United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
First Person: Conversations with Holocaust Survivors
First Person Jill Pauly
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>> Bill Benson: Good morning and welcome to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. My name is Bill Benson. I am the host of the museum's public program *First Person*. Thank you for joining us today. We are in our 18th year of the *First Person* program and our First Person today is Mrs. Jill Pauly, whom you shall meet shortly.

This 2017 season of *First Person* is made possible by the generosity of the Louis Franklin Smith Foundation, with additional funding from the Arlene and Daniel Fisher Foundation. We are grateful for their sponsorship.

First Person is a series of conversations with survivors of the Holocaust who share with us their firsthand accounts of their experience during the Holocaust. Each of our *First Person* guests serve as volunteers here at this museum. Our program will continue twice weekly through the middle of August. The museum's website, www.ushmm.org, provides information about each of our upcoming *First Person* guests.

Jill will share with us her First Person account of her experience during the Holocaust and as a survivor for about 45 minutes. If we have time toward the end of the program, we will have an opportunity for you to ask Jill some questions.

The life stories of Holocaust survivors transcend the decades. What you are about to hear from Jill is one individual's account of the Holocaust. We have prepared a brief slide presentation to help with her introduction.

Jill Pauly was born Gisela Renate Berg on May 1, 1933, in Cologne, Germany. The arrow on this map points to the location of the city of Cologne. Jill and her family lived until Lechenich, a small town outside of Cologne. Jill and her older sister picnicked in the Eifel Mountains in 1937 with their mother, Clara, and their aunt and uncle.

The Nazis came to power shortly before Jill was born in 1933. On November 9, 1938, the Nazis carried out a nation-wide Pogrom against Germany's Jews, known as Kristallnacht, or Night of Broken Glass. Alerted to the danger, Jill and her family fled to Cologne.

Here we see a historical photograph of Germans passing by a vandalized store of a Jewish shopkeeper.

Jill's family decided to emigrate from Germany and in June 1939, they left for Kenya.

In this photo we see Jill, on the right, and Inge, while on the German ship that took them on a two-week journey from Genoa, Italy, to Mombasa. Jill and her family lived in Kenya for the next seven years.

Pictured here is a group portrait of Jill's extended family on their farm in Kenya. Jill is in the middle, between her grandparents. Behind Jill are, from your left to right, her uncle, sister, Inge, and her mother and father.

In 1947, the Bergs came to the United States and settled in New Jersey. Jill and her husband Kurt, also a Holocaust survivor, had lived in the Washington, D.C. area since 1974 but last August moved to Long Island to be closer to their children. I'm pleased to let you know that Kurt, who is with Jill, will be our *First Person* tomorrow. Jill and Kurt have two children, four grandchildren, and two great grandchildren who are 9 and 1 years old.

Jill enjoyed a very successful career in real estate, became active as a volunteer with this museum in 1992 before it opened. She was to be found weekly at the museum's Donors Desk until the Paulys moved to Long Island last year. Since moving, she has spoken publicly on behalf of the museum, several times including at the United Nations for the opening of the museum's traveling exhibit on propaganda.

With that, I'd like to ask you to join me in welcoming our *First Person*, Mrs. Jill Pauly.
>> [Applause]
>> Bill Benson: Jill, thank you so much for joining us today and for your willingness to be our First Person today and, of course, to Kurt for doing the same for us tomorrow.

Jill, you have a lot to share with us. We have a pretty short period, so we'll just start if that's ok.
>> Jill Pauly: Very good.
>> Bill Benson: You told me that Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, in November 1938, was the catalyst for the decisions and direction that your family's life took for the balance of the Holocaust and the war. You were very young at the time, about 5 years of age. Let's start first with you telling us a little bit about your family before the war and the events that led up to Kristallnacht.
>> Jill Pauly: I remember my family from a vantage point that perhaps other children don't because all of my life in Germany, 98% was inside my parents' home. I didn't go anywhere, except family sometimes. So I can only say what I learned from my parents. They had been in Germany for maybe 300, 400 years, I don't know, ancestors way back. I've been able to research through 1699.
>> Bill Benson: Through 1699. Wow.
>> Jill Pauly: I can't go before that because before that the Jews of Germany were known by their Hebrew names; didn't have regular names, what we call regular names. You can't find them because my father would have been Joseph, son of Maier, Joseph Ben Maier. And there were a lot of people with that name, so it was not possible to find them in that sense.
>> Bill Benson: But you can go back 300 years.
>> Jill Pauly: Yes. There was a law that was put out by the churches, I believe, in the 1600's, that the Jews in the Rhine land were allowed to work in two professions; one was horse-trading; the other was the cattle business. My ancestors started making a living in the cattle business. My father was still doing it during the Nazi time.

The business had grown enormously because there were four men and my grandfather in the business. They were doing very well, very, very well until January 1, 1937, when they got a postcard -- I had a copy somewhere. I can't find it but I've seen it. The copy of

the postcard gives notice that of that date they may not do any business any longer. A year later, the same postcard, same sender, said everything they own now belongs to the state. So that was the catalyst. They couldn't make a living anymore.

