

Fred Taucher

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Question: It's just to get your name, first and last and middle and the correct spelling of it.

Answer: Okay. My name is Fred Taucher, T-A-U-C-H-E-R.

Question: Where, I got disoriented from the last interview that we had. Where were you born?

Answer: I was born in Berlin, Germany, January 29, 1933 and that is a day before Hitler became Chancellor of Germany.

Question: Wow. I mean, there's some irony there I guess, and born into a Jewish family?

Answer: I was born into a Jewish family, and my Father was born in 1891 in New York.

Question: Oh really, and migrated, emigrated back to?

Answer: With his parents, he. I don't know the full story, of course, I was too young at that time but he went back to Germany with his family. Now in the last two years, I've done a lot of research and I learned that my Father was married before and divorced, but his Mother was born in the UK.

Question: Oh wow.

Answer: And, my Father, when of course, he was, I was born in 1933. My brother in 1932, so he was quite old when he actually had us, and my Mother was only three years younger than my Father. And my Mother, too, was married before.

Question: Huh, so had any of your Father's family been from Germany or why did he..?

Answer: That I do not know; I have no idea. I've been trying to research it, but I do know the family on my Mother's side were from Eastern Germany, which is now Poland. For instance, my Mother was from (Bytom?), Ober Schlesien, and my Father too lived in that area which would have been Breslau that was Germany, now it is Wroclaw In fact now, providing there's no war, I will be going to Germany in May and also, visit Wroclaw to kind of now look more into my family on my Mother's side.

Question: What did your Dad do?

Answer: My Dad was a tailor. He had a tailor shop in Berlin. And speaking of that in 1938 when I was not quite six years old, November 9, when Kristallnacht occurred, and I remember that like it was yesterday, when the windows were shattered and the Nazis destroyed my Father's store, removed his inventory, destroyed his sewing machines, his tools of the trade... and I remember that like it was yesterday. Now the unique thing was back in 1938 the Germans arrested most Jewish storeowners but they did not arrest my Father. And I heard him discuss that with my Mother too, many times and with friends. The reason he was not arrested he thought because they considered him an American Jew, because they knew he was born in the U.S. and they left him alone. And of course because of that I think my Father never made any attempts to leave Germany, he figured they'd leave him

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alone. They made him work as a slave laborer on the railroad after they took the store away from him, but he did remain and he was not arrested until late 1943, so one of the last people that was arrested from the railroad where he worked and shipped to Auschwitz. And apparently, from the information I've gathered that he was murdered two days after he arrived in Auschwitz. The Germans kept fantastic records, even though some of the dates were wrong.

Question: But they still documented..

Answer: They documented everything, yes.

Question: When they took your Father's shop, was that a very organized sweeping of the streets by the Nazis to take these shops or was it just chaos?

Answer: Chaos, I would.. now I would consider them they were a bunch of hoodlums and they just it's just like when we've had demonstrations here and I'm thinking of the World Trade Fair that we had here back three years ago and I was an interpreter. I did interpreting in German and Japanese to the people that were here, and I was right amongst the demonstrators. At first they were peaceful but then a group came and they started destroying property. Unfortunately, the police didn't do anything. And this is exactly what I remembered; I mean it brought my time back when I was a kid in Berlin.

Question: Did you, was the type of set up where your Father had a shop downstairs and lived upstairs?

Answer: No, it was a one-story unit. It was part of a building and my Father had the storefront and we had one-bedroom living quarters in the place and of course they took that away from him and we. I don't know, again, I was too young then but I know we had only a short time to move out and again, the Germans then had some apartment houses in, not one of the better districts of Berlin, where all the Jews had to stay. And we had a one-bedroom; that's all we had, a one-bedroom. And I think we had to share the bathrooms and kitchens and so forth, with other tenants on that floor.

Question: So how old were you when they took the shop?

Answer: I was, well, probably I was just barely six years old. I think it was either December or January of 1938-39, and I was born in January '33.

Question: That had to scare the hell out of a little kid.

Answer: Oh yes. Oh yes, it sure did. Yeah. And I still remember my Mother just being up in arms and she says, What are we going to do? And I remember when they destroyed his inventory and everything, my Father saying; Well that's what we have insurance for. But, of course, even today I have never... not seen a penny yet of insurance money, and that's one of the things I am Chairman of the Survivors of the Holocaust asset recovery project. And I work very close then with the Insurance Commissioner of Washington State Deborah Senn, and we did pass a law here in the State of Washington that the German owned insurance companies that are operating in the State of Washington publicize the names and policy holders. But, that hasn't been done yet.

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Question: So these are companies that are still in existence.

Answer: Right, well a good example is Generali. It's an insurance company from Italy. But they own a number of insurance companies right here. I could be wrong on the name but I believe Unigard Insurance is owned by Aliance, the second largest insurance company in the world.

Question: So did they, and again you're were pretty young, but did they just take and throw everything out the windows and in the streets or what did they...

Answer: They, for instance, the sewing machines, they just threw and destroyed it. The clothing, even unfinished suits, my Father was both a ladies and men's tailor, he made ladies' dresses and they just tore those into pieces. The material, the array of material just for sewing, I think they loaded up. I don't really know what happened there. Again, I was so scared I was in the back of the room but they just emptied out his store, the storefront.

Question: Were these SS soldiers or were they common soldiers or..

Answer: That I wished remember. I think they were mostly Hitler Youth or the real young SS or the SA, the yellow shirts, and but I can't give you the specific details. Again, I was not quite six years old.

Question: Yeah, yeah. Do you remember... did it, did it 'cause you talked about your Dad that's what we have insurance for.

Answer: Right.

Question: So your Dad it sounds like turned the other cheek, have a positive look or did it break his spirit?

Answer: Again, he said that after the Germans left, you see. And he was at that time when he told my Mother that don't worry we have insurance. I think it was to calm her down and but he was also convinced the insurance companies would pay for the damage. Of course that never happened.

Question: Now you were a pretty young child but do you think that was your first experience with discrimination?

Answer: That I can remember. I know there were others. I know we were spit upon. I say we, my brother and I, but that's the first real heavy experience that I can remember. I may also add my brother's a year older, but he can hardly remember anything. In fact, he cannot even speak German to carry on a conversation.

Question: Now it's interesting. I overheard you a little bit saying that when you came to the states, you didn't speak German for a long time.

Answer: That's right. I did not want to speak German. I just had such a hate towards Germany and a horrible prejudice. Anything German I wanted nothing to do with, and I changed my mind back. I think it must have been 1970 or 1971 when I computerized the Jewish Community Center on Mercer Island which is for Greater Seattle, and while I was working there going through records that had to be

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computerized I had then an old lady start speaking German with me.. and I turned around, I said I don't like to speak that language. And she rolled up her sleeve and showed me her numbers that were tattooed on her arm from Auschwitz, and she put her hand on my shoulder and she said "Son, why do you punish a language when it were the people that were to blame?" And it made so much sense that I started speaking German again.

Question: Wow... So do you consider yourself a German then?

Answer: No, I consider myself an American... 100% American. In fact, even when we were child, five years old, our Father always said, some day we'll go to America. That's our country, even though I was born in Berlin. And, again I volunteered, after I got out of high school, in 1951, I volunteered for the U.S. Army. I wasn't even a citizen, but I was shipped to Korea. I kept a record of casualties during the Korean War on IBM equipment and of course I've been in that business ever since.

Question: So your Dad, even way back then, viewed himself as an American.

Answer: Yes he did.

Question: That's why, we...as Adolph was saying, we spoke with a gentleman yesterday, Mr. Zweig that was at Auschwitz and I said it was so surreal to hear him say and then we were set free. But, he was set free in his own country, which was weird. I mean, when, when he got let out and when they got liberated from Auschwitz, it was his own country. I mean we did the same thing to the Japanese-Americans here, but to think, you were, how could you be set free back to your own country?

Answer: I can tell you something if I may here. When I was born in 1933 it was common to be, have your birth by midwife. And the reason again that now I know the story, at the time of course I didn't. But in 1933 Hitler passed his very first ordinance, actually I think it was passed before he really came to power already; but that all doctors and hospitals that treat Jews will not be reimbursed by the country, by the state. And so Jews really couldn't.. if they went to a hospital, they wouldn't be serviced unless it was a Jewish hospital. There weren't any that I know of. And so, most of the Jewish families that needed help for birth hired midwives. Well, this midwife to my birth, it so happened was a very close friend of Hitler and a high-ranking Nazi member even back in the '30's. Yet, somehow she befriended my family and when my Father was arrested, she advised us that our Father has been arrested, that we have to go in hiding. She had a summer cabin in the outskirts of Berlin where only high ranking Nazi member could have property there, and she hid us there for about eight months and we were right in the amongst the SS or high ranking military officers, members of the Nazi Party that were on rest and recuperation, so to speak. And from 1943, when we went into hiding till the winter of 1943 we stayed right there; she got us false ID. She got us ration cards so we could buy groceries. And the reason I brought this up, you mention about after the war. I was caught at the tail end of the war and shipped to Dachau but I never was inside the camp. I escaped in a rail car, but anyhow I met up after my escape from Dachau, met up with my Mother and brother again. Incidentally, our Mother was shot by the Germans a day before the Russians invaded Berlin. They found her out. And, anyhow, after the war when Berlin was divided into the various sections, my brother and I visited an Army camp in Berlin and that's a long story. Anyhow we

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befriended, it so happened, a Jewish-American soldier, who helped us get a Visa to come to the U.S. And in 1946, in September, 1946, before we left for the U.S., she was real upset with us, this midwife, she says you are Germans; you can't go to America, they were our enemies. She was still a Nazi and she was a Nazi until the day she died. When we came here we wrote letters to her; she would never answer. She remained a Nazi till the day she died which was probably 25 or 30 years ago.

Question: Why do you think that she protected you then?

Answer: I think the only reason she befriended my family and she gave life to me; she was the midwife to my birth, and I think that's the only reason. I have no other idea why she did that. And also I know my Mother asked her well aren't you afraid. She says, well if they would arrest me, we won't tell anybody that I'm helping you; but if I do get arrested, Hitler will free me. And I remember my Mother even telling her, well then, why don't you call him up now? Because she was also such a fanatic, she was convinced Hitler didn't know what was being done. That's what a fanatic she was. And she, my Mother asked her, why don't you call up Hitler. She says I've called him many time but he's so busy with the war effort that he just hasn't had time to call me back.

