my philosophy? That you have enough money. And, I know that's my philosophy, but that's what the Jewish community did, so we're here for people. The generosity, of them. And, their generosity of spirit, and financially. I mean, eventually, we have to get back on our own. In the beginning, everyone would say, "We know that this is a marathon not a sprint." I think they just thought it was a 24 mile marathon, it's turning out to be 124 mile marathon! (laughter) And it's not a year, or two years, for the recovery. I think it, now people are talking about five to 10 years for the recovery. And I don't know what will happen to Jewish Family Service in the future. Where will we get the money to go? So many of our donors are no longer here.

RH: So where do you see the Jewish community right now, and where do you see some of the challenges?

DG: The Jewish community? I really believe that the Jewish community really just mirrors what's happening in the greater community. And, we're much smaller... what kind of economic opportunity -- today I was in an office building, and these two guys were in the elevator, and I have no idea what they did, but they were dressed in suits, and one guy was telling to the other, "There's just no business here, everyday I'm going up to

Baton Rouge to do business." I have no idea what business it was. My fantasy is they were either in insurance, or financial -- some kind of a financial thing that they were selling. And I don't know what kind of job opportunities are here. You know, for lawyers, for doctors, you know –- I don't know what kind of opportunities -- and without those opportunities, the Jewish community... there have been lots of Southern Jewish communities that have just withered. I think whatever happens to New Orleans, I think we're probably half the size we were. Some people really want to come back, and maybe some more will, but I think that those will be few and far between. Because once they come back, they're going to find that they're not coming back to what they left. I couldn't see my kids coming back here. I know my oldest son who lived in Atlanta always wanted to come back to New Orleans. And every job he would take, he would say, so that when he comes back to New Orleans, he'd be better suited to do this that or the other. I can't imagine that any of them would come back. So, what will happen to the infrastructure of the Jewish community, I don't -- there are going to be fewer people to give money. You know, the costs of keeping everything afloat stays the same, even though the population -- so something is going to have to contract. Something will have to contract.

RH: Do you have any thoughts yourself about how you would like to see the Jewish community reconfigured? Have you thought about that?

DG: Yeah, I've certainly thought about it. But, I -- I don't know. I think that it will be more like a small Southern town kind of thing. And, what will happen to the synagogues, or not -- I mean, each synagogue will decide for itself. Shir Chadash just a couple of years ago combined with another synagogue, because the other synagogue couldn't sustain itself. It will happen -- I don't know what will happen to Jewish Family Service. I have no idea. We're heavily reliant on United Way, too.

RH: What will the United Way have -- that's another fundraising organization that has a smaller donor base.

DG: Right. Absolutely. So... I don't know, I don't -- I want it to just be easy. Whatever, however we -- what the reality facing us is, I want to help it be easy to, easier to accept. You know, I think that...

RH: What are some of the strengths of this Jewish community that you'd like to see preserved?

DG: I think that there is a certain diversity in the Jewish community. There are -- I'd like it that's a very sort of middle-class Jewish community, but it's -- there are a lot of different people who get involved, and from different points of view. I guess I like it that it's not terribly, terribly Orthodox. Which makes it easier to be, with people, you know? It's a generous Jewish community, I think –- I think it's a broad-based Jewish community, and it's a highly affiliated Jewish community, and I think all those things are strengths.

RH: Are you concerned that, I mean, one way to manage the community is to say, let's not reach out to the larger community in New Orleans... ?

DG: Well, I hope that doesn't happen -- I really hope that doesn't happen. You have to go with your funding goes, and sort of -- the funder gets to make the rules.

RH: Do you do fundraising yourself, for JFS?

DG: Mm-hm, yeah. Although most of our funders, even in our own fund-raising, the majority, not all of them, but the majority, was from the Jewish community. And they weren't people who were different than who gave to Federation, or gave to their synagogues -- it's the same people.

RH: Has that always kind of worked? You kind of see a finite community of people, and people don't go -- that's my donor? (laughter)

DG: (laughter) Well, I think people do, but... we were sort of the new kid on the block in that, and I think, you know, I don't think giving to organization B takes away from organization A. People decide how much they want to donate to each organization, rather than saying, "I have x number of dollars to donate, and how am I going to divide it up?" I don't think that people really do that.

