

**EI-595**

**ANNA OLESEN ANDREASEN**

**BIRTH DATE: APRIL 20, 1906**

**INTERVIEW DATE: APRIL 20, 1995**

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**INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.**

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**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED AND REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.,  
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**AGE 20**

**SHIP: "THE OSCAR II"**

**PORT: COPENHAGEN**

**RESIDENCES:**

- **SVENDBORG**
- **US RESIDENCE: FLATBUSH, NY**

**SIGRIST:** Good morning. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Thursday, April 20th, 1995. I'm at the Ellis Island Recording Studio with Anna Andreassen. Mrs. Andreassen came from Denmark in 1926 when she was twenty years old. Welcome.

**ANDREASEN:** Thank you.

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SIGRIST: Let's begin by you giving me your birth date, please.

ANDREASEN: April 20th, 1906.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's right. I forgot to mention. (Mrs. Andreasen laughs)  
Today is Mrs. Andreasen's eighty- ninth birthday. So, happy  
birthday.

ANDREASEN: Thank you very much.

SIGRIST: May I also ask you your maiden name, please?

ANDREASEN: Olesen, O-L-E-S-E-N.

SIGRIST: O-L-E-S-E-N, Olesen.

ANDREASEN: Yes.

SIGRIST: Where were you born in Denmark?

ANDREASEN: Svendborg, on the island of Fyn.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

ANDREASEN: S-V-E, E-N-D-B-O-R-G, and the island is F-Y-E-N [sic].

SIGRIST: Can you tell me whereabouts in the country that is?

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ANDREASEN: It's the little island that runs between, lays between the Jutland peninsula and the bigger island is Sjaelland and Fyn is right in between there.

SIGRIST: What, what is your earliest memory in your life, from your earliest, earliest childhood?

ANDREASEN: (she sighs) Uh, well, we moved outside town and, to a little, a little house, I guess like a little farm house. And I remember jumping out of a window down to the ground (she laughs). We were playing there and I really took some bump there.

SIGRIST: Oh, so you got hurt when you fell?

ANDREASEN: Well, not serious, I guess, but it was enough to that it hurt, believe me.

SIGRIST: How old were you when that happened?

ANDREASEN: Well, I wasn't in school. I was probably about six.

SIGRIST: Tell me, you said you moved...

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you have any recollections of the house that you lived in prior to moving out to the farmhouse?

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ANDREASEN: Uh, very vague but, of course, I have been there to visit it since then so I know what it looks like now.

SIGRIST: Was it in town? Was it in the town?

ANDREASEN: Yes, yeah, right in the town, yes.

SIGRIST: Why, why did the family move?

ANDREASEN: I really don't know. My father bought this little place, I guess and before that he was a butcher by trade and he worked there in Svendborg. But for some reason he bought this little place out there and we were there for several years. Well, not too long. Two, three years I guess. Then we moved to Jutland, where both my father and mother was born and they lived there. And that's where I grew up then, in Jutland.

SIGRIST: But your earliest memories are of this farmhouse.

ANDREASEN: Is, is, yeah, that is from Svendborg, yes. I can still see it.

SIGRIST: Can you describe what you see, the house and..?

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes. You know, it had the, uh, like the English with the, uh, like you see the English houses, and the thatched roof, you with the...(she gestures)

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SIGRIST: Oh, the beams on the outside of the house.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, the wooden beams, yeah.

SIGRIST: I see.

ANDREASEN: Uh huh.

SIGRIST: And what was it like inside?

ANDREASEN: Uh, well, I remember the kitchen where we always sat and ate. And I can still see the coal stove there and, oh, we had a lot of fruit trees around outside. It was lovely. We could climb up there and we could eat the plums off the tree. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Now, you say "we"...

ANDREASEN: Oh, I have a sister that is two and one half years older than me.

SIGRIST: And what was your sister's name?

ANDREASEN: Marianna.

SIGRIST: And did you share a bedroom in the farmhouse with her?

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes. For sure. (she laughs)

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SIGRIST: Can you describe for me a typical Danish bedroom?  
What it...

ANDREASEN: Uh, we had what we called the "sloubink" [ph], "sloubink" [ph] and it was like a, in fact, I just saw a picture of it a short time ago. It was like a wooden couch and it had a wooden cover on it there like. And, you know, it was like a couch but it was straight. And that there we had our little feather pillows down there in it and I can remember us sleeping in that. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Now, you said you didn't live in the farmhouse very long. Do you know how long you lived there?

ANDREASEN: Probably about three years, I would say, because I started, I had just started school which we started at seven there when we moved. So probably two, three years we were there.

SIGRIST: Did you keep animals on the farm?

ANDREASEN: Yes.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about the animals on the farm?

ANDREASEN: Cows. We didn't have any horses. We had cows and calves and they took, when you took them out to grass they were on a, they had something around their neck on a rope. And there was like a, an iron thing we'd bang down in the ground. And then we would go

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and move them like every hour or so, half hour, every hour so they could grass some more.

SIGRIST: Was that the responsibility of the children?

ANDREASEN: Well, when you were old enough to do it, yes.  
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Well, how old would that be? How old were you?

ANDREASEN: Well, when I remember doing, see, we moved to another farm in Jutland. And when I remember, I would say I was about eight, nine, when I could go and move them, yes. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Now, why did you move to Jutland?