Question: So she believed that Hitler didn't know about what was happening in Auschwitz and Dachau.

Answer: That's right, that's right.

Question: Cause I've heard the other extreme. I've heard people say well the people of the village didn't know what was going on.

Answer: No, I'll go right back when I was arrested. Incidentally, the German archives are saying that I was arrested April 15 but I couldn't have been because I was probably on the last train, the cattle car, to Dachau but I think it must have been March because in April, I'm sure, the trains were not running to Dachau which is 30 minutes drive from Munich and the Allies were already there and I think some other areas, the British were in there. So, it had to have been March when I was arrested, but when I was arrested they. First of all, I didn't have my ID, like this midwife gave us ID but I didn't have the ID that I belonged to the Hitler Youth. And, also kids were supposed to be ten years old and older, in Hitler Youth uniform. I didn't have Hitler Youth uniform. Of course there I stood out, even I looked more like I was about seven or eight years old. And, anyhow they wanted my ID. I Showed ID... Why aren't you in Hitler Youth uniform and where's your Hitler Youth ID? I said I don't have it with me and the uniforms are being washed. And what did they do, within the streetcar full of people and they made me drop my pants. And that is because in Germany only Jews are circumcised and that's why many a man or boy was caught in Germany because of circumcision. And they just threw me out of the train, out of the streetcar, and they didn't hide it from anyone. And here I was a twelve-year-old boy and they threw me into a truck.. and I mean literally threw me... I had bruises. And then they took me to the SS Headquarters where I was not treated too gently for two days... nothing to eat or drink. And then, again, threw me on one of those cattle cars, which the cattle car I was on were mostly POW's, Russians, that were caught on the outskirts of Berlin, I guess. And I was in with mostly with them; there were a few other kids, not many, and women; and then it took, again, I'm guessing there and also having looked at some of the archives it looks like I was on that train for two days. Nothing to eat, no sanitation facilities,

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nothing to drink. And I do know the people that fell on the floor because of no sleep and too weak, they would never get up again; they'd be trampled to death. And I will thank the Russian soldier that kept me from falling down; they kept me standing up in the wait. Any anyhow it was during an air raid that somebody opened up the door to the rail car that I was in, and the Russian soldiers that were strong enough jumped out and I followed them. And they came upon a place, again, I don't know where. I visited Munich; I visited Dachau and I tried to backtrack where that could have been and I could not find it from the rail yard there. But there were a bunch of, a few German soldiers training Hitler Youth kids how to shoot a rifle; and the Russians, of course, didn't have any arms but they were able to overpower the few German soldiers that were there, even though over half were killed themselves. And then they killed every one of the Hitler Youth kids and shot 'em all. And then they put on, the Russian soldiers put on uniforms that fit them from the German soldiers; and they went into the woods there but would not let me follow them. And here I was all by myself amongst dead soldiers and dead Hitler Youth kids; some of them were my size so I decided, well if they put on the Army uniforms I can put on the Hitler Youth uniform. And so I undressed one of the kids that was my size and put on his uniform and I walked to the highway, that time known as the Autobahn and I flagged down a car. Well it happened to be a car with two SS officers. Of course, remember now, German was the only language I knew. I was like a German. And I guess I was blessed, I don't look Jewish or I didn't look and I flagged 'em down. I said I was here for training but some Russians came by and they looked like they were prisoners and they killed every one of them. And I said I'm the only one that came alive, that came out alive and my Mother's in Berlin. I want to go back to Berlin; how can I do it? And they opened up the back door and said to come in; we're heading for Berlin. So here I got a ride with two SS officers, ride to Berlin and they went, there were roadblocks all along; and they had a little sticker on their windshield and they were not even asked, they were just waived right through the roadblocks. And my brother, my Mother and I when we lived under false names, and at that time already we remained at a subway station in Berlin because there was day and night bombing and we didn't really have a place to go. And together with thousands of others, Germans, we remained down in the subway station because it was safe from artillery fire and so forth. And I met up with my Mother and brother again. And of course the first thing I did is.. I, we had spare clothing, and I removed the Hitler Youth uniform because I did not...Otherwise they would have made me go upstairs and given me a rifle. So even though, like I say I was a twelve year old kid that looked more like eight years old. But anyhow while the fighting was going on in Berlin, my Mother went upstairs from the subway station to get water out of the fire hydrant.. which the people did, and she didn't come back. And it was just recently, probably less than a year ago, that my brother actually received the death certificate of our Mother from the German government and it said she was shot at Prinz Albert Strasse. Well Prinz Albert Strasse were the SS Headquarters, so apparently our Mother was caught getting water from the water well, they hauled her off to the SS Headquarters which probably was only a ten or fifteen minute drive, and shot her over there or maybe she tried to escape. I do not know. But it was the first time that we knew of.. before we just had her as missing. And we thought possibly that the Russians when they invaded Berlin they took many of the Russian (German) women and kids and hauled 'em off to Russia. And we thought this is probably what happened to our Mother because even when the Russian occupation was still in Berlin before the Allies came in to Berlin they loaded my brother and I onto trucks many times wanting to ship us off to Moscow. But it was very easy; they didn't guard anyone. As soon as the truck slowed down or stopped, we'd jump off. Because again, our main goal was to come to America.

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Question: Do you remember if you were in a constant state of fear or does your mind get in a different place?

Answer: Different, at first we were in a constant fear. But after while it just got so that well if you get caught, you get caught. And again, like I said, none of us ever traveled together. Sometimes my Mother went to get ration cards from the midwife. You see, she would not go out there. And, or my brother would go or I would go and even though we were young we knew Berlin like a book. We were very familiar with Berlin and I'm getting that way again. I've been going back to Berlin for the last five years to do research. That's why... I'm beginning to put a puzzle together.

Question: And that's what it is, is a big..

Answer: It is and they want, a good example is when I went there four years ago I went from one office to another in Berlin trying to get information, archives on my family before and during the war. And I was sent from one end of Berlin to another, always to a different office and here it was on a Thursday afternoon we were ready to leave on a Saturday and I had just been sent into East Berlin, even though it's one Berlin now but the eastern part of Berlin, and they told me I had to go to that street.. which was only a block from the hotel I stayed at. And I got to that place and I go up that office.. and I speak in English first and right away the girl, the receptionist, didn't know English so I spoke in German. And I said I was born here and I'm trying to get some information on my time in Germany, and I was told that you have it here. She says, Oh no you have to go to that office. Again, another part of Berlin.. and I lied there, I said I just came from there and they said you have it here. I was really getting upset. And she says, Well I can't help you. I said well then let me speak to your supervisor. Well, they're all busy. I said, well then I'll wait until somebody is free. I'm not going to leave here, until I get some information and I raised my voice a little bit. And then a door opened and a young lady came out and she spoke in German, can I help you. I said yes, I'm from the U.S.A. and she interrupts me. She says, Oh you are; and she speaks good English to me. And I said Yes and she says, Where are you from? Well, I'm from Seattle I told her. She says you've got to be kidding. I love Seattle... I love Pike Place Market. And come to find out she was a Ph.D. holder; and most government people in Germany also in private industry that have management type of jobs, have either, they have a degree, Ph.D., or they have this diploma degree. And she was a Ph.D. and was for six months here in Seattle attending the UW for some type of training, and so we hit it off. Anyhow she says, well you have to go to Potsdam, which is again.. it's a good hour by train out of Berlin. And she says now you won't find the place and it's too late for you to go today. You go tomorrow and here's how to get there. You take the train to Potsdam; once you get off the train you walk across two aisles and you take Bus No., I've forgotten now.

(Tel. Rings... This is both a Palm Pilot and a telephone)

So anyhow she told me then the bus and how many bus stops and where to get off. And she told me everything and once you get off, you'll see it; it's a botanical garden there, beautiful landscape. Anyhow she says don't go in the building, as you go up the stairway you'll see a beautiful building. Don't go in there; that's the main office of the botanical garden. You take to the right, go about 150 feet and you will see a building on your right that's like a warehouse... and that's where you have to go. So sure enough I got there the next day and there were some people working there landscaping so I asked a few people in German where the archive center... Never

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heard of it, never heard of it. So anyhow then I walk to this building, sure enough there is that warehouse, and I open it up and a lady greets me. Are you Herr Taucher, my name in German is pronounced Tal-ker, and I said Yes. She says, well, here's the information that you were looking for. They gave me complete computer printouts. And also, I was requested by a friend of mine, also living here in Seattle, who also came from Berlin, if I could get information for him. But I didn't tell that to this lady in Berlin and then I ask can you also give me some information on this gentlemen. She says well, just a minute, we'll get to the computer. And she gave me much bigger printout than what I had for me. But anyhow that printout that she gave me showed exactly the date, even the transport number, that our Father was arrested and was shipped to Auschwitz. It did have the wrong birthday of my Father but it had in New York... they had all the information and that we lived illegally from 1941, well that's when we were supposed to have been arrested. Of course, we weren't going into hiding until my Father was arrested in '43, but I think maybe this midwife had something to do why my Father wasn't arrested earlier. But they showed us living illegally from 1941 and then it showed that I was arrested April 15, like I said earlier that should have been March 15, I think, and that I turned up missing on April 19 or 20, which again should have been March. And then they had where we lived after the war and emigrated in September; they even had the date that we left Germany which was September 7, 1946.

They had all that information, but anyhow they said when we left then, when I left that Archival Center, they said there's more information but they had to go to other archives. They had to gather that information and they will mail it to me and also for this other gentleman. And about two months later I get a form letter from that Archival Center and it said that sorry we have checked our archives and there's no information on you or your family. Now I sent an email to this lady that got me that information, the email address bounced, so I called up on my phone. Actually made a phone call and nobody ever heard of her. And two years ago when I went back I could not find out if she's working for the state or what happened, or if they fired her, I have no idea. Now I ran out of time but I'm going back in May and I'm going to try and visit that Archival Center again and see what they'll print out for me this time or if they are erasing the information. I do not know.

Question: Wow... What

Answer: And incidentally the same thing is true on this friend of mine. They gave me, must have given me twenty sheets on his Father, his parents, because his Father was a M.D.; and they had records from his medical practice and I brought back a whole bunch of it and now they say there's no records available. He got a very similar letter.

