

RG-50.031.0146

Two parts – 2 hr. 54 min total

Summary

Interview I (1 hr. 45 min) **Kevin Pogany** born on October 15, 1971 St. Louis, Missouri, son of Holocaust survivor Dennis Pogany & mother Anca (née Furu - her father Maurice born in Hungary, her mother Berta born in Romania), Kevin was 38 before his father Dennis shared his experiences in the Holocaust, including his father starving to death in slave labor camp; Kevin shares his emotional visit to USHMM & visiting Budapest where his father showed him family apt/store stolen by Nazis, memories of family is forced into ghetto, another memory of a Gentile gypsy who rescued 4-5 yr. old Dennis after he ran away from Budapest ghetto; Kevin's regrets never knowing his paternal grandparents but feeling import in sharing father's story with his children; Kevin's thoughts on growing up Jewish, the impact on his father losing his father as a small boy; **Interview II** (at 21:30) **Jeffrey Pogany** born in 1975 Chicago, Ill recalls his father escaping Hungary with a suitcase holding bottles of alcohol to bribe border guards; apt below family apt "blown out" by Nazi tank shooting from street; Jeffrey shares other memories his father disclosed on Budapest ghetto; Jeffrey's daughter " born on November 12, 2009 Julia "Violet" (English translation-named after his father's mother); Jeffrey's aim to take his children to Europe so they may know his father's story; at Jeffrey's wedding, father shares story of how he was able to hold onto his parents' wedding rings gifted to Jeffrey/bride (father had given his family his valuables before being taken to slave labor camp); **Holocaust Survivor Interview III** (at 34:20) Kevin & Jeffrey's father, **Dennis Pogany** born in Budapest September 17, 1935 – ancestors named Pollichek but with rise of anti-Semitism, changed to Pogany; paternal grandparents die before Dennis' birth; maternal grandfather Dennis knew until age 5-6, maternal grandmother endures Holocaust experience along with Dennis; father born in Ozd, Hungary, mother born in Budapest; closest friend, shoemaker's son (a Christian) who lived across street; family store sold feathers for beds (mother & grandmother ran store); father (chemist) worked in Egypt in pharmaceuticals, spoke 7 languages, with rise of antisemitism in Budapest, father able to stay in Egypt but wants family to return to Hungary; Nazis give 48 hr. for Dennis' family to evacuate store/apt (in Budapest 6th district); leading to neighborhood's liquidation, Christian friends forbidden to play with Dennis, family forced to wear star; (circa June 1944) Dennis & mother visit father at his first slave labor camp (in Budapest suburb, name of camp Dennis does not recall), was last memory of father; Dennis recalls not being allowed to approach a Christian, required to cross street to other side; mother has calm demeanor through turbulent times, maternal grandmother loving humorous, smoked "asthma cigarettes" (marijuana); acting on rumor that if parents were taken, children would be safe at Jewish Federation children's home & through Raoul Wallenberg efforts, mother/grandmother/9-yr. old Dennis move to safer shelter (encountering an amazing autistic math talent) but still have dire conditions, Dennis runs away, returning to their store; kind gypsy Gentile woman living behind store returns Dennis to mother at risk to her own life; Jews in Dennis' new shelter rounded up January 7, 1945, marched to selection; Dennis witnesses 60-yr. old mother slapped by Nazi; women with children & grandmother marched to ghetto, becoming few survivors from the 200 people rounded up that night, next day, lined up at Danube, positioned so bodies would drop into river, ordered to step out of shoes & were shot; liberation by the Russians; returning to

store, finding little damage; physical rehab on farm; learning father had been killed at Gunkirchen with only 1 loaf bread per 7 persons-15,000 starved to death; Budapest now under Communist rule, finishing 3rd-6th grade; grandmother dies of what was "considered at time old age 63"; family store becomes part of Hungarian Communist headquarters (family was "given some money for it"); bar-mitzvah Dohany St. Synagogue/Budapest; attends technical high school; 1953 death of mother from surgery; leaving Communist Hungary 1957, assisted by uncle in Paris & Viennese Amer Embassy, on US Marine ship, arriving to Brooklyn Navy Yard 1957; Milford, Ct. uncle assists with employment; obtaining pharmacy degree Univ of Ct; Dennis shares impact the Holocaust & Jewish experience has had on his life, e.g. Jewish emphasis on education, Dennis obtains PhD (wife Anca obtains Masters); Dennis' struggle to revisit his story, e.g. not seeking German govt reparation; feelings experienced in returning to Budapest, especially bldg. where people had been taken to the Danube; mixed emotions on maintaining the memory of the Holocaust; photographs of ancestral family, many of which victims of the Holocaust, photographs of wife Anca (born near Bucharest, died 2004), two sons' weddings, grandchildren; Dennis reads aloud his mother's detailed account of events suffered in Budapest; another account written by survivors who witnessed Dennis' father's death at Gunkirchen; official death certificate of Dennis' father issued by Hungarian govt; document from Hungarian Jewish Federation confirming father's killing by starvation; picture of Budapest building plaque with incorrect engraving, Dennis corrects record that it was "women over 60 & women with children" marched back to ghetto, where all other women present were "shot into the Danube"; Dennis' bar mitzvah document.