## RG-50.959\*0001 Oral history interview with David Krauthammer Date of first recording January 16, 1988

File	Segment	Content
1 of 3	covers	1906 - 1940
1906	6:45	Getting Started: I was born in Austria, which became Poland and is now Russia. I was born in 1906 in the town of Tlumacsyk in the province of Kolomea. I only know of my family living in Austria, I had three sisters and three brothers, I was the second oldest my older brother was Joyne next after me was my sister Regina, Joseph, Gicia, Schlome and then Rosa. I only knew my father's mother.
1911?	11:09	<b>Growing up in Austria:</b> I remember kindergarten.
1914	11:56	World War I:  I was eight years old when started. At that time 4 children in family. With the ear to the ground we could hear the canons. We lived a block and a half from the railroad station, the head of the station sent us a message that we should leave in the direction to Hungry, and we took only the most necessary to dress. Not enough food. We came to the city of Debrecen. The whole family felt very sad, we had to leave the house; the whole family (6) went. Gicia was born in Czechoslovakia and the other two when we came back.
1914	22:45	Life in the Household:  My father had a grocery store, my mother stayed in the house; we had a maid, Maria, Ukrainian. I don't know what my father's father did; my mother's father was very religious he prayed from early in the morning until 2 o'clock. Fanatic! All the Jews in Europe don't know where they came from. After the inquisition in Spain in 1492 they came. The languages spoken were German, Yiddish, Ukrainian, Rotania, Russian, and Polish. My mother stayed home, no mother like a Jewish mother. My mother loved me more than all the kids. We went from Hungry to Czechoslovakia, we lived in a barn, the people were very very good, and every day they

		brought food! We at bosher or non bosher happy to
		brought food! We ate kosher or non kosher, happy to have the food. My father said that he is so thankful to g-d because nobody knows we live here! Nobody will call me to the army. We lived there four or five weeks, and then came a military messenger and asked if Benjamin Krauthammer is there, and then said here, you have the invitation from Kaiser Francis Joseph – you have to travel to the Army – then he was away for three and a half years.
1914 -	33:05	Father inducted into Army - WW I:
1919		In war for 3.5 years, he was maybe 30 years, my mother a little younger. We had pension from government. He met a high officer, a general from the Division, a high officer. The officer gave him three or four men; he was stationed in Vladivostok Russia, very far away! The high officer wanted to make money, my father with the men had gold and went to Vienna to buy merchandise (leather, silk)like black market. When he was in Vienna he went to Politz, an hour from Vienna (by bus). He left two kids there, number 5 and 6 (one actually)! The war ended Nov. 4 or 5 1918, when went home 1919, springtime.
	38:40	Back Home: (in Tlumacsyk)
		I remember exactly, my father had gold and other things, we dug holes and buried in bottles, gold pieces in bottles –
	10.17	
	40:17	My Father:  My father was a very rare man, to do for people – every day was a problem for people. When I speak to my sister, she can't understand how he could be so good. My mother was not like this, more for the kids. I don't know about my fathers father, he died when I was three years, his mother I knew. I was maybe five years when she died. My father had two or three brothers, two or three sisters, not sure. My father had one brother who worked in court, doesn't exist in whole Kolomea that a Jew has a job, and he worked in court! He was a writer for a judge, he was more educated – no University, Jews did not go to University.  Family Life:

