

I am here with a gentleman who came from far away, from Los Angeles, Mr Mihai Wurmbrand.

I am so glad we got to meet. People know a lot of things about your father and about you as well. A lot of friends told me before I came here, "You can talk with this guy about everything, on every subject" and that's why I would like us to talk less about your father, about whom maybe thousands of shows have been made, who preached tens of thousands of sermons. He is well known around the world, his books were translated into. I don't even know how many languages.

MW: 85 languages.

85 languages. So he is considered one of the greatest Christian writers of the world. He lived a long time, he served 14 years in prison and when he got out he declared his love towards all his persecutors. He was incapable of hatred. I followed some of his public appearances and shows and I could tell that he was not bluffing. He simply loved people for who they were.

MW: More than that, many times when he was talking about his spiritual experiences while in the Communist prisons, at some point the communists isolated the Christians who were arrested. They were put in a separate cell, Orthodox, Catholic, protestant priests. They had their own cell so they would not convert others. When my father was talking about the communist prison, his spiritual experiences and whom he met there, he met Christians from Romania who really were saints. I was telling my father that if he went on telling these things, all people would want to be in a communist prison.

I remember you once you were telling me that he was telling you that nobody could run away from his sermons in prison. Some Christians at church look at the time, get up and leave. Your mother speaks about wonderful moments and revelations, encounters with the Holy one, miracles that took place there. I really enjoyed the story of that simple man, a peasant, who was telling a university professor that he had met Jesus and Jesus smiled at him. And everybody thought he was joking and asked him,

"Yeah, you met Jesus. And how did he smile?" In that moment, the peasant, who had never read a book except for the Bible, became all smiles. Your father said it was the most beautiful smile he had ever seen in his entire life. And your father was in his eighties already. The university professor, upon seeing that smile, admitted that the peasant had really met Jesus. It is obvious they had witnessed miracles because otherwise they wouldn't have survived for so long in prison or in solitary confinement. But I wanted to ask you a different thing and thus start the discussion about you. You were a child, your father was telling you what he had gone through and you didn't fully believe him. You believed him later on when you visited the communist prisons.

MW: Not only that, but I believed him even more in two different instances. One was when. I have to start from a different point. When my father died, an American pastor helped us a lot to get here to the States and while we came here and this pastor, his name was Myrus Knutson, he was a Lutheran from Minnesota, when my father died, this pastor had a few words at my father's funeral. He said "What impressed me most about Richard Wurmbrand is that for a long time I had heard various stories being repeated about what he had to go through. And what impressed me most was that he had never exaggerated the story. the story had never suffered changes. The story was always the same." So, I myself heard my father's stories and sometimes you might think "Is this really what happened?" I eventually got 8500 pages from CNSAS, from the (communist) Security service

From the CNSAS archives.

MW: Yes, yes. and I was absolutely amazed how certain stories my father had told me, were documented by the communist secret service
This is what I wanted to ask you.

MW: Not only that, but my father knew 14 foreign languages. I personally did not believe he knew all these languages, but I personally heard him preach in 9 languages. It is one thing to say "I know a foreign language, and it is totally different to be able to preach in a foreign language." I personally heard him preach in 9 different languages because he traveled on 5 continents, he was well known and so we traveled together and he preached in many places. He wrote a book, called Karl Marx was a Satanist. Have you heard of it?

Yes, of course. Yes.

MW: Karl Marx had beliefs and he was a kind of member in Satan's church. He worshipped the Devil and his entire communist doctrine is a Satanist conspiracy. My father wrote this book which was translated in a lot of languages and you can also find

it in Romanian. He wrote this book from his memory entirely. So, there were poems Karl Marx wrote worshiping the Devil and other writings and my father wrote all these from his memory. He gave it to me and told me to publish it. When I saw the book I was the first one who didn't believe in it and many times I had to tell my father to stop because he was, as Americans say, from the get go, which means he was a leader. He took advice from no one, he took the lead. Many times when we met to work together, after 5 minutes I would tell him "You gave me 30 ideas of what we have to do. Can we stop to try to fulfill the first three or four?"

So it wasn't easy to work with your father.

MW: Oh no, but that's what I wanted to say that we spent about two months in the library at the University of California at Los Angeles, where they had about 28 volumes of Karl Marx' works, published by East Germany, communist Germany. So they had all of Marx' works and this is how this book was documented. And I was stunned to see that my father remembered so many things. This is how he was. if he read a book, he could instantly quote from it.

He had an amazing memory.

MW: Yes

Clearly he had a great gift, actually, more gifts. But, when he was in prison, you were at home. How old were you?

MW: I am sorry. You are a kid compared to me. I was at home. If you give me the time, I'll tell you how it was when I was home under the communists.

Yes, yes.

MW: Ok, first of all, my father was abducted from the street. He was on his way to church. On February 29, 1948 he was shoved into a car and disappeared. He had protection from the Swedish embassy and that is why he was very courageous during that time. But it had never crossed his mind that the communists could have arrested him without actually officially arresting him. so actually abducting him and keeping him under a false name. the Swedish ambassador immediately went to Anna Pauker and she swore on her parents, who hated her either way, that Richard Wurmbrand did not exist in any of the prison registers from Romania. And this is how he disappeared. Eventually.

How long until you found out he was imprisoned?

MW: It so happened that. he was arrested on February 29, then a lot of steps were taken even by the Swedish ambassador because my father was under embassy protection and all these came to a dead end. Different people knew the brother of Teohari Georgescu, the minister of Security back then, and again another dead end. The one who interrogated him , in prison was the communist colonel Dulgheru, but no one in my mother's entourage knew about it. So it so happened that, on a monthly basis you could go to the Ministry of internal affairs to file a request to search and see where a certain person had disappeared. I think it was the prison in Uranus, there was a prison there, I think they destroyed it because of the People's House, so there was a hill there and an acquaintance of the family went for countless times to file this request at this prison in Uranus. She was a very intelligent Christian Jewish lady and while she was waiting in line she looked down and the windows from some underground cells were opened. There was Richard Wurmbrand. My father was very tall and she could only see his head. You know?

Very interesting. How long after he had been abducted?

MW: So it was summer time by now. May or June. And again the ambassador went very angry and Anna Pauker declared the ambassador persona non grata. She did the same with other foreigners who were around my father, she kicked them out of the country and that was it.

Do you think the order to take your father away came from Moscow or Bucharest?

MW: During that period, to make it clearer, during this period, between 1948-1953, this was a cruel Stalinist period. I was a child and I remember if I woke up early in the morning and walked around Bucharest, from this house to the other, from this street to the other, everybody was sent to prison. overnight. do you understand? It was a ghost city. there was nobody on the streets. during that period, trams, buses were stopped, people's identities were checked and of course they arrested people. so in 1951 I eventually went to live with my mother in a house where my father had started a church and this is an important detail and I'll get back to it. One day, at 6 o'clock in the morning some officers came, asked my mother to get dressed and took her away. they took my mother away.

This was happening after three years when they had taken your father.

MW: Yes, in 1951. Meanwhile.

How old were you then?

MW: So, in 1948 I was 9 years old, plus three. I was 11 years old, almost 12 years old.

Were you aware that what was happening to you was tragic? Your dad in prison, your mother taken away.

MW: It was hard for me to realize this. It was a tragedy, but this was a period. for example, my father had 1000 members in his church. This was a pretty big church in Bucharest, especially during those times. After both of my parents were arrested, if I was walking on the street on the sidewalk, in Dudesti, Vacaresti, where we were well known, and somebody who knew me came along, they would cross the street so they won't be seen greeting me.

Incredible..

MW: There was a Lutheran minister who made me sit down after my mother was arrested and told me "Please understand well - we are all afraid of you!" I was 12 years old. "Nobody loves you, nobody wants you! Stay away from me! Don't come to my place unless I invite you! Do you understand?" This is what he told me. But I was not the only one in this situation. There were many other kids like me.

So kids whose either one or both parents were imprisoned.

MW: Yes, there were a lot of children.

Out of curiosity? How did life go on? Did you play? Did you go to school?

MW: Yes, life went on. during that period I was attending elementary school not too far away from home and at some point, maybe a week or two after my mother was arrested, a truck with 5-6 officers came to my house. They sat down, I was alone in the house and they wrote a huge confiscation inventory of all there was in the house. and they told me to sign it. and at almost twelve years of age I signed it. Ok?

To be legal, right?

MW: Yes, but wait and see. it gets more interesting! I signed it and they showed me the door. They took my bed, all my toys, books and loaded the truck, I signed and they took off. They left some bigger pieces of furniture to take later on. Meanwhile, my father had done a great deal of good to various people. After the second world war, in 1946 there was a great famine in Romania and my father helped a lot during this famine. He knew all these foreign languages and had lots of contacts and he

received a small amount of money, US \$2000 or US \$3000, but after the war, this was considered a good sum of money to help with food. But before he became a Christian, my dad was a stock broker.