Question: Wow, so it didn't end, I mean what was happening is not, not..

Answer: No.... No.

Question: Now your Father was arrested, were you with your Father when he was arrested?

Answer: No, he was out working on the railroad... remember they took his store away and we lived in an apartment that they forced us to live and he went to work in the morning and he came home exhausted. And of course this one day he didn't come home; but this midwife called us and says, "Leave, leave the apartment or you too will be arrested."

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Question: So did you know where your Father had gone at that time?

Answer: No, at the time, no we didn't know it. He sent her a postcard though, and said, I'm in Auschwitz; everything is fine. Don't worry about me; I'll be home soon. And she was upset about that because she didn't want, because they were looking, you know, who they were sending mail to that she would be in trouble even though she was convinced Hitler would free her. But again nobody came after her or anything because again of her connection with the Nazi Party and Hitler. But it was just a postcard with a few lines that I'm sure he was told what to write.

Question: A couple things become interesting... cause I've never heard of anybody sending a postcard from Auschwitz.

Answer: Yes..

Question: You know, I've heard other prisoners in Prisoner of War camps, American prisoners caught sending home the mail but, but here so your Father was there

Answer: Yes, I do remember. I do remember. She, that midwife, she received the postcard from him and she was really kinda upset about that.

Question: Now did, I'll let this jet go by...

Answer: Oh isn't that beautiful music... I love airplanes. I own an aircraft.

Question: Oh...Did you have any idea at the time what Auschwitz was?

Answer: No...But we knew there were concentration camps, but I think my Mother knew. But we as kids were never told; we just thought that's where the place where they were forced to work. We did not know until later that, yes, we knew.. let's say, back in 1944 after about a year living under false names, we knew if we were caught that would be the end of our life. We knew that.

Question: Did you originally think that your Dad would be coming back?

Answer: Yes, yes.

Question: And you think that was part of your Mom protecting you?

Answer: Yes, uh huh.

Question: It's interesting because, and I didn't, you know I've read it places but I actually talked to somebody a couple months ago that tried to tell me that he had been over there. He'd gone to visit and he had seen, I forget which camp he went to, but he said, It's not real. He was trying, he was trying to tell me that, that..

Answer: Oh I get upset. Honestly, the last time I was in Munich, which goes back a few years, when I was sitting at a restaurant very close to Dachau... and I was talking to some Germans. In Germany, and they still do that today, when you sit in a restaurant and it's a busy restaurant, they'll put other people at your table, and uh, especially where you're on a highway. You know, they have rest stops with

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restaurants; and I was sitting at one of those tables, very close to Dachau. In fact I was driving to Dachau; I had a rental car, and I was sitting with these guys and I was saying how far is Dachau from here. Oh you aren't going to Dachau. I said, Yes I want to visit there. Oh forget it... it's all a big lie. That didn't happen, and I really got upset and I almost got into a big fight. I will say here I am Martial Arts trained; I have a second-degree belt and I don't want to do it or I'll break this. I can still put my hand like this on wood and can actually break wood. Well, I got so upset at this one guy and I said, You are dam liars. I happened to be here as a 12-year old child as a prisoner and don't tell me it has never happened, and just unconsciously I put my hand down on the table, raised everyone's hands and everyone of those guys, Waiter, waiter, check please, check please. They couldn't get out fast enough. But it's only my training in Martial Arts that I could actually keep my discipline, disciplined myself not to get into a real big fight.

Question: And that's where you would have gone, right, is to Dachau? You were on the train to..

Answer: That's right, well I was in Dachau. What Dachau.. if you should ever visit Germany and Dachau you will see the train station and then there's a fence and then there's a big sign Arbeit Macht Freiheit, means Work Gives You Freedom to go into the main camp. And... you know I wasn't inside the camp; I was at the rails and again now I know why... but at that time they didn't know what to do with us. They knew the Allies were right outside of Dachau and I also, again, I don't know who did it but I believe it was one of the guards that opened up the rail car and the one I was in the door just so that he could get preferred, preferential treatment, probably. And I did meet a U.S. Soldier that was one of the first troops into Dachau and I asked him once what happened to all the people that were in the rail car when you were there, when you liberated 'em. He says, Well there were rail cars full of people. There were a few open with empty ones but most of 'em had dead bodies in 'em that had numerous gunshot wounds in 'em. So I think when the Allies were actually in there, all the people that were still in the rail car they were just murdered, executed, machine-gunned down.

Question: Why do you think that Russian befriended you in the rail car?

Answer: I was a kid; I was a child and they just kept me. In fact, it may, I think one of them was actually a Russian Jewish Soldier.

Question: There was more the humanity of here's a scared child.

Answer: Exactly, exactly... and I was scared and I was beaten; I was... had bruises on me, my face and so forth.

Question: The people that beat you, when they captured you and threw you in and all that, was it pure, I mean... Today you hear President Bush talk about evildoers and, was that evil you saw?

Answer: Yes, yes. In fact, I put Saddam Hussein in the same category as Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. I put 'em in the same category.

Question: Did you ever Hitler speak?

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Answer: Oh yes, but I never listened to him. But I heard him speak. Yes, many times.

Question: Oh, over the..

Answer: Over the radio, loud speakers, and actually I think I was preached already, well after the Kristallnacht my parents pretty much preached to me. Hitler's no good. We're going to go America. But my Father didn't have that much money. He was a tailor and struggling and I think he also felt he was safe when he was not arrested at Kristallnacht.

Question: It's interesting, the contrast between your Father and parents realizing that Hitler was evil and this midwife who for whatever reason didn't want to believe that Hitler knew what was going on. Was she upper class, the midwife woman or?

Answer: Yes, yes. In fact, I visited the apartment that she had in Berlin, which is still in upper class neighborhood today.

Question: Isn't that when she protected you she took you out of..

Answer: Occasionally, let's say, when we went to town and it was too late... we actually, I say we... whether it was my Mother, my brother or I, always individuals, we'd stay at her place overnight and then... In fact, I almost forgot about that... that rings bells, back memories now. She got us in touch with a person who lived in the outskirts of Berlin, out in East Berlin in Erkner, and the person was a driver of the train, the city train called the Stuk-bahn, the city-elevated train and he was the driver, very much anti-Nazi. And she may have been the mid-wife to his kids too. That I do not know because she didn't report him that he was anti-Nazi but he was not drafted into the Army until the very tail end of the war in Berlin. But whenever we took the train to this cabin that she had was on that route, we always took the train that he was working and then he let us go in the front together with him. And that was never inspected by the Germans or by the Nazis. And of course, but then we still had to take the streetcar to get to the points where, to get the ration cards from her. And that's where I was caught.

Question: What's amazing what she set up and whole... confusing the part again that she believed Hitler but yet here she had this friend who was anti-Nazi. Here she protected your family..

Answer: That's right. No she, I'm pretty sure, protected a few other people.

Question: So did you see glimpses of humanity that over.. outshone evil?

Answer: Oh yes. There were, I will say, there, not all Germans were bad and it's just like what you see in Iraq right now. You know, the people are too scared to talk, to speak out and that is what happened in Germany. I mean, I have seen evil. I have seen a German Soldier not giving the Nazi salute of Heil Hitler and giving a military, an SS Officer, just a military salute and the SS Officer pulled out his pistol and shot him. I've seen that; but I've also seen, especially I remember a submarine officer once that knew darned well that we were Jewish and yet he didn't turn us in. And not all of them were bad, but unfortunately the majority of the people were and...

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Question: And I've heard people say that when you saw the SS versus other soldiers that there was this whole different aura, everything was..

Answer: Oh definitely, definitely. Also, again I don't know if that's true but a lot of Germans have told me that, that all of the people that the military that were working at concentration camp putting Jews to death and so forth, beating them, were all volunteers. That nobody was at a concentration camp of the Germans unless they volunteered to be there. Of course today they'll tell you that isn't true.

Question: I know we've heard that there were no Nazis in Germany.

Answer: That's right.

Question: I mean that's what when we interview people, Oh no, there were no Nazis in Germany. Yes there were Nazis in Germany. It's kinda like the same thing in the South Pacific, They say oh, no, no our parents weren't fighting; they were just gone for a while. Well no they were doing whatever.

Answer: And but again I, actually I had a customer in Munich, Germany and I gave him up because the first time I visited him all of a sudden he couldn't speak English and we always communicated over the telephone; this is before email and I called him many times or faxes, always in English, but when I visited him in Germany he couldn't speak German, English. He says, well, you're in Germany now. We have to speak German. He didn't even know I spoke German. But what in Munich I see is I see the Nazi mentality all over again and of course that's where it started. But giving the old Nazi salute or wearing some all of the old Nazi paraphernalia is strictly illegal subject to arrest. But in Munich I have seen these punks giving Nazi salutes in front of police officers who just turn their face.

Question: So in this sixty years things haven't changed as much as people would like to say that the..

Answer: And websites are full of anti-Semitic websites. Unfortunately, a lot of them originate right here in the U.S.

Question: When you go back to Germany, do you face a lot of discrimination?

Answer: I don't let 'em know that I'm German, that I understand the language, except when I have to; and I'm just an American tourist. I give myself away when I do speak German to some, maybe I have, not quite sure where I'm going and they don't speak English or don't want to speak English, I'll speak German and they ask me, Gee where did you learn to speak German so well. I said in school and they don't believe me. My German is too good to... where I can't hide it.

Question: True German with a German accent.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Yeah, Do you remember Berlin being bombed?

Answer: Oh yes, oh yes.

Question: What was that like?

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Answer: Again, you got to.. My brother used to be very, very scared. But, I never was that scared. I figure when the time comes, the bomb hits; I'm dead, but there were usually bomb shelters and before I have to remember that for my book. I'm in the process of writing a book. You ask good questions here. But, before, 1940 and 1943, before my Father was arrested, and when the bombing started I remember the British used to bomb in the daytime and at night and the U.S. in daytime. I remember that and they had bomb shelters for the Germans to go into. But back in 1942, I believe in 1941 we had to wear the yellow Star of David, yeah, which was a real bad thing for us kids especially; but Jews were not permitted to go in the bomb shelter back in those days.

Question: So where did you go?

Answer: We just remained in our apartment. You couldn't.

Question: So are you seeing buildings being..

