

Good evening. My name is Toby Ticktin Back. And I'm the director of the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo. It is August 24, 1987. And tonight, our guest is Dr. Ronald Hauser. Dr. Hauser, do you mind if I call you Ronald? Or do you want to make it a little formal?

No, no, that's great. Right.

Let's start with your story. You've told us that you were born in 1927 in Stuttgart. Will you tell us a little bit about your childhood there?

Yes, of course. I was a son of a pediatrician. And as a son of a pediatrician, my earliest memories were being hidden whenever I got sick because I wasn't good advertising for my father's business. But of course, my childhood was during a turbulent time and was probably something other than normal, even in the earliest years, because the clouds of Nazism really began before 1932.

Though I myself have no memory of these things, I do remember in the family life, the growing concern, very early, that things were going to get worse and worse, and my father buying a little cottage out in the country where we could hide out, and more and more time was spent there. And as I learned to read and became somehow aware that, for some reason, I was not a wanted person in among the kids.

Did you not have Jewish playmates?

I had very few Jewish playmates. My family felt itself to be German. And though we had associations with the Jewish community, mainly, our friends were-- or my personal friends, my childhood friends were non-Jewish. And I had some very good friends that were not Jewish and that continued to be friends throughout that time. But basically, I remember the problem of dealing with a relatively hostile world. I mean, the kids there.

So you felt rejected from an early childhood on?

Right, right. After kindergarten-- I mean, through kindergarten, I think, things were fairly normal.

That was about 1933.

Right. But beginning with the first grade and second grade, I felt--

Got in their way, as you say.

--I mean I was not a part of the social life of the schoolchildren. My parents put me into normal public school. And most Jewish kids were being rapidly withdrawn from the public school and were sent to the synagogue to the Jewish school. But my parents, with all three of us-- I have a brother, an older brother, and sister-- all of us remained in the public school system right until we left. I mean, when we got-- I showed you a report card that I had that was the very last semester.

Before we get to that, were there not grandparents or family to insulate you against this hostility?

I had two sets of grandparents living in the same city-- at the time, in Stuttgart, at the time we're speaking of. And they used to babysit me and so forth. And I had a close relationship with them. I think, probably, the closest family relationship I had, I sensed, and the warmest feelings that I have were my mother's parents, who-- I used to go there after school and spend time. But I did not have what one might call a life full of youthful activities because that was the first place where everything was closed out. There were no camps, no--

After-school activities.

--after-school activities. That was all the Hitler Youth activities at that time. And I was not permitted to be in a more--

So you felt like an outsider very early on.

So I was sort of isolated very much. And being the only Jew in the school, finally, dropped out one at a time.

Were you an academic achiever? Did that help you?

I was not-- it certainly did not help me to be in this position. I was very much intimidated. I was physically rather strong. And I was able to defend myself physically from my fellow student.

You mean there were actual physical fights?

Oh, yeah, there were regular fights. And I was able to gain some sort of personal respect by being big, kind of, and being able to--

And fighting back.

--fighting back and keeping them off me that way. But it was not a pleasant thing, nevertheless.

How about relationships with teachers?

Some teachers were just terrible.

Because you were Jewish?

Because I was Jewish.

In what way were they terrible?

Well, they used to beat me up. I mean, one particular--

Physically beat you up?

--physically beat me up. One teacher regularly used to take me into a room outside the classroom and used to really beat me.

And you never told your parents?

I never told my parents.

Why not? There are many reasons, but now that you think about it.

There are many reasons, but likely, I really-- I mean, the beatings were always for some reason, which only now or much later, I discovered were rather trivial reasons to be beating me. But I did feel guilt. I mean, I felt--

That you were doing something wrong.

--I had done something terrible and that whatever triviality these beatings were for were punishable offenses. I did not really connect it at that time with religious prejudice or anything other. I knew that I was an outsider within the group. But I didn't want to tell my parents because I was afraid I was going to get punished again.

So you were really in a bind there.

I felt very isolated with myself.

