

I want you to define kapo for me again but this time I want you to make it clear that kapos could have also been Jews. And just pretend that you didn't do it before. Just do it as if we haven't done it before. What is a kapo?

A kapo was chosen, the Jewish inmate was chosen by the Germans to be their police force actually, the overseer of their fellow inmates, prisoners. They were the ones that gave orders through the Germans. Some of them enjoyed their work more than others. Some really took the liberty of even hitting you if you weren't as fast as they wanted you to be.

And some would say in a nice way, please line up now. But mostly, it was, again, like it was their duty or their job to be accounted for, to say appell, to keep your barracks immaculately clean, or just for anything. Just to be reprimanded for talking to somebody if you weren't allowed to speak at that particular time of the day. Or to go to work, they would give the bar, rise and shine. Not in a very pleasant way.

This were their, I would say, their general duties. To oversee, to carry out their demands to the prisoners.

Could kapos also participate in rescuing? Could they help people?

Yes, in their own way. I told you their story that kapo who rescued her own sister. They could, I mean, if they had the opportunity. And some used, some were better than others. Some enjoyed their authority. I was beaten once by a kapo and she enjoyed it. Of course, she was going to show to the German overseer that how capable she is.

And that particular kapo, I swear that I saw her after the war and I followed her for days and I lost her. But I heard she was alive. And she was being prosecuted. Lots of them were. But as the years went by, people forget or they accept they had to do it because of this. Now this is where I differ with the general public were I don't forgive people that were mean there.

To me, they remained whatever they stand for today. They could be in politics, they could be the president of the United States, God forbid, or any professional person that had a past and you don't know about it. And to me, there's no excuse, Whether it's Jewish or not Jewish.

Talk about how Germans used Jews in various capacities to do things they didn't want to do.

In the workload?

Yeah.

Well, they didn't do any days. Just work, coming from-- they did factory work. They did work outdoors. They gathered the dead bodies to be cremated. They were in charge of it but they didn't do the-- they were there to push the button, to tell you to push the gas. They didn't do any physical work if that's what you're asking. They were their servants. They were toying with us to their delight.

If I'm just going to use an example, I was being punished once and the punishment was that I had to kneel on the stone overnight and the German would walk around with a smile around me all night long and I had to stand erect and it was raining, because I was a daredevil. I mean, I wasn't afraid because they had nothing to-- I didn't have second thoughts about it. I was stupid.

And I ran out somewhere where I wasn't supposed to be. It was forbidden or [NON-ENGLISH] it was that time. And I was out in there and that was my punishment. They took pride and delight in people suffering and this I'll never forgive them for. We lived and they ask the question. This is a new generation. And by all means, a child cannot be responsible for their father's deeds.

But who is that child going to believe? My story or his father's story? Why are we here talking about the Holocaust what we want to forget about? This wasn't a conversation for us for many, many years until we were to realize that if we don't speak about it, some of us, the remnants of the Holocaust, who will? And then the stories started coming out that this is

a hoax. Then how can we allow this to happen?

They put our personal feelings aside. Whatever it may cause and it's not easy but that's the least that we can do for the sake of our loved ones. I feel that this is really the least that we should keep their memory alive. And to talk about it as history because very well, in the '50s and even in the early '50s, in the dictionary, there was the Second World War happened, period. If I wanted to look at the Second World War, I had to read the Mein Kampf.

You wrote a line soon after the war and this is what you wrote, I feel like a dead, degraded, cowardly Jew. Do you remember that line?

Yes.

Can you tell me about it?

I felt defeated. Very defeated. With all the losses, and what would be appropriate? I felt very hollow. That's the only way I can describe it, hollow inside. And I felt if I didn't let it out, in some way, I would burst. I was hollow. I was angry. I was angry at God. If you are a God, how do you allow this to happen? In the same breath while I argued with God, I asked for forgiveness, at the same breath, but I was angry.

I was angry because this was my realization of what happened. Up until then, I lived and I walked around with the shadow pulled down. Pull down the shadow, I'll cry tomorrow. But this prevailed. Reality was there. People weren't there. I had to start a new life. I didn't know if I liked it. Things didn't happen the way I would have wanted my life to go. And it was a terribly hollow, empty feeling.

People talk about heroism in connection with survival, how do you feel about that?

Heroism? I don't see it as such really. I mean, with some people that were heroes, yes. I feel this was an individual survival trade. Whether that's heroism, I don't know. I don't think so. There were some heroes. To me, a hero is who salvages the world or salvages the situation or saves a human life. That's a hero.

Well, although, it's said that to save your own self, you are a human being too, so what's the difference? Who are you saving? If you save yourself, you're a human being. And I tend to tell people, I say, I haven't got time to do such and such for myself. Just pretend you are somebody else and you are doing it for somebody else, then you'll do it. Because for yourself, you don't do things.

So by saving yourself, in my estimation, it's not heroism. It's just an instinct. But going out of your way and doing a heroic thing by jeopardizing yourself, that's my definition of heroism. That we are all heroes, I think we are just lucky survivors to the extent that we are here. It took many years and many, many routes to come to the point where we say that we are lucky survivors because from my personal, I didn't call myself lucky.

When you live with that guilt complex, why me, I still question when I said that I was hollow. I still didn't feel like I was a deserving human creature. How come I endured the unendurable? That was my point of acceptance. But then as years go on, you have so many responsibilities, you forget about your all.

OK. Go ahead.

This is a picture of my family taken in 1938. My father's side of the family, my aunt's wedding. These are my parents, my mother and father, myself, and my father's brothers and sisters. From the whole picture that is still here to talk about the wedding is my cousin in New York, my uncle in California, and myself. Nobody else was able to tell the stories of the Holocaust from this picture.

These are my parents, their engagement picture, which must have been in 1926 or '27. My father is a soldier.

All right. Let's go back and just pause for just a minute and just keep it. Just wait for a second. OK.

It's very lucky to be able to find this only album that I have from my past. This is, again, my parents' wedding. My mother's parents, my grandparents, and the other set of grandparents from my father's side. Their wedding picture. The outcome of the wedding, number one, and number two, my brother.

Family pictures. This in 1942 or so. My parents, my brother. They said at age of six, he was cremated. Myself as an athlete, a fat one too. A playmate.

How old were you here?

I must be about nine. Nine maybe 10. Something like that.

OK.

My great grandmother whom I don't remember. My mother and her sister, who they went to get-- they were cremated the same time because they stood in the same line. I'm in the middle of them. I was very close to my aunt and my mother was very, very close. They were very, very close friends. This is my aunt from my father's sister and from my mother's sister and the children.

By this picture I'm told, this is my only surviving aunt who wasn't in concentration camp but she was imprisoned in Budapest and that's how she was able to survive, but these are her children that perished. Her husband is no longer. And this is a tale that we are told about her winning a beauty pageant contest.

This is my father and my mother. I think this was one of the last pictures that was taken before deportation. It must have been in 1942, the latest, or '43. But that was about me when I was taken to camp a year or two later. Uncle and an aunt. Children in the yard. My aunt's family. My most favorite cousin was shot right at the time of liberation. And her sister who lives in New York.

These are all, how should I say, goners. Nobody exists. Then I was telling you that people were not only [NON-ENGLISH] they had a life. They had a future at the time. And this is what was before. This was an uncle, my aunt at her wedding, and my cousin's graduation picture from-- I think it was high school. And this I call the girls because my mother and her friends. And that's my treasure from the past. Unfortunately, I don't have too many more left but I hold on to it for dear life.

Is it OK to turn the page?

Yeah.

OK. The perished children because nobody on this page exist except myself, which is here and here, none of the other. This little cousins, brother and cousin and cousin from other cities, I mean, neighboring cities that they lived in. This was Zori, Yunji, and Nivs.

Well, these were already after the war pictures so I don't think I'm will go into those.

Show me you after the war, right after the war.

This was my first professional picture after the war. This one was taken in 1946 or end of '45 in the Czechoslovakia.

Tell me about the little picture on the rock.

That was the outings we used to have around the city, around [PLACE NAME] where I lived after the war and we did a lot of outings by foot. It must have been one of those excursion trips, which those are the same. See, outdoor living. This is where I lived after the war at my aunt's place.

Let's go back to this page. Are others on this?

I guess somebody either took it out. These are friends or friends from those times. Somebody must have snatched this one from it. I don't know.

Do we need room tone from this place?

Sure.

OK. Yeah.

Room tone.