

OK. And you have to back up to the beginning of that story.

OK. As they got us congregated, it took us all out for the bunkers, all the people they could find. And tried to accumulate a transport for the last transport to ghetto because afterwards everything was burned down. I saw. I felt miserable. I felt miserable. They pressed. I didn't know at all what's going to happen next.

I felt like-- I saw a cat all of a sudden. I felt like a cat. The Germans also saw the cat. And she sicked the German dog to get the cat. The poor cat couldn't move. The cat was in the hand, in the throat of that German shepherd. And she started backing up.

And when she backed up, she was against the fence, was all buckled up, she didn't know what to do. And all of a sudden the German told the dog to attack. He attacked and killed the cat. I felt the same way, like I was in the hands of the Germans. And any moment, they can kill me, they can do anything for my life the way the dog had done to the cat.

We were nothing, we were worse than a cat, we were worse than anything else. We had no future, we had no life. We were, for Germans, we were next to nothing. A Jew was next to nothing.

Then next day, they put us on a transport, put us in cattle cars, and they shipped us through on the way to Germany. We still did not know where we are going to. I tried to escape with a few more young guys from the cattle car.

And I succeeded in cutting a hole and cutting the seal off up. And I opened slightly the door. But I couldn't jump out because there was other truck around a parallel with the train. So it was suicide either way. If you jump, you can kill yourself or wherever you were going.

So on the way to Germany, we stopped for some water. And from the German Wehrmacht, for the soldiers showed us from the guards an article with the big headlines that Hitler's assassination did not succeed. He said, you're very unfortunate because you could have been liberated right now.

Is this kind of things, these kind of phrases still sticks in my head. If he'd be assassinated, thousands, maybe millions of people would have survived the war and other things. But it was not to happen.

As we came further in Germany, we have landed in a place, a concentration camp called Stutthof. I was still, at that time, with my parents. They took us in trucks and threw us in that concentration camp.

When I looked out, I thought I was dreaming. I saw lakes with swans swimming in that. But little did I know that behind my dream, a crematorium's over there with smoke and fire. This was the last time I have saw my mother. They have separated us.

And my father always kept me under his guard, under his wing. A whole night they were unclothing us, they were shaving us, they were checking us to see if you're hiding gold. In all the places, they gave us other prisons clothes.

And the whole life in ghetto to the concentration camp was, again, like day and night. We were going really in hell. In ghetto, we're still with our families and we can still survive day by day.

Here, we survived hour by hour. We had no food. And if you said something wrong, they beat you, they killed you, they didn't care. You were a real nothing in the concentration camp. But I was slim and tall. And when they sorted me out with my father, they let me stay with my father.

After being in Stutthof and being separated from my mother, they moved us also with cattle cars to Dachau. In Dachau, I worked very hard. I worked extremely hard.

And my father, being a barber, got a job in the ghetto, in the concentration camp itself, without going outside the concentration camp. And he asked one of the Germans if they can give me a job to work also in the compound itself.

After a few months, and after he was cutting the Germans' hair, he made sure that I should work in compound. And this was my lucky break because I could never survive working outside.

My job in the compound was a privileged job. Was what I do every morning, me and other boy would take a wagon, like a rickshaw wagon, and go from barrack to barrack and pull up all the dead people who died, who starved, who was beaten to death, who were full of lice, and put them in, stack them up, and take them out, and dump them in ravine. We were doing it every morning but twice a day.

Then in the evening, I was helping the work in the kitchen. And this made my life easier. I used to stay next to my father. He kind of protected me. And this is one of the parts, one of the reason I did not waste too much energy. I did not waste too much of my youth in that particular concentration camp until my luck ran out.

They liquidated that particular concentration camp in Dachau, that part of it. And they wanted to separate my father and me. They wanted to send my father in a better place and me send someplace, I didn't know where. My father said, no, he won't leave me alone. Wherever I go, that's going to be his destination. Fortunately for me, he was with me.

And they sent us to Flossenbürg, a concentration camp, and from there to Leitmeritz. Leitmeritz was a real hell. I heard from the other people, from my wife about Auschwitz, Birkenau. But nobody heard that much from Leitmeritz.

When we came in there, we were around 500 people. When they were finished, we were 10 left. This was old camp already, and we were just new cannon fodder. They have put us in brigades, where nobody want to go over there. We got the worst jobs, the worst work. And we worked in mines. Not coal mines, but cement mines. But they were the same as coal mines.

Was miserable, was foggy, was wet, was very little food, a slice of food. And every morning, they grabbed us in different brigades where to go. When I came first, my father also kept me next to him.

I still looked pretty good because of my job in Dachau concentration camp. And as we stayed and we working in the coal mine-- in the cement mines, and we drilling, and we loading everything on the wagons to get the piece of stone out, I see a German in civilian clothes is walking past one time by us, a second time. I didn't notice him.

In that particular concentration camp, there were all kinds of people. There were Pollacks, there were Germans, there were Russian prisoners, and some Jews. Not that many Jews. Maybe we were the-- maybe a thousand, 500 plus. Maybe 1,000 Jews. And we were less transport.

And there were different insignias. We wore a yellow star of David plus a number. Mine was 84,532. I had to remember it for the Appel. For the counting every morning in German and in Polish, I had to learn that.

And some had already insignias-- criminals, green, homosexual, or whatever. I didn't know about that because in Dachau, where we were, they didn't have all that particular insignias.

So as I was working with my father, that German keeps on looking at me, going back and forth. Then he comes to me. He says, [GERMAN], meaning young boy or something, I should follow him. I looked at my father, but after all, he's a German. And he tells me--

You know, we're going to run out, I think, during this story. We should wait and reload.

When we came, we had transport with 500 people or more people. They assigned us different places. They grabbed us. And we wind up, my father working in the cement mines. And as I was working there, we noticed a German in civilian clothes walking and looking at us.

When passed by one time, where I was, then a second time. I was very naive. I didn't understand what's happening. I was only at that time 15 and 1/2 years old. And I did not knew what he meant when he said to me, [GERMAN], come here. I thought I should follow only German guards.

But my father said, he's a German, you'd better do what he says. So I followed him deeper and deeper in the mines. And it was very hazy that, small little lights burning. And he was telling me he's a officer for the German Air Force. And I still did not have any inclination in what his mind is.

All of a sudden, he comes close to me, and he starts hugging me. And I felt very awkward, and I start pushing him away. He started pulling his pants down and he wanted to kiss me. So I start screaming.

And in the mines, usually the echo is so tremendous, and people start running with Germans, with guns. And the Polish Kapos start running after all the sights. And I start tell him, complaining that what he was trying to do. And they arrest us both.

The Germans with the guns, with the rifles. And they passed by, took me down, passed my father. My father looked at me, I looked at him. I couldn't answer him nothing. And they took us down in the general staff from the concentration camp. And there, hell work hard.

They put me down in the chair, and I said, tell him the whole story, and I told him. I told him he tried to hug me and kiss me. And they were out of their mind. How a German officer has tried to kiss a Jude, a Jew? And this is beyond their belief, I mean, he'll die if he'll kiss a Jew.

And they sent telegrams to Berlin. And they took the position maybe 50 times and asked us questions day and night. And then they said, they tell me, you know, sorry to tell him that the German-- I shouldn't say nothing. But I want to say the whole thing what happened because otherwise I'll be in trouble.

So in middle of night, 12 o'clock at middle of the night, they dragged me out from my bunk. They kept me separate. They didn't let me go no more with my father. I thought they're going to kill me. They're going to shoot me, whatever it was. And he then bring me in an enclosing.

Here, there's a German, completely undressed, staying under the shower, the shower coming down on him. Cold, ice cold water. It was winter. And a Kapo, a Polish Kapo with a hose, tried to put water in his mouth and tried to put water in and with other hose he's beating him.

And they made me watch it, to see how they punishing him. And he was yelling, [GERMAN], mother, help me, help me. And looked at me, and looked at them, and they were beating him. And I had to look. And this is really a child, he was only 15 and 1/2, 16 years old.

And with all my experience in concentration, in ghetto, I still didn't have no experience. Still everything new to me. And his head swole up twice the size. They told me to go back to my father in the barracks. And I understand, I heard, that in two days later, he died.

And that's all. They didn't do anything to me. And I joined back my father. And we went back to work in the concentration camp in the mines over there.

And we get weaker and weaker. Because the portions-- we had Polish Kapos, Polish leaders, you see. And the portions, we used to go column of 20, with bumpy loaf of bread. He used to cut it for 30 pieces and the rest of it, take for himself.

So the portions and the soup, everything got less and less. And my father, being a barber, after a hard day's work, he used to steal shaved prisoners. And told me, my son, you're young, go in the bunk. Go ahead. And don't talk to nobody, don't use up your energy.

And he used to bring me a bowl of soup, a little bit of water soup. Soup more than water. And he shared with me. I said, you eat, pop. He said, no, I've eaten already. And I knew later, I find out that whatever he had, he gave it to me. Because he said, you going to still grow, maybe you'll survive.

And one time, we were laying on the bunk, we had a lot of love for each other, my father and I. And we kind of protect each other. And we are good for each other. That's the reason we survived. We can complement each other. In misery, you still need company. They say misery needs company. Believe me, we need company, we need each other.

And may times, we used to lay in the bunk. We used to reminisce. Sorry. The holidays we used to have with the mother, with the family. And he used to tell me, my son, please don't remind, please don't talk. Let's continue our life together the way it is.

And as we were laying, one time, people couldn't hold their bladders and couldn't hold. We were four stairs of beds, four bunks were on top each other. And people above us urinated on top of us.

So the German thought, the German Kapo there, or Polish Kapo, thought my father urinated. So he jumped on him. And with a stick, started beating him. So I thought he's going to kill him. So I jumped on my father, protect him. And he almost killed me. And when he broke the stick on me, he started beating us.

So as I say, we needed each other. I protect his health, he brought some food for me. And we were clinging to each other.

Until one time, we were working both in the mines, and we were unloading the cement. And I get weaker and weaker. And the cement was a 50-pound bag cement. Maybe I weighed at that time maybe 75 pounds and I couldn't carry it. I fell down. And that the German came, he said, I'm going to kill you. You broke the bag cement and you sabotage.

So he jumped on top of me, and with his heel, he was trying to kill me. Knocked me down and hit me, made me a mess. I was laying there, my whole bloody mess, my face, my body. And he walked away. My father there stayed next to me, couldn't help me. He couldn't help with nothing.

In the evening, he picked me up. He and somebody else, other prisoner, and took me down in the so-called hospital. At that time, I had typhoid fever. I was so weak that I had typhoid fever. And they took me to hospital.

Was hospital was no Jews over there. And they want to kill me in the hospital. I was delirious. They gave me a handful of aspirin and told me to swallow that, which I did without water. There were plenty of water. But still, they tried to torture me. And I had to swallow the aspirin.

I became completely delirious. And I almost went out of my mind. I don't remember that I tried to hang myself. And I find a-- thinking that I have exploded the mines, the Germans are after me. And I found a piece of wire, like a hanger, and I went in the toilet.

And the toilets have these things in Europe on top, you've got to pull down. And I hooked at the wire on top of my neck and jumped down. And I start making noises. It wouldn't-- it wasn't a rope, was a piece of wire.

And some prisoner came, saw that, and pull the wire off, and I ran away. Jumped in my bed under the cut. And I was laying there, hoping something will happen to me. They found me and put me in a cart with three more prisoners. We were four together. They were Russian prisoners.

They wouldn't give me food, so each time somebody died, I ate his food until the third one died. I kept in a few more days. And then I ate his food, and then he starts smelling, and I told me he's dead.

And this thing is the way we find ways to preserve ourself, ways to survive. Here was an innocent boy from 13 and 1/2 years old going in ghetto from a good life. And here, I am laying with dead people, which doesn't bother me. I'm laying, eating their food in order for me to survive. My father was out of his mind, he couldn't find me. He didn't know where I was.

We have to reload.

I'm sorry.

That's all right.