

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:26,460

2
00:00:26,460 --> 00:00:27,280
Welcome.

3
00:00:27,280 --> 00:00:31,350
I am Joseph Preil,
Co-director of the Oral--

4
00:00:31,350 --> 00:00:33,990
of the Holocaust
Resource Center here

5
00:00:33,990 --> 00:00:37,460
at Kean College of New Jersey.

6
00:00:37,460 --> 00:00:41,310
Today, Friday,
November 20, 1992, we

7
00:00:41,310 --> 00:00:45,660
are indeed privileged to have
with us a very special guest

8
00:00:45,660 --> 00:00:51,450
who will discuss with us his
experiences during World War

9
00:00:51,450 --> 00:00:54,930
II and the Holocaust.

10
00:00:54,930 --> 00:00:58,470
He is Mr Lee Merel,
currently residing

11
00:00:58,470 --> 00:01:00,810
in Westfield, New Jersey.

12
00:01:00,810 --> 00:01:02,550
Mr. Merel, to begin

with, could you

13

00:01:02,550 --> 00:01:05,710

tell us when and
where you were born?

14

00:01:05,710 --> 00:01:13,860

I was born in Berlin,
Germany, on April 7, 1924.

15

00:01:13,860 --> 00:01:17,700

Can you tell us something about
your early years in Berlin?

16

00:01:17,700 --> 00:01:20,820

How long did you live in Berlin?

17

00:01:20,820 --> 00:01:23,910

If my memory serves
me correctly,

18

00:01:23,910 --> 00:01:29,940

we left Berlin when I was
around four or five years old.

19

00:01:29,940 --> 00:01:37,860

I attended a fairly
orthodox Hebrew day school.

20

00:01:37,860 --> 00:01:40,020

My parents were born--

21

00:01:40,020 --> 00:01:43,250

both parents were
born in Poland.

22

00:01:43,250 --> 00:01:47,490

My mother comes from a
very religious background.

23

00:01:47,490 --> 00:01:50,880

And as a matter of
fact, I wore tzitzits

24
00:01:50,880 --> 00:01:53,040
until I was around 13 or 14.

25
00:01:53,040 --> 00:01:55,970

26
00:01:55,970 --> 00:01:58,440
You left Berlin at the
age of four or five?

27
00:01:58,440 --> 00:01:58,940
Yes.

28
00:01:58,940 --> 00:02:00,560
Where did you go?

29
00:02:00,560 --> 00:02:03,590
From Berlin, we went to--

30
00:02:03,590 --> 00:02:05,960
first, we fled to Switzerland.

31
00:02:05,960 --> 00:02:06,980
At age four or five?

32
00:02:06,980 --> 00:02:08,240
Yes.

33
00:02:08,240 --> 00:02:12,650
And then we went to
Palestine, where we lived

34
00:02:12,650 --> 00:02:15,710
for about four or five years.

35
00:02:15,710 --> 00:02:17,840
So you left--

36
00:02:17,840 --> 00:02:18,830
I left Pales--

37
00:02:18,830 --> 00:02:23,150
If you were born in 1924,
you left Berlin in '28, '29?

38
00:02:23,150 --> 00:02:23,900
No, no.

39
00:02:23,900 --> 00:02:25,070
Then I must--

40
00:02:25,070 --> 00:02:27,800
I'm sorry, it's such
a long time ago.

41
00:02:27,800 --> 00:02:32,840
We left Berlin about '34, so
I really must have been older.

42
00:02:32,840 --> 00:02:34,740
Oh, so you were
more like 10 or 11--

43
00:02:34,740 --> 00:02:35,240
Yes.

44
00:02:35,240 --> 00:02:37,310
--at the time.

45
00:02:37,310 --> 00:02:41,840
And then you went to Switzerland
and then quickly to Palestine.

46
00:02:41,840 --> 00:02:42,830
Palestine, right.

47
00:02:42,830 --> 00:02:45,620
So you were in Palestine
before World War II.

48
00:02:45,620 --> 00:02:46,850
Yes.

49

00:02:46,850 --> 00:02:50,330

And from Palestine, come
to the United States?

50

00:02:50,330 --> 00:02:53,180

The day after my bar mitzvah,
we came to the United States.

51

00:02:53,180 --> 00:02:55,670

So you came to the
United States in '37.

52

00:02:55,670 --> 00:02:56,570

About.

53

00:02:56,570 --> 00:02:57,470

OK.

54

00:02:57,470 --> 00:03:00,840

Now let's go back to Berlin.

55

00:03:00,840 --> 00:03:03,110

Although you were very
young at the time, still,

56

00:03:03,110 --> 00:03:05,060

10 years, you can
remember a few things.

57

00:03:05,060 --> 00:03:05,600

I remember.

58

00:03:05,600 --> 00:03:09,590

What do you remember of
your education and life

59

00:03:09,590 --> 00:03:12,320

in the community?

60

00:03:12,320 --> 00:03:15,170

My family was very

Jewish oriented.

61
00:03:15,170 --> 00:03:21,320
It's centered around
the Jewish community.

62
00:03:21,320 --> 00:03:29,100
We had a very large family
which interacted very well.

63
00:03:29,100 --> 00:03:33,860
We had only Jewish friends,
if I remember correctly.

64
00:03:33,860 --> 00:03:36,950
And as I mentioned
before, I attended

65
00:03:36,950 --> 00:03:43,400
a fairly orthodox Jewish
day school called [HEBREW]..

66
00:03:43,400 --> 00:03:47,760
You say that you come from
a fairly large family.

67
00:03:47,760 --> 00:03:48,260
Yes.

68
00:03:48,260 --> 00:03:51,320
How many members of that
family do you recall?

69
00:03:51,320 --> 00:03:53,390
My father had five brothers.

70
00:03:53,390 --> 00:03:54,470
All in Germany?

71
00:03:54,470 --> 00:03:55,700
All in Germany.

72

00:03:55,700 --> 00:03:57,990

That's right, because
his parents came,

73

00:03:57,990 --> 00:03:59,690

so the children
grew up in Germany.

74

00:03:59,690 --> 00:04:01,550

All in Germany.

75

00:04:01,550 --> 00:04:06,830

My mother had four sisters,
four or five sisters.

76

00:04:06,830 --> 00:04:07,700

We had numerous--

77

00:04:07,700 --> 00:04:10,670

So one was a family of boys
and one was a family of girls.

78

00:04:10,670 --> 00:04:11,330

Girls, right.

79

00:04:11,330 --> 00:04:13,940

And we had numerous cousins.

80

00:04:13,940 --> 00:04:17,329

And I remember very clearly
that my mother didn't

81

00:04:17,329 --> 00:04:19,550

want to give me
chicken fat, which I

82

00:04:19,550 --> 00:04:22,160

loved immensely, and gribenes.

83

00:04:22,160 --> 00:04:24,170

And there was my
most favorite aunt.

84

00:04:24,170 --> 00:04:28,910
And whenever we visited her, she
would take me into the kitchen

85

00:04:28,910 --> 00:04:32,480
and quickly give me a sandwich
with chicken fat and gribenes.

86

00:04:32,480 --> 00:04:33,410
OK.

87

00:04:33,410 --> 00:04:38,750
Now, your family, that
is, your parents and--

88

00:04:38,750 --> 00:04:40,400
how many siblings did you have?

89

00:04:40,400 --> 00:04:41,510
I have a sister.

90

00:04:41,510 --> 00:04:42,080
One sister.

91

00:04:42,080 --> 00:04:42,747
One sister, yes.

92

00:04:42,747 --> 00:04:46,160
So your family, your parents,
your sister yourself,

93

00:04:46,160 --> 00:04:49,190
eventually did you
all come to the United

94

00:04:49,190 --> 00:04:50,790
States and all These travels?

95

00:04:50,790 --> 00:04:51,290
No, no.

96

00:04:51,290 --> 00:04:54,800

We went from-- when
we went to Palestine,

97

00:04:54,800 --> 00:04:58,010

my sister at a very
early age-- she was 16--

98

00:04:58,010 --> 00:05:01,730

was introduced to a Iraqi Jew.

99

00:05:01,730 --> 00:05:05,600

And when she was
17, she married him.

100

00:05:05,600 --> 00:05:09,192

And unfortunately, we
had to leave her when

101

00:05:09,192 --> 00:05:10,400

we went to the United States.

102

00:05:10,400 --> 00:05:14,420

She's still living there
with her family now.

103

00:05:14,420 --> 00:05:16,910

You say "unfortunately"
because you came here

104

00:05:16,910 --> 00:05:17,900

and she remained--

105

00:05:17,900 --> 00:05:19,010

There.

106

00:05:19,010 --> 00:05:21,200

I don't know if the
emphasis is on the fact

107

00:05:21,200 --> 00:05:23,210

that she remained there
or that you came here.

108
00:05:23,210 --> 00:05:25,040
No, the emphasis is
on the fact that I

109
00:05:25,040 --> 00:05:27,380
lost a sister
because we now don't

110
00:05:27,380 --> 00:05:30,270
see each other very often.

111
00:05:30,270 --> 00:05:34,700
You're very logical
in that reaction.

112
00:05:34,700 --> 00:05:38,420
Now, so your immediate
family was completely safe.

113
00:05:38,420 --> 00:05:43,910
What happened to the
families of the four

114
00:05:43,910 --> 00:05:45,743
brothers of your father,
the three brothers?

115
00:05:45,743 --> 00:05:46,452
Everybody's dead.

116
00:05:46,452 --> 00:05:47,030
Really?

117
00:05:47,030 --> 00:05:49,220
Everybody's dead.

118
00:05:49,220 --> 00:05:51,620
From being in Germany.

119
00:05:51,620 --> 00:05:52,700
No.

120

00:05:52,700 --> 00:05:58,080

Either from being in Germany, or
they were three brothers here,

121

00:05:58,080 --> 00:06:01,340

including my father, and
they're all dead now also.

122

00:06:01,340 --> 00:06:03,050

Of natural causes.

123

00:06:03,050 --> 00:06:04,190

In this country, yes.

124

00:06:04,190 --> 00:06:09,770

But many of my family
members, many of my cousins,

125

00:06:09,770 --> 00:06:13,520

aunts, they all died
in the Holocaust.

126

00:06:13,520 --> 00:06:16,370

You don't know how it happened,
you just know that they died--

127

00:06:16,370 --> 00:06:17,150

Yes.

128

00:06:17,150 --> 00:06:18,140

--or were killed.

129

00:06:18,140 --> 00:06:19,170

Yes.

130

00:06:19,170 --> 00:06:21,500

Do you have any idea how
many members of the family

131

00:06:21,500 --> 00:06:23,450

you're talking about?

132
00:06:23,450 --> 00:06:27,710
Oh, I would guess an
estimate of maybe 20.

133
00:06:27,710 --> 00:06:29,630
About 20 members
of the family were

134
00:06:29,630 --> 00:06:31,770
killed because they did
not get out of Germany.

135
00:06:31,770 --> 00:06:32,270
Exactly.

136
00:06:32,270 --> 00:06:34,190
And those who did
get out of Germany

137
00:06:34,190 --> 00:06:36,350
represent how many individuals?

138
00:06:36,350 --> 00:06:39,370
Four in your family.

139
00:06:39,370 --> 00:06:46,070
Four, seven, I would say perhaps
12, 12, 15, no more than 15.

140
00:06:46,070 --> 00:06:46,570
All right.

141
00:06:46,570 --> 00:06:49,450
12 or 15 were saved
because they left Germany.

142
00:06:49,450 --> 00:06:50,140
Yes.

