

EI-527

ELISA DI RENZO

BIRTH DATE: APRIL 7, 1899

INTERVIEW DATE: AUGUST 9, 1994

RUNNING TIME: 37:43

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME

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TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

ITALY, 1921

AGE 22

PASSAGE ON "THE SAN GIORGIO"

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LEVINE: Today is August 9, 1994, and I'm here with Elisa, is that how you say it?

DI RENZO: Elisa.

LEVINE: Elisa. Elisa DiRenzo, who lives in Fort Washington in New York City, and Mrs. DiRenzo came from Italy when she, in 1920 or 1921, when she was either twenty-one or twenty-two years old. Today Mrs. DiRenzo is ninety-five years old, and I, I hope we can, uh, I hope that Mrs. DiRenzo can hear the questions so that we can proceed. (COMMENT OFF MIKE) Okay. It seems like the date of arrival at Ellis Island was in July 1921, so we'll go with that date. Okay. Mrs. DiRenzo . . .

DI RENZO: I can't hear, honey. ( break in tape )

LEVINE: Tell me about your mother.

DI RENZO: Yeah. My mother, yeah.

LEVINE: Tell me about your mother.

DI RENZO: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: What was she like? Do you remember her?

DI RENZO: I'm sorry, honey. What was that?

LEVINE: Tell me about your mother.

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: You remember your mother and your father?

DI RENZO: A girl, a boy.

LEVINE: Ah. Let's see. Do you remember about the boat?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: When you came on the boat?

DI RENZO: When I was born.

LEVINE: No. Yeah, when you were born?

DI RENZO: Yeah. My daughter, my daughter . . .

LEVINE: No, not your daughter.

DI RENZO: My boy?

LEVINE: No. When you came to this country, you came to America.

DI RENZO: Yeah. I see.

LEVINE: Okay. Tell me about the boat.

DI RENZO: My birthday?

LEVINE: No, the boat. When you came to America.

DI RENZO: The boat?

GIORDANO: Yeah!

DI RENZO: The boat. San Giorgio.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DI RENZO: Yeah, San Giorgio, 1921.

LEVINE: Good! Yeah? And what was it like? What was it like on the boat?

DI RENZO: Eighteen day. Oh, it was a shame. Eighteen day I no eat.

LEVINE: You didn't eat? Oh. What else?

DI RENZO: Huh?

LEVINE: What else do you remember about San Giorgio? What else?

DI RENZO: Baby, over here.

LEVINE: Over here?

DI RENZO: Yeah, over here I was a baby.

LEVINE: Do you remember seeing the Statue, the Statue of Liberty?

DI RENZO: What?

LEVINE: Do you remember the Statue of Liberty?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: How did you feel?

DI RENZO: No, my husband bring me broth in a bowl to eat.

LEVINE: He brought bread?

DI RENZO: (Unintelligible.)

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And . . .

DI RENZO: I had a tough time. No eat. Somebody eat. I was alone.

LEVINE: Your husband came to meet you?

DI RENZO: Huh?

LEVINE: Your husband came to meet you?

DI RENZO: Yeah. ( a doorbell rings )

LEVINE: Uh, did, where was your husband? Where did you meet him?

DI RENZO: I don't understand.

LEVINE: Did you go to Ellis Island?

DI RENZO: My (?).

LEVINE: Ellis Island?

DI RENZO: No.

LEVINE: Do you remember Ellis Island?

GIORDANO: The Statue of Liberty.

DI RENZO: On a plane?

GIORDANO: The Statue of Liberty. The Statue.

DI RENZO: No, no. (SHE LAUGHS) I'm sorry, honey.

LEVINE: That's okay. You're fine. That's fine. Whatever you remember.

You remember when you came to this country?

DI RENZO: Where? Here?

LEVINE: Yeah.

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: What did you see? What did you see when you first came?

DI RENZO: I don't know. My (?).

LEVINE: You don't remember. It was a long time.

DI RENZO: A long time ago.

LEVINE: Yes, uh-huh. What was your husband's name?

DI RENZO: What?

LEVINE: What was your husband's name?

DI RENZO: Nick.

LEVINE: Nick.

DI RENZO: Nick.

LEVINE: And what was Nick like?

