

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

INTERVIEW OF
W. DIETER BERGMAN, M.D.

CONDUCTED BY:

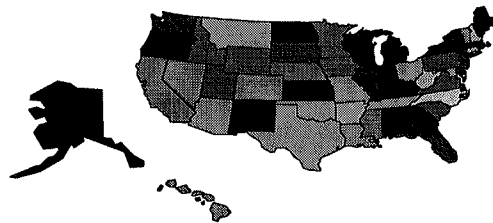
JULIE ROSENBERG

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PRODUCER: JOHN GRANT

Transcript prepared by:

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Deposition services nationwide

1 MS ROSENBERG: My name is Julie Rosenberg and
2 today I am interviewing Dr. Dieter Bergman.

3 Interviewing with me today is Nancy Magidson
4 and our video operator is Sean Simplicio. Today is
5 January 4, 1996. We are at the San Francisco Holocaust
6 Oral History Project.

7 Dr. Bergman, I wonder if you can start off by
8 telling us a little bit about your childhood.

9 A. My childhood was really very simple and I
10 grew up in a very wealthy educated setting. Until my
11 teens I didn't have the slightest problem. It was a
12 good life, in a good segment of the upper level of
13 German, upper level families. That had absolutely
14 nothing to do with Jewish. In fact, until I was 15 or
15 16 I didn't even know there were any Jews in the family.
16 I didn't realize that my mother was a Jew.

17 According to our definition, if you convert
18 from Jewish to Protestant you are no longer Jew. The
19 blood thing is either Nazi definition or it's old Jewish
20 definition one is Jewish when the mother is Jewish.

21 But my mother wasn't Jewish anymore, because
22 she converted to Christianity before she got married.
23 So this problem never came up.

24 What do you want to know? What else do you
25 want to know about my childhood?

1 I had a brother who was three years older. I
2 recently had a bad cold and my ears are plugged and I am
3 coughing a little bit.

4 We both were traveling a fair amount.
5 Leipzig, Leipzig was a sophisticated town, three quarter
6 million people, and we had more culture than San
7 Francisco ever had. The opera, the Library of Congress
8 was in Leipzig. Top theatre, top music. Montage
9 Orchestra was one of the top in the world. Since I was
10 a musician this was important to me. We went to a fine
11 high school, both of us.

12 In Germany there are three levels of
13 education. Standard practice for every day people like
14 Americanized schools up to age 14 or so and they have
15 technical, mathematical, practical higher level up to 18
16 and then they have more sophisticated group of Germans.
17 Thhat is called gymnasium, which implies foreign
18 languages and history of art and all kinds of fancy
19 subjects. That went on until 35 or so when all hell
20 broke loose.

21 So should I just go on and talk about that?

22 The first sign that something went wrong was,
23 other than, of course, reading in the papers the racial
24 politics, but I didn't apply it to myself.

25 I did write in the book about an incident in

1 school when I was maybe 14 or so. We had a Jewish
2 student, who to my thinking at the time, was a real
3 extraordinary unpleasant character. Big, fat and noisy
4 and he was beating up little guys.

5 One day I had a fight with him and knocked
6 him cold and I was called to the director of the school.
7 I am talking about 1935. That was two years into the
8 Nazi government when everybody knew that the Jews were
9 already second class citizens and most of them were on
10 their way out.

11 The director said "Regardless of what you
12 thought about this character, in our school the entire
13 Jewish demonstrations and fights are not tolerated. If
14 that ever happens again I will throw you out of the
15 school," which was really an extraordinary event,
16 because until that time nobody was likely to protect the
17 Jews, no matter whether it was right or not.

18 The next thing of greater importance was that
19 my grandfather was an attorney, sort of a judge in -- A
20 large state appellate court would be the equivalent in
21 this country. He was kicked out of his job. He was
22 already close to retirement age anyway and was told that
23 to please resign voluntarily in this small town where he
24 was practicing. Small town of Nurenborg, about an hour
25 away from Leipzig, only 40 Jews in the community of, I

1 don't know, twelve thousand or whatever it was. So
2 nobody even thought about anybody being Jewish in this
3 community. It was a rather big surprise, especially
4 because my brother and I didn't know we had any Jewish
5 relatives.

6 My grandparents and my mother had no signs of
7 any Jewish cultural behaviors. I don't even know the
8 words. You know the little thing on the door you have
9 at the entrance? Do you know what I am mean? What is
10 that called? Seven arm chandeliers, went to the
11 Christmas service at the local church and never occurred
12 to me they were anything other than average Protestant
13 people.

14 My mother was singing in the big cathedral in
15 Nuremburg singing Bach Christmas Oratorio. At any rate,
16 this was a big shock. At that point we had to, my
17 brother and I, we, my brother and I myself, my parents
18 had been divorced, not because of antisemitism but for
19 personal problems. We lived with our father. It was
20 quite common in Germany that the courts would give the
21 children to the father, sometimes if he had better
22 resources or better background or money.

23 But we were in constant touch with my mother.

24 I guess the next thing that happened,
25 dramatic thing, was the first chapter in my book has to

1 do with Kristallnacht. All these terms I am sure you
2 know about. The first big demonstration of the Nazis
3 throwing rocks in the windows and putting out all Jewish
4 shopkeepers in downtown Leipzig. Many of them were
5 carted off to concentration camps. Many of the SA
6 people, Stormtroopers, would help themselves to whatever
7 they found in those shops, including very expensive
8 jewelry and all that.

9 I was just flabbergasted to see this kind of
10 catastrophic damage to stores and fires being set in a
11 town that was very straight and liberal. We always had
12 no crime in this town in those days.

13 From that time on things got worse. Of
14 course, many people got arrested. It became clear to
15 all of us the time had come to make some plans.

16 One of the deplorable problems was -- The
17 average American has no concept, average people in the
18 world had no concept of how assimilated the Jews were in
19 Germany.

20 There were really two classes of Jews. My
21 grandparents were high class Jews and they had nothing
22 to do in the view of my grandfather with the bankers and
23 money lenders and pawnshops.

24 Leipzig was a big city for fur trade. Furs
25 came from Russia, Siberia. There was mainly one Jewish

1 street. These people were chewing garlic and smelled
2 bad. My grandparents would have nothing to do with the
3 Jewish rabble that was six stations in life below them.
4 It was extraordinary when I think about it. It's still
5 that way a little bit in Europe.

6 My point is the educated Jews, ever since the
7 First War, ever since Bismarck at the turn of the
8 century, were doing their best to blend in and disappear
9 in standard German people behavior.

10 Everybody expected them to be just another
11 good, well educated, usually wealthy German. That is
12 usual to this day.

13 One of the things that startled me when I
14 talk to people who had been reading my book is how
15 little concept people have how many Jews there were in
16 Germany when the Nazis took over. I asked everybody who
17 has read the book how many Jews do you think were in
18 Germany in 1938?

19 Everybody talks about six million Jews got
20 killed in Auschwitz and out of the six million German
21 Jews do you think -- Well, actually there were only six
22 hundred thousand Jews in Germany. Half of them were
23 wealthy and got out in time, with or without most of
24 their possessions. That leaves only about -- I think
25 the figures are there were two hundred seventy thousand

1 Jews in Germany. Only half of them were actually
2 murdered in Auschwitz and Treblinka and other places.
3 Many of them, several hundred survived the war, hidden
4 someplace.

5 Everybody knows some story about Swiss and
6 French places where courageous people would hide Jews in
7 the basement and garages and stables. So the Jewish
8 problem in Germany was relatively, as far as figures, in
9 a country of 85 million people, two hundred seventy
10 Jews, very small minority.

11 Most of the Jews killed in the camps were
12 Polish or Russian, some Czechoslovakia, some Hungarian,
13 Romanian. More of these countries had more Jews
14 exterminated than the Germans did. So what else shall I
15 talk about at this point?

16 What did you pickup in my book that you want
17 to know more about?

18 Q. What happened after Kristallnacht?

19 A. Well, that's one thing I wanted to mention at
20 this point. The title of the book is Between Two
21 Benches. That's quite important clue to the whole
22 situation.

23 In the year 1935 I think it was the Nazi
24 government decreed that Jews could not use public
25 transportation. In order to pick up their very meager

1 rations from one of six stores in the big city they
2 sometimes had to walk an hour and-a-half to pick up a
3 quarter pound of butter or something like that. Since
4 many of them were very old they couldn't possibly walk
5 that far. So the Nazis put out benches in the park and
6 bragged how nice they were to the Jews. They even put
7 special benches with big yellow star, which is in front
8 of the book. It says "For Jews only." Here is a yellow
9 star. Underneath it says "For Jews only." Nobody in
10 their right mind, a Jew, would sit on the bench because
11 you know darn well the next thing somebody would put
12 them in a paddy wagon and cart them off.

13 On the other hand, there was a bench for
14 local regular people who wanted to sit down and read the
15 paper. I, as a third class citizen, because of fifty
16 percent Jewish background, didn't belong on either
17 bench. I wasn't a real German, I was not a real Jew, I
18 was nothing. I was a little guy on the earth, on the
19 soil between two benches. I didn't belong to either
20 group of people. I never considered myself as Jewish.

21 What happened after the Kristallnacht that
22 was just about eight months or so before the war broke
23 out. All this time my formerly Jewish mother lived in
24 Berlin. She was a music teacher and French teacher.
25 She somehow managed to pack up and get out just a week

1 or so before the war started. She was lucky because
2 somebody, through some connection, had given her the
3 tentative offer of a job in England, which eventually
4 she didn't get, but that's not the problem. It saved
5 her life anyway.

6 I was going to say about my grandparents.
7 What was so sad is these people had a lot of money and
8 they would travel to Switzerland and stayed in some of
9 the best hotels and everybody said why don't you put a
10 few thousand marks or few ten thousand marks in the
11 Swiss back account so if something goes wrong your life
12 is protected.

13 My grandfather wouldn't hear of it. He was
14 just furious. "I am a German. I am not going to. This
15 country of Goethe, Beethoven, Chopenhaur or whoever is
16 not likely to ever persecute those Jews like me who have
17 done a lot of good for Germany."

18 So they had nothing saved and everything
19 went, disappeared eventually.

20 In 1938, when I was 17, as a matter of law I
21 had to join the -- I guess it's the equivalent of the
22 Peace Corps. I had to work for half a year. We worked
23 in the fields digging potatoes. Everybody did in that
24 age group. And I had to join the military. In those
25 days the law about, quote, half Jews, unquote, we were

1 suppose to serve in the military. So I reported to an
2 infantry regiment close by where I grew up and did my
3 share of duties.

4 The training was just about as tough as the
5 Marine Corps in this country.

6 Somewhere in August, 1939 we were shipped to
7 the east, to the border area between Germany and Poland.
8 On the 1st of September we marched into Poland and I got
9 my first taste of being shot at and shooting at other
10 people. I don't think I killed anybody. Because the
11 war went so fast, the Nazi military troops went so fast
12 into Poland, that after 24 hours the so-called enemy was
13 all gone and disappeared. Most poles have run away and
14 most of their homes had been put to the torch.

15 We just marched along the roads without much
16 of a war, except for airplanes that were bombing Warsaw
17 and other places.

18 After a while we were, when Poland was
19 occupied by the Nazis, we were sent to the west to wait
20 for whatever else happens. Everybody else knows that
21 between Christmas 1939 and May, 1940 everything was
22 quiet. It was kind of a pause between the Polish war
23 and the Western war. So we were just sitting around.

24 As soldiers we got good ration cards and all
25 that. We were very much appreciated by the local

1 population. It so happened my brother was nearby in
2 boot camp. He was a physicist. He had been, what is
3 the word, he had been excused for important wartime
4 service in physics. So he didn't have to join, even
5 though he was two years older.

6 So he had one of the more exciting stories
7 about the last time we met up there in Christmas time
8 1939. At that time the government decided that they
9 needed certain professions. They were planning to
10 occupy the whole world, of course. In order to supply
11 all the world with doctors, they needed a hundred eighty
12 thousand new doctors. Dieter Bergman, you go into
13 medicine. They kind of sent me home, which was nice. I
14 was in uniform. I lived at home and I went to medical
15 school for a while.

16 My brother was in the Army and he was killed
17 in May. It was ten days after the Western offensive
18 started. The funny story about my last meeting I was
19 told, I forgot the dates, on the 19th of December I was
20 told I would be discharged three days later and sent to
21 medical school in my hometown in Leipzig. I went to see
22 this character, but I couldn't get from my town to his
23 town where he was. I had to hire a cab at exorbitant
24 rates. It so happened, I don't know the right thing.
25 The right military degree. I wasn't a private any

1 longer. I guess I was a sergeant, which was also
2 strange, because I wasn't suppose to be such. Anyway, I
3 had some stuff up in here (indicating his shoulder). In
4 my pretty uniform I drove to the boot camp where my
5 brother was working. I opened the door and all these
6 guys were just brushing their boots or cleaning the
7 house, and there was this uniform man with a hat
8 standing at the door and somebody yelled attention and
9 everybody looked straightforward and trying to figure
10 out what disaster was going to happen now.

11 Suddenly my brother, who was back there
12 someplace, he shouted real loud, "You asshole." And
13 everybody was mad. We laughed because it was funny. As
14 a younger boy, to have this young man stand up to me and
15 salute me, others saluted me with their Heil Hitler
16 thing.

17 Anyway we had a nice time, nice night on the
18 town and that was the end of our relationship.

19 I went through medical school for a couple
20 years. Year and-a-half. And then it turned out that
21 the premedical examination -- This is different in
22 Germany after the first two years in medical school. In
23 this country you do much of your basic sciences, physics
24 and chemistry, botany, zoology and all that you do in
25 college before you enter medical school. In Germany

1 it's part of the first two years of medical school
2 training. So I could do all that and then they have an
3 examination and I wasn't permitted to take the
4 examination. I was hanging around in there, still went
5 to medical school. Suddenly I was kicked out of the
6 Army and eventually out of medical school. There are a
7 couple more funny stories.

8 But I guess you have to read them in the
9 book. Funny stories. One of the more funny stories is
10 just before I was discharged they sent me to a field
11 hospital 20 minutes from our home, the house where we
12 lived.

13 My father called me one day and said "You
14 better come home tonight. It's very important."
15 Somehow I managed to get out. So I came home. I said
16 "What is this all about"? He said "Just wait."

17 Suddenly the doorbell rang outside at the
18 garden gate and there stood a huge black Mercedes and
19 two adjutant types who ran around and opened the door of
20 the car. Out came a big fat Nazi general, with big
21 purple stuff here, walking up to my father and said "My
22 boy, Ernst, how nice to see you" and gave him a big hug.
23 It was two guys that were going to medical school.

24 First we had dinner and played a card game.
25 The general wanted to know what I was doing there. We

1 told him I was a flunky out in the reserve hospital. I
2 had to clean rooms and wipe behinds of patients and
3 bandaged them and cleaned the floor and everybody was
4 spitting at me.