143
00:06:50,140 --> 00:06:54,040
And 20 perished because

they remained in Germany.

144

00:06:54,040 --> 00:07:01,000

Now, why did your family--

145

00:07:01,000 --> 00:07:05,770

obviously, I can imagine why,
but I have to hear it from you.

146

00:07:05,770 --> 00:07:12,100

Why did your family leave
Germany in the middle '30s?

147

00:07:12,100 --> 00:07:14,920

About '34 or '35, I
think you said, 1935.

148

00:07:14,920 --> 00:07:15,820

Right.

149

00:07:15,820 --> 00:07:21,670

My dad owned a
cardboard factory in--

150

00:07:21,670 --> 00:07:25,450

a cardboard box
factory, I'm sorry.

151

00:07:25,450 --> 00:07:31,630

And he came home one day and
told us about terrible problems

152

00:07:31,630 --> 00:07:37,000

that he had with one of his
cardboard suppliers who was

153

00:07:37,000 --> 00:07:41,680

a very strong Nazi believer
and who threatened my father

154

00:07:41,680 --> 00:07:46,180

terribly. , And he came home
one day and said we're leaving.

155
00:07:46,180 --> 00:07:48,520
And he literally
packed his suitcase

156
00:07:48,520 --> 00:07:52,240
and packed our suitcase, locked
the door to the apartment,

157
00:07:52,240 --> 00:07:57,880
sold absolutely nothing,
and we went to Switzerland.

158
00:07:57,880 --> 00:07:59,400
That's an amazing story.

159
00:07:59,400 --> 00:08:00,430
Yes, it was.

160
00:08:00,430 --> 00:08:02,590
It was a sudden
decision, do you think?

161
00:08:02,590 --> 00:08:07,570
I don't think it was a sudden
decision in my father's mind,

162
00:08:07,570 --> 00:08:09,430
but it certainly was
a sudden decision

163
00:08:09,430 --> 00:08:11,420
as it was presented
to the family.

164
00:08:11,420 --> 00:08:12,400
Including your mother?

165
00:08:12,400 --> 00:08:14,680
Including my mother,
and my mother

166

00:08:14,680 --> 00:08:19,930
was a person who was a wife
that followed her husband.

167
00:08:19,930 --> 00:08:23,650
And without any question,
she packed and we left.

168
00:08:23,650 --> 00:08:25,760
And that really
saved four lives.

169
00:08:25,760 --> 00:08:26,510
I think so.

170
00:08:26,510 --> 00:08:30,430
I think that my father
had tremendous foresight

171
00:08:30,430 --> 00:08:33,159
in doing exactly that.

172
00:08:33,159 --> 00:08:40,570
And what did-- well,
since Switzerland

173
00:08:40,570 --> 00:08:43,150
was a temporary residence,
we won't go into that,

174
00:08:43,150 --> 00:08:46,090
but you spent a number
of years in Palestine.

175
00:08:46,090 --> 00:08:47,290
Yes.

176
00:08:47,290 --> 00:08:48,940
I think you said
about four years.

177
00:08:48,940 --> 00:08:50,020
Four or five years.

178
00:08:50,020 --> 00:08:51,070
Four or five years.

179
00:08:51,070 --> 00:08:53,620
What did your father
do in Palestine?

180
00:08:53,620 --> 00:08:55,090
And what did you do?

181
00:08:55,090 --> 00:08:56,860
I went to school.

182
00:08:56,860 --> 00:09:00,960
I studied a Hebrew curriculum.

183
00:09:00,960 --> 00:09:04,660
Of course, I learned to
speak Hebrew, which I still

184
00:09:04,660 --> 00:09:08,020
remember fairly well.

185
00:09:08,020 --> 00:09:13,270
My dad opened up a
custom-made furniture factory.

186
00:09:13,270 --> 00:09:16,960
He found an architect,
an Austrian architect,

187
00:09:16,960 --> 00:09:20,740
that designed the furniture,
and he sold furniture

188
00:09:20,740 --> 00:09:24,010
to very wealthy Arab families.

189
00:09:24,010 --> 00:09:29,890
And the very first boycott,
the first Arab boycott,

190
00:09:29,890 --> 00:09:36,700
I believe, if I'm right, was
'39, '38, someplace in there.

191
00:09:36,700 --> 00:09:39,520
He lost all of his
money because the Arabs

192
00:09:39,520 --> 00:09:42,310
refused to pay their bills.

193
00:09:42,310 --> 00:09:46,540
And consequently, he decided
to go to the United States.

194
00:09:46,540 --> 00:09:51,275
And it was relatively simple
to leave Palestine and come

195
00:09:51,275 --> 00:09:52,150
to the United States?

196
00:09:52,150 --> 00:09:56,710
At the time it was fairly
easy to get a visa, yes.

197
00:09:56,710 --> 00:09:59,020
Did you have family
here already?

198
00:09:59,020 --> 00:09:59,650
No.

199
00:09:59,650 --> 00:10:00,650
You were the first ones.

200
00:10:00,650 --> 00:10:03,940
We were the first, and
then two brothers followed.

201
00:10:03,940 --> 00:10:07,730

And they followed with
the help of your father?

202
00:10:07,730 --> 00:10:08,620
Yes.

203
00:10:08,620 --> 00:10:11,890
What did your father do
when he came-- where did you

204
00:10:11,890 --> 00:10:13,270
settle in the United States?

205
00:10:13,270 --> 00:10:17,500
We lived in New York City,
uptown Manhattan, Washington

206
00:10:17,500 --> 00:10:18,170
Heights area.

207
00:10:18,170 --> 00:10:20,170
Very well known German
community until this day.

208
00:10:20,170 --> 00:10:23,020
Very well known Jewish
neighborhood, exactly.

209
00:10:23,020 --> 00:10:26,530
And then my father
found himself a job

210
00:10:26,530 --> 00:10:28,660
in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

211
00:10:28,660 --> 00:10:33,820
And part of the pay for
this job was an apartment

212
00:10:33,820 --> 00:10:36,825
above the furniture
store that he worked in,

213

00:10:36,825 --> 00:10:41,350

and so we very quickly
moved to New Brunswick.

214

00:10:41,350 --> 00:10:44,020

So you didn't spend too
much time in New York.

215

00:10:44,020 --> 00:10:50,380

Well, long enough to go to the
George Washington High School,

216

00:10:50,380 --> 00:10:55,732

where they told my mother that
I was a mental idiot because I

217

00:10:55,732 --> 00:10:57,940

didn't understand any English
and I failed every test

218

00:10:57,940 --> 00:10:59,050

in the beginning.

219

00:10:59,050 --> 00:11:01,150

And they really,
really believed I

220

00:11:01,150 --> 00:11:05,980

need to be put into
a mental institution

221

00:11:05,980 --> 00:11:08,950

because I failed every test.

222

00:11:08,950 --> 00:11:12,040

Thanks God that
turned out otherwise.

223

00:11:12,040 --> 00:11:15,490

And as a matter of
fact, I remember,

224

00:11:15,490 --> 00:11:17,950
we came to this country,
I only had short pants.

225
00:11:17,950 --> 00:11:20,590
And everybody in those
days wore knickers.

226
00:11:20,590 --> 00:11:25,630
And the kids at school
kidded me terribly

227
00:11:25,630 --> 00:11:28,750
about my very short pants,
which they wore in Palestine,

228
00:11:28,750 --> 00:11:31,330
and I was beaten up
almost every day.

229
00:11:31,330 --> 00:11:33,790
And then I came home
so bloody one day

230
00:11:33,790 --> 00:11:35,980
that my father decided
that he could spare money

231
00:11:35,980 --> 00:11:39,050
to buy me knickers also.

232
00:11:39,050 --> 00:11:41,090
And did the beating stop?

233
00:11:41,090 --> 00:11:42,170
And the beating stopped.

234
00:11:42,170 --> 00:11:43,770
The kidding stopped and
the beating stopped.

235
00:11:43,770 --> 00:11:44,270
Amazing.

236
00:11:44,270 --> 00:11:48,140

237
00:11:48,140 --> 00:11:50,180
So you graduated George
Washington High School.

238
00:11:50,180 --> 00:11:50,760
No, no, no.

239
00:11:50,760 --> 00:11:51,260
I didn't.

240
00:11:51,260 --> 00:11:52,970
I went there for a while.

241
00:11:52,970 --> 00:11:55,190
Really, when we moved
to New Brunswick,

242
00:11:55,190 --> 00:11:56,690
I went to New
Brunswick High School.

243
00:11:56,690 --> 00:11:58,892
How many years were you
in Washington and how many

244
00:11:58,892 --> 00:12:00,350
years in New
Brunswick High School?

245
00:12:00,350 --> 00:12:01,910
Oh god, I don't remember.

246
00:12:01,910 --> 00:12:02,600
You ask me--

247
00:12:02,600 --> 00:12:05,310
But you graduated from
New Brunswick High School,

248
00:12:05,310 --> 00:12:07,970
your father was in the
furniture business.

249
00:12:07,970 --> 00:12:09,320
Yes.

250
00:12:09,320 --> 00:12:11,450
He subsequently opened
up his own store.

251
00:12:11,450 --> 00:12:15,080
And what happened to
you after high school?

252
00:12:15,080 --> 00:12:18,260
My freshman year,
my mother decided

253
00:12:18,260 --> 00:12:21,710
I should study engineering,
which I was completely unsuited

254
00:12:21,710 --> 00:12:25,010
for, and I failed miserably.

255
00:12:25,010 --> 00:12:27,710
And I literally was
saved by World War II

256
00:12:27,710 --> 00:12:31,880
because I had a reason
to enlist in the Army

257
00:12:31,880 --> 00:12:34,340
rather than seeing
college, which, of course,

258
00:12:34,340 --> 00:12:36,810
I regretted two days
after I enlisted.

259

00:12:36,810 --> 00:12:43,130

But it was my way
of running away.

260

00:12:43,130 --> 00:12:45,710

Where had you been a freshman?

261

00:12:45,710 --> 00:12:47,390

In New Brunswick.

262

00:12:47,390 --> 00:12:48,010

In Rutgers?

263

00:12:48,010 --> 00:12:50,310

At Rutgers University,
the School of Engineering.

264

00:12:50,310 --> 00:12:50,810

All right.

265

00:12:50,810 --> 00:12:54,180

So you were now in what year?

266

00:12:54,180 --> 00:12:54,680

19--

267

00:12:54,680 --> 00:12:57,453

268

00:12:57,453 --> 00:12:58,870

Oh god, if I had
known that you're

269

00:12:58,870 --> 00:13:02,320

going to ask me the dates, I
would have been more prepared.

270

00:13:02,320 --> 00:13:02,860

I--

271

00:13:02,860 --> 00:13:06,140

Well, let's say Pearl
Harbor was December 1941.

272
00:13:06,140 --> 00:13:06,640
'41?

273
00:13:06,640 --> 00:13:07,140
I guess we--

274
00:13:07,140 --> 00:13:09,190
Where was this in
relationship to Pearl Harbor?

275
00:13:09,190 --> 00:13:12,700
That must have really
been, let's say

276
00:13:12,700 --> 00:13:17,770
for the sake of argument, the
September or October of 1940,

277
00:13:17,770 --> 00:13:20,200
when I became a freshman
at Rutgers University.

278
00:13:20,200 --> 00:13:20,830
Really?

279
00:13:20,830 --> 00:13:23,740
So you-- wait.

280
00:13:23,740 --> 00:13:26,140
I think you were a little
bit young for that.