Answer: Oh yes, oh yes. Buildings across the street being bombed out. Oh yes. Now I think the Allies did try, I think the, the, they had information of what neighborhoods were the Jewish ghetto-like areas and I think they refrained from bombing them because even the store that my Father had is still, was never bombed, in that area.

Question: Does that building still exist today?

Answer: Yes, yes.

Question: Oh, it does?

Answer: In fact when the last one, well three years ago when I visited, there was a Chinese artifact store there. In fact I went in there. Last year when we were there it was empty; it was for lease. And of course that's one of the reasons I've been going back to Germany too, to Berlin, is most store owners, Jewish store owners had to buy the property like a condo here, you know, in the building. And I want to know what happened, who got the money for that property.. that my Father owned and I have not been able. I was more concerned in the past to get history on my parents and myself. Now I'm working on property. In fact, when we go in May I also plan to go to what used to be called Breslau, which is now Poland, Wroclaw Sp and see what happened to my Mother's family side. Of course, well I had an uncle that was a dentist, another uncle that was a lawyer and the family from my Mother's side were well to do. Of course, no one survived except one aunt who was an opera singer and she passed away in Vancouver. She left for Vancouver, apparently before the war; and I never knew about her until the late '70's; and she had passed away shortly when, before I went, tried to see her.

Question: It sounds like from what you've described that it wasn't the case of a Jew is a Jew is a Jew is a Jew, that even the SS segregated you even more specifically, is that right?

Answer: I don't know if I; I don't know. I really, I never gave that a thought, but no, I think because when they moved us into the various apartment buildings in

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Berlin which like I say was not in the best neighborhood, they had professional people there and common laborers. I mean..

Question: You talk about how your Dad was an American Jew versus a German Jew so you think..

Answer: There, I think they separated that a little bit. They gave him a little more freedom, I think, until the very end. Of course at the end they even arrested mixed marriages where the husband was Jewish and the wife was not and vice versa. But I think they did not arrest where the wife was Jewish and the husband was Christian, let's say. Right... They left those people alone but the other way around they arrested both.

Question: It's a.. Some of it's hard to fathom, I mean to contrast with what happened here.. with the Japanese-Americans and what happened in Germany because it is such a different thing. I mean what happened here was terrible what happened, but they weren't being executed.

Answer: I know some Nisei, which I don't know if you know what it means. A lot of people don't know what it means or Issei. Issei is the first generation and Nisei is the second generation. And some of the second generation is uh.. Japanese who really didn't have a profession. They were laborers, and they actually learned a profession in camp some of them, or the ones which I really find it hard to believe they did it, which they went into that 442nd Infantry battalion and became heroes while their parents were still in the concentration camp and I really admire those people.

Question: Which would have been like Hitler coming to you and saying I want you to fight for your country now.

Answer: Well I may mention something here. that I also just recently learned through my brother. My brother is just recently retired He spent twenty-two and a half years in the Army.. a year and a half in Vietnam and retired a major. He was initially drafted. He has a lot of time on his hands and has done a lot of research.. through the mail, and he actually just received the discharge papers of our father when he served in WWI in the German Army. He was drafted in the German Army and actually was a lieutenant in the German Army and injured, and he got the discharge paper from a field hospital in Germany. But again here my father was an American citizen drafted into the German Army. Of course I was technically a German citizen and I served with the US Army in Korea. In fact I remember when I took my test for citizenship while in the army stationed in Fort Leonard Wood Missouri. And I took the test and the interview with the.. I got the examiner from the immigration service and I was in an army uniform.. and one of the questions this examiner asked me was Would I bear arms for the US. But I said well.. and I had my orders for Korea!. And he says, I know it sounds funny but that is a formality.. we have to ask that question.

Question: Did you go to a Jewish School?.

Answer: Had to.. had to.

Question Had to?

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Answer: Yes. And I only went to the first grade and second grade and then they closed the school and we went into hiding.

Question: Had to because of Hitler's orders?.

Answer: Yes, they closed all the Jewish schools in 1940.... 41 already.

Question: Do you remember? I've asked this of some Japanese-Americans who were in school at that time.. These are your friends and the next day it's like they were your enemies.

Answers: Oh yes I remember that, we had friends and all of a sudden they wouldn't talk to us.. and beat us. That happened when we had to wear the Star of David.

Question: So even little kids?.

Answer: Yes.

Question: So the parents, or whoever taught them?.

Answer: It's the parents, I always say prejudice.. you aren't born with prejudice, you are taught. And the parents say don't associate with Jews.. they are animals.

Question: So even in that young age it crossed over and became this.. Sometimes you think kids.. children have such a blind eye to thing.. but

Answer: Of course you are not going to eliminate prejudice. And of course I sometimes find the same things that the Afro-Americans find right here in the US, Oh, some of my best friends are black, right.. well of course they know they are black. But with me a lot of people say.. and I hear them bad mouth a Jew. And I say.. Why you do that, I'm Jewish. Oh, I didn't mean it like that.. I have many friends that are Jews.

Question: Talking about the other Jews?

Answer: Yeah, I'm only talking about the other Jews.

Question: Was it chaos in Berlin. You've talked about WTO (The Seattle Riot) and comparing that. Was it just out of control evil hungry, power hungry people roaming the streets?.

Answer: That's right, it was the same type of hoodlums that used the demonstration over here at the world trade, except you had bigger quantities, and you had them through out Germany destroying Jewish property. And the Jews were like my Father and everyone else, if you tried to defend yourself you are dead.

Question: And endorsed by the government.?

Answer: That's right, the government.. the police stood by to assure that no one defends themselves. But I mean.. you said it.. it was endorsed, but it was just an excuse to destroy.

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Question: Did you have aunts and uncles around or was it just your parents?.

Answer: I think it was only my Mother and Father, again our.. I know I had an Uncle that went to Shanghai back in 1937 or 38. We had two cousins, who one of them.. they were brothers. One of them went to South America, another to Shanghai. And after the war they came to live in Joplin Missouri. And that is whom my Brother and I then lived with when we came to the states 'til we finished high school and I went into the army. My brother worked for a local department store afterwards 'til he was drafted.

Question: What do you think the history books are leaving out about this?.

Answer: That.. and this is why I started talking and giving speeches to Rotaries and schools. In fact tow years ago I gave a talk to senior officers at Ft. Lewis, and I'm scheduled to talk to the 5th Cavalry division at Ft. Lewis in April. And.. because it shouldn't be forgotten. In fact I started to tell you earlier when I took my significant other to Berlin four years ago and they have this old SS headquarters that is now made into a memorial. They show pictures of what it was like and Uhm.. the torture chamber so to speak and what transpired there. And anyhow, to get in there they charge a fee to get in... and I couldn't help myself, when I went in and this girl asked me... I forget, it wasn't too much of an amount but I said... You know when I was twelve years old I went in here and I did not have to pay. She says, Were you in the Hitler Youth?. I said know I was on the other end. And then her boss came out and he asked me if I had been a prisoner and I said yes, when I was twelve years old. He got on a computer and my name was indicated. And he asked me.. incidentally I didn't have to pay to get in. And he asked me if I would be willing to give a tape interview. I said well what do you want it for. He says well.. that there was so much denial going on that we try to tape everyone that had been a prisoner here whether Jewish or Non-Jews. A lot of Germans that again had helped Jews were also put in there and tortured. And so he says that we are trying to get everyone like that, and then we are sending those tapes to high schools to eliminate denials. So I agreed to that interview and all together it was about a five-hour interview.. all in German. But a.. you do have this generation now that regrets what happened.. fortunately. And yet now, Germany does not want to ally themselves with the US right now and uh.. but I.. I'm not a great lover of Bush.. but I will say.. I'm somewhat stubborn and so forth.. but he did say something last night in his speech that I fully agree. That cancer you have to fully stop before it gets to big.. so Saddam Hussein is that problem.

Question: Do you think Hitler was that cancer or was it the country?.

Answer: Yes.. Well Hitler formed that cancer and infected the rest of the nation. You see when he took power Germany was in the midst of a big inflation. Worse then any depression we had here in the US. And the German people as a whole I think are gullible, and he just convinced them, and the majority of the people were convinced Hitler was God.

Question: Do you think it could happen anywhere?.

Answer: Yes, look at the old Yugoslavia, Cambodia.. the Pol Pot regime. And I think if Saddam Hussein has his way he could do it, at least in the Middle East. Well

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I think he tried twelve years ago when he went into Kuwait. If the US had not interfered, Saudi Arabia would have been next.

Question: Same type of protocol.. a uh... a sterilization a cleansing?.

Answer: That's right, look at Afghanistan, the Taliban. They started to cleanse out different religions.. and even made some of them that weren't their religion wear different clothing. The women had to wear different clothing.. like the Star of David we had to wear in Germany.

Question: Excuse me.. I have to change tapes here.

Question: So it's just what occurred to me while I was sitting back here, what I was curious about.. you know, when you were five.

I remember, there was a friend of mine from grade school and he was the first Jewish kid that I knew and when Hanukah and Christmas, the subject came up, you know, for two young kids. We're both sort of going now, now explain this to me. Now how does this work? Because it was so different, you know, it was something alien to me I hadn't been exposed to and so, you know, at five years old, when this starts to occur in Germany, do you remember thinking well, why am I, why are they picking on me?

Answer: Yes, yes, I definitely thought, why, what did I do wrong, what did we do wrong? And probably, not until I was maybe, again, after the Kristallnacht when my parents also explained it to us, that we are kind of a minority race and Hitler is not only bad for the Jews but bad for the country and don't advertise that you're Jewish. And also, it was my brother is a year older and this all happened after the Kristallnacht, he went with some other kids and they were walking to school, Jewish school of course, we had to. And there is a, what's called a river going through Berlin, the Spree.. and some Hitler Youth kids threw my brother in the water; and he, my brother at that time didn't know how to swim and he almost drowned, and it was just a German worker riding by on a bicycle. Now, this wasn't, remember this was in 1938 or '39. It was cold too, in the wintertime; anyhow this guy threw his, jumped off his bicycle and jumped in the river to save my brother. And my Father then, of course, very thankful, made that gentleman, sewed him suits and things like this and couldn't give him enough. Well again, somebody turned him in.. that he took bribes from a Jew, and he was arrested. Now whatever happened afterwards I have no idea. But this is when I realized that first of all we can't celebrate Hanukah and of course there were no exchanges of gifts, or so forth.