5 The general picked up the phone, had the
6 adjutant pickup the phone and say this is General, I
7 forget his name. I wish to inspect the hospital 1017
8 tomorrow morning at ten o'clock. With two thousand
9 patients and nurses and doctors, all kinds of people.
10 Poor bastards they spent all night scrubbing, painting,
11 cleaning and everything. I was sitting there playing
12 cards with the general. The next morning I was still
13 back there cleaning toilets. The general drove up with
14 his retinue. All the hospital staff was lined up, chief
15 of services and the director, the boss of the hospital,
16 and head nurse and 25 people. They all stood there and
17 said "Heil Hitler, Herr General." He went down the line
18 and shook everybody's hand. He said "Where is Bergman"?
19 The chief hospital, said "Who"? "

20 Where is Bergman"? He asked, ".

21 Who is Bergman." Nobody knew who I was. So
22 they sent somebody to the office. They found out I was
23 the flunky in ward 32. Somebody came running down "They
24 want you up there."

25 So I walked up in my fatigues. All along

1 these 16 lined up officers and big shots that had been
2 treating me like a four letter word for a few months.
3 The general said "Dieter, my old buddy, it's good to see
4 you." He said to the chief of the hospital. "Doctor so
5 and so, can we use your office for a little while and
6 exchange memories.

7 Would you have a bottle of this good brandy
8 that you liberated in France."

9 "Of course, Herr General." We sat there for
10 a little while and the General came out and said "Mighty
11 fine hospital; dismissed." Everybody was fuming. I
12 didn't clean anymore toilets after that date.

13 A few other things that happened. Eventually
14 I was discharged and I was sent to the East, suppose to
15 work in a factory of some sort. We made, they made
16 large L-O-D-Z. At the time it was called -- It's mainly
17 well known for the fact it was probably the first
18 concentration camp in Poland. It was opened almost
19 right after the Nazis marched in there. I had to, on
20 the street car, go to the camp every day to go to work.
21 This was a chemical, this was a rubber plant. They made
22 rubber materials. Old tires -- Do you want to hear all
23 that? Is it very important? The tires were chewed up
24 and reduced to some kind of rubbery mash that was heated
25 up so certain chemicals would be removed and leaked out

1 and steamed off. They would make artificial tires out
2 of it.

3 There was an old chemist who was working
4 there. I had just come out of the physics and chemistry
5 class where I was red hot on chemistry. I was reading
6 all these books about rubber chemistry. I didn't know
7 anything about it. I had nothing to do. I didn't know
8 anybody. For three weeks I could read six hours a day
9 on the rubber chemistry and came up with the fancy thing
10 that containers for airplanes, gasoline containers, that
11 were made out of three layers. Outer layer was very
12 tough rubbery material that would withstand tremendous
13 cold in Siberia and other places. Inner layer was
14 against gasoline and impurities of wartime gasolines.
15 There was a middle layer that was our pride and joy in
16 this chemistry lab. If you would shoot a bullet through
17 the container the hole from the bullet, the gasoline
18 would leak out and make the median layer swell up so the
19 hole was temporarily plugged by this thing swelling up.

20 So the plane could still maneuver a little
21 longer and could land without crashing someplace.

22 At any rate, we did such a good job that
23 pretty soon the war material big shots from Berlin came
24 down and wanted to see what we had done. So the old man
25 who didn't know very much about chemistry said "Here

1 this guy did it all. He is pretty smart." The next
2 thing I know they offered me a fantastic job in another
3 factory in Krakow, which I didn't get. I didn't have
4 the right racial purity and signatures in my passport.

5 At any rate, a couple weeks after that, a
6 couple weeks -- I have to look in the book to find out
7 the dates. The exact dates are not important. You can
8 put that in later.

9 One day I got an official paper I had to
10 report Saturday morning at five o'clock a certain place
11 outside of town. When I got there we suddenly found
12 ourselves behind barbed wire with Nazi guards, with
13 dogs, and people were relatively friendly. Sorry we
14 have to send you to the West. The Allied forces are
15 trying to invade France and Holland and Belgium. We are
16 going to build last minute fortifications. This
17 organization, Todt was the administer of material. He
18 tried his darnest to get all able body males -- females
19 didn't count in those days -- they didn't count in
20 Germany. To be used to build fortification. The able
21 body healthy young males that were in uniform were
22 people like me, who were politically unreliable and
23 potentially dangerous. This was a semi-prison
24 situation. We were shipped to the West Coast, to
25 Bologna, and there we had to build fortifications, carry

1 cement bags up the hill to make huge big bunkers for
2 cannons and for rockets.

3 In the year 42 the Nazis had developed some
4 pretty clever rockets which they called, which were
5 ahead of anything the Allies had available. They were
6 called the V-1 and V-2. They were originally designed
7 in Pennemunde, the big research station that was run by
8 the infamous Dr. Teller, who ended up in this country,
9 and few other big shots that were cashiered by the
10 American occupation.

11 They sent us V-1 and V-2 from right next door
12 from where our forced labor camp was and made tremendous
13 noise. It sounded like five thousand backfiring pickup
14 trucks. In the middle of the night they would fly over.
15 Once in a while they got to the top they kind of fell
16 down and exploded, including falling into another camp
17 where friends of ours were killed by these V-2. I think
18 one out of four ever got to England and did some
19 moderate damage. It didn't change the outcome of the
20 war.

21 Eventually when the Americans and the British
22 landed there we were commanded to go somewhere else, to
23 march in the middle of the night to another place, and
24 to build some other fortifications. At that point the
25 buddy of mine and myself, we kind of escaped from the

1 marching column in the middle of the night and were
2 hiding under a bridge someplace.

3 We were trying to get over to the partisan,
4 French partisan in Bologna, the northwest part of
5 France, pretty close to the channel. The channel Dover
6 on the British side, Calais on the French side. Bologna
7 is an hour by train below Calais. We marched somewhere
8 else south and we were lucky enough to hide, be hidden
9 by some of the Maquis, the French underground movement.
10 They took us to Albertville and that's where we
11 experienced the end of the war.

12 We heard the British troops marched in. We
13 were in the cellar, hiding in the cellar, hidden by some
14 Maquis who eventually went out in the street and were
15 hollering and screaming and singing and enjoying the
16 victory of this town. Of course, Germans, regardless of
17 their political background, weren't much appreciated.
18 We were in mortal fear that in the excitement of the end
19 of the war they would do something.

20 At any rate, they marched us into the central
21 prison in Albertville and we were lined up face to the
22 wall, like maybe a hundred, 200 German nationals. Most
23 of them former concentration camp inmates. Somebody
24 back there behind us had a couple machine guns sitting
25 there.

1 It suddenly occurred to me that it might be
2 the last two minutes of my life. Like an idiot I turned
3 around and walked right up to the captain who was
4 commanding the machine guns. I said "Wait a minute now.
5 We are not Nazis. We have such and such a problem." I
6 caught my friend to come here. Incredible thing
7 happened. They were ready to -- I can't say the British
8 occupying forces were going to kill us all. Maybe they
9 weren't. Maybe I was hysterical. But I didn't want to
10 take a chance. Especially since the people in the
11 British Army that were in charge of the prison were
12 Poles. British had a rather large expeditionary Polish
13 force. The ones that were refugees from Poland when the
14 Nazi took over were put in British uniforms and
15 everybody thought in England the poles had more
16 motivation there to fight the Germans than the British
17 had. Adolph Hitler use to tell everybody that British
18 are really our friends.

19 At that point my buddy and I we got put in
20 separate prison cell. We had to ask "Please lock us
21 in." They left the door open. Everybody was walking
22 around in the middle of the night with a machine gun.

23 At any rate, it turned out all this time my
24 mother had been in England. Of course, I didn't want to
25 go back to Germany. I didn't know anything about USA.

1 The only place I wanted to go was England.

2 It turned out at that point in 43 only the
3 most serious Nazis in uniform, SS people, there was a
4 big contingent of SS that was in uniform, like the
5 military. Very often they were the commandoes. They
6 were the first -- When the Army marched into Western
7 Russia the first people that were sent up front were
8 some of these battalions of SS people. They were
9 looking for Jews and gypsies and gays and other terribly
10 dangerous people like that. Most of them were just
11 killed on the spot. Bang, bang, bang. SS people in the
12 military were just about the most brutal -- In a way it
13 was better than being starved to death or beaten to
14 death in Auschwitz. They were sent to England. London
15 had fabulous intelligence outfits. They knew more about
16 Germany than the Americans did. The Americans didn't
17 know a thing about all this Jew stuff.

18 If you read the story how President Roosevelt
19 reacted to anti-semitic remarks, you are amazed that
20 nobody knew what was going on in America. They were
21 just going to help their British brothers and sisters in
22 the war.

23 At any rate, so I was told by the
24 intelligence officer in France if you want to go to
25 England the only way you can get there is if we put you

1 in with those Nazi bastards and you keep your mouth
2 shut. I didn't keep my mouth shut enough. I ended up
3 in a prisoner of war camp that was run by Nazis.

4 They knew I was lying when I told them a sob
5 story that wasn't true. This buddy of mine and I almost
6 got killed there in a prisoner of war camp protected by
7 the British Army.

8 I was under the impression, being naive and
9 22 years old, I thought I would walk into England, I
10 would put a nickel in the telephone and say "Hi mom, I
11 am here now." It took a year and-a-half or two before
12 they told her I was in England.

13 One time I was in a camp maybe 50 minutes
14 away in a car from where they lived. My mother when she
15 arrived in England was not getting the teaching job she
16 expected, but she got a cleaning job. She was a
17 cleaning woman. She was a janitor type person, making
18 barely enough to buy the meager rations they had in
19 England at the time. Eventually she met this school
20 mistress lady who gave her a place to sleep and to eat.

21 Eventually she got into teaching and barely
22 survived.

23 One of the most dramatic moments in her life.
24 I have my mother's autobiography here, too. That's one
25 of the most dramatic things for her was sometime in May

1 1940, we had relatives in Belgium and Sweden. I think
2 they lived in Stockholm. My mother's cousin was the
3 head of the school in Stockholm. They were rather close
4 to the Landsbergs, my mother's family. In those days
5 Sweden, of course, was neutral. You could send a letter
6 from Germany to Sweden to England. My mother's friend
7 was in Australia. We got letters from Australia and
8 from Sweden you could manage to take communication. It
9 took forever. It like two and-a-half months to get a
10 letter from here to there. The Swedish relatives wrote
11 to my mother in maybe June, 1940. They had two letters
12 in two weeks. One said "Dear Gertrude, we are sorry
13 that your son was killed on May 18th. You probably know
14 that from Anna Maria in Australia and that your mother
15 was sent to Holland to a retention camp and is probably
16 now on her way to the camp in Auschwitz. Your father
17 died, you know, on the 10th of May. Your brother, who
18 was underground in Holland, has been captured by the
19 Gestapo and we don't know what happened to your younger
20 son, Dieter. Everything else was all right. Merry
21 Christmas."

22 This woman is sitting there. So she gets two
23 letters in two weeks. Practically the whole family is
24 wiped out. Father, mother, brother, and both children,
25 everybody. It wasn't quite true. Her brother survived.

1 He was hiding in Holland. Obviously, I survived. Two
2 of us are still here. At that time my grandmother had
3 been killed in Auschwitz. My mother never got over
4 that.

5 In this diary she has written, that I
6 incorporated more or less in my book, she has talked a
7 little bit about it. She never wanted to know about my
8 grandfather, for instance.

9 We tried to convince her to write to some
10 outfit that collected Jewish history. Turned out to be
11 the forerunner of (inaudible) I forget what they are
12 called. My mother refused to even talk about it. She
13 was so burdened about this horrendous tragedy. It
14 didn't exist. I wrote to this address. Back came this
15 letter. It came from Israel. It turned out after six
16 million Jews got killed in the war the Nazis had
17 complete records.

18 This letter I have someplace. It says "Upon
19 your request we have made proper inquiry and your
20 grandmother Elle Landsberg was sent from Dresden to
21 Theresienstadt on the 29th of March, 1943. Her
22 personnel number was three four nine. From
23 Theresienstadt to the east to Auschwitz she was sent on
24 the 15th of May, 1944. Destination Auschwitz."

25 She was born on the 14th of August. The

1 thing I found absolutely astonishing is they had
2 millions of Jews being shipped, like twenty thousand to
3 one freight car train to the East, even had complete
4 records. I have books someplace where they have copies
5 of gold teeth in one day. Auschwitz they collected, I
6 don't know, twelve hundred gold teeth. They would show
7 the teeth and there they would take the pliers just pull
8 it out and put it in the box. They would put down
9 Frederick Morgenthau, 19th of April, gold tooth, molar.
10 They shaved their heads. They didn't count the shoes.
11 You have probably seen mountains of these shoes they
12 collected. Hair was cutoff and they made camelhair
13 jackets and all that to give to the Nazi armies when
14 they marched into Russia.

15 At any rate, so we knew what happened to
16 grandma. I still can't believe somebody has complete
17 records. They have a picture of her on the wall, I
18 think. I was there many years ago, fifteen years ago,
19 and they already had started putting up little bit like
20 Viet Nam Memorial. Huge wall with the names written
21 down. One wall they had, they asked us to send photos
22 of grandmother, which we did. I haven't been back
23 there.

24 They took us, as I say, it took me two years
25 almost to see my mother. Eventually some Swedish,

1 British officer, cut through all the bureaucratic
2 nonsense and against orders and illegally came to my
3 camp and interviewed me.

4 I had written a letter to the camp commandant
5 one Christmas, a year or so after I got to England,
6 saying, writing a letter to my mother in Birmingham,
7 where I was a half hour away. I said "Merry Christmas,
8 Mother. This Goddamn country is as bad as the Nazis.
9 They wouldn't even let their son see their own mother.
10 I don't want to stay in this Goddamn country anymore. I
11 don't want to go to Germany. I just hate all the
12 British."

13 That letter, of course, was picked up the
14 sensors, camp commandant. He came to me. "You can't
15 send a letter like that." I don't know if you have seen
16 the kind of letters prisoners of war would write. I
17 think I have one in here. It would take me a while to
18 find it.

19 Maybe I have a postcard. This is a card.
20 It's three thicknesses of material. It's white stuff.
21 It's scratch resistant. Once you have written it, it
22 has cut into the surface of the paper. One can not put
23 in secret messages on this thing. This black sign here
24 means they had wiped out something. I don't know what
25 it was. It was a simple letter I wrote to my mother in

1 March, 1945.

2 I was transferred again to another camp and
3 preparing now to go back to my old beloved occupation.
4 I was in 16 different prisoner of war camps. The reason
5 was they would transfer people, especially when they
6 were popular, or when they were rabble rousers, you went
7 to the commandant and complained and got buddies
8 together who were political and I was a dangerous
9 person. Made it difficult for British military to get
10 off the chair and after they had finished tea and scones
11 and had to do something about it. That was too much
12 trouble. So they just sent you to another camp.

13 This is kind of a postcard that prisoners of
14 war would write. It says addressed to "Chief Postal
15 Censor, POW Department, 23 to 27 Brook Street, London,
16 EC-1, Great Britain. Here it says Dieter Bergman,
17 confirmed number prisoner 9960307C," and you are
18 permitted write one of these cards every two weeks or
19 something.

20 Anyway, after the camp commandant -- Also in
21 here I had the last postcard I got from my grandmother,
22 who was murdered in Auschwitz, dated, I don't know what
23 the date is. In Germany --, When you write a postcard
24 here you put the month first and the date. Except in
25 Germany they do it the other way around. I don't know

1 whether it's 3,4, or 4,3. This is December, 1943.

2 The prisoners in Auschwitz had just arrived
3 and would write dear so and so and sign it. Many cards
4 were presigned. In order to avoid people who had known
5 this woman has been transported and killed they would
6 have people sign six things. Every two months they
7 would send a card, with wrong dates, and actually it
8 says in order to camouflauge who I really was. They
9 would give me the name of a female. The sensor wouldn't
10 think it was a military thing.

11 By the way, here's the 30 cent stamp with the
12 Hitler's face on it. This was standard postage.

13 At any rate, somehow when I had this letter
14 to the commandant, he said, I don't quite know how it
15 happened. But two weeks later, Captain Rudolph,
16 intelligence officer of Swedish background, came to
17 interview me. He tried to figure out. Now, my mother
18 was a German citizen. She was an enemy alien.
19 Theoretically, between this strange so-called son of
20 hers and her being an enemy alien, bright woman with
21 Ph.D degree, it's quite possible we might have made a
22 spy situation. British were super careful. I was
23 caught in the trap.

24 But this Captain Rudolph, he would interview
25 me and he came to the conclusion I probably didn't lie.

1 I use to tell them look I have a picture here of myself
2 as a little boy, six years old. My mother in Birmingham
3 has the same picture on her dresser. Why don't you send
4 some flunky from the Birmingham over to 62 Sloan Street
5 in Sutton Coal Street and ask "Are you Mrs. Landsberg?
6 Do you have a picture of your son? Yes." That's the
7 same picture. Isn't that some help where you guys can
8 identify I am not a spy. I am now 20 years older than I
9 was in the picture. No, it didn't impress anybody. I
10 really hated the British in those days.

11 I went through Captain Rudolph and picked my
12 mother up. Our camp was in Scotland that time. He took
13 my mother all the way from Birmingham to Scotland. So
14 we met after four or five years and exchanged news, such
15 as there were.

16 Now my problem was I didn't want to stay in
17 England. At first they started some kind of a medical
18 school by the International Red Cross. They found out
19 there were 150 people in those prisoner of war camps
20 that interrupted their medical school. The British
21 authorities thought it was probably a good idea to get
22 these lazy guys that were sitting around and eating and
23 loafing all day long -- Actually, you had better rations
24 than the British had in prisoner of war camps. They
25 were scrupulously careful under Geneva convention.

1 They thought we were less dangerous and less
2 likely to do foolish things if we had something to
3 study. The International Red Cross created a medical
4 academy in one of the prisoner of war camps. I suddenly
5 went to medical school as a prisoner of war. This was
6 run by some high school teachers in physics and anatomy
7 and that sort of thing. It was recognized by the German
8 medical authorities when I eventually returned to
9 Germany.

10 I didn't want to go back to Germany. That's
11 the last place I wanted to live again. Under the Geneva
12 Convention everybody must be returned to the country of
13 birth.

14 I tried to stay in England. They said Yes.
15 By the time your mother is British citizen, next year,
16 two years, you could probably get permission to stay in
17 England and go to medical school. Except there are 80
18 thousand British soldiers coming back from the war who
19 have first pick at medical school. Also, your German
20 Nazi medical school, your first two years doesn't sound
21 very acceptable. You probably would have to start from
22 scratch again. I would have to wait four years because
23 the British Tommies have gotten into medical school.
24 Maybe in five, six years you can get in there. You have
25 to start from scratch. I figured out I would probably

1 be 39 by the time I became a doctor. It doesn't sound
2 very attractive, especially since the English medical
3 schools, except for some top schools like Edinburgh and
4 London, most of the other medical schools were not quite
5 up to German and American standards.

6 I tried to go to Israel. I didn't know
7 anything about Jewish customs so they didn't want me in
8 Israel.

9 I wanted to go to Australia, New Zealand to
10 Iran, South Africa. You name it. I have a folder of
11 applications I made to go someplace. I don't know why
12 at that point I didn't attempt to go to the United
13 States. It just occurs to me now. I never quite
14 figured that out. Why didn't I apply to the United
15 States at that time?

16 At any rate, much later than the rest of the
17 people in that medical school I finally had to go back
18 to Germany and I ended up in Braun, because I had a
19 buddy there from POW Camp who put me up. I finished my
20 medical school training with a little extra pressure.
21 The extra pressure had to do with the fact that I was a
22 victim of Nazi persecution. So I had some special
23 privileges, including getting a heating plate so I could
24 warm some soup that I got through a Care package. I
25 could actually make cold soup warm. We had no coal, no

1 matches. No money. I lived in an apartment under the
2 roof, with half the roof shot off. I had a carpet up
3 there and a couple chamber pots because it rained in all
4 the time. The people looked at the chamber pot. "Are
5 you too lazy to walk two floors down to the bathroom?"

6 "No, it's the rain coming in." It was a
7 pretty miserable time, except for some fabulous people
8 in Illinois, Peoria. I forget where it was now. People
9 I never heard of. From the Lutheran Relief organization
10 sent me Care package every two months. You know a Care
11 package had a couple boxes, a couple cans of dried milk
12 and dried egg, and a wonderful thing that was called a
13 stick of cigarettes. Can you imagine 20 packages of
14 cigarettes. How much are in a box? Ten or 20. I
15 forgot. In Germany, cigarettes were so valuable that
16 for a pack of cigarettes, one pack of cigarettes, not a
17 box, one pack, I could pay my rent and that rainy room
18 for six months. With two or three cigarettes I could
19 get some lady into bed easily. For six cigarettes I
20 could buy myself a meal in a top restaurant, top meal,
21 something called meat, m-e-a-t, that we hadn't seen for
22 a month. I was king of the crop because of the four or
23 five care packages I got.

24 When I came to this country I tried my best
25 to find those people in Peoria, I think it was. I have

1 to read my book in order to say all the right words. I
2 couldn't locate them.

3 At any rate, I finished medical school, I
4 supported my income by having -- This has really nothing
5 much to do with the Holocaust. Should I keep on talking
6 about it?

7 I was home originally in Eastern Germany,
8 which was really in central Germany, Leipzig. Now and
9 then it was part of East Germany. I had two passports.
10 East German passport by the Communists and a West German
11 passport by the quote Democrats, unquote. I would at
12 night sneak through the border between the two and carry
13 some -- I would pickup some eggs in East Germany,
14 because it was an agricultural community. In the West I
15 would buy some watches and take them over there where
16 they didn't have watches. I supported my income by
17 crossing at night through the so-called green border.

18 Eventually I applied to the United States.
19 When I got to Germany I was a member of an outfit called
20 VVN, Association of the Victims of Nazi Persecution.
21 For that I got some extra ration cards and some other
22 privileges. For instance, I was entitled to gasoline if
23 I had a car, which I didn't have.

24 After the currency reform in 1947 we didn't
25 need that extra stuff anymore. I forgot to cancel it.

1 It turned out Communists, German Communists, took over
2 the organization and when the time for me came to
3 immigrate to the United States it turned out VVN
4 organization had been declared a Communist front
5 organization by the Attorney General of the United
6 States. So they wouldn't admit -- This was way before
7 McCarthy. I wasn't going to be admitted to the United
8 States because I was a Communist. That was one problem
9 that took me a couple months to solve.

10 Eventually I went -- This was resolved some
11 how. I don't remember how. I went to the American
12 consulate in Hamburg. He said "You were in the German
13 Youth."

14 I said "No, I wasn't."

15 He said "Why not?"

16 I said "I was half Jewish."

17 He said "If you were Jewish you would have
18 been shot, you would be dead."

19 I said "Well, I wasn't shot and I am not
20 dead. I wasn't in the Hitler Youth."

21 He said "You are lying."

22 I said "I am not lying. If I were dead would
23 I get your Goddamn Visa to go to the United States?"

24 He said "Heh"? He didn't understand my
25 subtle, sarcastic humor.

1 Four pages from the end of the book there are
2 pictures of our graduating class from high school. If
3 you look at it close you see everybody is in uniform
4 except little me and a buddy of mine, Dieter. Everybody
5 else has a uniform, including some black uniforms of the
6 cadets for the SS. Since neither of us has a uniform on
7 how could we belong to the Hitler Youth? Everybody did,
8 except for politically unreliable people like me. So I
9 could prove I was not in Hitler Youth and finally I got
10 visa.

11 When I came to the United States, at the end
12 of the book is another fascinating story. It so
13 happened we went on a liberty ship to New Orleans. Just
14 before we landed there we were all called in the
15 assembly room of the ship, the top deck, like two
16 thousand immigrants. We were told our Nazi stuff is
17 over now and we want you to be real democrats and we
18 don't deal with this racial stuff. You guys better
19 understand what democracy is all about. Go to class and
20 learn something about it.

21 First of all, you have to sign here you will
22 never again submit to any racial, religious and other
23 discrimination against people. We are all created equal
24 in this country. If you don't sign this thing we will
25 send you back to your Goddamn country of Germany. So we

1 all signed the thing.

2 The ship pulled in at the pier in New Orleans
3 and the first thing we saw was three big fat white guys,
4 I think they had whips in their hand, but I might be
5 wrong about whips, standing with their arms on their
6 hips, hands in the pockets, while 150 black guys were
7 working loading the ship. Behind them there were four
8 bathrooms. It said women, black, ladies white, male
9 black, gentlemen white. You could only pee -- If you
10 peed in the black male thing you could have been put in
11 jail in New Orleans in those days. After we signed this
12 thing, it was rather strange introduction to this
13 wonderful society. Fortunately things have changed
14 since then. But it was a big shock. That is how the
15 book ends.

16 Now if you want me to fill in many of the
17 details I left out, I just gave you a short summary of
18 the book.

19 What is it you want me to talk especially
20 about?

21 Q. What happened after you arrived in New
22 Orleans? Where did you go from there?

23 A. Well, it's not in the book, but I had -- I
24 was back in Germany between 47 and 51 going to medical
25 school becoming a German doctor and taking specialty

1 training. My mother suggested I should write to some
2 people she knew. We had a cousin in San Francisco,
3 whose name is Otto Gutentak, who was a professor of
4 medicine at U.C.. Very nice man. He died a couple
5 years ago. We became great friends. At that time he
6 said "My dear boy, I have seen your transcript and your
7 grades and all that and I am sorry, but I have to tell
8 you don't have a ghost of a chance to ever make it in
9 this country. We need people of better accomplishment
10 than you have. Let me know what happens to you in the
11 future and best wishes. If we ever come to Germany we
12 will look you up. Your Uncle Otto."

13 My mother also wrote to Ursulla in Chicago
14 was a student of hers, Ursulla Mendelsohn, who was a
15 student of hers in Berlin. After all the Jews were
16 kicked out of regular schools so a school was founded
17 for Jewish boys and girls, small private school. They
18 hired my mother to teach there. One of her students was
19 this Ursulla. She became a social worker. She worked
20 with Jewish Social Services in Chicago. My mother wrote
21 to her and said "Do you think Dieter has a chance to get
22 a residency or something in the United States,
23 anything"?

24 Two weeks later I got a letter from Ursulla.
25 I am mixing up the years now. She said I have talked to

1 Dr. Manheimer, I have talked to the people at -- What is
2 the hospital in Chicago? They couldn't take you in the
3 big hospital, but Dr. Manheimer at Mount Sinai in
4 Chicago sent me a request. We will send him a green
5 card and he can start January 1st. I never told Uncle
6 Otto about that part of it.

7 Here I was a doctor and I practiced medicine
8 for 35 years. I had met a young woman in Germany before
9 I left and sat around for three months waiting for my
10 visa. Eventually she came over here. We got married
11 and had a couple kids in Chicago. I was in the Navy for
12 two years in Bremerton, Washington, and then I decided
13 San Francisco was my dream town. I had opportunity to
14 practice and so I did. Just hung up my shingle in
15 Castro Valley. There is a new doctor in town. He is
16 from Vienna. Austrian, German, or whatever, they are
17 fine doctors. So I carefully preserved my accent at the
18 time because it seems to have helped get started.

19 Another bright boy wouldn't have made it. I
20 did. At the time American Society, Medical Society,
21 patients and doctors, thought it was something extra
22 special to come from Germany. As you probably know, the
23 first half of the century, German medicine was probably
24 top in the world, together with English maybe. Second
25 half of the century, American medicine is top of the

1 world. I made the move at the right time. The rest is
2 just pleasant, successful life.

3 I have two children, who are quite
4 accomplished. My son is a bilingual editor of a large
5 medical publisher in Stuttgart, Germany. He is married
6 there. Makes a lot more money than I ever made when I
7 was 35 or 40.

8 I have never met anybody like (inaudible).
9 We are truly bilingual, to the point where afterwards we
10 have no idea whether we were talking German or English
11 together.

12 My stepmother visited us at one time. When
13 she came to stay with us and children were little we
14 decided, my wife and I, we were going to speak German
15 while grandma was there. When grandma left two months
16 later she said "It was very nice of you, but I wish you
17 had talked German sometime."

18 I said "What do you mean sometime"? We found
19 out when you practice everything is in English, you go
20 shopping, you talk to your spouse in English. You don't
21 translate it in German and everything is different. We
22 had this problem of slipping into the other language.

23 I use to tell people how this works. You say
24 in English a sentence and the word intellect, and
25 (German to English) from supermarkets and suddenly you

1 speak English and you don't know you switched from A to
2 B and back and forth. That was fascinating.

3 One time I made a presentation of double
4 talk, people thought it was fascinating. But she lives
5 in New York right now. For sometime even though she has
6 only twenty-five percent Jewish blood, she was hell bent
7 on living in kibbutz in Israel, which she never quite
8 got around to it basically because life in the kibbutz
9 was not as comfortable and wealthy as being a California
10 doctor's daughter. "Dad, can I have a thousand
11 dollars"? "Sure, Baby, here you are." They didn't have
12 that in Israel.

13 I retired five years ago, spent three years
14 writing this book. My main interest, other than
15 translating into German, is music. I have been playing
16 the violin all my life. I am a fairly good amateur
17 violinist. Chamber music, we play string quartets,
18 piano trios, and that sort of thing. I have been
19 playing in the Redwood Symphony for six or seven years.
20 We have now published two or three c.d.s. It's quite a
21 fine orchestra. I was very pleased to do that. So next
22 question.

23 Q. Thank you very much for your story. I want
24 you to go back to your childhood and ask more questions
25 about that.

1 First of all, were you very religious when
2 you were young in your family?

3 A. Not at all. Our religious interests came
4 through the German type Protestant families, which we
5 were. Limited religious exercise to major holidays.
6 Everybody went to Christmas Eve service, of course.
7 Easter time, Good Friday, you would go to church. The
8 schools that we went -- Most Americans are use to Sunday
9 schedule of religious services -- In San Fransciso there
10 are 62 churches. You can have everything you want. In
11 Germany you have two. You were Catholic or Protestant
12 or Jewish. When I grew up and after I came back there
13 were no Jews. You were Protestant or Catholic.
14 Protestants were more like Unitarian church. Besides
15 that my father was interested -- My father was professor
16 of philosophy. His main interest was to fight the dogma
17 of the powerful churches. He would hold forth on the
18 fact the Catholic church had burned one third of the
19 population of Spain at the stake at one time. The
20 Protestant church, Martin Luther was an antisemite and
21 he was responsible for a couple hundred peasants being
22 hanged in the peasant wars in 1518, or whenever that
23 was. He was a real violent man.

24 My church you would say is nature. We had a
25 vineyard, a very lovely place with place of wood and

1 growing wine and making our own wine. He would say "if
2 there is a God up there he is in the beauty of the
3 world, in the eyes of a child. We don't need all this
4 dogma. I don't believe that we are all sinners. Our
5 physical life, our sex life couldn't possibly be
6 sinfull. What kind of God is that who makes part of us
7 sinfull and part of us not, abstaining from something
8 normal and natural, how could that possibly be a sin we
9 have to be punished for in hell fire. What kind of
10 nonsense is that"?

11 Anyway, Catholic church put him on the index
12 of forbidden books. I have here one of the books about
13 him in my satchel.

14 To answer your question, how religious were
15 we? We didn't talk very much about religion. As a
16 matter of fact, this man was writing books all the time.
17 32 altogether. I have 29 of them at home here. I must
18 admit I haven't read them all because I am a little
19 bored. He was a very intense Germanic type person who
20 had all the answers. Some of this heathen stuff, Celtic
21 gods play a big part. He was interested in this semi
22 religion of the gods that fight up there in the sky and
23 protect Seigfried from being killed by Haagen and all
24 that sort of thing.

25 Q. After your parents got divorced did you see

1 your mom frequently?

2 A. We had a regular standard meeting situation.
3 We had two weeks in the summer with her. One week or
4 two weeks? We always had three days at Christmas time.
5 In between we would sneak away.

6 My grandparents happened to live in the same
7 town where our summer house was. We would sneak over
8 there quite often and see them. My father was
9 relatively gentle in that respect. We never experienced
10 any major outburst on either side. We didn't suffer
11 very much from the divorce.

12 As a matter of fact, the main reason for the
13 divorce was my mother was a lousy housekeeper. The
14 famous story was I did some cooking one day when she
15 came for dinner. In front of all the guests she said to
16 me, "Can I please have your recipe for this delicious
17 thing"? People never heard of a man cooking and his
18 mother asking for a recipe. We left to take her home I
19 was what? 50 at the time. When we were just walking
20 out the front door she turned around and she said
21 "Dieter you better go to the bathroom before we drive."
22 The whole room full of people just cracked up. Once a
23 son always a son.

24 I said "You better go to the bathroom. You
25 are the one that seems to be leaking." She died about

1 five years ago at the ripe age of 93.

2 My father died in the last year of the war.
3 That vineyard I am talking about, I have pictures of
4 that in the book too somewhere. Does it help to show
5 the pictures or is that not important? If I can find
6 it -- I probably can't.

7 At any rate, -- Where was I? Why was I
8 looking for the vineyard? My father retired from being
9 a professor. He was actually asked to resign. He had
10 been in the Nazi party for a while. Not because he was
11 a real Nazi, but because his heathen religious
12 philosophy in wartime fitted quite well with the Nazi
13 semi religion in the beginning. He was a dreamer. He
14 didn't know any better. He realized what happened to
15 the Jews and his two sons that was the shock of his
16 life.

17 Eventually he retired to the vineyard we had
18 and he was sitting there writing his books, one after
19 another. He was quite a remote person.

20 One reason I became a doctor, I guess, is my
21 father had a couple big operations. Kidney stones, eye
22 operation, and that sort of thing. Each time he was in
23 the hospital I would go visit him. Big professor.
24 Between two professors, they treat each other like two
25 cabinet ministers. A little guy sitting in the corner

1 and big guy in white gown. I was so impressed how
2 powerful these people were. Gee, I would like to do
3 that. Anyway, father had to take digitalis every day of
4 his life.

5 At the end of the war our vineyard was this
6 side of the valley and Nuremburg was on the other side.
7 British here. Both bridges had been blown up by
8 retreating Nazi military troops for no reason that made
9 any strategic sense. They went in the wrong way, not
10 the direction of the marching troops. You couldn't
11 really get to the city to get pills. Besides, the only
12 person who was there was my stepcousin, a woman, who
13 took care of the cooking and all that. She wouldn't
14 dream of walking to the city to get some pills or go to
15 the doctor when there were Russians around and were well
16 known to rape everybody in sight, especially a pretty
17 young girl. He didn't have his medication and he died;
18 practically the last day of the war in April 1945.
19 Thinking all the time his last dream was he thought
20 little Dieter would come up on a tank, American tank,
21 rolling down the street and say "Hi dad, we are back."
22 It didn't quite happen.

23 At that time I was sitting in some miserable
24 POW Camp in England.

25 That's one fascinating story I have talking

1 about my father that I haven't mentioned which is after
2 this Captain Rudolph had established that I was probably
3 politically correct, I was really truly an anti-Nazi,
4 after he found out all the facts of my life from my
5 mother and myself.

6 I was sent to an interrogation camp in
7 Kensington Gardens in London. The idea was I was in
8 front of a committee. They asked me if I was just a
9 convinced anti-Nazi, do I want to do something to
10 shorten the war. "Doing what"? "We could send you over
11 to the Black Forest and drop you with a parachute and we
12 have some Resistance friends in that particular village
13 and we want you to blow up a bridge over the Rhine River
14 together with two other guys and we pick you up two
15 weeks later at the border of Switzerland and take you
16 back home and you have done a real good deed.

17 We give you a guarantee that if something
18 happens to you, if you die in the attack, your mother
19 will get two thousand British pounds as compensation."

20 Before they offered that to me these people
21 were sitting around and somebody said "Have you ever
22 listened to the forbidden British radio"?

23 I said "Yes, I have in Poland and here."

24 "Do you recognize one of us here"?

25 It occurred to me this man over there had the

1 voice of somebody I had heard talking before. It so
2 happened it was Hugh Corden Greene, the brother of the
3 famous writer. In fact, Graham Greene's brother. Hugh
4 Corden Greene died two years ago. He was sitting there
5 and I said "I think you must be Hugh Corden Green" and
6 everybody didn't respond. I had just established my
7 credentials.

8 Listening to British radio in wartime was an
9 immediate death warrant. If you had been caught it was
10 standard for the Germans -- The Nazis had these local
11 party hacks in each community. Ten blocks either way.
12 One guy would be responsible to deal out ration cards in
13 wartime and report when the sons had been killed in the
14 war.

15 The first thing he did when he walked in the
16 house, he would walk up to the radio and see whether it
17 was set to the British broadcast or not.

18 At any rate, I knew who he was that gave me
19 credentials. But I decided not to go over. I put a
20 sentence in my book saying I would rather be a living
21 coward and talk about the war to the Holocaust Project
22 50 years later, than be a dead hero. So I didn't go. I
23 had no interest at all in being parachuted in Nazi
24 country. It was too much. I had done enough hardship
25 by that time. Maybe I am coward, but I know a few

1 million people who wouldn't have done it either.

2 Next question.

3 Q. When you were young before the war started
4 what did you want to be?

5 A. Funny thing is in my high school graduation
6 we were asked what we want to be. It says in there, and
7 I couldn't remember that I ever thought about it, it
8 says "Dieter Bergman wants to be an engineer." I don't
9 know where that came up.

10 At that age, which was 17, I didn't think
11 about becoming a doctor.

12 I certainly didn't want to be a professor
13 like my father. That just came about by circumstances.

14 So what else is missing in your picture?

15 Q. Was there anything you can tell us more about
16 the Jewish section of the town you remember? Any
17 instances you walked down the street, or what it was
18 like?

19 A. There are two ways to report this: I grew up
20 by my assimilated grandparents, I considered Leipzig had
21 a whole street that was the place where the Jewish
22 population of Leipzig went to bartering and selling
23 jewels and furs and that sort of thing. I don't think
24 there was anything disreputable about it. Much of it
25 was actually Polish and Russian Jewish background. They

1 were all poorly dressed. They are all in dark clothes.
2 To me they were kind of forbidding. I carefully avoided
3 walking down that street.

4 There was no danger of any kind, especially
5 not after the Kristallnacht, when most people had
6 disappeared by then, most Jews in Leipzig had
7 disappeared.

8 We had three Jews in the class. I have only
9 faint knowledge of what happened to one of them. He was
10 a grandson of a very famous Orientalist by the name of
11 Hamer. He has written some of the key books about the
12 connection of the Oriental philosophies and arts
13 compared to Greece, Rome and Celtic and a famous man. I
14 understood Klaus, his grandson, was in our class managed
15 to get away from Germany in time and changed his name.
16 We have tried to locate him but nobody has found him so
17 far.

18 I have gone through a couple reunions, two
19 reunions of the old high school group. It was a very
20 strange experience.

21 In the first place, like I gave you a clue
22 when I showed you the picture of the people in uniform,
23 I think 34 kids in this picture, including three girls.
24 We met in the town right at the East German West German
25 border. The East Germans had no money. They had no way

1 to travel in West Germany without special passports. So
2 we met. Out of 32 people, as far as I know, only nine
3 are still alive. Half of them have died. Everybody
4 stood up and told their story a little bit. Most of
5 their stories were humdrum. They were in the military
6 and had leg wound, had a cast on and eventually they
7 were discharged and had babies and were an accountant,
8 teacher or something. I was the only one who had a
9 rather explosive story. I didn't mince any words.

10 Certainly guys in the back looked at me like,
11 how did this guy get in here? The worst people, three
12 of them, refused to talk to me when they found out I was
13 one of the people on the left wing. Four, five, six of
14 the others said to me "Well, you just pack up and go to
15 America and get rich and have a wonderful life and we
16 have to clean up all the mess in Germany. Everything is
17 bombed out and we have to build houses and sweep streets
18 and try to survive and you just go away."

19 I said "Well, I had 25 bucks in my pocket.
20 You could have done the same thing with a little
21 effort." So I didn't particularly enjoy the scene. I
22 was treated by my comrades of my class, my buddies I
23 went to school with, like a traitor. I suppose I was,
24 because I didn't want to have anything to do with
25 Germany after the way Germany behaved and I still don't.

1 In the recent month I have thought about -- I
2 went to a wonderful retirement community in Frankfurt.
3 I have more close friends in Germany than I have here
4 because obviously people you meet when you are in high
5 school or a student or military are more likely to
6 become friends forever. After 35 or 40 you don't make
7 often close friends anymore. After going back to
8 Germany last year I came to the conclusion I really
9 don't want to live there, no matter what. I thought it
10 would be nice to have lots of old buddies that would
11 come and give me some support if I find myself in a
12 retirement home.

13 Then it occurred me to I was in better health
14 than most of the other guys and I would survive them all
15 and what the hell am I doing in Frankfurt when I could
16 be in this country? I have a big house and garden.

17 The other problem is Medicare, which as far
18 as I can see, is a fantastic way of covering almost
19 everything medical that can happen to you. I have had a
20 couple operations.

21 If I set foot, I go to Vancouver and have
22 appendix attack, Medicare won't pay. So all medical
23 things are off. When you are 75 years old and you have
24 to take out private health insurance in Germany it costs
25 you something in the neighborhood of three or \$4,000.00

1 a month. I don't know many people, including me, if I
2 live another ten years, and I have four hundred thousand
3 dollars medical costs just to get insurance, maybe I
4 never use the insurance. In this country it's very
5 generous actually. So I decided to stay where I am.

6 One of my favorite stories in the book is the
7 story of the three girls. Do you remember reading that?
8 I don't know how well I expressed myself. Every time I
9 think about it -- I am in touch, I had been in touch
10 with all of them. Shall I talk about that?

11 One of them, whose sister, the names have
12 been changed. Iris, her father was a printer, union
13 man, probably communist, in old Germany before the
14 Nazis, very strict left wing liberals, and here was a
15 quiet rebellious kind of person. Every time she talked
16 you could tell all this nationalistic stuff in Germany,
17 Prussian spirit, our Fatherland, didn't impress her.
18 She thought we were all human beings, whether German,
19 English, it doesn't matter. Eventually she escaped to
20 the East.

21 The best information I have from her sister,
22 who is a doctor in West Germany, is that she was a
23 political commissar in reasonably large town in Western
24 Russia. For a while and she got entangled with
25 Mr. Guisy, who turned out to be the health minister of

1 the SED. Social Unity Party of Germany, a communist
2 front organization in Germany.

3 She had a couple German kids with this
4 character, who is now an old man. I don't know what
5 happened to the kids. I have been trying to get in
6 touch with Iris. I have her address, but she didn't
7 respond. We tried to invite her to our reunion. She
8 let it be known through her sister she didn't want to
9 have anything to do with all these Nazi bastards so she
10 didn't show up. She is still living in East Berlin.

11 Now it's all one Berlin. I would love to see
12 her and talk to her and find out her mind and her
13 political philosophy has changed over the years. That
14 was Iris.

15 The other side of the spectrum, Gertrude was
16 the daughter of the superintendent of schools in a big
17 city of Leipzig. Blond. Brunhilda type. She was good
18 athlete. She was always doing something, great fun,
19 cheerleader kind of person. Eventually she became the
20 head, female equivalent of Hitler Youth was the BDM,
21 German girls. All girls were equivalent of Hitler
22 Youth, like all boys. By that time many of the girls
23 had been killed or were someplace else. Many of the --
24 I think the figure was 40 or fifty thousand girls under
25 16 were under her control. In the last few weeks when

1 the Russians were already marching into Leipzig she had
2 ten, 12 year old girls man bazookas and try to shoot
3 down Russian tanks with bazookas. Do I use the right
4 word, bazooka? They had many crude things. Many of the
5 girls were wiped out by machine gun. They were terribly
6 proud of it.

7 The story is in the book one day we always
8 use to go to the Thomas Kirscher, the mecca of all
9 musicians, the church where Johan Sebastian Bach use to
10 live and teach and conduct orchestra for 28 years or so.
11 Every Saturday afternoon at one thirty there was a
12 motet. All the people in Leipzig, all the professors,
13 and the conductors and the judges from the German
14 Central Courts, the equivalent of the Supreme Court was
15 in Leipzig also. They would go to the motet. Stand
16 around the steps afterwards and say hi to each other. I
17 ran into Gertrude. She said "Good to see you." By that
18 time I had been already discharged. I was in civilian
19 clothes.

20 Here's a 22 year old, healthy, relatively
21 good looking German man, who is not in Russia being shot
22 at, is not in a concentration camp. "What the hell are
23 you doing"?

24 Suddenly she realized she had forgotten about
25 this half Jewish thing and she got furious.

1 She said "You should really, people like you
2 should be exterminated" she said right to my face. "I
3 know what your telephone number is." I know my home
4 telephone to this day. 50576 was our home phone. She
5 said "I know your telephone number. I give you 48 hours
6 to disappear or I am going to see to it you are put in a
7 concentration camp where you belong." And then she
8 walked away.

9 That was one of the big shocks of my life.
10 An old buddy I had been sitting on the school bench for
11 eight years, next to her, most of the time, some of the
12 time, would have this incredible brutal attitude only
13 because of Jewish grandparents.

14 She was captured by the communists, was sent
15 to Siberia and ten years later she returned from
16 Siberia, completely destroyed, mentally unbalanced and
17 thin like beanstalk and she lived another five years.
18 Nobody knows what she really did to survive. Eventually
19 she died, of what I don't know what. Possibly
20 tuberculosis. That's number two.

21 Number three is Ursulla. Ursulla was out of
22 town student. She had to take a train ride every
23 morning and afternoon to go to school. Top school we
24 went to. So she had to get up at 5:45 and momma would
25 cook hot oats with milk and she would take the bike to

1 the railroad station and take the train for an hour. In
2 town she would have to walk another half hour or so to
3 get to the school. In the evening she got back and got
4 back at six o'clock and had just about an hour to do
5 some homework and momma would cook dinner and she would
6 go to bed.

7 During wartime, when we were all in the
8 military, Ursulla was drafted to work in the public
9 library. She still went with the same train. After
10 awhile, the main railroad station in Leipzig was bombed
11 out. So she had to get up at 4:45, and she didn't have
12 a bike anymore. She had to take a horse to the railroad
13 station or somebody had to take her. The train didn't
14 get all the way into town. She had to walk an hour
15 and-a-half to get to the library.

16 Momma still was cooking hot oats in the
17 morning. She still got a dinner at night. It was
18 seven-thirty for dinner, I guess. Somehow she survived
19 the war.

20 I went to see her, I think in 1963, and we
21 had lunch at the main railroad station in Leipzig that
22 was now restored to its old beauty. The story I was
23 telling you I got out of her at that time. I was eager
24 to find out whatever else happened in her life. "Are
25 you married"? "No." "You don't have any children"?

1 "No." "Have you been traveling"? "No."

2 The teachers in East Germany had a teacher's
3 home at one of the islands in the Baltic Sea. Every
4 teacher had an assigned one week, second week in August
5 or whatever it was, for peanuts or maybe free, and
6 everybody went second week in August, free room and
7 board or it was peanuts. Only place she had ever gone
8 to.

9 I wanted to find out have you ever been in
10 bed with a man or maybe with a woman?

11 In fact, I asked her that. She said "What"?
12 So I thought better leave that alone. I came to the
13 conclusion that there was -- At that time she had now
14 become assistant head of the public library system of
15 the City of Leipzig, which is a fabulous job. She
16 probably got the equivalent of \$50,000 a year.

17 Now she had to get up at six-thirty. In
18 Leipzig a chauffeur would pick her up and take her to
19 the library. In the afternoon she could take off. Mama
20 still cooked her hot oats. Now it was seven-thirty and
21 still cooked her dinner. Turned out actually her mother
22 had delivered her in the same bed where Ursulla was
23 still sleeping. She was born in that bed in 1920 and,
24 as far as I know, five years ago she still lived in the
25 same house and slept in the same bed. In 1990, seventy

1 years later she slept in the same bed. Whole war, whole
2 destruction, Holocaust and everything else completely
3 went by her. She knew all about modern literature. She
4 could hold forth n the Tin Drum, music, Germany and she
5 had never heard anything about Holocaust or Jews. I
6 found that extraordinary.

7 In fact, I am convinced that some great
8 dramatist could write a play about the history of women.

9 I really felt sorry for Ursulla, what a life.
10 Mama died about six, seven years ago. She has to cook
11 her oatmeal herself.

12 Q. Did any of your classmates who were in the
13 Hitler Youth, did they ever describe to you what
14 meetings were like? Were you ever able to attend?

15 A. A good question. Sometimes they would have
16 meetings connected with sports. We would have sports
17 competition. Those boys in the Hitler Youth would have
18 a meeting. It was pretty much like Boy Scouts, I guess.
19 Except they had to sing patriotic songs and had to swear
20 allegiance to the Fuhrer, Adolph Hitler, every time they
21 burped. It was not much different than what the Boy
22 Scouts would do in this country, except they had
23 uniforms, real uniforms, including a little dagger here
24 and so forth.

25 It was really premilitary training. They

1 were really brainwashed to become soldiers and officers.

2 Hitler Youth there was nothing wrong. They
3 had some incredible meetings. I don't know whether you
4 have seen any movie strips of the Federal Party meeting
5 in Nurenburg where Adolph Hitler would address a group
6 of children, young adults, adolescents. They would have
7 sixty thousand boys doing gymnastics and girls doing
8 ballet, wearing white dresses. It was a fabulous
9 experience. I never heard of anybody having fifty
10 thousand people doing in step proceedings.

11 So I guess they had a lot of fun. I was
12 envious I was excluded from all that. I was in a
13 similar outfit for Boy Scouts before the Nazis took
14 over. I enjoyed that very much. I was an old Boy Scout
15 type myself.

16 I have been a skier all my life. I took my
17 kids camping a lot. I love to go through the forest and
18 enjoy nature and look for birds and animals and go
19 fishing and all that. But I couldn't have it anymore
20 because I had the wrong racial mix.

21 Q. How did you find out you were half Jewish?

22 A. When my grandfather was kicked out from his
23 job it became clear to us we must be half Jewish. We
24 had to find records. My father tried very hard. He
25 talked to my grandmother at one time. There was some

1 question whether my grandmother's father, one of her
2 parents, was illegitimate. Possibly non-Jewish, which
3 would have reduced my Jewish blood from 50 to 37
4 and-a-half percent or whatever it was. That would have
5 removed me from the stigma of being partially Jewish.

6 After we found that out nothing much happened
7 at the time. I have Jewish friends that were not
8 persecuted in any great amount.

9 As a matter of fact, part of the Final
10 Solution, I am also writing about that, in Berlin in
11 1943 they excluded half Jews from the Final Solution.
12 People always thought if you are Jewish how come you are
13 still alive? In the first place I am not Jewish. What
14 is your definition of Jewish? It's a religious thing.
15 No, it isn't. What is race? That's the word Adolph
16 Hitler created. I don't like it. Ethnic? I have
17 trouble defining it.

18 Any rate, I told everybody I was baptized
19 Christian, or whatever you want to call it, and
20 confirmed in the Lutheran Church. I wasn't circumcised.
21 I had nothing to do with Jews. My mother happened to be
22 a Jew before she got married. What does that have to do
23 with me? It was rather strange to explain to most
24 Americans who don't quite understand half Jewish stuff.

25 In the Final Solution it was decided in

1 Berlin when the transports started to Auschwitz somebody
2 suggested that it should be made sure the half Jews
3 wouldn't have any children.

4 Since most of the half Jews -- To this day
5 you may find that incredible. I have never heard of a
6 half Jewish female. We have evidence there are
7 something like sixty thousand half Jews in Germany or
8 were or still are at this time, but all of them are
9 males. I don't understand that.

10 At any rate, they decided in Berlin, the
11 Final Solution, that the half Jewish males should be
12 sterilized. So they set up some phoney test situation.
13 You had to stand at a desk and sign some papers. While
14 standing at the desk they would direct Roentgen x-rays
15 against your testicles, assuming this would make you
16 sterile. It made several people sterile and several
17 people, whatever was done, they would fall off after
18 awhile because nobody knew how much radiation you need
19 to sterilize a male. And then they gave it up after a
20 while because too many of the people were severely
21 injured. It was obviously illegal to radiate a person
22 regardless of how undesirable he is, to radiate him to
23 the point of severe physical damage.

24 Quite a few Jews didn't have any problem at
25 all, really, except they couldn't marry other partially

1 Jewish people.

2 This is a copy of an organization book of the
3 National Socialist Party that I spirited out of Germany.
4 It was illegal to take it out. I made copies of it.
5 All the laws about the federal citizens rights law
6 identifies who is Jewish and quarter Jewish. There are
7 all these tables in here saying who is half Jewish and
8 who is full Jewish and it says there what you can do and
9 what you can't do.

10 This young friend of mine, there is a young
11 man, a student at Yale, who is partially Jewish himself.
12 You might be interested in meeting this man if he ever
13 shows up. He has been assigned by somebody to -- He is
14 writing a thesis, sociology or whatever his field is,
15 about half Jews in the military.

16 He has already interviewed a hundred
17 twenty-six half Jewish people. Many of them are my
18 friends that I gave him the name and I have given him my
19 book and some of the details that he didn't have. He is
20 trying to publish that eventually. It's amazing, almost
21 nobody knows much about half Jewish. It's never been a
22 problem. In the first place, as far as we know, almost
23 no half Jews were murdered. Certainly no quarter Jews.
24 Three quarter Jews were automatically considered Jews
25 and were killed just like a hundred percent Jews.

1 This whole business about twenty-five percent
2 is very distasteful to me. Whenever somebody says you
3 are half Jewish. Are you full Irish? Or why me?
4 Everybody has two parents. Two things that come
5 together. I hate the term half Jewish anyway, half
6 anything. Possibly I am because I am sitting between
7 two benches.

8 Q. Is there something you wanted to mention?

9 A. The thing I wanted to mention is I went to
10 medical school with a bunch of people in uniform in 1942
11 in Leipzig. It was a student battalion. Everybody was
12 studying medicine. One fine day I was kicked out of the
13 military. But I was in the middle of the semester. I
14 had to go back to the classes at the institute or
15 whatever it was. I mentioned that in the book. When I
16 walked up there all these soldiers and captains and
17 brass and stuff, there was this little measly looking
18 civilian with wartime pants and jacket. Who is that
19 coming there? How does that civilian get in here? Oh,
20 it's Dieter.

21 That was one of the most obvious rebellions
22 of students against Nazi government. They picked me up
23 and lifted me up and carried me around the courtyard.
24 The Captain in charge of it pretended he was busy. He
25 didn't say anything for a while. He said get in order

1 you guys. Attention. So they dropped me. That was
2 exciting.

3 After that I wasn't, I didn't feel so much a
4 third rate person any longer. That is really the main
5 problem that I had. I grew up being part of the German
6 cultural elite. There is no question about it. First
7 15 years of my life or so I thought I was, together with
8 my family, God's gift to mankind and suddenly I was a
9 third rate citizen. We had no rights. It was pretty
10 hard to tolerate. This demonstration of the students
11 was important.

12 So what other questions do you have?

13 Q. I was wondering if you can go through your
14 family tree and tell us some names.

15 A. I am not going back very far. My Jewish
16 grandparents, Adolph, was born in 1861 in Landsberg. He
17 married Elle Mockrauer in Posnan. Adolph was born in 61
18 and died in 1940. Fortunately he died before Jews were
19 transported away. He was kind of out of it at the time.
20 He was an old man. 79. He was 79. He didn't quite
21 know what was happening. Thankfully he didn't. His
22 wife Elle Mockrauer, M-o-c-k-r-a-u-e-r, Elle Mockrauer
23 was born in 1837. In 1873. She died in Auschwitz in
24 1944.

25 They had two children. One was my mother

1 Gertrude, born in 1894. She died seven years ago here.
2 The other one was Conrad, who was living underground in
3 Holland. He survived the war. He was harassed by the
4 Gestapo. He was an underground person who would write
5 inflammatory letters and drop them in strategic
6 locations in England and Holland. Somehow he was never
7 quite caught, or at least not retained in prison. I saw
8 him after the war once and met him at a railroad station
9 in Holland.

10 When he was younger he use to make his
11 parents angry because he had a motorcycle than he would
12 just love to load my brother and me on his single seat
13 motorcycle on the back and drive down between the trees,
14 on the sidewalk at furious speed. All the citizens of
15 the little town of Nuremburg were furious and ready to
16 kill him. My grandparents thought he was going to kill
17 one of their grandchildren one day.

18 At any rate, Gertrude had two children. My
19 brother was killed in 1940 and me. I am still very much
20 alive.

21 The other half of the family Bergman,
22 originally two Ns. Turned out one of our forebears was
23 Bergman with one N. I didn't know when I came to this
24 country one N was terribly important. In this country,
25 strangely enough, nobody said that in Europe, Bergman

1 with two Ns means they are not Jewish and one N is
2 Jewish. That was strange to me.

3 I changed my name. I wanted to Americanize
4 it. I dropped an N. That caused a little problem
5 because in the Jewish hospital in Chicago where I worked
6 for awhile as a resident the Jewish patients said to me,
7 "What are you? Are you Jewish or German"? I said "Wait
8 a minute. In the first place, there are lot of Jewish
9 Germans and lot of non Jewish Germans and a lot of Jews
10 that aren't Germans and a lot of Jews that are German.
11 What kind of a stupid question is that? What do you
12 care? I am a doctor. I have gone a good job."

13 "Never mind the good job. Are you Jewish or
14 German"? I couldn't do anything about it.

15 There is one story in the book about that
16 hospital. There was a big fat, rich Jewish woman who
17 was admitted for surgery. She was three hours late or
18 two hours late. The residents, like me and my buddies,
19 we had to write up her medical history. Ten-thirty at
20 night it's a little tough to interview somebody and
21 write a history. It takes an hour to look at all the
22 lab reports and talk to the doctor at home.

23 It so happened that a black resident was in
24 charge of that doctor's schedule. He walked in there
25 and said good evening, I am Dr. Lewis. She said --

1 Mrs. Goldberg, very rich family, State Street, Chicago,
2 she said "You are a doctor? I will not be touched by a
3 nigger doctor."

4 The guy said "Excuse me." He walked out and
5 said to the chief resident "She refused to see me."

6 So we concocted a little plan. One of my
7 friends was from Lithuania. He walked in and said "my
8 name is Dr. Runsinger" or whatever his name is. "I am
9 sure you don't like Lithuanian doctors, excuse me. I
10 wish I could have done your physical."

11 I walked in and said "I am the worse person
12 to do your physical, Mrs. Goldberg. I am a German."

13 She said "Wait a minute." I said "No wait a
14 minute. I won't insult you by laying hands on your
15 beautiful fat thighs." I didn't say all that.

16 Anyway, all of us refused to examine this
17 woman. By this time it was eleven thirty. The chief
18 resident called the professor, who was suppose to do
19 surgery the next morning, and said the residents refuse
20 to examine this woman and write up her history because
21 she called a black doctor, one of the smartest people at
22 this hospital, a nigger.

23 The doctor said "tell him to get his ass over
24 there and examine this woman."

25 How about "Bergman? Bergman was here on a

1 green card."

2 The chief of hospital called me at midnight
3 and said "if you don't examine this woman we will
4 destroy your green card and you can go back to Germany
5 where you belong."

6 At any rate, this was resolved. That's one
7 of the anti-semitic thoughts that were impressed upon me
8 by a very strange group of people in Chicago. At any
9 rate this is neither here or there. I am talking about
10 Bergman with one N.

11 My grandfather Albert Bergman was a minister
12 in part of Saxony. Our name comes originally from
13 Swedish ancestor, whose name is at the Auditorium
14 Maximum at the University of -- in Sweden. I'll say
15 that in a moment. He discovered platinum and zinc. His
16 name was Tolmud Bergman. He would have won a Nobel
17 Prize, if he lived a hundred years later.

18 At any rate one of the soldiers of Gustav
19 Adolph got stranded in Saxony and fell in love with a
20 little Saxonian wife and stayed in Saxony and became our
21 great, great, great grandfather and gave us the name
22 Bergman, with one N. Albin Bergman was a pastor. His
23 wife Louise was a Swiss lady, who took care of us when
24 our parents were divorced. They had four children. One
25 was my father Ernst, who died at the end of the war.

1 Second one was Tendavale, who has a special chapter in
2 the book. One of the most horrible experiences in my
3 life. The third one was Maria, who was also a pastor's
4 wife. The fourth one was Gertrude, lovely lady who was
5 a close friend of my mother.

6 My father got married again in 1927 to Louise
7 Werner, our stepmother in other words. Very quiet
8 woman. She really brought us up. She took care of the
9 two of us. My mother wasn't there most of the year.

10 Louise had a little boy when she was
11 already -- she was already 45. She delivered a baby who
12 was a mongoloid and died after a year. Was one of the
13 greater catastrophes in our family. These are the
14 people I mention in the genealogy picture.

15 Q. You mentioned the Nurenburg laws earlier and
16 I wondered how much that affected your Mom's daily life.

17 A. She was teaching at the musical academy in
18 Berlin. She had a pretty good job. In 1937 all Jewish
19 teachers were kicked out. 36 maybe. I mentioned
20 earlier that they formed a school for Jewish children
21 and she was hired by that school. She still had until
22 recently about six, seven or eight of her old students
23 were still writing to her every Christmas. We have an
24 old stack of letters. She was very popular. Until she
25 emigrated. One day somebody came to her and said, in

1 Berlin, Mrs. Landsberg, you have to come to the all
2 purpose hall. There is a young man playing the piano.
3 It's incredible. He is eight years old. This was Andre
4 Previn playing the piano. Do you know who Andre Previn
5 is? Until recently he was the conductor of the Los
6 Angeles Symphony and is a great jazz pianist. One of
7 our best contemporary musicians in the old country. He
8 can do anything and play anything.

9 My mother and I were in contact with him and
10 he is a fabulous musician. He is a genius. You say Tea
11 for Two and he will sit at the piano and play half hour
12 jazz improvisation on Tea For Two. He knew George
13 Gershwin and other people.

14 After that my mother had to quit. She had a
15 close friend she lived with in Berlin. This friend of
16 hers went to Australia because she had family there. I
17 guess I should mention a comedian hominist you don't
18 know. Why should you? They disbanded when the Nazis
19 took power. It was a group of six males. In this
20 country it would be like a barbershop quartet. These
21 people would pretend being an orchestra. One guy would
22 be the base. Another guy would pretend to be the horn.
23 They were so famous, they were the first musical group
24 in the history of the record, what are these old round
25 records we use to have before you guys were born.

1 At any rate, the first one that sold a
2 million copies. They were as famous as anybody in
3 Germany.

4 The sister of one, the tenor, Eric was my
5 mother's roommate in Berlin. Eric's widow lived in Los
6 Angeles. He just died last year. We were very close
7 friends and I went there many times.

8 After that my mother pretty soon immigrated
9 to England. She was in good health until late in her
10 life, excellent health. Lived in Berkley for years.

11 I should mention one other thing that
12 impresses most people, might not realize it. My mother
13 was teaching at age 38 or whatever it was. When was she
14 born? 94. 44, that's 50 years. She was 50 years old.
15 She was 43 years old when she was kicked out of school.

16 The German government paid her all the money
17 she would have earned if she had worked to 65, plus a
18 pension for the years after 65.

19 Until recently, she was 93 years old I think
20 she got a check every month from the German government
21 for 50 years. She got a general -- All her property was
22 disowned and disappeared. She got \$50,000 restitution
23 money.

24 Then she went to England and taught in
25 England under the British school system and she drew

1 Social Security in England. When she was 62 she came to
2 this country and studied nursing at Ferman Hospital in
3 Oakland. For three years she would do some nursing.
4 She would work with debilitated elderly men and women,
5 feed them and exercise them and collect Social Security.
6 Every month she had a stack of checks coming in. Three
7 checks from Germany and two from England and one from
8 this country. She had so much money coming in I use to
9 tell the children "Be nice to grandmother. You will
10 inherit." She spent a total of \$320.00 a month. That
11 is all she needed for room, board and occasional movie
12 and trip to Carmel. There were a couple thousand
13 dollars left over every month she didn't know what to do
14 with that my children inherited.

15 I think that gives great credit to the German
16 government, the way they decided to make good for all
17 the bad things that happened before.

18 What else?

19 Q. What were you doing on Kristallnacht?

20 A. On the 9th of November in 1938 my stepmother,
21 who had this mongoloid child I mentioned, was editor of
22 a newspaper. I have a copy of it here someplace. This
23 is a copy, which means Leipzig Bee Journal. She was
24 editor of a newspaper magazine for beekeepers. Fifty
25 thousand copies a year. That was the most famous

1 specialty magazine for honey producers in Europe. She
2 made a fortune. She earned five times as much as my
3 father did as a professor. She supported all of us.

4 At any rate, I went to her office in Leipzig,
5 on the 9th of November, to have lunch with her or
6 whatever and I walked across the city square to get my
7 street car, number eleven, to go home to where we lived.

8 The square is depicted in the book here, that
9 was the city square. When I walked in there I saw this
10 high building over here. There were flames shooting out
11 of the top of the building. It was a Jewish department
12 store. In this street here there was several Jewish
13 stores, including a jewelry store, where my father use
14 to buy rings and pearls and stuff for mother. They were
15 just dragging out some of the Jews and beating them up
16 and putting them in paddy wagons. I stood there and I
17 couldn't believe what I saw. This guy came up to me.
18 He was an 18 year old healthy and relatively good
19 looking young man, standing there. Obviously terrified
20 by what went on. He said "You, with your nose, you are
21 one of them."

22 I said "I am not Jewish. Leave me alone."

23 "Oh, you are not Jewish"? "If you are not
24 Jewish you might have a little bit of skin down there by
25 your pecker." As I described in the middle of the big

1 square I had to take my pants off so I could prove I
2 wasn't circumcised. That was pretty traumatic. I still
3 think about it ever once in awhile. Every time I walk
4 across there, that comes to mind. I could see the exact
5 spot I stood.

6 To answer your question I walked home and I
7 never told my parents what I had to do there. I told my
8 stepmother 25 years or 35 years later.

9 Q. How did your family react to that
10 Kristallnacht event?

11 A. Any decent citizen would have been horrified
12 by this expression of barbaric inhumanity.

13 Nobody thought that the country, the
14 tradition of Germany would have people tolerate this
15 kind of rabble. Everybody I talked to said how come you
16 guys didn't tell these SA men to go to hell and you beat
17 them up? Well, they were the power of the state. If
18 you were trying to beat up you would have ended up in
19 jail right this afternoon. This was just a tremendous
20 power of the state.

21 I described how my brother and I saw and met
22 Adolph Hitler at one time. We were in the opera in
23 Berlin. Before the curtain went up suddenly they played
24 the national anthem. Everybody stood up and turned
25 around and there was Adolph Hitler in the Emperors Loge

1 up there listening to the opera. One split second after
2 the last note my brother and I ran like crazy up the
3 steps and went to the anteroom, the Emperor's Loge.
4 When we opened the curtain to look in there the man came
5 out with two other people. Goebbels and a couple
6 guards. Here we were as close to him as I am to you
7 people. So I am one of the few people I know who has
8 really seen this man face-to-face, including the fact,
9 if I had a gun, and nobody asked me if I had a gun, I
10 could have killed the bastard right there. I wish I
11 had. I would have saved the world a lot of troubles if
12 I had.

13 Q. Do you remember the first time you noticed
14 any antisemitism?

15 A. Well, that was Kristallnacht, I guess. After
16 that very soon most of the Jews disappeared anyway.
17 They weren't carted away. A mass expulsion really
18 didn't take place until 1942, which is four years later
19 from Kristallnacht. I guess most of the Jews were
20 hiding from that time on or went to other places. Many
21 of them had family in England or Holland or Switzerland
22 and just disappeared.

23 I didn't see much antisemitism at all.
24 Everybody said some of my best friends are Jews. That
25 was standard for all educated people saying that,

1 whether they believed that or not. Of course, when I
2 was a factory worker I would drive a street car through
3 the ghetto. I have a picture of that in the book, too.
4 When you see the street was enclosed by two high wire
5 fences with barbed wire and occasionally there was a
6 bridge crossing over. The ghetto was located in such a
7 way that the streetcar had to go right through the
8 ghetto. We saw a lot of terrible behavior, beating up
9 Jews, almost killed a little boy that had stolen an
10 apple or something.

11 Of course, when you were in the streetcar you
12 took a newspaper and were reading the newspaper and
13 nobody would think you were very interested in watching
14 it. You were hiding behind the newspaper. We were all
15 cowards. 85 million Germans. 84 of them were cowards
16 like myself. I wanted to survive.

17 Q. How did your family react to the fact you
18 were half Jewish?

19 A. My father knew all that and it didn't bother
20 him. My stepmother was about as democratic and open
21 minded a person as you can get. Her reaction was we
22 have to make sure that these boys survive the war and
23 don't get caught. Even though she hated my grandparents
24 really. These matters were not really discussed in the
25 family like that.

1 I remember one time at my grandfather's house
2 in Nuremburg. I got angry because he always denied
3 everything. He said "It's all lies. It will be over
4 next month, next year. The Germans don't tolerate this
5 kind of behavior by the Nazi people."

6 I said to him, "Look, Bergen-Belzen is a
7 concentration camp in Weimar. That's only an hour from
8 here by car. If you live in Weimar you can smell the
9 smoke from burned victims every night."

10 He got furious. He almost slapped my face.
11 "You are lying. You are just lying like everybody
12 else."

13 I said "What do you mean lying? It's a fact.
14 People in Weimar, you refuse to accept it."

15 Of course, most Germans, if you talk to
16 people my age that lived in Germany during the war, they
17 will all say we didn't know anything about it. That's
18 very difficult to believe.

19 If I knew something about it when I was 16 --
20 It's true I had some reason to believe it because I had
21 some contact with Jews. I was more likely to listen and
22 check it out. But there were hundreds of people in
23 these little towns who really didn't know what was
24 happening.

25 The Nazis were very clever in hiding the

1 evidence. They would pickup people in the dark of the
2 night and cart them off and tell everybody they left to
3 go to work to a labor camp in Poland to help the war
4 effort so we won't lose the war.

5 Most people said "Well, I am glad I don't
6 have to go. Poor bastards." I don't think the Germans
7 at that time were particularly antisemitic as a country.

8 My guess is only one out of ten Germans was a
9 real antisemite. Even for those people there was solid
10 reason why they were antisemite. I didn't find out
11 until recently something that amazed me. If I would
12 check out the 200 most important organizations, commerce
13 and trade groups and shops and buildings in Leipzig,
14 Leipzig was a fair town. There was an industrial fair
15 twice a year. It was very famous. It was a central
16 place in Europe where goods from all over the world were
17 exhibited and sold.

18 Where was I? I don't know what I am talking
19 about just now.

20 What did I start saying just now before I
21 talked about the fair in Leipzig? What was your
22 question?

23 Q. Antisemitism.

24 A. Oh, I was saying only one out of ten was
25 really an antisemite, I suppose. Leipzig was a very

1 sophisticated city, pretty much like San Francisco is
2 nowadays.

3 There was a great deal of latitude for
4 tolerance for minorities. Not anywhere as close as in
5 this country. When some black American soldiers showed
6 up in Germany after the war the Germans were horrified.

7 Most Germans had never seen a black person,
8 except when Germany had colonies in Africa after the
9 First World War.

10 The antisemitism didn't really show it's ugly
11 head as much as it could have. I am convinced
12 antisemitism, if you listen to somebody like Elie
13 Weizel, he will say to you the Germans had great
14 propensity to hate somebody, like Poles or the Czechs or
15 the French. Including that they also hated the Jews,
16 the French and Jews, the Czech and the Jews, the poles
17 and the Jews. To this day I suppose they write nice
18 friendly articles, but there are only a handful of Jews
19 living in Germany and nobody wants to live there
20 anymore.

21 Now I remember what I wanted to say. I have
22 asked my friends what do you think of the 50 or 200 most
23 important businesses and trade centers in Germany, in
24 Leipzig, in the town of seven hundred thousand people
25 were Jewish. What would you say? Most people would say

1 everybody knows Jews were good businessmen and they made
2 a lot of money and they were sharp and sometimes a
3 little borderline honest about it.

4 Jews constituted two percent of the
5 population of Leipzig maybe. So they probably owned 12,
6 15 percent of the businesses. 85 percent, and that
7 includes radio, newspapers and all the mass, what we
8 call mass media nowadays. I considered some dumb
9 redneck German would get really unhappy about the news
10 controlling everything.

11 When Hitler said you go to Berlin, everything
12 showed in the newspaper, movies, books, you name it, was
13 controlled by Jews. I can see how the man in the
14 street, who wasn't terribly well educated, felt
15 threatened by the Jewish population. It was more
16 powerful in Germany than in any other country before the
17 war.

18 I could see Hitler could make many friends by
19 telling everybody the Jews are the real problem and we
20 have to get rid of them. Let's just evacuate them to
21 Poland and Russia. He didn't tell people. I should
22 have read Mein Kampf. I feel incompetent because I
23 haven't read it. People tell me. You know Mein Kampf,
24 Hitler wrote a book in 1923 or something when he was
25 incarcerated in the fortress in Bavaria. I don't know

1 if it says in there all the Jews have to be
2 exterminated. I think he used the word removed.

3 Everybody said how come you guys didn't read
4 the book and didn't know about it and stand up when
5 there was still time to stand up? The Germans have been
6 a race of cowards, and must have been slightly
7 anti-semitic all along for the reasons I am trying to
8 indicate.

9 Sometimes it's hard to blame them. When you
10 see, if you were a dumbhead, middle class person in
11 Leipzig you didn't have a chance to become a newspaper
12 reporter because it was all run by a bunch of Jews. If
13 you went to an exhibit in an industrial fair building
14 you had to pay through the nose to get acknowledged by
15 them.

16 So there is some solid evidence that the Jews
17 did not make themselves very well beloved by the
18 Germans.

19 My grandfather tried very hard to be a good
20 German. He had been in the military in the First World
21 War. He was about as good a nationalist as I have ever
22 seen. He was more patriot than my father and me and
23 anybody in the family. He was a real patriot. He
24 didn't want the Nazis to win the war. He thought Adolph
25 Hitler had done so far a pretty good job in getting

1 Germany out of the doldrums left over from the First
2 World War when the peace treaty of 1919, reparations
3 Germany had to pay were so massive and so intolerable,
4 Germany was destroyed and didn't hope to recuperate. So
5 he was against that. He didn't mean to imply that we
6 should build cannons, tanks and planes first.

7 Q. Can you describe what your home was like?

8 A. Our home in Leipzig?

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. We had a big two story house and I guess we
11 had three bedrooms and a couple big dining room and
12 veranda. It was a very wealthy house. There was a
13 garden place. We had nice flowering trees. My father
14 had in the middle of the apartment, an apartment I guess
15 it is, had his study that was floor to ceiling covered
16 by book shelves. He had incredible library. Like
17 Dr. Faustus. He had padded doors, because he was
18 forever reading and writing books. When the boys, my
19 brother and me were running down the hall and playing
20 ball or something, every once in a while the padded
21 doors would open and it sounded like Moses or somebody
22 stood in the door and he would shout at us. "Shut up,
23 quiet. I have to work." He just terrified us.

24 He was a gentle man most of the time. Once
25 in a while he was very sensitive about being disturbed.

1 Mother was working at her editor's job. She
2 never got home before seven or eight o'clock at night.

3 We had a cook who did all the cooking. In
4 Germany most people eat hot big meal of the day around
5 two o'clock or so. Or at that time they did. School
6 was out, I don't know, one fifteen, or twelve-
7 forty-five. I forgot when. We went home on the bike.
8 When I walked in the house, once in a while our cook had
9 put a note on the kitchen door, "I have a terrible
10 migraine and I can't finish dinner. Can you finish it?
11 Most of it I have done. It's in the oven."

12 I would fix dinner and serve it to my father
13 and my brother. Father didn't even notice that the cook
14 wasn't there. I was terribly proud I could do that just
15 as well.

16 We had an icebox. There is an icebox in the
17 book. You had a box with empty metal lined space.
18 Every Monday and Thursday some guy would come in with a
19 leather thing on the shoulder and unload some big bars
20 of ice, frozen water. That was cutout of the frozen
21 lakes in the park. You would slip it in the box.

22 One day, maybe 1931 or so, we had something
23 fantastic. It was a refrigerator. It was a great event
24 in our life. All our friends came and looked at the
25 Bergman's refrigerator. Electric. Just plug it in. So

1 much about the home life.

2 I must mention another part of that house
3 where we grew up. When I was in the factory camp in
4 Poland my girlfriend Annalee from Leipzig sent me a
5 telegram. In December, 1943 there was a terrible air
6 raid attack on Leipzig. She sent me a telegram and said
7 "Dear boy, your house is destroyed. It was a terrible
8 attack. Everything is gone. Love Annalee." That's
9 what "everything" means. My parents are dead. Somehow,
10 I can't understand how that was possible, in the middle
11 of the war I was punished by having to work in the
12 factory. I was three days away by train. I got
13 permission to travel. I came to Leipzig. After walking
14 two hours from where the train stopped to the house
15 where I had grown up, I came to a hunk of ruins. The
16 garden gate was still there. Everything was gone,
17 except the basement. After two or three days without
18 food and without sleep, I was sitting there, it was
19 getting dark, and one of the people who lived in our
20 house, an old lady who was a little (indicating)
21 deprived of her normal senses. She came by and said "My
22 poor boy, everybody is dead." I was sitting there.
23 Everybody was dead? My brother had died. My
24 grandparents were dead. My mother was possibly in
25 England. My parents had now been killed in the fire.

1 It was three days after the attack. The house was still
2 hot. There was fire still in the basement. I sat there
3 and thought what should I do now?

4 I could go back to the factory there? Can I
5 go underground or kill myself or what? There is nothing
6 to live for. I have no money, no food. I was
7 absolutely -- It was probably the worst day of my life
8 in some ways.

9 I was looking around there at the garden gate
10 there was a mailbox. I opened the mailbox. They had
11 delivered, two days after the bomb raid that killed a
12 hundred thirty thousand people and burned almost half
13 the city, they had delivered the mail. Utility bill and
14 advertisement and private letter. That was all. The
15 German Post Office was just on the ball right now. I
16 looked at it. My God, how idiotic can you get? On the
17 front there was a little piece of paper. I picked it
18 up. It says here "Professor Bergman now at" (in
19 German). I went to friend of ours two blocks away. I
20 took my satchel and raced over there, rang the doorbell
21 and there was father in the door with a gown on and
22 electric lights going on. Electric lights three days
23 after Leipzig was bombed to hell?

24 He said "Hello, my boy. Let's see you." and
25 I fainted. It was too much. You have just decided you

1 are an orphan and there is this bastard standing there
2 with a bottle of champagne and silk gown and eating
3 well. They had a lot of money to buy black market
4 stuff. That was the end of our house.

5 Before the war, when I left, I said to my
6 dad, it must have been about a hundred twenty air raid
7 alarms. Every night you would hear the sirens, every
8 other night or so. You had a satchel with important
9 documents and one other thing that, or two other things
10 you would take to the basement air raid shelter.

11 I said to my father "whatever you do when
12 there is an air raid shelter there are two things I want
13 you to save for me. One is my violin, old Hungarian
14 violin that was very valuable and one other thing was my
15 stamp collection."

16 During inflation, early twenties, my
17 stepmother, her father had worked in the -- There was a
18 sheet of German stamps. Does anyone know anything about
19 stamps?

20 At any rate, every day the German mark went
21 up in value and was 20 marks for a letter and then 200
22 marks and after six months before the crash you paid a
23 million a hundred thousand for one lousy letter. In
24 other words, you had to buy a new set of stamps every
25 other day. There was a cigar box with seven hundred

1 mark bluish stamp. Deutsch. There was in each sheet I
2 think seven sheets with a hundred stamps each in the
3 cigar box. The second stamp up there and last one down
4 there was misspelled. Instead of an e it was f. We
5 looked it up and the stamps were worth a fortune.

6 Now I have checked it a few years ago, each
7 one of these stamps could sell for twelve hundred
8 dollars. We had seven times two. It would have been a
9 fortune. Unfortunately the idiot, my father, one night
10 he didn't take the stamps, or my violin to the basement.
11 That's when the house burned. I never saw the stamps
12 again. We were horrified. My brother was dead already
13 by that time. I wanted to save it.

14 Next question.

15 Q. How did your finding out you were Jewish
16 affect your friendships, your relationships?

17 A. There or here?

18 Q. When you were a teenager.

19 A. Oh, this never come up. Nobody had the
20 slightest interest in talking about Dieter having a
21 Jewish grandparent. Nobody knew that. If they knew it,
22 my grandparents were not considered as Jewish. They
23 didn't have any religious attachment to the Hebrew
24 religion. They didn't speak Yiddish, Hebrew or
25 anything. They knew nothing about it.

1 I didn't and nobody else knew we had anything
2 to do with Jewish things. All our rivalries and
3 friendships were related to behavior, to sports, to
4 languages. Who was good in school and who wasn't. Who
5 was willing to help somebody who wasn't good. I don't
6 think most of my friends even when we went to a reunion
7 years later, several of them in the famous picture there
8 didn't realize I had some Jewish background.

9 At that time when this came up we were not in
10 school anymore.

11 Nobody ever talked about it, unless somebody
12 was -- They talked about jewelry. My father bought
13 stuff. Being Jewish was like saying there is a Chinese
14 store at the corner or Australian newspaper journalist
15 living over there on that street.

16 All this Jewish business really was only
17 focused during wartime. I am always a little surprised
18 how people, how concerned they are in this country.

19 Except for the case I mentioned earlier of
20 one Jewish student in our class, whom I had a fight
21 with, and I knew he was Jewish and I am afraid to admit
22 it, but I probably hated him a little more because he
23 was fat and Jewish.

24 At that time I didn't think very well of the
25 Jews. None of the 14 year old Germans ever did. But

1 most of the time we didn't know anything about it.

2 Many of the biggest editors and biggest book
3 stores and everybody knew they were run by Jews. It
4 didn't bother educated people like my family, either the
5 Jewish or the non-Jewish.

6 I went to Theresienstadt a couple years ago
7 with my children. It was my son and my Godson from East
8 Germany. I still -- I have a photo at home. I didn't
9 bring it. My grandmother was sent to Theresienstadt.

10 I don't know how much you know about
11 Theresienstadt. It was suppose to be a place for the
12 more powerful and wealthy and artistic Jews. Presumably
13 to have control over their financial power or their
14 political power and lock them up.

15 Originally it wasn't planned, as far as I
16 know, nobody was really exterminated in Theresienstadt
17 but were sent off eventually to Auschwitz, like my
18 grandmother. Several people died because of starvation,
19 and disease. Typhoid. Theresienstadt, a little earlier
20 I was looking at a floor plan of Theresienstadt. It was
21 an old fortress. It was an ideal place for the Nazis to
22 shelter people. It originally was a fortress that was
23 housing seven thousand people. Eventually they had
24 eighty thousand Jews there or so.

25 My grandmother lived in (inaudible). I have

1 a picture where she lived in the house upstairs for a
2 year and-a-half. She spent most of her time teaching
3 English. She spoke English pretty well. She had some
4 young kids and would teach them English, hoping the kids
5 would get away and leave Germany.

6 You must have heard about the famous movie
7 the Nazis made that was called The Fuhrer Adolph Hitler
8 gives the Jews a whole town. They made a movie of
9 Theresienstadt. They had enough people there to put an
10 orchestra together. They had enough intelligent people
11 to act on the stage and put on a stage show by Swedish
12 playwright. They would set up tables outside with table
13 cloth and serve coffee and cake. When the Swedish,
14 Swiss Red Cross came to investigate one of the famous
15 concentration camps, they would see, and kids would play
16 hop Scotch or hide and go seek. They got new shirts for
17 the day. They would whitewash the houses and hide all
18 the ugly stuff. The Swiss Red Cross thought the Jews in
19 Theresienstadt were pretty good. They had an orchestra,
20 played Beethoven, and had a floor show and composers
21 later became famous. There is Leonard Bernstein
22 recorded a c.d. with music from Theresienstadt where
23 people had written songs and little opera by somebody.
24 None of this is terribly memorable.

25 I listened to it and I was bored with it.

1 The people didn't have a chance to work on that stuff.

2 The moment the Red Cross had departed all the
3 cakes disappeared and all the shirts had to be turned
4 back in and they went back to their miserable living
5 style. But it was very fascinating to be there and
6 drive there from Prague. It's only about an hour
7 and-a-half from Prague.

8 It's funny when I think about what I have
9 told you here. I told you when I first walked in that I
10 am really in a way relatively little involved in the
11 Holocaust. Only by secondhand somehow. I don't think I
12 have suffered anything. Many of the people that read my
13 book said you poor boy, you must have a terrible time.
14 Being basically an optimist I have forgotten much of the
15 real misery, like carrying iron doors, cement wall in
16 the last year of the war and being bombed by the
17 American bombers that were trying to hit the V-2
18 starting points.

19 Several of our buddies that worked in Bologna
20 and France were killed by British or American bombs and
21 tried to knock out the starting points of the V-2.

22 I guess this was one of my most horrible
23 memories is there was an air raid shelter in Bologna.
24 They would send us into the shelter. It was a tunnel.
25 That was about eight feet high with boards in there,

1 enough for people could walk down there. They pushed
2 all of us in this tunnel. The tunnel went down into the
3 earth. If you were the first one to get in there then
4 there were 300 people between you and the outside world.
5 Everybody was scared to death. Everybody smelled bad.
6 The bomb fell and the whole place would jump up and
7 down.

8 To this day I would wake up almost screaming
9 with claustrophobia. Eventually we got out of the
10 tunnel and survived it.

11 There is the story about the commandant that
12 I don't want to talk about right now. It's a little
13 too, almost pornographic. That doesn't belong here,
14 does it? A mass rape, a homosexual mass rape in a
15 prisoner of war camp in England. It's in the book, but
16 anybody that wants to know more about it they should
17 read the book. What else?

18 Q. What were your mother's political beliefs?

19 A. I think my mother was a very unpolitical
20 person really. I don't think she knew much. She was
21 really cosmopolitan person. French, English, German,
22 Russian was part of the high community of educated
23 people. I don't think she had any knowledge about
24 Communism. I don't even know how she voted. I don't
25 think she could vote by the time I was old enough to

1 understand about elections. Certainly she probably
2 would have voted -- There was a liberal democratic party
3 my grandfather belonged to, which was probably like the
4 Perot party in this country, kind of an in between
5 thing. None of these people were way on the right or
6 way on the left in my family.

7 There was a German National Party, the old
8 standard for Prussian officers and Prussian good solid
9 patriotic Germans. On the left side there was Social
10 Democrats. The same philosophy as French Social
11 Democrats and German Social Democratic party now.

12 Chancellor Adenaur was a Catholic right wing
13 person. None of my family was on the right or way on
14 the left. I don't think my mother knew much about it.
15 She wasn't interested. She was only interested in
16 surviving and in music and reading literature, French.
17 She was a great French reader and teacher. She knew
18 much of French literature. Very educated person. She
19 had a Ph.D when she was 21 years old, which was somewhat
20 unusual around the turn of the century. There weren't
21 many women in this country, the other countries, who had
22 a Ph.D. in those days. I have a thesis at home about
23 Ophelia and Hamlet that was the philosophy of Hamlet and
24 Ophelia. And here, of course, in this country she voted
25 democratic, obviously.

1 She thought Adlai Stevenson, who probably
2 doesn't mean much to you young kids, he was an ideal
3 person. But he was much too educated and too bright and
4 too tolerant to become the president of this super
5 politicized country. He wouldn't have made it very far.

6 I guess Harry Truman was the one she said she
7 was surprised Truman became a real president. She voted
8 for him. I couldn't vote in those days. Yes, I could.
9 But I didn't. I wasn't a citizen at first.

10 I must tell you another story about
11 citizenship. I was in the Navy for two years in
12 Bremerton, Washington that was about my fourth year I
13 had been in this country.

14 After half a year in the Navy, Chief of
15 Dependent Service was transferred and I became Acting
16 Chief of Dependent Service, because Bremerton was
17 responsible for all the dependents all the way to
18 Alaska, Hawaii and Washington, Oregon and so forth. We
19 had an obstetrical service. I was an obstretician. We
20 had as many as I think 200 babies a month, including
21 Wacs and Waves. Of course, all the soldiers, they
22 preferred to have babies when they were in uniform
23 because the taxpayer paid the medical expenses and
24 education of the kids in the beginning.

25 I think the Coral Sea, the aircraft carrier

1 sitting in Alameda right now, I forgot what year it was,
2 53 I think, the Coral Sea was sent to Bremerton to
3 produce an angled deck.

4 In the olden times the carrier had a straight
5 take off and landing. Many of them would run into the
6 bridge and the whole carrier would almost explode. So
7 they started an angled flight deck so the worse can
8 happen a plane lands a little too fast it can fall in
9 the water and the pilot might drown but at least the
10 ship wasn't exploded. They took about eight months.

11 One fine day the Coral Sea came into
12 Bremerton. Let's say March 15th or something. No it
13 was May 15th. At any rate, there were two thousand four
14 hundred sailors on board. The next three days and
15 nights the five pay phones in Bremerton were busy day
16 and night. Everybody called their wives, girlfriends,
17 boyfriends as the case may be all over the country, to
18 please come. They had been gone for six months. Nobody
19 had seen their sweetheart for months and months. Maybe
20 a year. I have forgot. 15th of May. By the 20th of
21 May there were sixteen hundred wives and girlfriends in
22 town, in a town of, I don't know, twelve thousand
23 people. They had to sleep in tents and sleep in the
24 basement and on the lawn and sleeping bags.

25 Anyway, that was by now the 20th of May. You

1 know what happened around the 27th of February the next
2 year? Dieter Bergman was in charge of Dependent
3 Service. The delivery room in a matter of three weeks
4 or so we had somewhere between nine hundred and one
5 thousand deliveries. Everybody got pregnant. That's
6 time to get pregnant and have babies.

7 We hired -- I spent most of my time calling
8 all over Washington, Oregon and begging all the doctors,
9 nurses, please help us deliver these dozens and dozens
10 of babies. It was really funny.

11 At any rate I did a good job. The commanding
12 officer said to me, Captain Knolls -- he lives up here
13 near Sacramento. He came and said "Bergman, come here.
14 You have now been promoted to become a Lieutenant
15 Commander. I filled out the forms, your mother's family
16 name and where did you go to school and all that and
17 nationality, American."

18 I said "No. I am still a German."

19 He said "What"?

20 "I am still a German. I have been here for
21 four years."

22 He said "You can't be an officer in the Navy
23 and be a German."

24 We don't have a peace treaty yet. In 1954,
25 actually to this day no peace treaty has been signed

1 between Germany and America. It's just an armistice.
2 Until recently the Russians were involved and the
3 tripartite in Germany. Under German law if I wear the
4 uniform of an American officer I could be hanged as a
5 spy. Vice versa, by American law I could have been put
6 at hard labor in jail for 20 years.

7 Commanding officer, Good Lord, three days
8 later he talked to the Pentagon. He said "Sign here."

9 I said "What do I sign"?

10 He said "You are voluntarily relinquishing
11 your commission and get discharged from the Navy."

12 I said "Why should I be discharged"?

13 He said "Because you are a German. You can't
14 be an officer in the Navy."

15 Well, everybody knew I was German. I filled
16 out all these forms in six duplicates. I spent weeks
17 filling out forms and sending them to Washington. I
18 haven't hidden anything. I haven't lied about anything.

19 "Last week you told me I was a fabulous
20 obstretician, you had to deliver nine hundred babies by
21 yourself without sleeping and eating. Now you want to
22 kick me out. I refuse to sign this."

23 He was just in agony. Three months later I
24 got another letter from Washington asking me to
25 voluntarily cut down my time from two years and they

1 would not dishonorably discharge me but honorably
2 discharge me and pay me \$2,000.00.

3 I said "I refuse to do that, too. I haven't
4 done anything wrong. You can not punish me. I want to
5 be an officer in the U.S. Navy. I did a good job."

6 Eventually they came up with an offer from
7 Washington that I would be, that I would get full pay to
8 the two year date of my discharge if I would sign here
9 and leave the service right now. They would give me a
10 total sum of whatever it was. \$7,300.00 salary for the
11 next nine months.

12 I said "Why should I do that"?

13 He said "Because you are German."

14 I said "No, I am not."

15 He said "What"?

16 I said "No, I am not."

17 "You are not a German? You said you were a
18 German."

19 I said "I went to the District Court in
20 Seattle last week and I am now an American citizen."

21 Captain Knolls just about collapsed after all
22 this. He spent one third of his time just writing about
23 Bergman back and forth.

24 Eventually I didn't have to leave the Navy.

25 As a matter of fact, I delivered a couple

1 grandchildren for him. His son was an attorney in
2 Hayward. We became great friends.

3 This has really nothing to do with the
4 Holocaust.

5 I don't think anybody in the Navy or this
6 country people knew anything about my partial Jewish
7 background, except some idiot pediatrician in Castro
8 Valley, whose name shall not be mentioned, even though
9 he has departed recently with his wife. After a month
10 in practice he came to me and said to me "Look, Bergman,
11 sooner or later you have to tell us who you are, what
12 you do. Are you Jewish or are you German"?

13 I said "I have had all that back in Chicago.
14 I am not Jewish. I am not German. I am an American."

15 He said "Well, if you don't admit you are
16 Jewish none of the Jewish doctors will refer any
17 patients to you. Since everybody assumes you are Jewish
18 with that name none of the non-Jewish doctors will send
19 any patients to you and you will starve to death, and
20 that will serve you right because you are a coward.
21 Tell us what you are."

22 I said "I will take a chance on that." As a
23 matter of fact, the story got out people stopped sending
24 patients to that pediatrician. So did I.

25 I was going strong. I had a good practice

1 after a year or so. There was no real problem. I
2 thought it was really strange how terribly concerned
3 this man was. I tried to tell him that delivering
4 babies, you can't tell a baby that its Jewish. You look
5 at a baby. Does that baby look Jewish? You can tell if
6 they have a black father, but you can't tell if they
7 have a Jewish mother for God's sake.

8 What else can I tell you?

9 Q. Can you talk about how your political beliefs
10 developed?

11 A. In this country?

12 Q. No, in Germany.

13 A. In Germany? Well, I wasn't really long
14 enough in Germany. Don't forget that when I left
15 Germany I was 30. Prior to that there wasn't much of
16 any political discussion. It was a matter of surviving.
17 Of course, there was the equivalent of the Democratic
18 Party in this country and as years went by I became a
19 little more conservative. I am sitting between two
20 benches in some ways as a doctor and having a good
21 income. I was really conservative.

22 My basic beliefs, because of my history and
23 so forth, obviously were democratic. In Germany, I
24 don't think I ever voted. Yes, I did vote. There was a
25 social democrat by the name of Shumacher, wonderful man.

1 That was a Social Democratic Party and I voted for him.
2 I don't know how to compare Social Democratic Party to
3 American parties. I guess it's a little left of center.
4 A lot of equalitarian ideas without any exaggerated
5 nationalism.

6 Q. You mentioned a time when you were in the
7 German Army and you were conscripted in the Army. I
8 wonder if you can describe what a typical day was like
9 in the Army.

10 A. Pretty much like -- I have a few stories on
11 that, too. I was drafted and I was in an infantry
12 regiment, which you get up at five o'clock and have
13 about 20 minutes to wash your face and brush your teeth
14 and you eat a pretty good meal and you march and
15 exercise and parade march and all that and stuff and
16 have lectures all the time about wartime and what to do.

17 After a while the sergeant major of our
18 battalion, he got a hold of me when he realized I was a
19 relatively educated man. He said "Are you pretty good
20 at math"?

21 I said "No, not particularly." But this man
22 had to be promoted. Before he got promoted in the Army
23 to the next higher grade, whatever it was, he needed to
24 pass some tests. He hired me as a tutor. So every
25 night when everybody else went to sleep I had to go over

1 to his place and do math or geography or some damn thing
2 with him and it was a disaster because everybody else
3 barely slept and I had an hour less than everybody else,
4 plus everybody assumed that the sergeant major was
5 really sweet after me. He was really a hidden
6 homosexual. I was doing something unspeakable with this
7 guy. He treated me worse than anybody else because he
8 didn't want rumors to spread that I was his buddy. That
9 was pretty rough in the Army.

10 We had exercise marching, field exercise,
11 pontoons over rivers.

12 I was picked out to be a communications
13 person. I had a little radio around my neck and I. As
14 a matter of fact, when we marched into Poland right
15 after the war started I was assigned by the company
16 chief to go to a certain restaurant in the town that was
17 occupied by the German Army and listen to the British
18 radio. That's the only way we could get decent news.
19 With official sanction I would listen to British radio
20 and I got some information I couldn't have gotten any
21 other way.

22 Amongst my buddies in the military we had no
23 problems at all. Nobody discussed anything about Jews.
24 I didn't volunteer any stuff.

25 As a matter of fact, at the time I didn't

1 even think about it. It was of no concern. I thought
2 everybody is in uniform and what is the difference what
3 church you go to. None of my buddies thought less of me
4 for that reason.

5 As a matter of fact, everybody knows military
6 people are soldiers are very often entirely apolitical
7 and the German military people were apolitical. They
8 didn't follow the Nazi doctrine.

9 Some of the best entire Nazi jokes were told
10 at night when lights were out in the barracks, about
11 Goebbels and Goering and all these people.

12 Q. How did your parents feel about your being
13 drafted?

14 A. Oh, everybody knew you got drafted. As a
15 matter of fact, most of us -- I am still convinced at
16 this point and many of my friends here think less of me,
17 I think, it's a damn good thing an 18 year old has to be
18 in a society and get some discipline forced on him for a
19 couple years.

20 Most of the young men I know that spent two
21 years in the military turned out to be in many ways
22 better citizen, better organized and weren't hippies and
23 weren't selling coke. I think it's probably a good
24 thing.

25 I certainly don't feel I am militaristic in

1 any way. But serving in the service was most of the
2 time really quite pleasurable. Especially the buddy
3 system. I think that's probably what made it tolerable
4 and interesting.

5 I still have three or four people that I
6 served in the same unit 50 years ago and still write
7 Christmas cards to them.

8 That part of it was all right. I don't know
9 whether Americans feel that way about it. Somehow it's
10 considered undesirable to have to serve in the military.

11 I remember when my son, just before or during
12 Viet Nam war my son, one evening he said to me, "Dad, if
13 they are going to draft me I am going to hop on a train
14 or a plane to Canada. What would you say if I do that"?

15 I said "Well, I think that is your decision.
16 It's all right with me. If you feel you don't want to
17 carry arms and shoot at people and kill them I am all in
18 favor of that."

19 "Personally I feel enough allegiance to my
20 new country that accepted me that I served my two years
21 in the Navy voluntarily and I was happy about it." I
22 thought it's the least I can do for the United States I
23 do my share in that.

24 "But you are different person. You are
25 American. If you don't want to serve that's fine with

1 me."

2 Q. Would you be willing to come back for a
3 follow-up interview at some point in the near future?

4 A. Would I have a chance to look at some of the
5 stuff I have said?

6 Q. We will give you a copy of the tape before
7 you leave today. There is the matter of the pictures we
8 don't have time to go through today and there is other
9 stuff we should probe more deeply. If that would be
10 okay with you.

11 A. I will probably tonight and tomorrow think
12 about half dozen things I should have said today that
13 didn't come up, some basic philosophical things.

14 I find I am more likely to tell cute little
15 stories of the general and so forth, than what is really
16 important. Funny how I seem to trivialize things, how I
17 color them in relatively optimistic colors. I keep
18 saying that didn't seem very serious. I have friends
19 that read the book, my God, how could you have gone
20 through that and be normal, you are not insane. It
21 wasn't all that bad.

22 In fact, it made me grow up a little faster.

23 By follow-up you mean enlarge a few points?

24 Q. Right. You can come back and we will
25 continue. I don't think we have done enough justice to

1 you today, to have you come back for another session I
2 think we can close it up.

3 A. Are you going to edit it?

4 Q. No, the tapes aren't edited unless they are
5 broadcast or published and we haven't done that for a
6 little while.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Do you have any last thoughts for today? I
9 don't want to get into another issue.

10 A. The experience of writing a book is rather
11 strange. I told you how my memory, I read a book about
12 memory. Do you know the movie Roshamon, the Japanese
13 movie that deals with memory? What happens to a
14 person's memory? Why do we change facts around?

15 I told you I started writing my autobiography
16 a long time ago. Some things that happened. When my
17 mother died a few years ago it turned out at the end of
18 the war in Germany I was living alone in strange
19 surrounding, didn't have any friends and lovers and
20 people that mattered. Every night I would sit down and
21 write a handwritten letter from two to eight pages to my
22 mother in England and she would collect all that stuff.
23 When she died she gave me a suitcase full of letters, my
24 old letters. Here I had the stuff I had written out of
25 memory over here in the year 1943 and here, I had, 1947

1 and here I had letters I had written that same evening
2 about the same event and I couldn't believe how these
3 two things didn't match half the time, how the memories
4 tried to turn it around. Not necessarily make you feel
5 good. Altogether this whole book writing process is a
6 fantastic experience because it's like auto psycho
7 analysis. You suddenly start investigate your own mind.
8 It's a catharist. You get something out of your system.
9 You haven't given much thought. It was an active life
10 until four, five years ago when I retired. I didn't
11 think much about this stuff. It wasn't important. Now
12 when you head for the final golden years you want to
13 figure out what happened.

14 I have taken a lot of trouble writing and
15 connecting with all my friends and buddies from before
16 and talking to them. I find out I made a better
17 adjustment in life than most of them.

18 I find writing a book, especially since it's
19 not my mother tongue it's a moment I am trying to
20 translate it into German. Many of my old friends in
21 Germany, they couldn't read this stuff, hi-falooting
22 English. "Your English is so complex. We don't
23 understand English. We know English how to find the
24 bathroom and order food in a restaurant in San
25 Francisco. But this emotional stuff we don't

1 understand."

2 I am trying to translate it. I find while I
3 can speak German fluently with anybody on the street in
4 Germany I have a hell of a time translating it into
5 German, because German is no longer a living language to
6 me. I never speak German, except to my son when I am in
7 Germany for a couple weeks every year. So it's a new
8 job I am translating into German.

9 My main interest is at the moment to find out
10 whether anybody is interested, including Rabbi Sheffta,
11 I think his name is, wrote me a long handwritten letter
12 last year saying he is trying to figure out whether my
13 book can be published at their expense by a large
14 publisher and be available for general interest.

15 I am not so sure that is likely to be a best
16 seller because it's 50 years ago and people got tired of
17 listening to 50 years, United Nations and everything.

18 That's not my real concern. I am glad I have
19 written it and I am pleased it was printed at all.

20 It wasn't too expensive. It's a self
21 publishing job. It was fun while I did it. Now I will
22 go on to other things instead of harping on my past.

23 Q. Thank you very much.

24 A. Thank you for inviting me to do it.

25