

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:38,420

2
00:00:38,420 --> 00:00:39,410
OK.

3
00:00:39,410 --> 00:00:42,142
Irene, you were
going to [INAUDIBLE]..

4
00:00:42,142 --> 00:00:47,030

5
00:00:47,030 --> 00:00:49,550
It's a very broad
question, but I

6
00:00:49,550 --> 00:00:53,390
will try to narrow
it down a little bit

7
00:00:53,390 --> 00:00:58,400
by really saying that my entire
life has been affected by what

8
00:00:58,400 --> 00:01:01,880
happened to us in Auschwitz.

9
00:01:01,880 --> 00:01:08,150
And even to this day, my
life is still affected by it.

10
00:01:08,150 --> 00:01:12,660
It was not an easy road for
me to get to the Slotkins.

11
00:01:12,660 --> 00:01:14,910
We kind of glibbed over it here.

12
00:01:14,910 --> 00:01:20,210
But I had stayed with

other people first.

13
00:01:20,210 --> 00:01:22,580
And then other people
who, for whatever reason,

14
00:01:22,580 --> 00:01:23,780
it didn't work out.

15
00:01:23,780 --> 00:01:27,590
And those are all
personal rejections.

16
00:01:27,590 --> 00:01:34,340
And me and my self-image was
extremely, extremely poor.

17
00:01:34,340 --> 00:01:42,620
And when I finally did get
adopted by the Slotkins

18
00:01:42,620 --> 00:01:44,720
and they did-- they
went out of their way

19
00:01:44,720 --> 00:01:47,780
to do everything
within their power

20
00:01:47,780 --> 00:01:51,680
to try to make life more
normal and to make me happy

21
00:01:51,680 --> 00:01:54,300
and to buy me things.

22
00:01:54,300 --> 00:01:57,530
But the honesty of it
was that we never spoke

23
00:01:57,530 --> 00:01:59,510
about what happened to me.

24

00:01:59,510 --> 00:02:04,670

And so I began to
even doubt what--

25

00:02:04,670 --> 00:02:06,650

is this what really
happened to me?

26

00:02:06,650 --> 00:02:09,389

Why isn't anybody
talking about it?

27

00:02:09,389 --> 00:02:13,980

And I began to be very ashamed
of what had happened to me.

28

00:02:13,980 --> 00:02:16,880

In fact, I was so
ashamed that I would not

29

00:02:16,880 --> 00:02:21,170

wear short sleeves because
I have a number on my arm.

30

00:02:21,170 --> 00:02:23,480

I didn't want the
children asking.

31

00:02:23,480 --> 00:02:26,660

And if I did wear
short sleeves, my mom

32

00:02:26,660 --> 00:02:28,790

went out and bought
a special cream

33

00:02:28,790 --> 00:02:30,760

that we would put on every day.

34

00:02:30,760 --> 00:02:33,830

35

00:02:33,830 --> 00:02:40,080

I also was aghast at
the life in America.

36

00:02:40,080 --> 00:02:44,750

After all, Auschwitz
was a very strict--

37

00:02:44,750 --> 00:02:47,510

in Poland, where I lived
with the Polish lady,

38

00:02:47,510 --> 00:02:50,390

was a very strict
Catholic upbringing.

39

00:02:50,390 --> 00:02:55,730

If I was two minutes late from
school, I would get whipped.

40

00:02:55,730 --> 00:02:57,830

I came to America,
and the children

41

00:02:57,830 --> 00:03:00,740

were shouting out in the
classroom to the teachers.

42

00:03:00,740 --> 00:03:02,000

They didn't do their homework.

43

00:03:02,000 --> 00:03:04,740

They were running around.

44

00:03:04,740 --> 00:03:07,260

I could not even fathom this.

45

00:03:07,260 --> 00:03:10,710

How could you dare?

46

00:03:10,710 --> 00:03:12,120

I could not believe it.

47

00:03:12,120 --> 00:03:14,460

I was a very regimented child.

48

00:03:14,460 --> 00:03:16,590

I did everything
that I was told.

49

00:03:16,590 --> 00:03:21,000

I remember one day--

50

00:03:21,000 --> 00:03:22,755

I must have been
already in eighth grade.

51

00:03:22,755 --> 00:03:27,210

And I actually
came to class late.

52

00:03:27,210 --> 00:03:31,890

And I remember having to go
to the principal's office.