I did not know this!

MW: You can judge him or not, but my dad told me he took this money he had gotten from America and placed it in the feeble 1946 stock market and thus made a lot of money. The equivalent of what we would now say \$ 100,000. I don't remember the exact sum. But this gave him the chance to bring several train-wagons with corn, wheat. He had asked the Americans to bring cans of food, but they sent candies, M&Ms and different cans. For example, they sent avocado cans and the poor Romanian peasants thought they were being poisoned. I just wanted to give you an idea of how much my father helped others because he organized a canteen where around 1000 people got at least one meal a day. And my memories as a kid, since I was about 7 years old, was this enormous yard were around 70 women from my father's church peeling potatoes, cooking peas. and of course I was playing around. the reason I told you this, is that these people who were in the church and had been helped by my father, were the ones to cross on the other side of the street.

All of them?

MW: All of them. I am telling you, the number of people who helped me when my parents were in prison, can be counted on the fingers of one of my hands.

This is unbelievable.

MW: It truly was terrible. What I wanted to say is that there was this faithful young lady, she was 28 years old. she was from.

The one who had seen your father in prison?

MW: No, a totally different person. She had been (for a short period the minister of justice) Tatarascu's legal secretary and she was an educated woman. Her father had been Craiova's train station master in the '30s. To be a station master was something back then. So, this lady had not been helped by my father and without absolutely no strings attached she took me into her home. She took me and another kid and we stayed there for about three years until my mother came back from the (the prison camp named) Canal.

Your mother was at the Canal for three years?

MW: Yes, almost three years.

Unbelievable!

MW: Yes, she had never been prosecuted. She was never told for how long she would be there.

In these three years, did you manage to see her or hear from her?

MW: Yeah, I only saw her once. I'll tell you about it. If you are patient, I'll tell you everything, ok?

So, for three years you stayed in this woman's house.

MW: Yes, so, the security came, took all the furniture, showed me the door. eventually I was taken in by this lady, myself and another child. When they wrote the inventory, there was a hard wood desk and under it there was the typewriter. They did not put it in the inventory. So the people who eventually came to see me, quickly took the typewriter and hid it and so when we left Romania we had it. The typewriter eluded the inventory. But, here is the interesting part! This lady who took pity on me was eventually arrested for taking care of prisoners' children and she was imprisoned for six long years. six years of communist prison. There is a saying. no good deed goes unpunished. So, I am 19 years old and one day I am called at the communist Romanian IRS. They tell me I have to pay 90,000 lei. This was my debt to the state. I was afraid of the communists, but I jokingly asked: "How come that at 19 years of age I owe 90,000 lei?"

It was a huge amount of money.

MW: Yes, because my salary was around 380 lei or something like that. And they told me I embezzled money. So I asked "When? How did I embezzled from the state?" And they took out this inventory which I had signed at 12 years old. We had relatively expensive furniture. They confiscated around 80-90 chairs, we had a pedal harmonium, a piano and other tables. Why? Because my father had the church in this house. There was a large room which could hold around 60-70 people on chairs. So these security officers confiscated all these things and as they were crooked, they sold and replaced all the valuables with cheaper ones. I had not realized back then that the inventory said: piano with no keyboard, organ without pedal, three legged chairs, broken table. This is what they gave the state. When Anna Pauker, Dulgheru, Georgescu, Vasile Luca and all the security fell in disgrace, the lower underlings all

went to prison and they confessed everything, including faking the inventory. Who had signed the inventory? I did, when I was 12. So they lectured me on never signing without reading first. I would have been arrested, had I not been 12 years old. From then on up until I left Romania, 25% of what I got as a salary was taken by the communist IRS monthly. I paid for what had been confiscated from our own house until I left Romania.

Do you know what frightens me? I'm going to stop you for a moment. The same methods, used in the 50s, are used by the Romanian mafia system nowadays.

MW: That's where they were educated.

MW: Now listen to what happened next. It's even more incredible. So I have this debt. You must have heard or read that we were eventually ransomed in exchange for US\$ 10.000 and this is how we got out of Romania. This is a different story, a miraculous one, but separate. When we left Romania, for a few weeks we had to prove regarding all the public libraries in Bucharest that we did not owe them any books. Even more interesting, we had to prove that we have no debt to the gas company, where in fact there was no gas-heating there. Of course, none of these were given to us without a bribe.

Yeah, they knew you were supposed to leave the country so they were blackmailing you! Yeah.

MW: Meanwhile, the debt of 90.000 Lei that I owed became 120.000 Lei because I could not pay from my miserable paycheck and with all the penalties and interest. it was incredible. So what were we to do? The part of the secret service which sold us had nothing to do with the part of state security which had to grant us our passports and if we did not have that piece of paper it was very serious and there was nothing you could do. So then, my mother had two brothers in France and they sent us about 130 rain coats which was an item totally new for Romania. They sent us these raincoats which we sold at the market and this is how we paid back my debt and were able to leave. But what I'm telling you, all I am telling you, through the "good graces" of the state security, it is registered. If, by any chance, you doubt we got these 130 raincoats, they are all registered and written in the files I got from the secret police, as well as the inventory I signed at 12.

The interesting part is that, one day, about 6 years ago, I went to the Romanian consulate on Wilshire boulevard in Los Angeles and the secretary was having lunch

and the consul personally spoke with me. So I told him I wanted to pay \$ 135 or \$ 165, I can't remember exactly the sum, to get my birth certificate from Romania. I needed a legalized copy. We had left Romania without any of our personal documents. a different story. and the consul asked me "Why do you, at 70 years old, want to obtain your birth certificate from Romania?" I showed him a letter from CSNAS which showed that there were 11500 pages from the records of the communist secret police I could not get unless I proved I was the rightful owner. Not to be given to me, to be sold to me, ok? I paid more than \$2500 for those pages I got from CSNAS. Anyway, I got my birth certificate in about 6 weeks, I had someone in Romania who took care of all the paper work, I gave him power of attorney and finally got 8500 pages, not the whole 11500. But even these 8500 pages, to the shame of the Romanian authorities, have been recently censored.

Now in democracy.

MW: Yes, a lot of things are being wiped out because ..

Because even today there are people there in high position who are still part of the system.

MW: Yes, yes.

MW: My father said in many of his sermons here in America: all Americans think that the communists are anti capitalists or anti Americans. But no, communists are simply against everything. It is a religion of hatred. A communist can be against another communist.

Correct.

MW: When we were in Romania we had a joke, and if you got caught telling it, you could get 6 years in prison. There was a guy in a cell and another guy is pushed into the cell. So one asks the other why he is in prison. And the guy says "I am in prison

because I criticized Vasile Luca, at the time a communist official in power. And they threw me in jail. But you? Why are you in jail?" "Well, because I praised Vasile Luca." After he fell from power, the cell door opens and another inmate comes in and he is asked: "Why are you here?" And the guy says, "I am Vasile Luca."

I wanted to ask you. You were only a 12-year-old child. It is a trauma to have both of your parents taken away, but especially your mother whom you only saw once during those years. Where did you see her? Did they take you to the canal?

MW: I'll explain. It is a very interesting story for the Romanians in America, may be for those in Romania too. We created an organization for the persecuted Christians. We had enough money to make a movie. We found a very well known American writer, he had made other movies as well so we hired him. He was against communism, he promised to be loyal in representing the story so we hired him. He had read not only our books but many books about communism. When you make a movie you have to take into consideration the time limit so some scenes or dialogues are combined even though they happened in different time periods. So one of the stories I told the writer was how I tried to visit my mother at the canal prison camp. She was imprisoned in a place called Saligny, after a famous French engineer. So there was my mother. I was told I was given the right to speak with her. It was winter, in January. I travelled by train all night long and when I got to Cernavoda I had to walk to where this place was. I was walking alone, somebody rode with me on the train, but from Cernavoda I was on my own. I was almost 13. So I was walking in the cold, there was a terrible blizzard, you know, I finally got there. I had to wait in the cold from 7 in the morning until maybe 9.00, 9.30 when I saw enormous columns of women coming. There was a policewoman who from afar shouted that there would be no meeting between the families and the prisoners that day as the prisoners did not meet their work-quota. Do you understand? So, I had to walk back, take the train back and went back to Bucharest. This is what I had told the American writer. The following day, he proudly comes with his script which told how I went by train and then walked, how I waited for my mother to come from her labor, and there were many people there, which was true, as everyone was waiting for their wife, mother, daughter, and in the script the American said that an older man took pity on the poor little boy who was waiting for his mother and invited me to the prison cafeteria to give me something hot to drink. What restaurant? What hot coffee?