DI RENZO: Huh?

LEVINE: What was Nick like? Tell me about Nick.

DI RENZO: Yeah. (?) Nick, my husband.

LEVINE: Did you marry Nick in Italy?

DI RENZO: Yeah. He died over here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DI RENZO: He died. Fifteen years, he die. Yeah. I'm all alone. (?) I don't got nobody left.

LEVINE: Do you remember when, when you first came here.

DI RENZO: Huh?

LEVINE: When you came and you met Nick at the boat?

DI RENZO: No. No, no, no. I was a young girl. I was young. Yeah. I'm sorry, honey.

GIORDANO: What happened with the banana?

DI RENZO: Huh?

GIORDANO: What happened with the bananas?

DI RENZO: ( SHE LAUGHS ) My husband bring a banana. I say, "What's that?" (?) my town (?). I throw it in the water.

LEVINE: You threw the . . .

DI RENZO: I say, "What the hell you bring it to me for? What's that?" My husband says, "That's a banana to eat." I said, "I never eat them before."

LEVINE: So did you try to eat it?

DI RENZO: I ate the piece of bread. No, yeah. I never eat that. A lot of fruit there, the figs, tomatoes, peppers, everything. The banana, I no eat.

LEVINE: Okay. Did you come on the San Giorgio all by yourself? Were you alone on the boat?

DI RENZO: On the boat?

LEVINE: Yeah, all by yourself?

DI RENZO: No television.

LEVINE: No television, no.

DI RENZO: Nothing. (?) over here. (?) A long time ago who got the television? Nobody had a television.

LEVINE: When you came to this country, did you work? Did you work?

DI RENZO: Work? No, I never worked. My husband was working.

LEVINE: What did your husband do?

DI RENZO: I don't know. People, everybody died.

LEVINE: Your husband, what work?

DI RENZO: Everybody die.

LEVINE: Do you remember what Nick worked? Where he worked?

DI RENZO: NO, no, no.

LEVINE: What did he do for work?

DI RENZO: No.

GIORDANO: Your husband. Your husband. Your husband. Work. Do what?

DI RENZO: Washer. Washer. He went to work as a washer.

GIORDANO: As a welder?

DI RENZO: My husband. Yeah.

LEVINE: A welder.

DI RENZO: He was a bartender. He used to wash the dishes.

LEVINE: Oh, bartend.

DI RENZO: Bartend.

LEVINE: Bartend and wash. Uh-huh.

DI RENZO: Bring the bread to me. (?) I saw.

LEVINE: Was it hard for you to learn English? Do you remember when you learned to talk, to speak English? You talked, you spoke Italian, then you learned English.

DI RENZO: The (?).

GIORDANO: (?) something else. Auntie.

DI RENZO: What's that?

GIORDANO: When you learned how to talk English. When you learned American.

DI RENZO: Was married?

GIORDANO: How did you speak Italian, American?

DI RENZO: In Italy.

GIORDANO: Tell her the story.

DI RENZO: I married in Italy.

LEVINE: Yeah?

DI RENZO: After coming here. Yeah. I'm sorry. I can't . . .

LEVINE: No, after you came here, what happened?

DI RENZO: He was a nice man. He was a very nice man. I can't forget him.  
You see about that? Yeah.

LEVINE: He was a good man.

DI RENZO: Fifteen years, he died. I'm sorry, honey. I can't explain it  
to you.

LEVINE: That's okay.

DI RENZO: Nice (?).

LEVINE: You're doing fine. Tell me about . . .

DI RENZO: I don't remember.

LEVINE: Yes, you do. Tell me about your children. You have children?

DI RENZO: (?)

LEVINE: You have children?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: You. Do you have kids?

DI RENZO: I don't know what you say, honey.

GIORDANO: Two kids, you.

DI RENZO: (?)

GIORDANO: Two kids. Flo.

DI RENZO: Oh, Flo.

GIORDANO: And Philly. Two kids. You.

DI RENZO: Oh, yeah.

GIORDANO: Tell her.

DI RENZO: Florence, her name is Florence. And my son, Philip.

LEVINE: And do you have grandchildren?

DI RENZO: Who?

LEVINE: Grandchildren? You have grandchildren?

GIORDANO: You're a grandma.