281
00:13:26,140 --> 00:13:28,948
I suspect it's a year
later because in 1940, you

282
00:13:28,948 --> 00:13:29,740
would have been 16.

283

00:13:29,740 --> 00:13:32,410

284

00:13:32,410 --> 00:13:34,360

You probably were
17 at the time.

285

00:13:34,360 --> 00:13:35,320

17, probably.

286

00:13:35,320 --> 00:13:38,020

So it was it was shortly
before Pearl Harbor

287

00:13:38,020 --> 00:13:41,860

that you went in, probably
in September, October '41.

288

00:13:41,860 --> 00:13:42,730

Exactly.

289

00:13:42,730 --> 00:13:46,300

What happened to
you in the Army?

290

00:13:46,300 --> 00:13:49,690

291

00:13:49,690 --> 00:13:52,240

Well, I went to Fort
Dix, like everybody else

292

00:13:52,240 --> 00:13:53,680

did from New Jersey.

293

00:13:53,680 --> 00:13:55,600

I stayed in Fort
Dix, and from there I

294

00:13:55,600 --> 00:14:02,500

was sent to Fort Leonard Wood
Missouri, which was a combat

295

00:14:02,500 --> 00:14:04,990
engineer training center.

296

00:14:04,990 --> 00:14:09,130
And we were trained
to become people

297

00:14:09,130 --> 00:14:13,480
who were supposed to blow up
beach defenses, which scared

298

00:14:13,480 --> 00:14:15,200
the hell out of me, of course.

299

00:14:15,200 --> 00:14:18,040
And the more we trained
to blow up beach defenses,

300

00:14:18,040 --> 00:14:19,360
the more I got scared.

301

00:14:19,360 --> 00:14:23,680

302

00:14:23,680 --> 00:14:29,410
In Missouri there, I met up with
a great deal of anti-Semitism.

303

00:14:29,410 --> 00:14:30,550
In the Army or--

304

00:14:30,550 --> 00:14:31,360
In the Army.

305

00:14:31,360 --> 00:14:34,570
No, in the Army, a great
deal of anti-Semitism.

306

00:14:34,570 --> 00:14:36,910
How so?

307

00:14:36,910 --> 00:14:43,120
Certainly, the non-commissioned
officers called me the Jew boy.

308
00:14:43,120 --> 00:14:44,770
There weren't many
Jews in the outfit?

309
00:14:44,770 --> 00:14:45,820
Not in my outfit.

310
00:14:45,820 --> 00:14:48,220
There was maybe one
other Jewish fellow.

311
00:14:48,220 --> 00:14:53,830
And the officers as well
referred to me as the Jew,

312
00:14:53,830 --> 00:14:56,890
and I had a very difficult time.

313
00:14:56,890 --> 00:15:00,800

314
00:15:00,800 --> 00:15:07,760
I was a practicing Jew at
the time, as I am today,

315
00:15:07,760 --> 00:15:11,500
and Friday night I would
go to services, which--

316
00:15:11,500 --> 00:15:12,500
Were in camp or in town?

317
00:15:12,500 --> 00:15:16,490
In camp, which was frowned upon.

318
00:15:16,490 --> 00:15:21,330
I did not join into the
drinking bouts that took place,

319

00:15:21,330 --> 00:15:25,400

and I was not considered
one of the boys.

320

00:15:25,400 --> 00:15:29,580

321

00:15:29,580 --> 00:15:34,650

And how long did this continue,
this existence of yours?

322

00:15:34,650 --> 00:15:35,370

This existence?

323

00:15:35,370 --> 00:15:37,500

Until the end of basic training.

324

00:15:37,500 --> 00:15:40,450

Then I went home on leave.

325

00:15:40,450 --> 00:15:44,940

And at the Pennsylvania Railroad
Station, where I arrived,

326

00:15:44,940 --> 00:15:50,100

I met a family friend who
had been with the Military

327

00:15:50,100 --> 00:15:52,830

Intelligence Service,
and he had questioned

328

00:15:52,830 --> 00:15:55,020

why I looked so bad and all.

329

00:15:55,020 --> 00:15:59,010

And I told them, and
he had assured me

330

00:15:59,010 --> 00:16:01,290

that he will do something
and he would get me out

331
00:16:01,290 --> 00:16:03,840
of the combat engineers.

332
00:16:03,840 --> 00:16:06,540
When I came back to camp, we
were alerted to go overseas,

333
00:16:06,540 --> 00:16:08,370
and I had forgotten
all about this.

334
00:16:08,370 --> 00:16:11,130
And while we were
going on the train,

335
00:16:11,130 --> 00:16:15,270
a Jeep pulled up and
pulled me out of the rank,

336
00:16:15,270 --> 00:16:19,600
and gave me orders to go
to Camp Ritchie, Maryland,

337
00:16:19,600 --> 00:16:23,460
which was the training center
at the time for the Military

338
00:16:23,460 --> 00:16:25,390
Intelligence Service.

339
00:16:25,390 --> 00:16:30,270
And the last remark I
remember was for the Sergeant

340
00:16:30,270 --> 00:16:32,160
to tell me, well,
you lousy Jew, you

341
00:16:32,160 --> 00:16:33,720
did get away with it after all.

342

00:16:33,720 --> 00:16:37,270

343

00:16:37,270 --> 00:16:41,350

So you felt that there
was a strong element

344

00:16:41,350 --> 00:16:44,650

of anti-Semitism,
at various levels.

345

00:16:44,650 --> 00:16:46,570

I believe so.

346

00:16:46,570 --> 00:16:48,880

What happened to
you in your new camp

347

00:16:48,880 --> 00:16:51,850

and in your new life, your
new career, I should say.

348

00:16:51,850 --> 00:16:52,570

New career.

349

00:16:52,570 --> 00:16:55,780

I went from the fire into the
frying pan, I must tell you.

350

00:16:55,780 --> 00:17:01,780

No, we were with people
who certainly were more

351

00:17:01,780 --> 00:17:03,370

cultural, more intelligent.

352

00:17:03,370 --> 00:17:06,220

353

00:17:06,220 --> 00:17:11,680

And know, on a personal
level, I certainly

354

00:17:11,680 --> 00:17:15,220

didn't suffer at all

because I was with people

355

00:17:15,220 --> 00:17:19,300

who I could get along with.

356

00:17:19,300 --> 00:17:28,069

As a matter of fact, my cousin,

who's since passed away,

357

00:17:28,069 --> 00:17:31,522

went to that camp and finished

and graduated as I came in,

358

00:17:31,522 --> 00:17:33,230

and I met him there

for a couple of days.

359

00:17:33,230 --> 00:17:36,800

360

00:17:36,800 --> 00:17:39,350

And how long were you there?

361

00:17:39,350 --> 00:17:40,730

In Camp Ritchie?

362

00:17:40,730 --> 00:17:44,090

I would say maybe

eight, 10 weeks.

363

00:17:44,090 --> 00:17:46,520

And from Camp

Ritchie, I was sent

364

00:17:46,520 --> 00:17:51,890

to the University of Illinois

to do some additional language

365

00:17:51,890 --> 00:17:53,690

studies.

366
00:17:53,690 --> 00:18:03,320
I studied Serbian because at
one time the plan of the Army

367
00:18:03,320 --> 00:18:06,590
was to invade Europe from
the underbelly of Europe

368
00:18:06,590 --> 00:18:11,630
through Yugoslavia, which, of
course, never materialized.

369
00:18:11,630 --> 00:18:15,530
But nevertheless, I
studied Serbo-Croatian,

370
00:18:15,530 --> 00:18:21,150
or Serbian, if you will, at
the University of Illinois.

371
00:18:21,150 --> 00:18:23,300
So you were at--

372
00:18:23,300 --> 00:18:26,210
started in Maryland, went to
the University of Illinois?

373
00:18:26,210 --> 00:18:26,780
Yes.

374
00:18:26,780 --> 00:18:29,640
And then I went to the
University of Indiana as well.

375
00:18:29,640 --> 00:18:31,580
So you were getting
your higher education.

376
00:18:31,580 --> 00:18:33,980
Almost, yes.

377

00:18:33,980 --> 00:18:36,120
And what happened after Indiana?

378
00:18:36,120 --> 00:18:41,720
Well, then we were shipped to
England, and I was stationed--

379
00:18:41,720 --> 00:18:44,960
Do you have any idea
in terms of time when--

380
00:18:44,960 --> 00:18:46,110
You've asked me before.

381
00:18:46,110 --> 00:18:49,880
I have no idea.

382
00:18:49,880 --> 00:18:50,600
All right.

383
00:18:50,600 --> 00:18:51,286
Let me--

384
00:18:51,286 --> 00:18:53,580
It certainly was before
the invasion of Europe.

385
00:18:53,580 --> 00:18:54,080
Yeah.

386
00:18:54,080 --> 00:18:56,690
About how long, would you
say, a year, year and a half?

387
00:18:56,690 --> 00:19:01,010
I was in England about a short
year before the invasion, yes.

388
00:19:01,010 --> 00:19:03,660
At least a year
before the invasion.

389

00:19:03,660 --> 00:19:04,160
Yeah.

390
00:19:04,160 --> 00:19:06,700
And you were getting
further training in England.

391
00:19:06,700 --> 00:19:07,400
Yes.

392
00:19:07,400 --> 00:19:09,140
The fact that you
were born in Berlin,

393
00:19:09,140 --> 00:19:11,900
did this have anything to
do with the kind of work

394
00:19:11,900 --> 00:19:13,550
you were given in the Army?

395
00:19:13,550 --> 00:19:15,680
You're in the intelligence
corps, you know German.

396
00:19:15,680 --> 00:19:17,720
Perhaps, before, as
a matter of fact,

397
00:19:17,720 --> 00:19:21,890
while I was at the
University of Illinois--

398
00:19:21,890 --> 00:19:24,740
I believe it was Illinois--

399
00:19:24,740 --> 00:19:30,350
they changed my name legally
from Merel to Brewster.

400
00:19:30,350 --> 00:19:31,790
Why did they do that?

401

00:19:31,790 --> 00:19:33,800

Because they were
afraid that in case I

402

00:19:33,800 --> 00:19:40,760

would be captured by the enemy,
my whole family background

403

00:19:40,760 --> 00:19:43,700

would be revealed
and I could very well

404

00:19:43,700 --> 00:19:46,040

suffer some dire consequences.

405

00:19:46,040 --> 00:19:48,560

In other words,
well before D-Day,

406

00:19:48,560 --> 00:19:50,990

when you're still in
the United States,

407

00:19:50,990 --> 00:19:53,870

there were people in the Army
who realized what was going

408

00:19:53,870 --> 00:19:56,180

on and wanted to protect--

409

00:19:56,180 --> 00:19:57,230

Oh, yes, absolutely.

410

00:19:57,230 --> 00:20:00,590

--wanted to protect
Jewish soldiers?

411

00:20:00,590 --> 00:20:04,760

I certainly wouldn't like to
say that all the soldiers, all

412

00:20:04,760 --> 00:20:08,150

the officers in the
Army were anti-Semitic.

413
00:20:08,150 --> 00:20:09,890
That's not the case.

414
00:20:09,890 --> 00:20:12,470
But there was enough
anti-Semitism, of course.

415
00:20:12,470 --> 00:20:17,530
But they-- no, I think
on the higher level,

416
00:20:17,530 --> 00:20:21,440
they realized that they had
to do whatever they had to do

417
00:20:21,440 --> 00:20:23,010
to protect--

418
00:20:23,010 --> 00:20:23,990
Our men.