He probably was familiar to the prisons in the States.

MW: So he goes on to say: You must have had some vending machines for hot beverages.

Poor guy. he could not comprehend anything of the terror you were under.

MW: After having read so many books and after I had explained to him. I could not believe he had just put that in the script! So that was it with the American writer.

Nobody had the guts to say you took pity on somebody else. So you simply went home. How did you get to see her?

MW: After that my mother was imprisoned in a prison called Targor.

That prison still exists today. Somewhere in Ploiesti.

MW: Yes, I visited Jilava, which is still a prison today. Right?

Targor is somewhere in Prahova.

MW: Our prisons were kept.

So they gave you the chance to visit her there.

MW: Yeah, I visited her there for about 10, 12 minutes. Very short.

I do not understand and maybe you can remember. Children, my grandparents told me when you are a child you perceive reality differently. But no matter how Christian you are, no matter how much you believe in God as your guardian, it is awful to be away from your boy, from your own child, I mean. Did your mother ever tell you how she resisted during these three years?

MW: I had a mother. I have to say this because my parents were in prison, especially my father for so long, so because I also have a Master degree in Psychology. there was a kind of distance. I knew them as strangers. So when we met again we met as if we had been strangers. When my father got out, in. In 2006 there was a contest The Greatest Romanians of all times. The people from the national TV station organized this contest together with Evenimentul Zilei (Romanian newspaper) and promised that for the first 10 winners they would make one-hour-presentation movie. The first three were three Romanian kings, the fourth was Eminescu and the fifth was Richard Wurmbrand. All of a sudden, who is Richard Wurmbrand? The population voted for him, but nobody knew who he was. So I had a lot of interviews and meetings and somebody asked me then how my father had the strength to resist the pressure of communism.

No compromise at all.

MW: How could he have such a "rigid-strength spine?" Was the question. That's when I explained to them that Richard Wurmbrand had a double spine because my mother was even more strong than he was. Understand? So she pushed him even more.

For example, to understand who my mother was, Sabina Wurmbrand. That's why I told you. If I praise them, it is like praising a stranger. Many times I was telling my mother, in the States, while we were working together and traveling on 5 continents, and I used to tell my mother: "Mom, you are like the Keops' pyramid. You see it but there is no explanation for it." That's how I used to talk to my mother.

When I was 11 in Romania, the communists introduced us to becoming young pioneers. You got the red tie and its advantage was that children had some rights to go to game clubs. It so happened that I was in the 6th grade. I was the best in the class and I always tried to be among the best because of my past, so I was the best and I was offered to be the first pioneer in the following big school gathering. As a child I went home to my mother and proudly told her how I was going to be made a pioneer the following day. Not that I am old I understand my mother treated me as distantly as possible and told me: "Tomorrow, you are going to stand up and when they give you the red tie, you will tell them you refuse to wear the tie of a regime that holds my father in prison." And there was no discussion. I knew if I did not do what she had told me to do, she would not have me back in the house. No compromise.

And she was totally right.

MW: Yeah, everything I am telling you is documented. Absolutely everything.

So, you went to school the next morning.

MW: Yes, I went to school. I stood up and told them that I refuse to receive the red tie of a regime that kept my father. I also added some of my own ideas. I told them that this regime is an atheistic one, did not believe in God. Of course the whole meeting became a meeting of prosecution of this rotten apple which existed among the other kids. I was condemned but I was not kicked out of the school. The head mistress was very communist. I don't know if you heard about the Democratic Jewish Committee.

No, I haven't.

MW: You haven't. Immediately after the communists came into power, with Anna Pauker being where she was, there was a big Jewish association which was pro communism, pro Russia, pro socialism, anyway... All this came to nothing in 1951 when the Jews had the chance to flee to Israel. All their convictions were done and

over with. But this head mistress was in this committee and she condemned me, she scolded me, but she did not expel me. Years on, I am 22 years old and I am standing in front of shop window, looking at it. Next to me there's a lady and I look at her and immediately know who she was. And she says, "Mihai, don't look at me. I have something to tell you. You are the person I mostly admired in my life for the stand you took when you were a child." And then she left. She was gone.

Who was she? The head mistress?

MW: Yeah, the head mistress.

MW: One thing that helped was that my father established a rule when I was 5 or even younger. Every morning he would read to me from the Bible and told me a meaningful story.

A great thing he did.

MW: This was one thing I understood later on. I have two very musical children and I personally loved Mozart's music. I read a lot about him and I even have the collection of his letters because I also speak German. There is a detail there which reflected upon my life and I understood later on. When Mozart was 3, his sister tells this, his father made him compose a new piece every night and this influenced Mozart's entire life. In the exact same way, the many stories my father told me. I even remember many of them today.

They influenced your life.

MW: I want to tell you one of these stories because it is connected to what you told me about people being afraid that other know what they do or don't do. One of the things my father told was never to be afraid of others' opinion. Never. The funny story he told me back then. I even remember where we were and how he told me the story. It was with Nasruddin Hodgea. have you heard of him? He is a character, if you go to the UCLA library you will probably find 50-60 books published in Turkey, Iran, Uzbekistan. There are at least 20.000 stories with this character. They were all invented by this poet called Rumi. Have you heard of Jalaluddin Rumi? I highly recommend you search him. He was an Iranian who was born in Afghanistan and lived in Konia, in Turkey. He was such a famous speaker that 3000 Christians came to listen to him. He wrote a lot of interesting poems and he wrote a book called Rumi's Divan. It is fascinating. He is probably the inventor of these funny stories which also have spiritual ideas you can remember for life. One of them, which I heard from my father, was that Nasruddin and his son went to the market to sell their donkey. As they were walking along next to the donkey a passerby said: "Foolish people, you have a donkey and you walk next to it!" So, Nasruddin started riding the donkey. Another passerby said "Ruthless man, he lets the child walk and he rides the donkey." So he put the child on the donkey and he started walking. Another passerby said: "What a disrespectful son - he lets his old man walk." So they both rode the donkey. Yet another passerby said "They are going to sell this poor animal and on its last trip they are torturing it. Two people riding a donkey." So they both went down, put the donkey on their backs and another passerby said: "Crazy people! Who has ever heard of somebody carrying a donkey on their backs?" This story has impacted my entire life. I read to my wife one of the most beautiful biographies of Mihai Wurmbrand is three pages long and written at the communist Secret Service, by the Security, before they contacted me to become an informant.

Before they contacted me to become an informant, they looked me up and check me out and made me a file. There it was written - Mihai is a lot like his dad, no compromise, relentless, we will probably not make him an informant.

What a system! How can we catch Richard Wurmbrand? By telling him we corrupted his son. That's what they were after.

MW: Exactly, yeah.

Interviewer:

Exactly what you were thinking about your father and after you saw what the prisons looked like you realized that your father was not overreacting at all. On the contrary, I believe, after having talked with people who served time in prison, people like Coposu and others, all of them said, after I had asked them if they had the courage to tell everything to their children, they said that they couldn't. So I think Richard as well had the presence of mind to filter things or to let you know softly and in time.

MW: This was my father's oratorical talent and that is why he made an extraordinary impression here. He held numerous speeches here. When we got to the States, I don't know if you are interested to find out how we got here.

Of course, because you said it was very interesting with that ransom done through Sweden.

MW: There are far too many stories. If you have the time.

I have the time. Please go on.

MW: Ok. So, I was saying that my father held countless speeches and a lot of people were present here in America. This is one thing we tried to tell Christians in Romania too. At some point, he would say, "I would like you to listen to a Romanian Christian song. Would you like to listen to it?" This was a time, around 1972-1974, there were only a few refugees who had gotten out of Communism, but there were people from different Christian churches who came bringing Christian songs from Romania, like Our Father, also Nicolae Moldovanu's songs, if you heard of this composer, he was part of The Lord's Army movement. A lot of his songs are very well known.

I've heard of Traian Dorz.

MW: Exactly! Moldovanu wrote songs on Dorz's rhymes. So, Americans had listened to Romanian Christian songs. So they would, of course, say yes, that they wanted to

listen to them. So my dad, with his strong voice, started: "Aaaaah, aaaaah! Don't beat me! Don't hit me! It hurts me! Stop hitting me! You ruined my liver!" He would scream so hard that mothers and children ran out of the church. They would complain to their pastor because he allowed a lunatic to speak in church. But this is how impressed they were.

Related to those \$10,000 they paid as ransom for us. During those times, maybe you heard, it was in the newspapers as well, the communist secret service used to ask for money in order to let people leave the country. Jews were ransomed for \$500 or \$1000, various prices paid by the Israeli state. There was another method. Different public/state enterprises needed foreign money to buy things. So there were middle people who would take care of this and the secret service decided that one way to get this money was to sell these people. There was a Jew, Jacober, he was known in London.