Question: So you're Mother and Father, they must have drilled you a little bit and said now look at this, if you're in public don't do this.

Answer: Exactly, and also, in those days and we grew up very quickly. I think at the age of six or seven, I had the maturity of a sixteen year old.

Question: So you knew now like you'd talked about being asked about why you weren't in... you didn't have your Hitler Youth identity... you were able to disseminate, I mean you knew..

Answer: I knew when, I had to drop my pants. I mean, I already knew don't expose yourself. I knew that. And when I was asked to drop my pants, I knew I was done for - I was dead.

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Question: So when most kids were being told to grow up and be truthful and study, you were told to, to, to... that you had to lie and you had to deceive..

Answer: That's right and incidentally if it weren't for my Mother who gave us lessons, you see, from 1943 until we came to the states, 1946, we, well actually from 1941, we didn't go to school until 1946 and when we came to the states we didn't know any English and my brother and I basically took a German - English dictionary and just studied it page by page until one day the teacher in ninth grade, I believe it was, who had to look up words that we used and had to spell it for her because maybe she thought we mispronounced it. And then one day she brought in a whole bunch of comic books and says, Here boys, read this so you speak more like Americans.

Question: So did your Mom school you though?

Answer: Yeah, our Mother gave us lessons, how to read and write, arithmetic... the three R's.

Question: And when (Inaudible) the midwife when she told you your Father had been arrested and you were moved out to the countryside, how did... did you remember that she had to explain how you... what, who you were and..?

Answer: Yes, yes, she went out with us and she introduced us to the neighbors so to speak, the other cabins and these were all either dependents of SS, mostly SS, or the Gestapo, and she, of course everybody knew her and these are friends of her; we are friends and our Father is out on the front line and we're going to remain through the summer here.

Question: So did you have false names or did you?

Answer: Yes, oh no, we had false names.

Question: Do you remember what they were?

Answer: She, yeah, one name was Grossman, another one was Schmitz. And she got us names of Mothers with two boys our age that were killed maybe during an air raid.

Question: So they were real people then?

Answer: That's right. And we took their identity but it had to be changed, when it got..

Question: So that's pretty involved; it wasn't just that she said..

Answer: No, No. It... she had to really work at it.

Question: So she.. That's interesting because, you know, when you talked about she was mad that you left Germany, that you're German that, you know, you would think that well, she saved you just because she was a midwife and it was easy. But it really wasn't an easy thing to do.

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Answer: No, it wasn't. It was not. Now there is, have you ever heard of the famous conductor, German conductor Kurt Furtwängler? and they had a play on him. In fact I gave a talk prior to the play and he is a good example. I mean, he was tried for war crimes and he was acquitted. He helped a lot of Jews from going to concentration camp. But he was a Nazi and the only reason he did it, because he only saved musicians, good talented musicians, and he risked his life to do it.

Question: Did the... what is the name of the mid-wife? What's her name?

Answer: Noeting... Noe, in German its Err Noeting. I even have a picture of her right here because I usually I have a PowerPoint presentation.

Question: Is she, what's.. That's her last name.

Answer: Yes, Gertrude is the first name.

Question: Gertrude.

Answer: Gertrude.

Question: Did you, did she, now did, was she affectionate to you?

Answer: Yes, very much so, very much so.

Question: So that must have been hard when she severed communication with you and you left..

Answer: Oh yes, yes. And, I'm trying to find... I guess I, it's too small; I can't get the picture on here.

Question: Oh well we'll get a copy and look at it.

Answer: I have, I have it on my computer.

Question: See, so she was sort of, of course, you said such a closed society at the time that the only people you really could be open to was Gertrude and your Mother and your brother.

Answer: Okay, well she also had a daughter who she got a job; she was a photographer. And she did, at that time in those days you didn't have color photographs. And she used to color the photographs and she was a member of the Nazi Party and worked for the SS. But she never revealed us. Now I don't think she was that much of a Nazi because she tried to and talked with us and was very friendly, even after we told her Mother that we were goin to the U.S. She still was friends with us. And my brother while he was stationed in Heidelberg went to visit her and she was very, very friendly to him. And she told my brother that Gertrude was a Nazi till the day she died. And still kept it... held it against us for going to live with our enemy. She never got over that.

Question: Did um, you know, when you went back to Germany you talked about the argument you had going on your way to Dachau. I was wondering, I heard this from another veteran that he said that when, cause he goes back to Germany often. He's an American Army Air Corp veteran and he talked about meeting people just looking at them and that he could size people up, people of his age group. That when you're in Germany and you just meet people in the course of your adventures,

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or your traveling, is there some people that you look at and you know that they're SS?

Answer: No, I don't think I do know but I do, I'm very cautious with somebody that's about five or ten years older than I am. I'm seventy now and yet I do not hold any grudge against the younger generation because they weren't even alive yet.

Question: So, do you have a, when you go there, it's almost like you're six years old, given you're cautious. Do you; are you observant of your surroundings when you're in Germany?

Answer: Yes, yes I am.

Question: So there's a little bit of...

Answer: Yes.

Question: You'll never get over that.

Answer: I don't think I ever will. And again I don't think I'll ever get over, completely over, the older generation German. Even though they say they were not a Nazi and the people that tell me that, I say they are lying; they were Nazi. Otherwise they wouldn't be saying it.

Question: Did...Now your Mom and Dad was uh... Mr. Zweig who we just interviewed, his Father was a textile, he owned a textile factory in Danzig and he talked to me about his family life. His Father was a very stern man, a very old school father; and who he called Sir and he barely had a relationship with his Father. Was your Father, was he an old school stern father or was he a, really involved with you?

Answer: He was involved and he'd do anything for us two boys. He was stern when we had to be disciplined but I wished I could have remember him more than I can because we lost him so quickly.

Question: So, you have an affectionate family?

Answer: Yes, very much so.

Question: And your Mother, what's a real fond memory of your Mother?

Answer: She was a very good-looking woman. She, when we were in hiding and so forth under false names she was always concerned for us and there were times when she didn't feel that my brother or I should go out when it was maybe my turn or my brother's turn she'd go, sometimes there sixth sense or whatever you want to call it.

Question: Your turn to go for what?

Answer: To, maybe to go to the city for ration cards or buy groceries.

Question: So, she or her Mother's instincts said you might be in danger, she would..

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Answer: Uh huh, uh huh. In fact the day I was caught she didn't want me to go. She wanted to go. You know how Mothers are sometimes. No, we were a very close family. We, there was one other, I guess you could say it, a step-brother, my Mother was married before and had a child from a previous marriage, and when we had to live in that apartment building. And I still remember that, it had a spiral staircase which is, some of the old apartments in Germany even today, they still

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have these spiral staircases go up to maybe the fifth or sixth level of the floor and Klaus that was his name, he was... the SS went to pick him up to send him to a concentration camp. This goes back in the early, when they started picking numbers and taking people to concentration camps and he knew the SS was going up to get him and he went right in the center of the staircase head first, dove down to commit suicide rather than go into a concentration camp.

Question: Is that where you lived also?

Answer: Yes, and my Father and him didn't get along, of course. That was not my Father's child.

Question: Did your... So you really have a very vivid memory, I mean, you, you, your, you have, you notice details it seems like whereabouts??

Answer: Yes.

Question: So is that because of the trauma or is that just that, are you a detail person?

Answer: I am a very detailed person.

Question: Do you ask lots of questions always?

Answer: Yes. I am in some respect I'm not; in other respects I'm very detailed. When it comes to facts and figures I am very detailed.

Question: Now and sometimes there's things that trigger memories in me... Fall, cold fall days or burning leaves or different smells, you know. Are there those types, do you remember things like that or do things that trigger memories?

Answer: No, sometimes certain things trigger memories, just like I say, World Trade demonstration. That immediately, it triggered my memory of what happened at Kristallnacht

Question: Do you - it could've been like flashback almost?

Answer: Yes, it was, really. When I saw those guys picking up those garbage cans, I happened to be at the Crown Plaza Hotel here in Sea., on Fifth Avenue or Sixth Avenue. And they just destroyed, started to wreck automobiles, key 'em, and I thought, that's just like hoodlums that I remember as a child.

Question: Was there, was there, the first reaction, was there fear?

Answer: No, I didn't have no fear, not really.

Question: Did your... your Mom, do you remember, this is really prying, don't answer, but do you remember even like the smell of your Mom when you, when she held you or.. I mean?

Answer: No, that I do not.

Question: Was it because she was taken at such a young age in your life?

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Answer: I think so.

Question: Does, your Mother, when you were taken, your Mother must have been distraught when you didn't come back.

Answer: Oh yes.

Question: She wasn't with you when..

Answer: No, no, no and it was... But we always whenever like I say whether my Mother or my brother, I went, we always had a meeting point. They.. We'll always meet on Am Anhalter Bahnhof at that place, and of course, while I wasn't there, my Mother would go there every day to see if I'd be there. And this one day there I showed up in a Hitler Youth uniform.

Question: So that was the safe, that was the fallback, that if you disappear, I will wait for you here.

Answer: That's right, we always, or my brother, you know, wherever, that was our meeting point.

Question: Did you, did you wait for your Mom when she disappeared?

Answer: She always came back on time. Oh no, when she disappeared at the end of the war... No, because, the next day, my brother and I were down in the subway station. She didn't come up and at the, but we realized she hasn't come back. Nobody could go upstairs anymore to get water so we thought, well she couldn't get back down. I had to go in a different part of the subway station. And of course, then all of a sudden, two Russian soldiers with Tommy guns came down and everyone just clapped, and there a few German soldiers there and they threw down their weapons and raised their arms and that was the end of the war for us there.

Question: Did you... When you came walking up in that Hitler Youth uniform, did it take your Mom a second to realize it was you?

Answer: Yes it did. She wasn't sure.

Question: Was she exuberant when she saw you, do you remember the reunion?

Answer: Oh, I'm sure... I don't remember. I was just so glad to see her and she was so glad to see me. I really don't, I know she was exuberant, you know, but how her feelings were and mine, I can't, really don't remember that.

Question: Does it.. it seems like such an odd situation because here you disappear but she had no one to turn to say my son's gone.