53

00:03:31,890 --> 00:03:35,190

And I was like, oh my God.

54

00:03:35,190 --> 00:03:37,830

I didn't know subsequently
that the principal said

55

00:03:37,830 --> 00:03:39,780

it was the happiest
day of his life

56

00:03:39,780 --> 00:03:44,280

that he had seen me
do something normal.

57

00:03:44,280 --> 00:03:49,920

[LAUGHS] But my whole
life has been like that.

58

00:03:49,920 --> 00:03:54,690

I've always felt just a
little bit different and not

59
00:03:54,690 --> 00:03:56,960
quite with it.

60
00:03:56,960 --> 00:04:00,290
During that time
where you were growing

61
00:04:00,290 --> 00:04:05,510
up together in the same
house, you didn't speak of it.

62
00:04:05,510 --> 00:04:11,550
And yet, you felt like
there was something,

63
00:04:11,550 --> 00:04:13,200
something being hidden.

64
00:04:13,200 --> 00:04:16,360
I-- go ahead and
finish the question.

65
00:04:16,360 --> 00:04:16,860
No, no.

66
00:04:16,860 --> 00:04:17,360
Go ahead.

67
00:04:17,360 --> 00:04:21,540
No, we never spoke
about it there.

68
00:04:21,540 --> 00:04:24,060
Though there was the bond.

69
00:04:24,060 --> 00:04:25,750
I knew I had a bond with him.

70
00:04:25,750 --> 00:04:30,270

And I remembered things
from when we were little.

71
00:04:30,270 --> 00:04:31,830
Things we did with our parents.

72
00:04:31,830 --> 00:04:35,880
Going to the park, and
Rene dropping my doll

73
00:04:35,880 --> 00:04:42,120
from the window and breaking
it, and other nice things.

74
00:04:42,120 --> 00:04:47,700
We never, ever spoke about what
had happened to us separately

75
00:04:47,700 --> 00:04:49,680
in Auschwitz.

76
00:04:49,680 --> 00:04:53,220
Partly, I think, because of
the atmosphere in the home

77
00:04:53,220 --> 00:04:56,220
not to talk about it.

78
00:04:56,220 --> 00:05:03,310
And partly, maybe we just didn't
know how to talk about it.

79
00:05:03,310 --> 00:05:05,340
And so nothing was ever said.

80
00:05:05,340 --> 00:05:09,030
And for that reason,
I think in many ways,

81
00:05:09,030 --> 00:05:10,620
we didn't grow up close.

82

00:05:10,620 --> 00:05:14,370
Rene kind of had his
friends and his things,

83
00:05:14,370 --> 00:05:16,620
and I had my things
and my friends.

84
00:05:16,620 --> 00:05:18,300
We were very different.

85
00:05:18,300 --> 00:05:22,470
And we didn't really have
a very close relationship

86
00:05:22,470 --> 00:05:23,280
at that time.

87
00:05:23,280 --> 00:05:26,550
We are much closer now.

88
00:05:26,550 --> 00:05:29,580
When did you finally
talk about it?

89
00:05:29,580 --> 00:05:30,300
When did the--

90
00:05:30,300 --> 00:05:39,010
We finally first spoke about
it, believe it or not, in 1985.

91
00:05:39,010 --> 00:05:42,760
And that occasion was
triggered by the fact

92
00:05:42,760 --> 00:05:48,280
that we finally discovered
that we were not the only twins

93
00:05:48,280 --> 00:05:49,840
to survive Auschwitz.

94

00:05:49,840 --> 00:05:53,992

Up until then, we believed
we were the only twins

95

00:05:53,992 --> 00:05:54,700

to have survived.

96

00:05:54,700 --> 00:05:58,050

97

00:05:58,050 --> 00:05:59,430

So that's what triggered it.

98

00:05:59,430 --> 00:06:02,460

And we found other twins,
that there actually

99

00:06:02,460 --> 00:06:05,550

was a twin organization
called CANDLES.

100

00:06:05,550 --> 00:06:10,320

And they were sponsoring
a reunification

101

00:06:10,320 --> 00:06:14,740

in Jerusalem and to bring
Josef Mengele to trial.

102

00:06:14,740 --> 00:06:17,690

And that's when we
started speaking.

103

00:06:17,690 --> 00:06:21,770

Now, during the years
preceding that--

104

00:06:21,770 --> 00:06:28,960

say, the 10 years preceding
--there was beginning,

105

00:06:28,960 --> 00:06:32,160

people were beginning
to speak, the media

106
00:06:32,160 --> 00:06:33,885
were beginning to
speak of the Holocaust.

107
00:06:33,885 --> 00:06:36,045
And by that time, I suspect--

108
00:06:36,045 --> 00:06:39,070

109
00:06:39,070 --> 00:06:41,980
well, maybe you didn't
quite have children then,

110
00:06:41,980 --> 00:06:42,925
but you were adults.

111
00:06:42,925 --> 00:06:45,430

112
00:06:45,430 --> 00:06:47,260
Did you not even
speak with then?

113
00:06:47,260 --> 00:06:49,180
Did questions ever come up?

114
00:06:49,180 --> 00:06:49,840
Were you--

115
00:06:49,840 --> 00:06:52,390

116
00:06:52,390 --> 00:06:55,225
Yes.

117
00:06:55,225 --> 00:06:56,230
You were right.

118

00:06:56,230 --> 00:06:59,540

By the 1980s, people
were talking about it.

119

00:06:59,540 --> 00:07:03,580

And in fact, I think in 1982
was the very first reunion

120

00:07:03,580 --> 00:07:07,330

of Holocaust survivors
in Washington

121

00:07:07,330 --> 00:07:11,380

under the auspices
of Benjamin Mead.

122

00:07:11,380 --> 00:07:14,200

And it was there that
another twin by the name

123

00:07:14,200 --> 00:07:17,860

Eva Kor decided to
seek other twins.

124

00:07:17,860 --> 00:07:22,430

And that's how 1985
came into being.

125

00:07:22,430 --> 00:07:28,490

But until then, we
had been invited

126

00:07:28,490 --> 00:07:34,430

to this reunion in
Washington and so on,

127

00:07:34,430 --> 00:07:36,085

but I had no interest in going.

128

00:07:36,085 --> 00:07:38,680

129

00:07:38,680 --> 00:07:43,180
Because one of the things
was that as I was growing up,

130
00:07:43,180 --> 00:07:49,120
I heard other adults and
even some adult survivors

131
00:07:49,120 --> 00:07:52,270
saying that I could not
have survived Auschwitz.

132
00:07:52,270 --> 00:07:55,300
They actually denied
my very existence

133
00:07:55,300 --> 00:07:59,260
because they said no
children survived Auschwitz.

134
00:07:59,260 --> 00:08:01,250
And the second part of that--

135
00:08:01,250 --> 00:08:04,150
and if she did survive
Auschwitz, then how bad could

136
00:08:04,150 --> 00:08:04,840
it have been?

137
00:08:04,840 --> 00:08:07,660
I mean, she was just a child.

138
00:08:07,660 --> 00:08:11,380
When in reality, the trauma was
the greatest on the children

139
00:08:11,380 --> 00:08:13,060
because we lost our childhood.

140
00:08:13,060 --> 00:08:15,430
We lost our childhood.

141

00:08:15,430 --> 00:08:22,660

And so I was not keen to be
with other "older" Holocaust

142

00:08:22,660 --> 00:08:23,680

survivors.

143

00:08:23,680 --> 00:08:26,740

And it was only when we
heard that there were twins

144

00:08:26,740 --> 00:08:30,400

and I figured they would
be closer to our experience

145

00:08:30,400 --> 00:08:33,190

and closer to our
age that we finally

146

00:08:33,190 --> 00:08:38,299

decided to open up
and go and join them.

147

00:08:38,299 --> 00:08:42,720

I guess what I'm trying to get
to-- but even during that time,

148

00:08:42,720 --> 00:08:47,120

did you not speak to each other
about it when you were having--

149

00:08:47,120 --> 00:08:50,090

when all this was,
you didn't ever

150

00:08:50,090 --> 00:08:53,750

sort of verbalize this shared
experience to each other?

151

00:08:53,750 --> 00:08:57,890

Before we went to the
first reunion of twins

152

00:08:57,890 --> 00:09:02,030
in Washington, which
is early part of '80s,

153

00:09:02,030 --> 00:09:05,930
I don't recall speaking
to Irene about it still.

154

00:09:05,930 --> 00:09:09,230
Because we were still going
in our separate directions,

155

00:09:09,230 --> 00:09:09,980
separate lives.

156

00:09:09,980 --> 00:09:12,860
We were married and
we had our own sets

157

00:09:12,860 --> 00:09:16,140
of problems to deal with.

158

00:09:16,140 --> 00:09:20,000
It was only '85 when we
first really, really opened

159

00:09:20,000 --> 00:09:25,035
up and talked to each other and
I guess then to the world also.

160

00:09:25,035 --> 00:09:28,810

161

00:09:28,810 --> 00:09:31,390
I must say something now.

162

00:09:31,390 --> 00:09:35,530
Today is December 10, 2002.

163

00:09:35,530 --> 00:09:38,530
And as I was driving
here, I was thinking

164
00:09:38,530 --> 00:09:41,810
to myself, why
are we doing this?

165
00:09:41,810 --> 00:09:45,310
Why are we recalling
these events?

166
00:09:45,310 --> 00:09:50,850
And it came to my
mind that we have to.

167
00:09:50,850 --> 00:09:57,100
There's such evil that exists
in the world today still.

168
00:09:57,100 --> 00:10:01,250
So apparently, nothing was
learned from that lesson.

169
00:10:01,250 --> 00:10:06,190
We are now learning from
another lesson, the 9/11 lesson.

170
00:10:06,190 --> 00:10:10,630
Even though 12/7 was
just three days ago.

171
00:10:10,630 --> 00:10:14,530
Did anybody even mention
it and talk about it?

172
00:10:14,530 --> 00:10:17,120
No.

173
00:10:17,120 --> 00:10:22,230
So I felt sort of required.

174
00:10:22,230 --> 00:10:24,120
I just had to--

175

00:10:24,120 --> 00:10:27,030

I have to do this
for the future.

176

00:10:27,030 --> 00:10:29,345

For my children, for my
grandchildren, for the world,

177

00:10:29,345 --> 00:10:29,845

period.

178

00:10:29,845 --> 00:10:32,540

179

00:10:32,540 --> 00:10:33,170

I'm sorry.

180

00:10:33,170 --> 00:10:35,380

I went off on a tangent on this.

181

00:10:35,380 --> 00:10:38,530

I'm glad you said that.

182

00:10:38,530 --> 00:10:42,250

And again, in addressing
why we never really did

183

00:10:42,250 --> 00:10:48,040

talk about our experiences
at all until after '85.

184

00:10:48,040 --> 00:10:50,750

I, however, had
made an attempt--

185

00:10:50,750 --> 00:10:55,420

this is, again, when
Lori, my oldest daughter,

186

00:10:55,420 --> 00:11:01,420

questioned my number on my
arm, I did tell her that--

187

00:11:01,420 --> 00:11:04,510

as smart as she was
only about four.

188

00:11:04,510 --> 00:11:07,330

And I just tried to explain
to her that something very bad

189

00:11:07,330 --> 00:11:10,670

had happened and people
were marked with numbers.

190

00:11:10,670 --> 00:11:16,490

And so well, my
mom overheard me.

191

00:11:16,490 --> 00:11:22,340

And I got-- why did you
have to tell her that?

192

00:11:22,340 --> 00:11:24,810

Why do you have to
even talk about it?

193

00:11:24,810 --> 00:11:26,570

And again, I got
that thing like,

194

00:11:26,570 --> 00:11:29,210

am I supposed to all
my life be ashamed

195

00:11:29,210 --> 00:11:32,000

that I went through this?

196

00:11:32,000 --> 00:11:36,350

So again, in the
best of intentions.

197

00:11:36,350 --> 00:11:37,720

But it was wrong.

198

00:11:37,720 --> 00:11:40,450
My children have to
know that this happened.

199
00:11:40,450 --> 00:11:44,375
And their children are
going to have to know, so--

200
00:11:44,375 --> 00:11:48,070

201
00:11:48,070 --> 00:11:48,940
OK.

202
00:11:48,940 --> 00:11:51,520
Thank you.

203
00:11:51,520 --> 00:11:54,760
We're going to record the
sound to the room for about 20,

204
00:11:54,760 --> 00:11:55,660
30 seconds.

205
00:11:55,660 --> 00:11:57,730
So if you just sit
still for 30 seconds.

206
00:11:57,730 --> 00:12:01,970

207
00:12:01,970 --> 00:12:02,590
Room tone.

208
00:12:02,590 --> 00:12:30,570

209
00:12:30,570 --> 00:12:31,270
End room tone.

210
00:12:31,270 --> 00:12:33,780
Half of it was airplanes.

211
00:12:33,780 --> 00:12:34,745
Listeners also.

212
00:12:34,745 --> 00:12:35,940
Let's do Rene first

213
00:12:35,940 --> 00:12:38,010
OK.

214
00:12:38,010 --> 00:12:41,220
Rene, we need you to just
listen to Irene, who's

215
00:12:41,220 --> 00:12:44,550
going to tell us some stuff.

216
00:12:44,550 --> 00:12:46,360
We need a reaction
shot, in other words.

217
00:12:46,360 --> 00:12:48,810
So I just need you turned
towards Irene, listening.

218
00:12:48,810 --> 00:12:49,865
Hi, Rene.

219
00:12:49,865 --> 00:12:51,450
Are we having fun yet?

220
00:12:51,450 --> 00:12:55,980
[LAUGHS] Almost.

221
00:12:55,980 --> 00:12:57,570
What should I tell them?

222
00:12:57,570 --> 00:13:00,880
I'll tell you a very sad story.

223
00:13:00,880 --> 00:13:04,380

Do you remember one
night when I got

224
00:13:04,380 --> 00:13:07,920
lost going to the
latrines in the barracks?

225
00:13:07,920 --> 00:13:09,270
Yes.

226
00:13:09,270 --> 00:13:11,610
And I was so bereft
and I thought

227
00:13:11,610 --> 00:13:14,020
I'd really be in trouble.

228
00:13:14,020 --> 00:13:17,655
And hands were pushing me away.

229
00:13:17,655 --> 00:13:18,780
You couldn't find your bed.

230
00:13:18,780 --> 00:13:20,100
I couldn't find my bed.

231
00:13:20,100 --> 00:13:22,030
I was so confused.

232
00:13:22,030 --> 00:13:25,970
And then finally
just before dawn,

233
00:13:25,970 --> 00:13:30,510
some kind lady allowed
me to share her bunk.

234
00:13:30,510 --> 00:13:31,480
That was--

235
00:13:31,480 --> 00:13:32,160
It wasn't yours?

236
00:13:32,160 --> 00:13:32,890
You don't recall?

237
00:13:32,890 --> 00:13:33,630
No.

238
00:13:33,630 --> 00:13:35,280
I couldn't find it.

239
00:13:35,280 --> 00:13:38,870
So somebody was
nice, even there?

240
00:13:38,870 --> 00:13:39,680
Good deal.

241
00:13:39,680 --> 00:13:43,010

242
00:13:43,010 --> 00:13:46,050
Yeah, I have some
of Irene listening.

243
00:13:46,050 --> 00:13:47,600
We probably should
just get one more.

244
00:13:47,600 --> 00:13:48,100
OK.

245
00:13:48,100 --> 00:13:49,640
Yeah, so.

246
00:13:49,640 --> 00:13:51,350
Now you need to
tell her something.

247
00:13:51,350 --> 00:13:55,400
Do likewise something.

248

00:13:55,400 --> 00:13:58,850
Driving here, I was
going through my head

249
00:13:58,850 --> 00:14:03,590
one of my-- all these
thoughts came to mind.

250
00:14:03,590 --> 00:14:08,340
One of them was the
significance of the numbers.

251
00:14:08,340 --> 00:14:13,030
They reduced the
population to animals,

252
00:14:13,030 --> 00:14:17,230
like we mark cattle with
numbers or signs or whatever.

253
00:14:17,230 --> 00:14:22,470
And then after we were marked,
gave them freedom to treat us

254
00:14:22,470 --> 00:14:23,250
the same way.

255
00:14:23,250 --> 00:14:27,710
To treat us like animals, yeah.

256
00:14:27,710 --> 00:14:31,300
Well, I hope not happen again.

257
00:14:31,300 --> 00:14:32,198
I hope so too.

258
00:14:32,198 --> 00:14:34,740
It doesn't look like-- it looks
like the world is going there

259
00:14:34,740 --> 00:14:37,420
again, don't you think?

260

00:14:37,420 --> 00:14:39,140

Probably.

261

00:14:39,140 --> 00:14:39,640

Wow.

262

00:14:39,640 --> 00:14:42,390

[INAUDIBLE] nothing [INAUDIBLE]

263

00:14:42,390 --> 00:16:41,000