I spoke to a general who was in charge of taking the money for Jews and Germans. And he told me that this was a business. Ceausescu made this. Did you leave after 1965?

MW: We left exactly in 1965, on December 6th, on Saint Nicholas day.

So Ceausescu came into power.

MW: Yes, Ceausescu had come into power for several months.

Yes, the regime was making some deals according to which the government was carrying discussions with the Israeli state, the German state. The regime would say that they invested money in these people, schooling them, things like these. This is how much an intellectual costs. We give you qualified people, intellectuals, we need to cover our investment. That's what it was all about.

MW: They sold blood and they sold people.
Yeah, yeah. They sold people.

MW: Our case was totally different. My dad had come back from prison. The great release was in 1964 and my father realized that this would go on until the state obtained their loans and then all who were freed would be rearrested again. And this is exactly what happened. In December, last year I was in Romania and I talked with fellow inmates who were in prison with my father who said that after being released with my father in 1964, in 1967 were arrested again on the same grounds. So in that period, immediately after 1964, Christians from other countries tried to bring my father out of Romania. The main idea was for the state to make some money. Some

English Christians with some Norwegian Christians gathered this sum of money and I'll skip a lot of details, anyhow, they managed to get this money. The \$10.000 was not given officially and was not given to one like Jacober who was a middle man. My father had three brothers who were all very smart intellectually speaking. One of them was in the Jewish prime minister's office, Golda Meir. He was one of the ministers. As he was there and being one who fought for Israel's freedom, he was very well connected. One of his connections was with a man whom Draghici trusted.

Draghici, the (Romanian communist) minister of internal affairs, right?

MW: Yes, so the money was given to Draghici and he took it for himself. This was all personal, nothing to do with the Romanian state. Wait and see the rest of it. I finally got the 8500 pages from the security. You cannot read 8500 pages in one day. So every night, before I go to bed, my wife is next to me, and I read 10-15-20 pages. All was typed, pieces of information which took 15 pages, our best friends, almost 90 per cent of those who visited us, reported (as informants) to the secret service. What bothered me, and I'll tell you because you are from Romania. it was impossible (under communism) to find a ribbon for a type writer. And for me to see thousands of typed pages I imagined how many were used for the entire population of Romania. if I have 8500 pages, wow!

They were the best type writer tape consumers..

MW: Yes, so while reading these pages, one day I got out of bed and started dancing. My wife thought I went crazy. I spent half that night to explain to her. I'll make it shorter for you. To see how God works wonders. We lived in a house which was built by an English missionary in 1906. He built the Anglican church in Bucharest, he also built a big building on Negustor street and he built this house which was also the Anglican Church during that time in 1906 and which became a Christian school. The idea of this English missionary was to build a school, we are talking about the 1915-1920s, so where German, French, English was taught. So all the rich Jews sent their children to this Christian school which had teachers from abroad and had a church space of 1000 people. Meanwhile the church was shut down, but there were eight families who lived in this house. We lived in the attic. English houses have attics for servants. I don't know if you've ever been to London.

I was, but I didn't know about the attics.

MW: So, we lived there, it was the property of the state and we could not make any repairs. We had three water pails and if it rained we would use them.

They knew Wurmbrand was there so they would not take care of it.

MW: There were 8 families in this house. Each family had one or two rooms. There used to be offices, classrooms and so on. So this former church building had a huge room where Animafilm got the permission to take over the building. If you've heard of Gopo.

Yes, yes.

MW: So, what was there to be done with these eight families? You won't believe it but in the film industry they had a powerful high-ranking minister. This was communist propaganda. So eight brand new apartments were given to the film industry to move us so that they could use the old building we were in. But the crooked people from., all I am telling you is documented and if you want I can send you the documents as proof.

I never doubted you. I am curious to know why you started dancing.

MW: Ok, be patient! The crooked people from Animafilm or from the film industry, wanted these new apartments for themselves, so they stole them from us. They took the eight apartments for themselves even though they had been given to us. And they wanted to move all the eight families in Mogosoia, in some huts with dirt floor. This was around 1965, the state had just been granted loans from the Americans and with socialist legality being invoked and all. So in the name of socialist legality, the eight families united and did not evacuate the building for Animafilm. So what the film minister did was to cut our power, water, if we wanted to heat something we had to go to our neighbors to determine us to leave. More than that, there was a guy called Cucu, who came every two days telling us we would rot in a (communist) prison because we were against the state project and we were slowing things down, ambushing the state.

You wretched people!

MW: He would call us bandits and other names to force us to leave. But we did not move. They brought 22 workers to sleep there with us, to trash and destroy the house. They brought debris and rubbish as they were working on the big room which was empty. One day, (the minister of the Interior) Draghici allows us to leave, having been given the money, so we get his approval to leave the country. It was like a card telling us to get everything ready to leave. I was going all over the place to get approvals in order to leave. My mother called Mr Cucu in our attic, I was there as well, and told him: "Mr Cucu, I want you to know you can have our attic, we made up our minds,

you can have it." And he said, "You finally accept the huts in Mogosoiaia." My mother explained to him that we were given the approval to leave the country. The guy had tears in his eyes and all of a sudden stopped calling us thieves, and said: "Lady, you have no idea what I would give to trade places with you".

They were prisoners themselves. The prisoners of the system in which they had once put their trust.

MW: Yes.

There are similar people here in America who believe in this communism, socialism.

MW: Yes, I've met a lot of these people.

So, why did you dance?

MW: Be patient! We'll get there. Music starts slowly. You have to understand. So he had tears in his eyes, we needed to get some kind of approval from the administration and got it as well, we gave Mr Cucu the attic and left the country. So, I was reading in the communist secret police pages the other side of the coin.

The movie behind everything..

MW: While reading, I find a document which says: "Comrade Minister Draghici told us orally, because he cannot put this in writing, that the Wurmbrand family was approved to leave the country." These are the exact same words. "And we are told to do whatever we can to catch them with something illegal to stop them from leaving." Do you understand?

So, the wretched! He took the bribe.

MW: Yes, he took the bribe and gave these orders. on the next page. there are 40 pages of negotiation between one part of security and another part of security. Some were asking for 24/7 surveillance, the others were complaining they did not have so many people. Some were saying this was important, the others were finding excuses. So 40 pages in which they describe how we were surveilled 24/7 for a week. So, to cut the long story short, some things they wrote there: Richard Wurmbrand goes out of our yard, takes a right, then goes on to Bradului Street, turns left, reaches the bus station and goes on the bus and sits on the third chair on the left.

The resources they used!

MW: Extraordinary. I can tell you a separate story about the informants. He went off the bus at I don't know what station, met somebody, we don't know whom that person is.

The person was followed, identified and a file was opened on their name.

At the end of the 40 pages there is an annex where they indicate the name of the person my father had spoken with. The same was done for my mother and my self. I had borrowed a construction book from one of my university colleagues. Everything was written there. The fact that I met that once girl precisely during that week, gave her a book, they didn't know what book and this was also written there. They opened a file for this girl too. I am not done yet. This was not the reason for my dancing. Have patience!

I was eagerly reading these pages. I am very curious, it is interesting for me and it is like having someone recording what I had done in Bucharest the previous week.

These pages are useful now.

MW: Yes, so I turn the page and another page is in front of me. This is written by a (communist) security officer who said he had found out something very special which would allow them to open a case against the Wurmbrand family.

He wrote: "The Wurmbrand family were given a new apartment. I know the address of the apartment. The man from the administration office (and he gives the man's name) is one of ours. I arranged with technicians to tap the entire apartment."

When I read this I realized that there is an apartment somewhere in Bucharest, taken from us by one of the Animafilm guys, which up to this day, has wires and microphones all over the place and I realized why God did not allow us to move in this apartment. Sure enough, as my father was fearless, he smuggled Bibles, he would talk to someone and who knows what they would be planning. and so this is the moment I realized how God can change a miserable situation. I was 26. to be 26 and live in misery and not to have a place where to invite a friend or to read a book.

And to live under the constant terror of not knowing what would happen next.

MW: Exactly. That's when I realized how miraculously God protected us from Draghici.

And ruined one of the crooked persons back then.

MW: And that is why I spent half the night to explain to my wife, who does not come from a communist country, so I had to explain to her in detail why I started dancing in

the middle of the night.

It is interesting that with this episode a dire period in the Wurmbrand family comes to an end and the universal, world-wide preacher Wurmbrand comes to light. He becomes well known.

MW: I would like to explain to you how this global preacher came to be.

MW: Let me tell you something. We were bought for \$ 10,000 and on the morning of December 6th, 1965 we left by plane from Romania. On the plane there was an engineer who was in Romania for some business and we started talking in French. I explained how nice and good Romania was because I knew that people were made to come back even if they were already on the plane or on a ship. As long as I was on a Romanian plane, I was very scared.

The three of you were there, right? Your mother, your father and yourself?

MW: Yes. When we got to Leonardo DaVinci airport which back then was called Fumicino, from the plane to the terminal we were taken on a bus. All three of us cried. We were so moved. The engineer asked me why I was crying. So I told him that all I had told him on the plane was a lie. Now we have to start the story from the very beginning.

To tell you the truth. yeah.

MW: Soon enough, it so happened that when we got to Rome, we had no connection or acquaintances in Italy at that time. But we stopped in front of a. while we were walking we saw an American Christian organization and we stepped in and there was a Protestant American missionary in the building. My dad started talking with him, explaining where we were coming from and so on and the American was really impressed. It was a totally unexpected meeting. This American pastor told my dad: "Wow this is an incredible occasion! Here in Rome there is the First Baptist Church and I was invited to speak this Sunday because their pastor is going out of the city and invited me to speak. But I will let you speak." So he allowed my father to speak during our first Sunday in the free world. Wait and see what happened. The Italian pastor stayed in church even though he had to leave and he understood that he would let the American pastor speak. My father spoke Italian.

One of the fourteen languages he spoke.

MW: Yes, he spoke Italian and all of a sudden the local pastor was surprised to see someone different coming to the pulpit to speak. It did not take five minutes for my father to start telling where he was coming from and what had happened to him after fourteen years of communist prison, when the pastor stood up in church and said: "I will not allow you to say a single word against communism. I am a communist and a Baptist." Now imagine, it is Sunday morning during the worship service. My father replies to him. so it was like a loud quarrel. he says: "The last time I saw the communists, they were

atheists. How can you be a Baptist and believe in God and at the same time a communist who is an atheist?" The pastor replies: "I accept everything about communism except their atheistic views." So my dad replies, in Italian, "I am a Lutheran pastor, we believe in infant baptism and I might become a Baptist and accept everything about it except adult baptism."

Do you understand?

You won't believe what happened in the middle of this fight. As if by command, almost three quarters of the church stood up, locked their arms together as if they were manifesting and started shouting "Io sono batista e comunista! Io sono batista e comunista!" This was on our first Sunday in the free world: "Io sono batista e comunista! Io sono batista e comunista!" Of course the service ended, we were crying. It was very difficult not to cry, it was a true shock.

So this was happening on the first Sunday in the free world.

MW: Yes, we thought we had escaped communism when we encountered them in Rome. What happened next was that my mother had two brothers in Paris and one of them with the wife of the other brother came and met us in Rome and took us to Paris. We went to Paris. It may sound easy but we got out of Romania with a simple piece of paper. It was not a document, a passport, just a piece of paper saying we were allowed a one way trip from Bucharest to Rome. That was it. So, being in Rome, how could we travel to Paris? A whole different story!

Did you travel by car, on foot, on the coast?

MW: No, no! We went by plane. sorry, by train to Paris. There are a lot of details on how we got the papers, but we finally got to Paris. We had left Bucharest on December 6. Around the 22nd of December we were in Paris and receive a phone call from Norway. the people from the church in Norway who raised the money for our ransom, invited us to go to Norway to see what they had purchased. So we took the plane and went to Norway. There was a snow storm so we got there extremely late, around 2 at night. So at 2 o'clock at night we were in an apartment in Norway. We were given a meal with at least forty other people who had waited the whole night. because of the snow storm the plane did not land in Oslo, but in a different place, so we had to take a bus. So we got to this dinner. of course we cried, we thanked them, we explained who we were and where we came from. There was only one person who was also the main one who took care of the fund raising and so on, who knew us. All the others were people who, maybe two pastors, and the rest were people in the church who gave of their own money. So we thanked them. They gave us a three-room apartment with a loaded fridge and they left. This was on the 23rd of December.

How old were you?

MW: I was 27 years old.

What were your first impressions concerning the free world? What did you see? Buildings, people? What do you remember impressed you?
It was the grey of communism that you left behind and got out into the free world!

MW: When I first went into the free world, I went to Paris where I had cousins my age. I was 27, they were a bit younger. around 24-25 years of age. They were very kind and bought tickets to the Paris opera and to the Paris philharmonic, they wanted to take me to museums but I told them:

"Look, if I am able to walk on the street and I am not followed, I do not need you to buy tickets or take me to any show." We did not live with them, we stayed in a different place so each time I went to visit them they would

say: "Here comes our cheap cousin! Take him for a walk on the street!"

I want to explain to you about Norway because it was a very abrupt phase in our life. When we left Romania and we arrived here in Norway, we were given this apartment. Try to picture this. It is Christmas in Scandinavia, everything is closed, no bar, no restaurant, no bar in any hotel is opened. It is winter time. We came very poorly dressed. For seven days we stayed in this apartment. Nobody called us, nobody came to visit us, nobody came to see us and say hello. During the first few days we thought we could rest, but after the third, fourth day you start thinking: "Maybe we didn't thank them enough! Maybe they were not happy with their purchase from Romania" To be left alone like this for seven days, nobody to say hello in a country where we did not know the language, coming from Romania. I think you yourself would have been shocked, right?

Not only that, but also coming from a prison, you might think this was the same.

MW: A kind of prison. At first you are shy, but then, we started searching all the cabinets and drawers and eventually found a handwritten note with the name of one of the persons we remembered were present at the dinner. We called them and asked them what happened. The Norwegians speak English because there are 3 millions of Norwegians living in Norway and 12 million in the USA. So English is well known there. They explained that in Scandinavia the tradition is that Christmas is a family celebration. Nobody bothers anybody during Christmas and they thought that it was nice to let us spend Christmas in the family. My parents and I were looking at each other in shock, nobody to bother us. Do you understand?

So when we finally understood how things worked there, we took the phone book and it so happened that the following Sunday in January. I have to tell you because every small thing was a shock, ok? The phone book in Norwegian.

Norwegian is related to German and the Germans have der, die, das, the definite articles. they are similar in Norwegian and everything in the phone book was under the letter D. If you don't know if it is der or die, masculine or feminine, you can't find the listing. So, we found the American Lutheran Church and went there. The pastor preached and we cried from the very beginning of the service to the very end because we were extremely impressed because this was the church of the American Ambassador, he was a member there, and what impressed us was that they had a room for newlyweds, a room for children, rooms for different groups. In Romania, even in a Lutheran church you had one or two rooms. But here was an extraordinary building which impressed us. But this pastor had never seen three people crying so hard at his service. So he stopped us and asked who we were, what had happened, what part of his sermon impressed us the most. When my father explained to him where we came from and all of that. he was a very special man, he remained our friend for over thirty years. he was so impressed by what my father had told him. The pastor did two things - he spoke to the members to invite us for breakfast, lunch and dinner every day to different families. we told him about the seven days we spent alone. And the second thing he did was to allow my father to speak in the service.

My father was invited to speak in a Christian NATO meeting. During that time the largest NATO base was in Oslo, in Norway and the American military have some chapels where they gather and my father was invited to speak and then we had a Q&A session. I am telling you all these things to see that we did not have any important sponsor or any help from anyone. We lived true wonders and I am explaining these things to you so you can see how God performs miracles. At this Q&A session an American colonel stood up and

asked: "Mr Wurmbrand, why should we not coexist with communists?" During that time there was this Brejnevian idea of coexistence. Communism with a human face. So my dad, before answering, stepped

down, went straight to this colonel, because my father was imprisoned with common criminals in Romania, in prison, and not only did those criminals learn from my father, but my father also learned from them, so he hit the colonel on his left shoulder and with the other hand took the colonel's wallet from his pocket. The colonel did not expect this. He took the colonel's wallet, placed it in his pocket and told him: "Let's shake hands, your wallet is in my pocket! Let's coexist!"

Did he realize his wallet had been taken?

MW: Yes, of course. So let's coexist. Communism took half of Europe, almost all of Asia, of course they want to coexist. Every robber wants to coexist with the police. Thieves have nothing against the police. Understand? So, my dad went on, saying that we may not have a solution against communism, but even if we don't have a cure for cancer, nobody expects it, when you go to the doctor and you have cancer, for the doctor to tell you to coexist with cancer. So, of course, everyone clapped. there were about 300-400 people in this gathering. The colonel was deeply moved he was our friend for many years afterwards, he stood up and said: "Let's take an offering to send pastor Wurmbrand in America to take all the wallets from Americans and explain to them why they should not coexist with communists." Of course my dad gave him back the wallet. And you won't believe it, but they did it. They gathered around \$3,000-3,500 and you have to understand it was a whole surprise. Nobody had planned this.

That's what I wanted to point out. When you left, the purpose was to leave Romania, but you did not have a fixed destination. America.

MW: Not even the slightest idea.

So you were somehow deported to Rome.

MW: Exactly. That was it.

And from there you knew you might go to Paris where your relatives were.

MW: Exactly. We had no idea what was going to happen next.

Nor did you have money, I presume. Did you have money in your pockets?

MW: No, let me tell you what happened. We went to Paris and my uncles were ok, not rich.

Yes, but I was referring to the moment you left Romania. You did not have any money. You were not allowed to have foreign currency in your pocket!

MW: No, no. One of my uncles sent us 500 francs or something like that.

And you got to America. when?

MW: Wait a minute! We did not get there. yet. So, we went to Paris, were invited to Norway by some people who left us alone for 7 days, we met these Americans who hugged us and allowed my father to tell his story and all of a sudden everything changed and my father was sent to the States with \$ 3,500.

The idea is that all military people have chapels on their military bases and these people from NATO had connections and found churches around New York where my father could speak. But these chapels for military people are probably filled with 30, 50 people. small churches. nothing big. So, my father arrived in New York and after a few days was very discouraged because wherever he was invited to speak there were 20-30 people. There was no opportunity to take their wallets, understand? They might have been warned.

I am joking!

You won't believe it, but he booked his flight back to Europe in the following week. He realized. he got scared because in Romania to have \$100 was an enormous sum of money, but \$100 in New York. Try to stay overnight in Manhattan. \$400 a room in a hotel. cheap. right? So he got scared. During that time, the hotel he was staying at was \$130 a night. He booked his flight back. In the meantime we were in Paris. We had come back from Norway.

It so happened that before the Second World War my father had exchanged letters with a Christian Jew from Philadelphia. He called this Jew who told him to take the train and go to Philadelphia. From New York to Philadelphia.

"I want to personally meet you since we were pan pals. I want to meet you. I will pay for your trip," he said. My father got to this Christian Jew who was a pastor and he seated my father and explained to him that he did well to book his flight back as he had no future as a pastor here in America.

"You speak with an accent, you don't know how to drive a car, let alone manage a church. You come after so many years of prison, you lack the energy for what it takes to lead a church" and so he encouraged my father to go back. He took him to the train station in Philadelphia and it so happened that they could not move ahead by car because in that particular day they had the biggest rally against the war in Vietnam. This was happening in Philadelphia. This was the biggest rally ever, in 1966. So they could not drive forward and as my father was very curious. He had been out of Romania for three months so he said: "I want to see what a demonstration is like here in America." It was the fifth day that Richard Wurmbrand was present in America, ok? So, he went closer to the platform to hear better. This rally was conducted by a Presbyterian pastor who praised the communist Vietnamese and their fight against the American imperialism. It was a pro left rally.

60,000 people.

So communism was to be found here.

MW: Incredible, yes. incredible. So my father went straight to the podium, pushed the pastor. during his fifth day in the States. this refugee pushed the pastor and told him: "You know nothing about communism! I am a doctor in communism! So instead of speaking for the Christians who are persecuted, you praise these scam artists who torture the Christians! You are a Juda!"

In front of 60,000 people?

MW: In front of 60,000 people. And this pastor made a terrible mistake. a lot of people made this mistake with my father. My dad was, I don't know how to say it in Romanian, he was a debater. he was an incredible debater. He had a presence of mind that immediately attracted the audience. So this guy made the mistake to enter a debate with my father in front of all those people. He told my father: "There is no such thing as a doctor in communism.

How can you say such a thing?" So my Dad took off his shirt and showed them what the communists had done to him and he said: "This is what they did to me. This is my diploma in communism." And he started talking a little bit about who he was and he had spent time in prison and that he was a Lutheran pastor. The police came to arrest my father because he had stripped in public. But the police was nice

and told him to put on his clothes. The rally was interrupted. Tens of reporters with their cameras. there were only tv stations back then, no computers and internet. A lot of reporters came to interview my father and of course they had to ask for his address and he gave them his friend's address. In the meantime, his friend got there in shock not knowing who this guy was whom he had come from Romania, came from New York, interrupted the rally, the poor guy was scared. He was a very kind, peaceful man and all of a sudden he was in the middle of the event. So my dad stayed with him for a couple days to be interviewed.

What is important is that the next day 85% of newspapers had on the front page a picture of my father showing his scars made by communists: The pastor who took off his clothes during the rally. They explained what happened and everything I am telling you is documented.

So, overnight he became a public person. A star.

MW: Exactly.

Some saw him as trivia, the lefties saw him as an adversary, but the majority of the American capitalists who understood what communism meant, saw him as an ally. He was the best proof during those times when the Flower Power generation was so easily manipulated.

MW: In short, he got so many invitations to speak in churches as a consequence of these newspaper articles. In many of them the name of the Pastor from Philadelphia showed up, so he advertised as well. So my dad was flooded with invitations to speak that he had to postpone his ticket back to Europe. He spent two months travelling all over America to speak and then came back to Europe and had other commitments to speak for another three months. Eventually we were invited to come to Los Angeles, in America and this is how we got to the States.

Was he also invited to speak to TV stations?

MW: Yes, a lot of TV stations invited him to speak.

Did the public opinion of that time understand anything?

MW: Yes, they understood a lot of things. The lefties called my father "the darling of the right". America was in a critical situation, they were involved in the Vietnam war, a lot of lefties conspired to destroy America by getting it involved in this war. It was all about killing 50,000 Americans. 50,000 American died in the Vietnam war. but.

It was a trap America fell into.

MW: Yes, but 5-6 days after we arrived in LA, the Americans who welcomed us, very kind people, took us to Disneyland. I cried all day long while I was there. I do not cry easily but I cried all day long. The Americans thought they impressed me with Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and so on. but there was a special reason that I cried for the entire day. In the nightmare I lived through in Romania, alone, my parents arrested, kicked out of school three times. in all this nightmare I had a friend who had worked for the American Embassy and she knew a lot about Americans and she would tell me: "Don't be afraid! The Americans are coming!" This was a common belief among the people. the Americans come and get things settled. You will get a scholarship and will be able to study. This is how she encouraged me. And when I got to Disneyland I suddenly realized that the Americans did not even think to come and there is not even the slightest chance that the Americans would come and free us from under communism. So

this is how we started in America. We had no sponsors, except for these churches that invited my father to speak. But in the American churches they need content. it is like a TV show. I personally spoke in 36 states in a lot of American churches and we had a joke in our family. to see who will ask us, after we explained and told them our story, "When do you go back to Romania?" They were under the impression we were tourists.

Like a stand up comedy!

MW: Exactly!

We come here, tell our story, like a show!

MW: In Texas a guy who was 80 came to me. and he told me: "Young man, look at me, I am 80. I was a lieutenant in WWI, in WWII I became a colonel. Take a good look at me. I have never gone outside the state of Texas. Don't tell me about Romania, because I don't even know where it is." I drove through Texas. Texas is like a huge country.

The guy was right. We'll take a short break and then come right back.

Yes, we are back talking about Texas. big Texas, as big as a country or even a continent if we think of that military man to whom Texas was the maximum boarder.

MW: Exactly.

Yes, it was like a show biz for some to invite you and have rating in churches, but I still think there were a lot of people who empathized with you, or didn't they understand? Did they not comprehend spending 14 years in prison for your faith?

MW: A lot of times you think that the other, even if they take pity on you, somehow understands you. But this idea of understanding is similar to learning a foreign language. it takes a lot of time to learn a foreign language and for someone who is full to understand a hungry person it is extremely difficult. I jumped over an episode from Norway which probably illustrates precisely this. After the seven days in Norway when nobody payed us a visit... These people, I have to admit it, were very loving. The first thing they did after Christmas. we came in the middle of winter, a harsh winter in Norway. I was dressed very similarly to what I am wearing now. So they took us to a big store and bought us clothes. But somehow in a childish way they went and got us clothes without even asking us if we wanted this coat or that shirt. They went, got clothes and got us clothes. It may sound a bit funny but I will tell you how not funny it was. They dressed, very generously, hat, everything. It so happened that a young American from Operation Mobilization from here in the States, knew our family from back in Romania. He was on his way to The Czech Republic or Poland I think, as a tourist, when we were still back in Romania in 1964, a short while after my father's release from prison. And somebody, a Christian from Israel told him to go through Romania, "Don't even think to go through Bucharest and not meet pastor Wurmbrand who was just released from prison," he told the young American. It was a must do. So he came to the attic we were living in; there were 25-35 people in this small room. I spoke English and he told me he wanted to see pastor Wurmbrand. So I told him straight from the door: "This is pastor Wurmbrand!" And he asks: "Are you sure?" And I replied: "I am positive!" "How do you know?" "Well, I'm his son. I am sure this is pastor Wurmbrand!" We had not entered the room and the guy asks again: "I heard this man was in prison for 14 years. This guy is laughing and smiling. When did he spend 14 years in prison?"