		Was family close, uncles,etc.? Yes very close! Did family get together for holidays, like Passover ?- not like in the United States.
1919	50:30	Austria Divided: One morning my father looks through window, sees
		invasion from solders. What Happened? – The war is finished, Austria gone in pieces!
		Austria divided in 1919 into Hungary, Poland
		Czechoslovakia—Austria divided into 13 pieces. Thirteen new rulers, before one ruler, Kaiser Francis
		Joseph
1919 -	52:00	Family & Schooling:
1921		Mother had one child in Politz and two when we came back.
		I went to Baron Hirsch school for German and Polish.
		After the war I went to Hebrew school, I went away
		for the whole week. Ten, maybe fifteen children in
		school. My mother wanted me to be a Mohel, to be
		able to read the Torah. I went to school till I was
1001	F0.00	fifteen, three or four years.
1921 -	59:00	First Jobs:
1927		When I was fifteen a teacher came to house and asked my father if I can work at her store, ladies
		wear in Kolomea, he said yes. I stayed for a week, I
		had a room, my father paid. I had a friend,
		sometimes we shared the room. [Not long ago,
		[1980's]my sister from Israel wrote me that my
		friend lived in Brooklyn, I found him right away – we
		had a nice time together. In the war he was in the
		Polish Brigade and fought in the battle of Casino]. I
		did not get paid, I was being trained. After three
		years I left and went to work in a lumberyard, I left
		because there was no future in the ladies wear store. I was paid. I worked there 1924 – 1927. \$3.00 a
		week. I saved \$100 in three years.
1927	1:05:00	Moving to Italy:
		In 1927 I asked mom to write to my cousin in Trieste
		Italy, that I want a job. He writes yes! I still have his
		letter. January 11, 1928 I took the train to Italy.
	1:06:11	Girl Friends/Studying:
		I had girl friends, not many. The girls liked me very
		much. When I went to Italy Mom was waiting for me
		on the railroad station in Vienna. Beautiful rail
		station in Vienna.

1:11:0	In Hebrew school we just studied Hebrew. I had a love to study by myself. Every day I went to our attic and read books – I read the book and I wrote down what I read. I read a book from Arthur Schnitzler, he wrote a book on sex, I transcribed the book, I was seventeen, it was in German. If you want to remember a story, you transcribe. I transcribed many books!  Meeting wife:  Where did you meet your wife? I did not have to meet; they were neighbors to my house. We grew up together.
1:11:3	Wife's Family: Four girls, and three boys. The reverse from my family. In the war, her father was stationed in Bolzano. Her brother George was also stationed there he was seventeen. He had an illegitimate child there with a girl. He had to volunteer, he was declared candidate of officer because he continued to study. They discharged him from the army because his ability was not enough.  Mom's family and my family were very friendly. My wife's father did groceries, like my father.
1:14:1	My father's character: For my father did not exist an enemy, not only from Jewish people but from Ukraine's, Poles, very very rare.
1:15:0	Why to Italy: Why did you want to go to Italy after working in the lumberyard? Because of the income. More money! In the dresses they paid me nothing. Working with the wood, in three years I had certificate and hoped I would get a job in a big lumber place. What kind of certificate? The level of management I reached. Why did you think you would make more money in Italy? It was a mistake to think that. So, I worked for my cousin instead, no in lumber.
1928 - 1:20:0 1932	Breaking Away:  I worked for my cousin for four and a half years (1928 – 1932) in Trieste and then I reached out for myself.

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		My cousin was Giacamo Kleinman, died 1984/85 @ 96 years. Mom also worked for him. I traveled mostly. He advertised and every customer had six months credit, six payments.
	1:25:00	Mussolini:
	1.23.00	Mussolini was in power, very good. When he came to power he took seven Jews to high level positions, finance minister, armybut when Hitler came to power they all gone.
		Wife moves to Trento from Vienna, leaves work to make business for himself,
	1:27:00	Trento:
		Kleinman set-up a store in Trento and sent Mom to work there, I also worked there and he gave me authorization to hire and fire people. The store had four salesmen, mom had a room, I had a room. She lived by herself. Everyday thirty orders might come in, too much work. One day I had an argument with my cousin because why he let her come. So I told him I will leave – he wrote me a letter, I still have it, and he told me he would never take me back! He told me I would never succeed!
1929	1:35:00	Anti-Semitism & Getting Started:
		I did not want to get into competition with my cousin, so I went to sell Turkish Carpets. My first sale was for 300 lire, I made 200 lire profit. So I started to sell carpets here and there! But, I was afraid from the internal revenue. So, I made license to city hall, but they refused me. Why? In time I learned because I was Jewish. They expelled me from Italy. Because I had to go back to Poland, the Army wanted me and the poles did not want me to live in Italy (1929). So, I went to Poland and I stayed three months. I went back to Italy with a new application, a new passport, and when I went back – it was worse than before! They did not want me at all! They gave me permission to stay for nine months, three months at a time. Then a commissary offended me very much, he shows me hand-cuffs and if I don't leave in three months I will be put over into Austria. I went to my cousin in Trieste for help, but he could not help me. So, I went to someone who was a hero in the first world war and he said "it is a shame what they do to you and I will do something for you." We went to the

	did, he signed. This was in the month of June, in September he came to our house.  I met George 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning at the Brenner Pass. He says they were three doctors, two did not have documents and were sent back.  He stayed for 21 months, and then left for America (June 9, 1940). Krauthammer applied to go to America, permission denied, put on waiting list, told he would have to wait ten years! George registered two or three years before.  The mayor and the Governor signed the document because I had such high permission to stay in Italy from the Minister, otherwise they would never sign. When he left we sent him telegrams, when he came to the ship he already had good wish letters. When he came to America he wrote us and described what we had done, I still have this letter!

File	Segment	Content
2 of 3	covers	1940 - 1944
1940	0:00	Jailed:
		Nine days after George Altenhaus left for America,
		Krauthammer was arrested. In Jail 30 days. Aided by
		Maria Antonia Young girl friend of Hermann Goering.
		Young met thru brother in law – taking English
		lessons. Young spoke to Governor on my behalf.
	7:00	Interment:
		Released from jail, sent to internment camp
		Noteresco in province of Abruzzi. 93 persons in two
		villas.
	8:50	Letter to Mussolini:
		Wife writes to Mussolini, released from camp. Was in
		camp 50 days.
	14:45	Kristal Night:
		When Krauthammer hears what went on in Germany
		November 9-10, 1938 – Kristal Night –he liquidates
		all his businesses. Had a lot of money from
		businesses. For safe keeping of money, he buys
		dollars with his lire – Maria Young deposits money
		in bank in Holland, money is transferred to Cousin in
		Indianapolis.
1943	20:50	Protection:

		He is advised from the Italian Government that he
		will be allowed to stay in Italy, resumes business in Trento, Bolzano, & Rovereto with protection from government. On September 9, 1943 heavy bombing of Trento, destroys 51% of city. Germans occupy Italy. After bombing and German occupation, goes into hiding.
1944	31:11	Bombing Scare:
		Tells story after bombing, everything gone, looked for Mom and Sergio (son), all black/yellow from bombardment. Over 200 dead. Was told wife was dead, wife was told husband was dead. Walking length of river saw wife & son, concerned about curfew. Went to house of "funny" customer, slept night next day was brought to isolated house by highway—Germans passed all day. House had five-six children, were given room with kitchen, very nice family accommodated them. Could see Switzerland from toilet window, looked through window all the time, was in panic, knew what was going on. For four and a half months. Why not go to Switzerland? "how to go through streets, full of Germans!". Reached out for help from worker who went to police—was told all city is looking for him. Sister from owner of house went to town fountain and heard that people were saying brother had Jews in his house. Everyone from town knows they are in hiding. January 10, 1944 went into city, took out money – gave owner money
		to buy veal (50-60 pounds).
1944	42:39	Tip-off: 15 people, one sister looking at him and talks with him outside, very cold, needs to speak to him, tells him Gestapo is looking for him all over. Another sister working in hospital says Gestapo looking for couple with child. After hearing all this, can't sleepin cold sweet!!
1944	47:07	Escape:  Next morning, asks lady to get McConey—very wealthy man, made money via black-Market. Spoke with McConey—told him he needs to be in Switzerland tonight, I am Jewish! –here is 70,000 Lire, bring me to Switzerland!. Doesn't take money, Takes car to station—can't go to Trento station, his picture is posted. Goes to another local station. Person he is with, Groff, speaks with a Gestapo man

		at station. Groff says don't worry, he is my friend – he knows you too. Leave on night of January 11 <sup>th</sup> , night they shot Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-
1011	F0.00	law. Ordered by Mussolini.
1944	52:32	Verona Station: Gestapo, SS, pick-up Sergio, give him kisses, candy – don't know he is Jewish. All kinds of military at station, they hear shooting, shooting, up steps, sees 40 50 dead, no documents—they were shot.
1944	55:14	Train to Como: Como on edge of border to Switzerland – McConey sent people to border, they paid 20,000 lire and told Krauthammer that between 4 and 7 o'clock he should go to border, they gave him a red light to show that he paid. At 7 o'clock, not half way, McConey says they must continue on. Walking up hill, over rocks, in snow. Hit cable with head, sounded an alarm. In two-three minutes guards come, three in total—they said "you are taken"!, They were shown hole and were told Germans shot 14-15 people. A fourth guard came as well as dogs, state of panic.!
1944	1:03:02	Close Escape: Asks, who gave you the order, the Pope? More guards came, gave money, money, money!. But, Krauthammer had Lire, Dollar, Gold and threw it away—Seven men took them to Armory, lady came, still in Italy, walked a half hour more, by 11:00 – came an Italy soldier, handsome but "stupid". Came to Armory in Switzerland one minute to mid-night, mid-night it is closed!. At Armory, gave two-dollar bill to buy wood, started fire, and slept well! Total walk, from 4:00 to midnight.
1944	1:09:02	The Gold:  "what happened to the Gold?", told them "I dropped something from the child", why did you drop the gold? "I was sure I would have more!".  Scare: At border hear "Halt", but it was a Swiss guard, not a German guard.  The Seven: Guards were Italian, if German – would be dead!

File	Segment	Content
3 of 3	covers	1944 - 1988
	0:00	Questions:
	0.00	How did your mother die?
		Mother and Father died in Ghetto, My sister Regina
		(Israel) delivered food. Ghetto was in Kolomea.
		100,000 Jews were in accumulated in area. Most
		died of hunger. Nazis put up a Judenrat (council
		representing a Jewish community) who had to
		deliver to the Gestapo a list every day (200-300) of
		those to be shot. Judenrat existed in every city.
		How do you know? You were in Italy:
		From people after the war, but mostly from my
		sister.
1044	2.22	Mar Ciatan (Danima)
1944- 1945	3:23	My Sister (Regina):
1945		She was not in Ghetto, free. A Ukraine friend called
		and told her the Gestapo was looking for her. She was converted to Greek-Catholic. For two years she
		was converted to dreek-cathone. For two years she worked for Germans, she had plenty of food she
		shared with parents and others.
1944-	6:16	Sister Survival:
1945	0.10	Ukraine Friend prepared document with picture, she
		walked two-three nights by self—came in contact
		with train loaded with workers for Slezia taken from
		all parts. Slezia high industry, coal, steel, other raw
		materials. She went to a manager and told him she
		was lost from another train, he accepted her. Three
		to four hundred Ukraine (mostly) worked there -she
		became chief for kitchen, she had cooks (3-5) under
		her) they cooked for the workers. She worked for file
		factory. (Krauthammer had correspondence with
		owner after war, he wanted to import files to U.S.)
		Sister worked there to end of war, liberated from
1944-	11:15	Americans. Sister marries GI:
1944-	11.13	Sister met American Lieutenant, got married –
1713		Witness to marriage was a General. Lived with him
		6-8 months.
1944-		Surprise Visitor:
1945		Elegant women knocks on door and provides letter
		which allows women to remove property from the
		apartment. Takes three suitcases after opening a
		wall. Krauthammer was upset that she allowed this.

		Krauthammer speculates that property taken was
		stolen from Jewish people.
1944-		Marriage Ends:
1944-		GI husband ordered back to U.S. Regina did not want
1743		to go to America-thought life would be too hard!
1945-	18:23	
1943-	10:23	Helping Jews Post War: What happened to your other brothers, sisters?
1340		Taken from home, to a forest – as a young boy we
		would go like boy-scouts. This forest was located in
		Sheperovitz. One grave, maybe one hundred
		thousand Jews destroyed. They brought in from
		other towns too.
		Did you try to find your brothers & sisters after war?
		American JOINT Distribution came to house
		Sharpee Marco (head of Europe) from AJD . For the
		AJD people came over the Brenner Pass, refugees
		hungry, naked, I did what was possible. I provided
		tickets for people to go to Milan. People knew to
		come to my house. I gave them the tickets. War
		finished May 8, 1945 for a year and a half people
		came from Austria, eastern Europe with nothing, no
		documents, no passports – after a year and a half the
		Italian gov't required people to have documents to
4045	25.50	come into Italy. Even my own sister.
1945-	27:58	Searching for Family-Found Sister:
1948		OK, what did you do to find out about your family? I
		made letters - still have answers. Wrote to Paris,
		Berlin, Vienna, and New York. One day I have letter about Regina Krauthammer, but another, not my
		sister, JOINT sent another letter that they contacted
		my real sister. Its 1948, I wrote letter to Italian
		Embassy that I needed passport for my sister.
		Never heard anything about other brothers & sisters.
		How do you know what happened to them. I heard
		from HIAS.
1945-		Over:
1948		In Kolomea, all dead. Maybe 10, 11 persons from
		100,000 were alive. 5 or 6 died from eating, the
		Russians gave them food, but they had been
		starving – so they eat too much, too fast, they died.
		My sister in law (Regina) was in Kolomea after the
		war, she says David you have to see how empty it
		was! The Ukrainians after the war, they killed Jews.
		After the war <i>I never went back to Kolomea</i> .

1945-	37:39	Helping Refugees:
1948		After the Italian government made law-stopping
		people to come in, they still came. They were put in
		Jail. I helped get them out of Jail; even Michael
		(brother in Law) was in jail.
1945-	39:38	Dante:
1948		Who will describe the Holocaust? Reference is made
		to Dante. People can't image what Jews went
		through. I have letters from people I helped get out
		of jail.
1945-	41:49	Used Own Money to Help Others:
1948		Went to Police in Trento, they say they have 9
		people, 3 couples. I say I want to have them out. Each
		couple had a child, eight months. I brought home
		these three couples. We gave them our food, a place
		to sleep on the floor. They were happy, in the
		morning I took them to the train, I gave them money
		<ul> <li>never made application to the JOINT to get money</li> </ul>
		back. Did the same next day and next day I did this
4045	45.04	for three and a half years until I went to America.
1945-	45:01	The Black Marketers:
1948		One day, two people, they have two heavy sacks –3
		to 4 miles from the city. I went by myself to bring
		sacks, to the railway station – women at railway
		station, who was my customer – I told her I came for
		two sacks, she said not two sacks – but three big
		sacks and three big bundles. She gave me two men from the railroad to help. I opened one sack, I started
		to sweat. All black markets: flint, saccharin, other
		prohibited things. Later they came, took it all and
		went. I was happy, what would happen would
		happen to them, not to me.
1945-	49:20	Surviving:
1948		Working but not what I used to do, I did currency
		trading. I was able to change Lire for dollars and
		dollars for Lire. Wasn't black market, In war I lost
		everything, lire went down 2000%.
1944-	1:05:00	Surviving in Switzerland:
1945		500 days in Switzerland, we suffered hunger. Even if
		you had money you could not buy-they would say
		who knows how long the war will last. How much
		bread can you eat, how much? You can eat two
		pounds and a quarter. They gave mom a kilo of
		bread a day, same for the child, but for me only 3 oz.
		- mom gave away what she could not eat, we were

		not together, quarantined for twenty days. For one bread, one kilo you had to have a gold piece, twelve dollars. Are you saying the Swiss let people die? yes—from other things, they say it is war. People hated them so! After twenty days we were in a hotel, not all – they were separated but I wrote to complain that I had to be with my family, so we were together. When mom was pregnant with Sarah, she was in the hospital for ten months. I visited mom every day. Sergio was with me I had a good time. When Sarah was five months we went back to Italy. I had money from America, later, also from the Polish Consulate. The Swiss were very human with the Hospital, but not with the food.
1945	1:16:02	Returning to Italy:
		When we heard, 29th of April 1945, the war was over we went back to Italy. We went back over the river Rhine, for two dollars they take you over. Why not by train? There was no train! Why didn't you go down the mountain, the way you came? To come I was forced, to go down the mountain, never! I took two big breads, they lasted two - three days, they became all moldy – we ate it anyway.
1945	1:19:05	Surviving Back in Italy:
		When we went back we went to Milan. We went to the Americans. They gave us two rooms, beautiful. They gave me papers - I could travel anywhere. I came to Mr. Travis, rich man in Milan, I used to buy textiles from him. He gave me ten thousand lire. From this money I had first help. From Milan it was not possible to go back to Trento. Trains were not running - the roads were broken. I went to the Vatican; they gave me a paper to take one of their buses to Trento. It took two days and two nights. We went to the apartment, I had paid in advance two years, the hiding place, there we had everything.
1945	1:23:52	Back in Trento: When did you get involved in JOINT? – Not immediately, because the refugees from the East did
		not need papers, they go in the thousands. Not only Jewish, but Russians, Poles, Hungrythey no longer want to live in Europe. They go to Australia, South America.
		Then later on I had an apartment in Trento and people came to me, even without recommended.

1946		Simon Wiesenthal Visits:  Who came to me? Simon Wiesenthal! 1946, he was going to Palestine, he was in house three quarters an hour. He was just to the police he wanted to know if Jewish people were deported. I told him they deported over thirty people and we fled to Switzerland. He said good! He was very skinny then, not how he looks now. When he was in my House, Mengele was living very close to Trento. He was living there a year and a half. Not only he, there were a hundred, hundred fifty Germans because Bolzano is one hundred percent German speaking. The reason they stayed there. But you didn't know what they did? We imagined, we were mixed up after the war!
1946	1:30:34	Deciding on America:  I was so scared to stay in Italy. I saw the solders, Russian, French, English, and American. The Russians put posters on every corner, "all the citizens from occupied Russia can go back home", Mom cried every day! We had afraid they come and take us straight to Poland. It happened in many cases. I'll give you proof – they took Wallenberg away, they took other people away. The police told me something; "you know Mr. Krauthammer if something happens to you from the Germans, we will not declare war." The same was after the war, after the war there wasn't a boss. It was twenty, thirty parties – you make a mistake, you lost!
1946	1:33:00	Getting to America:  I was so fortunate with my name, the Italians gave me honorary protection when I was twenty-five years, in the beginning I didn't know, I was informed latter over the years. It was beautiful!  When it came to go to America in the same week I had invitation from the DP – Displaced Persons Commission in Naples. In the same week I had invitation from the Consul General of America in Genoa.
1946 1949	1:34:50	Settling in America: When we came here we were very unhappy. We lived in Indianapolis for three weeks, then to New York, a Hotel on 97th Street. We went back to Italy after three and a half years. In N.Y. we lived in a

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		hotel eight and a half months, I had money, I did not work. After the hotel we took an apartment [95 <sup>th</sup> & Columbus]. I helped people repatriate their money that was frozen from the Align Enemy Property, and I had a commission.
1950	1:44:01	Back to Italy, Back to America: We went back to Italy, but we came back to America we saw so many Jews leaving Italy. In twenty years there won't be a Jew in Italy, maybe Italian Jews but not align Jews. We stayed in Italy a year.
1988	1:45:28	Finishing Up: We lost Sergio, I want to get back the Swiss passports I want to deposit with Yad Vashem. We went through Dante's Hell. I want to bring out that Sergio was damaged we going over the mountain to Switzerland. Probably he was damaged, the next day he was crying the whole day. Why? It was forty to fifty below crossing the mountain.