419
00:20:23,990 --> 00:20:24,690
Yes.

420
00:20:24,690 --> 00:20:25,190
OK.

421
00:20:25,190 --> 00:20:27,830

422
00:20:27,830 --> 00:20:29,570
What happened after D-Day?

423
00:20:29,570 --> 00:20:31,280
What happened to your group?

424
00:20:31,280 --> 00:20:32,370
What happened to you?

425

00:20:32,370 --> 00:20:34,460

We went to France.

426

00:20:34,460 --> 00:20:36,110

How soon after D-Day?

427

00:20:36,110 --> 00:20:39,230

Very shortly, two, three,
four days after D-Day.

428

00:20:39,230 --> 00:20:41,390

So you were in
France in June '44?

429

00:20:41,390 --> 00:20:44,000

Yes.

430

00:20:44,000 --> 00:20:47,270

While we were in England,
one of the things

431

00:20:47,270 --> 00:20:50,390

we were giving as
an assignment was

432

00:20:50,390 --> 00:20:56,570

to prepare rather
large books of pictures

433

00:20:56,570 --> 00:21:02,850

and histories of people that
the Allies were looking for.

434

00:21:02,850 --> 00:21:07,010

And so immediately
after we landed

435

00:21:07,010 --> 00:21:13,370

in France, that was one
of the major assignments,

436

00:21:13,370 --> 00:21:15,770

was to look for these
people, to find them,

437
00:21:15,770 --> 00:21:24,590
and to interrogate them and
pass them on to other units.

438
00:21:24,590 --> 00:21:25,550
All right.

439
00:21:25,550 --> 00:21:27,100
Let's continue.

440
00:21:27,100 --> 00:21:29,720
You're in France.

441
00:21:29,720 --> 00:21:35,760
And what progress
is your unit making?

442
00:21:35,760 --> 00:21:40,610
Well, we moved--
occasionally, we were,

443
00:21:40,610 --> 00:21:48,950
before main army units came
to advance into France,

444
00:21:48,950 --> 00:21:52,010
occasionally we were
ahead of the fighting.

445
00:21:52,010 --> 00:21:58,060

446
00:21:58,060 --> 00:22:01,690
I was in Paris, for
instance, a couple of days

447
00:22:01,690 --> 00:22:04,570
before Paris officially
fell to the Allies.

448

00:22:04,570 --> 00:22:08,950

449

00:22:08,950 --> 00:22:12,790

I remember very clearly I
met a woman in Paris who

450

00:22:12,790 --> 00:22:19,420

was a life photographer,
who befriended me.

451

00:22:19,420 --> 00:22:22,060

And she took my
picture, as a matter

452

00:22:22,060 --> 00:22:24,400

of fact, a beautiful
photograph which I sent

453

00:22:24,400 --> 00:22:26,200

home, which I still have today.

454

00:22:26,200 --> 00:22:31,570

And by sheer
accident, I discovered

455

00:22:31,570 --> 00:22:37,540

that she was one of the
wanted people in the books

456

00:22:37,540 --> 00:22:39,410

that we carried with us.

457

00:22:39,410 --> 00:22:40,450

She was a German?

458

00:22:40,450 --> 00:22:45,970

She was a French woman
who worked for Germany.

459

00:22:45,970 --> 00:22:49,930

And of course, she was arrested,

and what happened to her

460

00:22:49,930 --> 00:22:51,490
afterwards I have no idea.

461

00:22:51,490 --> 00:22:54,520

462

00:22:54,520 --> 00:22:59,260
Our whole office was then
finally moved to Paris,

463

00:22:59,260 --> 00:23:03,160
and we stayed in Paris
for quite a while.

464

00:23:03,160 --> 00:23:07,420
And then as the
fighting progressed

465

00:23:07,420 --> 00:23:14,800
towards the German border,
I moved up with the troops.

466

00:23:14,800 --> 00:23:21,190
As a matter of fact, the very
first Rosh ha-Shanah in Germany

467

00:23:21,190 --> 00:23:24,175
was spent in Aachen.

468

00:23:24,175 --> 00:23:26,050
This would have been
near the end of the war?

469

00:23:26,050 --> 00:23:27,700
That was the very
beginning when--

470

00:23:27,700 --> 00:23:30,040
that was the first town
that fell to the Allies.

471
00:23:30,040 --> 00:23:30,730
Right.

472
00:23:30,730 --> 00:23:33,070
And I blew the shofar
at those services.

473
00:23:33,070 --> 00:23:33,590
Really?

474
00:23:33,590 --> 00:23:34,090
Yes.

475
00:23:34,090 --> 00:23:35,830
I'm just trying to put it out.

476
00:23:35,830 --> 00:23:38,590
We're talking Rosh ha-Shanah
would be September.

477
00:23:38,590 --> 00:23:41,020
It had to be either
September '44 or '45.

478
00:23:41,020 --> 00:23:44,110
You're talking about '44 then,
because in September '45,

479
00:23:44,110 --> 00:23:44,860
the war was over.

480
00:23:44,860 --> 00:23:45,820
Yes.

481
00:23:45,820 --> 00:23:50,930
Aachen was the very first town
that fell that was on the--

482
00:23:50,930 --> 00:23:51,430
German--

483

00:23:51,430 --> 00:23:55,930

--so-called Siegfried line,
and that was the first town

484

00:23:55,930 --> 00:23:58,000

that fell to the Allies.

485

00:23:58,000 --> 00:24:00,940

And who was in the congregation?

486

00:24:00,940 --> 00:24:02,600

Was basically military people?

487

00:24:02,600 --> 00:24:03,100

Yeah.

488

00:24:03,100 --> 00:24:04,350

We stood on the street corner.

489

00:24:04,350 --> 00:24:07,780

And as the fellas pass by, we
would ask them, are you a Jew?

490

00:24:07,780 --> 00:24:08,770

Are you a Jew?

491

00:24:08,770 --> 00:24:12,670

And soon enough, we had
more than sufficient people

492

00:24:12,670 --> 00:24:14,380

to have a minion.

493

00:24:14,380 --> 00:24:15,940

Very interesting.

494

00:24:15,940 --> 00:24:21,880

Now, so you're in France,
you're in Germany.

495

00:24:21,880 --> 00:24:24,910

Do you have any

recollections of interest

496

00:24:24,910 --> 00:24:27,730

of what took place that time?

497

00:24:27,730 --> 00:24:30,790

You mentioned one,
the life photographer.

498

00:24:30,790 --> 00:24:33,130

Are there any other
experiences that you

499

00:24:33,130 --> 00:24:34,480

had that tell us the story?

500

00:24:34,480 --> 00:24:39,520

I was fortunate, if you
want to call it that--

501

00:24:39,520 --> 00:24:44,170

I was fortunate enough
to interrogate the head

502

00:24:44,170 --> 00:24:46,060

engineer of the Krupp works.

503

00:24:46,060 --> 00:24:48,250

Really?

504

00:24:48,250 --> 00:24:50,260

He was serving in the
German army, is that is?

505

00:24:50,260 --> 00:24:52,177

No, no, he was the head
engineer of the works.

506

00:24:52,177 --> 00:24:54,760

Oh, he was working for Krupp,
which was producing armaments,

507

00:24:54,760 --> 00:24:55,260
right?

508
00:24:55,260 --> 00:24:56,050
Right.

509
00:24:56,050 --> 00:25:02,230
And I made a habit of putting a
German flag in front of my desk

510
00:25:02,230 --> 00:25:05,710
in order to antagonize
those people that I

511
00:25:05,710 --> 00:25:07,810
would have to interrogate.

512
00:25:07,810 --> 00:25:09,970
And they would have to
walk across their own flag

513
00:25:09,970 --> 00:25:12,140
before they would come to me.

514
00:25:12,140 --> 00:25:15,130
And then I would tell
them, look, you better

515
00:25:15,130 --> 00:25:20,150
start talking because I'm a Jew,
and I don't love you very much.

516
00:25:20,150 --> 00:25:23,960
This German flag in front
of your desk, where was it?

517
00:25:23,960 --> 00:25:25,750
It was a captured
Nazi flag that I--

518
00:25:25,750 --> 00:25:26,890
But where did you have it?

519

00:25:26,890 --> 00:25:27,520

On the floor.

520

00:25:27,520 --> 00:25:28,370

Oh, on the floor.

521

00:25:28,370 --> 00:25:28,870

Sure.

522

00:25:28,870 --> 00:25:30,220

It was like a carpet, and
they had to walk-- exactly.

523

00:25:30,220 --> 00:25:31,630

They had to walk on the flag.

524

00:25:31,630 --> 00:25:32,890

Exactly.

525

00:25:32,890 --> 00:25:37,660

And I don't remember
the man's name anymore,

526

00:25:37,660 --> 00:25:42,970

but I do remember the incident
very clearly because it just

527

00:25:42,970 --> 00:25:48,850

focused more so what the
Germans are all about.

528

00:25:48,850 --> 00:25:52,150

This man had lost two of his
sons on the Russian front.

529

00:25:52,150 --> 00:25:54,370

His wife was killed
in a bombing,

530

00:25:54,370 --> 00:25:59,050

and he had lost a leg
in the bombing as well.

531
00:25:59,050 --> 00:26:00,430
And I questioned him.

532
00:26:00,430 --> 00:26:03,010
I said, now that
you know and you

533
00:26:03,010 --> 00:26:06,950
had all the experience that
you had, what would you do?

534
00:26:06,950 --> 00:26:09,250
Would you do
something different?

535
00:26:09,250 --> 00:26:10,000
He said, yes.

536
00:26:10,000 --> 00:26:11,620
Now that we had
all the experience,

537
00:26:11,620 --> 00:26:13,610
I would be able to
do it all over again,

538
00:26:13,610 --> 00:26:15,170
I would do exactly
the same thing,

539
00:26:15,170 --> 00:26:17,990
except we wouldn't make
the same mistakes we made.

540
00:26:17,990 --> 00:26:20,120
So there was no regret
for the ideology.

541
00:26:20,120 --> 00:26:20,870
Absolutely none.

542

00:26:20,870 --> 00:26:21,550
Absolutely none.

543
00:26:21,550 --> 00:26:23,560
The only regret
was for the loss.

544
00:26:23,560 --> 00:26:24,640
Absolutely none.

545
00:26:24,640 --> 00:26:26,500
Absolutely, yes.

546
00:26:26,500 --> 00:26:27,940
They couldn't care less.

547
00:26:27,940 --> 00:26:29,740
This is one person.

548
00:26:29,740 --> 00:26:33,250
Did you find that
feeling widespread?

549
00:26:33,250 --> 00:26:37,540
I found the feeling
very widespread.

550
00:26:37,540 --> 00:26:39,370
You interrogated many Germans?

551
00:26:39,370 --> 00:26:41,530
Many Germans.

552
00:26:41,530 --> 00:26:44,560
As a matter of
fact, not to digress

553
00:26:44,560 --> 00:26:50,560
from that particular time
period, but much later on,

554
00:26:50,560 --> 00:26:53,500

when I was discharged and I
was in civilian life again,

555

00:26:53,500 --> 00:26:57,190
I was in the furniture business
and we sold some furniture to--

556

00:26:57,190 --> 00:27:00,475
a great deal of German-made
furniture to customers

557

00:27:00,475 --> 00:27:01,600
who came from Philadelphia.

558

00:27:01,600 --> 00:27:04,630
There was a large
concentration of German people

559

00:27:04,630 --> 00:27:05,860
living in Philadelphia.