Answer: No, my brother didn't even and I never my brother was a little bit different; he doesn't remember much and until I showed him, well he didn't realize that I was in Dachau until after the war and the Russian government made all concentration camp survivors, I mean, made the Germans government now, that temporary government, that were concentration camp survivors, and somehow they knew I was one of them. And they gave us an ID because to go to a store to buy a

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loaf of bread there were so many lines you may have to stay over night until a new supply of bread was baked and with this ID, I have a copy of it with me, with this ID I could go in front of the line. Just held out this line it had the logo of all the concentration camps on it and even we could go, then go later on go in first class in the trains, but my brother didn't realize that until I received that ID card that I was in a concentration camp.

Question: That was the East German government did that, is that who did that?

Answer: No, at that time it was still one Germany.

Question: Oh, just one Germany?

Answer: It was after the war in 1945.

Question: Oh, and things were, there still was a big shortages then?

Answer: Oh, of everything, even in '46.

Question: Did... The way your Mother and Father involved were this... You know, for us growing up in this country most all children in the world hopefully, you know, my Mother when she passed away we took her ashes out to the ocean where she wanted to be; and we all were there and we got to say goodbye. And with you and your Mother and Father, have you ever felt like you're able to say goodbye, I mean?

Answer: No, that's the thing. I wished and again not until I received some of these documents, five years ago, four years ago, from Germany, I didn't really know for sure what happened to 'em.

Question: Cause what do you say, Kaddish Is that, is that what you call it?

Answer: Which?

Question: Isn't it, what is it, what do they say if you say kaddish (Cadish) or Kaddish (cadeesh) Is...?

Answer: Oh, Kaddish. (Cod-ish)

Question: Kaddish?

Answer: Kaddish, which I never did. I'm Jewish but I'm not religious. Even though, neither is my brother, even though my brother and I attended the very first New Year services at the synagogue in Berlin, that was the only one that wasn't burned down completely which was rebuilt by Jewish, German and Russian soldiers right after the war when, after Berlin was divided. In fact this one soldier helped us come to the states, a Jewish-American soldier, very orthodox. But, we were the first two boys that were Bar Mitzvah'd in Berlin.

Question: Are you, you're not, you don't attend synagogue regularly or..

Answer: No.

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Question: Did... do you think that's because of your experience of what happened or...such..

Answer: Yes, I'm sure it is. Of what I have seen, my brother too, and you know, you say if there's, there's a God, I believe in God; but I don't believe that God can control your life and will keep you from getting in trouble and so forth or will, you know, that's up to the human being. And I just don't believe in that. I believe there's a God; otherwise we wouldn't be on this world but we are still on this world, while we are on this earth, we have to look out for ourselves. If there were a God, God wouldn't permit what has happened and is still happening today around the world. So I can't, and you will find very few holocaust survivors like me who are very religious. I know... well, in 1999 I went to the Holocaust Survivors' Convention. We have one every year. I went to the one in Prague. And in Prague I was asked if I could put this conference on in Seattle. I do, I'm involved in a lot of different organizations, have put on lots of things. And so I chaired the Holocaust Convention here in Seattle and there were, we had 300 people for dinner and the ones that wanted kosher meals, they had to let, we had to order special kosher meals. There were maybe a dozen people that asked for kosher meals, but only three of them actually accepted the kosher meals because they saw the regular food was so much better. So you know out of 300, three people actually ate kosher meals.

Question: So that's what it's...

Answer: Doesn't that tell you something?

Question: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, you know, it's like, talking to Mr. Zweig, who we just interviewed, it's the same way. He doesn't attend synagogue on a regular basis at all.

Answer: I don't even belong to a synagogue.

Question: Yeah, see, I think he really does and he just shows up at the one in Olympia when he wants to which is very rarely.

Answer: No, I gave a talk to one of the synagogues in Olympia three or four years ago. But my brother he actually calls himself a Unitarian. Well, after he retired from the Army he worked for Douglas Lockheed and was stationed in London. But he made many trips to Saudi Arabia because he hired people for Saudi for Lockheed in Saudi so he made many trips and as a Jew he couldn't go there. So he called himself a Unitarian.

Question: So some things don't change, huh?

Answer: That's right.

Question: Today, in the, the way things are in the world, you know, after September 11, there was a lot of backlash on Muslims in this world. Did you, how did you feel about that because I know that, you know, in Palestine and the issues there. That you know, some of my Jewish friends they have, they are very one way about it. They don't like Muslims. But then other ones I've talked to, they feel they sort of felt a, sort of a common bond with what was starting to happen here cause we were starting to say you know we gotta keep these people separate.

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Answer: No, I, first of all, I detest prejudice, even though like I say I'm prejudice towards the older German that, especially that I know were Nazis. Those I do have a prejudice and I'll never get over it. But everyone else, I detest it. Whether they are Muslim or what you are, what have you, and just because there is a small group that did that, doesn't mean all the Muslims would do the same. In fact, the true Muslim religion is peace, being peaceful, so I have no animosity toward them. As far as Palestine, you know, the Palestinians, well the Arabs themselves didn't want 'em in their own country and, but what has happened, what is happening in Israel, in Palestine, or whatever you want to call it, it's the same thing that happened in Germany. You see, even before Hitler became into power, he already started brainwashing the younger kids, the fives, the six-year-olds, but by 1940 they weren't six-year-old anymore. They were teenagers or young adults and of course they grew up to hate Jews. And this is what's happening in the... the Saudis, they don't teach Judaism, you know, they tell you well the Jews don't belong in Israel; that is Palestinian.

Question: So they don't teach tolerance....They..?

Answer: They don't. And the Palestinians, the younger ones, back in 1948, they already started teaching the Jews overtook our country; we have to get 'em out.

Question: They, so you sort of see a re-emergence of hatred, do you?

Answer: Right, well, you asked me earlier, could it happen again? I said yes, and you see it right there.

Question: Do you, you know, we were fortunate in a way that my Mom was 73 years old when she died you know, and even though I personally was so similar to my Mom, we used to argue a lot, you know, but in reality I think I probably was the closest child to her and so I, you know, I think of her often like, you know, she is really there for me even today when she's gone. Does losing your Mother so violently and so early in your life... is she sorta locked there in your life at that, the way she was.

Answer: Yes, pretty much so. I don't, you know I really never knew her. You know I was young when I lost her.

Question: Do you, is there a grave, is there a marker somewhere in the world for your Mom?

Answer: No.

Question: Neither for your Dad?

Answer: No.

Question: Is that a hard thing?

Answer: Well, I had it when I went to the convention in Prague. They had special tours to Auschwitz. But I can't go there. Now I visited Dachau. I visited the SS Headquarters because I was there but Auschwitz, I've lost so much of my family there, so many of them, that I can't visit there. There's one other place though that

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I've been to that I cannot go through. Have you ever been to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.? Well, if you were to go there it's different stories and there's one level, I think it's the third floor, where they have one of those cattle cars. And you have to go in one and come out on the other side to get through or you have to go clear around, and I have been to the Holocaust Museum many, many times. I cannot get myself to go through that train. I mean, I go through there and I can see the whole thing over again, the people, the dead people, the smell, I can actually smell, I mean, it was packed like you pack cattle or chicken and just think - no sanitation.

Question: So sixty years later, it's...

Answer: Yeah, I cannot go through there.

Question: Is there a lot of memories like that when you...

Answer: Fortunately, not a lot. I will say I had for two days thereafter I had nightmares when I took my girlfriend through the SS Headquarters in Berlin. I did have nightmares but they do go away.

Question: When you were growing up din... when you were growing up in this really bizarre situation in Germany, having to hide and to lie about who you were, you know, most kids would be reading cowboy books and thinking about being cowboys or something... Did you, did you, what did you think about, did you have, did you think you had a future or did ya..?

Answer: We never gave that a thought I think, at, at least me. I shouldn't even talk for my brother on that. I just thought survival and waiting for the war to be over and our Father to come back home. I thought of that, and playing, that was just out of the question. And of course like when we lived out at that summer home we had our school bags and we, every morning, the kids that were there went to school. Well we left right around the same time or maybe a little bit behind, but we never went to school. We left then and go into the forest and picking mushrooms, that we, we lived on mushrooms quite a bit; that was our main meal. And my brother and I both, young as we were we knew every edible mushroom.

Question: So you were play-acting?

Answer: That's right and then when it was time to go home, we didn't have watches, but you could tell in the lights and so forth; and then we'd stay at the edge of the forest and see if the kids were slowly coming back home. Fortunately, people went to different schools and then we'd go mix in, but we hardly ever played. And most of the kids over there didn't really play much.

Question: Huh, why was that?

Answer: I don't know.

Question: Did you have moments of joy in that period, those years or..?

Answer: Very little, I don't think we smiled much. You grew up fast.

Question: What about birthdays, so what..?

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Answer: What were those? Occasionally, yes, Mrs. Noeting she'd bring us some small thing, maybe a piece of clothing, new pair of socks if she had it, or she'd bring some pastry.

Question: Things were pretty bad in Germany anyway then...

Answer: Yes, yes, but she had more than the average German.

Question: Did you think that... you know, you talked about the conditions that allowed for Hitler looking bad and all, I think government, I think our government especially learned a lot between the wars about how to deal with defeat; but Germany was sort of destined for, for bad things because of the Treaty of Versailles don't you think. I mean 'cause don't you think it was so punitive that it, cause didn't it drive Germany into a real deep depression?

Answer: Oh, yes.

Question: Yeah, and then that was it, that was sort of the, wasn't that sort of the fuel for allowing something, a disease like this to grow?

Answer: Oh yes.

Question: Yeah, 'cause he prayed on, he prayed on hard times and bad luck, isn't that..?

Answer: Uh huh, that's right.

Question: So the way that we handled things afterwards, who do you give credit for the successful peace that we waged after World War II, is it us or the Russians or the..?

Answer: No, definitely not the Russians, no, no. I think the U.S. and Great Britain. I definitely do. But not the French or the Russians. Of course, I don't trust the French.

Question: Why don't you trust the French?

Answer: Well, I do know of a lot of Jewish survivors that were turned in by the French that they thought were friends.

Question: So there was a lot of anti-Semitism?

Answer: Yeah, and still is today. I was in Paris two years ago and I can feel the anti-Semitism there.

Question: Do you, you don't go to synagogue but then when you travel you're sort of careful about letting people know that you're German but do you or that you speak German, but are you careful about letting them know that you're a Jew?

Answer: Uh, no, I let them know.

Question: So that you don't have a ..

