

# EXODUS Project

## Interview of Diane Wruble

December 19, 2017

### *Page 1*

EXODUS

Diane Wruble.mp4

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**Lynnie Mirvis:** I'm Lynnie Mirvis and I'm here with Diane Wruble, and this is for the Exodus Project, and today is Monday, December 19, 2016. All right, if you would tell us your full name, Diane?

**Diane Wruble:** Diane Leach-Wruble.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Okay.

**Diane Wruble:** And I was born in Memphis.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** My mother was born in Memphis, and I've lived here all my life except for a time when Larry was doing his intern residency. We lived away one year in Philadelphia, where Lisa was born, and then four years in Miami, Florida, and the two boys were born there, so we moved back here when Larry finished all his training and was ready to go into making a living, and he worked full time at the university, when we first moved back, we lived in an apartment, and we had no ties. We had a house in Florida and we thought if we don't like it for the first year, not me, but Larry...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** If he didn't like it, we'd go back to Florida.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** So it turned out we stayed here. We've been very happy. We raised our children with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and we've never been sorry that we stayed instead of leaving, and early on, I got involved in the Memphis Jewish Federation, and I think through that is how I got involved in resettlement of the Russians that came...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

## **Page 2**

**Diane Wruble:** I forget what year. I'm sure you know what year it was, and we met Rita and her parents, her mother, Vladimir... Vladimir and Rita Gochberg, at the airport, and they came with Rita's two sons. Igor was... I guess he must have been 18, maybe, Slava being about four years younger, I think, and the boys had never been exposed to religion at all because I remember Igor... not... no, Slava, asking me how did I know there was a God.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Ah...

**Diane Wruble:** And which was a very hard question to answer, and I thought, "oh, this is a really smart-aleck kid."

**[laughter]**

**Diane Wruble:** "And I don't think we're going to get along."

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Oh, my...

**Diane Wruble:** But anyway, I tried to explain to him the best I could that... how I knew there was a God, and he assured me that he was taught that there was no God, and he was pretty smart even at that time, but I think I won out, and we convinced Rita to send Slava to the Academy, and I think that was really his...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Saving grace, I guess you would call it, because he then had a Jewish peer group.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** One of whom was... or still is... Jeff Baum, who is like the... they're best friends.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Ah...

**Diane Wruble:** I mean, they go away \_\_\_\_\_ together, every bar mitzvah, every occasion, they are together, so Slava, who is the younger of the two boys, had Jewish peer group, where Igor was older and never developed much... I won't say he doesn't have any... but he never involved himself in the holidays, and he was detached. He didn't have a background and never sought to develop the background, whereas Slava did, and Rita very much wanted her family to remain Jewish and, as I said, Vladimir was a **kohen** and he would \_\_\_\_\_ on the High Holidays, and he had a background in reading Hebrew, speaking Yiddish, and Rita, her mother, I think, through her mother living in the house, Rita had that connection with the grandmother, and the grandmother, I think, had a knowledge of Yiddishkeit.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** So it wasn't foreign to her, which a lot of the Russians came and it was completely foreign to them, and they assimilated very much into the gentile community. They fit in better there than they did to the Jewish community.

### **Page 3**

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And I think that, you know, that was not good. I remember at the time, they did not give the refugees coming out of Russia a choice to go...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** They gave them a choice.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** I think where to go, where I think had they told them they had to go to Israel, or maybe Israel couldn't take them all, I don't know, but the ones that went to Israel, I think, fared much better.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** They became... stayed Jewish, married Jewish. The ones that came to the States, unless they lived in Brighton Beach, where the Russians settled...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** It was very, very hard for them to come with no religious background and remain Jewish. They weren't accepted, I think.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** It was very challenging. Yes. Right. Could we go back a little bit further? I'd like to know a little bit about your background, your family, and your education and...

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah?

**Lynnie Mirvis:** How that might have impacted on you, you know, to take this on.

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah. Well, my grandfather, Sam Shainberg, my mother's father, was President of Baron Hirsch for like I think four terms maybe, so I grew up in Baron Hirsch, although I knew all of the other synagogues, you know, especially on the High Holidays. We would spend the night downtown at the Claridge Hotel. We would, you know, walk, and of course I would walk to all of the different synagogues.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Oh.

**Diane Wruble:** And I had all my education here until I went to the University of Alabama for two years, and at that point I came back home and was working. I met Larry because he was here going to medical school.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Uh-huh.

**Diane Wruble:** And that's how we met.

## **Page 4**

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And that was really the end of my formal education, but my family was always involved in supporting Israel, always involved in Baron Hirsch. I think my grandfather, Sam Shainberg, was involved in starting the school, not that he was shomer Shabbos, religious at that time, but he saw the need that the community needed it.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** For the... you're talking about the...?

**Diane Wruble:** Hebrew Academy.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Hebrew Academy?

**Diane Wruble:** At that time, he was... I've seen pictures where he was at the meetings, and you know...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** How involved, I don't know. My uncles, very supportive of the Jewish Community Center. Their name is all over there. They were very, very active in the Jewish... the JCC, you know, Jewish Community Center, not so much in religion. I had an uncle, my mother's older brother, went to Palestine in 1929, and he was killed in the Hebron Massacre there at the yeshiva, and he died... I think he was either 23, maybe 24 years old, and that had a very negative...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Feeling on the boys in the family. They thought if this wonderful person who was giving his life to HaShem... I mean, it was very unusual for a Jewish boy in 1929 to go to Israel to learn in a yeshiva.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** That's David Shainberg?

**Diane Wruble:** Aaron David Shainberg.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Aaron David Shainberg.

**Diane Wruble:** Right, and a lot of people in our family are named after him. In fact, my older sister, Alene... he died right before she was born, and even though you're not supposed to name after males, her name, Alene Doris, after... Aaron David was his name, so the two boys... my mother's brothers, were very negative about religion after that, and I think that's how they shuffled off to the Jewish Community Center, and my father was raised in a little small community in Louisiana, and he never was bar mitzvah, had no background. They didn't have a synagogue. He was from Lake Providence, Louisiana. My grandfather, who was a peddler, a peddler up through Louisiana, met my grandmother, who was from a Jewish family. Her name was Mary, but all her family were Jewish, and my father had a brother that married a gentile, and he decided he would never, ever have that in his family, so he let all three girls and boy know that that was never to happen to him, and so they were very strict in that we always kept a kosher home. We were not shomer Shabbos but we always kept a kosher home, and so then when we were moving back and I became interested and I was in the young leadership... I came through a young leadership program for the federation, and then I

Diane Wruble.mp4

## **Page 5**

served on the board and I was fundraising chairman and during the different wars I was one of the people that went out and spoke and had parlor meetings, and we had parlor meetings, Larry did parlor meetings. He went through the Mid-South and did parlor meetings for smaller communities, trying to get money for Israel at that time, which was needed very badly, and then we got... I got involved in the Russian program. Of course, they... you know, I don't remember how many families we relocated...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** But they asked the people that were involved in the federation, "would you consider taking a family?" And I said "of course." Didn't know at the time what it was going to involve, but of course, we would do that and want people to do that for us had it been reversed, so I go to the airport, and I meet Rita, the parents and the two boys, and they don't speak any English, and I speak no Hebrew or Yiddish to converse with her parents, and all we could... Rita could say "thank you very much."

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** That was it. "Thank you very much" and "da." I understood "da," but somehow, I don't know how, we communicated. I don't know how we did, but we did, and if she was doing something wrong or inappropriate, you know, I would tell her, and she looks at Joan and myself like we're sisters.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And we always had them for every Rosh Hashanah, every Passover to this day. You know, we've included them in everything and, you know, birthdays and anything going on in our families, they were always included, and...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** That's amazing.

**Diane Wruble:** Slava ended up, you know, marrying a Jewish girl, Soha, who... you know, they send their kids to the day school, and Igor still remains aloof but always respectful and loving. You know, there's nowhere that I don't see him that he doesn't come. He loves me and he hugs me and...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Aw...

**Diane Wruble:** You know, so it's a very close relationship, even...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** Even though I don't see him very often, and we were very close to the grandparents. You know, they were... as long as they were here with us, and they were just the loveliest family, and Rita came, you know, as a single person. It's a shame, I think, that she didn't get married because she certainly doesn't look her age. She's...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

## **Page 6**

**Diane Wruble:** Very nice looking and... but she just never connected, and I think she had such a close relationship with the two boys...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** That I think she didn't realize that...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** The kids and the grandchildren were going to have their lives and she was going to be left. I think she's very lonely at this point.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** It's very hard. What was that like for you? What... do you remember what feelings ran through your... you... when you met them at the airport?

**Diane Wruble:** Oh.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** What was that like?

**Diane Wruble:** Well, it... it was, you know, just this is going to be a relationship that I was going to have ongoing. It wasn't like "I'm meeting you at the airport and I'm going to dump you in an apartment on Summer Avenue and not have a connection," which I think happened to a lot of the families that did come, and I think that's why they didn't remain Jewish, and we were just in Florida, just recently. We used an Uber driver.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And somehow... well, there were like six of us, and you know, the driver is seven, in the car, and the person sitting up front said to him "where are you from? I hear your accent." He says "I'm from Russia," so he was a Russian Jewish boy, married to a Jewish girl, living in Aventura, Florida.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Which is a very popular Jewish area, and I had the conversation with him about what he thought, as a Russian Jew, and he... he's young. He has one little 1-year-old child, so it's a young boy, so he came as a very young person. I guess he must have come later than they because he's young.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm. True.

**Diane Wruble:** And I said... his family, he said... some of his family went straight to Israel, and some came to America. His family came to America, and he remained Jewish. His family remained Jewish.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And he goes back often to Israel to visit, you know, the extended family, and I think they went maybe to Israel first.

## **Page 7**

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** So he's... he remained Jewish, and I asked him what he thought.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Whether they... all the Russians should have probably gone straight to Israel, and he says "you are correct in your thinking."

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** He said "I see what happened to my friends that didn't stay connected to a Jewish community, you know, that they've assimilated into the American culture," and so I thought that was very interesting.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** That's interesting.

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** That is interesting. Well, is there... are there any stories that stand out for you about in the early days, when you were... were any things that you did with them specifically that you can remember around the holidays?

**Diane Wruble:** Oh, we did everything. They would meet with us on the holidays because we didn't drive, but you know, like for Igor's birthday or Slava's birthday or any of their birthdays, you know, we would be with them, and if you went to the house, you must eat.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** "Rita, I just had my lunch, I just had my dinner." Well, it's an insult if you don't eat in the house, so...

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** So we'd say "okay, we're going over there, but I guess we better not eat because we're going to have to eat a second time," so you had to kind of judge it because it was like an insult if you didn't eat there.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Right. Yeah.

**Diane Wruble:** And Rita loves to have company in her house and she keeps kosher so that her kids and grandchildren and we can eat there, and she prides herself on having these Russian dinners for us.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Oh...

**Diane Wruble:** And we love her cooking.

## **Page 8**

**Lynnie Mirvis:** What's... what are some of the favorite foods that... can you remember any?

**Diane Wruble:** Well, she makes borscht.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And I tell her, "Rita, I don't eat borscht. I don't like it." "Well, you're going to like my borscht," and I do, because Russian borscht is different.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Really.

**Diane Wruble:** My father ate the cold borscht with the beets and the sour cream, where hers is like a hot meat soup.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And so she'll have like part of sour cream to go on it, which I don't care for...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** But I love her soup. It's got meat, chunks of meat and stew, but it has the beet, you know, so it's kind of reddish, but I love her beet soup. She usually has the same thing because she knows what we like.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And then she'll make like hamburger patties, and she'll sauté onions and mushrooms on the side, and you can put that over the patties, and she makes the best potato salad you've ever tasted, because I don't really like potato salad, but I love her potato salad.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** What does she do to it?

**Diane Wruble:** It has little pickles, and it's got a very tiny, tiny, tiny... she's a very good cook. She can't bake a lick.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And so when we come, we know you bring dessert because Rita just doesn't... she cooks. No baking, and she'll make chicken. She's learned to make a few side dishes, and she loves sweets, even though she can't bake. That's her favorite part of the meal, so you know any time she's coming here, she's eating two or three desserts, and so I went to, you know, have... probably the pictures you've seen are probably from Vladimir's birthday party or, you know, or...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** I don't know if I did.



## **Page 9**

**Diane Wruble:** I had the whole family, her... you know, because she had two brothers, you know... one of them is deceased, and her sister-in-laws, you know... we would have the extended family if we were having a big, you know, summer party out by the pool, so I know, you know, the extended family, and...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Wow.

**Diane Wruble:** Rita stayed closer to us that I would say than to the Russians that lived... you know, I don't know if she...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Thought maybe she was a little better than they... and they're kind of a little snobby, depending on where they were from. If you were from this place, you would not...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** I guess it's like in America too.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** I don't know which place it was, but... no, she would say, "ah, you know, they... they're not good enough," or whatever, and trying to think what else. You know, they would... she would come over. I remember her coming over to swim soon after she got here, and she came in a bikini bathing suit and I thought "oh my God, oh!" I mean, she had a gorgeous figure.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** But it was just not appropriate, and so I thought "all right, well, I'm going to have to tell her, you know, that she can't come in her bikini bathing suit to my house," so I did, and she took it. We laugh about it, you know, that she showed up in her bikini bathing suit... looking good.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** But... Rita doesn't like to discuss age. She doesn't want me to say how old... you know, I'll say "ah, I'm getting old." "Don't say that!" You know, old is... do not ever say you're old.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right. Right.

**Diane Wruble:** And she certainly does not look her age.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Absolutely.

**Diane Wruble:** And she would be together so much with the boys that they would think she was like their sister or a girlfriend because she looks so young.

## **Page 10**

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Right. She does.

**Diane Wruble:** And you know, of course, Igor lost his hair so that made him look, you know, older, so they... no one ever guessed that she was the mother.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** That's amazing.

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** So what do you attribute to your commitment to this family, you know, that you really saw it through?

**Diane Wruble:** Well, I think that they were very easy to be committed to.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** In Rita's eyes, I can do no wrong.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** You know, there's not many people that you can feel like that.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** But she thinks, you know, "you're my sister, tell me what to do," you know, "I have something, I need to talk to you, can I meet you, I just need an hour of your time," you know, and she... she loves my advice and she thinks I know everything. I've told her a million times I'm not so smart, I'm not so wise, but she thinks I am, so you know, that makes you feel good, and the parents were just... you can't... you didn't know either one. Sweetest, kindest, gentlest people that you could ever meet, the two of them.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And even though he wasn't her father, she just had... the whole family, they had such great respect for him, and he... very special people, and he was an artist. He had the most gorgeous handwriting, and he did like calligraphy. That was his natural way of writing was this gorgeous handwriting, and if you... every birthday, every... any occasion, he would write you this gorgeous message in his beautiful handwriting. It was... and he was a real artist, and the mother was equally sweet and kind, and the two boys. I mean, they're not hard for me to develop a relationship with because they're great people, and they think I hung the moon.

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Well, that's great. That's...

**Diane Wruble:** So it's a very...

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** That was rewarding.

**Diane Wruble:** Nice mutual... you know, mutual...

**Lynn timer Mirvis:** Right.

Diane Wruble.mp4

## **Page 11**

**Diane Wruble:** Respect, and I have respect for them, and they have respect for us. They understood that we were shomer Shabbos. They were always very respectful of that, and of course Slava became shomer Shabbos himself, so that helped.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And he does believe in God now, but that was funny when he was this little smart aleck kid. It was like the first time that he was in the car and he starts with me that there's no God and how can I prove it.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** What did... do you remember what you said? I'm...

**Diane Wruble:** I don't remember. I remember I really wanted to smack him around and...

**[laughter]**

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Guess I never heard that...

**Diane Wruble:** Because the... no, it wasn't that I never heard it. I knew... you know, kind of prepared us for what we were going to be dealing with. Now, Rita and, you know, the... and her parents, of course, there was... they knew religion. They wanted, you know, religion, and he could dive in and he could do everything, the grandfather. He was...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** But Slava had been indoctrinated in the Russian schools.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And I guess Igor too at some extent also but he was a different personality. He wasn't going to come out and say there's no God, and you know, be disrespectful. He... it's not... Igor wouldn't have done that, but Slava was just young enough and fresh enough to do that, so I don't remember exactly how we got around it.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** But from going to the Academy, I guess they took care of that problem for me, because I don't know that I could have... I guess we talked about the trees and birth, and you know, that all of that couldn't happen without there being some Supreme Being, you know, so we... I didn't quote **any of the morahs** or anything.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** But I did...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Page 12**

**Diane Wruble:** Try to explain it the best I could, and then I guess the school did the rest.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** And then he... you know, it didn't last long, but I remember that first time he got in my car and he started with me...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Yeah. Well...

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah, that there's no God.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** He must have felt safe with you to be able to say something like that.

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah, yeah.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** You know, that that's a real challenge too. Would that be the most challenging thing that you experienced when you connected with this family?

**Diane Wruble:** Well, I wanted to make sure that he went to the school.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And I don't think Rita ever thought about taking him out, but Slava's a couple of times thought about taking his kids out and so that's...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Been an issue between them, but he'll come to me.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** If he has a problem or, I mean...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And we have that close a relationship. He'll come talk to Larry if he's having a business problem. He'll talk to me if there's a social problem, whatever, and he's gone through some tough times financially. We've helped them several times that way. When they opened their business, you know, we... she didn't want us to give them but to loan them.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Which we did, and they've always paid everything back and no problem, and so we never really ran into very serious a problem. I don't think the kids every got into any trouble. No, it was all...

## **Page 13**

**Lynnie Mirvis:** That's good.

**Diane Wruble:** All good.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** So if I had to ask you what was the most rewarding thing about this relationship...

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah, well, I think the relationship that we have and seeing Slava's kids.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** You know, he's got the most beautiful, bright. Soha's a wonderful mother and I'm sure Soha and Slava are both very bright. Rita's really a very bright woman.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Absolutely.

**Diane Wruble:** And the kids are very smart, do very well, and they're very motivated...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** In their Judaic studies and the English studies, and they make me very proud. I never, ever go anywhere that they don't come and acknowledge my presence. They call me "Didi" like my grandchildren.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Aww.

**Diane Wruble:** And they always... in fact, some of them, I think their kids are nicer to me than my own grandchildren.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** [laughter]

**Diane Wruble:** Very, very respectful.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Uh-huh.

**Diane Wruble:** I mean, no matter where they are or if Momo's with his high school... no, he's coming over and he's making sure that he's acknowledged me.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Oh, that's amazing.

**Diane Wruble:** So we've just had a good relationship. There's, you know, never been anything that I've been not happy about. Everything has always gone along great.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** So we were blessed. I guess that we connected so well. I think it had to be part... it had to be a mutual thing for us to have gotten along so well, and I find it... you know, I'm very proud of what I've done, but it had to be two-way street for it to work.

## **Page 14**

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** You know, if they had not wanted this relationship, we could never have had it. It had to be, you know, a mutual thing, so you know, just good family, so I think I was just blessed to go to the airport at the right time.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** To the airport at the right time as part of the volunteer program for the Russian Jewish Resettlement Program.

**Diane Wruble:** Right. Right, and I've interviewed some of the Holocaust... I was on a committee during that... well, I mean, it's a long time ago. I'm sure they kept it.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Uh-huh.

**Diane Wruble:** Gosh, it has to be 20, 25 years ago, and I remember they had different people in the federation interviewing the survivors.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm.

**Diane Wruble:** And taking notes and writing up reports on how it was when they came and about resettlement and everything.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** So using what we learned from the resettlement of Holocaust survivors...

**Diane Wruble:** Right.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** How to help these Russian Jews.

**Diane Wruble:** That's right. Yeah.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** So what about your family? Can you talk a little bit about how this commitment to volunteer and bring this Russian-Jewish family into your lives, how it affected your children and your grandchildren perhaps?

**Diane Wruble:** Well, Lisa, you know, I think... I think when children see their parents...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Uh-huh.

**Diane Wruble:** Giving tzedakah, giving up themselves, I think that it's something they learn very early. They see you doing, I think it's easy for them to do themselves.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** I think giving of yourself and giving of money, I think, has to be taught as a child. I don't think you can teach many adults...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

## **Page 15**

**Diane Wruble:** To be philanthropic or give of themselves if they haven't seen it in their home.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** I know that I have, you know, friends that I've worked with in different organizations, especially federation and everything, and they say, "well, I do this, but I don't like my husband to know about it because he doesn't understand and he never will and so I just do this privately. I do this. I have my own money and I do it this way." So I think if they see their parents giving of themselves and giving money, and Larry and myself both have done that, and I'm very proud to say that my children do the same thing, and they were as close... I mean, Lisa and Soha are almost like best friends. I mean, they...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Your daughter.

**Diane Wruble:** Entertain, and there's a Hanukkah party Lisa usually gives, you know, if she's doing because Slava's kids are coming and she gears it for the little kids, and any time Steve comes in town, he's...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Your son, yeah?

**Diane Wruble:** Son from New York.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Of course, he makes sure he sees Rita, and she has a close enough relationship that he'll... she'll say to him "are you dating? Who are you dating?" You know, she's close enough that she's a confidant of my son, who's now single, not too happy about that part, but happens, and so all of my kids, Gary and Dina, and you know, their... some... I think Sophie and one of their kids are best friends, Slava's daughter, so our families have just grown up together where so it's just... they know it's family.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** So that's all been good, and I don't know what else to tell you about.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Thank you. Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you want to add?

**Diane Wruble:** I don't know.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Let's see.

**Diane Wruble:** No, I think just look forward to seeing how that... their kids turn out, and of course mine too.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

## **Page 16**

**Diane Wruble:** Mine also, but they've grown up together, have, you know, a very close relationship. I think it's been good, and good for, you know, my children to see what we've done for them, but as I said, it had to be mutual or it wouldn't have worked.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** A mutual... a mutual... mutual relationship.

**Diane Wruble:** True. Yeah.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Yeah.

**Diane Wruble:** Had to be.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** You were a role model for your children.

**Diane Wruble:** I tried, tried, tried to be... tried to be a role model for them because I think when they came, you know, they were searching.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And Rita has said to me many times "thank God, thank God that I came to Memphis. I could have gone to New York," she says, "but I knew that my coming without a husband, that I needed a smaller community," and I think she was wise enough to leave Russia at the time.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** I think her rush to get out was that Igor was going to have to go into the Russian Army.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** He was becoming... I think one more year and they would have taken him into the army and then she wouldn't have been able... or wouldn't have left him there.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** And taking him into the army was a huge thing.

**Diane Wruble:** Yes. Yes.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** It wasn't...

**Diane Wruble:** So she was in very much of a hurry, and she was very lucky that she got out when she did.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** She... I never did quite understand whether she was married...



## **Page 17**

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Or if she was going to marry someone else...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** But his mother would not give permission for him to leave.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** So she was so determined to leave, because of Igor, she left this man and she really never found anybody to replace him here.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Oh. Sad.

**Diane Wruble:** She's had some offers and dates and things, but...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** Never found the right person to marry. She did almost, yes. That was not a good thing.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** She met somebody, a Russian, and she moved to Cleveland, Ohio, leaving her parents and the children here. Well, I was horrified, so I got on the phone and I told her "Rita, this is not the way you behave. No." I said, "one thing, you don't know this man well enough. You don't know what his intentions are," and I said "you need to come back. You can't leave your parents and your two children."

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** I mean, they weren't little at the time.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** This was a while after she had been here, so I said "no, this is not happening," but now I look back on it, you know, maybe I did the wrong thing by telling her to come back because she would have had a husband, but she just didn't know him well enough and I...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** She listened to you.

**Diane Wruble:** I felt responsible, and yes, she came back and listened to me, and she said she wasn't sorry that I gave her that advice.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Sometimes you wonder.

**Diane Wruble:** Yes, I know, but you know, had he lived here, and we'd known more about him, or if he was... he had a restaurant and he had her working. I said, "no, Rita, this is not for you," so I think I gave her the right advice hopefully, even though it was sad for me to see that she never found anybody.

## **Page 18**

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right. Right. Yeah. That's hard.

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** You're really close to all of those...

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** People in that family.

**Diane Wruble:** Right.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** All of them.

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah, now we're very close, and it's, you know... sometimes if somebody does something, I'll let them know. I feel that it... if you're family, you have to hear my opinion.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** My family has to hear it, and if they want to be family...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** How does that work?

**Diane Wruble:** They have to hear it. You... you're...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Think it's important to speak up.

**Diane Wruble:** Yes.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** When you see something that...

**Diane Wruble:** Now, all right, if you're not going to take my advice, even with my own children, you're not going to take it, but you're going to hear it.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right. How does that work for them? Are they able to hear?

**Diane Wruble:** They are able to hear, not all the time do they take my advice, but I'm not the kind of person that I'm going to keep it in and be able to say later "I should have said something at the time," you know.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** I'd rather say "this is the way I see it, you may not see it that way, but I'm going to give you this advice. You can take it or not take it," but it's worked out pretty well.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** Grandchildren know that I'm very honest, if we go shopping or whatever, and "does this look good on me?" They know they're going to get an honest opinion about that and about their lives.

## **Page 19**

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm. What's the most important thing for you to tell your children or grandchildren that, you know, as far as how to live a good life?

**Diane Wruble:** Well...

**Lynnie Mirvis:** And...

**Diane Wruble:** I think they see that, you know, charity and giving and taking care of other people is very important, so I think they see enough that I don't think I have to tell them. I think they've gotten it, but I have a few that have ventured away from religion, and they know how I feel about it, and very strongly, and I don't keep it back. They know.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** This is the way it is. We have apartment in Florida, and they know you are welcome to come there, but it has to be with a spouse, or you know, it has to be appropriately used.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** And this is the way I was brought up.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm.

**Diane Wruble:** I'm not changing at this age, and if you don't understand it, I'm very sorry, but this is my life.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** You're... stick to your beliefs and your values.

**Diane Wruble:** Right. I do, and I let them know what my values are, loud and clear.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** You do. You're honest.

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** In the...

**Diane Wruble:** Well, I've always been honest, and I don't hold it back, and they know that I speak my mind. They might... like I said, they might not want to hear it.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Right.

**Diane Wruble:** But they're going to hear it.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** And this Russian-Jewish family that you helped to volunteer for...

**Diane Wruble:** Right.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** And make part of your family...

## **Page 20**

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Really have appreciated your advice.

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah. So far.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** And so far...

**Diane Wruble:** So far they haven't... yeah.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Your friendship.

**Diane Wruble:** Yeah, and it hasn't broken our friendship. No.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Is there anything else that we need to... that you want to add before we conclude?

**Diane Wruble:** I don't think so. I think we covered most of the bases.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** We covered a lot.

**Diane Wruble:** But I think that we were just very lucky to have found each other. I think they broadened my horizons and hopefully I helped them assimilate into the American culture and stay Jewish.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Mm-hmm. Thank you so much, Diane.

**Diane Wruble:** You are so welcome.

**Lynnie Mirvis:** Thank you.

EXODUS/pti:dh