RH: Well, you, as an organization, have more challenges, and you've got more offices now, is that right?

DG: Right, right, we grew! (laughter)

RH: You're one of the growth industries in the Jewish community.

DG: Right, right, and the Baton Rouge office, and the Northshore office. And we have two offices in New Orleans, one uptown, and this is our main office in Metairie. Baton Rouge ultimately will decide -- we have a grant, a specific grant, for Baton Rouge. And when that grant is finished, then Baton Rouge will have to decide what it wants to do, whether they will have their own Jewish Family Service, if they want to spin off -- if they want to be part of us or just spin off and have it their own agency, or not. That is totally out of my control.

RH: Are you managing that in any way?

DG: Yeah, yeah. We manage that.

RH: Kind of doing the quality control, or --?

DG: Yes, that's exactly right. There are two social workers there, two part-time social workers. And less than one full-time equivalent, but there are two people, and we go up

once every two weeks, and supervise. Anne Friedman does it, I mean, you know, and she was part of the beginning of it, and she even I think sees a couple of clients there, and brings ideas to them, and helps them get established. And that's really an exciting place, because Baton Rouge is a growth city. So, it's really fun. Our Northshore office -- that had been in the works before the storm. So it just went... will we get the funding for it or not? I don't know.

RH: So, it's up though?

DG: Yeah, it's up and running. We're in the Northshore congregation there, we're housed there. You know, we ultimately will have to get an office, but right now, we're there.

RH: And, is that a growth area?

DG: It should be. Demographically, it should be. We'll see. We'll see how it is.

RH: Are there any family or Jewish observances, rituals, even down to dinners, (laughter), that have more significance to you now, in the past 15 months, than perhaps they did before?

DG: (pause) I mean, I think that I had a very memorable Passover... I had my contractor, he became part of my family. (laughter) You know, each one, as life goes on, each one... changes. I think, if you want to say one of the most memorable moments of this whole experience for me, and one that sticks with me and I bounce off, where is it in here, is when I went to get my mother's stuff out of her safety deposit box. Her safety deposit box flooded -- it was in Lakeview. And went to this building, and, actually, I have never been in a morgue. But what morgues look like on CSI, and other TV shows -- that's what this building looked like. This big warehouse, and they had all the little boxes up, just rows and rows of boxes from different banks, and they would pull out your box, or, you know -- and you would don these surgical masks and gloves, and they would

pour out the water... (laughter) It really looked like CSI to me. You know, and there was a certain feeling of death or finality. It was a very sad experience going to that. And I don't know why that popped into my mind just now. But I guess, moments... it was very meaningful, to go to it, to get it out, and everything was wet, and soggy. Those kind of moments were meaningful. But, you know, you just sort of have to go, on the other hand, one foot in front of the other, whether it was holiday meals, or whatever... you just put one foot in front of the other, and you just keep going, you know.

RH: The alternative doesn't look good, does it?

DG: No, I mean -- I certainly did think about moving -—

RH: You did?

DG: Yeah. And I might have. My husband really didn't want to move. And -- you know, and I think, where else would I -- where would I go that life would be really better? You're just trading off one kind of problems for another, I mean, I don't know that I wanted to -- I see what my mother's going through, so it's really hard, if she's 93 now, to be the new girl, at 93. Yeah, I don't know that I want to do it at my age, either.

RH: Right. Is there anything that would tip you into the, maybe leaving stage?

DG: Well, probably if my husband or I needed more medical care, or a different kind of intensive medical care. That certainly would tip me from... if there would be another flood. I don't think --

RH: You're concerned about those pumps at your house... if you'd just describe, they've put pumps now, outside your levee -- outside your door?

DG: Yeah -- outside my door. Oh, you can see it, oh yeah. They're huge, and they're going to be three times as big.

RH: Hm... that's increasing the value of your property for sure. (laughter)

DG: Well, I think that that's one thing that keeps me here now. If right after the storm I had sold my house gutted, that and the insurance money, I'd be better off, financially -- I'd have more money, I'd say I'd have more money, than what I could sell my house for now that it's finished. I moved in three weeks ago, I moved back in my house three weeks ago.

RH: And it's devalued... in 15 months, is what you're saying?

DG: Yeah.

RH: (laughter)

DG: I mean, there are five houses for sale on my street.

RH: So, they've put in a -- they're putting in, at the Orleans Canal; they're putting in a gate to shut it. So, if -- it'll be harder to pump water out.

DG: Right.

RH: So you might flood. Or, the chances are -—

DG: Right. You know, I could have flooded just as easily as the 17th Street Canal did. I could have had the 11 feet of water that Lakewood South did.

RH: It just happens to be, Orleans didn't -–

DG: The only canal that didn't breach was Orleans. Maybe they built it on a good day.

RH: (laughter)

DG: Or maybe it's not quite as big as the others. To me it looks –-

RH: Or maybe the soil's different.

DG: To me it looks like a smaller canal, I don't know if that's true or not. The bridge over it is shorter.

RH: Has anything, or any of your feelings about the Jewish community, or your Jewish identity changed, in the past 15 months?

DG: I think I've had a pretty strong Jewish identity. I mean, that's certainly... is who I am, and who I've probably always seen myself as. Certainly from my adolescence on, that has been a major part of my identity. (pause) My feeling toward the infrastructure of the Jewish community, has though been reinforced. And my father used to tell me that he left Europe -- what financed his trip out of Europe were some Israel Bonds that his father had left him. I mean, Palestine Bonds -- whatever they called them, because he left Europe in 1922, so I mean, he left Europe a long, long time ago, but his father had died and had left him these bonds, and he was able to sell them, and that's what financed his trip. And when he got -- first got to... well actually, he -- Cuba was his first stop, the Joint Distribution Committee helped him. I mean, he was 16 years old, and off the boat, and the Joint Distribution Committee had helped him. And he would tell me those stories -- and I guess I saw it happen again. It wasn't abstract, like when you get to see the resettlement in Israel. Or, helping the poor Jews in the Ukraine. I mean, it really is something to be really proud of, that it really helped people here. So, yeah, I feel real good about the Jewish community -- really good about it.

RH: Are there any Jewish frameworks that you've thought about in the past 15 months, that have either sustained you, or just come to your mind, and made you -—

DG: Yeah, actually there were several. One, is when I ever stopped -- especially in Atlanta, I remember this feeling really sorry for myself, I said "People who are not so genetically different from me went through the Holocaust, and they survived. They didn't

get insurance, (laughter) the government wasn't on their side, and they couldn't watch it on television." In the comfort that I watched this whole thing unfold -- I mean, I had an apartment, with air conditioning, and, you know -- I was roughing it, I didn't have a microwave. And, that people have been through much worse, so there is really no reason that I'm not going to get through this. I'd often think of my grandmother's experience, of being an immigrant with a five-month old baby, not speaking a word of English, you know, coming to some -- and she survived it. Actually, Anne Brenner, who was originally from New Orleans, and is now out in California, wrote an article about this, and it's so true, she said, "We have been in training for this, for 2000 years. Ever since the Exodus from Egypt, we have been in training." So yes, I mean -- I did, I thought about those things, and I thought, you know, what's so different from me, from them? You know. Not much. So, I did think about those things.

RH: Interesting. This is really the Jewish deep story -- the deep stories of these people. What do you think about the recovery? How's it going, in your opinion?

DG: Awful. It's extremely disappointing. Extremely disappointing. I was very much -- I thought that Nagin was doing a pretty good job, even right after the storm. I remember watching him on Meet the Press, and he said, "You know, we thought that after the three-day siege, the cavalry would come, and we would be saved." And I said, "Absolutely, that's what we thought," you keep -- you know, everybody knows a hurricane doesn't last too long. You know, it sort of blows in and blows out. I remember seeing Harry Connick Jr. on television. And, he was staying in downtown, he said, he can't believe that the government can't make it to New Orleans, he said, "Who am I? I'm a singer. I drove down Airline Highway, and I got in. What do you mean the government can't come and help these people?" You know, I am disappointed with the recovery, from Bush on down. There has been no, no leadership. No visionaries. Nobody to rally the troops. Nagin has turned out to be a tremendous disappointment to me -- I mean, he sort of disappeared after the storm. And that he got re-elected! And now that Jefferson got re-

elected! I feel it's so disappointing, I mean -- I don't know that I would want to give money to New Orleans, if I wasn't living here. (pause) I don't know, maybe the problems are so bad here -- you know, the educational system, which is -- the poverty. It's so sad. And I don't see it getting any better -- at first I was very enthusiastic about the charter schools, thinking that OK, you know, we're going to try again, but -- hearing what's happening in some of the schools -- it's very, very disheartening.

