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THE FASHION INDUSTRY LEADERS

ANNÁ (MAXIMILIAN) POTOK

MAXIMILIAN FURS

Dates of Interviews

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Interviewed by

Mildred Finger
MAXIMILIAN FURS is a leading couture fur operation based in the U.S. Its active head is Anna Potok who, with her brother Maximilian Apfelbaum, founded the firm originally in Warsaw, Poland in about 1920.

Anna Potok and Maximilian (who dropped the family name and was known as Maximilian) established the firm here in about 1940 after fleeing Europe with their families.

The firm is known for its extraordinary use of furs (sable is one of their specialties), for the painstakingly careful customer fittings, for their remarkable workmanship, and for their extraordinary client list, which includes important and well-known women from the entire world.

Heading this enterprise, as he has for many years, is the incredible Anna Potok. Her story and the story of Maximilian Furs are told in her own words.
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ANNA POTOK

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Q. You were just starting to tell me about *John Fairchild coming to the collection.

A. He came with his wife to fit her, to attend her fitting.

Q. What kind of coat had she bought?

A. Mink coat. And he was enchanted with what she bought and we started to talk about fashion and about my experience; my experience in life and how everything was and how I came to it. And he was very excited about the story and after a few hours meeting with us he left. He didn't tell me anything, but the next day Pamela called and said that he has given an order to make an interview with me, and I said, please don't ask because I am very, very poor in that case and, and, I know that I would be a big bore and would rather not to; wouldn't like to make it. She said, no, no, I have to interview you, I will come to your house and you will see how it's easy and so and so. And certainly she came and we have a wonderful session here. But, I am talking about Mr. Fairchild who was absolutely so wonderful, so helpful, so excited about the collection, about everything around that it makes me, gave me a lift; I knew, that he's very, very tough and he's not easy. And when he came, the

*Chairman of Fairchild Publications.
first time it was many, many years ago to order the first mink coat and he started also to say, I would like this and this and that and that and I said, I believe that we could make a little bit different, and I believe that it will be much more becoming to Mrs. Fairchild. He said, you know I think that you absolutely right and I shouldn't interfere with you, with my definition. So I was very proud and really the coat was a big sensation. So I was lucky. I was always lucky with people so that helped me in my career.

Q. Well I don't think it was a matter of luck but we'll get to that in a little bit. I don't think it's luck; I think it's just that you are a wonderful, warm person who obviously also knows better than anybody what she is doing so that's why people rely upon you. But, could we start a little bit further back? I would like to go back to the time in Europe and tell me about your grandfather who was in the business of...

A. Dealer, a dealer.

Q. ...He was a dealer in pelts. Right, yes.

A. When I was five years old, I used to come to my grandfather for lunch and to his office I loved furs and touching furs and I played with the fur and he also had a corner,
especially for sables. And I admired the smell of the raw sables and I always came to smell the sables. Everybody hated the smell but I loved the sables. I played with the dressed sables but I smelled the raw sables and the smell for me was the best perfume in the world. I started having fun with the fur (with the skins because he was only fur dealer) but in very, very costly fur like sables, minks, broadtail. That was great fun. I did hate business but playing with fur was really a joy. And, at that time my grandfather taught me what they are doing and how, and the name of the, the skins. At that time my father was also in fur business but a little bit different. We had a very, very attractive, very glamorous shop in, Warsaw. It was extremely elegant, but my father never made couture business, couture fur, only more commercial.

Q. Ready-to-wear.
A. Ready-to-wear.
Q. Ready-to-wear.
A. And, I was in school and my brother was in the army and my father got very sick. He was not able to work any more and I was alone with my mother.
Q. Never in the business? Your mother was never in the
business?
A. Never, no, she was here, - and.... My mother, yes, helped my father; my mother took care of my father. So I decided without even asking my parents it was the moment when, the financial situation was very difficult so I said - all my life I loved challenges - and I said, I hate it but I believe that is my duty now to help my parents and I will try to make the business more glamorous than before. And I started to work by myself, only I and one worker and I went to the market where I bought skins. I bought three minks and all my salary went to the silk which I bought. I decided to go, to the French importer and buy the most magnificent silks which were very, very expensive. So, without telling my father I used my salary and I bought the magnificent, really magnificent silk for ermine, for others. And I started to make a little bit different than it was before. And when, I make business and I make money and....

Q. You mean, you began to sell coats?
A. Yes. And one day came a lady, very elegant lady, and asked me about mink jacket. She wanted a mink jacket
and she described to me what she wanted. We, I didn't have but I said to her, if you would wait a few days I will make a canvas, without obligation: if the canvas will be alright, fine: if not, that's it. So, she said, alright. I went to the studio and I said to, he was very poor mechanic, but I explained to him how to make...

Q. Who was this, one of the workers?
A. One of the workers. And I told him about how I would like to see the canvas. He made the canvas which absolutely was not what I wanted. I started to shape the canvas until I was sure that it was alright. And I made the canvas and she came, as she supposed to: she put on the canvas and she was delighted and she ordered the jacket. It was a fitted..., she was magnificent too because she had beautiful figure and was very elegant. Polish women were very fashion minded and very quality minded, they were not easy clientele, but they knew what they wanted. And, so it was, and I said to myself, if I am able to do that maybe I will, I have to go farther, I will try others. And I started to play with the canvases and somehow things went very well. And I started to sell and, and when my brother
came from the army he had no idea, he finished commercial school, and, and I told him about, about my feeling, and about my desire to go into fur couture. And he was shocked. And he said to me, you don't know anything and I don't know anything and I said, you are right but I am absolutely sure that we are going to make a big success because it's new and we can do that. Now, after long talk he said, alright. That was before, just before my father died.

Q. 1920? Nineteen...
A. Twenty..., my father died twenty-two.
Q. Uh, huh.
A. And, when my father died I went to Paris window shopping and my brother went to Leipsig and bought a few bundles of skins. They were absolutely fantastic. I came home and started to make a collection. And we worked really very hard to do it.

Q. Excuse me, was Leipsig where, did they always have their fur fairs in Leipsig at that time?
A. Yes, that was the biggest center - fur center. And, I started to make more models and people came to us - we were very young. They were shown the collection and gave us money to buy the skins, and they never, never were
disappointed just, just they said always, we didn't expect..., we expect good but not to that extent. And we made the show which was absolutely, extremely glamorous and floor length sables, floor length ermine, floor length, with sable around. It was really glamorous.

Q. Where did you do the show? Where, where did the show....??
A. In, on our premises...
Q. Oh, really.
A. ...yes. That was the first: later it was with ballerinas as models and it was really with style and all the Ambassadors came and they order for wives and it was terrific success.

Q. What was the name of the company at that time?
A. At that time was Maximilian Apfelbaum. But when we came here he dropped their name and it was only Maximilian. And, we started, that was only one floor but very big salon, very huge and on the street and the center Marshal Guska, hundred-twenty-five. It was like here, Gucci in the center on Fifth Avenue, and it was very glamorous and after two years working with big success and a big glamour, we bought a whole block so that we remained the same but we bought one more floor and, the lobby which was before the important shop, was only the lobby, and we built an elevator inside to the next floor and it was absolutely the most elegant. People
came from all over the world to see our collection, including the most important people and we got a medal from the President. Because people came specially, from over the world to see our collection.

Q. Do you know what year that ..., do you remember the year that you got the medal?

A. I have the medal.

Q. Okay, we'll look at it.

A. So, I will show you. And, it was a big glamour. But before I started, that means before when, I was alone one year, absolutely alone and I didn't know anything about business, I hated business. I never thought that I could manage. I did it only because of the emergency but just as I said, I liked challenges all my life. And a lady came and ordered a mink cape, and she was supposed to have ready Saturday and the cape was magnificent and supposed to be delivered Saturday. Saturday, I decided to not send and call her that I will send her Sunday because Monday she was going to Europe. And she said, alright, Sunday will be. And I decided that the lining was too poor for such a magnificent cape and I didn't know how to sew - I never had a needle in my hand - but I decided to, that it will be much better finished if I will finish
with a velvet ribbon around. Sunday nobody was working: I was sitting and putting there, the whole day; eleven o'clock in the evening I deliver myself the cape and it was a terrific success. And I was very proud I gave them so much for the money and I was very proud and it was really worthwhile, my effort. So it's a, everything was, in my career, never was easy - always was very difficult because we wanted every day better and more and more glamorous and more international and more and more and more. And we did every day better and that was our record: better and better and nicer and nicer. And we came to a terrific success.

Q. How did you and your brother divide up what you did?

A. He was, it happens very seldom that we left business alone without us. But happened that we met in Paris. But he was all day long very busy with skins, I was very busy looking, checking fashion. So in the evening we talked, but during the day nothing. He has very good sense of colors of quality. He didn't know and I didn't about my ability to make some garments but I had. I work, came to the office at half past eight. For two hours I worked with the fitters, and desingers. At eleven o'clock I was in the salon, unless a very important
lady came from out of town. But until eleven I was with the workers. And I knew what the operators were, what they are doing and they have no right to, to put anything together without showing me before they put it on the board. And I might change the skin, I change always to be better and better and better. I very often even match the skins but when they put together broadtails or mink or sable, they show me before they put them on the board and I said, this skin is wrong so we change; this skin is wrong until is, was perfect then they put on the board. When was put together I check again. So I, I didn't take for granted that it's alright. I checked, rechecked everything with the operators, with the cutter, with everyone, until it was really perfect and I was sure.

Q. I don't want to interrupt you but could you just describe the whole process from start to finish as you were doing it there. In other words, a customer would come in, let's say she wanted a mink jacket and you would then begin to discuss with her? Is that...

A. No, I, then I told, show her the skins but at that time I showed the skins but very often later, they trust me. they don't want even to see unless the color, which I have to see, to her complexion, could be lighter, could be
darker. But very often until now, the people are not seeing them...

Q. But just so I just understand the process by which a coat gets made.

A. So, after the canvas fitting...

Q. Well first you have to design the coat, right? or...

A. Yes that is so. If she select, selected a style...

Q. From a croquis or from a finished model?

A. Whatever I had. If I have not in fur I show her the canvas.

Q. Right.

A. And then she saw the skins and she accepted the skins and then after the final fitting, of the canvas they made a paper pattern from the canvas. And the canvas has to be perfect. After the pattern was done, we selected the skins and went to the cutter, fur cutter or the skin cutter and he matched the skins. Then he cut the skins. Then, it's going to the operator. From the operator...

Q. Who sews it together?

A. Together and, and also they cut the coat there. It's very important how they put together, how they match, that is very big process, very important process. And after it's together they put on the board when they wet the skin and they cut according to the pattern. And that's, it's not
so simple as I said but more or less. And then, to operator to put together, that means seamed there...

Q. Uh, huh,. Up near the shoulders.

A. ...of the shoulder, after the pattern and put the sleeves too and the collar. And when it's put together it going to the finishing department. It's preparing for fitting; the fitting is the first fur fitting: the fur fitter is changing on the client whatever is important, is necessary and if that's done and everything is alright, the lining is coming and the...

Q. Which you no longer pay for out of your salary?

A. No. No. No. But I did a lot with my salary to put in business because I thought maybe, that it was at the beginning and later certainly it was, it was as we expected in short time. It was glamor, really glamor and their shows were also very glamorous and glamorous, very glamorous people were there from all over the world.

Q. Did they come to you from other parts of the world?

A. Yes.

Q. Even then?

A. Oh yes, oh yes. And even, Merriwther, she was Ambassador

Q. Who was that? I'm sorry...
A. Merriwether.... What is her name Miss Post?

Q. Yes, Merriwether, Mrs. Merriwether Post.

A. Yea. She was, she went to Russia, she was Ambassador. They always came to see our collection. To Poland, to Warsaw. And, like Mrs. Post there were many others and the Rothschilds came, from Paris, always, they always have, they always order and from Italy their Ambassador and the crown people from Denmark, from Sweden; many, many people like that.

Q. And they must have known about you just by word of mouth because there were no newspapers that wrote up fashion?

A. Oh, absolutely. And it was, Maximilian started to be.... you know the customer, the Polish beautiful women, they travelled a lot and when they came to Paris in our coats.... They... Molyneux and everybody, Lanvin, they ask from where they have such a fantastic coat? And like Mrs..., the Radziwills, Prince and Princess Rezdiwill, both of them, were our customer in Poland and Mrs. Radziwill, Princess Radziwill met me at Molyneux and she said ...

Q. This was the mother? This wasn't ...

A. Mother.
Q. ...Mother of the Prince.
A. We have, I have already fourth generation of Rothschild, of...
Q. Radziwill.
A. Radziwill. And she said to me, I have to tell you something, Mr. Molyneux, Mr. Lanvin saw me in, in the coat and, and they said that never was like, they never see such beauties. At that time, I made for Mrs. Radziwill, you know for Christmas, for hunting, fox coat and she was very chic, she was very chic, very, very fashion minded and, and she said I will not order, unless, I will not order unless you will fit yourself, myself, because she was very difficult to fit and it was success. And She told me...
Q. Why was she difficult? Because she had a bad back?
A. Back. And she was not tall, he was very tall, very handsome but she was very chic. For him we made also a coat, floor length, for hunting, raccoon, at that time. And, so we had the people started to find out who is Maximilian. Why they have such a terrific success and it was really from one to the other was a terrific success and we work very hard, it was, it's
easy to talk about but to accomplish what we accomplish and we worked very, very, hard. And it was really from nothing to extreme success.

Q. Mrs. Potok, when did you get married? You were working, of course?
A. That was 1930, 1930 I was married?

Q. And your husband was not in the business at all?
A. No. No, No. He had factory of a kind of oil and they were very well off people and very nice family and...

Q. And you had one son?
A. I have one son, Andrew, who went to school was eight years old when we came here to New York.

Q. What was it like to be a career mother in those days?
A. I was born liberated but it a girl from good family wasn't expected to work; and it was very odd and very strange to everybody and they wonder that I am going to business and I am in business. But I didn't mind and after a few years they were all daggers, that I am able to work, and so on. But when my son was born, I was very unhappy when I was
pregnant because I was sure that I will be not able to take care of my child. That means I am not able to bring him up properly. But I never neglected my son, if something was important or not important or less important. I was absolutely devoted and loving and never stop, and I told him, the other day, a few weeks ago, he was very magnificent child. I told him when I saw you the first time when you were born, I fell in love with you. So he said, so did I. And since then, we are in love and friends and Andy got a wonderful education.

Q. Well, wait a minute. But, that, in Poland, when you were there, I mean he, he went to school just for a couple of years because you left when he was eight.

A. Right. Yes.

Q. And...

A. He was in school. Everybody and all the Prime Minister's wife and, and wife of President, he said, you son can go to any school you want. But I said, thank you, I will put him in one I feel is right. And Andy was always a very happy child
and, and really when we came here and before
he started the school it was, he went to the
doctor for check-up; and they found out that
Andy has a terrible disease.

Q. They found it out when he was that young?
A. Yea, eight years old. We didn't know until he
eight years old what it was. But all the doctors
said that he will get trouble when he will be
sixteen, but unfortunately it started much sooner.
But Andy never complained, never was, but it was
a time here in New York, he finished school,
Yale college and university as an architect.

Q. Could we go back a little bit? Because I would
like to hear much more about him later but
we're coming to the point where you and, and
your brother are going to leave. He also had
a child, right? He had a daughter?
A. Anita, yes.

Q. And she was a little bit younger than your son,
right?

Q. Two years younger.

A. So, what happened at the point where you decided
that you had better get out?
A. It was when, before the fall, I went to Paris for ten days, and I arranged everything before...
- children have to be in, at home, with their two nurses and Anita a nurse and Andy and they were together and....

Q. Did you live with your brother? Did you share an apartment?

A. No.

Q. No

A. Before he married, and before I married. (I was first), we were together with mother. But, so, I said, I went to Paris for ten days. The next day sitting at Armenonville with a Directress of Paqvin, I said to her, I am feel ..., I feel that war is coming, I better go back home.

Q. What year was this?

A. 1939.

Q. Yes.

A. And she told me, if the war will come don't go to Poland, stay in France; and I said, oh no, I am going to my family. And I started to get up. I left her and she said to me, if you need something call me. I went to buy a ticket. They don't want
to let me, 'cause they said it's too late and dangerous. And they said, you can go through Switzerland and the trip is supposed to take three more days, I said, no, I am in very much hurry, I am going, I want to - through Germany. She said, that is impossible, there is no train going, anymore. So, I said, I have to and, and then I called the lady, she talked to Paqvin, Paqvin arranged that, that I..., but they put a special wagon for me from Paris to go to Poland. And I was all alone in the whole wagon and, and I was in Berlin, it was very unpleasant. It was - I saw what is going on and how dangerous it was but I arrived safely into Poland and my brother and my husband waited for me and said, you are not going anymore to the office today; Russia and Germany make a pact together and then I started to cry because I knew that it's very, we are in danger. And he said, you will go to the children who are already in the summer house in the country and I went to the country...

Q. This was still in Poland? When you say the country?
A. In Poland, yes. And I went to the country
with my brother and the children were there
with nurses and cook and so on. And my brother
went also and then he said, I wanted to see
how you were and I am going back to Warsaw and
it started to be very dangerous, the bombs are
falling even to the neighbors and one day it was -
we were in the shelter in our garden and somebody
told, called Maximilian, that we are in very big
danger because their bombs are falling here and
there. And a few yards, the neighbor, the bomb
destroyed the whole... So my brother came also:
the bombs are falling all around, so he took us
from the shelter to the car. We didn't even
went to take something from the house because
from the shelter to the car came home to Warsaw and
it was many people came from all over ask us what
we are going to do. And I said, men and children
out as soon.... My brother said, no I have to stay
in Warsaw. I begged him and, anyhow, I said, today,
you have to and my husband and children have to go
out, they have to go out and, and Andy, and my brother,
to the last minute, said, and what will happen to the business? I said, so I will stay but you and children out. And, I talk and ask him and beg him and he came from that business and he said, they didn't let me. I said, alright, we, you, you escape in the evening, in the night, but you will go out. And I stop, start to pack only food and warm things, nothing else, and my jewelry and we went
- we escaped - we wanted to go to Rumania but we came to a place, on the water and it was closed. One hour before, the passage was closed and we have to change our...

Q. The passage into Rumania?
A. To Rumania. And we have to go in the other way and we decided to go to Sweden. If we go to Rumania we were .... yes, so that was pure luck, we went to Sweden and in Sweden people are begging to sponsor us and to open, in Sweden, fur business. I didn't like to stay in Europe and I begged my brother to go to America. And I had a proposition also to one big furrier to Brazil for an exquisite proposition, they ask me to come, to go. And I said, I will go if I will not be able to go to New York. My brother wanted to stay in Sweden. My husband wants to stay in Sweden but I only, I want to go to New York. And my brother every day, every minute ask me, do you want, really want to go to America? Only to New York. And we came to the Consulate Saturday before twelve, and twelve o'clock they were closing. And we came to the Consul and asked for the Visa and he saw our name and he said,
I know you, I, we have mutual friends in New York, in Warsaw. And he stopped, he asked the workers only to stay until he made a visa ready and we had the visa in one hour and he told us about - he knew our business and our friends and so it was just pure luck and he gave us Visas without any difficulties. And that was Saturday and Tuesday we left to New York.

Q. By ship?

A. By ship, yes. It was not easy. Everything that I am telling you was very complicated and everyday was a very sad time and we came to New York and we started, no, after a few months we started, on Fifth Avenue, a small little place and I said to my brother, I believe we are ready for a bigger business. And we started to find a place and we saw many on Fifth Avenue and on 57th Street. When I came to this awful place furnished but very old, very terrible mess. And I said, 'we are stay.., we will stay here. And my brother took the decorators and remodeled the whole thing. It was remodeled from A to Z. And we started to be couturier in America. But at that time Mrs. Vreeland, Carmel Snow came, from New York Times - what was her name?
She was fantastic to us.

Q. Virginia Pope?

A. Virginia Pope and they saw only canvases, we had not yet even fur and they were excited about it and Carmel Snow believed in us and was really, whatever was ready she took for certain, Vreeland. From the beginning, she took from to put in work...

Harp... At that time...

Q. Harper's Bazaar.

A. ... was Harper's Bazaar.

Q. Right, they both were at Harper's.

A. Yes, and then after, and then it was the other one and she said to me, Mrs. Potok, that was already Maximilian was here, she said to me, I am your editor, what, whatever will be ready - I am taking.

Q. That was still from Harper's?

A. That was, no, that was Vogue.

Q. Vogue?

A. Yes.

Q. Was it Jessica Daves?

A. Jessica, Jessica Daves. And, and she was really oh so very, very helpful but Vreeland and Carmel
Snow, we remained friends, but Carmel Snow was absolutely delightful to us. And to me when my brother died she was really like sister taking care of me. And I was really lucky and to the last minute when she (C. Snow) died, I could talk to her, I could go to her house and ask her - she was always ready to be with me. So, but, and everything was, we had success, as I told you, from the first day when we started...

Q. That was what? 1941? About that?

A. ... Nineteen Forty, forty-one. When we started it was a big success but not easy. That means because we wanted better and more and more and it was too really extreme beautiful it was. One day my brother called me, that was in Poland, called me from Russia two o'clock in the morning, and told me what he saw about the skins, Russian, brown Russian broadtails and he explained to me the color and the quality and he said, how much, how many you think I have to buy? And I said, after your description, I believe that we need few hundred and that was enormous amount and that was, we never had brown broadtail skins, and when
I said good-bye to him, I said, I was really sleepy, how I can tell him so many that is really extravagant. And he bought the whole lot. Three times more than I told him to do.

Q. That was still about nineteen twenty-one?
A. That was after, that was nineteen, nineteen twenty-six, or five, or four. And, and he bought the whole lot and it was really a lot, a lot. And when the merchandise came I was so enchanted; so magnificent, so beautiful, the whole lot, all those beautiful coats in one year were sold out.

Q. How, oh my! How many coats does that make up?
A. Plenty! Many, many, many coats. And from over the world the people were coming to see the collection in that kind of fur. But as I said, the success was very soon after we were open but was very, very difficult. We struggle all the time, to get better and better and it not one month was like the other. Always, every month was better, nicer and more in every way fantastic. And, but, we work really very hard without interruption sometimes to ten o'clock, eleven o'clock in the evening.

Q. Now, was it, you mean, in Poland or here also?
A. In Poland.

Q. In Poland.

A. Yea. And the reputation was so fantastic that when we came here, they didn't treat us as a stranger because they knew about our reputation, they knew about our possibilities, and when we made the first collection here and the American people came and the designers and so on, and they said, oh no that's not for American people, that's too European but in few months they all came back and ordered.

Q. What year was that?

A. That was nineteen forty... end of nineteen forty-one.

Q. Oh! So it was very quick?

A. It was very quick, yea. It was quick and we made - Balmain used to come to see our collection, Belenciaga was with Carmel Snow to see the collection, many French came to see Maximilian. Givenchy. And they saw our factory and how we are working and it was a glamour all around.

Q. I'm just trying remembering back into my notes. I think you were once asked about what you considered to be the most elegant period and I think that you were quoted as saying that you thought the thirties
were the most elegant. That was, I guess, when you were still in Poland?

A. We - here in New York?

Q. Well, I read an interview with you in one of the mag..., one of the articles I read said that at one point, when you talked about elegance, you talked about the elegance of the thirties?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. That was really the period when women dressed up and...

A. The period, yes, that's true yes.

Q. Yea, right. And I think, I guess life got, after the war it was a little bit...

A. Absolutely, yes. And, the clientele, how, you know, our clientele was Mrs. Guinness, Mrs. Paley and so on. Mrs. Paley for three generations, I dressed three generations of Mrs. Paley's family. And, then, then the Duchess and, and...

Q. The Duchess of Windsor? Yes?

A. Of Windsor, twenty-eight years she was our customer.

Q. Yea, right.

A. And the Duchess, she said, she came once and she said, I would like to have some sport coat and don't show
me any mink coat because you know how many mink coats you made for me. I said, yes, alright and she said to me, so don't... show me any mink coats. She left with two mink coats, one long, one short. One day she came and she said I want a really sport coat; I have no money for coat, any other coat. I said, alright I will show you but you will not buy it, ah, this beaver coat, you will buy a sable coat. She said, you are crazy Mrs. Potok, I am going to, I don't want sable coat but I sure to have the sable coat and she put on and she said, no, no, I have no money, I will not buy sable coat. And then she called the Duke, and told him about the mink coat, the sable coat, and the price and he said, alright, buy it and she left with the sable coat. I have wonderful time with her; she was very big and perfectionist and I had wonderful time and she bought many, many things. She said to me, you know at the party when there are all mink coats lying on the bed of the hostess, I said: that is Maximilian, that's not, that's Maximilian, that's not and she said, I never made a mistake!

Q. (Laughter) Fantastic.
A. And, therefore, I don't mind to work so hard.

I don't mind because the clientele is so fantastic. The clientele inspired me, the clientele is very, very, appreciative and the most elegant and the most really international beauties and, and elegant people. I never had the slightest trouble or disappointment, never in my career. So it's, as I said, in very bad time when my brother passed away and I didn't know where I am going... I was absolutely crushed because between us, it was very wonderful friendship and so a big firm here called me up if I want a job.

Q. A job?

A. And they offered me a fantastic salary and everything else. With my name and with my, you know... fantastic. But, my partners didn't let me go so...

Q. Who were your partners? I didn't know you had partners.

A. I had partners and they are not anymore but they...

Q. Your partners supplied the money? Is that...

A. Yes and at that time it was Mr. Partos with us.

Q. Emeric Partos? Ah!

A. I took him in Paris. I engaged him in Paris and he was very good, he was very nice...

Q. Yes, I was at Bergdorf's when he was there.
A. Yes. And he begged me, really on knees to not
go anywhere but that we go together. We worked
very well together but something happened and he
left us. But, but I never had a problem because
if somebody wasn't so good, I taught them how to
work and I always have cooperation with the fitters
and cutters and....

Q. Before you finish with your clients, I was fascinated
that in addition to all the actresses that have been
your clients, I saw Madame Lupescu's name: is
that Magda Lupescu?

A. Yea.

Q. Was she as beautiful as, as a...

A. She was beautiful but, she ordered, the Ambassador
order from..., and that was, at the beginning when
we started Maximilian, I was in Paris and I had
telephone call and she ordered by phone.

Q. Now let's see the, I'm sorry ....

A. ...a sable coat.

Q. ...I'm just trying to remember my history. Madame
Lupescu was the mistress of ....

A. Rumanian...

Q. Franz ....of the Rumanian....?
A. ...King.

Q. King. Right, yes, okay, right.

A. And, and she ordered sable coat. Maximilian wasn't in Paris but in Warsaw. I called him and he didn't believe me (laughter); that was the first sable coat from a King. Later we had many Kings and Princesses and so on and so on but that was really wonderful...

Q. This was at the beginning almost, at the beginning of your business, right.

A. Right, yes. And we delivered and it was sensational.

Q. Yes.

A. So we really had the whole cream of not only rich people but really, very, elegant.

Q. Which of the actresses that you dressed do you remember. You mentioned Sophia Loren and Audrey Hepburn and Carole Lombard...

A. Yes, that was...

Q. You had a great many actresses as a clientele?

A. Yes, yes, oh she was fantastic - Lombard...

Q. Lombard?

A. I, I remember when she came for a fashion show and she got a broadtail dress, long dress, with ermine puffed sleeves, white ermine puffed sleeves.
And I remember when she was staying and they took a picture of her, it was really fantastic. And, we had many actresses and actors from all of Hollywood. And I have here today, I just cut out, Rosalind Russelii. .

Q. Ah, ha.
A. ...Lauren Bacall, Dinah Shore. Lauren Bacall and her husband Robard...

Q. Jason Robards.
A. Irene Galitzine.

Q. Galitzine was a client of yours?
A. Yes. John Kennedy.

Q. Is that a book of all the...
A. Yes, yes.

Q. That must be quite a book?
A. Yea. Kennedy, John Kennedy. Really, today I was very pleased to have them all. All the family..., Irene Dunne, Mike Nichols...

Q. Who?
A. Mike Nichols.

Q. Oh, Mike Nichols, he's so, he's such fun. He's wonderful.
A. Helena Rubenstein, Paulette...

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Q. Did, what, did she really, was she really your first...
A. ...Paulette Goddard.
Q. ...customer here?
A. Who?
Q. Helena Rubenstein. Was she really your first customer?
A. She was the first.
Q. The first.
A. Yes.
Q. And you said she bought many times...
A. Paulette Goddard...
Q. Uh, huh.
A. ...May, 1970. Swedish actress, Susskind, Mayor Lindsey, Mitzi Gaynor (laughter)...
Q. Oh, really.
A. Fairchild, John Fairchild, Princess, Sophie Princess that's a Greek...
Q. Yes, right.
A. I don't rem..., Lauren Bacall and, and John, Jason Robards—"to Madame, many thanks for taking good care of my wife, next time I will have a mink for myself." Rosalind Russell, Alan King, John Kennedy...
Q. What kind of coat did Alan King buy?
A. For her.
Q. Oh, for her. Okay.
A. Yes, a mink coat and, and a few others.
Q. Yes, right.
A. Merrick, David Merrick, Catherine Murray.
Q. Murray. Yes.
A. ...Murray, Arthur Murray, Wasserman who published
    Bo-Bo Rockerfeller. We have a few Rockefellers..
Q. Sounds like a who's who in society, American society.
A. Jacqueline, Jacqueline Kennedy, 1965. It was when
    she.... she's fantastic.
Q. Yes, really.
A. I'm going to tell you John Kennedy, Jacqueline Kennedy -
    I was in White House one day and she was absolutely
    fantastic. She really gave me time and, and not only
    time but so much heart, so much attention. I came
    in morning; I left four o'clock in the afternoon.
    She gave me really personal attention all the time. It
    was wonderful and now when she read a book of my son
    - I have to, to show you one day the letter that she
    wrote to me, so fantastic letter, so really touching.
    And I had many letters from wonderful people. I

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very seldom met somebody who is not nice, I should say. And, really I have wonderful relationship with my customers and that was from the beginning, not only in New York which is much more difficult, but in Poland, in Paris, everywhere. And that probably helped a lot. I'm...
A. I believe that right now the more expensive fur is selling. But the young generation, they are interested in fur and in good quality and they are investing money in fur coat. That means they are using, not for investment, but they are using. I am saying that because few years ago was just opposite. Young people, not only they were ashamed to wear mink coat even, now absolutely everyday it's happening that the twenty, twenty-two years old coming for a mink coat. The future is a little bit not so rosy because the good workers, the skilled workers are all retired or are dying, so, and there are not enough new people trying in fur. But they think about and are trying to get and encourage the young people to train in fur business, examples that are already in and they are very happy about it.

Q. Where do these people come from?

A. From all over the world. From Russia, even from Poland. And...

Q. Are you getting any Hispanics? Studying furs, how to make furs?

A. Yes, they are, they are, and I also know that one,
nineteen, twenty years old boy, went to Paris, to Germany, to Spain, and now he's here learning the trade.

Q. Learning it from you though, not in a school?
A. No, not in school.

Q. There is no school? That does training of furriers?
A. Not exactly, but they are going to big firm, big factories and they are learning; and dealers and so on and so on, they're starting from the dealers. And, they like it. So, it is a hope but it's not as it was before in quantities, that happens. That, they want to learn fur. And, but at Maximilian we have workers thirty-eight years, thirty-nine years and they came when they were very young - eighteen years old - so they still working in full capacity.

Q. So that might be for another ten or twelve years?
A. That's right, yes. But now it's a lot of things which are changing. For instance, as I said, we don't glue as many manufacturer are doing. We tape by hand still.

Q. I'm sorry, explain this. You don't glue what?
A. The furs, the skin.
Q. Right.
A. But we are, by hand everything.
Q. Sewing by hand?
A. Sewing by hand, tape by hand, that is, also slicing machine... but is slicing machine wasn't twenty years ago or ten years ago, that's something new that we are using slicing machine. And, but we are slicing fine fur by hand still which is very rare and few things that still we are, we are sticking to the old, old system because it's more flexible, it was more subtle.
Q. Excuse me, for interrupting you, but is it like in the ready-to-wear business where there is piece work or somebody who makes only a sleeve or only a collar? Or does one...
A. That is only, Yes, at Maximilian yes, but only the finishing department.
Q. Otherwise?
A. Otherwise they are operators, they are slicers, and they are cutters and they are men who put it, on the board. And they have only that coat is one. But...
Q. In other words one person will be responsible for the operation of a whole coat not for the individual
pieces? You don't have fifteen men working on fifteen different sleeves?

A. No, no, if an operator, he's taking care of all coat, one...

Q. The entire coat?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Right, okay.

A. And, there are, we have, the broadtails too we are making, hand sewing, not in machine, the Russian broadtail and it's, it shows th...

Q. But that's in your company; in other companies, they work with machine?

A. More, very often. And, now dressing skins is a big improvement now. The breeding is changed, now they have, they could have any color they want in breedings and they achieve better looking coat and the dressing is much softer and it's a big improvement over ten years ago.

Q. What caused the improvement?

A. I believe that it's mechanical, but also, what they are using. They are using many, many chemical things which are helping and - did I tell you about horizontal minks, how happened in Maximilian?
Q. No.

A. I decided to have a broadtailed coat lined with mink and I didn't want to have the lining in vertical, I decided to have horizontal because it's different design and different and it's lighter, from female only. And one day came a very important, very fashionable lady, she was on the list of best dressed women and she was many years our customer. And she asked me, she want, and she asked for a mink seven-eighth coat. At that time I had not any coat but I had my lining and I put on her the lining and she said to me, Mrs. Potok that is out..., how do you say that...

Q. Outstanding?

A. No, no. just opposite.

Q. Oh.

A. Very bad, and very

Q. Outrageous?

A. No. Very, oh my, how to translate English, is the word, the most terrible. And she didn't, when I saw on her, I loved it and I said so, and what she said, she is and I respect to her face but I was sure that she is wrong. When she left I went to studio and I said
I have to have a coat done like that. Everybody say to me that I am out of my mind - that's ugly and that will not work. So I said, not only tomorrow but today I have to start and that has to be coat and I explain to them what I want. Anyhow, one day goes by, nobody touch, the second day nobody touch, the third day I said, that is out, that's terrible, I have to have as soon as possible this coat. I believe in this coat and I, we have to do it. We made the coat and the coat was such a sensation that anybody who is somebody in America had the coat. The people came for broadtail they saw, on the model this coat, they had to have it.

Q. What year was that? About?

A. That was nineteen fifty-two or three.

Q. Nineteen fifty-two or three?

A. Yes. I don't remember if my brother still was alive or not, I don't remember. But, but the coat - Mrs. Guinness, Mrs. Paley, Duchess of Windsor, Duchess of Windsor had three, Mrs. Paley had also few and everybody, but everybody for few years, many years, the coat was in fashion. And then, people didn't even copy, that have no courage to copy that in America.
Q. Oh, you were very early, yes.
A. Yes, but after... they copy, certainly they copy.
   But it was such a hit that we were always working
   on this, and...
Q. Were you still able...?
A. And the lady who said is ugly, after one year
   she bought it too and she didn't remember.
Q. (Laughter) Were you still able to sell vertical
   coats?
A. We, once in a while, we have now in...
Q. I mean not, yes now they're back, right?
A. Back, yes.
Q. ...but then...?
A. Yes. We are now working on orders, mink coat and a
   Stone Marten coat and we have one sable but just
   to make, just somebody ordered...
Q. Yes.
A. ...but not for, but next year I make, if I will
   have courage to make a new horizontal coat...
Q. Yes??
A. ...because it's very pretty, it is very pretty.
   And, so it was I had terrific ....
Q. I'll bet it was a sens...
Q. Oh, you were very early, yes.
A. Yes, but after...they copy, certainly they copy.
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   on this, and...
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   have courage to make a new horizontal coat...
Q. Yes??
A. ...because it's very pretty, it is very pretty.
   And, so it was I had terrific ....
Q. I'll bet it was a sens...
A. ...and also in a "hair-up," we were also the first.

Q. In what?
A. Hair-up.

Q. Hair-up.

A. Also, I playing, by accident, I playing the whole weekend, improved the mink, something new, and I am playing with skins and I came to conclusion that it looks very beautiful, lush and airy, more airy, more luscious, and we made one and we made fantastic success. Still we are, I never had a mink coat hair down, always hair up. And still we are very strong. Not everybody is doing that because they don't believe it but Maximilian is selling ninety percent in hair up skin. Because it's fantastic look. So there are many things which really I could say that Maximilian started.

Q. You also did start this business of using two different furs, one for the outside and one for the inside?
A. Oh yes. And she used the, now hideous about (laughter)

Q. Hideous, okay, yes.
A. Hideous. But she didn't, I was not discouraged at all and also the hair up was, they ask me still if that is, you can wear for few years, if is nothing happens to hair up. No, it is very solid, it's more work, more fur and more skill in that, to make something, good coat, fur up so we are still working on it. And, what else, see, I can tell you...

Q. Well, do you believe that as time goes on and your handworkers retire or disappear, do you believe that there will be more and more changes made in the technical aspect or do you believe that there would be...

A. More machine.

Q. ...Yes, that's what, uh, huh, you think there will be more machines, yes.

A. Yes. More machine, yes. They are trying to, yes, to introduce many machines.

Q. Are there many innovations coming out of Europe?

A. Yes. Yes. And I believe they will achieve, with the machine if they improve, some good... result. But Maximilian we still many things, we are not using machines and doing only by hand.
Q. Do you think it's possible to go into the fur business today? When you went into it you were able to go into it and you made a remarkable success by using the money that somebody gave you as the deposit (as I remember the story) to finance yourself. But if you were going into business today, could you finance yourself without, uhm...?

A. Yes. Yes, certainly, but I don't know to what extent because this business needs a lot of money.

Q. Yes, well that's what I wondered, do you need a lot more capital today?

A. Yes, Yes, a lot of money. If you want expand, there is, no limit but, the labor today is difficult, very, very costly and union is very strong. So you have to follow their law and it's very costly and you never know what will be in three months, they want new, they changing all the time to, to make happier workers and they have many advantages and they are protected by union, very, very well. So that is really a big effort to follow them. And they really are taking all that, each step so that
it's not easy.

Q. Yes, right.

A. But, thank G-d, we have no trouble because we are following to go ahead.

Q. Yes, right. Now, now let's talk about your family because we haven't really.

A. My family is delightful. (Laughter) I have about my son - so when he was seventeen years old, Andy and Anita (that's, Maximilian's daughter, Andy was seventeen, Anita was fifteen) they went with their teacher to Europe and went through Europe seeing all the...

Q. About what year was that? Wait a minute, thirty-three years ago was when he was, so that would be, thirty-three, that would be nineteen forty-eight, after the war, after the Second World War.

A. Right. And they went to see all the museums everywhere, even once I met them in Florence and we went to all those museums together then. I went back and then we met again in Paris. We went all through museums together and it was wonderful summer because I learned a lot and, and with them it was fantastic experience there. And we talk about what we saw and Andy, at that time, started
to think about painting and he was the first school in here, in New York, it was Horace Mann, then Yale College, then architecture school at Yale: he work with Joseph Albers, who was great in colors.

Q. I'm sorry, would you spell Al... Joseph, what was his last name?
A. Albers

Q. A L B E R S ?
A. Yea, that's right. Work with artist Andre Lhote, in Paris, L H O T...

Q. Okay, go ahead.
A. Maurice Briancon at Beaux Arts; and very important was English printmaker Hayter.

Q. Hayter?
A. Hayter, yea, H A Y T E R.

Q. Thank you.
A. He has exhibitions in Spain ....

Q. Your son?
A. Yes, but he married and they went to Paris to live and he, had exhibitions in Spain, France, Greece and New York then in Vermont. And he divorced his wife. Mark was, eight years old and Sarah was six years old and Andy took the children with him. He divorced in
Greece: he was in Greece a few years. After, the divorce he came to New York and went to Vermont and then he met Charlotte, and married her. And after few years, he, the eyes started to be bad.

Q. Incidentally, Charlotte is the one who has the two children, one of whom is going to F.I.T.?

A. Two, no, two children, that's Mark and Sarah, her children...

Q. I mean her children, yes.

A. ...one F.I.T. and the second in Pratt Art School. Then started hurt..., is his eyes, but still he makes...

Q. What he had is Retina Pigmentosa, is that what it is?

A. Retina Pigmentosa. And Andy back to school for Ph.D. and he had Ph.D. in counseling, in counseling in a graduate school and he was giving lectures in Goddard College and also counseling psychiatry in Boston hospitals and other hospitals.

Q. Was this after he had begun to lose his sight?

A. Yes. And he loved to be with the students and doctors together giving, lecture to them and he, enjoys to be with the young people. And then the book.

Q. He wrote a book?
A. About his handicap - you didn't read? I will give you the...

Q. No, I don't, I haven't read the book, no.
A. I will give you the book. And...
Q. And I, but I believe you did say that he never wanted to take up sculpture because he said that color was so important to him?
A. Yea, but later he started to do sculpture ...
Q. Ah, he did?
A. ...Yes, and the sculptures are, I saw some in Vermont in Museum. But he didn't like, because he was very shocked, that was terrible shock to him when he stopped, to paint because he adored that. And he was very good in colors. I could show you a few paintings of his I have here. And then, and Charlotte, that's his new wife but it's now fourteen years together, a very good marriage. And she is teacher in pottery in college and he had also company American Apple Pie but it was not successful because, not that it was her fault, but the production was too sl...
Q. What was the name of it?
A. ..., American, American Apple Pie.
Q. American Apple Pie? Was the name of ....

- 50 -
A. Yes, Yes, and she was in China, in Japan in Korea and now she stop over there, visual art faculty in Goddard College. She's on the top now and really she adores it. She's...

Q. And he's happy now because he's been able to make his adjustment and he's able to....?

A. Very happy, very happy and very, she's very intelligent and very talented and they love each other. And the children are ....

Q. Yes, tell me about the children. Sarah apparently has inherited...?

A. Sarah, yea, Sarah inherit..., but not, the doctor, the other day, said that is not so strong like Andy. Too bad because she left before, she's beautiful, she is spending the weekend with me. And...

Q. What is she doing? What does she do with...

A. Now I was telling you about Sarah because she left me a paper about what she does..., Sarah, actress and mime, both theatrical performances and commercial work including T.V. commercial as mime. A performer in mime in Chicago worked with Abner the eccentric clown, Chicago Mime Theater and University Clown tour in New England. Education: Simon's Rock, Massachusetts,
University Vermont, Sorbonne, Alliance Francaise, Paris, and now, she graduated Northwest University.

Q. How old is she?
A. Twenty-four.

Q. Twenty-four.

A. She left Vermont because she said that it's not on the level, so she went to Paris and that's where she was in Paris, Sorbonne and Alliance Francaise.

Q. What did you mean, not on the level? Not on the level meaning that...
A. In, that means, they were not avante-garde.

Q. I see.

A. In training, the studio in Paris, dance, Goddard College, dance, Sonia Nicholas Theatre, Chicago Acting, Mime.' That's Sarah.

Q. Yes, so all of your family is really creative; it's just taken different forms?
A. Very intellectual.

Q. Yes, what about Mark?

A. Mark, Mark work City News, Chicago. How many times it change name to the Times, Indian, Indiana...

Q. In other words, he's a journalist?
A. A journalist, yes. And he's labelled Reporter but
he's very interested in politics, very. And education, University of Chicago and, that means first University, then the work what he's doing now. And other, he built house in Vermont, before going to college, built glass blowing studio in the house, he...

Q. He's very creative too?
A. Three, four years ago, what, about three years before going to college, yes, and he is, now I will show you - that's Mark promoted.

Q. Ah, yes. You're very proud of him and you should be.
   Yes, yes right.
A. Promoted to professional.

Q. I see, to the bus, to Business Labor Writer, very nice.
A. Yes.

Q. They have never been interested in the fur business I guess?
A. No, hate it.

Q. Really, (laughter).
A. Hate it. My son and, and Anita, Anita is ...

Q. Maximilian's daughter.
A. Maxim, yes. She also has nice background; Anita graduated from Bennington then Master Degree at the Bank Street School of Education, she is now Professor
of psychology and education ....

Q. Has she ever married?
A. Twice, twice.

Q. She married twice?
A. Twice divorced.

Q. Oh, you, what you tell me about her is all I need to know, you don't have to worry about the paper...
A. No, because now she is in really wonderful..., anyhow, I'm sorry (hear shuffling of papers)...

Q. Oh, that's, that's alright.
A. ...it's in here somewhere....

Q. No, but I'm just..., I'm interested in it just in the general way to know that they are all very creative people but not..., but everybody expresses it differently?
A. Yes, they are very, very ambitious, very strong characters and very nice people. What is very important.

Q. Yes, right. Tell me about, when you were a young mother did you have any of the conflicts that young mothers have today about their children being at home while they are working? How did you feel about it
because after all you were doing this a long time before most people did?

A. My children, even, I really never neglected my son, and I also took care of my niece, Anita, because my brother was separated, that means, divorced, and, and I ...

Q. So she lived with you?

A. No, no.

Q. No, oh, she lived with him.

A. She lived with her father, but I took care of her.

Q. Yea, right.

A. And, you know I am very, I have a lot of discipline and if it's going to, if I am going to think about Andy's bringing up, it was, really I can say that ..., nothing was missed in his life because of neglect, or just something mediocre. Everything had to be really, really very good. That means he had nurses with whom, I was working every morning and in the afternoon, when I came home. I knew exactly where Andy was at during the day: I knew exactly when, what he's doing and twice a week I was with him, the Sunday and Thursday afternoon I was with Andy, always. And I had two nurses only, from birth to four years, and
from four to eight. After four years with the
nurse I say good-bye because Andy started to be
interested and asking her questions about everything
and she was not able to answer, but she was wonderful
the four years when he was a baby. Then he has
more intelligent nurse and she was very wonderful.
Andy was really exceptional good child and in school
he was really always doing his job perfectly without
forcing him, never. Even at colleges nothing, I
never ask him but I knew that he always had ninety
everywhere so I was, and he was, whenever I check
on him in school, Horace Mann, they always were
delighted with Andy. Before Horace Mann he was in
school and Andy didn't like the school and I wanted to
call him to come back after being... They begged me
to, to leave Andy and they will give him scholarship
and I said, no thank you, Andy will come back to
New York.

Q. He was in boarding school, was that?
A. In boarding school. And he always did his job
perfectly, so, but, but as I show you he get a good,
a good education, that was really no limit, whatever
Andy wants to try it was no limit, I never said no.
And he use, still he use his, but unfortunately, he is handicapped, he was very good athlete but now he can't use it. He was, but he's very active. In Vermont he's very active, in arts, and, he has open mind and is very, very good father - children were six and eight when he took care of them - that was not easy for him.

Q. Charlotte's children?
A. No. Charlotte and his children

Q. Yes.
A. Mark, 6, and, and Sarah, 8, and he took care of them fantastically and they adore each other.

Q. Right, but I'm not sure, I don't understand one thing. Charlotte had her own two children...
A. Two children...

Q. When she became his wife, there were four children in the household?
A. Four children together but the four children, they love each other, it's a wonderful atmosphere when they are and when Sarah is here, they are coming to see her and they love each other. So I believe that it's a big accomplishment to create the atmosphere... for both children. And the atmosphere altogether in
Andy's home in Vermont is fantastic - full of friends, always, full of love always and it's really a pleasure. And Andy's very musical so all the time there is music in his, inside the house, classic music and the children have different music, always is going something on, it's not a dull house it's a really active...

Q. Do you like the snow? Do you go up and visit or did you?
A. I, not in winter.
Q. Not in winter?
A. No, it's too cold.
Q. Not with all the sable fur? (Laughter)
A. (Laughter) No, no, no I've never been in winter in Vermont.
Q. Really?
A. No, only in summer and, or in, I was also in April, May once, but I prefer summer. And it's beautiful there and, and they have very good house and always people and always friends from New York, always is something going on.
Q. What I'd like to do now, I'm going to turn this over...
Q. Okay?
A. Would you please tell me what I ....

Q. Well, what I, I'm interested to know what your personal philosphy is about such things as discipline, independence, working on your own, what your sense of ethics is, morals, anything like that because you have mentioned that you felt very keenly that it's important for somebody really to be independent and to achieve without outside help.

A. No question about it, that was very strong when I was very young and going to the one school from kindergarten to the end, I was not the best student but I was alright so it was okay and I never stay two years in one class.

Q. This is Warsaw?

A. Warsaw. I always admire my colleagues who were very smart and very intelligent and I always wanted to be more than I was. That means, I, every day I decided to improve myself, to improve myself in any way, in school, in acting, in every minute, even in, at home, I wanted to be not as I was, I want to improve. I improve myself and then improve every day in business but I was very unhappy, I had very difficult childhood,
and I always thought that I have to take care of my family even when I was, I would say six years old, I was interested that, my mother should be happy, my father should be happy and my brother to whom I always been more than a sister. I was like a mother and friend. He was four years older, my brother, but still I believe that I was one who took care of him and would cooperate with him. He was also very demanding person and, and nobody really, understand him, but I did and I went through everything to make him happy and more happy every day. And I have no help, no supporters, nobody who told me, oh, that's good that you are doing that and that; no, they, everybody thought that what I am doing is wrong even though the result every day was good, whatever I did, whatever I, I wanted to do was better than somebody else because I, I was very conscientious and I want to, to really better, to be recognized but it was not easy.

Q. Was part of this, you say you wanted to be recognized, was part of it because you were
a girl that you were not?

A. Probably, probably. And I really always thinking to help and make my family happy. Without talking about it, I did the utmost all my life from, really from childhood and, and I wanted, (since my mother work hard) and I wanted to, to see her happy and I decided when I was five years old, I decided to work so hard that I, one day in the (laughter), she will wake up and see her purse full of money, that was my dream when I was...

Q. Five years old?

A. ...Five years old. And, I did it. I was, that was my dream always and very, that means the dream was not once and I forgot it, no that follow me always, that I have to do it and that's my task, goal in, in my life.

Q. A strong sense of needing to achieve, of wanting to achieve?

A. To achieve, yes, to achieve. And, I believe that going through and thinking, I did it with all my family. That means the whole family and for each other, and...
other, and...

Q. You had a very strong sense of family, didn't you?

A. Yea and I never heard somebody say thank you to me and I didn't expect it. I never ex., that was very good because I didn't suffer because that was strong as a...

Q. Why didn't you expect it, why wouldn't they say thank you?

A. ...Because my father was very strict and very severe so I knew that he wouldn't; and my mother was very good mother and very efficient mother and very efficient wife and she was very involved in, with...

Q. With him and his work?

A. With him, yes. So I went through very difficult time and always with struggle but I had also fantastic relationship with my brother with whom I spent a lot together having fun. And we, it was time when we were together going to roller skating together or iceskating, to theater for dancing, for parties, later when we started to work we went to very, very fancy parties, fancy people, to travelling
- I was always travelling since I was nineteen years old by myself - to parties, everywhere by myself. And it was rather not dull life. My friends who were intelligent and beautiful, and had success in everything, they were jealous about me who struggle every day and had all, problems, of all my family and they really were jealous about it because I had always beautiful friends and devoted friends who are, who really I enjoy them and they enjoy to be with me and we were, we have wonderful time.

Q. Did they suspect that you had the kind of talent that you have?
A. No.
Q. They did not?
A. No way. And, my clients recovered, my talent but not my family.
Q. Discovered?
A. Discovered, right.
Q. Yes, right.
A. But, not my family.
Q. So you never really had their approval?
A. No, never.
Q. Well, I guess it built your character even if it couldn't make you very happy, but you became very strong?

A. Probably yes. Probably yes, because but, that what, I was prepared for it so I knew that nobody will help me. I knew that I will not have any support in my life and I said it's alright, I will do myself. I will do the utmost, maybe plus, that I achieve something which will be honest work and proper thinking and put all my knowledge and effort and everything what I can use and, as I said, every day I wanted a little better. If I did wrong something I said never again and that was with my, Andy.., with my son. When he was little child and I said to him, something was broken or something was done, and I said, who did that? He came, mommy I did it but never again.

Q. (Laughter)

A. And I try to, also with my son, to bring him up in a very honest and happy atmosphere.

Q. So you really, gave him a childhood that you did not have yourself?

A. No, just opposite. From the first day, just opposite