My father was a very practical man. There were seven people in the household he had to support. One of the reasons we were still in Germany is that although they were Orthodox Jews, they could not think about going to Palestine because there were no cattle businesses there. There were no cows. There was no grass.

>> Bill Benson: And that was their business. That's what they knew.

>> Jill Pauly: They needed to make a living. Although they had money, they still needed to make a living.

>> Bill Benson: How big was your extended family?

>> Jill Pauly: Oh, huge. I have no way of knowing. Yes, I have a genealogy. If I study that, it would be seven feet, eight-feet wide.

>> Bill Benson: Aunts, uncles, cousins.

>> Jill Pauly: My grandmother came from eight children. My grandfather came from four or five children. And marriages and children, you know. My father had so many cousins. He didn't think a second cousin was a cousin. I think my second cousin is very valuable because I only have one left.

>> Bill Benson: Jill, besides losing your father -- your father losing his business, when the Nazis came to power in 1933, in the years going up to Kristallnacht, many, many restrictions were imposed. One of them was that you shared -- that you shared with me is that it was forbidden to keep kosher and yet your family did its best to continue doing that. Tell us a little about that.

>> Jill Pauly: There were a lot of laws. There were laws -- it's in the exhibit next door where they had to give up their silver, their jewelry. They didn't do that. They gave them some things but they didn't. They didn't obey the law of not having the kosher slaughtering. They did it -- not in hiding -- yeah, one uncle did it in hiding. And the other one had what do you call it, where you slaughter -- it has a name. It's a facility where cattle are slaughtered.

>> Bill Benson: Right. Someone in the audience will know that.

>> Jill Pauly: Since we had such a big business, he had one on his property. He did kill cattle. They refused not to eat meat. What to do? What to do? The people next door were Nazis and they were very close. And they watched them all the time. So he locked the inside door, had a man with him, of course a righteous gentile who wouldn't talk, tied up the animal, did the kosher slaughtering, and then he took a gun and shot him to his head and the neighbor heard the shot. That's the way they lived.

>> Bill Benson: And you shared with me that they would then hide the knives that were used for the ritual.

>> Jill Pauly: Those knives were hidden in our house. And we had two raids. Somebody gave them away or tried to give them away. They raided the house. And the small ones for the poultry, the special knives, were hidden in a drawer in the kitchen with the cutlery. And the big knives were the big cattle, my uncle strapped to the inside of the chimney.

So it wasn't like they went down not fighting. There were many people that had organized in our town, who were, I believe, Catholic, who were righteous gentiles, who refused to let this happen. And this was a double-edged sword. They were very good to us. They helped the family and the business. They made sure we had to eat. And they said this is crazy, he's nuts, this is not going to continue, don't pay any attention to it. That's a double-edged

sword. That gives you comfort. It's good to hear but it can be destructive if you're not, you know, tuned into reality. So on Kristallnacht, all of that changed.
>> Bill Benson: Before we get to that, just one or two more questions. You were not yet in school at that time but your sister, Inge, who is four years older than you, what was her school experience like in those early years?
>> Jill Pauly: Well, she went to public school first. She was tormented by the children. She hit back. She struck back. And it landed on a boy's nose and he had a bloody nose. And you would say good for her, right? But not so good for her because it frightened my parents enough that they took her out of the school. And at 6 she was sent to live with my grandmother in another town where there was a man -- I wish I could speak of him. He was an extraordinary man. He was a teacher, a Hebrew school teacher. He ran a schoolhouse. He had four, five grades in one room. And that was education. And she was a wiz of a student in both Hebrew and German. She could fit into any school pattern. And this man absolutely refused to believe that anybody would capture him or do him harm because he didn't do anything else but teach children. He didn't do anything to save himself. And he died in the camp.
>> Bill Benson: Jill, Kristallnacht, the night of November 9, 10, 1938, tell us what you remember about that night and what it meant for you and your family.
>> Jill Pauly: Well, it meant wake up. The men were still at home. It was 9:00 in the morning. My grandfather was the president of the synagogue in our town for 30 years. They prayed in the synagogue twice a day. It was only a block away. Somebody knocked at the door. I was in the living room with my grandparents. I could see the door being opened. My father was dressed to go to synagogue. A man came to the door and said to him, "Don't go to the synagogue." And he said, "Why?" he said, "Something terrible is going to happen. Don't go to the synagogue."

He didn't know anything. We didn't know anything. That became very upsetting. The men were screaming. The brothers were screaming. My grandfather was in. My grandmother was listening, sitting in a chair in the living room. I was sitting on a low chair. I think we were in there because it was November and it was cold out and we had a little stove in that room so we were keeping warm. When she heard them screaming and fighting and the phone started ringing, and my father was trying to find out what was happening, he found out over the phone. So she said, ok -- her other son, my uncle, went outside to close the shudders. That was his way of keeping the world out. And she said, "It's too late for that. That's not going to help us." Call up so-and-so, tell him to pick us up, we're running away.

I don't know what she had in her mind, where to run to, but she was in charge. She was in control. She said we're all running away. So the car came and picked up the grandparents and us, a non-Jewish driver. And my mother and father were probably waiting for my uncle with the family car, a mile away. And my father and all the men in the family didn't show up in Cologne. We drove into Cologne. They didn't show up. They had run into the woods. They drove into the woods, far into the woods.

We got there, it must have been dusk. When we were leaving the house, we smelled smoke, my sister and I, and we saw gray stuff falling. It was the synagogue burning. It was 11:00 in the morning. We were screaming from fright. So my grandmother put us in the car and put us with our faces down on the floor of the car. The grandparents put their feet on us. That seemed to quiet us down. We stopped crying and screaming.

The driver went. When we were just before Cologne, she let us get up. And I remember seeing the periphery of the city with many, many, many fires, big fires. We went into

Cologne and I remember I saw the Nazi flag. It was kind of late already. It was winter. Later. And I saw the Nazi flag for the first time. I thought it was very pretty.
>> Bill Benson: You remember seeing that.
>> Jill Pauly: Clearly. They were big. I had never seen a Nazi flag. So it shows you how they kept the children. Never saw one.
>> Bill Benson: As you said, you had barely been outside for the several years.
>> Jill Pauly: Hardly.
>> Bill Benson: Your synagogue was burned and so were hundreds of others throughout Germany. Do you know if your parents realized that that night of attacks on Jews and Jewish businesses was occurring all over Germany? Do you think they had any idea?
>> Jill Pauly: Yes, after the phone started ringing. Yes. That's when they learned. You know, Kristallnacht wasn't announced on the radio. It just happened. And the surprise -- also, the thrust of Kristallnacht, the underlying -- other than the anti-Semitism was stealing. If they could grab as much as they could of the properties that belonged to the Jews, it would be theirs.

I read about this once. It's very quite interesting. The men came into Cologne the next day at 10:00 the next morning, I think. Goebbels called it off. And when he called it off, he meant no more, no more rummaging, stealing, attacking. They had done enough and they had gotten enough.

Ok. The men came into Cologne for the Sabbath.
>> Bill Benson: Like your father.
>> Jill Pauly: My father. And the other men went somewhere else. And he decided over that weekend, Friday, that we were going to go into hiding in the attic. Where have you heard that before? And thank God, a million times my sister had a screaming nightmare. And they realized it's not safe; they had to leave. So three of the men, my father, his brother and first cousin, got into a car, our car, but no permission and drove into Holland without permission. And they were caught. And they were imprisoned.
>> Bill Benson: By the Dutch.
>> Jill Pauly: By the Dutch. And there were many Dutch Nazis. Those borders were being controlled. 40,000 Jews ran into Holland during -- around that time. They had their own economic problems.

When they were put in prison, my mother's brother and sister and her husband were living in Holland. They had left Germany in 1937 because the two men were working for the Berg brothers and the business was closed. They had no way of making a living, so they left and lived in Holland.

My mother's brother was young. He was in his 20s at the time. He was fluent in Dutch. Because my family lived almost on the Dutch border. My mother's family. And we lived an hour from the Dutch border, by car. They understood Dutch. He and my aunt's husband saw them being transported to the prison so they followed them. And he asked the man, when he got there, the head of the prison -- who was a little -- really a Nazi -- "What are you going to do with these men?" He said, “I'm sending them back to Germany tomorrow.” That's all he had to hear. And he said to them, to him, "You know I know the law. You're not allowed to send these men back to Germany unless you have written permission from The Hague to do so." He says," “Ok. I'll get that permission by tomorrow morning and then I'll send them back."

So my uncle got in touch with a very, very well-known Dutchman, a Jewish man, who happened to be the court Jew. Two queens --
>> Bill Benson: Queen Juliana of the Netherlands.

>> Jill Pauly: She was not Nazi. He got permission to see her and got a document signed by her to leave these men in a camp in Holland but they were not to be send back to Germany.
>> Bill Benson: So they were interned but not --
>> Jill Pauly: But not in a concentration camp. It wasn't a happy camp but it wasn't a concentration camp. They didn't make them work, you know. On the contrary, they had nothing to do, which can be very difficult also.

So they stayed in Holland. And the rest of the family -- one of the women that married into the family also lived in Lechenich with her husband. He was not in the business. He was my father's cousin but he was not in the business. And she was determined she was getting out of Germany with her little boy. Her husband actually wasn't that frightened. I don't know how he was not that frightened but he wasn't. He and his brother had been in World War I and they probably felt that would help them not be --
>> Bill Benson: As veterans of the German Army.
>> Jill Pauly: Yeah. There was something in the beginning where he said the veterans wouldn't be sent to the camp, but you know that wasn't -- he didn't hold to that.

Ok. So she came from a very highly intellectually educated family, the woman. All her cousins were something, really something. And one of them was a chemist studying chemistry in Munich. He heard Hitler speak on the streets while he was in college and he was determined that the day after he has his certificate he was leaving Germany. And he went to England and he started a chemistry factory with a friend and he was successful. He had a sideline. And the sideline was helping Jews get out of Europe. So she called him and he was willing to try and help us.

He had a brother who had been sent -- who he brought out of Germany also to study law in England. And when he was employed -- it was by a prestigious law firm in Nairobi, Kenya. Kenya was a British protectorate. And he had the good luck of having someone in his office who was very looked up to by the British government. He was a Jewish man. And he was able to help get permission for us to come into Kenya, contingent on many things. There were about 28 people signed up as family to go to Kenya.
>> Bill Benson: As all part of your extended family to go to Kenya, working through the family member now in England.
>> Jill Pauly: I left something out.
>> Bill Benson: Ok.
>> Jill Pauly: My grandmother, the one who was in control, she forbade her sons and nephews to put one penny into German banks after Hitler came to power. And she carried -- she was the bank. She carried it on her tummy. I have her big tummy. And we had the little bag she carried it in. We've lost it. We've moved too many times. This man that went to the queen had met my uncle in the mountains on vacation and he told him to get the family money out of Germany. My grandmother thought that was great. But they never smuggled. They didn't know how to do that. It takes a talent. That was not one of their talents. But it was -- he knew somebody. He knew a smuggler who did this for a price. And the day I was born, the business money was smuggled out.
>> Bill Benson: Into The Netherlands.
>> Jill Pauly: Yes. And this man was so honest. I think he was the caretaker of this money the whole time that the men were incarcerated, for that whole year -- no, from -- six years he managed that money. And he was so honest, gave back every penny and lost his life. They murdered him.

>> Bill Benson: And, Jill, that money was important for lots of reasons, including you had to pay for those visas that were going to allow you to get to Kenya. You needed more than 20 of them for your family members. Do you remember what the cost of that was?
>> Jill Pauly: Yes. It was 50 British pounds a head.
>> Bill Benson: In 1938-`39.
>> Jill Pauly: It's about over $1 million today. And that money that they had brought into Holland, that served a purpose of saving people. There were lots and lots of people who couldn't make decisions like that. They were afraid to spend their money because they always felt they didn't know what was coming next, they would need their money. I am so eternally grateful that they were all able to make this decision to let go of the money because every one of us would have died.

So once the money was in the banks in Holland -- about four years ago my cousin, my second cousin, Igon, called England. He had never -- he's an attorney. He had never seen anything written in his mother's home to verify what we know. So he called England. He called the daughter of this man who helped save us and asked her whether there were any documentation between the Berg family and her father. “Oh,” she says, “Yes, lots, but I have to have open-heart surgery so if you call me back in six months, I'll be able to help you.” Sure enough, six months later her son had gone to the museum where they contributed his writings and gotten copies for us.

And we got them about four, five years ago. And we have the underlying documentation to what happened. The first letter on the file that came out was a thank you letter signed by my father and his brother and the cousin who were in the prison for nine months and couldn't make any decisions, who weren't allowed to communicate. It all had to be done outside of them.

And the uncle that I had in Holland, he was fantastic. He was bright. The other uncle who was in Holland was not bright and quite dangerous, actually, because what he wanted was for this man to get us all into Holland.
>> Bill Benson: So fortunately the family maids the decision you're all going to take advantage of the opportunity to purchase these visas and make your way to Kenya, which you did do in June of 1939. Tell us what it took -- because your father and your uncles are imprisoned in Holland. So it's your mother, your grandmothers, aunts. How did they manage to pull that off, to get you out of Germany?
>> Jill Pauly: The way I pulled off getting myself at 83 packed and moving to New York. Who knows?
>> [Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: Ok. One of the things, of course, your money was in Holland but the Nazis were not allowed -- remember, this is before the war formally began in September 1939. It's about to happen. But you were not allowed to take any money out of the country but you could purchase goods while you were in Germany.
>> Jill Pauly: Oh, yes. Everybody's so amazed about that. But there was a method to their madness. The people who had permission to leave Germany could spend all of their money buying German stuff. Hitler had no problem with that, as long as they could steal it off the piers once it was packed.

A lot of people got stuff out. They had spent a fortune -- there were several issues there. You were going to Africa. Who went to Africa in 1939, 1939? There were no refrigerators no cars, no ovens, no utensils. There was nothing. So they bought it all. And my mother had us

outfitted for eight years in clothing. And some of it arrived but most of it went somewhere else.
>> Bill Benson: It was packed and shipped and you never saw it again.
>> Jill Pauly: Right. Stuff did arrive, enough to manage on.