RH: I was thinking maybe we should put JFS in charge of the recovery.

DG: (laughter)

RH: (laughter)

DG: These are... I wonder, if somebody from the -- maybe this guy who Nagin just hired.

RH: His new czar, or whatever?

DG: Yeah.

RH: In your vision, what would you like to see happen?

DG: Well, I -- somehow the footprint of the city has to get smaller. And just like we say the footprint of the general community has to get smaller, the footprint of the Jewish community is also going to have to get smaller too. I mean, when I was paying $600 a month utility bills, I felt like I was paying for all the people who aren't there too -- and I was, and I am! But the whole footprint is going to have to get smaller, but to make people feel that even though it got smaller... you're not disenfranchised. I got a letter from the Property Owners' Association, from my neighborhood, and they talked about building the pump right in the middle of our neighborhood. And he said, "We just have to think of this as our contribution to the survival of New Orleans."

RH: (laughter)

DG: Know what? That little statement made me feel better. We need somebody to make people just feel we're going to be in this together -- I really worry about race relations, I think it's gotten so bad, even worse than it was before.

RH: Really?

DG: Yeah. Certain meetings I go to, and I just can feel it in the air.

RH: Are you going to some of the community meetings?

DG: Well, I go to United Way meetings.

RH: Oh, United Way. Mm-hm.

DG: And... and other -- I don't go to those Unified Plan meetings, I just think it's –- I'm not the person who can make a change, and I have other things I need to do.

RH: Mm-hm. That's polite.

DG: (laughter)

RH: A little doubt with the process, also, maybe?

DG: Ugh. Yes.

RH: I'd like to wrap this tape up.

DG: OK

END OF PART 2

RH: ... talking about going to United Way meetings and feeling that the tension -- there's racial tension... can you put your finger on what's going on, what do you think -- it's a battle over the resources, or -- how people are feeling?

DG: Yeah -- I think... well, since no resources have come down to anybody (laughter), it's a battle of the unknown resources, or the potential resources. (pause) I think -- I think that the poorer you were before the storm, the rougher time you had. You know... my husband's secretary, who really was a person who really pulled herself out of an inner-city situation, I think she's one of nine children, her mother had a drug problem, she had her first baby at 14... she really, though, is a driven person. And she didn't evacuate at first because she was putting her kid in -- her son, it was very important that he go to private school, because she didn't want him in that public school environment, and she didn't have $200 to spend on a hotel for three nights. We actually heard from her right away because she stayed uptown with somebody, but -- because you asked me before if we were worried about her. At first we were but we really did hear from her very quickly. She really had less resources to fall back on. She didn't have the family, you know... I mean, she had family for moral support, but no financial support, I think... so the poorer you were to begin with... you know, she had four kids. She was 28 years old... you know, she didn't have a lot of disposable income. You know? (pause) So I think that, that while the flooding happened indiscriminately, certain resources to rebound made it easier, financially, and the more you had... I think that the educational disparity -- you know, how able were you to get a job in another city. I mean, I think -- one of the things that I really have always felt confident about, and that helped me through this, is I feel I could always get a job someplace else. You know, I'm not going to be the director of an agency maybe, or do as well as I'm doing now, but I could always get a job. And it might be naïve to think that, but -- that's what I think -- I think I have an education, and... those kind of things. (pause) I think feeling disenfranchised, feeling hopeless; feeling that there's no future for you, probably, makes -- it makes everybody angry, and the more hopeless you feel the more angry you become.

RH: And, were you seeing this at the United Way meetings?

DG: Well, what I see is... like what resources are going to go to bring back the inner-city folks. What's going to happen to the projects? What housing options are available for them? (pause)

RH: Mm-hm.