ANDREASEN: I have no idea. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did your, well, you said your parents were born there.

ANDREASEN: Well, we sold that, yeah. We moved to where my father was born. We moved to his, it wasn't a town. it was like a village, you know. And he bought another small place there and that had a turf factory like...

SIGRIST: Turf?

ANDREASEN: Turf.

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SIGRIST: Turf.

ANDREASEN: Do you know what that is?

SIGRIST: Yes, like sod, uh...

ANDREASEN: Well, it's not sod. It's things they make and they burned that rather than coal.

SIGRIST: Like in Ireland.

ANDREASEN: Did they do that in Ireland, too?

SIGRIST: Yes, yeah.

ANDREASEN: Uh huh.

SIGRIST: I didn't realize they did that in Denmark also.

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes. Oh, we had a big thing. And, oh my goodness, we had to go out, you know, when they dry, after they lay them out in a form like, and when they're dried enough then we had to, us kids, we worked. We had to go out and we raised them out on each end like and, to dry. And then after that again they were raised up and made in big, round things like that (she gestures) that stood until they dried. And then they were sold and they supplied, I remember my father was supplying to a mareet [ph], that's, you know, where

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you took the milk in those days to be, uh...

SIGRIST: Processed somehow?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, whatever, you know.

SIGRIST: Tell me, the turf, now, did you grow that on your farm or did, was it, did it grow wild?

ANDREASEN: No, it was the, it was the ground that was there that supplied that. "Mose" they called them. (Terra?) mose.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

ANDREASEN: M-O-S-E, and mose, mose, yeah. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: That's interesting. I didn't realize that they did that in Denmark, too.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, oh yeah. He had a, quite a, because he had, well, my older brothers was working there too, and he had quite a few people working there. That's besides the farm we had. He had both cows and horses there, too.

SIGRIST: So that was a bigger farm in Jutland.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, oh yeah. That it was.

SIGRIST: You mentioned that you had an older sister. Now you just

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mentioned you had older brothers, too. What were their names?

ANDREASEN: My sister's, my sister is still living. She is living in Denmark, Marianne. And then I had a brother Karl, Alfred, Marius, Guthard...

SIGRIST: Guthard.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, and Jøs.

SIGRIST: And Jos. How do you spell Jøs?

ANDREASEN: J-German Ø-S, you know, with the line through it.

SIGRIST: And they're all older than you? Were you the baby of the family?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, I'm the youngest of the family, yes.

SIGRIST: We should talk about your parents, actually. What was your father's name?

ANDREASEN: Ole Olesen.

SIGRIST: (not understanding her) Olo?

ANDREASEN: O-L-E.

SIGRIST: Oh, oh, like Olesen.

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ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Oh, I, and that's how you got your maiden name, from your father's name?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me what your father's personality was like.

ANDREASEN: Oh, he was a kind of a straight, uh, man, I guess. But he was a, he was a good man. But he, you towed the line. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a story that would, that would reflect his strictness?

ANDREASEN: Well, uh...

SIGRIST: Something that maybe you did that he wasn't too happy about?

ANDREASEN: No, not really. But only that you knew what you had to do. You did it and that was it.

SIGRIST: What were some of the rules in the house that you had to follow?

ANDREASEN: Uh, no, I don't know. Things went very smooth. We didn't, uh...

SIGRIST: As being the youngest, and a woman, were there certain things that you weren't allowed that maybe your older brothers could around

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the house?

ANDREASEN: Uh, probably. I don't really recall that, uh, you, we went to school and we come home. We did have to go out and raise some of these turfs there. That we did.

SIGRIST: And the girls did that as well as the boys?

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes. We sure did, yeah.

SIGRIST: What were some of your other chores around that, that you were responsible for?

ANDREASEN: Well, I did learn to milk a cow. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: How do you milk a cow? Can you describe it for me?

ANDREASEN: Well, you sit on a little stool, a little round stool, and you hold the pail between your knees and you kind of have to have your head against the cow. And then you go (she gestures), two at a time.

SIGRIST: (describing her gesturing) You make this rhythmic motion with your hands.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, uh huh, uh huh. And they get the milk.

SIGRIST: Who taught you how to do that?

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ANDREASEN: Well, I suppose, it was either my mother or father. I really don't remember.

SIGRIST: Was that something that women did more often or did both men and women milk the cows on the farm?

ANDREASEN: Well, they, women certainly helped, too. They did.

SIGRIST: Then how would you, what would you do with the milk? How would you store the milk?

ANDREASEN: We had big pails, "transportskanike" [ph] we called them and...

SIGRIST: "Transportpanike?"

ANDREASEN: Yeah, "kane," it's transportkane [ph].

SIGRIST: Oh, transportkane [ph].

ANDREASEN: Yeah, and you know we had a strainer, when we poured the milk through the strainer into the pail. And then there's a wagon that came along and that picked up those pails every morning, you know. And they went to a mareet [ph] and then they separated like as the cream from the milk, you know.

SIGRIST: And then would the family get that back?

ANDREASEN: We usually got, yeah, we got it back. But the, you know, I guess

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without the cream and the things, and then, you know, the milk was used there on the farm again.