It was hard for him to believe his eyes.

MW: Yes. In short, this American whom we met in Romania, came twice to Romania in 1964 and we remained friends. When he heard we went to Norway he came to visit us there. He had money so he came as a tourist to Norway to see us. We immediately encouraged him to go back to Romania and help. We had left Romania with high hopes that we would be able to help the Christians there. So we asked him to go back to Romania and bring some help to the Christians there. He was missionary minded and was very enthusiastic. He

said: "Whatever pastor Wurmbrand tells me to do, I'll go and do it. I'll go to Romania!" So my dad spoke to the mission's director who gave the money for our ransom who were our friends, bought us clothes and so on. My dad told the director we had an opportunity to help the people from Romania, "Do you think the people would like to be involved in this?," my dad asked him.

The man was very kind and told my father: "Sure, we'll give \$1000 to help the Romanian Christians." During those times that was a fabulous sum of money. in 1966.

Yes, it was a good sum of money. not a great one though.

MW: Yes. anyway. so the American spent 3-4 days with us in the apartment and nothing was going on. So when you are at the beginning you are shy, you don't know how things work, so eventually my dad asked the director of the

mission: "When do you think you could give the money? This man would like to go to Romania." The mission director answered very similarly to the attitude we always faced here in the West: "You are refugees, you don't know how these things work in Capitalism. it is true I told you we want to give \$1000 but this money is not my personal money, it is the organization's money. I cannot give it to you unless the committee gathers, votes for it and I think they will listen to me and we will give the money to you." This was January.

So my dad asked: "When is the next committee meeting?" "In June," he said.

Do you get it? So seeing this we understood how things were standing. They were the same people who left us completely alone for one week, they wanted to help but in June. So all the clothes they had bought, shirts, coats, everything. we gave it to this American and whatever money we had \$100-200 and this was the first missionary action of our family to Romania.

So, let me see if I understand. The people were not eager or interested to save the persecuted Christians.

NW: Not in the least. and I'll skip to one year later. We were in the States. This pastor we met, a very special man, the one from the American church in Norway, came back to Los Angeles and he knew the Lutheran bishop from California very well. He insisted to set a meeting with this Lutheran bishop and my father. The bishop was very friendly and told my father: "We want to help the persecuted Christian, send them Bibles and Christian books and help financially the families whose relatives are in prison and so on and I think we could give \$ 50,000 from our funds in Minneapolis for this ministry." My father asked him: "When do you think we could start?" \$50,000 was beyond our wildest dreams! The guy replied in a similar way: "You are refugees, you don't understand how things work here. I don't have this \$50,000. The budget is already made for next year so we cannot give it to you. Maybe we'll bring it up and approve it two years from now and give it to you three years from now." He was extremely honest and innocent and totally not prepared for our mindset and our urgency from communism. So my father.

I think after spending 14 years in prison. Fourteen years means a lot. and then come and see how people have time and are relaxed. we'll see what happens in three years' time. well in these three years people are imprisoned! And I think this story should be made public. We need to be patient and tell people about the communist prisons. A lot of people nowadays don't understand how cruel it was.

MW: Yes. What is extremely interesting is what happened next. Up to this point the discussion was extremely friendly and favorable to pastor Wurmbrand. But my father told the guy: "I know how you could give us the money now." It was a big project, a \$50,000 worth project. "We can start it in one or two weeks." We spoke English but with an accent. The bishop was looking at us. Later on an American university professor told me: "I don't care how smart you are. if you don't get rid of your accent, we will always consider you a Mexican!" So my dad told him: "We can have the \$50,000 in two weeks!" The Lutheran bishop became curious and asked how this "Mexican", this guy from communist Romania would have any idea how to come up with \$50,000. My dad told him: "It's very easy. We write to 15,000 pastors from the dioceses to give up 15% of their salary, but not for good. We are just borrowing from them and in three years' time when you approve the budget, we pay them back." The bishop quickly dismissed my father and then sent a letter to 15,000 pastors saying: "Please do not invite pastor Wurmbrand to speak because he is irrational! He is crazy! Here what he said - he wants you to temporarily give up 15% of your salary for three years in order to help the people in the communist world." Do you understand?

The ones who were in prison.

MW: Yes. I don't know how to tell you this, but when there is an emergency and somebody cries out.

In this world it does not look well. in this world, they are ready to help a con man who has no money in his pocket but smells good and promises millions a week, but they cannot hear the desperate cry of a hungry person. I see this. even in Romania it is the same.

MW: I think this comes from the fact that people do not realize that this life is a miracle. They are so used to this life that they do not realize how thankful toward the Providence they should be that they can breathe, that their hearts beat, that they are allowed to be alive.

That they see beautiful things, that they see healthy children.

MW: That there is even a small way they can help. So when we saw their attitude.

I have to say this. we are talking about America after a couple of months after your father was released from prison. We are not talking about years.

it's months after prison that your father comes into contact with this capitalistic world. I am thinking about what your father said about the grace they had in prison when he preached when all the prisoners from the smallest to the biggest were listening, singing and so on. I am trying to put myself in his shoes. he was shocked. he seemed to want to go back to prison because he was used to the 14 years in prison. and it seemed that prison was better than this hypocrite free world. hypocrite is too strong a word.

MW: I cannot count how many times we cried, we were shocked. We took part in a Pentecostal congress, in Texas, in Dallas. A big congress. they invited the representatives of the Pentecostal church from Russia. During that period there wasn't a single Pentecostal church in the entire Soviet Union and

these people were nothing but Soviet spies, KGB people who became pastors overnight and who came to the West with a lot of documents proving who they were and what they were.

They came to sell lies and propaganda.

MW: Yes, so then, I personally and someone else went to the balcony and hung a big banner saying: "Russian Christians are in prisons. Pray for them!"

Nothing else. The Pentecostal leaders, Canadian and American and some other people, they did not ask us anything or told us to take away the banner.

just like a commando, cuffed us, hurt me, took me head down the stairs, hurt my ribs and kicked us out. They were pro -ommunists. They were all bought by the communists.

They had taken money of course.

MW: Wait and see how. if an American pastor visited Holland or France, they were common tourists visiting Holland or France. If an American pastor went to Moscow or Bucharest, they were treated like state dignitaries. all kinds of favors, benefits and these went on even when they left the country.

There were some. I know from some old police guys, they were kindly hooked and they thought they deserved it and then they were given a woman in bed or a minor and with this they were sold.

MW: When I am telling you these things you might think that this is my personal opinion but I have documents to prove it. These are my documents:

at some point the American senate met and one of the Soviet Union consuls who had fled to the States as a witness in this session was asked about the Russian espionage as he had been sent as a spy. And he said: "You don't understand. It is true they sent me here as a spy, but I did not have time to spy because we were given the order to open a file for each and every tourist who wants to visit Russia before they go to visit it and I had to find if these people had weaknesses, who their families were, who they were how they could be recruited" and he went on "I was busy all day long to chase these tourists instead of military espionage."

This is one piece of evidence and the next one is in the security files I managed to get related to my family. An Orthodox Romanian priest informs the security somebody from the west came from the World Council of Churches and the communists wanted to infiltrate this organization and eventually they did and the priest says: "This person came and asked me about Richard Wurmbbrand and I had not been informed about him so I did not know what to say about Richard Wurmbbrand but I found out that this person was interested in hunting so I lured him into a discussion about hunting bears and he forgot about Richard Wurmbbrand."

Your father was an optimistic person and he was not easily discouraged. When he saw all these things, did he ever think to go back to Europe? I don't think Romania was taken into consideration.

MW: Even better than thinking about returning to Europe, we tried to penetrate Europe with our message. Once we got to the States we tried that.

just to give you a glimpse of what my father was like I have to tell you that these people from Norway who were very generous people and very kind even if they were slow in understanding our urgency, here's what they did and this is a portrait of my father. As soon as we got to Norway, in January. Norway has some picturesque fiords and they bought us a place to stay in one of the most peaceful relaxation resorts from Norway. with a breathtaking view. for three months to rest and unwind after the trauma

we had gone through in Romania. We were speechless! So we went into this relaxation house. at first we were shy. but when we met the American pastor we started to understand how things were working and how we needed to go about things. that we were on our own and needed to act alone without putting our trust in other people. At first, like it or not, we went to this resort in the mountains.

This was after America?

MW: No, no. We arrived in December in Norway, stayed for seven days alone, got to the Americans but meanwhile we were still with this Norwegian mission, they bought us clothes, there was the episode with the American who left with the clothes they had bought for us and eventually we had the surprise of this stay in the resort in Norway. It was really nice, a great hotel. on the third day the manager of the hotel called my father and told

him: "Mr Wurmbrand, in this guest house nobody has ever received 12 phone calls a day, nobody has ever made 12 phone calls a day and nobody has ever typed on a mechanical typewriter at two o'clock at night." He gave my father a check and told him: "Here is the money for the three months, please do not be offended but go somewhere else." This was the third day. This gives you an idea about what my father was like. He annoyed the poor Norwegians. so the resting time was over after only three days, ok?

So when we got to the States, my dad spoke 14 foreign languages and you think you know the American culture based on what you previously read, but in fact you don't. Unless you live here for a couple of years you are under the impression that you know, but you don't. So my father's idea when we got here was. an American mission hired my father and this is how we got to the States. we talk to the Baptists and they will help the Baptists behind the Iron Curtain, we talk to the Catholics and of course they will, in turn, help the Catholics behind the Iron Curtain, we talk to the Franc Masons and they will pity all the Franc Masons who had been imprisoned, we talk to the 7th day Adventists and they will take care of their own. no way!!!We were so foolish and naïve. What Adventist here took pity of the Adventists in Romania? I personally met the North Baptist secretary and I want to tell you the story and you will be shocked.

So here I was with another Romanian and we were invited to meet with. they have a huge building in Philadelphia. he took us to have lunch and told me:

"Mr Wurmbrand why do you attack us? We have been so good to you, we even offered you this lunch?"

I said "Well, we attack you because instead of helping the Christians in the Soviet Union who are in prison by hundreds and thousands, you support the officials who are KGBists, Soviet spies. What kind of Christianity is this?" And he told me the following: "We don't need to help the suffering Christians from the Soviet Union because they have three alternatives." "What are the three alternatives?" I asked.

"Very easy:

they either submit to the regime and if it says they are not allowed to gather on certain days they have to obey, or if they do not want to submit, they have to be ready to suffer because they do not submit to the state authority," he said. "What would be the third alternative?" I asked. "This is very simple - if they don't enjoy the Soviet Union, they can leave."

Oh my God!

MW: Do you understand? These are the people who pretend they understand the language when in fact they don't.

There is another shocking thing to me. Ok, they don't understand the language, their brain is the size of a walnut in understanding the atrocities of communism and thirdly, I am shocked by another thing. it

means that all these leaders who are in position of authority in the churches around the States had a communistic mindset which made them submit to the state and the system. If you think you have to submit to the state, it means that this person did the same thing here in the States.

MW: When I managed to get all these documents from the security about our family I have to tell you I was also shocked. I had expected to find proof of people who informed the security in Romania. a lot of them. I can say about 90% of the people who visited us or met us, willingly or not, some even enthusiastically informed on us, ok? I even found documents that were saying: "In order to make the Wurmbrand family disappear we will talk with reporters in the West who are ours." and they mention well known newspapers.

So people who used to work for newspapers like Le Monde (in France) or Frankfurter Allgemeine (in Germany) and so on. in England. there is a document proving that while we were there for two weeks speaking in different churches, The Romanian communist secret police had information on each and every place we had gone to, what we talked about, what we were wearing, an entire journal from the security.

So they monitored you even after you left the country.

MW: Intensely. they had an unlimited budget to track us. what happened. I'll tell you what shocked us. They said they would speak to these reporters to interview us in a friendly manner and show enthusiasm to our message in order to get us out of their house and in this way tap our phone and analyze how they could eventually kill us All this was approved by Ceausescu. I have documents from the security which were signed by Plesita, the chief of the security.

About my mother. one interesting aspect. just to see their meanness and effort against us. God somehow took their minds. An unknown Christian is forced by the security to come and speak with my mother to open the subject of Lindon Johnson, the American president, so that my mother would express her affiliation to Americans and thus find a reason to arrest my mother.

In America?

MW: Yes. No. this was in Romania. So we are talking about the blindness of the security and how they spent their money. The guy reports: "I tried to get to Sabina Wurmbrand but on my way there ,a lady, Maria, met me and we talked for about an hour and a half in the tram station and ended up not reaching my destination." And of course there are all these informant reports which are signed and marked as read by security people. One of them writes: "Find out who Maria is!" Another writes: "Check and see if Maria was not sent by Sabina so that our informant was impeded to get to her." Do you understand? All these were signed by Plesita, the chief of the security back then. But, wait, listen because there is more and it is very interesting. The same informant: "I finally got to visit Sabina. A certain Christian whom I know was there and another one too, there was a man wearing blue pants and a black belt whom I did not know. I started a conversation about American President Johnson but Sabina opened her Bible and started reading about Abraham and I did not have the time to conduct the conversation so I mention president Johnson" "I could not stay late because I had to wake up early the next morning so I left." Signed by the security. "Find out who the man wearing blue pants and a black belt is."

Yes, there are hundreds of papers and reports like these. Some were Christians forced to do this. They were blackmailed, but others were very eager to do that. One even explains that he can prove that Wurmbrand pretends only to be a Christian Jew because he is the chief of the legionary

(anti-Semitic) movement in Romania. Yeah. Richard Wurmbbrand is the chief of the legionary movement in Romania. ok. it may sound like a joke but this was an extraordinary effort on the part of the security. in our case 8500 pages.

I spoke to others who told me to have thousands of pages, followed by five security people.

MW: Wait a minute. dreams sometimes begin as nightmares. How our dream came true was that we knocked on so many doors and found such a degree of gullibility, a lot of kindness but also a continuous postponing on the part of religious leaders, some of them lefties and mean. at some point there was a Lutheran pastor in California and if you remember during those times there were a lot of hippies and antipolice movement in America. This pastor invited his church members to kill policemen. in letters to church members:

"Kill the pigs" that's how they named the police. What we did was to take this pastor's poster and I reprinted it and sent it to 15,000 pastors and told them: "Our family reprinted this poster to all pastors and we ask you when you are going to eliminate this pro-communist minister? We promise that we will reprint this and send this to your entire congregation." And this is how we were done with this guy. After that, my father met a revolutionary lefty pastor in Santa Barbara, California. My father nicely spoke to him and told him, "Brother, a revolution means a mess." He replied: "Any revolutionary mess is far better than this capitalistic regime." This guy had a desk full of things and my father brushed all the things off the desk and told him: "Do you like a mess? This is what it looks like!"

Good one! He was a very spontaneous person!

MW: My father was so spontaneous, he was exemplary. I tried to imitate it to a very small degree, but it was hard to do it. So one day, when we saw this, deliberately, I only had \$60 in my pocket and it is true my dad was invited to speak to many churches. but I told him: "We'll start the mission with this \$60." And my dad was so discouraged. I was young and a bit of a fool.

Sometimes when you are young you don't understand the depth of a problem you are getting into. My dad said: "I went to all these American offices, I saw rooms filled with computers, what can we do with \$60?" "We start with \$60!"

I said. The way we started was that we had some supporters, friends of ours and we asked them to give us their Christmas lists of friends and this is how we started. We went from Christmas list to Christmas list.

MW: I want to tell our audience that my family and I visited late priest Matei Boila in Cluj, before he died. Priest Matei Boila I think was imprisoned for at least 7 years in communist prisons. He was also very spontaneous. When we first met him, he said: "I have met and heard of many anticommunists but only Richard Wurmbrand had a practical sense to give \$50 or \$100 to a poor person who had suffered under communism. He did the practical thing. I don't know if he won or not, but at least he helped someone." I created the Richard Wurmbrand Foundation in the States and it is very easy to find on the internet (<http://RichardWurmbrandFoundation.com>) and Help For Refugees (<http://helpforrefugees.com>) There are way more possibilities nowadays. I created in Romania a Christian association named after my mother Sabina Wurmbrand (<http://asociatiacrestinasabinawurmbrand.ro>) and the idea is to help the Christians who passed because of their Christian faith through communist prisons and who are now 80 or 90 years of age. Just recently a priest who was 102 passed away and I helped them financially with small amounts of money to be able to at least buy their medicines. people who spent years in communist prisons. so whoever wants to become involved is welcomed.

To me Christianity is exemplified in Acts in the Bible where Peter speaks about Pentecost and over 3,000 people become Christians, the first reaction of these people was: "Brother, what can we do?" A person who is touched by Christianity, their first idea is: "What can I do?" They become active.

MW: I help orphans as well. there are so many orphans in Romania. it is an unbelievable tragedy! This is how I would like to end and tell Romanians that it is not enough to follow and like, but to get involved.