DI RENZO: Grandma?

GIORDANO: You. Tell her.

DI RENZO: Palomina.

GIORDANO: Not Italian.

DI RENZO: My grandfather, Cericino.

GIORDANO: She's telling you her grandfather's name.

LEVINE: You remember your grandfather?

DI RENZO: My father, Dominick.

LEVINE: Your grandfather. Uh-huh. And your mother?

DI RENZO: Florinda.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And do you remember your mother's maiden name, her name before she got married?

DI RENZO: No, no.

LEVINE: No.

GIORDANO: What was your mama's name? Your mama, your mama.

DI RENZO: Grandma. I told you. Palomina.

GIORDANO: Her last name.

DI RENZO: Cericino.[ph]

GIORDANO: That was her grandparents' name.

DI RENZO: I remember that.

LEVINE: Yeah, good. That's wonderful. You remember your grandparents?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: What did you do with your grandparents, when you were in Italy?  
What did you do? Did your grandparents take you, and did you visit them?

DI RENZO: My grandmother raised me.

LEVINE: Oh.

DI RENZO: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you help her.

DI RENZO: My grandma raised me.

LEVINE: Did you help your grandma?

DI RENZO: She die of old age. Old age.

LEVINE: When you were a little girl, when you were a little girl.

DI RENZO: No, no.

LEVINE: Did you help your grandma? You help her do things?

DI RENZO: What happened?

LEVINE: Did you help your grandma do things?

DI RENZO: Ah, I come here, my husband call me to come here. That's why

I'm here. Otherwise (?).

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I see.

GIORDANO: When you were in Italy, you worked.

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Where?

DI RENZO: What?

GIORDANO: Where did you work? You?

DI RENZO: No.

GIORDANO: You worked, in Italy.

DI RENZO: Italy.

GIORDANO: Yeah, you, tell her. Tell her the story. You.

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Did you work on a farm?

DI RENZO: Was a little farm. Oh, work, all day, on the farm.

( she gestures ) I was skinny like this because I worked so  
much.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What did you do on the farm? What did you do on the

farm?

DI RENZO: What?

LEVINE: On the farm, you worked?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: What did you do?

DI RENZO: The corn, tomatoes, squash, zucchini, you know, everything.

LEVINE: Where did you live? What town?

DI RENZO: Huh?

LEVINE: What was the town where you lived, in Italy?

DI RENZO: Italy, a part, near to Rome.

LEVINE: Near Rome?

DI RENZO: Near to Rome. Yeah.

LEVINE: You remember it? You remember it?

DI RENZO: I'd like to go back.

LEVINE: YOu'd like to go back?

DI RENZO: I'd like.

LEVINE: Why?

DI RENZO: San Bono Quietta[ph]. San Bono Quietta[ph].

LEVINE: Why do you want to go back?

GIORDANO: San Bono Quietta[ph]. That's the part of Italy.

DI RENZO: The province.

LEVINE: Oh.

DI RENZO: Quietta[ph].

LEVINE: I see. Was it pretty there? Was it a pretty town?

DI RENZO: Long time.

LEVINE: Long time. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Did you have brothers and sisters?  
Did you have brothers and sisters?

DI RENZO: Yeah. I was raised in Italy. I was married in Italy. Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you have a big wedding?

DI RENZO: My husband was in the (?) war. He was (Italian), my husband.

GIORDANO: That's the name of the war, I guess, she's explaining.

DI RENZO: It was (Italian).

LEVINE: Your husband was in the war?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Then after the war, you got married.

DI RENZO: Yeah. (?) ( she sighs ) You can help me, honey.

LEVINE: Well, whatever you remember. Whatever you remember.

DI RENZO: Me?

LEVINE: Yeah.

DI RENZO: When I was born?

LEVINE: When you were a little girl.

DI RENZO: I was born, San Bono Quietta[ph], the providence is Quietta[ph].

LEVINE: Yeah. And what do you remember about Quietta[ph]?

DI RENZO: My mother . . .

LEVINE: Do you remember your house, the house where your mother . . .

DI RENZO: (Italian)

LEVINE: What's that?

DI RENZO: My mom.

LEVINE: Your mother?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Was it nice over there?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: How was the house?