560

00:27:05,860 --> 00:27:09,670
And I had an opportunity
to go to Cologne

561

00:27:09,670 --> 00:27:11,620
once a year to the
furniture show.

562

00:27:11,620 --> 00:27:15,610
And while I was in
Cologne, I went to a store

563

00:27:15,610 --> 00:27:17,680
to buy some porcelain
that I wanted

564

00:27:17,680 --> 00:27:23,110
to bring home as a gift to my
wife, and there was something--

565

00:27:23,110 --> 00:27:25,270
I don't remember

any more what it was,

566

00:27:25,270 --> 00:27:27,190

but it was a pair of something.

567

00:27:27,190 --> 00:27:31,210

And I went in, not

talking German at first,

568

00:27:31,210 --> 00:27:38,990

and the woman tried

to double the price.

569

00:27:38,990 --> 00:27:40,580

Instead of charging

me for a pair,

570

00:27:40,580 --> 00:27:43,850

she charged me for

two pair, if you will.

571

00:27:43,850 --> 00:27:49,040

And then, of course,

I protested in German.

572

00:27:49,040 --> 00:27:53,310

And I was told by her, who

asked you to come here?

573

00:27:53,310 --> 00:27:54,810

You can go back

where you came from.

574

00:27:54,810 --> 00:27:56,660

We don't want you here anyway.

575

00:27:56,660 --> 00:28:00,680

And when I went to the

city hall to put in

576

00:28:00,680 --> 00:28:05,240

to complain about this

particular incident,

577
00:28:05,240 --> 00:28:08,390
I was given a questionnaire,
like, 20, 25 pages long.

578
00:28:08,390 --> 00:28:10,640
And I was told, here, fill
this out and bring it back.

579
00:28:10,640 --> 00:28:13,170
Well, of course, I tore it up
and I threw it at the desk.

580
00:28:13,170 --> 00:28:14,240
I walked out.

581
00:28:14,240 --> 00:28:20,180
But I'm convinced that
people of that era,

582
00:28:20,180 --> 00:28:23,900
who were born and lived in
that particular time period,

583
00:28:23,900 --> 00:28:26,210
have no regrets
of what happened.

584
00:28:26,210 --> 00:28:27,590
The only regret
that they have is

585
00:28:27,590 --> 00:28:31,400
that they don't have all that
illustrious Hitler-ism back.

586
00:28:31,400 --> 00:28:35,550

587
00:28:35,550 --> 00:28:37,890
So they believed--
what did they believe?

588

00:28:37,890 --> 00:28:40,730

589

00:28:40,730 --> 00:28:42,780

They believe that,
unfortunately, they lost,

590

00:28:42,780 --> 00:28:47,945

but it was due to not
their circumstances.

591

00:28:47,945 --> 00:28:51,050

It was due to all kinds
of outside influences,

592

00:28:51,050 --> 00:28:55,880

and they certainly would
like to have the past back.

593

00:28:55,880 --> 00:28:58,520

And the past meant
the master race?

594

00:28:58,520 --> 00:29:00,350

The master race, absolutely.

595

00:29:00,350 --> 00:29:01,100

Absolutely.

596

00:29:01,100 --> 00:29:03,290

That they're tops
and everybody else--

597

00:29:03,290 --> 00:29:04,760

Absolutely, no
question about that.

598

00:29:04,760 --> 00:29:05,260

This German?

599

00:29:05,260 --> 00:29:06,980

Absolutely.

600
00:29:06,980 --> 00:29:08,360
And they believe
that, you think?

601
00:29:08,360 --> 00:29:09,800
Very much so.

602
00:29:09,800 --> 00:29:11,630
In other words, it
was preached to them,

603
00:29:11,630 --> 00:29:13,520
and they bought it
and it couldn't go out

604
00:29:13,520 --> 00:29:15,050
of their system.

605
00:29:15,050 --> 00:29:18,080
I don't know if it
was preached to them.

606
00:29:18,080 --> 00:29:20,420
I think, historically,
the Germans

607
00:29:20,420 --> 00:29:22,280
always thought they
were superior, even

608
00:29:22,280 --> 00:29:24,680
from the times of Bismarck.

609
00:29:24,680 --> 00:29:27,290
And the younger people today,
you said perhaps they--

610
00:29:27,290 --> 00:29:30,090
Perhaps the younger people
today don't feel that way.

611

00:29:30,090 --> 00:29:31,820
I don't know.

612
00:29:31,820 --> 00:29:34,640
Yet, the incidence
of these skinheads

613
00:29:34,640 --> 00:29:38,600
that we have and the
incidence of anti-Semitism

614
00:29:38,600 --> 00:29:42,200
in Germany that
are very prevalent

615
00:29:42,200 --> 00:29:46,920
and which are accepted by
the older people as well

616
00:29:46,920 --> 00:29:51,530
and sometimes lauded very much
so can only point to the fact

617
00:29:51,530 --> 00:29:53,120
that they really
haven't changed.

618
00:29:53,120 --> 00:29:56,090

619
00:29:56,090 --> 00:30:05,390
I believe that people
like Kohl internally

620
00:30:05,390 --> 00:30:10,490
accept this fact and live
with it, even though he

621
00:30:10,490 --> 00:30:13,340
talks with a forked
tongue outside

622
00:30:13,340 --> 00:30:16,070

and says something
different outside of Germany

623
00:30:16,070 --> 00:30:22,190
and possibly condemns
it, but it's not

624
00:30:22,190 --> 00:30:26,090
condemned enough because
it's not controlled enough.

625
00:30:26,090 --> 00:30:28,250
I have to ask you
mentioned Kohl.

626
00:30:28,250 --> 00:30:31,440
Does that apply to Willy Brandt
and Konrad Adenauer also?

627
00:30:31,440 --> 00:30:32,160
Yes.

628
00:30:32,160 --> 00:30:33,410
You don't see any differences?

629
00:30:33,410 --> 00:30:34,340
No.

630
00:30:34,340 --> 00:30:37,150
No.

631
00:30:37,150 --> 00:30:41,470
So you think that the
anti-Semitism master race

632
00:30:41,470 --> 00:30:46,240
belief is alive
and well, certainly

633
00:30:46,240 --> 00:30:48,580
among the older
generation of Germans?

634

00:30:48,580 --> 00:30:49,150

Isn't it?

635

00:30:49,150 --> 00:30:50,510

The ones who grew up with you.

636

00:30:50,510 --> 00:30:52,990

Read the newspaper.

637

00:30:52,990 --> 00:30:53,840

See what happens.

638

00:30:53,840 --> 00:30:57,680

All these incidents that are
now again coming to the surface.

639

00:30:57,680 --> 00:31:00,010

Isn't it?

640

00:31:00,010 --> 00:31:02,560

Let's go back to 1945.

641

00:31:02,560 --> 00:31:04,390

You're in France.

642

00:31:04,390 --> 00:31:06,100

You've moved into Germany.

643

00:31:06,100 --> 00:31:13,030

You were in Aachen, Germany
for Rosh ha-Shanah of 1945.

644

00:31:13,030 --> 00:31:17,890

I spent a great deal of time
in the so-called Ruhrgebiet,

645

00:31:17,890 --> 00:31:23,090

which was the industrial
area of Germany,

646

00:31:23,090 --> 00:31:27,400

which was adjacent to
the whole French border.

647
00:31:27,400 --> 00:31:32,140
And I spent a great deal
of time there looking

648
00:31:32,140 --> 00:31:35,710
to different factories and
inspecting different factories

649
00:31:35,710 --> 00:31:38,140
and writing all kinds
of reports and speaking

650
00:31:38,140 --> 00:31:39,540
to all kinds of
different people.

651
00:31:39,540 --> 00:31:42,160

652
00:31:42,160 --> 00:31:56,400
Where were you when the war
ended, on V-E Day, May 8, 1945?

653
00:31:56,400 --> 00:31:58,800
As close as you could get
to Berlin at the time.

654
00:31:58,800 --> 00:32:04,620
I really ended up in Berlin
after the war was over,

655
00:32:04,620 --> 00:32:07,910
still doing the same thing.

656
00:32:07,910 --> 00:32:11,400
And did you ever get
to a concentration--

657
00:32:11,400 --> 00:32:11,900
Yeah.

658

00:32:11,900 --> 00:32:16,760

Well, there was a small
concentration camp

659

00:32:16,760 --> 00:32:19,470

in the area where
I was very active.

660

00:32:19,470 --> 00:32:22,070

The name was Gardeleben.

661

00:32:22,070 --> 00:32:24,160

Where was that located?

662

00:32:24,160 --> 00:32:28,220

In the Ruhr, in this Ruhrgebiet.

663

00:32:28,220 --> 00:32:36,080

And the Allies were
told that the Germans

664

00:32:36,080 --> 00:32:41,930

were killing all the inmates
of that concentration camp.

665

00:32:41,930 --> 00:32:43,400

But how large a camp was it?

666

00:32:43,400 --> 00:32:46,440

667

00:32:46,440 --> 00:32:51,150

I would tell you that we
found maybe 3,000 or 4,000

668

00:32:51,150 --> 00:32:56,550

dead people and
maybe 2,000 living

669

00:32:56,550 --> 00:32:58,410

people when we got there.

670
00:32:58,410 --> 00:33:01,290
And we had received
orders to go and try

671
00:33:01,290 --> 00:33:06,330
to save this camp from
being exterminated.

672
00:33:06,330 --> 00:33:08,010
This is after V-E Day?

673
00:33:08,010 --> 00:33:09,160
No, no, no, no, no, no.

674
00:33:09,160 --> 00:33:11,250
That's before V-E Day.

675
00:33:11,250 --> 00:33:13,650
That's as the Americans--

676
00:33:13,650 --> 00:33:14,428
Are advancing.

677
00:33:14,428 --> 00:33:15,595
--were advancing to Germany.

678
00:33:15,595 --> 00:33:17,560
But it's close to V-E Day.

679
00:33:17,560 --> 00:33:23,448

680
00:33:23,448 --> 00:33:27,788
You know, in the back of those
pictures, there are dates.

681
00:33:27,788 --> 00:33:29,830
If you take a look in the
back of those pictures,

682

00:33:29,830 --> 00:33:30,940
there are dates.

683
00:33:30,940 --> 00:33:32,290
I like to date my pictures.

684
00:33:32,290 --> 00:33:35,320
We'll take a look at the
pictures momentarily.

685
00:33:35,320 --> 00:33:43,510
And what was your
connection with the camp?

686
00:33:43,510 --> 00:33:45,340
How often did you go in, once?

687
00:33:45,340 --> 00:33:46,320
More than once?

688
00:33:46,320 --> 00:33:48,370
No, I was in charge
of a group that

689
00:33:48,370 --> 00:33:53,380
was sent in to save what
there was left to be saved.

690
00:33:53,380 --> 00:33:55,612
Oh, you were given
this as your work?

691
00:33:55,612 --> 00:33:56,320
As an assignment.

692
00:33:56,320 --> 00:33:57,610
This was your work assignment.

693
00:33:57,610 --> 00:33:58,110
Exactly.

694
00:33:58,110 --> 00:34:00,040

And you were in charge
of how many soldiers

695
00:34:00,040 --> 00:34:01,900
who were going in there?

696
00:34:01,900 --> 00:34:06,010
Oh, possibly a
company of soldiers

697
00:34:06,010 --> 00:34:12,100
and a unit of the medical unit.

698
00:34:12,100 --> 00:34:16,420
About how many individuals
are we talking about?

699
00:34:16,420 --> 00:34:20,170
I would say probably 125.