And you couldn't relate to your brother and sister and tell them about your problems? Were they having problems?

They were having similar problems. But I never talked about this. To this day, I've never talked about many of these things with family members.

Talk about family members-- perhaps you could tell us about a pin that you recently borrowed from your brother.

Yes.

I think we'll have that on the screen now.

Well, it's one of the more amusing stories because, of course--

There it is. It's on the screen there.

Some teachers were very supportive. And the last teacher I personally had in Germany also was very supportive and wouldn't allow me to be segregated from various activities-- one of the activities being swimming, for example, going to the local pool. On the pool, on the outside, there was a big sign, Juden verboten-- Jews prohibited--

Prohibit.

--from entering the inner sanctum of the pool. And the teacher just absolutely forced me to go. He said, no, no. Nobody goes unless you go along. And so there were such teachers too.

But they were taking chances.

They were taking chances.

Someone could squeal on them.

Somebody could squeal on them. And that was the case in my brother's great victory. He was a good runner. And he was one of the best. He was a high school student. And he was one of the best high school runners in the city. And they had a all-high school run-off, 1935, as the pin indicates. And he won several races and was one of the athletes invited up to the podium after the race to be decorated by Gauleiter so-and-so so-and-so. I have no idea what his name was anymore, but the guy with brown uniform, the swastika, and so forth.

And they didn't know they were decorating a little Jewish boy?

As a matter of fact, when my brother came up-- and none of the family looks particularly Jewish-- he looked kind of German. And the man held a big speech about this wonderful example of Aryan youth that was standing in front of him and gave him this pin. And only after that did some of the teachers in my brother's school begin to debate the issue of whether it was proper to have had him participate in this race. And in future years, in the two years that were left, my brother was excluded from that activity, although no one ever actually squealed on the teacher for allowing him to participate that one year, in 1935.

So he had a minor victory.

A minor, amusing victory. It was probably the last one.

So your school years are not happy. What about home life and other circumstances?

Well, the home life tended to be-- I mean, one did not come home and talk about these things.

That sounds very German, very proper.

Right. And especially that impersonal pronoun that I used. That's right. We did not talk about this much. I mean, what we talked about in relationship to this were a certain emergency planning, that if something happens-- and the something was never clearly spelled out-- we would all meet in this little village outside the city, where we had this tiny little cabin, a one-room cabin among farms and so forth, very isolated from any kind of scrutiny.

I mean, I was maybe eight years old when that land was purchased and that little cabin was built. And I remember my parents teaching me the way to get there. Even as an eight-year-old kid, I could go through the woods. It was 10 miles or so.

Did you ever have to use that little house?

I used to go there frequently. I mean, we spent vacation time there. No, we did not. Nothing ever occurred that caused us to pull the alarm. But it was clear that such things could happen.

Perhaps you'd like to tell us about the report card that--

The report card.

--has a special item on it. There it is on the screen. I see religious at the top.

This is not a report card I'm terribly proud of. And perhaps--

It says 1937.

--the good thing is that hardly anyone who's liable to see that will be able to interpret the symbols. I can still interpret them all. But it is not a great report card. It's not failing, but it's not great. But the first item there in the upper left-hand column is religion. And a lot of people didn't know that even under the Nazis, the old German tradition of not separating religion from the state, that every child was required to spend one hour in religious instruction.

But I thought, at that time, the only religion was Nazism--

Well, I mean--

--up until a certain point.

--it continued throughout that time, as you see on the report card.

You still have religion though. '37.

I think you can see the--

Well, there's a 7 up there.

--date on the upper.

So you're 10 years old.

So in 1937-- actually, the next page has 1938 on it-- religion was a required thing. There's no grade there, as you will see. And well, it was required. I mean, now, the Catholic kids went to one room in my class. And the Protestant kids went to another room. Probably, the whole school got together. I never participated in that.

And a clergyman from that faith would come?