DI RENZO: Mom.

GIORDANO: The house?

DI RENZO: House?

GIORDANO: Yeah.

DI RENZO: The tomatoes.

GIORDANO: The house. Was it nice?

DI RENZO: Yeah, yeah.

GIORDANO: Was it nice? Tell her how nice it was.

DI RENZO: ( SHE LAUGHS ) It was good.

LEVINE: What did you eat when you were in Italy? What did you eat?

DI RENZO: I can't tell you any more.

LEVINE: No more?

GIORDANO: Auntie, auntie, what did you eat over there?

DI RENZO: Eat? Yeah. Plenty to eat over there.

LEVINE: What?

DI RENZO: In my town, plenty to eat.

LEVINE: What?

DI RENZO: Ah, everything, honey. Everything you could . . . ( SHE LAUGHS )

GIORDANO: Did you cook? You? What did you cook?

DI RENZO: (Italian)

GIORDANO: What did you cook? You cook? You make pasta? Cookies? Tell her.

LEVINE: What did you cook?

DI RENZO: Everything. I was on a horse. ( she imitates the running noise of a horse )

LEVINE: On a horse?

DI RENZO: Me, yeah.

LEVINE: You rode a horse?

DI RENZO: On a bicycle. ( she makes an imitation noise ) I was on a bicycle. I enjoyed myself. My (?), come along want to (?).

LEVINE: Did you go to school? Did you go to school?

DI RENZO: What?

LEVINE: Did you go to school when you were a little girl?

DI RENZO: A horse. My father's horse.

LEVINE: Your father's horse. My father, my ma, my grandma, my grandpa, I (?).

GIORDANO: Did you go to school?

DI RENZO: Huh?

GIORDANO: School.

DI RENZO: What?

GIORDANO: School.

DI RENZO: A horse.

GIORDANO: School.

DI RENZO: A horse.

GIORDANO: No, did you go to school? School, to learn?

DI RENZO: What?

GIORDANO: A teacher.

DI RENZO: A horse. I went on a horse. That horse ( she imitates the horse ) I used to work on a farm. I used to work on a farm.

LEVINE: What did you do?

DI RENZO: I (?). ( she imitates the horse ) Like that.

GIORDANO: Did you go to school? School.

DI RENZO: A horse.

GIORDANO: School. School.

DI RENZO: My father's horse.

GIORDANO: No, did you go to school to read and write?

DI RENZO: REAding.

GIORDANO: School?

DI RENZO: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know.

GIORDANO: She's not hearing me too well today.

DI RENZO: A long time ago.

LEVINE: Yes, very long.

DI RENZO: A long time, I forget. Sometimes when we got, everything (?).  
I can't read. I can't write.

GIORDANO: When she did come to this country, she, I think she worked in a  
factory sewing.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you sew? Did you sew?

DI RENZO: OH, yeah. Oh, yeah. Me? Yeah. I was sewing. I was  
crocheting and everything.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. In Italy?

DI RENZO: Make a dress, I make a dress. Yeah. Because I didn't have no  
money to buy. I buy (?).

LEVINE: Cloth.

DI RENZO: Material. I make a dress. I can't do no more.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DI RENZO: I can't (?). I told (?). You (?).

LEVINE: Well, I just wanted for you to say whatever you remember. What  
you remember from a long time ago.

DI RENZO: No, no.

GIORDANO: She doesn't understand what you're saying. Auntie.

LEVINE: She's so adorable.

GIORDANO: What happened when you were a little girl?

DI RENZO: What?

GIORDANO: When you were on the boat. What happened?

DI RENZO: (?)

GIORDANO: Did you make cookies?

DI RENZO: Yeah. Oh, you bet.

GIORDANO: Did you make cookies?

DI RENZO: (?) ( SHE LAUGHS )

GIORDANO: No, cookies.

DI RENZO: You.

GIORDANO: Did you make cookies?

DI RENZO: What happened?

GIORDANO: Cookies.

DI RENZO: A horse.

GIORDANO: No.

DI RENZO: What? ( SHE LAUGHS )

GIORDANO: Did you cook? You make pasta?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Tell her.

DI RENZO: Yeah. You tell her. She told you.

LEVINE: You made pasta? ( Mrs. DiRenzo laughs )

GIORDANO: She thinks I'm saying something else. You make cookies, the  
dough.

DI RENZO: Macaroon.

GIORDANO: Yeah, tell her the story.

DI RENZO: I make macaroon.

LEVINE: Oh!

DI RENZO: OH, yeah. I make (?) macaroon. I make . . .

LEVINE: How did you do it? How did you make it?

DI RENZO: It was good.

LEVINE: Yeah? Good?

DI RENZO: Meatball, made, yes. Yes, honey. Uh-huh. I can't make it any more, no more. No. She make it.

LEVINE: She makes it for you?

DI RENZO: She's wonderful.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. She's a wonderful niece.

DI RENZO: You couldn't help me.

GIORDANO: Auntie. Did you make cookies? She don't understand what you're saying.

LEVINE: Let's see. You remember the bunk beds? You remember the bunk beds on the boat? The bunk beds.

DI RENZO: On the boat.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DI RENZO: You want me to go on a boat?

LEVINE: No, I want you to tell what you remember about the boat.

DI RENZO: I don't know, honey. I don't know, honey.

GIORDANO: The beds. You slept on the bed. Tell her the story.

DI RENZO: On the boat, yeah. I was asleep. I pay, I pay Naples. You know Naples?

LEVINE: Naples.

DI RENZO: Where the boat, the boat leave.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DI RENZO: Yeah, I was there, yeah.

LEVINE: Did you know anyone on the boat?

DI RENZO: No.

LEVINE: No? Did you make friends on the boat?

DI RENZO: I don't know. A long time ago.

GIORDANO: She was telling me she made a friend on the boat.

LEVINE: And then do you remember when the boat came in and you went to Ellis Island?

DI RENZO: (?)

LEVINE: Ellis Island, from the boat?

DI RENZO: You want me to go to Italy? (THEY LAUGH)

GIORDANO: There's your answer. She wants to go there.

LEVINE: Why do you want to go to Italy now?

DI RENZO: Why?

LEVINE: Why? Why do you like Italy? What do you like about it?

DI RENZO: San Giorgio. San Giorgio. It went to South America now, not coming no more here. I was eighteen days on the water. I no eat. It was a tough time.

LEVINE: You were thin?

DI RENZO: Tough time.

LEVINE: Time, uh-huh.

DI RENZO: I can't buy nothing, because you don't got no money. ( she imitates a moaning noise ) You know, I was hungry. Not only me, everybody. Everybody, yeah.

LEVINE: Everybody was hungry. And then . . .

DI RENZO: So my aunt come on the boat with a big basket.

LEVINE: Your aunt?

DI RENZO: A big chicken, bring me bread, bring me a banana. I threw it

away. I ate. I fall asleep, because my body was full.

LEVINE: And then you had to stay overnight.

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: You had a fever.

DI RENZO: Oh, my aunt.

LEVINE: Did you have a fever when you first came?

DI RENZO: No, over here, she's over here, dying.

GIORDANO: Did you have a fever?

DI RENZO: Oh, yeah.

GIORDANO: On the boat?

DI RENZO: Yeah, my headache. My headache.

GIORDANO: NO, you had a fever. You were warm on the boat.

DI RENZO: On the boat. Cold on the boat. It's in the water. I don't got no clothes to wear.

GIORDANO: Nothing? Did you get sick?

DI RENZO: Huh? Everybody (?), when you go out, who you are, they give it to you back.

GIORDANO: When you came off the boat did you have a fever?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: You had to go to the hospital?

DI RENZO: The hospital?

GIORDANO: Yeah.

DI RENZO: The hospital nothing.

GIORDANO: Over there, on the boat.

DI RENZO: No, a drink of water. I wanted a drink of water, they don't give it to you. I pass a lot of time, plenty of time. (?) Oh, God, pray to take me.

GIORDANO: Auntie. When you were on the boat, did you see the Statue?

DI RENZO: I (?).

LEVINE: The Statue of Liberty?

DI RENZO: The Statue of Liberty.

LEVINE: You saw it?

DI RENZO: Liberty, I passed by.

LEVINE: Yeah?

DI RENZO: Oh, sure. (?)

LEVINE: And remember Ellis Island?

DI RENZO: Huh?

LEVINE: Ellis Island?

DI RENZO: Ellis Island.

LEVINE: You met Nick at Ellis Island?

DI RENZO: When I come here I pass the Statue of Liberty. I say, "You're full of baloney." Excuse me. Excuse me.

LEVINE: So then you . . .

DI RENZO: (?) Statue of Liberty. Liberty, no eat.

LEVINE: Liberty . . .

DI RENZO: No eat.

LEVINE: No eat.

DI RENZO: (?) water.

LEVINE: On the boat. Uh-huh.

DI RENZO: And when you're gonna pee, you gotta pee in front of those people. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DI RENZO: Oh. (?) ( SHE LAUGHS ) I had to go see grandma. Grandma was something. Her grandma. Ah, what are you gonna do? ( Italian ) What's your name?

LEVINE: Janet.

DI RENZO: Jannie?

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DI RENZO: Oh. My name Eliza.

LEVINE: Eliza.

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: It's nice to meet you.

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: It's nice to meet you.

DI RENZO: Nice name?

LEVINE: Yeah, nice name. So when, so when Nick met you, remember when

you saw Nick, your husband?

DI RENZO: (?) DiRenzo. DiRenzo. D-I-R-E-N-Z-O.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. That was your husband.

DI RENZO: Yeah. Nice to talk to you.

LEVINE: Nice to talk to you, too.

DI RENZO: Get a drink or something.

GIORDANO: Would you like a little cranberry juice?

LEVINE: Yeah. I have something. I wonder, maybe we'll pause here.  
(break in tape) You remember where you, you remember where you  
lived?

DI RENZO: At (?).

LEVINE: In Italy? The house?

DI RENZO: I'm sorry.

LEVINE: Okay. You remember when you came here with your husband, where  
you lived?

DI RENZO: It's my husband.

LEVINE: What?

DI RENZO: You see my husband?

LEVINE: Yeah. Let's look at the picture.

DI RENZO: It's my husband. It's my brother-in-law.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What was your husband like?

DI RENZO: (?).

LEVINE: What was Nick like? Nick? Yeah.

DI RENZO: There's my grandson, my granddaughter. That's me.

GIORDANO: That's my grandfather, that's her brother. That's, this is her husband here. That's her cousin.

DI RENZO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Very nice.

DI RENZO: This is my son.

GIORDANO: You know, my uncle had taken the old . . . (break in tape)

LEVINE: Okay, we're resuming now, we're resuming again now. Doris Giordano, who is Mrs. DiRenzo's niece . . .

GIORDANO: Great niece.

LEVINE: Great niece, sorry. Your, let's see, your father was . . .

GIORDANO: My grandfather was . . .

LEVINE: Was her brother.

GIORDANO: Yeah, right.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, um, anyway, Doris is going to question her great aunt now, and we'll see if we can get a little more information.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

GIORDANO: How was Italy?

DI RENZO: Huh?

GIORDANO: When you were over there, how was it?

DI RENZO: What happened?

GIORDANO: Yeah.

DI RENZO: To me?

GIORDANO: Yeah.

DI RENZO: When?

GIORDANO: When you were a baby.

DI RENZO: A lot of thing. I forget.

GIORDANO: When you were a little girl.

DI RENZO: When I was a baby? A lot of thing.

GIORDANO: What? Tell me about it.

DI RENZO: I forget.

GIORDANO: When you were a little girl.

DI RENZO: When I was small, I used to go on a bicycle. I used (?).

GIORDANO: Was it nice? Was it nice?

DI RENZO: I was fighting somebody.

GIORDANO: You were fighting?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: With who? How was Italy?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Did you help Mama, your mother and your father? Yeah.

DI RENZO: Fighting me. ( makes fighting noises )

GIORDANO: Why?

DI RENZO: Because I had (?).

GIORDANO: Yeah?

DI RENZO: And they don't do that. Oh, I was so bad.

GIORDANO: You were a bad girl, huh?

DI RENZO: That girl don't come no more, because I hit her.

GIORDANO: Oh, boy.

DI RENZO: I was a bad.

GIORDANO: You were a bad girl. How was your mama?

DI RENZO: Huh?

GIORDANO: How was your mama?

DI RENZO: My mama was good.

GIORDANO: Tell me about it.

DI RENZO: Was very good, like your mother.

GIORDANO: How was she? What did she do?

DI RENZO: (?) My mother was young.

GIORDANO: Did she work?

DI RENZO: My young daughter (?).

GIORDANO: Did she work? Your mama, did she work?

DI RENZO: (?) be nice.

GIORDANO: Your mama, did she work?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Did she work? What did she do?

DI RENZO: I don't know what you're saying.

GIORDANO: Did she work? How about your papa?

DI RENZO: ( SHE LAUGHS )

GIORDANO: Your father.

DI RENZO: My mama.

GIORDANO: Yeah, your mother. Did she work? Did she work?

DI RENZO: (?)

GIORDANO: Did she work? Work?

DI RENZO: She don't take no (?) to nobody.

GIORDANO: Did she work?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: What did she do, work?

DI RENZO: Somebody want to hit you, you hit her back.

GIORDANO: All right. How was your house?

DI RENZO: Why?

GIORDANO: Did you live on a farm? Where did you live?

DI RENZO: My husband, my husband.

GIORDANO: Your house.

DI RENZO: (?)

GIORDANO: The house?

DI RENZO: (?)

GIORDANO: Tell me about it.

DI RENZO: I can't tell you.

GIORDANO: The house. Where did you live?

DI RENZO: He was good to me.

GIORDANO: Where did you live with your mama and your papa?

DI RENZO: Mom, yeah, it was good.

GIORDANO: Did she work?

DI RENZO: Beautiful.

GIORDANO: Did she work? What did she do?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Did she work? How about Papa?

DI RENZO: I can't tell you everything. I forget.

GIORDANO: But how was Italy? Was it nice?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Or no nice.

DI RENZO: No?

GIORDANO: Was it nice? Tell me about it.

DI RENZO: I don't know. I was so close to everybody.

GIORDANO: How about your father?

DI RENZO: My father?

GIORDANO: Yeah.

DI RENZO: Oh, it was a piece of bread. My father was (?).

GIORDANO: Did he work? Did he work?

DI RENZO: (?) my sister, my brother, every time. My mother.

GIORDANO: It's kind of hard today. She has her good days, and she has her bad days.

DI RENZO: It was a long time ago.

LEVINE: You remember a lot, though. You remember a lot of things.

GIORDANO: Her memory is very good, but it's just her hearing is very bad.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, we're going to pause here.

GIORDANO: You like this country?

DI RENZO: What?

GIORDANO: You like America?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: What's nice? ( Mrs. DiRenzo laughs ) What's nice about America?

DI RENZO: What I told her? I forget.

GIORDANO: What's nice? What do you like about America?

DI RENZO: What (??)

GIORDANO: Yeah.

DI RENZO: Oh, a lot of things. I don't remember everything.

GIORDANO: But you like, what do you like in America?

DI RENZO: Mama, my mother.

GIORDANO: Yeah.

DI RENZO: And my father.

GIORDANO: Yeah.

DI RENZO: Was a (??).

GIORDANO: Did they work?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: How about you?

DI RENZO: My mama.

GIORDANO: No, you. You like this country?

DI RENZO: (??) everybody.

GIORDANO: Are you happy you're here?

DI RENZO: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Are you happy?

DI RENZO: I happy. (?)

GIORDANO: That's a microphone.

DI RENZO: Oh, yeah?

GIORDANO: Yeah.

DI RENZO: Oh.

GIORDANO: I don't think we're going to get any too much response from her.  
Tell me, do you like this country?

DI RENZO: (?)

GIORDANO: Are you happy you're here?

DI RENZO: Wherever. (?) too well.

GIORDANO: No, not your teeth. Now, when you came to this country and you  
had Flo.

DI RENZO: When I went home?

GIORDANO: Flo.

DI RENZO: I don't know what I . . .

GIORDANO: Your daughter.

DI RENZO: I forget it.

LEVINE: Okay. I think we'll sign off here.

GIORDANO: Yeah.

LEVINE: I want to thank Doris Giordano for trying to, apparently this is a bad day for Mrs. DiRenzo. This is August 9, 1994, and we're here in Fort Washington, New York City, and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service signing off.