When we got to Kenya, we saw my father. I picked him out of a million people because he was wearing his European suit, a white shirt and a hat. That's not the way the men in Kenya dressed.
>> Bill Benson: Before we get to you getting to Kenya, tell us about your journey to get to Kenya. With this large number family members, you had grandparents, at least one grandparent who was very ill but you somehow managed to get everybody together and out of Germany.
>> Jill Pauly: It was horrible. It was nine months living in Cologne. There were five -- I thought they were old people. They were in their 50s and early 60s. We lived in an apartment. They were my mother's aunts and uncles. There was my mother and the two children. And there was other people. The apartment was just awful. They didn't have enough money for food. They were afraid to go on the streets. And I had a very sick grandmother in that apartment. She had cancer. And she was on morphine. Jews weren't allowed to go to non-Jewish doctors. So they had a connection there. It must have been a Jewish doctor who was able to get her the painkiller. My other grandparents were not with us.

I wasn't always good there. I tried. I had a little schoolmate, a little girl. My first playmate. I wasn't allowed to play with other children ever. Because they were afraid we would talk. I wasn't allowed to play with non-Jewish children, that was a given. But I didn't have any Jewish children to play with either. So this little girl and I had a ball for those eight months. We enjoyed each other tremendously.

My grandmother -- they used to leave us with the grandmother and went to do what they had to do. I don't know what they were doing, papers, shopping. And she was with me. So I kind of got close to that grandmother during that harsh time. The people we were living with were her brother and sisters. They had retired from another town and moved into Cologne. You know, I've never spoken about this. This came from a little town where he was so well-respected and liked that they made him King of the Carnival, the annual carnival. And that town became virulently anti-Semitic so they had to get out. And he being a very Orthodox man, he was worried about our losing our identity. So he went out and bought [Indiscernible]. And the man, two men, carried that out on the last boat and it got to Kenya.
>> Bill Benson: And you had it with you in Kenya. Tell us where it is now.
>> Jill Pauly: Now it's at the synagogue in Silver Spring, Maryland. My sister and I inherited it. We brought it to the states. It went dormant. You couldn't use it because the letters were rubbing out. We had it restored. And then we donated it to the synagogue. So it's still living.
>> Bill Benson: So you -- on that date, June 9, 1939, the family left Germany. You went by train, ended up in Genoa, Italy. And from there you boarded a ship. Tell us about the trip.
>> Jill Pauly: Oh.
>> [Laughter]
>> Jill Pauly: You know, it started on the train. Before the train my mother decided that I was no longer a child, so she sat me down and she told me that what we were doing was life-threatening and very dangerous and that I had to learn how to behave once we got on the train.

Getting on the train was not easy either because my grandmother had to be carried and they had no use for sick people that had to be carried. But we found a man, a relative of a

relative, who had just come out of Dachau. He was in Dachau for a month. I remember what he looked like. Oh, God. And he carried her into the car and into the train. And then they didn't see that she couldn't move or anything. They left her alone.

We were very good on the train. We were scared. I understood what it meant to be separated.

>> Bill Benson: Because, again, your father is still away.

>> Jill Pauly: Right. He was already gone. But I was afraid of being separated from my mother. So we sat in the compartment without speaking to each other. We just sat there.

Not long ago I called my sister and I said, "I have a memory. Did the Nazis come into our compartment and look at our passports?" She said, "Not once, twice. Your memory is right." And they walked out again.

Once we got -- about three, three and a half hours, my mother smiled. I had never, ever seen that.

>> Bill Benson: Once she was out of Germany, felt safe.

>> Jill Pauly: The smile I'll never forget. But we weren't quite there yet. So when we got to Italy, it was hot, steamy. We didn't have any money. Every Jew that left Germany was entitled to what we call today $10. And there were 12 of us. And we had to stay somewhere over the Sabbath.

My grandfather was very Orthodox. He didn't make it easy. And as Orthodox as he was and as educated he was in Judaism, there was one aspect of Judaism that he didn't realize -- didn't quite connect with. If your life is in danger, the rules of the Torah do not apply. You can do anything. You can eat anything and you can do anything to save your life. He wouldn't eat on the ship unless he had kosher food. And if he didn't get kosher food, he wasn't going on the ship. [Laughter] It was funny. Somebody called Berlin, one of the aunts, out of desperation called some organization in Berlin and they delivered kosher food for the family for the ship.

>> Bill Benson: And the real kicker here, of course, is it was a Nazi ship.

>> Jill Pauly: A Nazi ship.

>> [Laughter]

>> Bill Benson: Because you were only allowed to take a Nazi ship.

>> Jill Pauly: Right. But this is my grandfather. And he was walking around on the ship with his cane and white shirt. You would have thought he was Prince Edward. He was 79 years old. And we were forever grateful that he was so positive, you know. He could have made it harder.

Once I got on this miserable ship, my mother had such a fit. She got so angry. All the Jews were sent lower deck and were not allowed to go on an upper deck. And the rest -- the human beings were on the upper deck. She got furious.

She rebelled quite a bit there on that ship. We had to go in to eat in the dining room but we couldn't take Igon with us, the little boy. He had to be fed separately when the adults were out of the dining room. Every time he went in to eat he peed on the floor. The diapers in those days were not what they are today. And my aunt wanted to get on the floor and clean it up and my mother said, "Over my dead body. They are treating us like animals, you're not going to clean it up." She wouldn't let her.