700
00:34:20,170 --> 00:34:23,449
So you had quite a few
people with you to work with?

701
00:34:23,449 --> 00:34:24,520
Oh, sure.

702
00:34:24,520 --> 00:34:27,650
And what did you find
when you went in?

703
00:34:27,650 --> 00:34:28,150
Well--

704
00:34:28,150 --> 00:34:30,550
Would it help if we start
looking at the pictures now?

705
00:34:30,550 --> 00:34:33,143
If you want to, yes.

706
00:34:33,143 --> 00:34:34,810

Well, let's take a
look at the pictures,

707
00:34:34,810 --> 00:34:39,670
and we'll see how much of
this we can get on the screen.

708
00:34:39,670 --> 00:34:42,380

709
00:34:42,380 --> 00:34:44,340
You better go to the left.

710
00:34:44,340 --> 00:34:46,690
OK.

711
00:34:46,690 --> 00:34:47,690
Oh, that's out of focus.

712
00:34:47,690 --> 00:34:50,889
That's not clear.

713
00:34:50,889 --> 00:34:54,590
I think we have to get
the other camera on.

714
00:34:54,590 --> 00:34:55,889
That's completely out of focus.

715
00:34:55,889 --> 00:34:58,680

716
00:34:58,680 --> 00:35:02,280
We're getting the other
camera to zoom in on it.

717
00:35:02,280 --> 00:35:02,880
There it is.

718
00:35:02,880 --> 00:35:06,830

719

00:35:06,830 --> 00:35:07,960

That's fine.

720

00:35:07,960 --> 00:35:09,080

Now we have it.

721

00:35:09,080 --> 00:35:09,580

OK.

722

00:35:09,580 --> 00:35:10,330

Very good, yes.

723

00:35:10,330 --> 00:35:11,800

Who's in that picture?

724

00:35:11,800 --> 00:35:16,360

That's one of the
inmates and myself

725

00:35:16,360 --> 00:35:21,100

pointing at one of
the ovens in the camp.

726

00:35:21,100 --> 00:35:22,570

All right.

727

00:35:22,570 --> 00:35:25,750

The inmate, obviously, is in
the undershirt and the striped--

728

00:35:25,750 --> 00:35:26,770

Pants, yeah.

729

00:35:26,770 --> 00:35:28,990

That's the uniform of--

730

00:35:28,990 --> 00:35:30,860

He was one of the
healthier looking ones.

731

00:35:30,860 --> 00:35:31,360

Yeah.

732
00:35:31,360 --> 00:35:34,210
And you're there in khaki.

733
00:35:34,210 --> 00:35:36,970
All right, and this
is May 1945, it says.

734
00:35:36,970 --> 00:35:37,630
Exactly.

735
00:35:37,630 --> 00:35:42,790
So it's right either before
V-E Day or right after V-E Day.

736
00:35:42,790 --> 00:35:45,340
Next.

737
00:35:45,340 --> 00:35:45,840
No, turn it.

738
00:35:45,840 --> 00:35:46,310
OK.

739
00:35:46,310 --> 00:35:47,060
No, the other way.

740
00:35:47,060 --> 00:35:47,904
That's it.

741
00:35:47,904 --> 00:35:48,860
Who's this?

742
00:35:48,860 --> 00:35:51,140
That's the Kommandant
of the camp.

743
00:35:51,140 --> 00:35:53,690
Did you have anything
to do with him?

744

00:35:53,690 --> 00:35:54,860

You took his picture.

745

00:35:54,860 --> 00:35:55,478

Yeah.

746

00:35:55,478 --> 00:35:57,770

Well, I took his picture
because he was the Kommandant.

747

00:35:57,770 --> 00:36:04,400

And I spoke with him
for a very short time,

748

00:36:04,400 --> 00:36:06,080

and he was shipped out.

749

00:36:06,080 --> 00:36:09,980

And I really don't know whatever
happened to him after that.

750

00:36:09,980 --> 00:36:12,110

All right.

751

00:36:12,110 --> 00:36:17,080

Next we have-- all right.

752

00:36:17,080 --> 00:36:19,650

753

00:36:19,650 --> 00:36:21,960

That's what we found.

754

00:36:21,960 --> 00:36:26,140

That's what we found, dead
people, many, many dead people.

755

00:36:26,140 --> 00:36:26,640

All right.

756

00:36:26,640 --> 00:36:29,250

Well, we're going to have a
few such pictures, I believe.

757
00:36:29,250 --> 00:36:31,180
Yes.

758
00:36:31,180 --> 00:36:33,810
There it is again,
another picture.

759
00:36:33,810 --> 00:36:36,160
That's what we first
found when we came to--

760
00:36:36,160 --> 00:36:37,740
This is your first day there?

761
00:36:37,740 --> 00:36:39,450
Yes.

762
00:36:39,450 --> 00:36:40,980
We smelled that camp--

763
00:36:40,980 --> 00:36:44,490
when we came there, that camp
could be smell from miles away.

764
00:36:44,490 --> 00:36:50,000
It was an awful
stench of dead bodies.

765
00:36:50,000 --> 00:36:51,580
There it is again.

766
00:36:51,580 --> 00:36:52,090
Yes.

767
00:36:52,090 --> 00:36:54,730
And then when we came there--

768
00:36:54,730 --> 00:36:58,300
there's this one more picture.

769
00:36:58,300 --> 00:37:01,840
Is this something you'll
always remember, I assume?

770
00:37:01,840 --> 00:37:06,580
I sometimes have
nightmares about that.

771
00:37:06,580 --> 00:37:08,608
I used to have quite
a few such pictures.

772
00:37:08,608 --> 00:37:09,400
What do we see now?

773
00:37:09,400 --> 00:37:13,360
Here, I made the-- there was a
small town next to this camp,

774
00:37:13,360 --> 00:37:16,660
and I made the population
come out and bury

775
00:37:16,660 --> 00:37:20,110
the inmates that were dead.

776
00:37:20,110 --> 00:37:25,120
And they wanted to put
on things over their nose

777
00:37:25,120 --> 00:37:29,110
so they wouldn't have to
smell these dead people

778
00:37:29,110 --> 00:37:31,240
and they wanted
to put on gloves,

779
00:37:31,240 --> 00:37:32,740
and I would not permit this.

780

00:37:32,740 --> 00:37:37,780
I made them smell the smell and
I made them touch these bodies

781
00:37:37,780 --> 00:37:39,520
while they were being buried.

782
00:37:39,520 --> 00:37:43,720
I would hope that they
would remember this incident

783
00:37:43,720 --> 00:37:45,670
for the rest of their
lives as well as I

784
00:37:45,670 --> 00:37:47,350
will remember this incident.

785
00:37:47,350 --> 00:37:50,080
And these pictures keep
on having the townspeople.

786
00:37:50,080 --> 00:37:50,860
Yes.

787
00:37:50,860 --> 00:37:54,330
There it is again.

788
00:37:54,330 --> 00:37:58,950
Obviously, I'm not the greatest
technician in terms of--

789
00:37:58,950 --> 00:38:01,320
what do I have to do to
get this picture straight?

790
00:38:01,320 --> 00:38:03,390
You show it well enough.

791
00:38:03,390 --> 00:38:07,030
These are dead people
being put into the ground.

792

00:38:07,030 --> 00:38:07,530

All right.

793

00:38:07,530 --> 00:38:10,380

Thank you.

794

00:38:10,380 --> 00:38:15,990

There was one incident in that
camp which was unbelievable.

795

00:38:15,990 --> 00:38:21,660

You probably can make a
movie of this incident.

796

00:38:21,660 --> 00:38:23,880

After this camp
had been cleaned up

797

00:38:23,880 --> 00:38:27,330

fairly well and everybody
had been put into--

798

00:38:27,330 --> 00:38:33,300

those living had been put
into the hospital tents,

799

00:38:33,300 --> 00:38:34,180

I was walking down--

800

00:38:34,180 --> 00:38:35,088

On the campgrounds.

801

00:38:35,088 --> 00:38:35,880

On the campgrounds.

802

00:38:35,880 --> 00:38:38,580

I was walking down
the camp street,

803

00:38:38,580 --> 00:38:41,080

and there was a
body lying there.

804

00:38:41,080 --> 00:38:44,850

And I thought that
body was dead,

805

00:38:44,850 --> 00:38:47,940

and that body just
had enough strength

806

00:38:47,940 --> 00:38:52,260

to grab my ankle to show me
that this person was alive.

807

00:38:52,260 --> 00:38:55,770

it was a male person.

808

00:38:55,770 --> 00:39:00,900

And I, of course,
immediately called somebody

809

00:39:00,900 --> 00:39:03,720

with stretchers, and
he was that he was

810

00:39:03,720 --> 00:39:08,340

brought to the hospital tent.

811

00:39:08,340 --> 00:39:11,987

And in the evening, I wanted
to see how everything was going

812

00:39:11,987 --> 00:39:13,320

and I went to the hospital tent.

813

00:39:13,320 --> 00:39:15,510

And I walked over
to this man, who

814

00:39:15,510 --> 00:39:18,480

by then had recovered
sufficiently,

815

00:39:18,480 --> 00:39:19,740
and he called me over.

816
00:39:19,740 --> 00:39:23,565
He turned out to be a
deaf and dumb person.

817
00:39:23,565 --> 00:39:26,310

818
00:39:26,310 --> 00:39:28,240
I know it shouldn't be dumb--

819
00:39:28,240 --> 00:39:32,130
a deaf person who
couldn't speak.

820
00:39:32,130 --> 00:39:32,790
Mute.

821
00:39:32,790 --> 00:39:34,440
A mute, yes.

822
00:39:34,440 --> 00:39:36,630
And he turned out
to be my cousin.

823
00:39:36,630 --> 00:39:39,360

824
00:39:39,360 --> 00:39:40,200
Fantastic.

825
00:39:40,200 --> 00:39:42,230
A first cousin?

826
00:39:42,230 --> 00:39:44,120
Yes.

827
00:39:44,120 --> 00:39:45,440
And this--

828

00:39:45,440 --> 00:39:49,070

And you remembered him
from your childhood?

829

00:39:49,070 --> 00:39:53,180

Not immediately, of course.

830

00:39:53,180 --> 00:39:58,130

As we started to talk and
I could sign a little bit

831

00:39:58,130 --> 00:40:02,480

because I had such a cousin
when I was a very young boy

832

00:40:02,480 --> 00:40:06,260

and he was able to
read lips, and I do

833

00:40:06,260 --> 00:40:09,650

speak German very fluently.

834

00:40:09,650 --> 00:40:12,830

We started to talk,
and the more we talked,

835

00:40:12,830 --> 00:40:16,130

one thing brought
the story to another,

836

00:40:16,130 --> 00:40:21,230

and pretty soon I discovered
he was my first cousin,

837

00:40:21,230 --> 00:40:24,020

was my mother's sister's son.

838

00:40:24,020 --> 00:40:27,140

Did you discover it
simultaneously, or one of you

839

00:40:27,140 --> 00:40:28,200

realized it first?

840
00:40:28,200 --> 00:40:30,912
Sort of together.

841
00:40:30,912 --> 00:40:32,120
That was quite an experience.

842
00:40:32,120 --> 00:40:36,130
It's very emotional when I
think about this, all the time.

843
00:40:36,130 --> 00:40:39,720
It's always emotional to me.

844
00:40:39,720 --> 00:40:42,720
That he--

845
00:40:42,720 --> 00:40:45,660
Since I had a little pull
because of the position

846
00:40:45,660 --> 00:40:50,280
I was in, I shipped him
over to London by plane,

847
00:40:50,280 --> 00:40:57,810
and we placed them with a family
who also had a mute daughter.