And a clergyman from that faith would come to the school. And they would have lesson. And throughout the whole city, this was a common hour. I think it was Thursday morning at 10 o'clock or so, something like that. Well, I was sent out, I mean, alone. I mean, there were no other Jews in that year, 1937.

Actually, the bad year was the previous year, 1936. That was the most formative year in this respect with me because I was sent out to the synagogue. And the synagogue was maybe 10 minutes' walking distance away. And I walked to the synagogue. I got to the synagogue and was very badly treated by the rabbi, who, in my childish imagination, was angry at me for being late, which I had no particular personal responsibility, I understand.

But I felt very guilty about it. And I was made to feel guilty. It didn't occur to me until many years later that the reason he was angry was because I continued to be in the German school system. I should have been in the Jewish school by this time. But in any case, he treated me very badly. And I don't know, if you have a-- that other part of the report card on the film.

Yes, we can fit that. There it is.

Yeah, that shows a very bad grade that I got in religion.

What does it actually say?

That says, barely passing, the equivalent of a D there. And I can't quite read it on the screen. But it's a report card issued by the Israeli Community School of Stuttgart. And it doesn't say much, other than give me a bad grade. This one here is dated the 13th of November, 1935. That must have been the bad year.

Oh, 1935. 1935.

In 1935, right.

Well, were you the only child getting religious instruction?

No, no.

It was a class?

All schools, including the Jewish school,

Oh, including the Jews.

--there was a Board of Education law that all students had to have an hour of religion at that time.

So you were with a group of children. But you didn't have a chance to get?

I was with a group of children. All the other children, of course, knew Hebrew pretty well and had some sort of connection to the Jewish community. I was a total outsider. I came in there.

And you were made fun of?

And well, not really. I was just-- didn't fit in at all. I had no relationships with anyone there. And I was badly treated by the teacher, who lectured me a lot, threatened me a lot.

The rabbi teacher?

Right, then sent me out to the other school at the end of the hour. I then went back to my public school class.

You must have been late again.

Of course, I was late. I was 10 minutes late getting back to class. And then, especially in that year, I believe it was either '35 or '36, I'm not quite sure, but I had a teacher named Eichler-- I remember his name to this day-- who then used that excuse for being late. First of all, he made me recite a Nazi slogan in front of the class. And then he took me in next door and he beat me.

He beat you up.

He beat me up with a stick.

What a sad story for a little boy.

Yeah. That was a real problem.

And you never told your parents?

I never told my parents. And the unfortunate victim of that series of events was the fact that what it really drove out of me was religion, strangely enough.

No, that's not strange at all.

Well, I don't know. I could have blamed it on other things. But somehow, I was never able to--

To relate to--

--to relate to religious organization since that time.

Well, did you have any religious observance at all at home-- Sabbath, holidays? Did it mean anything?

Minimally. Right, minimally.

But it didn't mean anything to you, especially after this.

After this, I can never remember, really, ever comprehending, personally, religious thought. I mean, it seemed strange to me from then, from those things.

You were just completely isolated from it.

Right. It seemed like from another world to me after that. And I mean, this is a repeated action. It's-- didn't just happen once, but happened weekly. Every time, I knew it was going to happen.

So it really traumatized you.

I knew I was going to be beaten up. I knew I was going to face a satire, a sarcastic talk of the rabbi. And it happened week in, week out, the whole school year long.

You never played sick on Thursdays?

Well, I don't know. I might have.

Couldn't get away with a whole year of it, though.

No, I might have. I think I remember a couple of times cutting the religious class out altogether and just not going, just going for a walk instead. But usually, I went. And it was a most unpleasant, unusual kind of an experience for a young kid.

How much longer did you stay in the school system or then in the country?

I stayed in the school system until about a week before we left for America, 1938.

What month was that in 1938?

That was in-- I think we left in March or April 1938. I can't remember the specifics.

So that was after Crystal Night?

No, no. It was before.

Crystal Night was--

That was in the fall.

--November. Oh, November 1938. So it was afterwards. So you missed that. Now, what happened to you? How did you emigrate? What were the circumstances there?

Well, the circumstances were very lucky for my family. I mean, I was unusually lucky. Many others were trapped, who were not-- didn't have that constellation of good fortunes that happened upon-- was heaped upon my family. My parents happened to be born in Alsace-Lorraine.

In France.

My father was born in Strasbourg. My mother was born in [FRENCH]. And at a certain point in the immigration process, we were beginning to process a departure for Chile. We were, in fact, learning Spanish.

Why Chile?

Well that was the only--

Was an easy place to get to.

--open, yeah. But suddenly, it was possible to be put-- I mean, the problem was that German Jews had way over-subscribed to the American visa--

Quota.

--quota. And so we were suddenly put on the French quota, which was wide open. And that allowed us, then, to be processed for emigration to the US.

Did you feel badly about leaving Germany?

Not particularly. I mean, I did have friends, as I mentioned before.

Did you leave your grandparents behind?

Yes, of course. And I have very harsh feelings to this day about an abandonment.

They didn't survive?

And I can imagine, my parents were terribly injured by that necessity.

Did they go through the camps?

They went. One grandmother died just before we left Germany, just a few days. And one grandfather died of natural causes before being -- before the other two were taken away to camps and died--

In the camps.

--in the camps.

Did you lose other relatives in the camps?

Many other relatives, dozens of relatives.

Any one that you were very close to?

Well, my grandmother, who--

Your mother's mother?

--my mother's mother-- I was extremely close to. I think I mentioned it before.

You mentioned that you felt good with her. Right. She, of course, disappeared. And my father's father, they had actually gotten married, my father's father and mother's mother, in order to be able to move in together after their spouses died. And things were really tightening down, obviously.

But there were many other uncles and cousins. One aunt of mine got out to Israel at that time. But virtually everyone else who was left in Germany either died in concentration camp or escaped from-- there were a few people who escaped from concentration camp and who got out of Germany very late.

But most people left behind did not survive the war. I mean, one of the survivor problems that one has is that these people die and you don't know of it. I mean, so they, in a certain psychological sense, they don't die at all. They have never died. They're never mourned.

You haven't grieved, right.

So you haven't grieved. They suddenly disintegrated. They are no more. But you are not aware of their death. And that's one of the terrible, cruel things I find I have difficulty dealing with in my older age now. I mean, I repressed all that for many years. And now, as I'm getting older myself, I think more and more about these problems, especially about--

About those people didn't really say goodbye to.

--right. And whose death, in a sense, one-- I was forced to deny. I mean, you didn't hear about it until years later. You keep hoping that maybe they survived. And of course, they didn't. You simply don't hear of them. And then you get a little bit of information here and there. They must have been in Theresienstadt between these days. And somebody saw them there. That kind of report begins to come upon your consciousness. But the reality of their death is not actually absorbed.

It's also the trauma of growing up as a little child without grandparents, without uncles, without aunts, without cousins.

That's right. The family was totally scattered. It was a large and rather close family. I mean, distant cousins and whole



large groups of people used to meet once a year, at least. They all were settled in an area, let's say, the size of Rhode Island.

So they would have family reunions?

And there were a lot of family reunions. And there were a lot of-- lot of closeness. Everyone knew each other. And the kids got together once a year. And of course, the closer relatives were also-- there were daily contacts. As I said, my grandparents were a part of my daily life as a young child. And these people all scattered. They're all over the world, those that survived. I mean, roughly taking my total family that I was aware of, that I am aware of now, let's say, half survived, I would say, which is pretty good.

But they're dispersed?

But they're all over the world. I mean, they're in Australia and England.

Do you visit with any of these?

No, no one.

No contacts with--

No contacts with anyone.

--with any one of them?

None.

Not even the one in Israel?

As a matter of fact, I have a rather well-known relative, whom I recently ran into in Buffalo. She is a novelist.

Living here in Buffalo?

No. She's a novelist living in New York. Her name is Marianne Hauser. I said, I think I may be related to you. And she absolutely denied that possibility. It happens that just this summer, I got some information, which definitely-- as a matter of fact, there's a paper that I showed.

Oh, that family tree that you showed me before.

And she's on that. I mean, she is.

Well, why would she deny it?

Well, for the same reason I would probably deny a relationship to someone who came up to me and said, we're probably-- I would say, probably not. There are a lot of Hausers around. But it so happens that I had previously had an inkling that she was, indeed, related. And she does show up on a list of survivors.

But you would think in a family that's lost so many family members that you would cleave to each other.

Well, the trouble is that we spent so many years denying the importance of family, in a sense. I think that's one of the psychological effects of all of this, a sort of a-- in order to survive, you have to deny--

Deny.

--the importance of a family and the past.

It's another victory for Hitler-- not only total annihilation, but psychological--

Psychological.

--annihilation.

It is a very strong problem that has been-- powerful problem that has been vested in--

In so many survivors.

--many millions of survivors, right.

Yes.

And it manifests itself in different ways. I mean, my parents, for example, got to California. And they anchored themselves in a small town. They would never go anywhere. I mean, they became absolutely rooted to that place.

That was their security vow?

That was their security. I'm just the opposite. I mean, I cannot stand associating myself with a place. I mean, one of the things I love about Buffalo is that it's right on the Canadian border.

So that you can run?

I mean, I can run. I'm always looking for the exit. I mean, when I'm in a room like this room, I'm always aware of where the exit is. I'm constantly afraid to put down roots.

That they might be disturbed again.

Right. I don't want to be disturbed. I want to take off in time. I mean, after all, it's a tremendously fortunate thing that my immediate family, my parents left. My father was a leading pediatrician in a large German city with a tremendous practice. These political events begin to happen. They get worse, and worse, and worse. And how many millions of people said to themselves--

It'll blow over.

--it's going to blow over. It can't get any worse. It's got to get better. And at what point does one say, no, I'm going to leave all this to an uncertain future.

Tremendous courage.

Well, considerable courage, right.

Was your father able to reestablish a practice?

Yes, right, he was able to do that.

Did you and your family remain close to each other?

We did not remain close to each other. I mean, we were.

Of course, you were still a little boy.

I was still a little boy. I was 11 when I came to this country. And I, of course, lived in my parents' house throughout my schooling. Right after I graduated from high school, I was drafted into the US Army. And I left home. And I never returned, really, from that, I mean, in any significant way.

There was never any hostility. But there was never any closeness in my family, including right to this day. I have a brother and sister in California. I visit them. And we're perfectly friendly. There's no hostility. But there's no real closeness, either. We don't really talk. We don't talk to each other.

That's it. The communication isn't there.

We visit. And we, say, spend an evening. But we don't have any intensive relationship.

Are you close with your children?

I try to be, yes. I try to be, but probably not adequately.

Well, everybody feels that. Do they know the stories about your--

They know these stories, yes.

--your school days and the problems that occurred?

Yes. I have not stressed these things with my children. I mean, in fact, I haven't really thought about them until the last few years.

Why do you think you started to think about what happened to you?

Well, I started to understand that there was a certain psychological danger to me in my all too ready ability to repress, to get out of my mind unpleasant things. And it began to interfere somewhat with my everyday life. And I simply had to start reviewing my life. And I got some professional help to--

To embrace your--

--to deal with this business. And this started me thinking and remembering. And I remember a great deal more now than I've ever remembered.

Well, you blocked it out, obviously.

I blocked it out or most simply, didn't think of it anymore. I had kind of cut out the family from my consciousness in a certain way and cut out my memories. I never collected photographs, for example. I had no apparent desire to dwell on the past at all.

And now, you are collecting things?

Now, I'm beginning to collect things, yes.

I think it's interesting that you asked your brother for that pin.

Yeah, not only the pin, but family photographs and so forth that we found in my father's house when he died, and things like that.

Now, they mean something to you.

I've been picking up. I still have more things to go through that I'm sort of interested in these things now. And not so much because I would like to create relationships with these people, some of whom are still alive, but rather just to get to know myself and to get to understand the psychological reactions that I had.

Have you been back to Germany?

I've been back to Germany many times, yes.

To your hometown?

Yes, yes, yes.

How do you relate to that?

Strangely sentimentally.

With all the--

I was always surprised.

--negative things that happened to you.

Despite all the negative things. And I have-- I do not visit any people there. I do not--

Just places.

I look at places. And I remember places from my childhood.

Did you go back to the little house?

And I go there. I went back to that little house, yeah-- not entered, but I looked at it from a distance.

Is it still a family house?

Well, it's still there. I don't know whose it is.

It's yours, isn't it?

Oh, no, no, no.

It doesn't belong to the family?

No. As a matter of fact, I think my father gave it to somebody who was very helpful to us in our last days, simply as gesture of-- I mean, it would have been confiscated by the state, as everything else was.

So this was a gift for helping out.

This was a gift to someone who helped out, yes.

How was your acclimatization to your new life in the new world?

Rather unconscious. And I felt very good coming in America right away.

Like an escape, you put all that behind you.

Yes, I mean, all that pressure and all that sense-- I mean, I was an outsider initially here too, but it was an altogether different thing. And I immediately began relating with the other kids in the school. That was the most important thing, as I remember, because everyone was interested in my experience, as kids used to come and ask me.

And in fact, I think the teacher had me tell some stories about Germany. And it created a-- I mean, I was immediately bonded, creating bonds with the other kids. I had friends right away. And even though I didn't know much English at all when I came, I learned it enormously quickly-- after one year, I think.

You were probably highly motivated.

I sort of-- I never had any problems anymore, no.

Did you have Jewish friends at that time too?

No, not many.

Where did you settle? San Francisco. Well, the first year was in San Francisco. And after that, my father began a practice in Vallejo, California, outside of San Francisco, from where, after a year, we had to move because we were Germans suddenly.

Germans?

Yeah, that's right. We were enemy aliens. When the war started, we became enemy aliens-- Germans, that is. And we had to leave the city of Vallejo, California, which was a naval city and was restricted. And Germans were not allowed to go there. And we had to-- so my parents moved to the next town north of Vallejo, which happens to be the town of Napa, where the wine is grown.

Nice place to live.

Nice place to live.

And my father began practicing medicine there. And that's where I went to high school.

So that was a good period?

Played football.

And you were happy?

Was happy. Even though as an enemy alien, I was not allowed to leave Napa, I was not allowed more than five miles outside of town. And I have to, after all these years, admit to a crime because I was on the football team.

And you left?

And we used to go all over Northern California with the football team.

Well, did you know about that restriction?

Of course, I knew about the restriction.

Did your coach know about it too?

My coach knew about the restrictions. But somehow, I always lied to my parents. I don't know if they knew that I went

or didn't go. But I pretended. Somehow, I never told them about the trips. But we used to make regular trips.

Well, I think we'll be winding up soon. You've talked a lot. Is there something that you want to say in summation about your own life or in general about what happened?

Well, I think-- well, I mean, I always, of course, feel very fortunate and somehow, feel some of that survivor's guilt, that is to say, having deserted people, even though nothing could be done at that time. There's a certain feeling of killed for just being alive, yeah, after so many close relatives die. That becomes a major problem in life.

Which is expressed by all the survivors I've met.

I think so. I mean, that--

That tremendous guilt-- why?

--cannot be escaped, yeah.

But on the other hand, the expression is I've been chosen for a reason.

That's perhaps too religious for me a notion. The secondary effect, of course, is that the family as it had been in 1930, let's say, when I was very young, or 1933 still, that close-knit, happy, big family that I only vaguely remember was totally wiped out-- I mean, not dead, but there is no relationship between people-- some people in Australia, Chile, and Bolivia, and England, and East Germany, a few, and Switzerland.

East Germany? You have relatives in East Germany?

I have relatives in East Germany, and Switzerland, and France. All over. No one in Germany-- there's not a single relative who has chosen to return to Germany.

Except for the East Germany.

Well, yeah, I think he sort of was there. I mean, he somehow survived the war. He had lived in the Berlin area before the war. And I don't know-- I have no idea how he got through the war. But I do know he-- one particular person, whom I vaguely knew when I was a child, he was maybe 12 years older than me, is a journalist. I know of him as a journalist in East Germany.

Are you in touch with this person?

No, not at all.

No.

So you're really dispersed all over the world, not only geographically, but in kinship.

Yeah. There seems to be no-- I mean, if I could, if it's possible, analyze your own psyche, there seems to be no drive to get together with people because the bond-- what can we talk about? We can talk about those things we don't want to talk about in a certain way. So there's no great drive to-- or I have not, throughout my life, felt a great drive to try to look up relatives. I have some inclination to do that now in my dotage.

Far from dotage. But it might be of great interest to your children to find their long-lost cousins and other relatives.

I think so, yes. I recently just happened to make contact with cousins from-- who live in France and found it to be a very pleasant experience that I hope to repeat soon.

So you made the initial effort. And you got your feet wet. And it wasn't bad.

Right, right someone I hadn't seen since I was 10 years old and just saw again, and unfortunately, 50 years later for the first time.

Well, since we're all going to live to be 120, so you just pick up and go forward.

See them again when I'm around there.

So there's hope. And there's more to being together than reminiscing or thinking of the negative things.

Yes, of course. But we do share that-- or I assume we all share that terrible grief. And somehow--

Sometimes, it takes one catalyst, one family member to trigger a reunion. Maybe that will come about-- maybe fragmented or in general.

Yes. I would like that to happen. But it's difficult. It takes a certain energy, a certain positive desire to accomplish something. I know my grandfather, my father's father, was the chronicler for the family. He was sort of the family historian. And his very last letters that are known to me, but that I do not have, speak of the necessity for someone to take over the task of keeping track of where people are and keeping some sort of a relationship alive.

Maybe that's your destiny.

I don't know. I don't know.

That remains to be seen.

I'm thinking about it. But my first attempt to try to get one of my family members to admit a relationship--

Oh. this journalist--

Well, not a journalist, I mean--

--it bombed.

--no, she's a novelist.

A novelist.

A well-known novelist. And one right-- having quite a celebrity in New York just in these last few years. Shes been a writer for a long time.

But yet you've got to home base with your relatives and friends.

And friends, yes. Actually, they came to see us on a-- they were on a trip to America.

Nice.

But they-- I happened to be in California when they passed through. So I got to speak to them. And it was a very interesting and important experience, I think, for me. Perhaps there'll be more.

That's positive. Is there anything else that you'd like to say?

Well.

Any message for your children?

A message for my children? Yes, my children, of course, are also affected by this, perhaps one might point out, because they do not-- I mean, their family also stops very short. I mean, they are aware of their grandparents, my parents. But otherwise, there are no relatives.

There's no horizontal line anymore.

Right, no cousins really to speak of. I mean, their own cousins, but no second cousins. All that sense of a large family is gone. But of course, that's not unusual in America. It is an American phenomenon too.

Yes, we're more of a nuclear thing.

Because everyone sort of came over at a certain time. And families have all been disrupted. So that's not especially isolating, yeah. So it's just kind of a relatively normal experience.

But yet, we keep in touch.

Well, not all families do.

More or less, more or less.

Yes, with some members, I have.

Well, thank you very much for telling your story. It's not easy to go back. It's easier to go forward.

It's not a tremendously pleasant thing. But I do think it's important that even these minor little things-- I mean, after all, I'm only peripherally involved in all this. Nevertheless, these things--

It's significant.

--history is made up of the minor things as well as of the major catastrophes.

That right, it's part of a whole.

We must have to.

We thank you very much for bearing it. Thank you.

Well, thank you for having me.