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Answer: No, but again I, I feel I can handle myself if somebody wants to get violent with me.

Question: So you, if someone, if a Frenchman's going to be a bigot, that's fine.

Answer: Uh huh. Let them be, I can't, I can't and don't have any intentions of changing his life as long as he leaves me alone and doesn't bother others like me.

Question: And, um, you know after, now you were in Berlin, you were right in Berlin through the end of the war, and right after?

Answer: Yes, yes.

Question: In the last days of... Berlin was devastated by our bombing wasn't it?

Answer: Oh yes, but if it hadn't been for bombing, I know I wouldn't be alive not just Dachau, just surviving there because that's how we received false ID; and I've had many a times I've met an old pilot since I am an aviations enthusiast and an aircraft owner and pilot I meet other pilots that have flown bombing missions throughout Germany and I tell them I was there during the war. Oh I'm sorry that we bombed you. I say, Hey, don't feel sorry. I'm glad you did.

Question: That's interesting, I think about that that it was, that because of that death you get an identification.

Answer: That's right.

Answer: Did, um, you know, the kids going to school, did they, you know, it was sort of like one hand didn't know what the other was doing, where you'd leave the school and but you might be going to a different school, do you think the children were aware that, do you think anybody ever, anybody that they were, they were sort of suspected that?

Answer: No, no, I'm positive, they never did.

Question: You know, you don't think you would not have survived if they had suspected?

Answer: I think we would have been in trouble, yes. And again, you see the main reason we didn't go to the school because of physical education that was required; then everyone had to take a bath afterwards, that would have given us away.

Question: Did um, the last final week of... when things really, really were at the end, was it, Berlin was 24 hours a day of the Russians were coming and shelling and bombing and so you, were you in the bunker for a long time?

Answer: Well, I would say from almost immediately after I got back to Berlin, we no longer stayed in any house. We were pretty much living in the subway tunnel and again I wished I had more idea of the time involved; but I think probably the last six or eight weeks we were living out of the subway tunnel which is Am Anhalter Bahnhof which is no longer a train station but they still kept it as a train station.

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Question: Does the uh, so the tunnel, is it still there, the subway tunnel?

Answer: I believe it is.

Question: Does, what is it, we've talked to a few different people, I've talked to some German women that were civilians, German civilians, but none of them has ever described what it was like to be in the receiving end. What, what's it, what's it like in a subway tunnel? What is it like there? What happens? What does it smell like and what do people do and what do you hear as bombs are dropping down below ground like that?

Answer: Well, the subway tunnel again I think this is why so many Germans chose Anhalter Bahnhof as being the subway tunnel because it was deeper down and it was pretty much known it would be bomb proof. There were, we were at another subway tunnel first but the Germans, before the Russians came in there, this was probably the day the Russians or day before that the Russians liberated or went into Berlin, a whole bunch of the Germans set up and flooded some of the subway tunnels. And we had to go out and then walk in between shellings and you saw dead soldiers and Germans and all throughout dead bodies. And when then went into Anhalter Bahnhof and down there you could hardly hear, you couldn't hear any shelling once we were in the Anhalter Bahnhof.

Question: Were lots of people down there?

Answer: Oh yes, everywhere.. they had the trains in there and people were sitting or lying on the floor because the seats were all taken.

Question: So was it just quiet or were people tense or..?

Answer: Tense, quiet, then were some, I remember some real fanatics that said well Hitler has a secret weapon and he'll be using it pretty soon and chase them all out.

Question: So there was lots of conversation. People knew it was the end, right?

Answer: Oh yes, and most of the women were knitting and of course there were no guys, men there. In fact I even remember the German officers and I'm pretty sure they were SS coming down and any men, they made them go upstairs and even if they were foreigners, in other words, not Germans, and some of them were proudly enemy aliens they gave them weapons and tell them shoot the Russians and then they shot the Germans. I mean, I know that happened.

Question: Did they try, did your Mom worry about you being taken upstairs?

Answer: No, no, we were too young then. And again, both of us looked, my brother and I looked very young. Well, I still had to show ID when I was thirty years old to buy a beer in a tavern.

Question: Did the, when the Russians ended up coming in, they.. it was pretty devastating when the Russians showed up, wasn't it? I mean, the Russians were pretty, were pretty mad when they showed up.

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Answer: Well, to us kids, they treated us good.

Question: They did?

Answer: And again though, remember I was twelve years old and I saw the Russians raping women; I didn't know what that was at the time but I saw them tearing off the clothes in daylight and tops, places in Berlin and just raping them right in the middle of the street. And that's what they did and then some of the younger women would dress themselves up like real ugly old women but the Russian soldiers got wise to that and..

Question: Did they also, you said that they, they actually they, they put you in a truck?

Answer: Yes, uh huh.

Question: What was the purpose of..??

Answer: To raise us as Russians. You see, my brother and I when they came in, this is before the Allies went into Berlin and we showed them; we knew Berlin so well and we showed them how to go from point A to point B; and then they maybe they picked up other Russian soldiers and then they put us in the back of the truck and says we're gonna go to Russia with them. And that's when we jumped out.

Question: Sort of adopted you, huh?

Answer: Uh huh.

Question: You didn't speak any Russian?

Answer: We learned Russian, both my brother and I were able to speak enough to really communicate in Russian, but.. and the same thing, some of the Russians were really Polish and but Polish and Russian is very similar; and I used to be able to communicate in Russian and Polish but I've forgotten it.

Question: Did, now you were there for about a year, were you before you emigrated or?

Answer: Well, the war was over I think in May 1945; and we came to the U.S. in September 1946.

Question: Did, now you were, you were orphans?

Answer: Yes, incidentally, we lived with the Russians until Berlin was divided; and then we lived with this midwife.

Question: So she is still, was part of your life then?

Answer: Oh yes, not until we told her, which was about a month before, well we lived for awhile, after the war the British had a recuperation camp for survivors, not just concentration camp survivors, also kids that lived in hiding like us and so forth. And they had a camp; they took over an old U.S., not U.S., German Army Camp in Lüneburg about a three-hour drive out of Berlin. And they invited us for

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recuperation; they gave us physical exams and fed us back because every one of us was way underweight. And we were there for, we were supposed to have been there for ninety days, but we were there for only one week because just before we went to that camp we applied through this one American soldier that got us the visa, helped us get the visa, but that's quite another story. You can even read that on the web site. When I went to the University, to the Holocaust Convention in Prague, we had workshops and you'd give your story, how you survived during the war. And while I was giving my story in this room this lady next to me, she said, Were you in Lüneburg.. I said, Yes. Well you, and you, you have a brother; you were both in Lüneburg.. I said, Yes. And she went hysterical; I mean she just lost her mind. And what happened is she thought both my brother and I were, were dead. And again like I say, this Lüneburg should have been three or four weeks but an American soldier, or two American soldiers came and got us out of there; they said we had visas to come to the U.S. And we were supposed to have come to the U.S. via military flight, but it was filled up with other soldiers on emergency leave and we came via ship. Well, that flight we supposed to have been on crashed and everyone aboard was killed and in Lüneburg the rumor came that we were on that flight and we were killed. And she, all these fifty-some years later she thought we were dead and there we were. But anyhow it was when we came back here and that's when we told, the first time we told this midwife that we were going to the U.S.; and she just completely disowned us then.

Question: Did that hurt you when she did that?

Answer: Yes, yes, yes, it did.

Question: Did you tell.. did you discuss that with her daughter?

Answer: Yes, and her daughter says, well, she's old; you have to forgive her and she's..

Question: So it was more, it was more she was just stubborn

Answer: Right, and uh huh, we just said okay. So anyhow when we came to the States we wrote to her and her daughter, I think she, she wrote back once or twice without Mother knowing about it. Incidentally, it was a step-daughter that she had adopted.

Question: Uh huh, so she was really, you were almost like her children then..

Answer: That's right.

Question: Wow. Did.. now you were... Berlin fell; the Americans did not come into Berlin because of the agreement with Stalin.

Answer: Yes, that is one thing that a lot of Germans were surprised; they expected Americans to come into Berlin.

Question: But they stopped at the Rhine is that where..

Answer: I believe so.

Question: And that was an agreement between Truman and Stalin.

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Answer: Uh huh.

Question: Yeah. Did now, when was it that they partitioned the city?

Answer: You know, I don't remember when. It must have been the end of '45. Maybe three or four months after the Russians were in.

Question: So did you, did you sort of seek out Americans at that point?

Answer: Yes, I can tell you that story, when the Americans went into Berlin then, we of course knew where Berlin was and we knew in that section which was not too far. In fact, we ended up living in the American section where the midwife had her apartment or condominium; and then we went to the Army camp. Of course they had a guard up front who didn't speak German and we didn't know English, but we were trying to talk it, we, my brother and I; and then a Army truck came by and he stopped and this driver listened and listened and finally he spoke to us in German. And he says, he must have somehow gathered that, and he says.. You're Jewish and you lived here all through the war? We said, Yes; and so he told the guard let us in and we rode in the truck to his part of the camp. He was a very orthodox Jew, and he's the one, one of the people that helped rebuild that synagogue so it can be kept for services. And that's where he forced us to study more Hebrew so we can be Bar Mitzvah. I have, there, there was a British magazine, the British, a British reporter and their magazine took pictures of the first services, New Year services at this synagogue. I have that magazine, the original magazine with my brother's and my picture in it. I have it with me if you'd like to see it.

Question: Did you, now, now that was for instrumental, you meeting this man for..

Answer: Yes, and we actually went to visit him. In fact, I made a special trip to New Jersey once back in the '60's to visit him. I've lost track of him because he moved; he was in Newark, New Jersey and then all of a sudden the mail was returned; and I haven't been able to find him and I'm, I would say he's about ten years older than I am, so if he were still alive he'd be about eighty years old.

Question: So did Gertrude, did she at that point did she, was she raising you like a Mom?

Answer: I would say Yes.

Question: but were you sort of left to your own devices about how you were..?

Answer: Yeah, my brother and I, neither, neither one of us told her that we were going to try and go to the U.S. We wanted to get out of Germany. We would've even gone to Israel at that time, still Palestine. But our goal was to come to the U.S. We were raised that way.

Question: Uh huh, 'Cause your Father was American.

Answer: Right.

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Question: Was the, so you went to this base because you had a goal. That's why you went there.

Answer: That's right. We went there with a mission.

Question: So how did that all happen? How did you get your papers? How'd you convince anybody to help you?

Answer: This soldier... he arranged it all; and he took us to the Jewish Chaplain at the camp and, and then through there's a, which is still in operation today, the Joint Distribution Committee, JDC, in New York. And they're the ones that sponsored and found foster parents, and so forth. And once that was in order, we were able to go to the U.S. And what a sight it was arriving by ship and seeing the statue of Liberty.

Question: You remember that huh?

Answer: Oh Yes.

Question: Was this in the morning that you arrived or?

Answer: No, it was daytime; I don't know if it was morning or afternoon but it was daylight.

Question: So you and your brother together of course?

Answer: Uh huh.

Question: So did you shed tears over that?

Answer: Not really. Just happiness.

Question: Happiness. So was that the first real happiness you felt for years, you think?

Answer: Yes... well happiness was to be free. And happiness was even at the recuperation camp.

Question: To be rid of Germany.

Answer: Uh huh. And not being afraid to say you're Jewish.

Question: So did you, you not only wanted to come here but you wanted to erase Germany from your lives and German...(Inaudible)

Answer: Yes, and once my brother and I was somewhat fluent in English, not completely, we wouldn't even speak German, and my brother's still that way. He was stationed in Heidelberg for three years and never mixed with the Germans. And he completely left, lost his German.

Question: Did the, now it's the JDC, the Joint Distribution..

Answer: Committee.

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Question: So they, they also helped other Germans.

Answer: Oh Yes. And they are still helping the needy Jews and so forth.

Question: And did.. now was it relatives you came here to?

Answer: Well, we did, we knew, we thought they were uncles. We knew we had two relatives here, brothers, but we didn't even know what state. And there is a newspaper published in New York, published in German, that's still being published. In fact, it's on the web site, the Aufbauen, The Rebuild. And the Joint Distribution Committee says okay we'll put an ad in the Aufbauen since you say your uncles, at that time we still thought they were uncles, came from Germany so maybe they read that paper. And there, in those days, there were pages and pages of names looking for relatives. And though my cousin never subscribed to that paper or read it, friends of theirs in St. Louis, Missouri saw the name and called them. And that's how we ended up in Missouri.

Question: Did you ever, had you ever met him before?

Answer: Oh Yes. They were from Breslau which is now Wroclaw and this one cousin had his, pretty well to do, and he had his car and he used to drive to Berlin and visit with us always bring us toys and we had taken the train and visited him when... That goes back to 1939-1940 when Jews could still travel at, unlimited times. And so we knew them but we thought they were uncles but turned out to be kids from my Father's, of my Father's brother, cousins on Father's side.

Question: Is that a, with all, there's a couple different questions but one, you sort of, after the war you sort, you sort of assembled your family and your life from, from what was left in the devastation. I mean, it's like, was that your only family that you had was?

Answer: The two cousins, right, and my brother and I. We're the only ones in our family that really survived.

Question: So you became sort of a, would you say you all most came together as, as family then?

Answer: Right, my brother, these were two brothers and the first two years in the U.S. we lived in Kansas City because there were, there was no woman in the household. And they lived at the YMCA in Joplin, Missouri; and we lived with foster parents for the first two years. But then they had an aunt who was in Palestine, and they brought her over here from Palestine and now they're, and then they bought a house, and now they're with a woman in the family and that's when the Social Services would let us live with our cousins. And we went two years in school in Kansas City and then finished high school in Joplin. (Oh, you got this for me? Good, thank you - I just getting very dry)

Question: (Just pop that clear top off)

Answer: (There we go)

Question: (And you pop the white one up)

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Answer: (Right)

Question: The, see what else I have to ask here. There's some other question, but since I'm 48 years old I can't remember anything you know.

Answer: I have an excuse; I say senior moment.

Question: Karl and I we interview all these people - we interviewed a woman that was 96 years old and her memory was better than mine.

Answer: You know something, I don't know if you know Governor Albert D. Roselini.

Question: I know of him.

Answer: Well he's a very close friend of mine for the last thirty years. I have lunch with him about twice a month. I had lunch with him on Wednesday. And anyhow, that guy just turned 93 on January 21; he still drives his car every day, goes to his office every day and his memory is still surprisingly well.

Question: Amazing.

Answer: I admire that guy. I say as long as he can work, I can work.

Question: You know I have a question. I have a friend of mine that was emigrated as a child from Germany. Because, when the war was over, there was nothing; I mean, there was a lack of food; there was a lack of metals, there was a lack of paper; there was a lack of... And her, all of her brothers and sisters finally emigrated because their parents couldn't provide for their kids. And so yeah, I think for children today they think well the war ended and everything was fine; but it really wasn't fine was it?

Answer: No, there was a lot of starvation after the war, especially in Berlin. And again, this is where my brother and I had it. The Russian soldiers treated us well.

Question: So they helped you.

Answer: They gave us food; we ate the regular U.S. Army, I mean, the Russian Army food, we lived with the Russians and I cannot complain; but the rest of the Germans, they didn't treat so well. And to be honest with you, I didn't feel sorry for them, for the Germans.

Question: There was lots of people that were... you, you talked about the, the newspaper and the ads, that in Germany itself there was lots of people with... looking for people, wasn't there, I mean...

Answer: Oh Yes.

Question: Because it wasn't just, it wasn't even just Jews, but it was Jews and Germans and..

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Answer: Uh huh.

Question: `Cause there were lots of people just never came home.

Answer: Oh Yes, that's right.

Question: So that was sort of hard; you're fortunate that you did have relatives here and you put together a family.

Answer: Yes.

Question: So did you sort of that became your family then; they became your uncles, did they or?

Answer: No, they were cousins and they were cousins and we called them by their first name.

Question: Okay.

Answer: We didn't say Uncle Felix or Uncle Alfred.

Question: Oh, okay, yeah. Oh boy, I had another question about that. Yeah, I think the base thing we need though is just that your, your parents, it's just hard for, it's hard, you know, that they're, you're, they're there and then they're gone.

Answer: That's right.

Question: Just someone decides and you're gone. "Cause I don't know if people understand, that, young people, to understand what power people can have over your lives.

Answer: It can, right. And again, it's, you saw then Germany of course and you saw it in other countries here, again, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq. And I don't believe the people in Iran are that free. Cuba, I think they are somewhat free but they are still, they don't dare talk against the government; they do not have freedom of speech.

Question: So, is freedom of religion a big thing?

Answer: For me it isn't but for, in a lot of countries I believe it is - the old Soviet Union..

Question: So our Bill of Rights is a big thing?

Answer: Yes it is.

Question: So do you think that, do you have a... because you've seen life from both sides and then you desired to be an American, do you sometimes meet kids in schools or around and think, you don't understand what it is, you don't..

Answer: I have found that out and I do speak at school and I do, I do let the kids know how lucky they are to be in a country like this. It may not be perfect, but nothing in life is perfect. It's still better than any place else. And again, I travel a

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lot, to a lot of other countries and every time I come here, this is still heaven. Now, I fell in love with Seattle when I came from Missouri stationed at Ft. Lewis on my way to Korea. And I just fell in love with it and I said if I make it back alive from Korea, this will be home. I've never regretted living here since 1954.

Question: So you have your American Flag in your lapel.

Answer: That's right.

Question: When you go to a ball game and they play the national anthem and you see the flag does it, does it sort of choke you up?

Answer: It doesn't choke me up but I'm proud to be there and salute that flag. I'm proud to have served in the U.S. Army. I am a Disabled Veteran and if I were younger or even today, if they would take me, I would go back in. And my brother would do the same.

Question: You know something you were talking about earlier about the differences of the way Jews were treated in the axis countries, about how sporadic the treatment was and, 'cause you had a relative that was in Shanghai, correct?

Answer: Right.

Question: And you were saying how some were picked up and some weren't and...so you have no idea of why that was.

Answer: No, I wished I could have an answer for it.

Question: Now who was it that went to Shanghai?

Answer: I had an uncle, a dentist.

Question: Was he escaping the Germans or?

Answer: Yeah, well he had enough money and a lot of German Jews, not only from Germany, other parts of Germany, of Europe, they went, that couldn't come to the U.S. because the U.S. did not really let enough people in - they kind of became an isolationist. And they went to Shanghai and there actually there were the Japanese Counsel General in Lithuania. Saki... Now I've got a senior moment... Sakihara... no. Anyhow a book was written about him and he saved many, many Jews.

Question: Well he gave them papers right?

Answer: Yes, he gave them... issued visas, even while he was on the train leaving.. his place. And a lot of them went from wherever they left via Siberia and others went through Kobe Japan which is a big port. And a lot of them remained in Cove; I have personally met a few of them.

Question: So is, so, you know, it's really a complicated thing and I think that, you know, like Karl is talking about why we do this because there's a lack of history being taught about World War II where kids don't even know what it is almost. But that as far as the holocaust it's real easy for you to look at it and just say okay this,

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this three-inch square white box... that's the holocaust. And now this big black box - that's World War II; but it's actually, it's more complicated than that, that it's millions of different people, millions of different stories and like you say, that, you know, here this Japanese Counsel General saved, who is allied with the Germans, gave visa that he used to save Jews.

Answer: Uh huh, that's right.

Question: And then here in this country, America, we wanted to issue, in fact, there was a real famous case, one of a ship that we...

Answer: The St. Louis that we turned back, that Cuba wouldn't let in; they were heading for Cuba and Cuba wouldn't let them in.

Question: Uh huh.

Answer: And they went to New York and Roosevelt wouldn't let them in. And so they had to go back to Germany and most of them ended up in a concentration camp and died there. A few of them that were left out, I think, in France or some place, but I do know a gentleman in Olympia whose parents were on the St. Louis. He's from Olympia, Danny Kaden

Question: Really, huh. Yeah, that's pretty interesting but you know it's not, it's not, you know, it's sort of a, everybody thinks it's real black and white, good and evil; but it's there's, you know, like here we, here our country itself is guilty of not saving people it could've.

Answer: Oh yes, uh huh.

Question: And then like you say France... it had the Vichy government was pretty wild so...

Answer: That's right.

Question: Well, I want to thank you for our tape here unless Karl's got something he wants to ask.

Answer: Let me...

Question: No, I just stood back here listening and fascinated by... I could probably spend more time if I had time to get over this memory...

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