>> Bill Benson: Tell us about -- basically sounded like a command performance to have you come and sing before the ship's captain.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. I realize now, after many years, what was wrong with me was I was sun deprived. I was not let out in the sunshine for six years. I was not let out, hardly ever. Only

when I was [Indiscernible] and not for a long time.

I started singing. When I was happy --

>> Bill Benson: On the ship.

>> Jill Pauly: When I was happy, I was singing. In Cologne I was not singing. That's not true. One of my uncles taught me Haggadah for Passover. All the music, I was singing the whole thing. And that was just after Passover. So I'm sitting there singing some of these songs to myself. And I was overheard. And the next thing you know, my mother was called in to the captain. She was shivering from fright. She didn't know what it was about. Because she knew we were being good because we understood. Would she give permission for me to sing for his crew? She couldn't say no. She was afraid.

So ok. Then she worried about my singing Hebrew songs. The Haggadah was in Hebrew. Beautiful music, by the way. My uncle, my great uncle, sang at the opera. So gorgeous. That's why I was singing it. She said yes, ok. But then she decided I needed not to sing the songs from the Haggadah. And they told me. I don't know how much of it I understood. But my grandmother, who taught me a million folk songs, because I was always singing, she said, "Sing the songs that you sing with me."

>> Bill Benson: German folk songs.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. And I must have done well because nothing came back to us. And they asked me to sing every night for two weeks for the whole trip. And I only remember one. I don't remember singing for them every night. But the lady who is still living, 99 1/2, when she was of full mind she said "You sang every night."

>> Bill Benson: So, Jill --

>> Jill Pauly: The Germans, Nazis, love music.

>> Bill Benson: They wanted to hear those folk songs.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: You make the trip. It's a long journey to East Africa. You make it to Kenya, arrive in Kenya. And your father and uncles, they've gotten there ahead of you. So they're there for you.

So now you're in Kenya, an entirely different world, an entirely different culture. One of the things I'd like you to talk about first, before we turn to that, is it's a British protectorate, as you said, the British run it. They declared you as enemy aliens.

>> Jill Pauly: Not right away because the war hadn't broken up.

>> Bill Benson: Ok.

>> Jill Pauly: When we first got there, my father had the freedom to go around and look for farms. And believe it or not, my father was afraid of wild animals. Here he was in Kenya.

>> [Laughter]

>> Jill Pauly: And he loved animals.

>> Bill Benson: A cattle man.

>> Jill Pauly: But he sure knew what they would do if they got ahold of him. He did understand that.

So some English people, I don't know who, took them around looking at farms. They bought a farm. We first went to live in a big house in Nairobi, everybody together in one house. My sister and I had to start school the day after we got there because my parents were totally hysterical about our not getting educated. I didn't think it was a problem.

>> [Laughter]

>> Jill Pauly: It's true. I really remember those feelings. What are they so hysterical about?

Anyway, the custom was that the black men, the young men who worked for the family, would walk us to school, carry our lunch boxes, and pick us up. And my mother had to adjust. She wanted us go to school, she had to adjust. So she had exactly 24 hours to adjust.

I remember the first day of school.

>> Bill Benson: This was an English school.

>> Jill Pauly: English. I didn't understand a thing. But I did cry because when I came home, I had been told, first weekend, that I had to learn how to sing "God Save the King" and I had to know the poem "The Daffodils" by Wadsworth. I came home and cried bitterly. My grandmother said, "Don't cry, child. We'll learn it. You'll know it." She didn't know a word of English.

>> [Laughter]

>> Jill Pauly: Something -- I don't know what happened on Monday, but I don't remember that. But what was important about that walking to the house, to school and back, they taught us Swahili.

>> Bill Benson: So you were learning English and Swahili.

>> Jill Pauly: At the same time. And we were both fluent within three months. There was some pressure on us for the English but the Swahili there was no pressure but we learned it easily. And I think one of the reasons was because we loved those people. We were very -- who the hell was nice to us, anyway? These people were good to us. And so we bonded very quickly.

Then something happened. I can't tell you the exact truth about this because I have a disconnect. I don't know if they bought the farm before the war broke out but we weren't living on the farm but I think they had put down the money and they had gone to settlement and we hadn't moved yet from the house when the war broke out. Because I remember a little black man coming to the house and picking up all the men to put them in a camp.

>> Bill Benson: Once the war began.

>> Jill Pauly: Once the war began, all German nationals in Kenya were put in a camp.

>> Bill Benson: Including German Jews who escaped.

>> Jill Pauly: Who were running away from the Nazis. Right. They didn't know that. I found that out in this museum 50 years later. The reason they picked up the Jews is because the Nazis were stealing Jewish identities and going into allied countries. So they had to be very, very careful.

>> Bill Benson: For spying purposes?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

So all the men in the family went to a camp. And they wanted to take my grandfather. So my grandmother said, “Fine, you can take him but you have to take me with him; I'm his caretaker.” “No, you can't go.” She says, “Well, then you can't take him.” And they didn't take him.

>> [Laughter]

>> Jill Pauly: So there we were in Nairobi. Oh, then -- somebody worked for them with the government, spoke to the people in Nairobi, and said that we had already purchased the farm and would they give permission for them to go? People who had where to go they let out. People they could supervise they would let out. So they let them all go back go to the farm. It only took a week. And we were all interned as enemy aliens. That means we could not leave the farm without permission. And all of life was in Nairobi. My sister and I had to go back and forth all the time but I don't think my father needed permission for us because they knew where we were.

>> Bill Benson: To go to school.
>> Jill Pauly: And when they needed permission, they had to have a black fellow with a bicycle to go very far away and bring back the permission slips. It took time. But for five years during the war, especially the men, were interned, couldn't leave without permission.
>> Bill Benson: And with most of the British -- many of them were off obviously fighting in the war. So folks like your father and your uncles were forced to manage other farms.
>> Jill Pauly: They had to do -- what do you call it? They had to be supportive during the war. So instead of managing their own farms, in addition they had to each take one other farm in the area.
>> Bill Benson: During that time, during those war years that you were in Kenya, do you know if your family members, parents and other family members, adults, did they have any contact with the family that were still in Germany? And did they have any tense of what was happening to Jews in Europe or to any degree?
>> Jill Pauly: No. We did have contact until, I would say, the last -- `40, `41. They had absolutely no idea at all but they knew it wasn't good. It was a terrible war. They figured they might have been bombed and killed. But they didn't know anything about the ghettos. They didn't know anything about --
>> Bill Benson: Death camps or anything like that?
>> Jill Pauly: No. No. They started learning in a very strange way. Before they started looking for their family members, there were men in Kenya, Jewish men, who had come to scout out the country and had left their families behind in Europe and were going to bring them over and got caught. The families were in Europe and they were in Kenya. They got information right away that their families didn't survive. And these men wanted to remarry. And there was an influx of young women who wanted to marry that came from Europe, to Kenya. Not many.
>> Bill Benson: Postwar.
>> Jill Pauly: Postwar. Not many. And they started realizing that there was something not quite right about these people. And they started talking. And they started telling their stories. It was terrible. It took them -- they never really adjusted to what happened to their family members.

I know when we left Nairobi, we had many friends who when -- who came to see us off. One of the men gave my father an album of photographs of people in the camps. They looked at it. My father started to cry. My mother started to cry. They closed it. So I wanted to see what was in the album. And they said, no, under no condition was I to look at it. But I wanted to see what was in the album. I got a hold of the album. And I opened up and looked at it. I was 13. And something built up in me, I don't know. I became a different Jew. I was so angry at these pictures. My mother noticed that there was something going on with me with these pictures. She took the album, threw it overboard. She couldn't take it. You couldn't identify anyone. It was awful.

In school I suffered quite a bit in Kenya.
>> Bill Benson: A lot of anti-Semitism?
>> Jill Pauly: A lot.
>> Bill Benson: By the British.
>> Jill Pauly: By the British. But particularly for me there was a girl who started harassing me when I was 6, 7 years old. So much so that when my sister picked me up after school, we'd meet after school to go to where we were living, I was crying, every day. She said, "What's going on?" She said, "I know what the problem is. It's your name, Gisela. We're going to have to change that. From this day on you're going to be Jill." And it worked.

It helped a lot, except for one girl. Unfortunately she was in my class throughout the school. I could not understand how this little girl could be so anti-Semitic where she learned anything about Jews. I was the only Jewish child in the school, in the lower school. And she called me "dirty Jew" or whatever Jew, and it started to make me very angry. And this went on all the way through until I would say what you call here eighth grade. And the last two years, seventh and eighth grade in Kenya you had to do double-duty sports. During the school day and three days a week after school. And I loved it. I bicycled back to school. I played hockey, field hockey. And she played field hockey.
>> [Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: I think we see what's coming. Don't we?
>> Jill Pauly: And she had an opportunity to hit me, to bang me on my shin. Oh, I could still feel the pain. Terribly painful. I let that hockey stick -- I wouldn't hit her with the hockey stick. Hit her with my hands. I beat the crap out of her.
>> [Laughter]
>> Jill Pauly: She just stood there. She was as white as snow. Her face -- she was horrified. I mean, she had said these things --
>> Bill Benson: For years.
>> Jill Pauly: Verbal abuse I could handle. Physical abuse, oh, gosh did I let her have it. And I also knew that we were going to America. So I had this little bit of a push behind me.
>> [Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: You knew you were about to leave.

Of course, they ended up then moving to the United States. Leaving in part because of turmoil in Kenya with the uprising that was taking place in 1947. You came to the United States, again, a whole new culture, whole new life.

We don't have time to talk about that. I think we have time for one or two questions and then we're going to close our program. Let's see if anybody has a question.

We have microphones. We ask if you have a question, please use the microphone. I'll repeat the question. Make it as brief as you can. I'll repeat it just to make sure that we all hear it and then Jill will respond to it. I think we have time for a couple.

And let me also mention that Jill will remain on stage after we finish, so, please, absolutely feel free to come on up on the stage afterwards, meet Jill, get your picture taken with her, ask her a question. I'm sure she will tell you a lot more.

All right. We have a question, one back here and one right here I think. Ok. Let me get you the mic, if you don't mind. It's coming to you now.

Thank you.
>> First of all, thank you very much. I've appreciated this. I would like to know -- you said that your family went back for several hundred years that you have been able to find. You have a rather large number of you got to go to Africa. How many of your family in Europe got -- was able -- other people of your family that you know of was able to get out?
>> Bill Benson: How many members of your family that weren't with you got out?
>> Jill Pauly: Oh, since it was such a huge family, I know of two of my father's cousins. One went to Chile, another one went to Majorca, I think, and then we found a second cousin. Oh, and my father did have one woman, one relative who came to the United States before Kristallnacht. And they communicated sparingly during the war. My father had enough information to find her after the war. And there was a great relationship, extraordinary relationship.

>> Bill Benson: And Jill, of course, that means that hundreds of extended relatives perished.
>> Jill Pauly: I can't tell.
>> Bill Benson: Hundreds.

We have a question right down here.

>> Thank you so much. I've appreciated what you told us all today. My question is, a few minutes ago you spoke of this little girl who became your best friend, your only friend you had and you played with her for a number of months or years. Did you ever keep in touch with her?
>> Bill Benson: The little girl that was your playmate, did you keep in touch with her, Jill?
>> Jill Pauly: I couldn't. Because her mother told my mother -- we left in June. In April the mother told my mother that she's taking the child to follow her husband who was somewhere along the border with Czechoslovakia. What I do know? I didn't understand all of that. And she left. Didn't survive.
>> Bill Benson: One more question. Remember, we'll have you come up on stage afterwards. One more question. Right there.

And we have a young person back there. You want to come up on stage and ask your question afterwards? Ok.

>> Thank you so much for your talk this morning. Have you ever been back to your hometown or to Cologne?
>> Jill Pauly: Yes.
>> Have you been able to find your place where you grew up and whatever?
>> Jill Pauly: Yes, yes I have. I come back all the time with the same reaction. I'm as cold as ice. In fact, I spoke there. I was invited to come back because they were all so curious how we managed to survive. And the last generation wouldn't tell them. So I told them. They were very nice. And I had a question from a young girl of about 16. She said, "Don't you ever get homesick?" "Wouldn't you like to come back and live here?" It was a very hard question but I was very direct. I told her I had no connection whatsoever. Our roots were cut and planted in the United States and that I was so grateful for that, that I could never consider leaving.
>> Bill Benson: I'm going to turn back to Jill in a couple of moments because it's our tradition at *First Person* that our First Person has the last word. And then when Jill closes the program again, please, absolutely come up if you would like to and ask her a question or talk to her and get your picture taken with her.

I want to thank all of you for being with us. I remind you we will have *First Person* programs each Wednesday and Thursday until the middle of August. I hope you can return another time or next year. We'll resume again in March 2018.

With that, Jill?

>> Jill Pauly: Yeah. With just a few days past Memorial Day this year, I've taken a long walk on Memorial Day and came back and decided to watch TV. I saw that there was a program on, on World War II. It was three hours. It was excellent. In the end they showed the pictures of the cemeteries of the American soldiers in this Europe. My husband and I had been to the ones outside Luxembourg in the 1990s. We took a trip and stopped in Luxembourg. And the effect those cemeteries had on me -- I was a very little girl on the farm in Kenya when my parents decided they had to open a second income because they had to pay for our education which couldn't come out of the farm. So they opened a bed and breakfast. They were terrific cooks and they were very social. For three, four years, soldiers used to come for R&R to our farm. They loved my parents. They loved the food. We had to have a quorum for saying prayers. They came with drivers. They were high-ranking, some of them. They had drivers. And the

drivers weren't Jewish but that didn't bother anybody. They just fit right in, into the program. They were wonderful men.

And then -- I think in 1943, one after one was sent to fight and not a single one came back. It was so devastating to me as a child. And when I saw these cemeteries with all of these crosses and Jewish stars, they came up again on this film and I thought, How deeply do we feel? Do people go back to these cemeteries? Do they visit their ancestors who fought in the war? It wasn't a one-sided war. You know, murdering the Jews was a separate war from World War II. Many, many, many other people, 60 million people were killed.

Are there any people in the audience that are descendants of World War II soldiers that didn't make it? One?

Yes. You see? We think about it on Memorial Day but it's such a big thing really. How many soldiers died? How many Americans died? Never mind the other people. 250,000?
>> Bill Benson: Hundreds of thousands.
>> