

OK. Don't look at this. It's a secret, OK?

Tell me when we're rolling.

OK.

So--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Tell me about--

About having babies.

Camera roll eight.

About marrying Joan and your expectation for a family and then finding out you couldn't. Go ahead.

When I married Joan, you know, and we waited for a while. Then we said we're going to have a big family. You're not going to work. I'm going to have a good job because they're-- Somebody offered me a job in the garment center. No more mechanic. And I worked as myself--

Hang on a second. I don't care about that.

Right.

We only care about--

OK. The issue of the children.

OK. All right. Is that on or not yet?

It's on.

Yeah, so what I'm trying to tell you this. I said I want to have a big family or something, and I want to put all the names which I lost, you know? I have biblical names in my family. And we decide to have a family, but nothing happened. We tried and tried. We went to a million doctors.

Finally, I came to the conclusion that let's call up the German government, the consulate, Park Avenue. They gave a response, and they says they're going to send a doctor, which they did. They send a doctor. We were examined-- with the doctor. We had an appointment, and we went to Harlem Hospital, I had to go. And I was there for two or three days. And it was a Ger-- The doctor took a biopsy.

When he took a biopsy, is in the beginning, he scared me. He says, I know you're a sergeant, you're a sergeant in the Korean War, but I was a captain in the Panzer division in Russia. And my wife got so scared, she says, let me sleep in the closet. He might kill you. This is true.

And as he's taking the biopsy, and I ask him to give me a copy. They wouldn't give it to me. So after so many years, so I know nothing. So we tried, we tried, you know, and nothing happened. So we finally we came to a conclusion to adopt a child, which we did, Allison. And we could adopt another child, a boy, but she was so hyper, my little one, so hyper. She broke her arm. She broke her leg in the crib, right? So they thought I beat her up.

Let's stop for a second. Our light changed.

OK.

And that wasn't probably [INAUDIBLE].

I'm still going on?

We're back. [INAUDIBLE] I can't look-- It looks like.

We got our light back. OK. I want to ask you--

Keep going.

When did you find out that the reason you couldn't conceive was from what happened at the camps?

Yeah, then I realized-- Then after a while, I was reading in the papers how people were sterilized, you know? I didn't know about it. How people were sterilized by the Germans, and they showed pictures and this and that. I said to my wife, you know something? They did it to me. And I didn't realize. And when I went to the doctors and I told them, sterilized, you know, Auschwitz-Birkenau, he says, forget it. You better adopt a child. And they gave us letters, permission to adopt, recommendation.

So we went to where is our commendation. But we needed money. In the beginning, it's very hard to adopt, money. But I worked for a good company, and they helped me. I went to-- I drove to--

I think we have enough information.

Yeah.

What other lasting side effects physical, emotional, mental, do you think you have or had from the camps?

I had mental very much so. I had-- you know, I was a-- I had to get some treatments. I got good treatment for a long time, and I'm still having right now, too. I'm going to a place to the Fort Hamilton, you know, to the veterans hospital. And I go once a week because I have a guilty conscience about my family when I left them. You understand?

Hang on a second. I hate to stop you there, but our light just changed.

OK.

(technical adjustment in filming)

Yeah.

So we have to start over, and I want you to tell me again about what the side effects, the lingering, the lasting effects that you've had from your experiences during the war in the camp.

Well, the experiences, didn't come after I came out the army. That was the experience I have, very bad. I used to get palpitation and I used to dream. And I used to speak to to my mother. A lot of things happened in my life, you know? And I had to get-- I had to be tranquilized. I'd be in the hospital every second day because I had-- my heart was going too fast. So they tried to put the finger right my throat to stop it. I was in a very bad shape because I realized what it did to my family. And it's unbelievable. And I had to take treatment.

You also tell me about the psychiatric treatment.

Yes.

And why are you undergoing that?

I had to take a lot of treatment from different people like Stein, Dr. Stein, Garr, you know?

I don't understand. You're saying treatment, but I don't-- the people--

What treatment means that some were with a social worker, some were with a psychiatrist, and I had them both, Dr. Weiner. Lieberman. So I still go to Dr. Lieberman to now go for some because my conscience bothers me where I left my family. Yeah, I did right or I did wrong? But look what I lost. I lost so much. When you lose-- We were 10 people and I'm alone now. OK?

People are telling me, look how far you have ridden. Yeah, I would say to myself sometimes, too, how did I go that far? And then with all the problems I had, you know? And thank God that we adopted the beautiful child, Allison, you know? And she's very dear to us and very good to us. And we're happy to have her. And I hope that she gets married and have her own children, which we couldn't have it.

They gave me a no no, the Veterans Administration, private doctors, and then German doctors. His name was [Personal name] His first name I forgot already, but his name was Dr. [Personal name] And he-- and he-- I gave to Peter Rose, I gave him the report, what he gave us. He says that is no question in his mind that the Social Republic of Germany, I don't know how you pronounce it, whatever of Germany is at fault.

OK. I'm sorry.

OK.

Want me to stop?

So the doctor, the doctor told you what?

Dr. [Personal name] when his report came out, it says the sperms are there, quite a few, but they don't last too long. The production, the way you call it. The-- Your words, the words from the producer is damaged. So I'd rather get some money from the German republic, and adopt a child. We didn't wait that long. We waited long enough, but we went to ask an agency. I was recommended, and we adopted the child.

Tell me what did happen to your family.

Well, in 1942, or could be the end of '41, she was-- All the little ghettos was shipped to Lodz. You ever heard? The city Lodz? And I still got-- from my mother, I got when I was in the labor camp, somebody came over and looked for-- asking my name, and then he gave me a shirt and he gave me those shoes made out of wood, like the Holland have those wooden shoes. OK.

Sorry.

I'll wait. I'll wait.

OK. We have the light. So what I want to know, because this will be a more concise answer, who-- Of your family, who survived?

My brother survived. He was a major.

First tell me how many people you had in your family.

Eight. Eight.

Start with-- OK.

OK. You asked me how many people I had in my family. We are four sisters and four brothers.

I want you to say it in a complete sentence.

Yeah. What I need you to do this because they don't hear my question, you have to say--

Yeah, go ahead. You tell me again.

In my family I had--

Yeah.

Are we OK?

I had a big family. We were four sisters and four brothers and my father and my mother. And when they were shipped from one ghetto to a bigger ghetto, I believe that they perished or in Treblinka or Sobibor, some of them. They never take a family together. They split them, the children separate. Or Auschwitz could be, but I have no knowledge of it.

And that's the last time-- I didn't see my family since 1941, beginning of 1941. And I tried so hard to look for someone alive, like my sister, but in vain. There was nothing. We tried so hard, but I found my brother--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Two brothers I found through Red Cross.

OK. So tell me about that.

Now can go on?

Yeah.

I found my brother through Red Cross. He wrote a letter to the Jewish press that he's alive. He's in Warsaw, and he's going to stay for a while. And he asked the American people and asked the Jewish press, please, take care of my only brother I have left. And that was heartbreaking when you write a letter to the Forward. You have heard of Forward, right? It's the Jewish press.

And then they-- and we communicate with the letters. He got married. He got married in, I believe, in '51 or '52, I don't remember. He got married because he waited till the girl was going to be of age so he could marry her. And he lived there and you stayed in a place called Bydgoszcz. That's where I wrote him. He was a major, battalion commander. One second, please.

Of course. You have to tell me where Bydgoszcz is.

That's-- Bydgoszcz is not far from my home town between Germany and Poland, in the middle maybe, in the middle, yes. And I wrote him all the time letters, and I sent him some things that he didn't accept it. But my brother-- my brother had a problem. When I went to war in Korea, he was arrested because I wrote him a letter. And they said that he was communicating with the United States Army, and they put him under house arrest. He went on trial. They found him not guilty because he won the Congressional Medal of Honor. And he says, I'm going to leave the country and please send me to Israel. And he left Israel, I think in 1957, Poland to Israel.

And finally, I went to Israel to see him the first time. I think I didn't see him for about 20 years. When I came down the

plane, I didn't know this is my brother. I couldn't recognize him, but my wife was screaming, That's him! That's him! That's him! Hug him! Hug him! I said, you're crazy. It couldn't be. He's holding a flower. I said, this couldn't be him, you know?

And it was torture, you know? And then my other brother came later, maybe a year or two, you know?

When was your other brother? Did you know he was alive?

Yeah, he was alive.

Tell me when you first--

I wrote to him. I wrote him a letter. He was working by the Communist, whatever you call it. And the communists don't have-- you don't work private. They have like cooperation, whatever they call it, and you work for the government. So yeah, I think he was a presser or something. He was pressing garments.

But how did you find out that he was alive, your other brother?

From this brother.

OK, start over and tell me in complete sentences.

OK. I find out that Abraham is alive through my other brother, through Aaron, the first brother, when we corresponded with him. So I found out they are all alive, and I was very happy. But he was very sick. He insists, where's my sister, Leah? He loved her so much. What happened to her? And I explained to him that she didn't make it.

To deal with it.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Then I want you to tell me very concisely--

Go ahead.

After the war, you found out that you had two brothers alive.

Right.

How did that happen? Not too much detail.

Right, right. Through the Red Cross I found one.

After the war.

After the war, through the Red Cross I find one.

Oops. We got to tell Allison to call later.

Tell me what else you want to tell me.

What I want you to say is that after the-- start with after the war.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

After the war, we wrote a letter to the Red Cross. We're looking for our families. I had little sisters and little brothers. They're very little, you know? Little brother was only five years old and this sisters must have been six, seven, eight those days, no? And I gave them the names. So they found my brother, an officer of the Polish army

And I wrote to him a letter. And then he wrote back. He send his picture to the Jewish press in America. He says, thank you, America for keep my brother safe. You know? And through him, I found the other brother is alive working in a Polish company. All I know-- they have, they have those-- I don't-- I don't know. I can't explain it to you, but they don't work private. They work for the government. I don't need to know that.

OK.

Good.

Tell me what happened to the rest. You found them. What about the rest of your family?

Well, I tried to get the rest of my family, and I and I wrote letters and then I got a letter from the Red Cross. Give us a chance, we're looking. And somebody told me that my sister, Leah, might be with her friend in Yugoslavia. And I tried in Yugoslavia. I tried everything I could, and nothing happened. It was just-- I lost them all. And this was shocking when you lose such a big family.

And you didn't lose them all. You lost them all except--

I lost most important things in my life is my four sisters. And this is more-- and my little brother. It's unbelievable that I cannot-- My mother was so dear. My mother was very young. My father married-- my father was older than my mother. She must have been about 34 or 36 years old when they-- when they-- when they took her. I don't know where she was.

Where did they take her? Must have been Auschwitz, Sobibor, there's so many places they did. Sometimes Chelmno was a big crematorium place. Chelmno. Have you ever heard of it? It's a big, big-- Yeah.

OK, one more question. This is a big experience, but you have to make it as short as possible.

Yeah.

Tell me how you came to be drafted to Korea and about your service there.

I was-- every young man, every young man if you're a teenager or you you're of age, they send you-- not a draft card, the classification that you are eligible, when they call you, to come for-- to come in for an inspection or they call you to examine you, whatever. One day they called me into Whitehall street. There was--

Hold on a second.

OK.

OK.

OK. One day, they wrote to me that I should come into induction center, Whitehall street. And there, they examined me and examined me again. I tried to explain to them that I'm from the ashes of Europe. But they don't understand what I'm saying. They don't know about the concentration camps, not all of them. Only those who understand about the concentration camps are those who went to war in Europe. And those young men probably from the state or from the South, and I was qualified 1A --- They said that I'm in good condition to be inducted. But I say--

Hang on a second. Joan, we can hear that. We can hear that noise. We're almost done. If you give us five minutes, we'll be done.

Oh I'm not rushing you.

But we can hear the sounds. We're asking you not to move.

Oh, OK.

Thank you. When they didn't-- When you told them you had been in a concentration camp, didn't that matter to them?

They don't know what's concentra-- I had not-- They had no place to talk to. They just want me. But I had one thing on my mind, and this was very important. Listen, America gave me a second chance. Those soldiers lost their lives, right? And I-- and I decided I'd go with destiny. If I survive, I survive Korea. And-- and-- and--

You're in the shot.

I know.

And I survive Korea. I come back to the States, and I'll be free and nobody has to carry-- and nobody has to be behind my back with a gun, and I go to Coney Island and have my hot dogs by Nathan's with sauerkraut, the mustard. But I-- what I-- I was not-- While I had knowledge, but not educated. I had four years elementary school, you know? And I was taking training--

Hang on one second. If you want to sit down, go ahead.

I want you to make pictures of my family. I'll be very upset.

We'll make them.

Yeah.

Want to know about the army?

No, actually this is the last question about the army.

Go ahead.

Tell me what those medals are.

Well, this is-- I'm a top sergeant. You can see, I have four stripes. OK? Korea, two brown stars, tank. I'm a lighting division. This is a division you hit and run. You know what I'm talking about? Like a Delta Force, whatever you call it. I don't know. And that Purple Heart. I was hospitalized in Pusan, and they said that all my records were burnt in St. Louis, Missouri in 1973. But I got this from the hospital, but I did still come out the hospital and I still went back to finish my time in Korea.

But to be a sergeant. So I says-- they wanted me go to officer school. I didn't even finish elementary school. So you know what the commander says? Education without knowledge is a boat put on a dry dock. But you still have got to have education anyway. You know, I had education probably from Germany. How to survive. You know? That was my goal, and I tell you, I never lost no one except, some by accident. I was a good tank man. I was a sergeant with Sherman tanks.

When you were in Korea, did you ever stop and say, I went through all of this--

Yes. Yes. Well, sometimes-- Well I'm ashamed to say it, but I have to tell you. Sometimes I felt so bad. Why I was come out of the hospital, I was assigned in something which I didn't expect that they're going to do to me. I was assigned that I have to get the tanks out, the boats, the Korean did it, and bring them up North so the GIs have new

equipment to defend himself. But the eyes in your carry you know the flat decks you carry four five tanks and sometimes-- I lost everybody. Where I'm going? Are you understand? I lost everybody. What I'm doing here?

So came moments that I jumped to a river over there the creek, and the guy says, the driver, hey Polak, what did you just did? I said, no, I tried to-- I says, your brakes didn't work, so I tried to jump. Yeah, there was moments that I-- that came to my mind just like this. I don't know why. That I wanted to go. And I don't know why. It's just, just--

This is-- you know, the war was bad over there, but-- I don't know what to tell you. There sometimes comes to a person moments that you don't want to be around no more because you lost so much, you know? Where are you going from here? Right? You have no family. Where do you go? You understand? You're alone. So there came moments. And I-- nothing I could say anymore.

OK. We're done.

We're going to record silence for 30 seconds.

We're just going to all be silent for 30 seconds.

Room tone. End room tone.

Can we make picture?