

Take six is up.

OK. Let's go back to that.

Well, I really think I was lucky. As I tried to explain, you didn't know where you go, which direction is good. The right could be good, the left could be good. We came to this farmer just by accident. I mean, it's not a planned thing or something like that. So I really say it was really lucky.

I wasn't that wise, and smart, and I know what I'm doing. I didn't know what I'm doing. I just happened-- we went and we came to the right place at the right time. And that is really what I was thinking. It's not that I was smarter than other people that survived. The luck was with us.

So you don't think there were choices that Jews had in those?

No. No, there was not any choice because all the people were already dead. And the Polish population, in a way, they were happy it happened because a lot of the Jewish houses they got, and they were hiding things from the Jews that didn't come back.

A matter of fact, this Friedlander, there was the one from the Polish side, one of the organizers from the uprising, he came back after the war. And a year after that, he went back to get the house from his parents back. And other people lived there. They killed him because he came to pick up the house. So there was not any cooperation, any compassion.

It was just, in a way, some people-- some people, I don't want to generalize all of them. A lot of people were really happy what happened to the Jews because they got businesses and also the changed world anyway. But anyway, they had a lot of profit of it, the houses, all the houses.

You see this in the other movie. You see how he came back, he talked with the people. And what they lived in the houses of the Jews. And they're happy they got the houses. They didn't get back.

You don't seem like it would be easy for you to kill, even that German that you killed. Tell me how dealt.

Well, it was really a moment when they put your knife on your throat, you do everything. That really was-- to best prescribe it is that is the way it is. There was no choice. It was a question of survival. Nerves and I don't know what carried me through, because I'm not the type at all.

But it was just a question of survival, that's what it is. So every jab I gave, I said, that's for my father, that's for my brother, and that is for all the people Jews people you killed. And I really don't know how to tell it. It is only a question of survival. And fear and survival in a desperate situation, you do probably everything. Yeah, I think-- to my imagination, probably everybody will be may be able to do the same thing.

How does your experience make you feel about humanity in general?

Well, human beings could be worse than animals. When I say it I mean because an animal just it acts-- he is attacked, he reacts, he kills. A human being thinks it out, plans it, is even worse. Like the Germans, what they killed so many people. They just planned it, make it efficient, and take advantage of everything from the clothes, from the hair from the women, use it all. So in my opinion, it's even worse.

So as far as human nature concerns, everybody has a little animal in him. It depends the situation and depends some upbringing. So I really don't-- I still want to believe most of people are good people.

But if you take a nation like the Germans, has 60 million people, they knew a lot of them what's going on. And there was just cooperation. Very few, really, were they really felt something that was not right. Very few.

Because when we were on trials in Germany, we had a welcome committee from the Germans in the place where we were to welcome us as witnesses to the trial. They wanted to show some gratitude or something. And we met these people, and matter of fact, the people were here in our house, and we went to their house. And we get still letters from them. But that is only very few, very few.

So the majority, they can tell me what they want. The majority of the Germans, they knew what's going on because so many aware what they did it, and they came home, they told their friends and their family, and things like that. And they knew what's going on.

There was a part what didn't know. I don't want to generalize anything. I don't generalize anything. But the fact shows that a lot of them knew what's going on. So I still have trust in human beings. But I'm still reserved, always with a certain reservation.

Tell me, was there a deception of the people in the transports. Were they given receipts? I mean, was there a deception so they didn't know where they were going?

Yeah. Well, [INAUDIBLE], it wasn't receipts or something. The deception was-- first of all, they came there, somebody came and told them that they go to [GERMAN], which in German that means to the disinfect their clothes, and they go to work, and they have this baths to have because it goes cholera or some sickness around. So they kept them.

And also what they did is when people came like from Holland, they gave him postcards and to write back to their house that they arrived here, and it is nice, and they go to work here. To deceive even the people what didn't come yet when they get a note like that. So they had the hope they come to work here. So that was a deception.

To the last minute, they kept us as secret as possible. So to the last minute, they did. Whoever didn't know by then didn't know it till the last minute. So there was a deceiving, really.

And now I want you to tell me about meeting Selma and how you got involved with Selma. And you can describe how you met.

Yeah. Well, when people in transports came, some people had with them instruments, musical instruments. And when in the first night of the second-- it came though the Germans want to have some pleasure out of it. What they did, they said that we all have to come together and the people that had this musical instrument to play.

And we have to dance. We had to dance. That's to see that there's some kind of sarcasm. You know, there burn the people, the family, and here, we have to dance. And everybody had to ask somebody. And I happened to ask Selma. And that's the way I met Selma.

And that is what we stayed as much as possible together because where we lived were quarters. The quarters where we lived were barracks where the women lived and the others where the men lived.

Now, from about after we ate till we had to go to bed, we were free to move around in this circle where we lived. So we met and we talk to each other. So that where we met and that we saw each other, Selma. That is when I got in love with Selma and that is till today.

And tell me how you took care of her and how you spoke together, what language you used.

Well, Dutch is a little similar to German, and she knows some German, and I know German, and I started to learn Dutch. So we spoke-- German was our language, really. So that's the way we communicate.

But [INAUDIBLE], we worked also very often together because she was sorting clothes, and I was doing the same thing, although not in the same group, but not far from. So we could sometimes talk to each other. And in the evening, as I say, we talked to each other.

Did you take care of her?

Well, it was not much to take care of. Matter of fact, she took care sometimes of the things because she brought some food cans from the camp. She was more daring than I though. So she took some foods with us. In the evening, we ate the cans, whatever. We couldn't make any fire or things like that.

But we had cans of meat, sardines, or whatever, and some bread, things like that. What we could take with us from the truck. And she did it. It was very dangerous what she did. But that what we did. So it wasn't really taking care of. You couldn't take care more than it was there.

Would she have escaped if you hadn't taken her along?

No, I don't think so. A matter of fact, I told her what happened. And I told her she is not allowed to tell none of the people, the friends, or things like that. Because we were very afraid that somebody might talk too much and the whole thing can be endangered. So I told her, you're not allowed to say anything.

Now, the uprising, I didn't feel guilty about because the uprising was for everybody planned. It was not two, five, 10 people. So when the time comes, is early enough that they know it, and they can take part in. Because we couldn't do more than they did. We ran all randomly away. So it was not any. But the other way if we would have told them, we might come out front on the other.

We're just getting rolling. OK.

Well, the only thing I know is we lived in a small place, [PLACE NAME]. And one day we had that the Partisans-- how I got to know, I don't know-- they planned to kill the Jews at the night. So I took Selma and we went, we took on a-- somehow I got an auto, a big auto or something that took us. And we went to Lublin. We ran away. We thought that would happen. And it happened. When we went away, they killed the Jews.

The Polish?

The Partisans, Polish Partisans. They were very antisemitic. They didn't tell you. They take the Jews so quickly in. So you see that there was although they were in the same thing against the Germans, but not for the Jews. So the only thing I know is of what I said in this paper, that we heard they to go to kill the Jews, and we ran away the same day. And we went to Lublin to find other people that were there. That's all I can tell you about.

Now I want to ask you generally about age in the camps and whether it helped to be a young person.

Definitely, it helped so far. First of all, you think differently when younger. You have more hope, you dream to something. Inadvertently, you dream about something as a younger person. When you are in a jam like that, you think, I might come out what I thought of it.

Also, it was very unrealistic to think that you would come out of that. But somehow because you are young, you had a whole life before you, so you're thinking I will come out on that. It's just unimaginable to think even like that. So that was help, probably, when somebody is young.

When I said the people, some people in the uprising was didn't want to go, mostly was it older people because they gave up on life. They had some life and they were enough of it. So they just didn't want to try it anymore. We were young, we still tried. We ran away. And that is mostly what had helped. It helped much to be younger. Yeah.

Do you have something particular that you want to say, that you want to add, that's your own feelings?

Well, what I would like to add only is that Hitler didn't start to be big in one day. It started very small. And things can grow and be bigger. So never, never ignore when you see some bigotry or prejudice, whether it's against Jews and the others. You never know how much that can grow. There is hatred in a lot of people, more than we know about.

And you have to be very careful. You can not ignore it. You have to act when you see it. How is react? You shouldn't take it for granted. You should think about there could be a danger and then apply what you can to help for the situation.

And that's a matter of fact the reason that we go and talk about. Because we are still around, survivors, that people believe and see what really can happen. Because the story is unbelievable, but that is really what happened. That people got to slaughterhouse and got slaughtered like cows, like animals. And that human beings can do that.

And I don't think people changed now from 50 years ago. The right people do the right thing. The wrong people do the wrong thing. So you cannot ignore that if you see things like that. You have to be sensitive. You couldn't say, ah, this one, the Ku Klux Klan, ah, what can they do? You never know.

So you have to be very alert about and react to it. That is what I would say. That we hope nothing like that can happen. But believe, me it can happen. It's not the first time a story in history that things like that happen. So they can happen. So you cannot just ignore it.

And can you talk about how difficult it is to describe in words these things?

Well, I don't think they found the right words in any language, or a human being is able to tell exactly what happened. The only one understands what really happened is the man what experienced it. He lived by himself through that and can.

But it's impossible to tell what that really is. The words have not the same meaning what the one what tells the story wants to tell it. Because that's a life experience. Only the one what really experienced this can judge about. So I don't think anybody can put it in words. Even if you read it, that has not the same meaning for the one what survived of-- experienced this and the one what listens to the story. The word has probably a different meaning.

That what I think, really. It is impossible to tell the story. You do your best, you come with the best words through. Even if your language is very good and you have all the words possible, you still cannot tell what really happened.

It also depends to the listener. If the listener is sensitive and wants ready to feel, to get the feeling of it, will understand more about it. But still not to the degree that they fully can understand what the one what experienced it. So it is really so tragic, there's not words for it.

And can you talk to me a little bit about heroism? Do you feel that that uprising was heroic?

No, I don't think it was heroic. It was a question of survival. And some people have more courage than others. If I would have been the one to plan, I would never have come something of it. I'm not courageous like that. Which the others was very courageous, I could take partially part in it.

So there are people who are more daring, and courageous more, and determined more, and there. But I don't think what you call heroism. That was a question of survival. So you do think some people are able to do more than others. So I don't think it is heroism.

And now, can we just go to before the war and how you ended up getting-- how you ended up in Sobibor?

Well, when the war broke out in Poland, I was a Polish soldier. And it was mandatory service for 1 and 1/2 year. And I supposed to be-- everything would have normal on September the 15th, I would have been released from the service. The war broke out September the 1st, so I was just in the middle of the war. I was for three weeks. As long as the war lasted, I was a soldier, till they caught me as a prisoner of war.

And all the Jewish prisoners of war-- all the prisoners of war sent to Germany to work there. We cleaned the streets in Germany, in Leipzig, and all kind of odd work what we did. And then they decided all the Jewish prisoners of war to send back to Poland. So I figured the Jews to go anyway to a concentration camp, why should they keep them for

prisoners of war?

When I came back-- I came originally from Lodz, I lived before the war in Lodz, a big city in Poland. And when I came back, my parents were already driven out of their house, just with what that they could carry. So somehow, I found out they were brought to Lublin. Lublin is not far from the concentration camp for us. And they were-- they didn't take anything with them, just what they could carry. And so they had a very, very hard time.

When I came there, I took a job with a farmer and I worked at a farm, where they gave me food and shelter and also something I could help my parents there. And then my brother got also a job. Then one day, came all the Jews. Farmers that could work, they were not allowed to do other jobs. So farmers, there still was-- they were very late they could work as a farmer. That's the reason I could work as a farmer.

And then it came that all the Jews have to come to concentrate in the city, come back to the city. They took them to send them to concentration camp, to the death camp.

So I with a friend of mine, and my brother, and myself, we decided we don't go to this city, and we ran to the woods. But we couldn't get any food. We were for three days there. No any food, no shelter, the people, the Polish people didn't do it.

So we said, we have to go back again to some place where still are Jews. And then we end up in a place, Izbica. There were still some Jews there. And we came in the evening. And we went some Jewish people. They took us in. And the same night, all the Jews-- drove all the Jews out of the houses and concentrate them in the center of the city. And they took them to the camp.

But we were hiding out in the attics. We hoped they might-- the Germans came and they would go, and then we could come out. But they didn't go. And we didn't have any food. So for two, three days, we were hidden there. So we had to come out. And then more people were hiding so they come out, too. So they took us to the trains. And that was to Sobibor. That was the brief story that how we came to Sobibor.

Thank you.

That's it?

That's it. Fabulous. Thank you.

Kurt, room tone.

Following is 30 seconds of room tone for Chaim Engel.