

RG-50.031.0164

Summary

In Part 2, Jerry Shane shares the same testimony as in Part 1 but with additional details, which have been interpolated into Part 1 (cited in parentheses).

Part 1 [50 min]

Jerry Shane (born on January 9, 1928 on papers only-real birthday not known) b. Jankiel Cieszyński in Siedlce, Poland; Jerry adopted by step-father Hershel Cieszyński (Communist)-a brush & shoemaker, mother Chaya Leah Ozdoba (Orthodox Jew) a seamstress, two younger brothers Abraham, Rubin; pre-war home life Otwock, Poland, Jewish/public education, religious home, Yiddish spoken only in home; antisemitisms begin, little brother beaten to near-death, Jerry witnesses the beard cut off of berated Jewish man; best Non-Jewish friend tries to turn Jerry over to Nazis; between ages 10-15 yrs. old, many times captured, always escaped (Jerry expands on numerous escapes in Part 2); family forced into Otwock Ghetto; mother sends 10 year old Jerry alone on train to grandfather's (a rabbi) farm to obtain food, mother so impressed with how Jerry escapes Nazi arrest, she encourages solo train rides to other villages to find little jobs & food; Jerry barefooted, blonde-haired poses as Gentile peasant (learns Lord's Prayer & how to do sign of the cross), uses funny songs at train station to pass hat for money, steals coal for money (there was black market commerce on the trains); in ghetto, brother Abraham dies from gangrene after getting frostbite, father dies from hunger (both die in same bed where Jerry was sleeping), mother later killed at Treblinka; in villages, Jerry sometimes sleeps in peasant barns, steals from their fruit trees, steals & drinks warm eggs from chickens, drinks from cow's udder; Jerry witnesses Jewish children taken from Gentile woman & shot; another Gentile woman saves Jerry, telling Nazi that he was hers; photograph of mother's only sister & another of his immediate family; panhandling in train station, sleeping on window sill or behind bookcase; hears man interrogated if he is circumcised, witnesses naked people shot, wetting self from fear; seeing trains with imprisoned Jews from different countries, some with broken limbs, seeing recent graves of people that had been taken from trains; selling candy on trains, prided self for becoming—according to Jerry “successful businessman”; liberation by Russians; Polish family (Kroll) in Garwolin, Poland want to adopt Jerry but he is outed after discovery of circumcision, his Polish friends beat him up; Jerry is placed in Jewish orphanage-Lublin; Warsaw Central Committee post-war assistance; resumes public ed, endures another post-war beating because he is Jewish; February 21, 1948 immigration to US; two daughters, granddaughters; discussion/importance of sharing story; Jerry returns to discussing another Nazi arrest, presenting as Gentile, abusive interrogation, sense of abandonment, tearing skin off his penis & resorting to spewing antisemitism to escape; another traumatizing interrogation when Nazi fires bullets around Jerry.

Part 1 [2 hours 17 min]

same testimony as above but with additional details (many placed in parentheses in above part 1; part 2, Jerry additionally shares details on the danger of stealing a Gentile's birth certificate, additional information on his post-war experiences, thoughts on being Jewish, more on Lublin

Jewish orphanage; fleeing into Vienna, Austria, rescued by British Army, Bremerhaven DP Camp, American Army's efforts assisting US immigration; his step-father's first wife had been beaten by step-father's brothers because she could not conceive children, brothers forcing step-father to divorce first wife, Jerry's mother too had been divorced, both in bereavement met in a park; Jerry crosses Atlantic on SS Marine Tiger 1948; in Chicago, assisted by Erna Ganz of Holocaust Memorial Foundation (HMFI) who came to US on same ship; eventually owns a Polish meat market; becomes President of Evanston, Illinois branch of B'nai B'rith Anti-defamation League; joins HMFI speakers' bureau sharing his story with students; discussion on Israel and Holocaust survivors' struggle in sharing their experience, but reminded of Erna Ganz' "Educate, educate, educate."