SIGRIST: I bet when you woke up this morning you never thought you'd be tape recording how to milk a cow. (they laugh)

ANDREASEN: I never did like to milk a cow but there was times when I had to do it. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: But tell me what your father looked like. If you had to describe him in words, what did he look like?

ANDREASEN: My father was over six feet tall. He was in, in the King's Guard. And he had the big, uh, fur hat, you know, that they wear. And uh, that was, he was very proud of that. (she laughs) That was favorite...

SIGRIST: Do you remember seeing his uniform? I mean, he was still active in that when you were growing up?

ANDREASEN: They had, no, no he wasn't, no.

SIGRIST: Oh no, that was before.

ANDREASEN: That was, he was out then. But that was his pride and joy, telling us about that (she laughs) and singing the songs and (she laughs)...

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SIGRIST: Do you remember any of the songs that he sang?

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Can you sing one for us in Danish?

ANDREASEN: Uh, oh, I can't sing.

SIGRIST: Or just try a little bit?

ANDREASEN: (she laughs, then sings a couple of lines of a song in Danish and then laughs again) That's enough. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Well, thank you. Let's talk about...

ANDREASEN: (translating the song) Here come, here, here, here we are coming, the soldiers from the king's Copenhagen, or something like that.

SIGRIST: And, and, and that was really sort of his glory days. He was...

ANDREASEN: That was his glory days. And he, he loved to sit and talk about that. And with his, he had some friends that was there at the same time and they were very (she laughs)...

SIGRIST: So they would come into your house.

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes. They would sit and talk and they would have a (Danish). (she laughs heartily)

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SIGRIST: Is that Danish for liquor or something? (he laughs)

ANDREASEN: And what they call (Danish).

SIGRIST: Oh, my goodness. Can you spell that, please?

ANDREASEN: Well, that's like a black coffee. And they put the aquavit in it.

SIGRIST: Oh, I see. Okay. We may be calling you on the phone to get some of these spellings of (Mrs. Andreassen laughs)...

ANDREASEN: That's okay.

SIGRIST: Tell me about, so children were allowed to come into the room when, when all the men were around telling their war stories.

ANDREASEN: Well, that's, family rooms, you know, there wasn't that many. We used, you have a kitchen, you have a living room and then you what they called (Danish). That's your nice living room. But, you know, everyone sat in their, I guess what we would call a family room here, (Danish).

SIGRIST: Oh, my goodness. (they laugh at the prospect of another Danish word to spell) Oh. (he decides to forego asking Mrs. Andreassen to spell the word) Do you know how your parents met?

ANDREASEN: I don't know. Well, that was after, my mother was, well, she was

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born Yerma [ph], I believe, but she was living in Holstebro. I think my mother was the first telephone operator that was in Holstebro. And that's where they met.

SIGRIST: Was that before you were born?

ANDREASEN: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: What, what, did she ever talk about being a telephone operator in, in, I guess the 1890s...

ANDREASEN: Well, it's one of the stories when you asked about, you know, that, uh, what went on in those days, I guess, you know. We, we heard that.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any of the things that she said about that experience?

ANDREASEN: No, not really, except that it was one of the things, you know, we heard. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Tell me about your mother's personality, what she was like as a person.

ANDREASEN: Oh, my mother was a very easy going, soft kind of mother. And she lived to be ninety four years old.

SIGRIST: Ah. Do you know what year she was born?

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ANDREASEN: Well, I should know but I don't. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Well, that's fair. Tell me, when you think back to your childhood, say, you know, when you were ten or something, is there a story that you can tell me about your mother that, that you always like to tell, something that your mother did or an experience that you shared with your mother that comes to mind when you think about your mother when you were a kid?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, well (she pauses), I remember we had, like before Christmas, we always had an evening where we were making decorations for the Christmas tree, you know. That was made out of paper usually and we, that was always a very cozy time. And I think it's New Year's Eve she used to make (Danish) and anyone that came, similar to what we have the Fourth of July here with a lot of noise and things. New Year's Eve, people used to go around with those things that make noise and she would invite them into to have a (Danish) and a cup of coffee and so on. But it was similar to what the Fourth of July is here, I guess, but not to that extent but that, the young folks would go around to the houses and then shoot these things off and...

SIGRIST: But this would be on New Year's?

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

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ANDREASEN: That was New Year's Eve.

SIGRIST: What were your mother's chores around the house? What was she responsible for doing?

ANDREASEN: Oh, she did a lot of things. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: List them for me. What, what...

ANDREASEN: She, she cooked and she cleaned and she, oh, at that time we had a well where we had to go and pick up the water by the pailful, and I remember her doing that. And she would milk the cows, too.

SIGRIST: Did she make clothes for the children?

ANDREASEN: Oh, she sewed. She made everything for us.

SIGRIST: Do you remember a dress that you had when you were a children that sticks out in your...

ANDREASEN: I certainly do.

SIGRIST: Can you describe it, please?

ANDREASEN: It was red material, wool material and it had a little black pin stripe in it and it was decorated with little, narrow velvet ribbon. It came like this (she gestures) and it came it a bow here (she gestures) in

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the front and around the sleeves and around the belt. And I think I still have a picture of that, believe it or not. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: How old were you when you had that dress?

ANDREASEN: Well, I must have been eight or nine.

SIGRIST: Did you, did you get the dress for a special occasion?

