

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:04,440

2

00:00:04,440 --> 00:00:07,530

This is a continuation of
the United States Holocaust

3

00:00:07,530 --> 00:00:10,800

Memorial Museum interview
with Jack Ophir.

4

00:00:10,800 --> 00:00:13,920

This is track number two.

5

00:00:13,920 --> 00:00:16,770

And you are now in Israel.

6

00:00:16,770 --> 00:00:19,740

Did you have any comment about
when you arrived in Israel?

7

00:00:19,740 --> 00:00:23,550

You thought maybe that it was a
little bit later than you first

8

00:00:23,550 --> 00:00:24,050

mentioned?

9

00:00:24,050 --> 00:00:25,530

Maybe a little bit later.

10

00:00:25,530 --> 00:00:26,640

I do not--

11

00:00:26,640 --> 00:00:29,400

September '46, you think?

12

00:00:29,400 --> 00:00:31,260

Maybe September '46, yes.

13

00:00:31,260 --> 00:00:35,640
But I don't remember my first--

14
00:00:35,640 --> 00:00:43,510
going around in Israel are
kind of very murky in my mind.

15
00:00:43,510 --> 00:00:45,990
I don't remember friends.

16
00:00:45,990 --> 00:00:49,470
I don't remember
people necessarily.

17
00:00:49,470 --> 00:00:51,420
I don't remember that.

18
00:00:51,420 --> 00:00:56,340
I just remember that my
mingling with other kids

19
00:00:56,340 --> 00:01:02,440
was very difficult for
the first few years.

20
00:01:02,440 --> 00:01:05,195
Because of what you going
through as a young child.

21
00:01:05,195 --> 00:01:05,820
Yes, of course.

22
00:01:05,820 --> 00:01:06,610
Yes, yes.

23
00:01:06,610 --> 00:01:11,690
I wasn't a nice kid, and all
the other kids on the street--

24
00:01:11,690 --> 00:01:13,330
they were afraid of me.

25

00:01:13,330 --> 00:01:15,455

And I was using my
hands for excess.

26

00:01:15,455 --> 00:01:17,080

So you were very
physical and fighting?

27

00:01:17,080 --> 00:01:20,350

I was very physical, and
if I didn't like something

28

00:01:20,350 --> 00:01:26,010

or I did like somebody I
used my hands in excess.

29

00:01:26,010 --> 00:01:27,850

There's no question about that.

30

00:01:27,850 --> 00:01:29,350

Did you get in trouble?

31

00:01:29,350 --> 00:01:31,198

All the time I was in trouble.

32

00:01:31,198 --> 00:01:33,240

Which is why you were sent
to the private school?

33

00:01:33,240 --> 00:01:37,150

That's why I was sent to a
private school, absolutely.

34

00:01:37,150 --> 00:01:42,370

But when I left the private
school, by the way--

35

00:01:42,370 --> 00:01:48,160

I just ran away from the private
school, which was quite far

36

00:01:48,160 --> 00:01:49,390

away from Tel Aviv.

37
00:01:49,390 --> 00:01:54,770
It was on the outskirts of
Haifa, which was quite away.

38
00:01:54,770 --> 00:01:57,400
And at that point,
I was a young child,

39
00:01:57,400 --> 00:01:59,980
but I couldn't care less.

40
00:01:59,980 --> 00:02:01,900
You left on your own?

41
00:02:01,900 --> 00:02:03,078
Completely on my--

42
00:02:03,078 --> 00:02:04,495
You walked off the
school grounds?

43
00:02:04,495 --> 00:02:07,660
I left off the school grounds.

44
00:02:07,660 --> 00:02:11,560
I had maybe 1 or 2
pounds in my pocket.

45
00:02:11,560 --> 00:02:17,620
I got on the bus, and I traveled
all by myself to Tel Aviv.

46
00:02:17,620 --> 00:02:20,170
And I made it from
the bus station

47
00:02:20,170 --> 00:02:23,230
back to my parents' home.

48
00:02:23,230 --> 00:02:26,290
And a matter of

fact, when I arrived,

49

00:02:26,290 --> 00:02:29,395

my mother was in
shock to see me.

50

00:02:29,395 --> 00:02:30,520

You know what had happened.

51

00:02:30,520 --> 00:02:34,300

And I explained that I
will never ever go back

52

00:02:34,300 --> 00:02:35,800

to that place.

53

00:02:35,800 --> 00:02:38,680

And this is when my father
came back from work,

54

00:02:38,680 --> 00:02:40,690

and they had some conversations.

55

00:02:40,690 --> 00:02:45,670

And all I know is
that I stayed at home,

56

00:02:45,670 --> 00:02:48,580

and they had to work
out the school for me,

57

00:02:48,580 --> 00:02:50,350

et cetera, et cetera.

58

00:02:50,350 --> 00:02:56,320

And from that point on, of
course, I stayed in Tel Aviv.

59

00:02:56,320 --> 00:03:00,520

And so you're in high school,
and then what happened?

60

00:03:00,520 --> 00:03:01,810
I started high school.

61
00:03:01,810 --> 00:03:04,630

62
00:03:04,630 --> 00:03:10,078
My bar mitzvah was, of
course, in Tel Aviv.

63
00:03:10,078 --> 00:03:10,870
What was that like?

64
00:03:10,870 --> 00:03:12,130
Can you talk about it?

65
00:03:12,130 --> 00:03:15,300
Well, I remember, there was--

66
00:03:15,300 --> 00:03:16,540
1951, it would be--

67
00:03:16,540 --> 00:03:23,350
A lot of people came to my
bar mitzvah, and that was--

68
00:03:23,350 --> 00:03:24,430
--1951.

69
00:03:24,430 --> 00:03:27,670
--in 1951.

70
00:03:27,670 --> 00:03:36,650
And from that point on, I
became, in many respects,

71
00:03:36,650 --> 00:03:39,680
a different person.

72
00:03:39,680 --> 00:03:45,830
By that I mean my
aggression kind of left me,

73

00:03:45,830 --> 00:03:51,530
and I became much more friendly
with people, much more friendly

74

00:03:51,530 --> 00:03:53,450
with children my age.

75

00:03:53,450 --> 00:03:57,890
I joined the Boy
Scouts of Israel

76

00:03:57,890 --> 00:04:04,260
at the time, of which later
on I became a guide in the Boy

77

00:04:04,260 --> 00:04:05,540
Scouts.

78

00:04:05,540 --> 00:04:07,410
I went to high school.

79

00:04:07,410 --> 00:04:10,670
I went to some of the better
high schools of Tel Aviv,

80

00:04:10,670 --> 00:04:11,900
and I became--

81

00:04:11,900 --> 00:04:14,960
I matured somewhat, I would say.

82

00:04:14,960 --> 00:04:16,220
Describe your bar mitzvah.

83

00:04:16,220 --> 00:04:18,600
Where was it?

84

00:04:18,600 --> 00:04:19,990
Where was it?

85

00:04:19,990 --> 00:04:20,490
Yeah.

86
00:04:20,490 --> 00:04:23,245
The bar mitzvah was
in our apartment.

87
00:04:23,245 --> 00:04:24,120
Not in the synagogue?

88
00:04:24,120 --> 00:04:27,240
In the house, not in a hall or--

89
00:04:27,240 --> 00:04:30,660
for a matter of
fact, at that time,

90
00:04:30,660 --> 00:04:37,410
people made what we call
[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

91
00:04:37,410 --> 00:04:41,640
celebrations in their own homes.

92
00:04:41,640 --> 00:04:45,930
It was very customary to
do it at home, not in a--

93
00:04:45,930 --> 00:04:46,740
--synagogue.

94
00:04:46,740 --> 00:04:49,440
--public hall.

95
00:04:49,440 --> 00:04:51,450
Did you read from the Torah?

96
00:04:51,450 --> 00:04:52,658
Of course, I read up to the--

97
00:04:52,658 --> 00:04:53,908
You had a service in the home.

98
00:04:53,908 --> 00:04:55,110
I read the Torah.

99
00:04:55,110 --> 00:04:57,630
I went up to the Torah.

100
00:04:57,630 --> 00:05:01,530
At that point, I still
was a semi-religious boy.

101
00:05:01,530 --> 00:05:07,830
I was wearing a yarmulke
until I went to high school,

102
00:05:07,830 --> 00:05:11,130
and I went to high-- when
I went to high school, that

103
00:05:11,130 --> 00:05:15,150
was already a
non-religious school,

104
00:05:15,150 --> 00:05:21,780
but I was not accustomed
to it at the very beginning

105
00:05:21,780 --> 00:05:27,000
because I still went, as I
remember, with my yarmulke

106
00:05:27,000 --> 00:05:31,350
on my head, and some
of the kids in school

107
00:05:31,350 --> 00:05:36,240
were kind of making fun
of me, which didn't sit

108
00:05:36,240 --> 00:05:39,720
too well with me at that point.

109

00:05:39,720 --> 00:05:44,490

But it took maybe
six months to a year

110

00:05:44,490 --> 00:05:49,170

until I removed my yarmulke
and I continued high school

111

00:05:49,170 --> 00:05:55,980

with all the other
children until, of course,

112

00:05:55,980 --> 00:06:07,620

I finished high school and I was
called to the duty by the army.

113

00:06:07,620 --> 00:06:11,100

So you went into the IDF in '56.

114

00:06:11,100 --> 00:06:14,190

Yes, '56.

115

00:06:14,190 --> 00:06:18,330

End of '56, I went
into the army,

116

00:06:18,330 --> 00:06:23,100

and I went to the
[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH],, which,

117

00:06:23,100 --> 00:06:29,610

at that time, was a special unit
in the army that the end result

118

00:06:29,610 --> 00:06:35,910

was a membership in a kibbutz.

119

00:06:35,910 --> 00:06:43,830

However, while I
was in the army,

120

00:06:43,830 --> 00:06:48,840

I decided to have

a military career,

121
00:06:48,840 --> 00:06:58,950
and I was asked to go to a
corporal's school in Israel

122
00:06:58,950 --> 00:07:02,290
prior of--

123
00:07:02,290 --> 00:07:06,750
I should say, in Israel,
you don't become a corporal

124
00:07:06,750 --> 00:07:09,730
because you are a good soldier.

125
00:07:09,730 --> 00:07:14,940
You become a corporal because
you go to a special corporals

126
00:07:14,940 --> 00:07:16,500
school.

127
00:07:16,500 --> 00:07:22,780
If it is a fighting unit,
you have to go to school.

128
00:07:22,780 --> 00:07:25,980
And since I belonged
to a fighting unit,

129
00:07:25,980 --> 00:07:27,960
I went to corporal school.

130
00:07:27,960 --> 00:07:29,670
I finished it.

131
00:07:29,670 --> 00:07:41,940
I was a instructor in
the military for recruits

132
00:07:41,940 --> 00:07:45,960

that came into the army,
and shortly thereafter,

133
00:07:45,960 --> 00:07:50,640
maybe a year after, I went to
the military academy, which

134
00:07:50,640 --> 00:07:51,870
I finished.

135
00:07:51,870 --> 00:07:58,440
And I became an
officer in the army.

136
00:07:58,440 --> 00:08:03,540
I went to a paratroopers
unit, and that's

137
00:08:03,540 --> 00:08:10,410
how I finished up my army,
as a retired officer.

138
00:08:10,410 --> 00:08:15,960
Was your name still
Jacob Feingold?

139
00:08:15,960 --> 00:08:19,530
At that time, it was Jacob.

140
00:08:19,530 --> 00:08:25,080
Some of my friends
referred to me as Jankele.

141
00:08:25,080 --> 00:08:31,920
That was a nickname that I
carried since my very early age

142
00:08:31,920 --> 00:08:32,880
in Israel.

143
00:08:32,880 --> 00:08:37,400
And what did you do after the
army, when you left the army?

144
00:08:37,400 --> 00:08:44,270
When I finished the
army, most of my friends

145
00:08:44,270 --> 00:08:54,160
were already either in
the university, some

146
00:08:54,160 --> 00:08:58,660
of them working or
building careers,

147
00:08:58,660 --> 00:09:06,960
and I kind of found myself
a little bit lost because I

148
00:09:06,960 --> 00:09:08,780
didn't know what I want to do.

149
00:09:08,780 --> 00:09:12,460
And I had to make up my mind.

150
00:09:12,460 --> 00:09:15,960
And being persuaded
by some good friends

151
00:09:15,960 --> 00:09:21,370
that I should go and
continue my education,

152
00:09:21,370 --> 00:09:23,520
the question became,
where should I go,

153
00:09:23,520 --> 00:09:26,160
and what should I do?

154
00:09:26,160 --> 00:09:32,260
And as I had finished my
matriculation in Israel,

155

00:09:32,260 --> 00:09:38,580
there was one subject that I was
somewhat weak with, and oddly

156
00:09:38,580 --> 00:09:42,690
enough, that was English.

157
00:09:42,690 --> 00:09:46,950
My English was very
weak at that time,

158
00:09:46,950 --> 00:09:53,160
and of course, when you were
seeking for higher education,

159
00:09:53,160 --> 00:09:59,670
English had to be one of the
subjects that you passed.

160
00:09:59,670 --> 00:10:06,270
I did not pass English,
and therefore it

161
00:10:06,270 --> 00:10:11,490
was somewhat difficult for me to
make up my mind how to proceed.

162
00:10:11,490 --> 00:10:15,900
It took about a
year or so until--

163
00:10:15,900 --> 00:10:20,160
and I did all kinds
of odds and ends,

164
00:10:20,160 --> 00:10:24,780
all kinds of different jobs
until I made up my mind

165
00:10:24,780 --> 00:10:29,700
that I'm going back to school.

166
00:10:29,700 --> 00:10:35,010

And from all the places
that I decided to go to

167
00:10:35,010 --> 00:10:39,270
came the United
States of America.

168
00:10:39,270 --> 00:10:44,850
So I parted from all
my friends in Israel.

169
00:10:44,850 --> 00:10:47,320
What made you decide
to want to come here

170
00:10:47,320 --> 00:10:49,140
if your English wasn't so good?

171
00:10:49,140 --> 00:10:53,520
Then I came to the conclusion
that the only place where

172
00:10:53,520 --> 00:10:57,180
I will quickly
command a language

173
00:10:57,180 --> 00:10:59,460
will be if I would
be able to speak

174
00:10:59,460 --> 00:11:02,920
the language but the
language of the country.

175
00:11:02,920 --> 00:11:05,250
And I had many other choices.

176
00:11:05,250 --> 00:11:08,220
I could have gone to
France or to Germany,

177
00:11:08,220 --> 00:11:13,230
but I kind of felt that the

United States of America

178

00:11:13,230 --> 00:11:20,310
should be best, and I
decided to come to America.

179

00:11:20,310 --> 00:11:24,690
It took maybe six
months for me to make

180

00:11:24,690 --> 00:11:26,850
the proper arrangements.

181

00:11:26,850 --> 00:11:28,560
I left my friends.

182

00:11:28,560 --> 00:11:31,950
I left everybody
in Israel, and I

183

00:11:31,950 --> 00:11:36,780
traveled to the United States
of America, a country which

184

00:11:36,780 --> 00:11:39,330
I am in until this very day.

185

00:11:39,330 --> 00:11:41,730
What did the United
States mean to you

186

00:11:41,730 --> 00:11:45,105
as a young adult at that time?

187

00:11:45,105 --> 00:11:47,700
Did it have any special
meeting besides the fact you

188

00:11:47,700 --> 00:11:48,867
were going to learn English?

189

00:11:48,867 --> 00:11:50,970

It meant to me--

190
00:11:50,970 --> 00:11:56,730
America meant to me
the country of success,

191
00:11:56,730 --> 00:12:04,080
a country of big achievements,
a country of being

192
00:12:04,080 --> 00:12:07,500
able to do what
everyone wants to do,

193
00:12:07,500 --> 00:12:12,190
a country that has
really no limits.

194
00:12:12,190 --> 00:12:13,470
That's what it meant to me.

195
00:12:13,470 --> 00:12:17,370

196
00:12:17,370 --> 00:12:18,870
So you land--

197
00:12:18,870 --> 00:12:20,340
And I land here.

198
00:12:20,340 --> 00:12:22,470
Did you fly or take the boat?

199
00:12:22,470 --> 00:12:24,210
I took a boat.

200
00:12:24,210 --> 00:12:27,900
I was sick as a dog.

201
00:12:27,900 --> 00:12:28,900
What boat were you on?

202

00:12:28,900 --> 00:12:36,000

And I made myself a promise
that I will never ever

203

00:12:36,000 --> 00:12:38,490

put my foot on a boat again.

204

00:12:38,490 --> 00:12:41,650

What was the name of the boat?

205

00:12:41,650 --> 00:12:42,450

Do you remember?

206

00:12:42,450 --> 00:12:46,680

Actually, I came through France.

207

00:12:46,680 --> 00:12:49,300

I came on an Israeli--

208

00:12:49,300 --> 00:12:58,440

on an Israeli boat of that
time to France, and from France

209

00:12:58,440 --> 00:13:04,260

I traveled on the virgin
voyage of the French

210

00:13:04,260 --> 00:13:09,460

into the United States of
America, into New York City.

211

00:13:09,460 --> 00:13:12,673

And putting your foot
down on American ground--

212

00:13:12,673 --> 00:13:13,590

--on American ground--

213

00:13:13,590 --> 00:13:14,340

--what was that?

214

00:13:14,340 --> 00:13:15,210
Was that special?

215
00:13:15,210 --> 00:13:19,200
It was not, not
that it was special.

216
00:13:19,200 --> 00:13:22,620
To leave the sea
was very special.

217
00:13:22,620 --> 00:13:27,592
I was sick as a dog, and
being on the ground--

218
00:13:27,592 --> 00:13:28,830
That's what it meant.

219
00:13:28,830 --> 00:13:30,720
--gave me a great pleasure.

220
00:13:30,720 --> 00:13:31,785
Then where did you go?

221
00:13:31,785 --> 00:13:33,930
As a matter of
fact, I had an aunt,

222
00:13:33,930 --> 00:13:41,040
one of my father's sisters,
who lived in the United States

223
00:13:41,040 --> 00:13:43,680
since the Second World War.

224
00:13:43,680 --> 00:13:51,720
She escaped from Poland
through Morocco into France

225
00:13:51,720 --> 00:13:54,780
and ended up in the
United States of America

226

00:13:54,780 --> 00:13:56,430
with her family.

227

00:13:56,430 --> 00:13:58,230
So I met her.

228

00:13:58,230 --> 00:14:00,900
I lived in the first
few months with her.

229

00:14:00,900 --> 00:14:01,560
In New York?

230

00:14:01,560 --> 00:14:03,840
In New York City.

231

00:14:03,840 --> 00:14:12,010
And of course, when I first came
and looked at New York City,

232

00:14:12,010 --> 00:14:21,840
it was like a story from
"1,000 Nights of Stories."

233

00:14:21,840 --> 00:14:28,050
It was an unbelievable scene to
see the size of the buildings,

234

00:14:28,050 --> 00:14:33,240
to see all the people, and most
disappointing at the beginning,

235

00:14:33,240 --> 00:14:37,860
that everybody spoke
English and I did not.

236

00:14:37,860 --> 00:14:41,350
But that did not
take a long time.

237

00:14:41,350 --> 00:14:43,560
So we're talking

about what year?

238
00:14:43,560 --> 00:14:47,560
1960?

239
00:14:47,560 --> 00:14:50,830
1960, 1960.

240
00:14:50,830 --> 00:14:51,330
OK.

241
00:14:51,330 --> 00:14:52,580
So then what did you first do?

242
00:14:52,580 --> 00:15:00,990
And then, in 1960,
through a very pleasant

243
00:15:00,990 --> 00:15:08,730
and unforeseen connection,
I was guided into CCNY

244
00:15:08,730 --> 00:15:09,720
in New York City.

245
00:15:09,720 --> 00:15:10,680
City College, yeah.

246
00:15:10,680 --> 00:15:14,920
And I went to school in CCNY.

247
00:15:14,920 --> 00:15:18,930
After that, or a matter of fact,
part of it, at the same time,

248
00:15:18,930 --> 00:15:22,620
I went into Fashion
Institute of Technology,

249
00:15:22,620 --> 00:15:27,677
and graduated, and started
my career in New York City.

250

00:15:27,677 --> 00:15:29,010

You obviously picked up English.

251

00:15:29,010 --> 00:15:32,370

Modestly picked up

English, and by the time

252

00:15:32,370 --> 00:15:38,173

I finish, I was pretty fluent

in the language of English, yes.

253

00:15:38,173 --> 00:15:39,465

Did you go to language classes.

254

00:15:39,465 --> 00:15:40,048

No, I did not.

255

00:15:40,048 --> 00:15:41,460

Or you just picked it up doing--

256

00:15:41,460 --> 00:15:46,080

No, I got myself a

girlfriend, and that's

257

00:15:46,080 --> 00:15:47,730

the way I learned my English.

258

00:15:47,730 --> 00:15:49,710

No, no.

259

00:15:49,710 --> 00:15:55,680

That was many years

before I got married.

260

00:15:55,680 --> 00:15:58,030

So you graduated

from the schools.

261

00:15:58,030 --> 00:16:04,830

I graduated from the school,

and I worked for an engineering

262

00:16:04,830 --> 00:16:10,530
company by the name of
Bertram Frank Associates,

263

00:16:10,530 --> 00:16:13,470
and then after a year
and a half or two,

264

00:16:13,470 --> 00:16:18,820
I worked for another company
of engineers as well.

265

00:16:18,820 --> 00:16:32,030
And while working with
this engineering firm--

266

00:16:32,030 --> 00:16:36,170
the name escapes my
mind for a moment--

267

00:16:36,170 --> 00:16:42,620
I met some people who were
in the midst of building

268

00:16:42,620 --> 00:16:51,320
a large factory farm in
Puerto Rico, from all places.

269

00:16:51,320 --> 00:16:57,210
And we finished it up, and
they came back to New York.

270

00:16:57,210 --> 00:17:02,720
And they offered me a
job to work with them.

271

00:17:02,720 --> 00:17:06,230
I wasn't sold on it because
I had a very serious job,

272

00:17:06,230 --> 00:17:08,780
and I was happy with the job.

273

00:17:08,780 --> 00:17:13,435

At that time, I was making a
lot of money for a young man--

274

00:17:13,435 --> 00:17:16,410

or that's what I
thought, anyhow--

275

00:17:16,410 --> 00:17:19,099

and I was very comfortable.

276

00:17:19,099 --> 00:17:24,109

And they invited me for a few
interviews, which I did go,

277

00:17:24,109 --> 00:17:31,740

and I met a fellow by the
name of Charles Greenberg who

278

00:17:31,740 --> 00:17:37,680

happened to be a nephew of the
man that owned the company.

279

00:17:37,680 --> 00:17:42,840

And they convinced
me to join them.

280

00:17:42,840 --> 00:17:47,130

They better than
matched my salary,

281

00:17:47,130 --> 00:17:53,760

and I joined them to find out
after maybe a year with them

282

00:17:53,760 --> 00:18:01,710

that the men who hired me, a
fellow by the name of Leonard

283

00:18:01,710 --> 00:18:08,730

Sherman, decided to sell his
business without telling me

284
00:18:08,730 --> 00:18:11,250
anything about it.

285
00:18:11,250 --> 00:18:15,360
And he did sell the business,
and we became a part

286
00:18:15,360 --> 00:18:18,000
of a much larger company.

287
00:18:18,000 --> 00:18:21,270
But after selling
that business, I

288
00:18:21,270 --> 00:18:26,550
got together with what was
at that point my partner

289
00:18:26,550 --> 00:18:31,260
or my associate, a fellow by
the name of Charles Greenberg.

290
00:18:31,260 --> 00:18:37,320
And we decided to leave the
company and go on our own

291
00:18:37,320 --> 00:18:46,290
and open our own manufacturing
facility, which we did.

292
00:18:46,290 --> 00:18:52,980
We produced women's lingerie
or women's underwear

293
00:18:52,980 --> 00:18:56,580
for over 18 years.

294
00:18:56,580 --> 00:19:10,980
And in and around 1985
we parted company,

295

00:19:10,980 --> 00:19:13,610
and the business was sold.

296
00:19:13,610 --> 00:19:17,690
Of course, much
prior to that I have

297
00:19:17,690 --> 00:19:24,560
met my wife, who happens to be
my wife until this very day,

298
00:19:24,560 --> 00:19:31,370
a lady by the name of Theas
Otehea Hornstein of that time

299
00:19:31,370 --> 00:19:38,450
and today, of course, Thea
Ophir, which I'm still married.

300
00:19:38,450 --> 00:19:42,350
I should say happily married.

301
00:19:42,350 --> 00:19:44,150
Was she from Europe also?

302
00:19:44,150 --> 00:19:48,230
She was born Israeli,
[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH],,

303
00:19:48,230 --> 00:19:52,400
the way we refer to--

304
00:19:52,400 --> 00:19:54,770
How did you meet her?

305
00:19:54,770 --> 00:19:56,690
We met through some mutual--

306
00:19:56,690 --> 00:19:58,620
--mutual friends,
actually, in the--

307

00:19:58,620 --> 00:19:59,840
--here in the United States?

308
00:19:59,840 --> 00:20:01,190
--here in the United States.

309
00:20:01,190 --> 00:20:05,360
She used to be a
stewardess with El Al,

310
00:20:05,360 --> 00:20:11,930
and on one of the flights
to New York City she--

311
00:20:11,930 --> 00:20:12,780
I don't know.

312
00:20:12,780 --> 00:20:14,540
I don't remember
any more-- happily

313
00:20:14,540 --> 00:20:18,180
or unhappily came to
my apartment, the place

314
00:20:18,180 --> 00:20:21,500
that I was entertaining
on Sundays.

315
00:20:21,500 --> 00:20:25,160
And that's how we met, and
the rest of it is history.

316
00:20:25,160 --> 00:20:26,960
Do you have any children?

317
00:20:26,960 --> 00:20:30,920
We have three children,
and we have a daughter that

318
00:20:30,920 --> 00:20:32,885
came first and two more sons.

319

00:20:32,885 --> 00:20:36,350

320

00:20:36,350 --> 00:20:40,130

All three are married and
have their own families.

321

00:20:40,130 --> 00:20:45,050

The youngest was with
me until this very day.

322

00:20:45,050 --> 00:20:49,310

And when did you
become Mr. Ophir?

323

00:20:49,310 --> 00:20:52,190

324

00:20:52,190 --> 00:20:55,880

I have changed my
name very shortly--

325

00:20:55,880 --> 00:21:02,000

or I should say, while I
was in the army in Israel.

326

00:21:02,000 --> 00:21:08,750

Before I went to officer
school, one of my units

327

00:21:08,750 --> 00:21:13,910

worked as regards
to David Ben-Gurion.

328

00:21:13,910 --> 00:21:20,210

And he was very
influential on us

329

00:21:20,210 --> 00:21:24,530

to change the names
to Hebrew names.

330

00:21:24,530 --> 00:21:31,250

One of the members in my family,
a son of my father's brother--

331

00:21:31,250 --> 00:21:37,070

he changed the name first
to the name of Ophir.

332

00:21:37,070 --> 00:21:39,950

And I had another
job in the force,

333

00:21:39,950 --> 00:21:42,470

and being that I
did not want to have

334

00:21:42,470 --> 00:21:47,300

too many names in the same
family, I took it upon myself.

335

00:21:47,300 --> 00:21:52,370

And I changed my name to
Ophir, the same way he did.

336

00:21:52,370 --> 00:21:57,890

So the Hebrew name remains
the same within the family.

337

00:21:57,890 --> 00:22:01,800

And did he choose the name
Ophir for a specific reason?

338

00:22:01,800 --> 00:22:02,300

Yes.

339

00:22:02,300 --> 00:22:03,592

How did he come to choose that?

340

00:22:03,592 --> 00:22:05,300

That's a good question.

341

00:22:05,300 --> 00:22:10,460

The name of Ophir

is a biblical name,

342

00:22:10,460 --> 00:22:21,410

and it is the land of gold,
the land that Queen Sheba mined

343

00:22:21,410 --> 00:22:24,290

her gold for King Solomon.

344

00:22:24,290 --> 00:22:29,190

It was the finest gold
found at that time,

345

00:22:29,190 --> 00:22:32,210

so that's the relationship to--

346

00:22:32,210 --> 00:22:32,870

--to Feingold.

347

00:22:32,870 --> 00:22:33,820

That's wonderful.

348

00:22:33,820 --> 00:22:36,950

349

00:22:36,950 --> 00:22:38,090

Are you still working?

350

00:22:38,090 --> 00:22:39,890

You said your son is
in business with you.

351

00:22:39,890 --> 00:22:40,840

Are you still working?

352

00:22:40,840 --> 00:22:45,500

From 1985, we have--

353

00:22:45,500 --> 00:22:49,100

I should say, prior
to that, my wife

354

00:22:49,100 --> 00:22:56,210
was in the antique business, and
being that we sold our lingerie

355

00:22:56,210 --> 00:23:01,380
business, she raised the
question one day, said to me,

356

00:23:01,380 --> 00:23:05,730
Jack, what would you like
to do when you grow up?

357

00:23:05,730 --> 00:23:11,420
And it wasn't a
question of finances.

358

00:23:11,420 --> 00:23:17,780
It was more a question of peace
of mind, I would say, among us.

359

00:23:17,780 --> 00:23:22,490
And I thought about it, and
I said to her, you know what?

360

00:23:22,490 --> 00:23:25,910
I will go into the
antique business,

361

00:23:25,910 --> 00:23:28,940
the same business you are in.

362

00:23:28,940 --> 00:23:38,690
And to make it clear, I
always had an interest myself

363

00:23:38,690 --> 00:23:44,420
in the other antique business,
so it came rather easily

364

00:23:44,420 --> 00:23:46,790
to go into that business.

365

00:23:46,790 --> 00:23:51,560
And my wife at the
time handled very--

366
00:23:51,560 --> 00:23:56,390
I would say very small
collectible items,

367
00:23:56,390 --> 00:24:03,390
and by virtue of
maybe importance,

368
00:24:03,390 --> 00:24:10,710
I would say not very important
items, but more collectible

369
00:24:10,710 --> 00:24:14,190
items and decorative items.

370
00:24:14,190 --> 00:24:17,460
And when I went
into the business,

371
00:24:17,460 --> 00:24:20,820
I made the decision that
I would like to handle

372
00:24:20,820 --> 00:24:25,230
more important type of objects.

373
00:24:25,230 --> 00:24:33,870
And that took a little time to
recognize where we want to be

374
00:24:33,870 --> 00:24:38,850
and what type of merchandise
or objects we want to handle,

375
00:24:38,850 --> 00:24:43,740
and came a moment where we
decided to handle the Art

376
00:24:43,740 --> 00:24:50,820

Nouveau period as
Europe was concerned,

377
00:24:50,820 --> 00:24:58,650
mainly French and
Austrian type of objects

378
00:24:58,650 --> 00:25:06,960
and parallel, American Tiffany
studios or objects that were

379
00:25:06,960 --> 00:25:11,500
made by Tiffany in the 1900s.

380
00:25:11,500 --> 00:25:17,370
I would say late 1800s and
early 1900s, a business that we

381
00:25:17,370 --> 00:25:19,170
are in until this very day.

382
00:25:19,170 --> 00:25:20,790
Wonderful.

383
00:25:20,790 --> 00:25:23,610
Can we now talk a little
bit about your thoughts

384
00:25:23,610 --> 00:25:27,540
and your feelings about
what you went through?

385
00:25:27,540 --> 00:25:31,200
How do you feel
about Poland today?

386
00:25:31,200 --> 00:25:34,730
What are your
thoughts about Poland?

387
00:25:34,730 --> 00:25:41,390
About two, three
years ago, I finally

388

00:25:41,390 --> 00:25:48,320
made the decision that I would
like to take a look at Poland.

389

00:25:48,320 --> 00:25:49,640
You had not been back at all--

390

00:25:49,640 --> 00:25:54,770
I have not been back
to Poland since.

391

00:25:54,770 --> 00:25:59,090
I have been back to Germany,
which I will tell you

392

00:25:59,090 --> 00:26:02,630
in a second about.

393

00:26:02,630 --> 00:26:07,860
And we did go, and the
first place, of course, we

394

00:26:07,860 --> 00:26:10,470
went to Warsaw.

395

00:26:10,470 --> 00:26:13,470
And before we toured
Warsaw, we went

396

00:26:13,470 --> 00:26:19,320
to Lodz, a place I was born in.

397

00:26:19,320 --> 00:26:28,110
And when we arrived in
Lodz, a force from stories

398

00:26:28,110 --> 00:26:33,270
I knew that we come from a very,
very well-to-do background,

399

00:26:33,270 --> 00:26:40,660

and the homes were very serious
homes, very elaborate homes.

400
00:26:40,660 --> 00:26:43,980
And it was natural for me
to look for those homes.

401
00:26:43,980 --> 00:26:46,990

402
00:26:46,990 --> 00:26:50,770
I couldn't find those
homes, and Warsaw--

403
00:26:50,770 --> 00:26:52,840
I know from a story
that my mother--

404
00:26:52,840 --> 00:26:57,220
when she was still alive,
she went to look for her home

405
00:26:57,220 --> 00:27:01,720
and couldn't find it because the
Polacks burnt everything down

406
00:27:01,720 --> 00:27:05,620
to the ground and built some
apartment buildings there.

407
00:27:05,620 --> 00:27:08,140

408
00:27:08,140 --> 00:27:15,530
To be completely
candid, our first visit

409
00:27:15,530 --> 00:27:22,280
was the cemetery in Lodz,
which is a huge cemetery.

410
00:27:22,280 --> 00:27:26,060
Nevertheless, half of

it was completely ruined

411

00:27:26,060 --> 00:27:33,470
by the Germans, and none of
the graves could be found.

412

00:27:33,470 --> 00:27:36,950
And we looked, we tried.

413

00:27:36,950 --> 00:27:39,230
Nothing was found there.

414

00:27:39,230 --> 00:27:43,910
And some of the older cemetery--

415

00:27:43,910 --> 00:27:57,910
that was in place, and the
only place that was evident

416

00:27:57,910 --> 00:28:03,640
was the place where some
very well-to-do Jews lived

417

00:28:03,640 --> 00:28:07,570
and were buried right
before the Germans came in.

418

00:28:07,570 --> 00:28:13,320
And those, of
course, are stones,

419

00:28:13,320 --> 00:28:22,850
still stand, and
they are absolutely

420

00:28:22,850 --> 00:28:28,170
unbelievable in the
construction, looks,

421

00:28:28,170 --> 00:28:36,180
and important, meaning they
look like celebrity stones,

422

00:28:36,180 --> 00:28:40,980

celebrity people
were buried there.

423

00:28:40,980 --> 00:28:42,990

This was Lodz.

424

00:28:42,990 --> 00:28:48,780

As far as city is concerned,
it meant nothing to me.

425

00:28:48,780 --> 00:28:50,610

Are you still fluent in Polish?

426

00:28:50,610 --> 00:28:54,113

I am still completely
fluent in Polish.

427

00:28:54,113 --> 00:28:56,280

So when you were there you
could talk to the people?

428

00:28:56,280 --> 00:28:57,280

I talked to some people.

429

00:28:57,280 --> 00:28:58,710

I talked to people.

430

00:28:58,710 --> 00:29:02,640

As a matter of fact, our guides
all were fluent in Polish,

431

00:29:02,640 --> 00:29:06,540

and they couldn't believe that
I speak the type of Polish I do,

432

00:29:06,540 --> 00:29:08,280

but I am fluent.

433

00:29:08,280 --> 00:29:10,920

And from there we
returned to Warsaw.

434
00:29:10,920 --> 00:29:14,860

435
00:29:14,860 --> 00:29:19,720
Warsaw is being
rebuilt completely,

436
00:29:19,720 --> 00:29:26,750
high-risers, beautiful
homes, and that

437
00:29:26,750 --> 00:29:34,160
was another city that had
absolutely no impression on me,

438
00:29:34,160 --> 00:29:35,810
none whatsoever.

439
00:29:35,810 --> 00:29:39,500
Like all the feelings
were burnt out.

440
00:29:39,500 --> 00:29:48,770
We went to see the old city
of Warsaw, which actually

441
00:29:48,770 --> 00:29:54,290
Warsaw totally rebuilt. There's
nothing old about the old city,

442
00:29:54,290 --> 00:29:57,950
with the exception
of a rebuilt city.

443
00:29:57,950 --> 00:30:03,650
We were in the places where the
ghetto was existing, of course,

444
00:30:03,650 --> 00:30:07,310
and couldn't find anything
with the exception

445

00:30:07,310 --> 00:30:14,160

of some insignias
of families that

446

00:30:14,160 --> 00:30:17,400

lived there or stayed there.

447

00:30:17,400 --> 00:30:21,650

448

00:30:21,650 --> 00:30:25,190

To be perfectly frank, I like--

449

00:30:25,190 --> 00:30:29,840

I always did-- some
traditional Polish food

450

00:30:29,840 --> 00:30:31,910

because that's the
way I was brought up

451

00:30:31,910 --> 00:30:34,010

in my mother's kitchen.

452

00:30:34,010 --> 00:30:39,410

However, I must say
with a little humor

453

00:30:39,410 --> 00:30:43,250

that you can get better
Polish food in Greenpoint

454

00:30:43,250 --> 00:30:48,770

in Brooklyn than you
could in Warsaw of Poland,

455

00:30:48,770 --> 00:30:50,345

and that's the gospel truth.

456

00:30:50,345 --> 00:30:57,080

457

00:30:57,080 --> 00:31:01,280

We stayed in Warsaw, for
a, relatively speaking,

458

00:31:01,280 --> 00:31:04,790

short time, and we left.

459

00:31:04,790 --> 00:31:13,370

And to be very frank about it,
I have absolutely no feelings

460

00:31:13,370 --> 00:31:20,000

or no memories of what
Poland was to me or is to me,

461

00:31:20,000 --> 00:31:23,030

just with the exception
of it was nice

462

00:31:23,030 --> 00:31:27,740

being there just to have a
memory that I was born there.

463

00:31:27,740 --> 00:31:30,800

And that's about it.

464

00:31:30,800 --> 00:31:34,070

We did take a trip,
of course, to Germany.

465

00:31:34,070 --> 00:31:37,940

I used to do some
business in Germany.

466

00:31:37,940 --> 00:31:44,360

And at one point that long
ago, I made the decision

467

00:31:44,360 --> 00:31:48,500

that I would like to
see Bergen-Belsen,

468

00:31:48,500 --> 00:31:54,590
a place that I really, for
many years, didn't want to see.

469
00:31:54,590 --> 00:32:00,200
And I had a conversation
with my wife about it,

470
00:32:00,200 --> 00:32:06,890
and we made the decision
to go to Bergen-Belsen.

471
00:32:06,890 --> 00:32:15,570
We traveled to Berlin, stayed
in Berlin for a few days

472
00:32:15,570 --> 00:32:19,220
and by the way, from
all places, much more so

473
00:32:19,220 --> 00:32:21,560
than Poland or Warsaw.

474
00:32:21,560 --> 00:32:27,140
Everywhere you turn
on the Berlin street

475
00:32:27,140 --> 00:32:32,000
you find Hebrew
insignias and Hebrew

476
00:32:32,000 --> 00:32:39,590
names of families that used
to live all over Berlin.

477
00:32:39,590 --> 00:32:44,900
And they are impressed
with bronze signs,

478
00:32:44,900 --> 00:32:49,160
and it's absolutely
impossible for you

479

00:32:49,160 --> 00:32:54,560
to visit Berlin and
not know the influence

480
00:32:54,560 --> 00:33:00,680
that German Jews had on Berlin.

481
00:33:00,680 --> 00:33:05,150
That being said, we
had an appointment

482
00:33:05,150 --> 00:33:11,990
with a driver, a young
fellow, that took us directly

483
00:33:11,990 --> 00:33:15,290
to Bergen-Belsen.

484
00:33:15,290 --> 00:33:18,260
We asked him if he
would like to join us

485
00:33:18,260 --> 00:33:25,370
or whatever he would like to
do or maybe meet us later on,

486
00:33:25,370 --> 00:33:33,680
and he kind of insisted for us
to take him into Bergen-Belsen,

487
00:33:33,680 --> 00:33:36,680
which we did.

488
00:33:36,680 --> 00:33:40,100
We explained to him who
we are and who I am,

489
00:33:40,100 --> 00:33:43,070
that I was there during the war.

490
00:33:43,070 --> 00:33:48,050
He was a young woman that
knew very little about it,

491
00:33:48,050 --> 00:33:52,490
or maybe just what he
was taught in school

492
00:33:52,490 --> 00:33:54,800
or told by his father.

493
00:33:54,800 --> 00:34:01,910
But I would say the driver was
in his early 30s or late 20s,

494
00:34:01,910 --> 00:34:04,520
so he couldn't know
too much about it.

495
00:34:04,520 --> 00:34:09,300
But he knew that it did exist.

496
00:34:09,300 --> 00:34:13,190
We came into
Bergen-Belsen, and we

497
00:34:13,190 --> 00:34:25,310
were greeted by one of the
chief guides in Bergen-Belsen

498
00:34:25,310 --> 00:34:28,040
of today's guides
in Bergen-Belsen.

499
00:34:28,040 --> 00:34:31,460
Of course, it was
turned into a museum.

500
00:34:31,460 --> 00:34:42,139
And when we said hello, the lady
that intercepted us or met us--

501
00:34:42,139 --> 00:34:45,739
she thought, at the beginning,
that we are visitors,

502

00:34:45,739 --> 00:34:51,860

and my wife had explained to
her, yes, we are visitors.

503

00:34:51,860 --> 00:34:57,380

But you have in
front of you a person

504

00:34:57,380 --> 00:35:02,070

that spent some time
here in this childhood.

505

00:35:02,070 --> 00:35:07,820

She was taken for a
moment, and then she

506

00:35:07,820 --> 00:35:12,660

said, yes, that her
boss, who couldn't meet--

507

00:35:12,660 --> 00:35:17,900

he's the general
manager of the museum.

508

00:35:17,900 --> 00:35:22,460

He couldn't meet us, but he
prepared for us some items,

509

00:35:22,460 --> 00:35:36,670

and he prepared for us the
complete double book of all two

510

00:35:36,670 --> 00:35:40,360

volumes, two large
volumes of books

511

00:35:40,360 --> 00:35:44,770

with an agendum
of all the people

512

00:35:44,770 --> 00:35:50,950

that were in Bergen-Belsen as
long as Bergen-Belsen existed.

513
00:35:50,950 --> 00:35:54,320

514
00:35:54,320 --> 00:35:56,120
And the first
[INAUDIBLE] she said

515
00:35:56,120 --> 00:36:00,050
that she would be very
happy to give us a tour,

516
00:36:00,050 --> 00:36:03,100
and she did bring us.

517
00:36:03,100 --> 00:36:07,880
We spent some time in the
general hallway that is--

518
00:36:07,880 --> 00:36:10,580
it looks just like a cave.

519
00:36:10,580 --> 00:36:15,905
And all the personal artifacts
and things of this nature

520
00:36:15,905 --> 00:36:22,190
are displayed, which wasn't
a very comforting type

521
00:36:22,190 --> 00:36:23,420
of a memory.

522
00:36:23,420 --> 00:36:28,880
But those cans that I told you
about that the Germans used

523
00:36:28,880 --> 00:36:36,890
to bring the soup in-- a few
of them were there, on display.

524
00:36:36,890 --> 00:36:41,960

And when we went through
all those displays,

525
00:36:41,960 --> 00:36:44,120
we wanted to go
into Bergen-Belsen,

526
00:36:44,120 --> 00:36:46,430
into the camp, which we did.

527
00:36:46,430 --> 00:36:49,610
When you saw the cans, did
it bring everything back?

528
00:36:49,610 --> 00:36:51,315
And the first place--

529
00:36:51,315 --> 00:36:56,240
they had no barracks,
no buildings.

530
00:36:56,240 --> 00:36:59,840
Everything was
taken off, and where

531
00:36:59,840 --> 00:37:05,330
the crematorium was where they
were exterminating people--

532
00:37:05,330 --> 00:37:07,650
that was completely gone.

533
00:37:07,650 --> 00:37:11,750
And the only thing
that you could find

534
00:37:11,750 --> 00:37:17,210
were outlines of the
barracks and where

535
00:37:17,210 --> 00:37:20,150
the barracks were located.

536

00:37:20,150 --> 00:37:27,260

And as we went into
the camp, I requested

537

00:37:27,260 --> 00:37:33,440

to meet in barracks number 10,
and I was led to it immediately

538

00:37:33,440 --> 00:37:36,470

as we entered the camp.

539

00:37:36,470 --> 00:37:44,300

And believe it or not,
I sat in person right

540

00:37:44,300 --> 00:37:51,340

on the grounds of the
barrack that I lived in when

541

00:37:51,340 --> 00:37:53,080

we were in Bergen-Belsen.

542

00:37:53,080 --> 00:37:56,110

543

00:37:56,110 --> 00:38:02,770

My wife was, of course, with
me and there was very little

544

00:38:02,770 --> 00:38:04,180

that I could say.

545

00:38:04,180 --> 00:38:07,040

For a moment I just
wanted to be left alone

546

00:38:07,040 --> 00:38:18,200

and just look around, and it
was a little bit difficult.

547

00:38:18,200 --> 00:38:20,110

It really was.

548
00:38:20,110 --> 00:38:22,510
Many, many, many
years passed by,

549
00:38:22,510 --> 00:38:25,990
but all of a sudden,
some memories came by.

550
00:38:25,990 --> 00:38:29,350
And I was right there.

551
00:38:29,350 --> 00:38:31,400
I was right there.

552
00:38:31,400 --> 00:38:34,450
We spent a few hours
in Bergen-Belsen.

553
00:38:34,450 --> 00:38:37,900

554
00:38:37,900 --> 00:38:40,660
There's a big stone
right in front

555
00:38:40,660 --> 00:38:43,870
of the camp with the
name of the camp,

556
00:38:43,870 --> 00:38:49,300
and at first I took a
picture in front of it.

557
00:38:49,300 --> 00:38:50,770
And it's on my Facebook.

558
00:38:50,770 --> 00:38:53,530

559
00:38:53,530 --> 00:39:00,730
And we came back to

Berlin, and in the taxi

560

00:39:00,730 --> 00:39:07,270

the guy was kind of
telling us and thanking us

561

00:39:07,270 --> 00:39:14,350

that we allowed him to come
with us, that he knew about what

562

00:39:14,350 --> 00:39:16,450

had happened, but
he never really

563

00:39:16,450 --> 00:39:23,020

had the chance to see
it in his own eyes.

564

00:39:23,020 --> 00:39:24,850

However, we came back to Berlin.

565

00:39:24,850 --> 00:39:26,710

We had a pretty
good time in Berlin.

566

00:39:26,710 --> 00:39:30,310

Berlin is a very large city.

567

00:39:30,310 --> 00:39:35,920

And we stayed another day or
so and came back to the US,

568

00:39:35,920 --> 00:39:37,360

came back home.

569

00:39:37,360 --> 00:39:40,090

Came back-- is the US your home?

570

00:39:40,090 --> 00:39:41,370

That is our home, yes--

571

00:39:41,370 --> 00:39:42,370

Poland is not your home.

572

00:39:42,370 --> 00:39:43,470

--absolutely our home.

573

00:39:43,470 --> 00:39:44,300

And Israel?

574

00:39:44,300 --> 00:39:45,776

Is Israel your home?

575

00:39:45,776 --> 00:39:51,580

Actually, I happen

to be, by now,

576

00:39:51,580 --> 00:39:55,900

more American than

anything else because I'm

577

00:39:55,900 --> 00:39:58,525

in this country

for over 50 years.

578

00:39:58,525 --> 00:40:01,760

579

00:40:01,760 --> 00:40:07,870

Israel is a home, too,

but in a different way.

580

00:40:07,870 --> 00:40:12,220

[INAUDIBLE] after my children

were brought up here.

581

00:40:12,220 --> 00:40:13,330

They have a home.

582

00:40:13,330 --> 00:40:15,580

They have their own family here.

583

00:40:15,580 --> 00:40:17,180

It is a little different.

584

00:40:17,180 --> 00:40:20,860

We still have some family
in Israel, mainly my wife's

585

00:40:20,860 --> 00:40:24,910

family, but it's different.

586

00:40:24,910 --> 00:40:27,100

Speaking of your children,
when your children

587

00:40:27,100 --> 00:40:31,030

were the young age that
you were when life changed,

588

00:40:31,030 --> 00:40:33,760

a little boy, five years
old, six years old-- when

589

00:40:33,760 --> 00:40:35,860

your children were that
age, did that trigger

590

00:40:35,860 --> 00:40:38,488

memories of what you
had to go through when

591

00:40:38,488 --> 00:40:39,280

you were their age?

592

00:40:39,280 --> 00:40:40,360

Absolutely not.

593

00:40:40,360 --> 00:40:43,120

594

00:40:43,120 --> 00:40:51,950

When my kids were
small, of course I

595

00:40:51,950 --> 00:40:55,490

had the memories of where
I was and what I did,

596
00:40:55,490 --> 00:41:02,000
but it was already so
far away that I started

597
00:41:02,000 --> 00:41:05,990
my own family in
the United States

598
00:41:05,990 --> 00:41:08,055
on totally different grounds.

599
00:41:08,055 --> 00:41:11,430

600
00:41:11,430 --> 00:41:15,450
The only one that
kind of reminded me

601
00:41:15,450 --> 00:41:19,470
of it at the very
beginning was my mother

602
00:41:19,470 --> 00:41:25,350
when she came to visit us,
and she kind of memorized.

603
00:41:25,350 --> 00:41:27,030
She said, you have
small children.

604
00:41:27,030 --> 00:41:36,600
At first, she was happy and
very much attached to them.

605
00:41:36,600 --> 00:41:39,420
From time to time,
she said, I remember

606
00:41:39,420 --> 00:41:41,760
when you were that age.

607
00:41:41,760 --> 00:41:46,740
But I did not relate
to it anymore.

608
00:41:46,740 --> 00:41:50,310
To be very Frank
about it, I think

609
00:41:50,310 --> 00:42:00,600
that my wife had related to it
not as an experience over there

610
00:42:00,600 --> 00:42:03,120
but as a happening
that she wanted

611
00:42:03,120 --> 00:42:06,780
the children to
know and understand

612
00:42:06,780 --> 00:42:10,350
what their father went through.

613
00:42:10,350 --> 00:42:21,570
So she was the factor of me
really translating or telling

614
00:42:21,570 --> 00:42:22,450
my children--

615
00:42:22,450 --> 00:42:24,242
So she was the one to
tell them your story?

616
00:42:24,242 --> 00:42:25,990
Yes, not my mother, my wife--

617
00:42:25,990 --> 00:42:26,820
Your wife, yeah.

618
00:42:26,820 --> 00:42:30,990

--was the one that really
forced the issue because,

619
00:42:30,990 --> 00:42:34,350
for a long time, I
didn't want to get there.

620
00:42:34,350 --> 00:42:40,920
I didn't want to repeat it for
many reasons, and some of them

621
00:42:40,920 --> 00:42:49,080
are personal reasons
of my own of difficulty

622
00:42:49,080 --> 00:42:53,520
sharing those experiences
on the one hand.

623
00:42:53,520 --> 00:43:00,280
On the other hand,
I really thought

624
00:43:00,280 --> 00:43:08,770
or think that they don't have
the full understanding what

625
00:43:08,770 --> 00:43:14,110
going through this type
of experience means.

626
00:43:14,110 --> 00:43:21,380
To them, it means a horror,
something that was terrible,

627
00:43:21,380 --> 00:43:28,060
but not necessarily
the bad experience.

628
00:43:28,060 --> 00:43:33,400
And that gave me always
a little difficult time

629

00:43:33,400 --> 00:43:45,160
to relate with it to them until
my wife had convinced me, Jack,

630
00:43:45,160 --> 00:43:50,770
they really should know
some more about this.

631
00:43:50,770 --> 00:43:55,930
And at that point,
I tried to give them

632
00:43:55,930 --> 00:43:58,370
a little bit more
knowledge of those stories.

633
00:43:58,370 --> 00:44:06,130

634
00:44:06,130 --> 00:44:09,160
You had mentioned that when
you still, in today's world,

635
00:44:09,160 --> 00:44:11,180
go past something
that's burning,

636
00:44:11,180 --> 00:44:13,840
that it brings back the memory
of the burning [INAUDIBLE]..

637
00:44:13,840 --> 00:44:14,590
It certainly does.

638
00:44:14,590 --> 00:44:17,770
Are there any other
sounds, or smells,

639
00:44:17,770 --> 00:44:24,600
or sights that trigger a similar
response in today's world?

640
00:44:24,600 --> 00:44:26,580

Or just the burning.

641

00:44:26,580 --> 00:44:28,170

Absolutely not.

642

00:44:28,170 --> 00:44:29,350

Just the burning.

643

00:44:29,350 --> 00:44:29,970

Absolutely.

644

00:44:29,970 --> 00:44:39,540

As a matter of fact, the view
of hundreds and thousands

645

00:44:39,540 --> 00:44:47,790

of corpses of dead people
did exactly the opposite

646

00:44:47,790 --> 00:44:59,840

in my own self, meaning
when I see a body,

647

00:44:59,840 --> 00:45:02,670

it's meaningless to me.

648

00:45:02,670 --> 00:45:07,360

And I don't say it
in a positive way.

649

00:45:07,360 --> 00:45:10,100

650

00:45:10,100 --> 00:45:17,660

It's in a painful way,
but it is a fact of life.

651

00:45:17,660 --> 00:45:23,290

Sometimes somebody may
fall down and break a leg

652

00:45:23,290 --> 00:45:24,605

or hurt themselves.

653

00:45:24,605 --> 00:45:28,550

654

00:45:28,550 --> 00:45:30,980

It means very little to me.

655

00:45:30,980 --> 00:45:38,930

And again, not because I don't
feel sorry for the person,

656

00:45:38,930 --> 00:45:48,920

but because I had seen so much,
those things become relative.

657

00:45:48,920 --> 00:45:56,030

And when I take a second look,
I say to myself, so what?

658

00:45:56,030 --> 00:45:57,542

You understand?

659

00:45:57,542 --> 00:45:58,500

Yes, you were exposed--

660

00:45:58,500 --> 00:45:59,658

And this is--

661

00:45:59,658 --> 00:46:01,140

--what you were exposed to.

662

00:46:01,140 --> 00:46:07,070

It's a very difficult thing
for many people to understand,

663

00:46:07,070 --> 00:46:14,745

but it kind of burns out a
certain nerve in your own body.

664

00:46:14,745 --> 00:46:17,270

665
00:46:17,270 --> 00:46:19,520
It's dead.

666
00:46:19,520 --> 00:46:20,488
It's not existed.

667
00:46:20,488 --> 00:46:23,030
You had to protect yourself as
a young child to what you saw.

668
00:46:23,030 --> 00:46:25,700
Absolutely, it was probably
a protection mechanism--

669
00:46:25,700 --> 00:46:26,950
That was protection mechanism.

670
00:46:26,950 --> 00:46:33,030
--when I was a child, but
now as I'm a grown-up man,

671
00:46:33,030 --> 00:46:36,270
it doesn't exist.

672
00:46:36,270 --> 00:46:44,160
In the times, I almost have
to make it up as it exists.

673
00:46:44,160 --> 00:46:54,900
But it doesn't exist, and it's
not an easy thing to admit.

674
00:46:54,900 --> 00:47:00,960
It's not an easy thing to
live with all the time,

675
00:47:00,960 --> 00:47:03,050
but it's a fact.

676
00:47:03,050 --> 00:47:06,260
Are you more comfortable

being with people

677

00:47:06,260 --> 00:47:08,675

with similar backgrounds to
you than native Americans,

678

00:47:08,675 --> 00:47:11,120

let's say, more in common with--

679

00:47:11,120 --> 00:47:13,370

Absolutely not.

680

00:47:13,370 --> 00:47:17,870

I feel comfortable with
people that had my background

681

00:47:17,870 --> 00:47:18,865

or have my background.

682

00:47:18,865 --> 00:47:20,240

--been through
the war in Europe.

683

00:47:20,240 --> 00:47:23,810

But it doesn't mean
anything to me.

684

00:47:23,810 --> 00:47:29,750

Many times when other people
discuss my background,

685

00:47:29,750 --> 00:47:33,140

meaning not necessarily
my background,

686

00:47:33,140 --> 00:47:37,070

but the history of
that background,

687

00:47:37,070 --> 00:47:39,260

I sit, and I listen.

688

00:47:39,260 --> 00:47:44,300

And sometimes I
laugh in my heart

689

00:47:44,300 --> 00:47:51,210

because I know that they really
don't know what this is like.

690

00:47:51,210 --> 00:47:56,610

But it doesn't give me any
hard time or any indifference

691

00:47:56,610 --> 00:47:58,020

being with them.

692

00:47:58,020 --> 00:48:05,640

I listen, and I listen very
thoughtfully and very openly

693

00:48:05,640 --> 00:48:11,950

with no anxiety of
my own whatsoever.

694

00:48:11,950 --> 00:48:15,730

You obviously lost part of your
childhood going through what

695

00:48:15,730 --> 00:48:17,170

you had to go through.

696

00:48:17,170 --> 00:48:18,700

Do you feel you
got it back ever?

697

00:48:18,700 --> 00:48:26,300

I lost all my child, not part
of my childhood, all of it.

698

00:48:26,300 --> 00:48:26,800

Yeah.

699

00:48:26,800 --> 00:48:28,600

Did you get any

of it back or not?

700

00:48:28,600 --> 00:48:30,190

No, not really.

701

00:48:30,190 --> 00:48:32,620

Maybe some of it

I'm getting back now

702

00:48:32,620 --> 00:48:40,000

when I look with when I look at
my grandchildren or sometimes

703

00:48:40,000 --> 00:48:40,570

my wife.

704

00:48:40,570 --> 00:48:44,540

705

00:48:44,540 --> 00:48:48,110

Do you feel like you're two
different people, someone

706

00:48:48,110 --> 00:48:52,310

to the outside world and
something different inside?

707

00:48:52,310 --> 00:48:54,260

Or are you one in the same?

708

00:48:54,260 --> 00:48:58,240

709

00:48:58,240 --> 00:49:08,730

People that went through
the experiences that I have,

710

00:49:08,730 --> 00:49:12,310

in many respects,
are different people.

711

00:49:12,310 --> 00:49:15,490

712
00:49:15,490 --> 00:49:22,370
The common denominator
is that we are people,

713
00:49:22,370 --> 00:49:28,380
and we try to care
for one another.

714
00:49:28,380 --> 00:49:32,430
That's the common denominator.

715
00:49:32,430 --> 00:49:38,510
But since the experience,
the young or the earlier

716
00:49:38,510 --> 00:49:44,120
experience, is so
vast, sometimes we

717
00:49:44,120 --> 00:49:46,692
are very different.

718
00:49:46,692 --> 00:49:47,192
Yeah.

719
00:49:47,192 --> 00:49:50,180

720
00:49:50,180 --> 00:49:54,580
You were a young adult in the
beginning of the Civil Rights

721
00:49:54,580 --> 00:49:56,690
Movement here in
the United States,

722
00:49:56,690 --> 00:49:59,920
and since you and
your family were

723

00:49:59,920 --> 00:50:04,210
deprived of your civil
rights, did it strike a chord?

724
00:50:04,210 --> 00:50:07,360
Were you involved in any way
in the Civil Rights Movement?

725
00:50:07,360 --> 00:50:09,970

726
00:50:09,970 --> 00:50:11,050
Not really.

727
00:50:11,050 --> 00:50:13,700
Yeah, you were still getting
adjusted to life here.

728
00:50:13,700 --> 00:50:14,643
Not really.

729
00:50:14,643 --> 00:50:17,800

730
00:50:17,800 --> 00:50:21,320
I did not relate to it at all.

731
00:50:21,320 --> 00:50:23,710
I just related to
it from the point

732
00:50:23,710 --> 00:50:32,170
of view of people being
dealt with not as even, not

733
00:50:32,170 --> 00:50:35,620
as the same type of people.

734
00:50:35,620 --> 00:50:42,340
But I have no relationship
whatsoever to my background.

735

00:50:42,340 --> 00:50:45,280
Going back to your youth,
was there an advantage,

736
00:50:45,280 --> 00:50:51,880
do you think, to being so
young during the war, or would

737
00:50:51,880 --> 00:50:52,690
it have been--

738
00:50:52,690 --> 00:50:56,080
if you had been older,
would it have made a--

739
00:50:56,080 --> 00:51:03,130
I would suspect that,
being as young as I was--

740
00:51:03,130 --> 00:51:12,400
many of the circumstances
or many of the situations

741
00:51:12,400 --> 00:51:16,870
that I went through
I took as granted

742
00:51:16,870 --> 00:51:18,727
that that's the way it is.

743
00:51:18,727 --> 00:51:19,560
That's what life is.

744
00:51:19,560 --> 00:51:22,480
That's what life is, naturally.

745
00:51:22,480 --> 00:51:25,420
I just started to
maybe think about it

746
00:51:25,420 --> 00:51:30,190
differently immediately
after the war when

747

00:51:30,190 --> 00:51:36,520

I have been associated with
some other children my age,

748

00:51:36,520 --> 00:51:40,600

and this probably
was why I was so

749

00:51:40,600 --> 00:51:45,160

aggressive and difficult
because, as a child,

750

00:51:45,160 --> 00:51:49,720

this was my existence.

751

00:51:49,720 --> 00:51:54,320

This was what I had
seen as a young child.

752

00:51:54,320 --> 00:51:55,760

And in the violence
that you saw.

753

00:51:55,760 --> 00:51:56,650

Absolutely.

754

00:51:56,650 --> 00:52:01,710

755

00:52:01,710 --> 00:52:04,110

Do you remember if you
had any specific thoughts

756

00:52:04,110 --> 00:52:05,730

during the Eichmann trial?