848
00:40:57,810 --> 00:41:00,810
And they married.

849
00:41:00,810 --> 00:41:05,130
And subsequently, years later,
they came to the United States.

850
00:41:05,130 --> 00:41:07,800
He was a furrier by
trade, and my dad

851
00:41:07,800 --> 00:41:10,890

had set him up then
as a furrier, again,

852
00:41:10,890 --> 00:41:12,900
and the Washington Heights area.

853
00:41:12,900 --> 00:41:17,440
Unfortunately, he passed away.

854
00:41:17,440 --> 00:41:20,780
His name was Greenbaum.

855
00:41:20,780 --> 00:41:23,670
What a story.

856
00:41:23,670 --> 00:41:30,320
And so I sometimes feel
that I was born to save him.

857
00:41:30,320 --> 00:41:32,760
Fantastic.

858
00:41:32,760 --> 00:41:34,720
What were your days like?

859
00:41:34,720 --> 00:41:36,570
You were there for
a month in charge

860
00:41:36,570 --> 00:41:39,760
of this entire operation.

861
00:41:39,760 --> 00:41:42,430
How did your days--

862
00:41:42,430 --> 00:41:45,340
how did you find your
days moving along?

863
00:41:45,340 --> 00:41:47,920
Did you-- were
working constantly?

864
00:41:47,920 --> 00:41:52,000
It was just an
extreme effort to save

865
00:41:52,000 --> 00:41:53,420
as many people as possible.

866
00:41:53,420 --> 00:41:55,180
Some of these people died--

867
00:41:55,180 --> 00:42:00,070
some of the life people that
we found died afterwards.

868
00:42:00,070 --> 00:42:05,800
It was just a constant
fight to keep them alive

869
00:42:05,800 --> 00:42:08,110
and keep them going.

870
00:42:08,110 --> 00:42:12,880
And then, in fact, they
were all shipped out,

871
00:42:12,880 --> 00:42:14,000
and we closed the camp.

872
00:42:14,000 --> 00:42:17,800
So the 2,000 who
survived were very sick.

873
00:42:17,800 --> 00:42:19,240
Very sick.

874
00:42:19,240 --> 00:42:23,710
They were undernourished,
certainly undernourished.

875
00:42:23,710 --> 00:42:28,370
Some of them had

terrible sores on them.

876

00:42:28,370 --> 00:42:34,522

Some of them had broken bones
that were not set properly.

877

00:42:34,522 --> 00:42:35,605

Most of them had no teeth.

878

00:42:35,605 --> 00:42:38,220

879

00:42:38,220 --> 00:42:40,320

It's like some of
our survivor friends

880

00:42:40,320 --> 00:42:43,350

here say that when
the liberation came,

881

00:42:43,350 --> 00:42:46,220

it was impossible to celebrate.

882

00:42:46,220 --> 00:42:46,780

Yes.

883

00:42:46,780 --> 00:42:49,863

And had the war lasted
another six months,

884

00:42:49,863 --> 00:42:51,030

nobody would have been left.

885

00:42:51,030 --> 00:42:51,960

Exactly.

886

00:42:51,960 --> 00:42:54,690

And what you're describing,
of these 2,000--

887

00:42:54,690 --> 00:42:56,550

As a matter of fact,

in the beginning,

888
00:42:56,550 --> 00:43:00,000
when they were able to
receive as much food

889
00:43:00,000 --> 00:43:02,820
as they really wanted,
they weren't able to eat

890
00:43:02,820 --> 00:43:04,860
and they weren't able
to keep the food down.

891
00:43:04,860 --> 00:43:07,410
This was a dangerous time
because soldiers and GIs

892
00:43:07,410 --> 00:43:10,140
were giving them chocolate,
and it killed them.

893
00:43:10,140 --> 00:43:11,390
Yes, exactly.

894
00:43:11,390 --> 00:43:14,820
They really died-- some
of them died from eating.

895
00:43:14,820 --> 00:43:19,210
You had 125 men who
were working with you.

896
00:43:19,210 --> 00:43:22,110
How did they react to
what they were seeing?

897
00:43:22,110 --> 00:43:24,900
I think this was among
the very first incidents

898
00:43:24,900 --> 00:43:27,570
that the Americans--

899

00:43:27,570 --> 00:43:31,590

non-Jewish Americans--
were exposed to this.

900

00:43:31,590 --> 00:43:32,970

Jewish Americans as well?

901

00:43:32,970 --> 00:43:34,830

Jewish Americans as
well, you're right.

902

00:43:34,830 --> 00:43:41,130

And this was quite interesting
to see the reaction

903

00:43:41,130 --> 00:43:46,980

that, in fact, these things
that they only heard whisper

904

00:43:46,980 --> 00:43:51,060

about really, really took place.

905

00:43:51,060 --> 00:43:56,850

And they learned the
inhumanity of men.

906

00:43:56,850 --> 00:43:59,820

How did they react
to the experience?

907

00:43:59,820 --> 00:44:02,220

Very kind and very caring.

908

00:44:02,220 --> 00:44:04,200

They did everything
they could possibly

909

00:44:04,200 --> 00:44:07,620

do to make these
people comfortable.

910

00:44:07,620 --> 00:44:09,180

It was a shining
moment for them.

911

00:44:09,180 --> 00:44:10,410

Yes, I think so.

912

00:44:10,410 --> 00:44:11,520

In the way--

913

00:44:11,520 --> 00:44:14,890

It brought out their
humanity, if you will.

914

00:44:14,890 --> 00:44:15,417

Yes.

915

00:44:15,417 --> 00:44:17,250

So that's a beautiful
story, their reaction.

916

00:44:17,250 --> 00:44:22,320

Which many people
lose very quickly.

917

00:44:22,320 --> 00:44:27,060

Morality and humanity
is lost much all too

918

00:44:27,060 --> 00:44:32,620

quickly in the daily
struggle of living.

919

00:44:32,620 --> 00:44:36,840

How did you react to the
discovery of this camp

920

00:44:36,840 --> 00:44:38,250

Gardeleben?

921

00:44:38,250 --> 00:44:40,290

You had heard
something was going on?

922

00:44:40,290 --> 00:44:45,010

Well, we were-- because of the
job that I had in the Army,

923

00:44:45,010 --> 00:44:47,430

we certainly heard
about these things,

924

00:44:47,430 --> 00:44:49,260

and we were exposed
to these stories

925

00:44:49,260 --> 00:44:52,050

much more than the
average GI would.

926

00:44:52,050 --> 00:44:57,000

And naturally, I knew that was--

927

00:44:57,000 --> 00:45:00,510

but the actual experience,
when you read something

928

00:45:00,510 --> 00:45:01,950

or when you hear
about something,

929

00:45:01,950 --> 00:45:04,710

it's completely different
than when you actually

930

00:45:04,710 --> 00:45:05,540

experience it.

931

00:45:05,540 --> 00:45:10,560

And the first time I
saw that soldier, when

932

00:45:10,560 --> 00:45:13,230

I landed in France, I vomited.

933

00:45:13,230 --> 00:45:14,700

I had to go to the
side of the road

934

00:45:14,700 --> 00:45:19,320

and vomit because hearing that
soldiers die and seeing one

935

00:45:19,320 --> 00:45:21,480

are two different stories.

936

00:45:21,480 --> 00:45:29,820

And the experience of
seeing this actually,

937

00:45:29,820 --> 00:45:35,080

it was almost incomprehensible
that this can happen.

938

00:45:35,080 --> 00:45:38,820

So what did you find happening
with your state of feelings

939

00:45:38,820 --> 00:45:40,320

day by day?

940

00:45:40,320 --> 00:45:43,470

You've now described
your first encounter

941

00:45:43,470 --> 00:45:46,560

with this when you
walked into the camp.

942

00:45:46,560 --> 00:45:51,180

As you worked, did you
realize any change within you?

943

00:45:51,180 --> 00:45:55,210

944

00:45:55,210 --> 00:45:57,040

For a long time,

I questioned God.

945

00:45:57,040 --> 00:45:59,910

946

00:45:59,910 --> 00:46:02,490

That experience brought
that out in you?

947

00:46:02,490 --> 00:46:04,170

For a long time,
I questioned God.

948

00:46:04,170 --> 00:46:06,900

949

00:46:06,900 --> 00:46:09,360

I still today--

950

00:46:09,360 --> 00:46:10,590

I believe in God.

951

00:46:10,590 --> 00:46:14,470

I truly believe in God,
but I question God.

952

00:46:14,470 --> 00:46:15,510

But you have questions.

953

00:46:15,510 --> 00:46:16,010

Yes.

954

00:46:16,010 --> 00:46:18,790

955

00:46:18,790 --> 00:46:26,160

It's very difficult to
understand a good God that

956

00:46:26,160 --> 00:46:32,070

lets something like this
happen, and that's probably

957

00:46:32,070 --> 00:46:36,570

the biggest struggle that I
had and I still have today.

958

00:46:36,570 --> 00:46:40,690

959

00:46:40,690 --> 00:46:45,910

Just to go to a synagogue on
Rosh ha-Shanah or Yom Kippur,

960

00:46:45,910 --> 00:46:50,770

and then immerse yourself
into the services, which

961

00:46:50,770 --> 00:46:55,150

very often to me are really
meaningless because I don't

962

00:46:55,150 --> 00:46:57,970

think that a human being
can go through a whole year

963

00:46:57,970 --> 00:47:00,610

of sinning, and then go on
Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur

964

00:47:00,610 --> 00:47:02,770

and pray for
forgiveness, and God

965

00:47:02,770 --> 00:47:04,150

will forgive them so quickly.

966

00:47:04,150 --> 00:47:06,640

And then he can go out
and start all over again.

967

00:47:06,640 --> 00:47:10,310

Either you're good or you're
bad, and if you're bad,

968

00:47:10,310 --> 00:47:15,170

I don't think that praying
very hard will help very much.

969

00:47:15,170 --> 00:47:25,870

And so my whole
outlook on religion

970

00:47:25,870 --> 00:47:29,720

is very difficult for
me to grapple with.

971

00:47:29,720 --> 00:47:34,970

I will tell you that I
separate Judaism from religion.

972

00:47:34,970 --> 00:47:38,240

To me, Judaism is something,
and Jewish religion

973

00:47:38,240 --> 00:47:41,270

is something else altogether.

974

00:47:41,270 --> 00:47:47,060

I'm a great practitioner
of the Jewish heritage.

975

00:47:47,060 --> 00:47:51,350

I believe if we
don't practice our--

976

00:47:51,350 --> 00:47:56,720

those things that we need to
practice or should practice,

977

00:47:56,720 --> 00:48:00,800

the Jews will be
lost very quickly.

978

00:48:00,800 --> 00:48:02,910

Belonging to a
synagogue, however,

979

00:48:02,910 --> 00:48:06,140
does not mean religion to me.

980

00:48:06,140 --> 00:48:12,350
It really means to
furthering of the Jews

981

00:48:12,350 --> 00:48:15,020
as a Jew, not as a
religious entity.

982

00:48:15,020 --> 00:48:21,480
So you want the Jews as a people
to live is what you're saying.

983

00:48:21,480 --> 00:48:24,020
And if they don't--

984

00:48:24,020 --> 00:48:29,450
If we lived this long, we must
have done something right.

985

00:48:29,450 --> 00:48:31,500
But it's very hard.