ANDREASEN: Uh, we both got the same thing. Whether it was, I know I wore it to a wedding of my cousin's. Maybe it was for that. And I remember the dress I got before I was confirmed. I got a very nice dress, too, with the, there was a dressmaker in to make that one.

SIGRIST: And what did that one look like? Can you describe that one for me?

ANDREASEN: That was a salmon colored dress. And it had like, like a little, almost like a little satin. I'm sure it wasn't but, uh, decorations around the...(she gestures)

SIGRIST: Like a little satin yoke around the...

ANDREASEN: Yoke. That's what I couldn't think of. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Are there toys that you remember as a child? What was your favorite thing that you played with when you were a child?

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- ANDREASEN: I had a doll with a porcelain head and I was playing with it and I was throwing it up in the air and catching it and it fell and it broke. And I hid it. (she laughs)
- SIGRIST: Were you afraid someone would get mad at you for breaking your doll?
- ANDREASEN: Yeah. I'm sure I did get a scolding. I don't remember but I remember...(she laughs)
- SIGRIST: Did your family, when you were a child, did your family do a lot of things as a group?
- ANDREASEN: Yes, we had family gatherings once a year usually, both with my father's family and with my mother's family. And we went by horse and carriage and my father and mother sitting up on the seat, of course, and when we were going home at night we were usually laying down in the back of the car, uh, the wagon and fell asleep. (she laughs)
- SIGRIST: And what would you do? Is this like a picnic that you were going to or somebody's house?
- ANDREASEN: Well, in, in the house usually, you know, and dinner and everything, you know.
- SIGRIST: So would you say that the, that the family provided entertainment in a way? I mean, that's how you...

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ANDREASEN: That, that was the entertainment usually. Each one, we always went to the different family members. And we had it once a year for my mother's family and once a year for my father's family. And it was nice.

SIGRIST: Were there grandparents living that, that were part of your life?

ANDREASEN: My father's father was alive, yes.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about him?

ANDREASEN: Oh, (she laughs) I remember, I used to, my mother used to do the wash for him and I would go with the wash with a little, like a kerchief and the things was tied and that, like a little bundle. And I would go back and forth with that. And each time when I came, he would show me, his wife had made white things that they buried them in. (Danish) we called them. And she had made that by hand. And he would show it to me each time when I came there. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Was that what he was going to be buried in?

ANDREASEN: Him? Yeah.

SIGRIST: Was it like a shroud, sort of?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, a white, like a white shirt with long sleeves and that's what

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they used in those days. And he, he was quite proud of that.

SIGRIST: Did he die while you were still in Denmark?

ANDREASEN: Yes. He died when he was eighty four. I went to his funeral.

SIGRIST: How old were you when that happened?

ANDREASEN: Oh, uh, I probably was seventeen, eighteen.

SIGRIST: And what can you tell me about what you remember about the funeral and, and that whole occasion?

ANDREASEN: Well, my father and, I guess there was, there was four brothers there. I guess I remember them, you know, carrying the casket and, uh, they throwed three shovels of dirt on the casket.

SIGRIST: Was he indeed buried in that shirt?

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes, indeed he was. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about school. You said you started school when you were seven.

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What, what's it like for a child to go to school in Denmark?

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ANDREASEN: Well, you went with your books and your wooden shoes, and you bought your slippers along and put them on inside the schoolroom, and left your wooden shoes outside.

SIGRIST: Now why would you do that?

ANDREASEN: Well, because, uh, because the slippers was clean. Wear the wooden shoes when you walked outside and then...

SIGRIST: And were wooden shoes what you always wore, like on an everyday basis?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, outside, yes.

SIGRIST: Where did you get them?

ANDREASEN: Well, there was a man, uh, a store in like the village that sold them.

SIGRIST: And would you get, how often did you get a pair, a new pair of wooden shoes?

ANDREASEN: As your foot grew, I guess. (she laughs) They have a, the ones we had in Denmark, they're a little different from the ones you see in Holland now. They had like a leather top, not all the way to the top but halfway like and then the sole was wood and the heels, too.

And that's what you walked in outside in those days.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's interesting. So it had sort of a leather top...

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ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: ...and your foot slipped in but the back...

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: ...was wooden. The back and the sole...

ANDREASEN: Yeah, yeah, yeah...

SIGRIST: ...were wooden.

ANDREASEN: Uh huh.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's interesting. And then you said you, you took them off. You had to put slippers on when you went to school.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, uh huh, when you go inside.

SIGRIST: And then how long was the school day?

ANDREASEN: Well, that seemed to be all day, I think. Well, I guess we came around four o'clock, we came home around that, three, maybe we got out at three. I don't remember. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Do you remember any of your teachers that you had in Denmark?

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ANDREASEN: Yes, I do.

SIGRIST: Can you describe one of them for me?

ANDREASEN: I even have pictures. Well, I don't remember her name now, the first teacher, but she was very nice. The main thing I remember about her, it sounds silly, but she was impressing upon us that you could not steal. And she said even if you steal a small piece of, a lump of sugar, you know, the sugar lumps you could buy, that's stealing. And I know I stole them. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Where would you steal them from?

ANDREASEN: My mother's, from the cupboard or, you know, you had the bowl there with the sugar. (she laughs) I know I did that. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Was, was the school part of the church at that time or was it...?

ANDREASEN: No, uh huh. That had no connection with the church whatsoever. I believe the state supports the church. I remember my father having to pay (Danish) they call it. That's church tax.

SIGRIST: And what, what denomination is that, the church?

ANDREASEN: Lutheran.

SIGRIST: You were Lutheran.

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ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Were you a practicing family? Was that very much part of your life?

ANDREASEN: Well, you, you, certainly you went to Sunday school and you, uh, you went to church when the occasion was there. I wouldn't say we went every Sunday but probably we did more so, I don't think my father went to church too often. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: So I can assume your mother was more religious than your father.

ANDREASEN: Well, she, (she laughs) I guess she's the one that was pushing us in that, well, that was something you, you had to do. And, you know, before you're confirmed you have to go to the minister's house for six months to be prepared for it.

SIGRIST: Oh, I see, as sort of an instruction time.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, to, before you were confirmed.

SIGRIST: And again, girls as well as boys?

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes, we went together, yes. And then you had a big confirmation. That was a big day. Then you were grown up...

SIGRIST: You reached your adulthood.

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ANDREASEN: ...when you were fourteen, yes, indeed.

SIGRIST: We need to pause just for a second so that Peter can flip over the tapes and then we'll get you to America.

ANDREASEN: Ah.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGIN SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: Okay, Peter has flipped over the tapes and we're about to begin Side Two with Anna Andreasen, who came from Denmark in 1926 when she was twenty. Well, we've kind of hit some highlights of your childhood. (Mrs. Andreasen laughs) I'd like to know when you were growing up, what did you know about America as you were growing up in Denmark?

ANDREASEN: It's the richest land in the world. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Why did you think that?

ANDREASEN: I didn't think that. That's what I heard, it's the wealthiest country.

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SIGRIST: Did you have family that was in America already?

ANDREASEN: My second oldest brother left home. My father didn't, wouldn't let him go out on a ship but, however, he left on his own anyhow. And we didn't hear from him for many years. And when we finally did hear from him, he was here in the States and he was married and had one child, I believe, when we heard. And he had worked his way up. He was captain for, at that it wasn't Standard Oil, it was, it was another oil company that Esso bought out after. This go back many years. He had worked himself up from being what they call (Danish) or, you know, on a boat. And he never came back to Denmark again. And he, of course, when he, he wrote to the post office in the town where we were living and I believe that's how we heard from him. And writing to him, I told him, "I think I would like to come over." And he wrote back, "If you'd like to come, I will send you the ticket." And he did that.

SIGRIST: When you were a child growing up, was this Guthard? Is that...?

ANDREASEN: Guthard

SIGRIST: Guthard. G-U-T...

ANDREASEN: H-A-R-D.

SIGRIST: D, D like in dog?

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

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SIGRIST: Right, but it's pronounced like a T.

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: When you were a child growing up with him, did you know of his interest in getting to America? Had he always really wanted to leave and go to America?

ANDREASEN: Well, you see, there's quite a few years between us now because I was the youngest. I think there's fourteen years between us.

SIGRIST: Oh, there is a long time then, yeah.

ANDREASEN: And the only memory I have in Denmark was him making fun of me at one time or another. And I can still see, uh, hear that. (they laugh) And he did have papers. He had been sailing on a, on a sailing ship and he did have papers. But my father had taken the papers away from him and he had got a hold of them somehow or another and took off. And that was the last he was in Denmark.

SIGRIST: If, if your father was so against your brother's coming to America, how did he feel about your wanting to go to America?

ANDREASEN: Well, he was dead.

SIGRIST: Oh, he had died.

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ANDREASEN: No, I'm sorry. He took me to the station when, yeah. No, they, they didn't mind. I don't know that he was against him coming. He was just against him going out on the boats sailing.

SIGRIST: Do you know why your father would, would have that objection?

ANDREASEN: I really don't know.

SIGRIST: But it was a strong power with your father.

ANDREASEN: Yes, it was. He had taken the papers away from my brother. He got a hold of them.

SIGRIST: So you don't know if your father had some bad experience himself on a ship that would make him...

ANDREASEN: No, no, no, no.

SIGRIST: Not that you know of.

ANDREASEN: Absolutely no, no. I think it was just he wanted to the boss, I guess.  
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Why do you suppose your brother stayed in America for so long without making contact with the family?

ANDREASEN: I really don't know.

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SIGRIST: It's an interesting question, you know...

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: ...why he would...

ANDREASEN: He, he, because he was a very, uh, kind person. He was, in fact, he was in (she pauses) the navy during World War Two. He was in the Pacific. He worked himself up to be a very, uh...

SIGRIST: He liked the ocean, too, obviously.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, yes, he did and he, he has a family here which is still here. I just, uh...

SIGRIST: Uh huh.

ANDREASEN: Yeah. In fact, my niece (is still?) in my picture down there.

SIGRIST: You mentioned that he, he fought in World War Two later on.

ANDREASEN: Yes.

SIGRIST: Did any of your brothers have any personal experience with World War One, or were they all just not quite old enough or...

ANDREASEN: They were not, they were not in the, in the war but whether they were not, well, I had two brothers that went to South America. So

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it would only be my oldest brother, I guess. And he, he had been in the service, you know, the services. They had to go to serve in the army and I guess he was already out. They serve so long and then...

SIGRIST: Like a mandatory service that he has to go through.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Did your family experience any hardship during World War One?

ANDREASEN: Well, yes, as far as you couldn't get coffee, you couldn't get thread, you couldn't get (she laughs) all the things that, I guess, is important, you know, you couldn't get. But as far as suffering, we always had plenty to eat and, because living on the farm there, you know, that makes a difference.

SIGRIST: Yeah, that does.

ANDREASEN: It was just things that, like coffee and, of course, clothes was scarce. But I wouldn't say we, of course (she pauses), not really that I remember then.

SIGRIST: Mostly just deprivation of certain food commodities and that sort of...

ANDREASEN: Yeah, yeah.

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SIGRIST: All right, so Guthard tells you if you want to come to America, he'll sponsor you.

ANDREASEN: Yes.

SIGRIST: What was the next step? What was the next step? Tell me about telling your mother and father that you wanted to go to America?

ANDREASEN: Well, I don't know that I really recall that. I guess I was home and I got the letter and I, I guess that, uh, there was no objection. They were, uh...

SIGRIST: Do you, do you have any recollection of getting the necessary papers to leave Denmark?

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes. I had to go into Copenhagen and, oh, and I had to get references from my teachers like from school, a written reference from a couple of, there, and, you know, your birth certificate which is from the church where you were baptized. That was the only record of your birth, and I got that from Svendborg, of course, where I was born.

SIGRIST: Did this whole process take a long time, getting all the right papers and...?

ANDREASEN: I wonder if it didn't take about a year.

SIGRIST: Because you have to go to all these different places and...

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ANDREASEN: Yeah, yeah, that's it. And I had to go to Copenhagen and to the consulate and it went smooth. I had no trouble. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you go by yourself or did somebody go with you from your family?

ANDREASEN: No, I went by myself.

SIGRIST: Yeah. Was that the first time you had ever been to Copenhagen?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, but my sister was there at that time. And there was people we knew, see, so I had a place to go so you know it wasn't (?). Because it seemed to me it took the better part of the day to travel because you, first you went by train and then a ferry and then a train across the island of Fyn and then the ferry across over to Sjaelland and then...

SIGRIST: That's quite a process.

ANDREASEN: And then a train again, yeah. So, Denmark is a small country but it took time just the same. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: It had a lot of water in between it.

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you packed to take with you?

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ANDREASEN: I guess I packed what I had. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Do you remember any personal object that you took with you as sort of a, a memento of your life in Denmark?

ANDREASEN: I might have but I don't recall. Well, I'll tell you, my oldest brother home, he was a musician. And he had packed a lot of books that he wanted to send over to my brother here. And I had all my clothes in a suitcase. This is some story. (she laughs) I don't know if you want to hear it.

SIGRIST: Please.

ANDREASEN: And all these books, they were in there. But then I thought I had a big cardboard box, too, and I thought, "I'm going to put the books in there and I'll have a lot of string around it." And here I came with the suitcase in one hand and the books in the other. Now I lost my train of thought now...

SIGRIST: Your brother was sending the books to your other brother...

ANDREASEN: Oh, he was, yes. And my sister-in-law now, my brother's wife here...

SIGRIST: Guthard's wife.

ANDREASEN: Yeah. She came here to Ellis Island to meet me. And, you know, it

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went very smooth coming through here. We walked and we were examined and I went into where they examine the papers and my sister-in-law was waiting for me there. And she is, or was Irish. And, of course, we couldn't talk together. And so there was a minister from a Danish church up in the Bronx that visited the ships as they landed. And I think he felt kind of sorry for me that I couldn't talk to her, you know. He kind of stuck by me the whole time. And he came with us. We took a ferry or a tugboat, but we came over to Manhattan for, to South Ferry there. Uh, whatever, whichever, why I don't, we had to go, we had to go to New York to go to Brooklyn, I guess, at that time.

SIGRIST: And that's where you were heading for?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, for Brooklyn, yes. So as we come off the ferry there, my sister-in-law picked up the box with the books. It was a great big thing. They were heavy, you know. (she laughs) And remember now, it was a blizzard and there was just a little walk where you could walk one by one coming off that ferry that took us over there. And I was walking behind her and this string cut through the cardboard box. (she laughs) She dropped one book. (she laughs and gestures) And, you know, remember I couldn't talk to her. I didn't know what to, I picked up the book and there I am. And I picked up another book and I picked up another book (she laughs) and finally this minister, he went with us. He got a hold of my sister-in-law. And I had one of those travel blankets, you know, over my, that was the style then. You travel with that over your arm. (she laughs) And he got a hold of her and he took that blanket

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and he spread it out on the snow there and piled all the books in and tied it together and threw it over his shoulder and (she laughs) took it over, over to the Swedish home or whatever, church home or whatever was down there. (she laughs) We left them there and my sister-in-law went over and picked them up. But we often have a, had a lot of fun talking about that (?).

SIGRIST: So you were carrying this box of books all the way from Denmark to America...

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: ...plus your own luggage. Where did the boat leave from? Where did you get the ship to come to America?

ANDREASEN: Copenhagen.

SIGRIST: Copenhagen. So you had to go back to Copenhagen.

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And you said your father took you.

ANDREASEN: No, he didn't. He took me to the train for, in Jutland.