757

00:52:05,730 --> 00:52:09,770

Did that mean anything to
you at that time in the 60s?

758

00:52:09,770 --> 00:52:10,950

Would you repeat that?

759

00:52:10,950 --> 00:52:13,410

The Adolf Eichmann trial--

760

00:52:13,410 --> 00:52:16,890

did you have any thoughts

during that time?

761

00:52:16,890 --> 00:52:20,160

Well, the Eichmann trial--

762

00:52:20,160 --> 00:52:26,340

the thoughts that I had

were very simply that what

763

00:52:26,340 --> 00:52:28,620

he received--

764

00:52:28,620 --> 00:52:32,100

this is what he deserved.

765

00:52:32,100 --> 00:52:37,450

That's all I can say about it.

766

00:52:37,450 --> 00:52:42,990

Sure, I had followed it

through all the time,

767

00:52:42,990 --> 00:52:45,810

and there were some

memories, of course, involved

768

00:52:45,810 --> 00:52:48,780

from the Eichmann trial.

769

00:52:48,780 --> 00:52:55,230

But the relationship to

it as what had happened--

770

00:52:55,230 --> 00:52:57,092

some of it disappeared.

771
00:52:57,092 --> 00:53:00,540

772
00:53:00,540 --> 00:53:04,910
It stayed in my memory,
but some of it disappeared.

773
00:53:04,910 --> 00:53:09,820

774
00:53:09,820 --> 00:53:13,090
Did the experience make you
more religious, less religious,

775
00:53:13,090 --> 00:53:16,490
have any effect on your
thoughts about religion

776
00:53:16,490 --> 00:53:18,380
once you became an
adult, obviously?

777
00:53:18,380 --> 00:53:25,220

778
00:53:25,220 --> 00:53:31,580
My experiences did not make
me any more or less religious.

779
00:53:31,580 --> 00:53:34,790

780
00:53:34,790 --> 00:53:39,290
I must say that my
father tried to send me

781
00:53:39,290 --> 00:53:42,560
to a religious school
when he came to Israel,

782
00:53:42,560 --> 00:53:45,560

and I did attend a
religious school.

783
00:53:45,560 --> 00:53:53,480
And I had a pretty good
background of religion

784
00:53:53,480 --> 00:53:55,820
in my young age.

785
00:53:55,820 --> 00:54:00,420
Nevertheless, the
question that you're

786
00:54:00,420 --> 00:54:09,540
asking, if my experience had
change my mind about religion,

787
00:54:09,540 --> 00:54:13,860
no, it did not, nor
did it enhance it

788
00:54:13,860 --> 00:54:17,550
by no means of the imagination.

789
00:54:17,550 --> 00:54:27,920
I understand why I am a Jew,
but the religious part of it

790
00:54:27,920 --> 00:54:30,070
is something totally
different to me.

791
00:54:30,070 --> 00:54:36,323

792
00:54:36,323 --> 00:54:40,300
You mean more in the
sense of peoplehood

793
00:54:40,300 --> 00:54:41,740
is what you're saying?

794

00:54:41,740 --> 00:54:44,830

It's more of a sense
of peoplehood type of--

795

00:54:44,830 --> 00:54:50,160

It's more of a sense of
peoplehood, yes, absolutely.

796

00:54:50,160 --> 00:54:54,240

I am not fanatically religious.

797

00:54:54,240 --> 00:54:55,950

I never was.

798

00:54:55,950 --> 00:54:57,630

I never will be.

799

00:54:57,630 --> 00:55:06,080

I just know what it means to be
a Jew, and I'm proud of that.

800

00:55:06,080 --> 00:55:20,380

But to translate fanaticism of
Judaism or strict Judaic laws--

801

00:55:20,380 --> 00:55:28,060

I can't do it because I'll
have to do too much comparison

802

00:55:28,060 --> 00:55:31,780

to what I went
through and there will

803

00:55:31,780 --> 00:55:33,340

be too many question marks.

804

00:55:33,340 --> 00:55:36,930

805

00:55:36,930 --> 00:55:42,630

Are you angry that you had to go
through the terrible, terrible

806
00:55:42,630 --> 00:55:48,060
times that you did because you
were born in Europe as opposed

807
00:55:48,060 --> 00:55:50,290
to being born here
and those of us

808
00:55:50,290 --> 00:55:51,540
not having to go through that?

809
00:55:51,540 --> 00:55:59,610
I'm not angry at all because
I didn't know any different.

810
00:55:59,610 --> 00:56:06,450
The anger actually came
when I started to understand

811
00:56:06,450 --> 00:56:09,780
what my parents went through.

812
00:56:09,780 --> 00:56:12,180
This is when the anger came in.

813
00:56:12,180 --> 00:56:17,760
But I'm not angry
about my upbringing

814
00:56:17,760 --> 00:56:20,640
because I didn't
know any better.

815
00:56:20,640 --> 00:56:23,170
But you had to go through
terrible times when those of us

816
00:56:23,170 --> 00:56:23,970
were here playing.

817
00:56:23,970 --> 00:56:27,240

When I went through
those terrible times,

818
00:56:27,240 --> 00:56:30,540
I did not know that they
were terrible times,

819
00:56:30,540 --> 00:56:38,850
so there was a very fine line
as starting being more educated

820
00:56:38,850 --> 00:56:44,610
and starting understanding
what my parents went through

821
00:56:44,610 --> 00:56:51,250
and how they had to raise me
through all what had happened.

822
00:56:51,250 --> 00:56:55,510
That's what brought
anger to my heart,

823
00:56:55,510 --> 00:57:02,670
but not the physical upbringing
up to the age of maybe six,

824
00:57:02,670 --> 00:57:08,460
seven of my own because I
thought that that's the way it

825
00:57:08,460 --> 00:57:13,110
is at that stage of the game.

826
00:57:13,110 --> 00:57:18,210
There's a very fine
line that today,

827
00:57:18,210 --> 00:57:21,540
of course, being
a little bit older

828
00:57:21,540 --> 00:57:25,650

and a little bit more
understanding of how people

829
00:57:25,650 --> 00:57:34,170
act or react, then I can
put it into a logical sense

830
00:57:34,170 --> 00:57:36,440
of how I feel about it.

831
00:57:36,440 --> 00:57:39,520

832
00:57:39,520 --> 00:57:40,970
Can the Holocaust happen again?

833
00:57:40,970 --> 00:57:45,560

834
00:57:45,560 --> 00:57:48,248
It may.

835
00:57:48,248 --> 00:57:49,930
It may.

836
00:57:49,930 --> 00:57:58,600
We wish from day to day
to educate the population

837
00:57:58,600 --> 00:58:04,900
and to educate all human
beings that it should not

838
00:58:04,900 --> 00:58:07,810
happen again.

839
00:58:07,810 --> 00:58:14,060
But to have
guarantees, we do not,

840
00:58:14,060 --> 00:58:19,300
and I don't think we can

have those guarantees.

841
00:58:19,300 --> 00:58:22,600
But we should do
anything and everything

842
00:58:22,600 --> 00:58:27,040
possible through education
and through showing

843
00:58:27,040 --> 00:58:30,860
other people what
was it all about

844
00:58:30,860 --> 00:58:34,490
so they don't think about
it, that it can happen again.

845
00:58:34,490 --> 00:58:38,630

846
00:58:38,630 --> 00:58:41,510
Before we close, is there
anything, any message

847
00:58:41,510 --> 00:58:44,930
you want to give to your
grandchildren that you have?

848
00:58:44,930 --> 00:58:47,000
Any special words
you wanted to say?

849
00:58:47,000 --> 00:58:53,430

850
00:58:53,430 --> 00:59:02,020
I'd like to say to my
grandchildren and my children

851
00:59:02,020 --> 00:59:08,230
that it will be very
wise to study that era

852
00:59:08,230 --> 00:59:14,650
in their parents' and
grandparents' life.

853
00:59:14,650 --> 00:59:18,540

854
00:59:18,540 --> 00:59:26,340
Relate to it from a
point of view what human

855
00:59:26,340 --> 00:59:35,430
should not do rather
than do and to understand

856
00:59:35,430 --> 00:59:42,990
that not all people
are the type of people

857
00:59:42,990 --> 00:59:46,650
the Nazi generation used to be.

858
00:59:46,650 --> 00:59:49,700

859
00:59:49,700 --> 01:00:01,780
And I want them to appreciate
the fact that their grandmother

860
01:00:01,780 --> 01:00:09,360
requested or influenced
me to have that interview

861
01:00:09,360 --> 01:00:11,110
in the Holocaust Museum.

862
01:00:11,110 --> 01:00:16,310

863
01:00:16,310 --> 01:00:21,600
Well, thank you very much

for doing the interview.

864

01:00:21,600 --> 01:00:23,420

Thank you.

865

01:00:23,420 --> 01:00:26,630

It was my pleasure.

866

01:00:26,630 --> 01:00:29,960

This concludes the United
States Holocaust Memorial Museum

867

01:00:29,960 --> 01:00:33,500

interview with Jack Ophir.

868

01:00:33,500 --> 01:00:34,000