DG: That's what I think.

RH: And there's not a lot available?

DG: There is nothing available.

RH: Nothing. (pause) And, do you think that it will be a very different city, as it rebuilds?

DG: I bet you it's not going to be any whiter of a city. You know, at the beginning, I remember they talked about what would be the options for New Orleans? Is it going to be a Galveston, after it's hurricane and it just withered, and Houston took over from it. Will it be a Detroit, that just eats away from the inside? Or will it be an Atlanta, that had a plan and made itself a dynamic city? Or what other options are there? And... it doesn't look like we're going down the Atlanta road... you know? Are we just going to be a smaller city, or a decayed city? And what area will pick up -- will Baton Rouge become the port city? I don't know, will New Orleans be just a tourist -- you know, sort of like a tourist attraction? I don't know, I really don't know. I think about those things. But I don't know.

RH: Do you have an idea of what it would take to bring in the footprint and not disenfranchise people? I like the idea that you said the pumps were your contribution; it's obviously, everybody needs to -- everybody is going to have to make sacrifices, is what you're saying, I think.

DG: Yeah. In the meantime -- that's my contribution -- in the meantime, you know I have a nicer house than I'd left.

RH: (laughter)

DG: You know, really -- I changed some things, I mean I would have never gotten a new kitchen. My house -- all painted, and it's fresh, and it's really nice. I moved a wall -- as long as you have the walls down, you can move 'em. I think everybody has to feel like they get a good consolation prize. I really believe in consolation prizes. (pause) I remember when one of my children didn't get into the private school would do that. I mean, you know... maybe that's what it is.

RH: Not a bad idea.

DG: Yeah.

RH: (laughter) Now that you've been out of your home for 15 months, can you tell me what home means to you?

DG: (pause) I'll tell you what my mistake was when I moved, and that's -- I kept thinking that I was going to be home in six weeks -- I had this moving target of six weeks, (laughter), which is probably all the work I had to do -- but this moving target of six weeks. And I never really settled in a place. I kept living out of boxes. I never -- when I moved into my mother's house, which was last November, I should have cleared out the drawers, and put my stuff away -- I should have made the house look like mine. I mean, I could have easily painted the walls, freshened it up. It really wouldn't have been much -- I could have done that myself, there was nothing wrong with the walls. I never moved in -- I guess what being home is, it's a sense of permanence. It's a sense that you -- that I want to get a sense of orderliness. That I can look around and say, "Oh, this looks really nice." When I was in Atlanta for those two months I never put a picture on the wall. I never bought little things, to make it homey. And I think that that's what home is, where

I'm settled. Where I'm going to be out of boxes -- if I don't have room for it, if I don't want it -- I'm getting rid of it. (laughter) But I'm not living out of boxes.

RH: What -- has anything changed in your world-view, since Katrina?

DG: I think... I feel differently about -- I feel an empathy -- or at least I see it as an empathy, like of the people of Iraq, who are displaced from their homes. And how much worse that is, than what I had. How dreadful it really is for those people. I mean, I don't know what the answer there is, but certainly to understand how totally alienated and how angry they could get. I really think I do understand how people can join up with the Taliban, or something like that. When you feel like you have nothing. When you feel so impermanent. (pause) I think in that way my worldview changed, to know what it is to just sort of be on the move. I remember one time I was watching this program from -- it was when, in Kosovo, when they were having all the strife there, and this reporter was saying, all people wanted was to use their cell phones, or to get on their -- the reporters' computers. And I understand now what that means -- you just want to be in touch with people. So -- I guess in that way, it's changed a world view, it makes me think -- also it makes me think how ineffective the United States is, and I really worry, are we really a powerful nation? I don't know. I'm really scared. I'm really scared about that. (pause) If the country can't take care of our own... and doesn't want to.

RH: And doesn't want to.

DG: And doesn't want to. I mean, Congress doesn't want to. Maybe this election will start a change. I mean, I just saw us getting -- like this fundamentalist country. So, I really -- at first, when all this was coming down, and no one was helping, I had this feeling that came up in me one day, I said, "I resent that for the 13 years of my life, every day I began with the Pledge of Allegiance!" (laughter) through school, kindergarten through 12th grade. And I don't feel like that anymore, I mean that's how I felt at one time, but I do worry, and wonder really, how solid the United States is. How solid is our

economy? How solid is our education, how solid is anything? I don't know.

RH: What do you hope for your grandchild?

DG: (pause) Well... I hope he has a life as comfortable as I've had. And I hope he has resiliency.

RH: Just in case it isn't as comfortable. (laughter)

DG: Right, right. Right.

RH: Have you learned anything about yourself these past 15 months?

DG: (pause) I've learned that in some ways I'm more superficial than I thought I was.

RH: (laughter)

DG: I was -- I went to go, I got called about a case -- these people had a disabled child, severely disabled child, and they were in this nursing home in Baton Rouge, and I went, and I'm sitting there and I'm talking -- and I know this family. And we're trying to get them out to California, and they had to be Medivac'ed, and it was really... awful. And it was the grandmother, and the mother, and the father, and the severely disabled child. And all the sudden I'm focusing on the grandmother's hair, and I say, "My god, look how bad her roots are showing!" (laughter) And all the sudden I became consumed that I had to get my hair colored!

RH: (laughter)

DG: (laughter) I was really sort of disappointed with myself that I just couldn't stop thinking about that!

RH: (laughter)

DG: Yeah, I think I found out a lot about myself... (pause) I think I found out more about my family, and in some ways I was a little disappointed, but... that's the way it goes.

RH: Tell me about that.

DG: Well, my kids got really angry with me during this whole thing, that I was not -- that I was spending too much time focusing on work, and not enough time focusing on what my mother needed, or what my husband needed, or what they needed.

RH: Mm-hm.

DG: So that was sort of sad, I thought that they'd be more empathetic to me. But they weren't.

RH: Would you do anything differently?

DG: Are we starting out from when they were little, (laughter), so I can teach them to be more empathetic? (laughter)

RH: That's not what I meant. (laughter) Let me clarify my question. Would you -- did you feel you had to do what you did for the Jewish community, and would you do the 15 months pretty much the same, or would you balance it differently?

DG: No, I don't think -- I mean -- I don't think I was a martyr for the Jewish community. I mean, I had a job and I needed to keep the job. I mean, I like my job. I wanted to keep it. And I think that was really more motivating.

RH: So did you feel they just -- they were fairly intact, and they needed to let loose a little bit, of you, for the greater community?

DG: Yeah. Well... yeah. That... I mean, my mother was very helpful. I think, actually, what I really found out -- I'm much more like my mother.

RH: And how's that?

DG: That a person, at 92, can decide, practically, "Well, I think I'll move to Atlanta."

RH: Pretty amazing.

DG: And that -- (laughter) -- actually, in some ways, I'm actually probably much more like her. She went and looked at another home, than the one she's living in. And the people there were not as... well groomed. And my mother decided that she couldn't live there either. (laughter) You know, so... and my mother always has this sort of bohemian attitude about herself. But, she -- she has moved to Atlanta. (laughter) But that she was able to do that, and just -- by just putting one foot in front of the other. And so I think I am like her in that way.

RH: What are you grateful for?

DG: (pause) I'm grateful -- on the other hand, I am grateful for my family. I truly am. (pause) I'm -- I certainly, my husband always believed in insurance, you know -- and I'm certainly grateful for my husband, and what he was able to do. (pause) I'm certainly grateful for the Jewish community. And I work with very, very nice people. And I'm grateful for that. You know, it really was very nice to come back.

RH: Is there anything you would like to add to this interview? Anything you wanted to talk about, maybe I haven't ask?

DG: No, I think you've asked a whole lot of questions.

RH: (laughter)

DG: You know, I've tried to be forthcoming.

RH: You have been. It's been a great interview.

DG: (laughter)

RH: That's why I went into the third tape. (laughter) So I thank you very much.

DG: Well thank you, it was sort of fun.

RH: Good, good.

DG: Well it is --

RH: I'm going to put it all together in one place, and to take the time to do it -- it feels like I can't fit it in, you know -- you've only got a hundred other things to do, but -- I'm glad you took the time...

DG: You know, we had done a family stories project here a long time ago, maybe...

[END OF INTERVIEW]