SIGRIST: I see. Do you remember saying good bye to your parents?

ANDREASEN: Yes, I do.

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SIGRIST: Can you describe that a little bit for me?

ANDREASEN: I cried. And I could see my father. The train, you know, the gates go down where the streets run through. And I was in the train where they were and he had walked over to where the gate was and was standing there waving. That's the last time I saw him, yeah.

SIGRIST: You were traveling alone.

ANDREASEN: Yes, I was, to Copenhagen. But then my sister was there and, uh...

SIGRIST: Did, but she didn't come to America with you. You came...

ANDREASEN: No.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the ship that you took?

ANDREASEN: Oscar II.

SIGRIST: Oscar II.

ANDREASEN: My mother was over here visiting, though.

SIGRIST: Oh, so your mother was here.

ANDREASEN: She came here to visit after I got married.

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SIGRIST: Oh, oh, a little bit later.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, uh huh.

SIGRIST: And you said this is April, correct? That you were coming in April?

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: April of 1926.

ANDREASEN: No, I came in February.

SIGRIST: February of '26, okay. And tell me what you remember about the voyage on the ocean. What sticks out in your mind?

ANDREASEN: It was rough, quite rough.

SIGRIST: Were you ill?

ANDREASEN: No, I wasn't but it certainly was rolling. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you have a cabin in the ship?

ANDREASEN: Yes.

SIGRIST: And did you have roommates?

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ANDREASEN: Yes, I did.

SIGRIST: Do you remember anything about that experience?

ANDREASEN: No, not really.

SIGRIST: No. How long was the ship, voyage?

ANDREASEN: I think it was ten days. And, as I say, we came into New York Harbor and we did dock over in Hoboken.

SIGRIST: You docked in Hoboken.

ANDREASEN: Yes. It was, the Scandinavian-American Line had the pier there and then we were taken from there on a tugboat here, to Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: You told us a little bit about what happened when you were at Ellis Island. Can you describe for me what it all looked like when you were here?

ANDREASEN: Quite impressive, to know that that was the gates you came through to come into the country.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me how you felt about having to be examined and that sort of thing?

ANDREASEN: I think I resented that a little bit. (she laughs) Something you're not

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used to, being stripped. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Oh, so they stripped you down then.

ANDREASEN: To the waist, yeah.

SIGRIST: And that, you were a little resentful that...

ANDREASEN: Yeah, and I guess it was your lungs and your heart. That was it.

SIGRIST: Were there, were, other than the minister, the Danish minister that you knew of, were there other Danish people that you were...?

ANDREASEN: There was no one, there was no one I could talk to. My brother was out on a ship, too. Pan American, that was the oil company he worked for at that time.

SIGRIST: He worked for the Pan American Oil Company.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, and he was away at the time. But the...

SIGRIST: That's why he sent his wife to get you, I guess.

ANDREASEN: (she laughs) Yeah, of course.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you were wearing when you arrived at Ellis Island?

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ANDREASEN: I sure do.

SIGRIST: Can you describe it for me?

ANDREASEN: (she laughs) It was a dark blue coat with a kind of a brown fur on it. And I had, we wore all the big hats you see down there in the pictures. I had a big felt hat on, too. (she laughs) Yes, I can still see myself. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: And then you had a dress on under the coat?

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: What were the hemlines like at that time?

ANDREASEN: Uh, I would say about three quarters down.

SIGRIST: Fairly long, then.

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Of course, it's winter, so...

ANDREASEN: Yeah, a half, mid-calf, uh huh.

SIGRIST: Did you see anything at Ellis Island that you had never seen before? Anything that was new to you?

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ANDREASEN: Well, it was all new, you know. You walk in and you, uh, everything is new.

SIGRIST: So you were here for just a couple hours, probably, right?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, uh huh.

SIGRIST: And you met your sister-in-law and couldn't really talk to her...

ANDREASEN: I couldn't, no. But it didn't take me too long to pick up. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Well, and you told us that wonderful story about the books dropping. So they bring you to Brooklyn.

ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me how you spent your first night in America.

ANDREASEN: Oh, well, I remember seeing the children. Well, they, they lived on East 35th Street near King's Highway in Flatbush. And their oldest girl, she was about six I would say, and then there was one that was four (?)and Eugene, he was in a high chair. And I met them and the lady that took care of them, she lived downstairs, a friend of theirs. And I slept on the couch in the dining room. They had a couch in there and that's where I slept.

SIGRIST: Did they feed you dinner when you arrived? What did you eat that first night when you got to America?

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ANDREASEN: That I don't remember, but I'm sure I got food.

SIGRIST: Something, yeah. (they laugh)

ANDREASEN: I stayed there for I think about a month, maybe. Maybe a little bit more.

SIGRIST: Now, your mother, was your mother, oh, she came later, after you were married.

ANDREASEN: This, after I was married, yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah, right. What, was it, was it your intention then to get a job immediately.

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Tell me about what that experience was like trying to get a job.

ANDREASEN: Well, of course, my sister-in-law helped me and, uh, not too, it was not too far from there. I got a job in, working in a house. It was a divorced wife with, there was a son about twelve years old.

SIGRIST: Is this like domestic work that you're doing in the house?

ANDREASEN: Yes.

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SIGRIST: Did you go to an agency to get the job or you just answered an add in the paper...?

ANDREASEN: No, I think we answered an add in the paper, took me up there and I got along. You point to things and you, and what helped me a lot, now, that little boy that was there, twelve year old, I sat in the window and listened to the kids talking out in the street. And then I picked up a lot of English that way. And then it comes.

SIGRIST: Was it hard to learn English for you? Was that a difficult process?

ANDREASEN: No, I don't think so. But, you know, you mispronounce a lot of words. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Is there a story or an incident that you remember where you were trying to say something and it came out wrong?

ANDREASEN: Well, the main thing I remember is my sister-in-law had two younger brothers. They also came from Ireland. And they delighted in teaching me how to say "shut up" and different things like that. (they laugh) And you know how, I didn't know what I was saying, so...(she laughs heartily)

SIGRIST: And they thought this was very funny, probably.

ANDREASEN: That, yes, uh huh. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: How long, how long were you doing domestic work before you got

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married?

ANDREASEN: About a year. I met my husband, he was a, I think he was second mate or had been sailing with my brother at that time. At that time they were not on the same ship, though. I was here for a month before I met my brother.

SIGRIST: Oh, because was out on the, out on the ocean.

ANDREASEN: Yeah. And my husband had been sailing with my brother and they were friends. But he was another ship then, though, but uh...

SIGRIST: But they knew each other.

ANDREASEN: They knew each other. That's how I met husband.

SIGRIST: And what was your husband's name?

ANDREASEN: Hans Andreasen.

SIGRIST: And was he Danish himself or was he born in this country?

ANDREASEN: No, no, he was born in Norway.

SIGRIST: Oh, he was Norwegian.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, and he left Norway on a sailing ship, too. Norma can probably tell you more about that than I...

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SIGRIST: Norma is your daughter who is listening.

ANDREASEN: Yeah. I think he, I think he was fourteen when he shipped out.

SIGRIST: What was it about your, your husband-to-be that attracted you?  
What, what did you like about him?

ANDREASEN: Oh, I guess I liked everything about him. (they laugh) He was nice.  
He has a good sense of humor and he was kind and he was good  
and he

certainly was always good. He was lost during World War Two.

SIGRIST: I see.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, my youngest was six months old and my oldest was  
twelve. He was on an Esso tanker and it was torpedoed outside of  
Iceland. And no one, there were, none one survived. They all went  
down.

SIGRIST: That's terrible. How many children did you have?

ANDREASEN: Four.

SIGRIST: And can you name them for me, please?

ANDREASEN: Yes. My oldest daughter is Sue. She died four, five years ago. I

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have a daughter Marian who lives in New Jersey. My daughter Norma...

SIGRIST: Who is with you today.

ANDREASEN: ...who takes good care of her mommy, live in Long Island. And my son Hans lives in Staten Island and, him and his family, they have the house that we had. He bought that from me when he got married.

SIGRIST: And was, is Hans the youngest?

ANDREASEN: Yes, yes.

SIGRIST: So he was, he was six months old when your husband died then, he was.

ANDREASEN: Yeah, he's fifty tw--, he'll be fifty two, I think the 25th now, five days from now.

SIGRIST: I, I have a question. When you first met your husband, when you first met him, how did you communicate? I assume he either speaks English or Norwegian and...

ANDREASEN: Yeah, well, between the two we did well. At that time I was able to make myself understood. It didn't take me long and I, I had some books with me, you know, translating English, Danish into English.

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And that helps. And, uh, I didn't have a hard time learning.

SIGRIST: We have just a couple minutes left and I want to ask you, when your mother came to visit you, I want to know what your mother thought of America.

ANDREASEN: Well, I'm sure she was overwhelmed. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: How long did she stay?

ANDREASEN: I think it was, I think they were allowed to stay six months. It was, she came on a visit, you know.

SIGRIST: You had been married a year at this point?

ANDREASEN: Yeah, I, no, I had a baby already, my oldest daughter, yes.

SIGRIST: What year did you get married?

ANDREASEN: '28.

SIGRIST: 1928.

ANDREASEN: Yes.

SIGRIST: Okay. I'm just curious how your mother who, of course, is older at this point...

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ANDREASEN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: ...and had been, never been out of Denmark, what she thought of her daughter and her son, because Guthard is around, I assume, what she thought about your life in this strange country and...

ANDREASEN: Well, I'm sure she was happy to see us all well and happy and well taken care of and, uh, really.

SIGRIST: Your father had died by that point?

ANDREASEN: Oh, yes. My father died right after I got married, yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you have any advice for someone listening to this tape, some young person. You know, today is your eighty ninth birthday, you look back on your life, do you have any advice for somebody from the future listening to this tape about how to live their life?

ANDREASEN: Well, you take the bad with the good and you make the most out of the good things and you forget the things that you know you can't change. And look ahead and be happy for what you have and be grateful.

SIGRIST: Good. Well, Mrs. Andreasen, I want to thank you very much. This has been a delight and I'm very pleased to be able to know you and to add this interview to the collection here. Thank you.

ANDREASEN: Well, you're quite welcome. I don't know that I (she laughs) helped

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you any. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Well, this is Paul Sigrist signing off with Anna Andreasen on Thursday, April 20th, 1995 here at Ellis Island. Thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW