

Sephardi Voices UK

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| Interviewee Surname: | Canderò Bendayan |
| Forename: | Anita |
| Interviewee Sex: | Female |
| Interviewee DOB: | 12/03/1946 |
| Interviewee POB: | Gibraltar |
| Interviewee Occupation: | Beautician |
| Father's Occupation: | Businessman |
| Mother's Occupation: | Housewife |

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[00:00:18]

We're filming today Anita Canderó Bendayan. Today is 10th May 2012. My name is Sharon Rapaport. Mrs Bendayan, I would like to start by thanking you for taking part in our project and giving us your interview about your life story. I would like to start with you stating your family name and the date you were born.

Well, my family name is – married name is Bendayan. Maiden name is Canderó and my mother's name is Beriro. And I was born in Gibraltar, the year 1946, and – but I was brought up in Morocco, in Tangier.

Could you tell me a bit about your family background, if we were to start with your mother's side?

Yeah.

From where did they come?

My mother, from Gibraltar. I don't know – I remember my mother telling me that my grandfather was from London, but I don't really know. I have a cousin who's [inaud], the one I told you, who is looking for – at some kind of archive, finding who is the family Beriro. And I think he could find in Portugal something about the Beriro family who was in Portugal, and they change – because Beriro was not the real name, but it was Benchemol, but they change it to the name Beriro. **[00:02:06]** So Beriro really is only one of my family and there is no one except my family. Sometimes, yes, when I was in Canada, I was looking at the guide, the telephone guide, and I found a Beriro, so I was curious so I called them and told them that I was a Beriro and I would like to know who – from where they are. They were living in Casablanca but they didn't know anything about the Gibraltar family. And we met, we knew it. But – and that's it, yeah.

So what do you know about your mother's – what did she tell you about her family, your mother? What did her father do?

Oh, my grandfather, I don't know. He had business but I don't know really. He died very young. He had a stroke and he died very young. And he had a lot of children, there are nine, and they were very young. The last one was about one year old, so ... And also my grandmother died also as well young, leaving the five sisters, leaving them very young, a daughter of 12 and a boy of just bar mitzvah. And my mother was in charge of bringing them up and marrying them and giving up her own life. Even if she had only one child, she was used to bringing up many children [laughs].

Did you know your aunts?

Of course, we were very close. **[00:04:02]** We were very, very close. And all my cousins on the side of my mother. So that's why I told you, I once – my cousin married to her daughter in Canada and she wanted to gather all the family – I mean, the cousins from my mother's side, all the mother's side. And we met – we met – we had a picture that I showed – cousin came from Venezuela, from Israel, from – well, she was in Toronto, so the Toronto one who was – Venezuela, Israel and Gibraltar as well. They all come to meet them, and it was a very nice reunion.

Can you remember anything that your mother told you about her childhood in Gibraltar? How was it to be Jewish?

Oh, that was fine, yeah. The same what I knew, what I found in the '60s, it was perfect. Now it's not so much because there are a lot of Arabs living now in Gibraltar. It's not the same. But anyway, yeah, in the time of Gibraltar, before the war and after the war, it was a fortress and there was – nobody was allowed to live in Gibraltar unless it was born in Gibraltar. So we were a close community, even non Jews and the Jewish, because we were close. We were not foreigners and Arabs or something like that. But then everything changed with the EU and so on. They mixed up the Arabs in Gibraltar and it's very small, so there is no place for them [laughs]. But I say it's not the same, but in that time we were very close and we were very good, yeah. **[00:06:02]** We never felt anti-Semitism in the old times, when my mother grew up. And even when I grew up, I – yeah, sometimes I could find anti-Semitism but just the Arabs – the people in the street, which are Arabs, and the native ones that used to shout, “Hey, dirty Jew, dirty Jew,” for fun. But we never but attention on it. But I was brought up in a

secular girls' school. I didn't go to the *Alliance Française*. But I never knew – I never knew that there was a feeling of anti-Semitism.

But what you told before, that people would tell you in the street, was it –

How do you call it, where you – if you were not French, where you – I mean, they're the natives of Morocco, the Arabs, the ones that – uneducated Arabs maybe, but – like a song. I never heard that – I never forget that. It's different now. In school we were fine. It was only French, only maybe Spanish, very few Arabs, very few Arabs, and all the Jews. We were a lot of Jews in Tangier so we didn't feel – we were the majority of the European community so we couldn't feel so much left alone, no.

Where did you live in – where did your family live – in Tangier?

In Tangier.

So before we go on talking about life in Tangier, just tell us, you were born in Gibraltar.

Oh yeah.

And at what age did you move to Tangier and why?

Well, after birth. [00:08:02]

So why was this move?

Because my mother came back to Tangier. She was living in Tangier. I was born after the war. They didn't want to come back to Gibraltar so they stayed in Tangier.

So your mother was officially from – she came from Gibraltar.

Yeah, yeah.

And your father, where did he come from?

From Tangier but he lived in Gibraltar. He was living in Gibraltar.

He was living in Gibraltar, okay. And where – do you know anything about where they met and when they got married?

No, I don't remember so much, no.

Okay.

In Gibraltar – I had a picture of the wedding of my mother but I lost it. In Gibraltar, she married in Gibraltar, yeah.

So they at the time lived in Tangier and your mother came especially to give birth in Gibraltar

–

Yeah.

Because her sisters were there.

No, not her sisters, they were – no, her brothers. The sisters were in Morocco already. They married during the war, you see.

And did your mum talk to you about how was it to be in the war in Gibraltar? What happened?

Oh, in Gibraltar, there were no people [laughs] – well, only men, the army. It's a base of the RAF. It was many military place. In Gibraltar, no, I don't know. It was military.

Was she sent on one of the convoys out of Gibraltar, your mum?

Convoys? What's convoy?

So how did your mother, when she had to leave Gibraltar, she could have left to London or she could have –

Yeah, but she didn't want to the blitz in London. My younger – one of my younger – the eldest one, who was not in the army, then yes. [00:10:01]

He moved to London?

He moved to London, yes, and he used to tell us the nightmares that they got many nights with the blitz and everything. It was very difficult in London, yeah.

So your mother decided to, instead of –

My parents did, yeah.

Your parents, they went to Tangier.

Yeah.

Could you tell us a bit maybe – did they talk about the difference between the life in Tangier to the life they had in Gibraltar before?

No, I don't think there is a difference in Tangier and Gibraltar, no. Now, Tangier, yes, of course, as it isn't – at the moment, yes, of course, it's different. It is different. But no, in that time, no, there is no difference.

So please tell me a bit about your childhood. So in what area did your parents live?

Well, I never knew that there is cities that had the place where the Jews lived and the place where non Jews lived.

There wasn't a mellah?

No, no, no way, no.

Okay.

No. In Morocco, yes, but in deep Morocco, not there – there was like the East End, you see, the site – the old Tangier, the site of where most of the Jews were living, but this was not a *mellah*. It was for Arabs and for people like natives, who were born in Morocco, who are living all their life in Morocco – I mean, not in Morocco, in Tangier, most of them. They didn't know of anything of Tangier, just like that place, because as it is now, it was in that time East End, but everybody used to live in East End, no? Not in the north west. [00:12:02] Now it – after the war I think – or before the war, they started to build the high town of Tangier. It's like a mountain at the top and the old city was the bottom, and they started – the Jews started to move.

I'm interested to know about your family. Who were the neighbours that – do you remember? Did you have any relationship with the neighbours round you?

Oh, I used to have a relationship with neighbours of my grandmother. They were very close. They were not Jewish. They were very close to my mother and they still – my grandmother died many years ago but my mother used to visit every time - on Christmas night to visit them and say hello, every time, every year, every year. And even when she died, I used to come to visit her in Christmas time, in Christmas night. We were very close. And the two ladies who were in the picture of my wedding, they are – these two ladies, they came -

Were they Muslims?

No, no, no, not Jewish but Catholic. No, no, they were not Muslim in Gibraltar, no. They were not allowed to live. But she came from Gibraltar to Tangier to be in my wedding, and we were very close. But sadly they all died, disappeared.

What languages did you speak at home?

Now – with them I used to –

With your parents.

Yeah, Spanish.

Spanish?

Yeah.

Did you also speak Hebrew?

Well, because I lived in Israel two years, yes, I know some Hebrew, but not much, no. [00:14:07] No, in Tangier we used to speak Spanish or French but never Arab. Just in South Morocco, which they – all the Jews speak Arab, but Tangier was international, there were no Arabs.

Could you tell me a bit about the school you went to? What was the name of the school?

Well, it's a state school. I mean, the state of – France state. It was French. My parents didn't send me to the *Alliance Française* because - the *Alliance Française* was very good, was one of the best in the world, because most of the Jews who came from that school in Tangier, most of the judges, most of the lawyers and doctors, came from that school. But when I was young, that side where the *Alliance Française* was not very safe or – let's say, it was too far as well. It's the same – I live in West End and I have to go to the East End to the school.

In what area was the school? What was the name of -

The East End.

The East End.

The Alliance Francais. Yes, it was in the old part, yes, of course, because when the – I don't know how many years the *Alliance Française* was built. I don't know, really, but it was a long, long time, yes. Three generations after me.

So in your school –

And then, well, he sent me to the French school, to the France state – state school from France.

Was it a mixed school?

Yes, yes, yeah.

And who were your friends there?

Oh, I have – most of the – well, all the Jews, the Jewish girls and boys, were close. [00:16:04]
We were like families. And I remember of course still now, but they are not any more in Tangier. They are living in Israel. They are living in Canada. And when I go to Canada, I meet them after years and years, but anyway.

Do you have any specific memory from school that you can tell us? Something about school life?

No. No. An anecdote which I remember. My son went – when he was in Israel, he did a small course in a *yeshiva* – he went to a rabbi, *kabbalist* or something like that, to receive *bracha* from him, and when he told – he invite him for Shabbat to his home and he was talking about him and his father, and then his wife ask – because his wife studied in Tangier. His wife was from South Morocco but the parents sent her to Tangier to have an education in Tangier. And when she heard that I was from Gibraltar, she said, “Oh, I used to know a girl from Gibraltar but she lived in Tangier.” And he said, “Well, maybe it was the family of my mother.” And then it was me, it was me. I don’t remember so much her face, but she remembered me and my name from the school. It was funny.

So til what grade do you study in that school?

Oh, when I had to leave at secondary school, first years of the secondary school. I couldn’t finish my *Bacc* – well, my A levels. I went back to study in –

Why couldn't you finish?

Because my parents went to live to Gibraltar. [00:18:04]

They decided to go back to Gibraltar?

Yeah.

What year are we talking about?

I think it was about – the '60s.

In the '60s?

Maybe, or '59, '59, '60.

But let's say in the years that you grew up in Tangier, did you feel that there are any differences – and if we're talking in 1956, that Morocco was once again united, or if we're talking of the 1967, when the Six Day War – was there any change towards Jewish people in the Jews that you grew up in Tangier?

Well, I think so, yeah, yeah. The Muslim brotherhood had changed a lot, a lot. They brainwashed the people of Morocco, yeah.

When are we talking about? What years are we talking about?

Now.

No, but I'm not talking about now. I'm talking when you grew up, did you experience or feel any changes towards you as a Jewish person?

No, no, we were feeling – no. We grew up in a different way. I don't know how to explain to you. For instance, I remember – because it was the beginning of the end of the war. I remember many girls, [inaud] girls, who were coming from Germany and they were fleeing the war. And I remember them – but I don't know, they were not very close and they did look for the Jews. They were close in themselves. And I didn't know why, but that's the beginning of – when I felt the difference, *Ashkenaz* and *Sephard*. I don't know why they didn't want. We thought that maybe the language was difficult for them. [00:20:03] But anyway, yeah, maybe because they were not proud to be Jewish so they didn't want to mention it. For instance, in *Kippur* we had a problem because the French government used to want all the time the main exams in the day of *Kippur*, because France is always anti-Semitic. It's not a surprise. They were very anti-Semitic with the children, with the Jews. Always in the day of *Kippur* and we couldn't go, so we had to beg to be authorised to not to go to the exam and that didn't work. And we had problems because these girls used to go to the exam in *Kippur*, they didn't mention at all, so all the time the detector used to say, “Why the Jews at school? Why they are going to the exams and not you?” That kind of problem we did have in my time, yeah. But since then the government stated that Saturday and Sunday will be free, but not now – not at that time.

Could you please describe or tell us a bit about – what kind of house did you grow up in?

Oh, the flat one.

Yes, tell me. Did you live in a flat? A house? Near the beach?

Yes, five minutes, beach, yeah. My house was five minutes to the beach, yes. But anyway.

Could you describe a bit the house?

Well, they were very big. There used to be very big rooms and very big corridors. We used to have the bicycle in the corridor. [00:22:02] It was so long that with the corridor we could ride the bike, yeah. I never saw those big rooms, no, never. Now in Spain they are very small, in here as well, but oof, yeah.

And were your family a religious family? Were you an observant family?

Not so much but *Kippur*, yes, we respect, and Yom Tov as well. Rosh Hashanah, for instance, yes. But no, no, they weren't – Shabbat, yeah, but I mean my father never go to Shabbat. They didn't teach me to read Hebrew, for instance, or to pray, no. But I – in the school, of course, I did know the religion. It was secular. They did teach religion to anybody.

And did your family go to synagogue?

My father used to go to synagogue but not me. I mean, girls did not go, but it's different now.

What synagogue was it? What was the name of the synagogue that your father used to go to?

Oh, now I think, I don't know. It's the family name now, someone who owns the synagogue and the synagogue was under his name. I think it's now – I don't remember the names of the shul.

Were you a Zionist family? What did you know about what was going on in Israel?

I remember when I was very young, I remember my father brought me to – all the family, we were in the port to say goodbye to someone who was going to Israel as immigrants. [00:24:04] I remember that, that night, I remember. But I don't know. They never talk about that, no.

What did you know about Israel at the time?

That there was a new culture for the Jews and that many people wanted to go to Israel. And I remember going to the port to say goodbye. They took the boat from Tangier straight to Israel. But now they were – no, not – now they are allowed, they are allowed, but after the war of Israel they –

What war? What war are you talking about?

I think the discussion of Israel started from the war of independence.

The Independence War?

Yes, I think so.

From '48?

I think so. I think so. The Seven Day War was also – but before the Seven Day War they were not allowed to write straight to Israel or any things like that. They were not allowed to call, of course, but to write, no, because many families who had children in Israel used to send us the letters into Gibraltar and from Gibraltar we used to send the letters to them, to Israel, to have news from their children, yes. But since that, I don't know when, but not the day of the creation of Israel, after the war. I think so, I think so. I don't know. When started the rules against Israel, that's when.

What did your father do? How did he make his living, your father?

Oh, *bureau de change*, yeah. Yeah, because Tangier was international so it was very good because any coins can use it, you know. [00:26:06] Anyone who has Spanish currency, French currency or English currency, they could use it.

So your father actually was the change –

Yeah, yeah. And also after the war there was a lot of movement, of course, many people that take their money away from the country that *Communistas*, yeah.

Before we go on, I'm interested to know if there's any custom or something that you used to do in your family that you would like to document? Do you remember maybe a special way that the chagim were made or something that you would like that was special for your family.

No, well, not special in my family but all the Jews in Tangier, for instance, yes, there is prayers of the *Mimuna*, yeah, but not as much as South Morocco. We used to celebrate *Mimuna*.

Could you tell us what is the Mimuna?

Mimuna, the last day of Pesach, the night, the last night of Pesach they celebrate. They visit each one and they drink and they eat.

And how did they do the Mimuna in your family?

Well, the same. We had drinks. We used to – my mother used to put on the table some coins, gold coins, and – I don't know, fish. I don't know why.

What were the gold coins for?

I don't know. For *bracha*, no? I don't know. I really don't know. But it was nice, but it's finished. In Gibraltar they don't do so much. We still sing in *Yom Tov* or *Seuda* or something, when many Jews are united, you know, or the family complete, family united. [00:28:10] After the *Birkat HaMazon*, for instance, we sing a kind of *Birkat HaMazon*, not in Ladino. It's all Spanish, because Ladino is not really a language. It's just a lot in Spanish. So we used to sing it in Spanish, very beautiful, *Bendigamos*.

Do you remember that, do you want to – ?

Of course, yes. Not word for word. We still sing it, yeah.

How does it go?

Oh, [*sings*] *Bendigamos Alatisimo*. But I don't know word by word. I don't know very well, but it's like a *halel*.

It was like a halel.

It's very nice, yes. Like a translation of a *halel*, yes, I think so.

And I'm interested to know the prayers that you used to do in Tangier, was it more the –

The Sephardim.

The Sephardim?

Yeah, but the real Sephardim.

Which means –

The Spanish, the Spanish one.

The Spanish one.

Not the South Moroccan one or – no, completely different, no. They are *Sepharad*, *Sepharad*.
What means the word in *Sephard* in Spanish.

So how would you define, regarding, let's say, the prayers, the difference between –

I don't know. The Torah may be more Sephardic, more and more Spanish, more Andalusian Spanish. Mostly for the South Spain it's Andalucía and this was Arabic in that time. So they taught the music more or less like that. Because as well, the Moroccan songs, the non Jewish Moroccan songs, they have a tone of kind of flamenco. It's a mixture of Moroccan music. [00:30:00] And us, we have the tone of Spain, yeah, as well, for shul, yeah. We don't have – we don't – we are not assimilated with the Arab customs, but the Moroccan, real Moroccan people in South Morocco, they are assimilated. It's the same in any other country from Arabs. For instance, Iraq or Syria, they are more assimilated with the customs of this country than the real *Sepharad*. They didn't keep the traditions all the time, like the Turkish. It was the first time in my life that I met a Turkish person in Israel, and you know why? I was in the bus and I heard the Spanish, two speaking Spanish, but not today's Spanish. Speaking Spanish like the language of my – not my great grandmother but great uncle and aunt, they used to speak. But they were completely different. And also I was surprised, I was shocked, and then I asked her, how do they know this language, and, well, they told me they were Turkish, they keep all the time their language.

So you felt it reminded you actually how – the way they spoke different to, let's say, Moroccans or –

Yeah, yeah, I never know. I never know that in Turkish they speak the Spanish that – because when I used to hear my aunt, my great aunts, speak, they were old people speaking that old Spanish. We thought – I thought, for instance, they speak not the good Spanish, the good grammar Spanish. [00:32:03] They are very old and they don't do – maybe they don't want – they didn't go to school in Spain so they didn't learn the real Spanish. And this was not true, it was the old Spanish that they used. But it was not Ladino like they call –

It wasn't?

It's not the same. Ladino is not the same. Ladino sometimes, yeah, because they make – they mix some Hebrew things, like Yiddish, but...

Is there any – let's say regarding the food. Is there any kind of typical –

The Adaphina, mm.

You did the Adaphina?

Yeah.

Could you tell us, what is the Adaphina?

Well, it's a Shabbat meal.

And what was in the Adaphina?

Well, potatoes, chickpeas and the meat, and then that's it, yeah.

And when did you eat the Adaphina?

On Shabbat.

On Shabbat? Was it cooked at home? Did you have cookers at home? Or was it cooked outside the home?

In the old time, I remember, when I was a little girl, they used to – every street used to have a communal oven, like the old stoves, something like that, and we used to send the pot of the *Adaphina* – my mother used to put a piece of paper, glue with flour and water, all around to seal the pot and the lid, and she used to send it with a little Arab, who was working there in the oven. And she used to send it to with him. And then when it was ready – well, not the *Adaphina*. In the morning they used to bring the *Adaphina* home.

The Arab child used to on Saturday morning bring the Adaphina home? [00:34:04]

Yeah, yeah. And also the cakes and the bread, the *challah*, the bread. They sent it to the oven, because there was no oven at home, electric oven or gas oven. There was no electric ones. Yeah, I remember it.

Is there any other typical Jewish food that your family used to –

No, the *Adaphina* is the typical Jewish foods. Some biscuits but then this is Moroccan, that they copy the recipe.

What is the name of the biscuits?

Some other biscuits. Oh, I don't know. They're sweet biscuits. They are typical of the Moroccan ones.

So where did your mother, let's say, buy the meat, the kosher meat?

Oh, you see, it was easy. In Tangier there were butchers, of course, a lot of butchers, yeah.

A market or was it in a –

Well, like a *souk*. There is a place called a *souk*. We used to go inside that, like a – not a street but like a shopping [laughs] – covered shopping, and there were a lot of shops and butchers, all of them kosher, yeah.

But was this market especially a Jewish market or was it for everyone, which had a few butchers?

No, in the *souk* there are like small shopping centre, clothes, but they were a lot of shops to rent and most of – the Jews were the majority so there were a lot of Jews. Maybe they were also – were non Jewish shops or butchers, and also Muslim butchers, of course. Well, it was the only place to buy the meat.

The kosher meat? [00:36:01]

Well no, the meat altogether, so the non kosher and the Muslim, the halal meat, everywhere. But yes, because it's not so big, Tangier is not so big. There was a *souk* who used to buy the fruit and the vegetables and the fish as well. The fish was the same, covered and all stands were with the fish, all kinds of fish, and then there were butchers. And my uncle was a butcher. I did say to you they were different, of course, non Jews, yes.

So you are a teenager at around the '50s.

Mm.

As a teenager, how was it to be in Tangier? Where did you hang out? Where did you go to as a teenager, a bit older?

Yeah, I don't know, teenager or where I was older, because as a teen, 15 or 12, we were not allowed to go out at night, that's for sure. Erm, disco dance or something like that, *oui*, ska go-go [laughs].

And the music you used to listen to, was it –

Oh, this English, American, modern one, the rock and roll and those things, yeah. We had cinemas. We had cinemas in French, in Spanish – no, English, no. French and Spanish and also Arabs, the other neighbourhood of the Arab, but the neighbourhood of the European, they were French and Spanish at the same time, two different cinemas. And one cinema Moroccan, yeah, and they were all in French, and the other one was completely Spanish, yeah. All the new films.

And before we go on, I'm just interested to know if you were part of any Jewish social activity after school? [00:38:06]

No, not really so much there, no, no.

So in what year do your parents decide to leave Tangier and why?

Well, because of the law of – the Treaty of Tangier, which is not any more international.

So 1956?

Oh, I don't remember the year.

It was '56.

In '56, it was?

Yes, so '56 Tangier becomes part of Morocco and Morocco is reunited.

Yes, exactly, and it wasn't any more international, so they were not allowed to change money like it was, you understand? In Tangier it was not any more international, so my father cannot have the bureau de change, so instead he went back to Gibraltar.

How old are you at the time?

I was – about 12.

You were 12?

Yeah. No, 14 – no, no, 14, 14, yeah, 14, 15.

Do you recall, as a child, what did your father tell you? Why did they have to do the change?

Well, no, I was old enough to understand that there was no more freedom in Tangier like it was before.

Did you experience something on that?

Well, we didn't have time because he decided to go to Gibraltar and we closed down the home and we moved.

Could you describe maybe leaving your home, leaving your friends?

Oh well, it's difficult, yes, it was difficult. I still had contact with my friends. I found a lot of friends that I knew before when I used to go on holidays to Gibraltar, and I liked it, Gibraltar, very much because we have completely freedom. And at that time it was different, there was no freedom in Morocco, not because we were – [00:40:06]

When you say there was no freedom –

Not because we were Jews, no, but just that there were lots of let's say – not harming people but, let's say, pickpockets, that kind of – well, they might pull you and then fall down and accidents like that. We were not free completely like in Gibraltar. We were free, completely free. And so I first knew that feeling of freedom and so – I don't know, it was different. We were not allowed to go out very late or in spite – well, because it was also old times, because no parents wanted to let us go with other children that they don't know.

That was in Tangier?

Yeah. But in Gibraltar –

So were you happy to leave?

Well, I was happy when I met so many people, that I was free to go to Spain, even with a group of girls and boys, because my parents knew them, knew their families, so they let me go there. We used to do picnics, moonlight picnics in the beach. But it was very funny. But in Tangier we were not allowed to do that, so dark in the night, no.

So you suddenly had a feeling of freedom and openness.

Yeah, yeah.

And what other differences were there between Gibraltar and Tangier?

Well, we didn't have so many maids [laughs].

You didn't have so many maids.

I had to help my mother more than ever. I had to help her. Because we used not to help the parents. [00:42:03] In Morocco we had help all the time so we didn't have a problem. It was different.

Where did you live in Gibraltar at this time?

Where?

What neighbourhood did you live in?

Oh, a mixed neighbourhood.

And were you affiliated to any synagogue?

In Gibraltar? Yeah, sure. There are four synagogues there.

What synagogue did your family go to?

Oh, Flamenca, we called it. We called the synagogue Flamenca. But it's *Etz Chaim* in Hebrew, but in general we call it Flamenca Shul. I don't know why Flamenca, because the decoration is like the flamingos, yeah. It's a way of saying that.

Flamenco [ph 04:42:47], okay.

I will show you the picture. It was beautiful.

And how was it different to what you knew from Tangier, let's say, the synagogue, the liturgy all that? How was it different? If it was different at all.

Well no, I didn't see the difference.

Didn't see the difference?

No. The shul was the same and prayers, you know. The songs were the same, yeah. Not any different.

And how did your life go on? You're 14. Did you go to school?

Yes, yes. Well, I had contact with my friends in Tangier as well, and she took – one of them was in the seminar, French Jewish seminar, and she was telling the experience. And then I heard that I can study there and get the *baccalaureate*, and half day is secular and a half day Hebrew – I mean, a whole, *Kodesh* [0:43:50]. And I went there, in the boarding school, to have my *Bacc* in Tangier, in French, *Bacc*, yeah. [00:44:10]

So now it's the first time you're in a Jewish environment.

Yeah, yeah. First time I know the religion – I met religion, really, and I learn the *alef bet*, because I didn't have an idea of the *alef bet*, yeah, and I like it, I like it very much, yeah.

So did you finish – did you do your baccalaureate?

Yeah, yeah, yeah. But it was not the same that if I was in a high school than a *lycée*. It was mixed, no? In the yeshiva it was not exactly the same, the same curriculum, but anyway, yes.

And now what was the – how did they approach everything to do with Zionism, now that you're in – what year are we talking about, the '60s?

No, I never had contact with Zionism, never. I know that my brother in law was studying in Uni, in Rabat, it's the capital of Morocco, and all of a sudden – he was studying agronomy, the lands, you know? I don't know how do you call it in English, to learn the cultivating.

Yes.

And all of a sudden he disappeared. They were desperate, the family. And that's why, he met Zionism and he was so involved – because he thought was so useful in Israel because he had this profession, agronomy, and he disappeared. And he wrote a letter to us, to me, to let the family know that he was in a *kibbutz*. And he didn't finish the career but he finished there in the *kibbutz* in Israel, and he was a very good – he still is in the *kibbutz* and he was very helpful in the *kibbutz* because the agronomy of him, it was – he'd say - he's very Zionist, very well. [00:46:25]He used to say, for us, for his parents, for instance, “You think you are happy when your bank account is growing, and you are happy. You are saving and you are happy. You care for the money,” because the *kibbutznik* were really, really socialist, no money [laughs]. “But for us, we don't care for the money. We care for the plants who is growing. We are happy when we see the plants growing.” That was his explanation. Yes, he was very Zionist. But we never met an Association of Zionism. They knew – in Tangier it was very few people, so they took the university and they tried to involve the young.

In Tangier?

In Tangier, no, the university. The university was in Rabat.

But did the Shlichei Alyia come, let's say, to Gibraltar to bring you to Israel?

No, I never met, no, no, no, no. No, in Gibraltar they were not Zionist, no. Well no, yeah, yeah, we are helpful. We are very – we were – I mean, my mother was always part of the WIZO, but not Zionism that we thought that we want to live in Israel, no. Well, in Israel – in Gibraltar, when situation started not very safe in Morocco, they started to – a big evacuation, big, to Israel, people who did have passports or have education. [00:48:12] Nothing at all, poor people from the mountains. They brought them to Gibraltar and they stay in a camp, like tents in Gibraltar, in an area, an empty area, at the end of the rock, near the cemetery. So they stayed there. They prepare them, they clean them. Most of them, they ran away, walking through all the mountains, the Atlas Mountains, dressed –

They ran away in order not to go to Israel? They went back?

No, no, no. They went in Morocco in the mountains and they walk through all the mountains to go to Tangier, up to Tangier, to cross the strait and to stop in Gibraltar to wait for boat to come for them. Some of them free walking, but some of them – then five families, but slowly, slowly, when they had enough families, then the government in Israel send a boat for them.

And that you knew because you saw these people –

Well no, they were part of my family. There were some from my family. For instance –

This cousin?

Leon, Leon, yes. They went to me, family, and they stay. But his father didn't have a passport, and it was a period where – a very hard period. They didn't know exactly what will happen. So the government even in Gibraltar give passports to Jews, because they didn't want them to go to Israel, you see, or to Canada even. [00:50:11] But then because he didn't have passport, he had to walk all the way to the port, hidden, like days and days, with Arab clothes, like he

was Arab, and he came dirty, with the clothes dirty, hungry, everything. We couldn't recognise him, with a beard. We couldn't recognise him. At least he was safe, he was in Gibraltar. But yeah, it was quite a story [laughs].

But how did your parents get along with this change back to Gibraltar?

Well, they were used – it was their second home. My mother, of course, she wasn't happy with it because she had help over there. In Gibraltar she didn't have help. Perhaps once a week but it's not the same [laughs]. But well, it was fine, of course, yes. She was happy. She has her friends here, her family as well. My uncle is married already in Gibraltar in the meantime during the war. So it was fine, yeah. But I don't see a difference between Gibraltar and Tangier. Just now, yeah, because the situation came, but I don't see the difference, no.

And your life, how did it go on? How did you meet your husband?

Well, while I was in a seminar, studying. That's why I married very young.

When you were in the seminar how did he – can you describe a bit, how did you meet?

Because we went – a group of girls, we went to the shul and then, as normal, the boys went out to try to meet the pretty – because the girls of Tangier used not to go to shul. [00:52:13] They were not religious so much. So they were surprised to see a group of girl and they approached us, and then I started to meet him. But anyway, that's it, yeah.

What was his name? I understand he's dead. What was your husband's name?

Bendayan.

Bendayan. What was his first name?

Oh, Abraham.

Tell me a bit about his family background.

His mother was from Tangier, but his father was from – I think from Mogador, a very small town in deeper South Morocco, yeah.

And were there differences in the mentality to your family?

Well, the mother was from Tangier so she was normal – well, not normal but typical. More or less Gibraltarians are different, maybe, but ... But however he was more – like she stayed in [inaud], like the Tangier people used to call the people of the south *Forestero*, because *Forestero* means just foreigners. So his father, for instance, knows Arab but he doesn't know Spanish or French. So he slowly, slowly learn Spanish so he could talk to us. But the people of the South Morocco only speak Arab, or French if they are educated, but if not they only speak French or Arab. [00:54:01]

You mentioned that you married at a young age. How old were you?

Very young, very young, 19 or 18, 18. I was not 19, yeah.

You were 18.

Mm-hmm.

Describe please a bit the marriage day or the preparations for the day. Did he come – how did you decide? Did he have to come to your –

Well, because they wanted to marry in Tangier because they didn't want –

Who wanted?

His family.

His family wanted you to go and marry back in Tangier?

Yeah.

Okay.

And in that time in Tangier they do the wedding in the home after they cook, the home. I remember a lady who used to cook and prepare, and all the friends and the helpers used to help them, because they were so big kitchens so they had place for them [laughs]. And then I remember very much all the whole week before the wedding, they work and the help, the meantime they sing like Ladino.

Sing us a song. Do you remember one of the songs?

Oh no, no, not at all. But I heard that song because they made it in – they recorded in Toronto, the Tangier people, community.

But the song was in –

In old Spanish, yeah, not in Ladino.

Not Ladino?

Well, Ladino, it doesn't exist because old Spanish completely different vocabulary and the grammar is completely different, like Ladino. But Ladino really is not – it doesn't exist. It is old Spanish.

So everyone got together in the house –

Yes, to praise the bride and to praise the groom. It was very, very nice. [00:56:04]

And were there any celebrations before the wedding itself with the henna or something?

Well yeah, the night of the *mikveh*, it was a celebration, with the *henna* – well, the *henna* is the *berberisc[a]*.

Tell us, what is the henna?

The henna – no, this is – the henna they call it in Israel, but really the *henna* – well, it's – henna is a herb which they – it's like dark and make the hair very dark and the – because the Arabs, when they are happy, to prove the happiness of the *brachav [sic]*, the people, they painted their faces with henna, yeah.

But did you do henna?

Yes, yes. It was a must. But I mean, henna, it doesn't – in Morocco –

I'm interested to know your henna. I'm interested only about your henna. How was it?

Yes, I did henna, like a Moroccan, like Jews in Tangier. We had a ball of henna, and also with gold as well, and we used to paint at the front door of the house the five fingers, hand, in henna and gold, and they paint us the palm of the hands, yeah? And well, I think the *henna* night is when the bride dress with the *berberisc[a]* dress of the bride, the one which is velvet, embroidered with gold thread. It's very nice, embroidered, all the dress, and the jewellery and the crown.

From where did you get your dress? [00:58:01]

There was a Jewish woman in the Jewish community and – well, I think the property of the Jewish community, and the old woman came and helped me to dress, because it was difficult to dress in that dress, and the – after the donation for the community.

Could you describe the dress? Because there are people that don't know what we mean.

Yeah, it's velvet and embroidered, all the bottom, with gold thread. And it was across – I don't remember already, so many years.

And a hat?

Yes, all red and the pearls, very red, and they used to put like a plait, fake plait, in the hair to look very hairy. They put me fake plaits under the crown, yeah? It was very good, very nice, yeah. And then the wedding, yeah, that was like a wedding party, a big party.

The henna?

Yeah. Well, it's together with the henna, yeah.

It's on the same day?

I think so. I think that the henna was not the henna. It was the night of the *berberisc[a]*, bride and the henna was painting in the wall and so on. But then after it was the night of the *mikveh*, the big party for the family. Now for henna, the *berberisc[a]* dress, nightgown, all embroidered, like – this is a second party. Sometimes they called the music, Arab music, and they danced, Arab style, just for fun, like a wedding, a small wedding. [01:00:06] And then the day of the wedding and that's it.

And the day of the wedding, could you a bit describe it for us?

Well, the day of the wedding was – well, most of all it was a big – like *seuda*, but not so much dancing. After my wedding they started to break dance, like normal, like now, but in my time only *seuda* but not the dancing.

So you get married in Tangier and how does your life go on? Where do you live? Do you go back to Gibraltar again?

No, I stayed with my husband.

In Tangier?

Mm.

And til what year did you stay with your husband in Tangier?

Yes, I did.

Til what year?

Well, about two years ago – two years later he decided to go to Madrid to live.

In Tangier what did your husband did? How did he make his living?

Oh, he had a jewellery firm with his father. They was – in Tangier, near the souk there was a small street, very narrow street, all jewellers, completely, one near the other. Well, jewellers are not like now so much, but all gold, 18 carat gold. But we didn't have fear of hold up at all, at all. There were no security at all. That was all the shops, most of the other jewellers, were Jews, of course. And my husband had one shop, who was his father's one, then his father owned – and brother in law – gave to his brother in law jewellery, so one of them, they used to move from the other shop to the other to talk to him and they would leave the shop alone. [01:02:06] They are not so scared of the –

In Tangier now?

Yeah, yeah. Not now, not now.

No, then. When I say now –

About 40 years ago.

Yes, when you lived there. And what did you do at the time?

Oh, I didn't work, no.

You didn't?

No. I was at home.

And where did you live in Tangier at this time?

In Tangier, in a flat, yeah.

So all these years, you're going back actually – from '46 til '60 something you're going back, Tangier, Gibraltar. Was it – in these years that you're already married to your husband, was Tangier different?

Well, of course it was more empty of Europeans, of course, yes. There were lots of Arabs who were not there. But it was still nice to live. But since then it's changed, of course.

And then you decide – your husband decides to leave to Madrid. Why does he decide to leave to Madrid?

I don't know. Don't ask me because [laughs] – don't ask me. He was – I don't know. He was unstable all the time, wanting to move. But then I decide – he decided to live in Madrid. It was a very nice town, a big capital, lovely. But it was in the Franco time and to be Jewish was very difficult because there was no kosher at all, and we were kosher, so it was very difficult. My mother used to send me the meat and tins, kosher tins or something, to eat, because only fish all the time. But I remember we used to visit a shul. [01:04:01] It was in a flat, and it was not sure that it was a shul. And we prayed very quietly, not strongly, because of the neighbours, and they were looking at us like suspicious. But anyway we couldn't say it was a shul. After – after more or less five years later, even with Franco, then Franco allowed to build the shul, and then we went there, a very big shul – well, the only one.

What's the name?

I don't know.

In Madrid.

I don't know, the only one shul. That one.

And when you go to Madrid and Franco, do you live in a Jewish area?

Well, there is no Jewish area in Madrid. I never know that – I never heard about a Jewish area at all. We learned about a Jewish area when we went to Canada. When we went to buy a house, the estate agent told us, “This side of the...” Not of Montreal but of Laval, which is a small town near Montreal. The estate agent told us, “This side is more expensive and that side less.” “Why? What's the difference?” So then he say, “Well, this side is Jewish and this side is not Jewish, and it's more expensive, Jewish.” It's ridiculous but it's true. We were surprised. We didn't know that.

You were saying before about the synagogue, that in the beginning you had to hide your identity. Did you hide your identity as Jews on the whole or...?

Well, I used not to say properly, “I am Jewish,” because the Spanish people even didn't know what is true. [01:06:01] They thought that we were like the devil. We [inaud], believe me, something that they think that they have big nose and of course they [inaud]. But, well, we couldn't go to with a *kippah*, of course not.

No.

No, no.

And when you say that the Spanish people thought that it – did you experience anything personally?

Well, yes, yes, anti-Semitic, yes. Well, because, as I – the Catholics were brought up with the idea that Jews are the enemies, are the ones who killed Jesus. They don't change their mind.

But did you experience something? Do you remember something that happened to you?

No, but – I don't know, because I did say that I was Jewish.

So who were your friends?

I didn't have friends who were Spanish people, no. I have a lot of Spanish friends now because they are more educated and more civilised, but no, no, I didn't have.

*And at the time, what was the difference that you experienced between Tangier and Madrid?
How was it different?*

Well, because we couldn't – we couldn't say properly that we are Jewish, or we close the business, for instance, because we are Jewish. We couldn't have a business because we had to open on Shabbat and we didn't want to work on Shabbat. And a lot of it – and a *Kippur*, for instance – for instance, for *Kippur*, because the Jewish community get together on *Yom Kippur* but not on Shabbat, not very much, but for *Yom Kippur*, the flat was very small for us so we had to rent a big boardroom like that in Castellana Hilton in Spain, in Madrid. [01:08:11] And when we went to the hotel to pray, we took the *Kippur* in the pocket and then put the *Kippur* in the shul, in the room, yeah.

And what did you do in Madrid?

Oh well, I work as a translator in French and Spanish, secretary – well, for a while, not much, because I had to – back again to Gibraltar. I went back to Gibraltar because I had a problem with my – with Franco. Franco cut off the telephone completely. We couldn't have contact with my parents, for instance, from Madrid to Gibraltar. We couldn't talk to them. So I couldn't stay. I couldn't live separate from my mother. There was no computer [laughs] in that time, and I couldn't have news from her because with no phone it's impossible. So I decided to go back to Gibraltar because I couldn't more live like that. So we decided –

So before we go back to Gibraltar, so your husband, what did he do? Because you said that you had to close the business, so what did your husband work as in Madrid?

No, he worked at a company, export company, because he was using his French and Spanish, so he was very useful. In Spain they were starting to have contact with Europe and over the

world, so they ask a lot of people who can speak other languages, so they made well. But in Gibraltar we bought a shop.

So now what is the year that you're in Gibraltar again? What year are we talking about?

Erm ... Maybe – I was ... '67 – no, '69. [01:10:12]

1969. So 1969 you go back to Gibraltar.

Yeah.

And this time what does your husband work as?

Well, he bought – it was a shop, a small shop, that did jewellery, and I bought a shop for clothing, for change of clothing. I like it very much. And I was happy in Gibraltar.

Yes?

Mm, I like it.

And was it different to the other times that you lived there? Did you see this time in the late '60s, beginning of '70s –

Not really, no, not really, no. It was the same. There was no united Europe or anything at all. It was the same, no. And then when my father died suddenly, slowly, slowly he decided to – and, well, my cousins went to Canada and they were very happy, he decided to go to Canada.

Who?

My husband.

Your husband. Your parents, you were talking – your parents died.

My father. I was with my mother.

And then...?

We went to Montreal.

Montreal?

Yep. I have my aunt, my mother's sister, my aunt and her husband and my cousins, married.

And how was life in Montreal for you?

Well, it failed completely, of course. Not only because of the weather. But anyway, it's different.

In what ways was it different?

[01:12:00] For instance, I didn't know the difference from *Ashkenaz* and *Sepharad*. I didn't know that Jews should live in a Jewish neighbourhood. I couldn't see that, no. I research some place I like. They say, "Oh no, no, no, that is not a Jewish area. You should not live in." Oh, but I like it because it was, I remember, near the river, St Lawrence River. And I miss so much the beach, I want to live with the view of water, at least even the river. Because I always lived – in my room, if I opened the window, I had the sea. So I missed it. So, "No, no, it's not a Jewish area. You should not live in that." So okay, okay, every time I see as well, no.

And your children, where were they born?

No, they were born later.

Okay, so still later. And in this thing, you said it's the first time you understand that there's this Ashkenaz and Sepharad. Where were you? Where did you put yourself? In what part of this deal?

Well, I was *Sepharad* [laughs] because I am Spanish. I mean, I was speaking Spanish. I mean, not because I am Sepharad because I – I am Sepharad, let's say, but because – well, I think *Sepharad* should separate, two parts, the Mizrahi one and the real *Sepharad*, I mean, Spain, Spanish, which is the main meaning. Because I feel Spanish and if I say *Sepharad*, it was because I felt Spanish. It's not that I choose that but it's because I am Spanish [laughs] – well, I am not Spanish – because I felt Spanish. [01:14:06]

In Israel there's this thing between Sepharad and Mizrahi.

Yeah, lots, lots, yes. Not – well, Mizrahi is for Israel but I think that was Sephard, but Spanish not. We don't see the Spanish in Israel so much, no.

And in Montreal were you part of a Jewish network? Were you part of a Jewish –

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes, I was part of the Jewish community, the Moroccan community and the Tangier community, not so much South Africa. But there is a very big community, Spanish community, in Tangier – community in –

In Montreal.

In Montreal, yep, yeah. They are close, yeah.

So did you feel comfortable with your heritage there? Did you feel comfortable in Montreal?

I don't know. Well, it is custom, yes. But I don't know. No, I don't like the weather and everything, no.

So your husband, what does he do in Montreal?

He had a jewellery manufacturer, because he couldn't open in Shabbat.

How many years do you stay in Montreal?

Not much, not much, maybe four years.

And then where do you go to?

Well, he decided to go to Israel.

What years are we talking about?

Oh...

'70s? Late '70s?

The late '70s, yes, yeah.

And where do you live in Israel?

Yes, '78, Netanya.

Netanya. And do you live –

Near the family, the parents, his parents, yeah.

Ah, his parents lived in Israel. And how did you feel in Israel?

[01:16:00] Well, I felt more a foreigner than ever, because when I moved to Madrid I could speak the language and I could watch the TV and I could read the newspapers, but when I lived in Canada I could watch the TV and I could read the newspapers and everything. I could live on my own, defend my own, be independent. But then when I was in Israel I was not independent at all because I did rely on my mother in law, on my sister in law. I couldn't understand the people. I couldn't read the newspaper. I couldn't understand the TV. It was very difficult for me [laughs]. I went to a *ulpan* but it was very slow to get the language completely. It was impossible. But no, I liked it. But as well it was difficult for my husband who had a business.

What business did he have in Israel?

Well, we both had a boutique for women. I used to run it.

In Netanya?

Yeah, just in front of the *tachana*, just in front, yeah. I was – used to run it. I remember to go – I go to Tel Aviv to buy the dresses, to visit the manufacturer. I used to ask for an address. They explain me, “*Yemina, yashar, yemina.*” “Sorry, what is *yemina*?” “This is *yemina*, or?” [laughs]. And then, yeah, everything – well, I could speak English a bit, I could find someone who understand French a bit, and I could find some Spanish, Argentina people, yes, but it was difficult.

And financially how did you get on?

Well, it was a problem because money had no value at that time. Every time we had – we had the same money and we had to buy much more expensive stuff, every time, every time, and it was very difficult. [01:18:12]

What interests me here is in regards to your Sephardi heritage. How did you feel in Israel in those times?

Well, I met – well, I was – my husband used to go to the shul of his uncle, and his uncle, who – they built like a little shul, a very small *minyán* of people of Tangier, so he doesn’t feel the difference. And I did feel the difference so much. I had a lot of contact with Moroccan people, French people, French speaking people, and I had a lot of contact of Argentineans, because of the language but not of the mentality, no, but of the language, yeah.

So in the mentality, close to who did you feel more from all the communities that lived there at the time?

Well, I preferred the Moroccan or the Tunisian, Algerian, the French, all of them. But Argentinean, I have a lot of friends. Even my cardiologist, since 20 years I left – more than 20 years – 25 years I left Israel, I still have contact with him. He's Argentinean. They are very lovely people. They are most of all *Ashkenaz* there, but they are lovely. But I don't know, they speak of their time, of the way they used to live, and it's more – I feel more foreigner, no, because not – if I meet someone of Algeria, they speak about their way of living, it's more similar from my way of living, so that's why, yeah. [01:20:05]

So did you feel adjusted into the community?

Not yet, no [laughs], not really, no. I liked more – after that I met some Turkish people. It's very – I admire them because so many, many settled and they didn't have contact of Spain at all, not like us. Me for instance, my descendants, my great grandfather, they had contact with Spain, so they kept their Spanish, but those people had no idea of Spain and they still kept the contact of their language and their tradition. It's admiring. I admire the Turkish people really, how they can hold their language. Really it's admiring. Never, never saw Spain really [laughs] in their life, and never read a book or a newspaper in their life.

Is there any other memory that you would like to record about your life in Israel?

In Israel? I can't –

Where did your children – where were they born?

In Netanya, in Netanya. They were brought up in Netanya, yeah, yeah.

And what language did you speak to them?

Oh, Spanish at home, yeah. But sometimes – when I started with the *ulpan* and I started talking a little bit in Hebrew, I could talk sometimes more Hebrew with them, or I could follow their reading, to help them reading, for instance. It was easier for me, yeah.

So they grew up in Israel, your children?

Yeah, but I speak Spanish with them, yeah. But even still now, til now, yeah. [01:22:00]

And you speak with them Spanish?

Yeah. I don't want to speak to them in English. But this one who was born in Tangier – oh, in London, the little one, it's very, very difficult to get language. He doesn't want. He's English and English, only that, but it's a pity. I prefer to speak to him in a proper language so he can learn a proper language, rather than to speak to him in English which is not really good and he will learn the bad mistakes in the language. But he doesn't want. Now he wants to know Spanish better, to speak Spanish, and now it's too late because he can't get properly all the grammar.

So til what year are you in Israel and why do you leave Israel?

Why? Well, because the inflation was 120 percent, I think, more than 100. It was impossible. I had, for instance, to buy some stuff and every time it's more expensive, and we could take the stuff because it's – it goes with the train – some of the stuff, for instance, can't go up, because instead of going up, we have to reduce the prices. And it was so difficult and impossible.

Financially.

Yeah. Yeah, but I think that they didn't have this problem now, no? Well okay, the economy is difficult but not so much. I used to buy four yogurts and that morning it cost me, for instance, 10 shekels and the next morning 12 shekels because of that [laughs], because of inflation. But it was impossible, it's boring, that kind of life all the time. [01:24:04] Do you remember that time? No?

We'll talk about it in the end. At what year do you leave Israel?

What year?

What year? What year?

What year, I think it was the '80s.

And then you moved to...?

Or '79 maybe.

And then you moved to...?

To Gibraltar, yes, back to Gibraltar.

You moved back to Gibraltar. How did Gibraltar look to you now after you lived in Israel and in Madrid and –

Oh well, yes, it was changed. Yes, it was changed. It was changed, yes.

In what way?

Because United Europe now, they allowed freedom, the people. England has not any more have the Gibraltar like a fortress. It was forbidden to live in Gibraltar unless someone born in Gibraltar. It was very difficult, impossible to live in Gibraltar for the Arabs, for instance.

And in the '80s, now that you've come back.

'80 or '78 or '79, yes, because now the law in England, it was not military again. It was not any more military, so they can live, Arabs. And also because of Franco, who closed the frontier for the jobs, for the workers, no Spanish workers can go to Gibraltar to work. There were no workers in Gibraltar for the dockyards and everything, so they brought people from Morocco to work. They had no choice. And they stay in Gibraltar. So after so many years, I came back, the borders were open, because Franco was dead already, and I was surprised because it was invaded by Arabs [laughs], because everybody - you know that Arabs had a lot of children and

they stayed in Gibraltar for years, since the borders were closed. [01:26:24] So I found it different, yeah, but anyway after that, besides this, I was very happy.

Did you have to hide in any way your identity when you came –

No, no, not at all, why? In Gibraltar, no, no, we don't hide.

And how was the relationship with the Arabs for you now this time that you came to Gibraltar?

Well, I mean, the Arabs in Morocco are the same because they are just employees and workers that – they might be a problem, the new generation. The new generation grow up in Gibraltar, you see, they find themselves Gibraltarian and they think themselves, I don't know, more right than us. But no, in that time they don't speak so much, no. But in the meantime there is something that's not officially, but we have fears sometimes. For instance we didn't see any security guards in shul for these big parties or big celebrations.

In Gibraltar?

Yeah. No, we are not – we never –

Even in the '80s?

No, never, never, never, yep. But we are not so sure of these kinds of people who are coming in and out.

And how did your children adjust to the change from Israel to Gibraltar?

Oh, a little bit difficult. [01:28:03] I admit that it was difficult, so many towns and then so many different countries. But well, Gibraltar, there is no change for them because the family are the same. But yeah, they knew Gibraltar, so...

So when do you decide to leave Gibraltar and why?

Well, because my husband decided. This is one of the reasons I divorced [laughs] after 33 years.

So then you come to London.

Yeah.

And how does London – we are talking about '85? What year are we talking about?

Yeah, '88.

'88. After all your going around Madrid, Israel, Gibraltar, Tangier, what were your first impressions in the '80s of London?

Well, I was used to London because Gibraltar is – there are two flights a day to London so sometimes every long weekend or something like that we used to go to London to go shopping. I am used to London and Golders Green, because there are lots of Gibraltarians here in London. So, well, it was not – I forgot it was not new for me.

And how did your life go on here? What did you do?

No, I didn't work. He was working.

What did he do?

Oh, jewellery.

And did you hang out with Sephardis? With people from –

Well, people from Gibraltar, yes, friends of ours. But I mean, friends not so much, unless the parents come to visit here their children, because my age is not so much. But I have friends here. [01:30:05]

Was it important for you to preserve your Sephardic traditions? And what traditions do you preserve?

Well, it's not because it's very important but because I feel like that if I - you know, identity, my identity, I can't live in a -

So your identity, how would you say? What is your identity?

Spanish, you see. If not we don't feel that. I like it, of course I like it, keeping the traditions like Gibraltarians do. In Gibraltar they keep all the traditions. But if you are away from Gibraltar it's difficult.

So what traditions did you keep in England, in London, from home?

Not much, not much, not much, because my children are already in schools here. They grew up in an *Ashkenazi* school, the Hasmo and they are very Hasmo and they don't care of the traditions of - the Sephardim traditions, no - most of all the Spanish, not only Sephardim. No, no, they felt that they are Sephard. They go to the *minyán* of Sephard, of course, but not Spanish, no. There is a *minyán*, a Gibraltarian *minyán*, not only the London, the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue, Maida Vale, not only that but a small *minyán* from Gibraltar, yeah.

Where? In the Spanish end?

In Hendon, in Hendon, in Hendon.

In Bell Road, no?

Bell Lane?

Bell Lane? Not that one?

No, no, no. Well no, they have a room in a Jew college in Abbott Road. [01:32:04]

In a Jew college?

Yeah, a Jew college. Yes, there is a Jew college here in Abbott Road and they rented a room for Shabbat, and for *Kippur* they rent the gym room of the school in Bell Lane. I think the Menorah – I don't remember the name of the school, Beit Yaacov I think.

So where do you regard as your home when you think of home?

Oh, my home is now here. But anyway – no, no, really. But anyway, I feel of course my home is Gibraltar. Every big *hagim*, I go to Gibraltar because I like the traditions there, the way they sing in the shul. Sometimes they sing songs of Spanish, in Spanish, in the *Pesach*, the second day of *Pesach*. They sing '*Shira, Shira*' in Spanish and I like it. But yeah.

Looking at your life story, you went a lot from place to place. This moving from place to place, how did it impact your life?

Well, maybe in a way of course I went on and on doing new experience and new people and new customs. But anyway, I still stay with my customs and my thoughts. I didn't change my mind because we changed situations, no, but ... I don't know. As a Jew, the best place where I lived was in Gibraltar, of course, and as well in London, in Hendon, I have completely freedom to be Jewish. [01:34:12] And I didn't feel that in Madrid. Yeah, and in Montreal, yes, but it was not Montreal Town but a little town outside the neighbourhood, yeah. So I don't know if you know Laval but near Montreal.

Do you think your life would be very, very different if you were to stay all your life in Gibraltar?

Well, I suppose yes, of course, yes. I experienced a lot of situations different, and in Gibraltar, yeah. I would not come back to Gibraltar, even if I feel this is my place, because I don't know, I have my life here and I like ... I have more chance to be part of organisations and many things that in Gibraltar we don't do. But no, it's nice, yeah.

But you go back and forth quite a lot til now, and it's to Gibraltar, not to Tangier. It's always to Gibraltar.

No, I have – no, I didn't go to Gibraltar – to Spain – oh, to –

To Tangier [laughs].

No, to Tangier at least 10 or 15 years ago, and I don't wish to come back.

But how does Gibraltar look to you different today than when you grew up or in all the years you came back? Is there any difference? [01:36:01]

Well, the mentality of the people, no. That didn't change. It's become bigger, much bigger, because they took a lot of land from the sea and they doubled – almost they doubled Gibraltar, which we were not – we didn't have that. But that's good because it changed for good. But anyway.

Where would you like to be buried?

In Gibraltar [laughs].

Gibraltar?

Oh yes, this I always say to my son.

Although your sons are here.

Yeah, yeah. But even my mother died in Canada but I brought her to Gibraltar because she wanted to have the cemetery of her parents, and me too. I say always to my children, "I want to be part of the same cemetery that my mother – that my parents went." But that's why I told you when you ask me what shul am I a member, that we are a member of a shul, because we want to have the right to space for a burial. But as I don't mind, I don't need to be a member of the shul. But yeah.

You were talking a lot about the difference, the uniqueness of the Jews of Gibraltar. If we were to just finalise – in what way do you think that the Jews of Gibraltar are different to other Spanish communities?

The Spanish communities – well, there is no Spanish communities because there is no more Spain. [01:38:01]

North African –

North African is different, yes.

Middle East and North African communities. In what way would you say – if we were to kind of finalise?

Well, that's why, because in Gibraltar it's small and they keep together, they keep the traditions, it is Spanish tradition, really Spanish, and the South Morocco is not really Spanish, but the North Morocco is – which is more near to Spain, and also half of the North Morocco is from Melilla, Ceuta, Tetouan, Larache. This is a colony of Spain, and also a protector of Spain, so they have Spanish schools in the North Africa. But the only difference is that because in Gibraltar they didn't move, they did stay in Gibraltar, they are different. They are more safe and not in the north of Morocco, that they had to move. But they still keep their traditions and when they find a *minyán*, led by the Gibraltarians, they want to go. They feel more near to them, to their traditions. Those people in the North Africa as well, the same. Even if we don't have contact with – the Gibraltarians don't have contact with them, feel that they are the same. That's it. But it's different, these Spanish people, than in the South Africa or Baghdad or Iraq. They are different. We don't – they come from the same, from the same route, but – I don't know, because they are more assimilated to the country, they were – [01:40:05]

While you stick to the group.

Yeah. We were not assimilated. And maybe we were assimilated to Spanish traditions, okay, but this is the same, our route. It was Spanish traditions, so it's the same, you see, not because of – we feel the difference, yes – well, not a difference, but we don't feel identified with them,

let's say. Maybe more than the *Ashkenaz*, maybe, I don't know. But they are very, very – sometimes some crazy for gay men or something like that, they are very, very, very close – deep inside the traditions of the Arabs. We don't understand so much them, no, no.

But you said that you're not part of the shul because in the end you want to be buried there.

Yeah.

But when you go to shul here, let's say, will you look for a special –

We go to the *Sepharad* – and my children go to the *Sepharad* shul here.

In Maida Vale?

Oh no, it's too far for me. No, no, I would like to go to Maida Vale on Shabbat, but no.

So in what Sepharad –

No, here, there's an Iraqi one, *minyán* – no, Adeni *minyán*.

Where is that?

Oh, in Finchley Lane, up the Finchley Lane, way up there. And in Brent Street there is a *minyán* of Iran but, I don't know, it's completely different, yeah, completely different.

We're getting to the end of the interview. Is there any message that you would like to give to anyone that will watch this life story about your life in the future, something about the Jewish – something that you would like to pass on that is important for you? [01:42:14]

To be Jewish or...?

It can be anything, something about your life, about to be a Jew, a Gibraltarian Jew. Is there anything you would like to pass on to someone that will watch this video in another few years?

I – I’m sorry that *Sephardim* Jews who are brought up in an English school and were *Ashkenazi*, feel a little bit ashamed to be *Sephard*, and I’m sorry for that because they shouldn’t. That’s one of the reasons I would like to talk – I mean, to address to the youth who are Sephard and are a bit aside from *Ashkenaz*, because they should be proud to be a Sephard as much as they are *Ashkenaz*. It’s true, we didn’t have the Holocaust but our ascendants who freed Spain to save their – not their life but to save their religion and their traditions, not their life, because they could be as well Spanish and live in Spain and keep their wealth and keep all their properties as well and their welfare – but they’re free because of – they wanted to be Jew and because they wanted to keep their traditions, and they should be proud of that. They should be proud of the ascendants to be Sephard. [01:44:08] It’s not ... inferiority because they are not from *Ashkenaz* is, is wrong. They have to be proud of it and as the ascendants of the poor and as well, who had to change to Arab countries, who know how the situation was, and they try to keep their traditions. Well, not so much but the Turkish could keep their traditions. It’s another country that is completely different to what they were used to in Spain, and ... Despite the centuries and centuries, they still keep them. They still keep the *Sephard*, the Spanish. And they – be proud of people who wanted to keep their tradition and lost everything. They prefer their welfare to the – to their religion and their tradition, yeah.

Thank you. Is there anyone or anything that you would like to talk about that we didn’t mention in the interview, that you would like to talk about?

About someone?

Someone or something about your life that we didn’t mention.

I don’t know what, no, nothing. I think I speak about Israel, about Canada, about Spain. [01:46:06] I don’t know.

Mrs Bendayan, I thank you very much for the interview.

But really I have a sad feeling - to – I don’t know what I say, if it was – you will agree with me or you understand me, because I have a completely argument with my children. They don’t

want to keep anything – I mean, not religion but tradition. They don't mind. I feel sad for it because they should, but they don't want, they don't want.

That's why it's very important to contribute to our archive.

Yeah.

Thank you very, very much. And now we will –

Okay, I'll show you the pictures.

Yes.

Mrs Bendayan, could you please tell me who we see in this photograph?

I have my grandmother from my mother's side and my uncle, eldest uncle, the day of the bar mitzvah of my uncle.

In what year was it taken?

I think the 1920s. I don't know, more or less.

And by who was it taken?

Oh, I don't know [laughs]. It's a studio, I suppose.

Okay, thank you.

And this one.

Well, this is outside my aunt's house. It's a new neighbourhood they were building in Tangier. They didn't finish the road yet. It's outside Tangier. [01:48:00]

What year was it taken?

About, I suppose, early '50s. I don't know what age I was.

And what's the name of your auntie, her full name?

Ora.

Sorry?

Well, in English, Golda.

Golda?

Yeah.

And her surname?

Owasra.

Thank you.

This is my uncle, his wife and my parents as well and another aunt, and it was in Gibraltar.

And when was it taken?

I don't remember. Late '30s, I think.

And where was it, the place?

The place, I don't know. I didn't recognise it completely, but – because I think those walls were brought down.

Okay, thank you.

Tangier Beach.

And who do we see in the picture?

My father and my cousins, and me.

And in what year was it taken?

In the '60s.

Thank you.

What could you tell us about this picture?

This is my *berberisc[a]* night in 1965. And these two ladies were neighbours of my grandmother, but they still keep our friendship with them. They are not any more alive. But...

And the dress?

The dress was a *berberisc[a]* dress in velvet and embroidered with gold thread. [01:50:06] And I had a lot of jewellery, fantastic jewellery, custom jewellery, and...

Where was it –

In Tangier.

In Tangier, in the synagogue?

No, at home. They put like a throne where people sit down with the bride.

Thank you.

It's my husband and I before we were married, and this is the souk where we used to buy the fruit and veg and the meat, and the fish.

Where is it?

In Tangier.

And around what year is it?

That's the souk.

Around what year?

In '63.

Thank you.

Yes, it's my wedding day in Tangier, 1965. And the shul is a house of a very rich man who closed down the shul.

What's the name of the shul?

Oh, the family was Shukran.

Thank you.

This is the entry of the garden.

Thank you.

Sometimes they could take – the day of my wedding in the shul, Shukran Shul, and this is showing the arch of the Torah.

Thank you.

Could you tell us a bit about the shul?

This shul, it has closed down and they took all the *Sepharim*, the Sepher Torah, and they brought them to Canada, where they opened a new *shul* up, *Sephardim* and Moroccan people in Toronto. [01:52:08]

Thank you.

Could you tell us –

That's after 20 years I left Tangier, I went back with my sister in law to show my son, who is not on the photograph, the house where I was brought up. And I knock at the door of my flat, my ex flat, and I ask if I could visit the flat. It was an Arab family. They were very welcome. They were very nice. But it changed so much. And the house, the entry, quite changed. It was – well, the steps are in marble. It's true that it changed because many years ago – passed so many years. But the ceramic on the wall is like Andalucía style for South Spain. The ceramic design is – and the table there is the place where the caretaker used to stand, the piece of –

So who do we see in the picture?

Me and my sister in law.

Your sister in law. And when was it taken? What year, around?

More or less 10 or 15 years ago.

Thank you.

Okay, yes, when was this picture taken?

In '98 – yeah, '98. It is the bar mitzvah of my son, my little one, but it was in Canada, and in Canada there is a very big community from South Morocco. [01:54:04] And the custom in Morocco and in Canada now, they dress the boy as an Arab and with a hat, Arab hat, and they

do a night of henna and the dress the boy with the Arab dress and the caftan – every woman dress with kaftan.

Thank you.

Yes.

Well, this is a wedding of the daughter of my cousin, and we were united, all the cousins from the mother's side.

And where was –

In Canada, in Toronto, yeah.

And what year?

In 1992, more or less.

Thank you very, very much.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT - 01:55:18]