

Oh, baby, yeah.

So you were on a train and you met this man who you didn't recognize? This was when you were-- where were you headed to?

Well, I went-- when I come to Sosnowiec and I find out that some people in Kraków from my town, I went by train to Kraków and took the tram from the station to the central city. I got in mind to go to the Jewish committee, find out-- to find any people who I knew from my born town.

But on the train, I meet a-- a man come to me and start-- took me around and start kissing me. Said, Pini, I'm so happy that you are back. And I asked him, who are you? And he told me, my name is Bom. I'm from Wiślica. I'm from your town. And I remember, there was a small boy when I married and left Wiślica. But after the war, he was a man of 25 or 26. And of course, I couldn't recognize him.

And I ask him, do you know about my sister anything? Yes, I know, he said. She lives and she is with a child. But I don't know where she is. But go there over there in that and that house, lives my brother-in-law. Well, that's [PERSONAL NAME]. He was my friend. I was with him in school. They lived there. Go there. And they knew exactly where she is. And so was. I went there. I went back the train to the stop at that. I knew Kraków very well.

This was in Kraków. So your sister was living in Kraków?

No. No.

OK, sorry.

I went to Kraków, to that man, to that friend of mine, [PERSONAL NAME]. And when I come there, he was very happy to see me. And we stayed there a few hours. And I ask him straight away, where's my sister? She lives in Radom. So your cousin is in Radom, too. And he had the address where the cousin lives. And you will find out there where she is. And you will meet her there.

And that's what I did. I took the next train to Radom. It was a long way, about 15-16 hours to come there, come there in one morning. And I knocked on the door of my cousin. She wasn't there. She wasn't there.

And he told me, she's traveling around, doing some business with leather because she needs to make some money to make a living. But she's coming back in a day or two. You stay with us here. When she comes back, I will-- she's got her own room with a Polish family. And she will. And that what's happened.

Up until that point, that was the first member of your family that you had found out was alive?

That's the first and the last. I didn't saw it anymore.

And the last. But at that time, did you know that your parents were not alive anymore at that time?

Well, I heard from those people from-- I lived in Kraków. They said to me, your parents, your brother, everybody is not back. They told me, even, that my sister come to Warsaw. He went with her back to that cave where they been. And this way, they left. And they don't know anything. And nobody knows what's happened, where they going, when they've been killed. Nobody knows anything. But one thing is sure, they're not alive.

The farmers-- so they went to the farmers where your parents had been in hiding?

Yes. Well, when I met my sister in Radom--

OK, I'm sorry. Let's finish this story first. OK.

--when she come back from her trip where she were-- traveling around, she come up right away to my cousin. And he was very happy, crying a lot and kissing a lot. And she told me that she has got her child still in the-- she couldn't manage to keep it by here. She hasn't got anybody to look after the child. And the parents vanished.

She went to the bunker to that Pole, where-- with a man, with that friend of mine what there. And still, the coat of my mother was in the room hanging. They were not there. He said, they left. And he don't know where they are, where they went, and what's happened. He just said, he doesn't know anything. But they left in the-- he didn't-- I didn't know when they left.

I think there was connections between my sister and my parents till about the end of July, till early August 1944. And then everything stopped. And she hadn't heard from them. We haven't found out anything anymore.

Well, then my sister went to Kielce. She brought her child back with her. We've been living, staying a few weeks in Kielce. And I said to my sister, it's no good. I don't want to live here. I'm going back to Sosnowiec. You come with me. We went to Sosnowiec together. And we rented a room. We went together for quite a while. We do some business.

Can I just ask you one other thing? Do you think that your parents left that hiding place? Or do you think that they were killed there? Do you have any idea?

I think they were killed there.

By the farmer?

By the farmer, yes, by that Pole what was there because the coat of my mother and the coat of my father were still in that place where they've been in the cave. There was a storeroom for that, they call it, for the wheat. What they call it?

A silo.

That's right.

How you call it?

I think it's called a silo. Well, the place where they keep wheat?

Keep feet, that's right. I don't know what you call it.

I think.

The coats were there. And where would they went in winter--

Without a coat.

--without a coat or anything?

At that time in Poland, it's my understanding that Jews were still in danger from-- that even after the war was over--

Yes, of course.

--Jews could-- that there were some pogroms?

Yes. Well--

If not pogroms, that--

When I went back, a lot of people already who survived in January of '45, I meet them in Budapest. And they asked me, where are they going? I said, I'm going home. And they said to me, don't be silly. You have got no home in Poland. We coming from Poland. The Poles still keep killing Jewish people.

[INAUDIBLE], I said, no, I can't look-- can't do that. I have to go there. I have to find out with my own eyes. I have to find out by myself what's happened with everybody of us. And then I will see what I have to do. I've stayed in Sosnowiec with my sister and her child for a few months. And we'd been doing some business and made a few dollars.

What kind of business?

Leather business.

Leather business.

We were doing leather-- same business before the war.

And this was like-- this was in 1945 still?

That was in 1945, '46. We been there till about the middle, I think, till about the end of '46. I can't remember exactly.

And then about another year. You stayed there a year.

About a year we stayed there.

And you had an apartment?

We got-- not apartment, a room with another family. And there were my sister meet your father. And after-- by the end of 1946, we all went.

They married in Sosnowiec?

No.

Oh, they just met there.

Just met there and doing business together. And we left Poland in 1946, all of us, my sister and me, and the child, your father, and a cousin of your father with his wife and child. He come back from Russia. Forgotten his name, they've been in the shoe business too. Anyway, we better than before the war-- was a cousin. They're there in New York, I think.

I know who it is.

Yes?

I've met them before.

Yes. He's got a little child there and a girl, a little girl, I think.

He had a girl named Sheila.

That's right. They had a little girl.

I met them when I was in--

Well, we went all together to Germany. Well, me, the cousin, and his wife, and their child. And your father went with another transport. He's been looking for cheaper fares. It was the transport going for men without any pay. We payed to get through the border and get through to be together. But your father didn't want to spend-- it cost about \$50 or \$60. He said, I'm going that way. We will meet in Germany.

What zone were you in at the time?

Beg your pardon?

Were you in the Russian zone at that time?

That was the Russian. Poland was under Russian occupation already. But we went from the Polish border, through the black border, to the Russian border-- to the Russian section, to Berlin, the Russian section. And then we went from the Russian section to the English section. On the English section was your aunties, your father's sisters and a niece-- Shmulik, his name, too, he lives-- I think he lives in New York.

And I come first to Germany. Before that, I went with your father to Germany to make some money. We took German marks, put them in a double deck, and we went by ourself. And we left the money at your auntie's places. And they been living in-- I don't know where it was. It was near Bergen-Belsen. And they been there.

And we left dollar, which I changed it into American dollars. And we left the money there. And we went home to take-- I went there to take my sister and the child. And he went there. We got some more money left there to clear up everything what we have got. And then we went-- the second time, we went back. When we come back, I come first with my sister and that cousin of yours. And your father wasn't there still. I went to Regensburg. They was in Regensburg there.

Regensburg?

Regensburg, yes. I went to Regensburg. And I asked your auntie for the money what I left. She gave it to me.

This is my father's--

His sister, I think.

--stepsister?

Stepsister, yes-- stepsister. And I think it was Shmulik. I can't remember exactly. And then when I been there, I got my money already with me. And the same afternoon, your father arrived from Poland too. He was very shocked. He was very frightened because they've been looking very-- they--

Because what?

They been looking if he hasn't got money. Something went wrong on the border with him. He was very shocked. But we stayed another day too. And he said to me, well, where are you? I said, I am in Kassel in a camp. And I think I'm going there back. You got your sisters. You should stay here. He said, no, I prefer to go with you there. Well, if you want, I said, you can. You can come with me. Anybody can come to that-- into that camp. That was a DP camp.

What was the name of the camp?

It was near Kassel. It was a DP.

Kassel in Germany?

Pardon? Kassel, Germany, yes.

OK.

It was behind Kassel, Germany. And when we come there, he enrolled himself into the camp too. And I said, well, I don't think so I like to stay here. I would like to go. I went by myself to Regensburg, to Munich, to look for friends. And I find out that in Stuttgart, there is some people who I knew very well and very good friends of mine. I went to Stuttgart.

And I-- was hard to get a unit, a flat, apartment. But I paid some money for it. And I got the apartment, two rooms, and use of the kitchen with a German. But in the peak-- there was the peak that you couldn't get in. It was full. So I went to the apartment with a German not far from the camp. And I enrolled there me, and my sister, and my child. And I went back.

You mean her child?

Mean her child, yes.

That's right.

And I went back to the camp. And I said, well, I got the cards, the coupons for-- you got to get coupons after the war.

Ration cards.

Ration cards. I got the ration cards for all three of us. And I went back. Your father was still there. And I told him what happened, what's going on. And he said, I'm going with you. And I will find-- anyway, when we come back, it was still hard to get for him to get into the camp again.

When he come to me, I said, well, if you wouldn't mind, I would enroll into your apartment. Say, that's all right with me. If you can, you can do it. And he enrolled himself into the apartment.

And we starting do it. I even got one bedroom for myself and your father, and one bedroom for my sister and the child, and the use of the kitchen. And we been doing some business together, partnership. And we made quite a bit of money. It was a black market. We managed to do something. And was-- we stayed with him there the end of the '46. We stayed there till about the end of '48.

So you were there two years?

Yes.

And during that period of time, my mom-- your sister and-- got married?

My sister got married. And I think it was in-- I can't remember exactly. But I think it was about the end of '48 or might be early '49. They got married. And I got married too.

How did you meet your wife?

Well, a friend of mine introduced us. She wasn't in the DP camp. She was in Radom. My friend who I've been doing business with him, he said--

What was her name?

Chava.

Her name was Chava?

Yes.

What was her last name, what?

What do you mean last name? She was Silverberg from home.

I beg your pardon-- Silverberg.

Silverberg from home. I met her. And my sister was already married then with your father. And they was going on. It's a lot of people had been going to Israel. A lot of people going to USA, to America, a lot to Australia. And everybody wants to run away from Germany. Well, your father and my sister, they been going-- we going to go to Israel. My wife, she's got a-- she's going to get a permit to go to Australia.

How did she get that permit?

She got a lot of people from me at home. She was from Radom, was people here. And they sent letters. They can buy permits for--

So she had connections--

She had connections--

--in Australia.

--here and Australia, yes. But I couldn't get a permit for my sister and my brother-in-law to Australia then. But we been discussing. If they go to Israel, we didn't wanted them to stay in Germany. And everybody wants to run away from Germany. Even we could stay till today. But we didn't like it this idea.

If you go to Israel and I will settle down in Australia, maybe I send a permit to Israel for you. But in the meantime, the father got some papers. And he could find out that he can go to the USA. And they got papers from the Joint to go to USA.

And they went-- one child was born, what was born in Germany. Was a little baby at that time. She was born, I think, in '49, at the end of '49. And they decided to go to America. I haven't got my papers still. I stayed in Germany still. They left for America.

A few months before, I got-- I stayed still. They left for America. I don't know where they come to-- New York. They settled in Norfolk. After a few months, I got my papers, my permit to come to Australia. And we come to Australia.

Did you-- was it a very-- I mean initially, my mother, your sister, was supposed to go to Israel.

On the first place, not to stay in Germany, was in mind to go to Israel. And we have been discussing that from Israel, I can take them all to Australia. But when your father got the permit, he got the papers to go to America, it was decided that they go better to American than to Israel.

My mother told me that you were opposed to her going to Israel because it was so hard there, the way of life at the time.

Yes. I had been a bit opposed. But there wasn't any choice. Instead, let them then stay in Germany, I preferred them to go to Israel. But when the papers come to America, I've been very happy that they go to America.

Was it a difficult decision to separate?

Well, it wasn't any other choice. We have got-- we've been looking just like anybody-- we looked-- they say in Yiddish, [YIDDISH]. Not show a key to-- we been afraid-- still been afraid from the Germans. And we

hated them like hell. And everybody-- if anybody left, like he won of the lottery. He's going out from Germany. And they got papers-- oh, I'm sorry.

No, that's OK.

If they got papers, they go to America, I couldn't say, no. Go as soon as you can. I'm staying here.

The idea was just to get out. And you still felt in danger.

Yes. And just that happened that they got the papers. And they left first. And my wife and I, we didn't want to go to America. We've been feeling that we'll be better in Australia here. We still been thinking, maybe, there-- if they can't make a good living in America, they can come to Australia.

But they start in business. And they been making some money there. And when they been making money, I haven't been making any money here. I've been working on a job. I thought they're doing better-- quite all right there. Your mother didn't written to me, didn't let me know what's going on there. She kept all everything to herself.

Well, I think, economically, they were doing OK.

Well, were doing OK. That's right. And I find out what has been going on when I come to America. By 1963, I got my house already. I been remarried. My wife died in--

Why don't we get back to that OK? You were still in Germany. And you got papers to come to Australia. And this was what, in 1950 or 1949?

No, 1949. We arrived to this-- in Melbourne in December 1949. It was a bit hard. I've been doing--

You were resettled by who?

I've been-- it was rented a room at a Jewish family in Acland Street, not far from here. And we lived in that room.

The Jewish Family Service resettle you? But what agency were you resettled by?

By friends, by friends of my wife.

Oh, I see. OK.

They rented a room for me. They knew I got some money. I don't want to go into a camp or anywhere else. Paid two pounds a week rent and settled at that room with a Jewish family. And I've been doing. We arrived in December 1949. I couldn't do anything because [INAUDIBLE] I applied, nobody will give you a job. I stayed there till January '50. January '50, I took a job at General Motors-Holden. I start working, start learning the language, start looking around what's going on.

What did you think of Australia?

I been very happy. I been even working very hard, even not making money, but I've been happy that I've been away from Europe. I accepted the way life is. And I like it. And working on a job-- and at '50, I start a job with General Motors-Holden. And I'm working on that job maybe five or six months.

But in the meantime, I'm looking around, doing something to buy a business or to get off. My own business could-- was very hard. I took a job. I opened a business in the market. I've been traveling around on the market. But I haven't got a car-- somebody else.

It was very hard. I keep two jobs for about three years, market business by. And I've been doing on the job shift work. I did 7:00 till 3:00 in the morning, from 3:00 till 11:00 at night, and from 11:00 till 7:00 in the

morning every week, different times.

You worked 24 hours a day?

No.

I don't understand. You had-- there were different shifts.

Different shifts.

OK.

Shift work, I tell you.

I see. OK.

There was one week I've been working morning shift, one was afternoon shift. In the meantime, when I got time in the daytime, I've been doing some buying, and going on the market, and doing-- making some extra money. And that has been going on for quite a few years.

Meanwhile, you had a daughter who was born.

Yeah. My daughter was born in December '51. My wife hasn't been doing any work. I didn't let her go to work. She was staying home. She got pregnant in 1950, end of '50, '51. And my daughter was born in December '51.

I've been good doing on about two or three years like that work doing, and saved quite a bit of money-- not much, but a bit of money saved. Arrived I think it was in April '54. And I opened-- just opened up the factory with my partner. It was hard work, a lot of work, but good money. Start making some money.

But I've been a bit trouble, been by myself with a little baby. I haven't got where to-- what-- I couldn't do anything. I haven't got any friends, any family to help me with a child. I couldn't take it. And I got-- I bought a house in 19-- when my daughter has been going to be born, I bought a house here in Brighton, not far from here for 4,600 pounds. So we moved in there.

OK.

Well, we moved into the house in-- it was in March, in March '51. And my daughter was born in December '51. And we've been living in the house.

My wife died in April '54. I've been living a few months longer in that house, and sold the house, and moved into apartment. I couldn't keep my daughter with me because I went myself. She was staying in a home for a few months. It wasn't very pleasant. But I've got to do it.

And then I gave her to a Australian woman. She was very pleased, very happy there. She's looked after her very well. They pay-- of course, they paid for it, for everything.

And then I bought an apartment in Chapel Street. And I took in a domestic help, an old woman. She's been looking after the child and brought her to school. And been staying there-- she'd been staying with us till about the end-- till about July 1957. I don't remember this was '57 or '58.

I married. I married in '58. I remarried in '58. And I got my child with me home. And everything was quite all right. We've been working very, very hard. But we make a good living and managed to save some money. But then I bought a house here on [PLACE NAME] Road. We moved into the house. My wife has got a child of her own. And everything is up till today nice and fine.

OK. I have some questions to ask you about after the war in terms of, for example, what kinds of feelings



did you have about being Jewish after the war? In light of--

In Poland, we been feeling very low, very depressed. We been discriminated, still been discriminated after the war. And a lot of people have been-- Jewish people have been killed in Poland. That's why we left straight away. We been a few months only there.

And we left because it wasn't any future for us in Poland anymore. And where we could go? Where we could go? Is only Germany on the black border. And we stayed there in Germany till we could get further-- to America, to Australia, to Israel, anywhere. Everybody has been looking just to leave that rotten country. Even we could live till to die in peace, but just couldn't stand them, just couldn't go on with them.

In light of everything that happened to you during the war, you knew that your first wife and your two children had died. What kept you going, do you think? What kept you-- what kept that will to keep going on?

In a situation like that, after all what's happened, we been thinking, everybody of us, has been trying to establish a new-- to form a new life for himself. And life is going on. We been looking to make money, to get married, to have family, and to live a normal life, to live again a normal life. It wouldn't be any good. I didn't believe that we ever will-- after the war, that we ever will be able to live a normal life again. But everybody's been trying. And things were worked out quite all right.

People have different philosophies in life about what people are like, what humankind is like. How do you think the war influenced those sort of feelings about people, or about that the world could come so low, and that people could be so-- support such a system that happened? Did that-- how do you think that affected your outlook about people in general? Do you think, for example, you're more mistrustful of people?

Well, I think, in my own opinion, I think the world is a jungle. And people are just like animals. They could eat up each other, they would. But it-- I'm not sure if things like that won't happen anymore. I don't think so.

Do you think another Holocaust is possible?

Different story, different wars. It will come. They creating atom bombs and that, and that.

Well, war is one thing/ war is one thing. But annihilation and genocide is something else.

Yes, I understand that.

Do you think it's possible for the Jews ever to get into that kind of situation again? Or for the world to let that happen?

Not in that kind because Jews will be more stronger. And they will be able to look after themselves. They understand-- know how to protect themselves. And especially, we got Israel. And Israel has got an army. And they got a country.

Whatever happens, we can always-- we have got always to whom to turn and to whom to-- somebody to help us, wherever and whatever happens. If anything goes wrong in Israel, the Jewish people in America, and Australia, and all over the world will do everything they can to help them. The same thing if something goes wrong in Australia, or something goes wrong, we have got a Israel with an army. And they are ready there.

So we need each other. And that's the only way to go on living. We can't risk to have all the people, all the Jewish people in Israel because we don't know what can happened in 10, 20, in 50 years. Never know. It's 100 million Arabs around Israel. We can't be sure what can go on, what can happen.

That's why we need some people all over the world and that will help each other. Whenever anything goes wrong, we will be able to protect or will be able at least to protect it ourself. The last war was where we were just-- we've been just to call it in Yiddish hefker. Could do anything. Could do anything with us. Nobody

would even raise a voice. Nobody-- they didn't even say a word for us. We got-- anybody to talk for us, to say anything for us.

OK. So you said that you felt like that Jews didn't have anyone to really speak up for them.

Of course not.

Do you think people in Poland, Poles, knew what was happening to Jews?

Of course.

Now, today, many Poles claim that they didn't know.

Oh, they knew exactly. They've been talking about it every day. They knew exactly what's going on. They knew there that. They've been talking on the times that they're burning, they're killing. They knew everything. They killed themselves. They killed a lot of them.

They killed my brothers. Poles killed my brother, my two brothers. My youngest brother was 10 years younger than me. And he went to the town one night. And he was killed. How could my parents live? They knew their son went to town and he already died, killed by his friends went to school together and been living together.

Did you apply for reparations after the war?

Yes.

Reparations. And did you get?

Yes, yes.

Reparations for having been in a camp?

Well, they payed reparation for losing-- for health reasons.

Why did you apply?

Well, I didn't want to leave the money with the Germans. I prefer to keep them for myself. If I don't need them, better to give it to Israel or give it to poor people then leave them. You see, that in Hebrew is a saying, you murder and inherit the money from the people that you murdered. They murdered us and inherit the money too.

They got the property.

Whatever you could, we can take that back, we taking. In money, raising, money-- but can get out money if they were taking, whatever we can.

When you came to Australia, since you've been living in Australia, did you ever join any survivor organizations?

Yes. There's [NON-ENGLISH]. I'm registered as a [NON-ENGLISH].

Yeah. Is there a group here like a New Australians? I mean, a group that came.

No, there is a called [NON-ENGLISH]. They're doing what they can. They're making protest. They're making the camps there. Comes in April [NON-ENGLISH] and everything.

Why did you join it?

Why not? I been in the camps. And I been in the concentration camps. And people organized it. I joined it.

Did you feel this need to keep some sort of connection with people?

Oh, yes. Yes. We have the connections. We have to make sure that the next generations know about it and know-- that they will know how to protect themselves if anything comes wrong, if anything goes wrong in life. I feel that has to go from generation to generation. It has to stay in mind of the Jewish people forever. As we remember forever the home, Jerusalem, we have to remember the home. It was a Jewish life was in Europe.

You mean the destruction of the temple.

Yes. That's right.

So you have to remember the Holocaust.

You have to remember the Holocaust-- was a terrific Jewish life, Jewish built whole of Europe. And then they come, and they killed us all, and took away everything. And that has to remember. And they have to be ready for generation after generations not to let it happen anymore.

When you came to Australia did you talk very much about what happened, about your war experiences to people?

Yes.

Were people interested in listening to what you had to say?

Yes, yes, we were always talking it.

Amongst survivors you talked. How about people that-- Australians, people that weren't survivors? Were they interested in hearing what you had to say?

I don't think so they are much interested.

Do you think they believed you what you had to say?

Maybe some did. I don't think so they can believe it. It's just a thing what is impossible to happen-- that's happened, what is just impossible. And I don't blame Australians if they don't believe 100% then if listen. And when they go away, they forgotten. They don't think about it.

What kind of reception did you get from Australians when you came here?

Very good. Very good. Very helpful.

Were they sympathetic?

Oh, yes, very helpful in every way, at work and everything.

But you tended not to talk about your experiences with people that were not survivors, with Australians, let's say?

I really-- I know we have to talk about it. And I really don't like too much to talk about it.

I understand that. I'm sure it must be very painful for you.

What did you communicate to your children about the Holocaust? Did you ever talk about the Holocaust to

your children?

Not much. Not much.

Did they ever ask you?

Not much. I don't think they like to know-- they liked to know too much. They just don't feel it at all talk about it. In Australia, the children are not very much connected, not much interested.

Well, I talked to other children, sons and daughters, whose parents went through the Holocaust. And I think in some situations, children-- sometimes, children didn't want to know because I guess it was too painful. It was too painful to hear the pain that the parents experienced.

That's right.

But sometimes, children didn't talk about it because they sort of sensed that it was painful for the parent to talk about it, but that they, in fact, wanted to know.

That's right.

But they sort of got messages from parents, not obvious, but subtle messages that they shouldn't ask. Do you think that your children really just were afraid to ask because they just-- for themselves or that they thought it might be too painful for you?

Yes, I think so. They think that will be too painful for us. And they wouldn't like to make us feel bad again, make us-- keep us remembering about what's been happening.

Why did you agree to do this interview?

I just like to talk with you.

Any opportunity to. Well, I enjoy talking with you too.

Thank you very much.

But do you understand why I asked you to do this interview? Why do you think I asked you to do this interview?

I understand you're working yet. And you're interested. And you're working now with organization that's called Generation After. And I think that's a good thing to do it.

You think it's important to document?

It's important. I think they should do that. You're doing a good job.

So you're just saying-- you're saying that you feel it is important to--

Yes, I think so, yes.

--document--

Yes, of course.

--people's experiences.

Yes very, very, very much important. It's important for the next generations to know what has been going on and to know how to be ready if anything goes wrong, anything.

OK. Well, thank you very much.

Thank you, darling. Was a pleasure.

Pleasure was mine.