986

00:48:31,500 --> 00:48:34,220
It's very hard to--

987

00:48:34,220 --> 00:48:37,110
it's even very hard for me
to interpret my own feelings.

988

00:48:37,110 --> 00:48:37,610
All right.

989

00:48:37,610 --> 00:48:39,890
So you were addressing
the question

990

00:48:39,890 --> 00:48:43,830
that's raised, where was
God during the Holocaust?

991
00:48:43,830 --> 00:48:46,400
How do you view the
question of, where

992
00:48:46,400 --> 00:48:48,050
was man during the Holocaust?

993
00:48:48,050 --> 00:48:51,080
What does it say to
you about humanity?

994
00:48:51,080 --> 00:49:00,380
Well, supposedly, according
to what our rabbis tell us,

995
00:49:00,380 --> 00:49:03,300
man was born with a choice.

996
00:49:03,300 --> 00:49:06,990
And God doesn't make this
choice, we make this choice.

997
00:49:06,990 --> 00:49:09,510
And if we choose goodness,
then we are good.

998
00:49:09,510 --> 00:49:12,140
And if we choose evil,
then we are evil.

999
00:49:12,140 --> 00:49:17,720
And apparently,
man in those times,

1000
00:49:17,720 --> 00:49:20,480
and historically
many times before,

1001
00:49:20,480 --> 00:49:23,810
chose evil over goodness.

1002

00:49:23,810 --> 00:49:28,040

Except the question
why so many people

1003

00:49:28,040 --> 00:49:34,100

had to suffer because
some men chose evil

1004

00:49:34,100 --> 00:49:38,570

and why so many people were
permitted by God, if you will,

1005

00:49:38,570 --> 00:49:42,800

to die because we have
a free choice of good

1006

00:49:42,800 --> 00:49:47,420

over evil or evil of a good
is very hard to very hard

1007

00:49:47,420 --> 00:49:48,600

to grapple with.

1008

00:49:48,600 --> 00:49:52,280

So when evil is triumphant,
people will suffer.

1009

00:49:52,280 --> 00:49:54,530

And when people suffer,
we have to determine

1010

00:49:54,530 --> 00:49:58,160

whether evil is triumphant
because of a lack in man

1011

00:49:58,160 --> 00:50:02,390

or because of where was God.

1012

00:50:02,390 --> 00:50:05,930

Well, but why-- then
the real question

1013

00:50:05,930 --> 00:50:11,000

is, why did God give us a
choice of good and evil?

1014
00:50:11,000 --> 00:50:15,350
Why didn't God just say to us,
be good, and be done with it

1015
00:50:15,350 --> 00:50:16,700
and not have suffering?

1016
00:50:16,700 --> 00:50:19,100
Well, this is quite a
theological discussion.

1017
00:50:19,100 --> 00:50:21,420
I don't think we can go
much farther with it.

1018
00:50:21,420 --> 00:50:23,510
Otherwise, we'll
be here forever,

1019
00:50:23,510 --> 00:50:27,170
and our time is beginning
to run out, I see.

1020
00:50:27,170 --> 00:50:32,690
I want to ask you a few more,
probably two more questions.

1021
00:50:32,690 --> 00:50:35,210
When did you start talking
about the Holocaust

1022
00:50:35,210 --> 00:50:37,580
and what you experienced
and with whom?

1023
00:50:37,580 --> 00:50:40,980

1024
00:50:40,980 --> 00:50:45,000
I think the older generation,

the older Jewish generation,

1025

00:50:45,000 --> 00:50:48,690

is more receptive to
discussing the Holocaust

1026

00:50:48,690 --> 00:50:52,440

and acknowledged the
terror of the Holocaust

1027

00:50:52,440 --> 00:50:54,490

than the younger generations.

1028

00:50:54,490 --> 00:50:58,590

I will tell you that I have
three children, two girls

1029

00:50:58,590 --> 00:50:59,340

and a boy.

1030

00:50:59,340 --> 00:51:02,117

They're married, they
have lovely grandchildren.

1031

00:51:02,117 --> 00:51:02,700

I'm fortunate.

1032

00:51:02,700 --> 00:51:03,783

I have five grandchildren.

1033

00:51:03,783 --> 00:51:04,960

They have lovely children.

1034

00:51:04,960 --> 00:51:05,380

You're right.

1035

00:51:05,380 --> 00:51:06,713

You have a lovely grandchildren.

1036

00:51:06,713 --> 00:51:11,820

I have five lovely
grandchildren and, thanks God,

1037
00:51:11,820 --> 00:51:14,010
they live a very comfortable--

1038
00:51:14,010 --> 00:51:16,770
more than comfortable life.

1039
00:51:16,770 --> 00:51:21,630
And I know that they're all
active in Jewish causes,

1040
00:51:21,630 --> 00:51:22,900
Hadassah, if you will.

1041
00:51:22,900 --> 00:51:25,740
And they all belong to
temple, if you will.

1042
00:51:25,740 --> 00:51:26,940
My boy doesn't.

1043
00:51:26,940 --> 00:51:29,610
He doesn't believe in
Yiddishkeit at all,

1044
00:51:29,610 --> 00:51:31,620
but that's another story.

1045
00:51:31,620 --> 00:51:36,630
But they all lived a good
life in terms of morality.

1046
00:51:36,630 --> 00:51:39,390
And they're bored.

1047
00:51:39,390 --> 00:51:42,750
They're bored to
hear these stories.

1048
00:51:42,750 --> 00:51:48,030
And this is the generation, and
my grandchildren's generation,

1049
00:51:48,030 --> 00:51:52,590
those are the people who need
to know about it because this

1050
00:51:52,590 --> 00:51:53,760
cannot be forgotten.

1051
00:51:53,760 --> 00:51:55,260
It shouldn't be forgotten.

1052
00:51:55,260 --> 00:51:59,240
It may not be forgotten.

1053
00:51:59,240 --> 00:52:03,850
So the next question is obvious
what your answer will be.

1054
00:52:03,850 --> 00:52:08,110
What should be taught
to your grandchildren

1055
00:52:08,110 --> 00:52:12,790
and to American students
about the Holocaust?

1056
00:52:12,790 --> 00:52:15,490
The Holocaust?

1057
00:52:15,490 --> 00:52:16,870
The Holocaust.

1058
00:52:16,870 --> 00:52:18,190
It has to be taught.

1059
00:52:18,190 --> 00:52:19,420
Absolutely.

1060
00:52:19,420 --> 00:52:22,990
It's a terrible
part of our history.

1061

00:52:22,990 --> 00:52:27,100

Isn't the Hanukkah
taught and Purim?

1062

00:52:27,100 --> 00:52:32,080

And those are happy times,
even though Hanukkah

1063

00:52:32,080 --> 00:52:34,750

came after a bad time.

1064

00:52:34,750 --> 00:52:40,390

The loss of the temple as law
is certainly commemorated.

1065

00:52:40,390 --> 00:52:45,580

Orthodox Jews sit with
ashes on their head

1066

00:52:45,580 --> 00:52:48,760

to commemorate the
fall of the temple.

1067

00:52:48,760 --> 00:52:50,350

Not all orthodox Jews.

1068

00:52:50,350 --> 00:52:51,910

Many orthodox Jews.

1069

00:52:51,910 --> 00:52:55,780

But the point is this
is a recent event

1070

00:52:55,780 --> 00:52:59,180

in our Jewish history
that we all know about.

1071

00:52:59,180 --> 00:53:00,460

We all have lived it.

1072

00:53:00,460 --> 00:53:01,900

It's so recent.

1073
00:53:01,900 --> 00:53:03,730
It's not ancient history.

1074
00:53:03,730 --> 00:53:06,550
And because it's so
recent, perhaps we

1075
00:53:06,550 --> 00:53:11,050
can teach our children
and their children

1076
00:53:11,050 --> 00:53:14,350
to live lives so that
this history should not

1077
00:53:14,350 --> 00:53:15,070
repeat again.

1078
00:53:15,070 --> 00:53:18,160

1079
00:53:18,160 --> 00:53:22,720
It can't repeat again, because I
don't think that Jews can again

1080
00:53:22,720 --> 00:53:26,510
afford to lose 6 million more
because then we won't be left.

1081
00:53:26,510 --> 00:53:28,570
There won't be anybody left.

1082
00:53:28,570 --> 00:53:32,350
Other than your
questions that you

1083
00:53:32,350 --> 00:53:36,250
raised of a religious
nature, has this experience

1084
00:53:36,250 --> 00:53:42,170

had any other impact on you?

1085

00:53:42,170 --> 00:53:42,670

Yes.

1086

00:53:42,670 --> 00:53:47,350

I believe that I have become
even a more practicing

1087

00:53:47,350 --> 00:53:54,040

Jew, not religiously
now, than I have ever

1088

00:53:54,040 --> 00:53:57,250

thought that would
be possible because I

1089

00:53:57,250 --> 00:54:02,920

am a strong believer that
our traditions are so

1090

00:54:02,920 --> 00:54:08,980

important in order to learn
that we must live as a people

1091

00:54:08,980 --> 00:54:16,530

together, that if we don't
keep those traditions--

1092

00:54:16,530 --> 00:54:18,870

intermarriage, for instance,
is a terrible thing

1093

00:54:18,870 --> 00:54:21,570

because our traditions
are not being kept.

1094

00:54:21,570 --> 00:54:26,190

And slowly, slowly the
Jews are being disseminated

1095

00:54:26,190 --> 00:54:30,600

not by terror, but by

their own doing because we

1096
00:54:30,600 --> 00:54:33,700
don't practice tradition.

1097
00:54:33,700 --> 00:54:37,650
So what you're saying is, while
religiously you have questions,

1098
00:54:37,650 --> 00:54:42,870
you've become firmer
in your belief

1099
00:54:42,870 --> 00:54:47,635
that the traditions
of the Jewish people

1100
00:54:47,635 --> 00:54:48,510
should be maintained.

1101
00:54:48,510 --> 00:54:52,380
Yes, the tradition of the book,
the tradition of learning,

1102
00:54:52,380 --> 00:54:56,610
the tradition of the holidays,
the addition of the family, all

1103
00:54:56,610 --> 00:54:59,770
those things spell out survival.

1104
00:54:59,770 --> 00:55:05,070
And if we don't have that,
we will have no Jews.

1105
00:55:05,070 --> 00:55:09,830
Well, I want to thank you
for coming down and giving us

1106
00:55:09,830 --> 00:55:15,500
your unique experiences
of seeing these events,

1107

00:55:15,500 --> 00:55:18,560
both from the point of
view of a youngster who

1108

00:55:18,560 --> 00:55:21,740
was born in Germany,
from your point of view

1109

00:55:21,740 --> 00:55:27,260
of a young man who received
the American education

1110

00:55:27,260 --> 00:55:28,340
and background.

1111

00:55:28,340 --> 00:55:31,310
It's a unique experience
that you have,

1112

00:55:31,310 --> 00:55:37,830
and I think it was a very
important development for us.

1113

00:55:37,830 --> 00:55:41,330
I must tell you, it was
very important for me

1114

00:55:41,330 --> 00:55:45,740
too because I haven't bared
my soul as I have done here

1115

00:55:45,740 --> 00:55:47,110
in a very long time.

1116

00:55:47,110 --> 00:55:49,620

1117

00:55:49,620 --> 00:55:52,050
Well, we appreciate
your coming down.

1118

00:55:52,050 --> 00:55:56,950

And it's very important for us,
as you say, as it is for you.

1119
00:55:56,950 --> 00:55:59,060
Thank you very much.

1120
00:55:59,060 --> 00:56:17,000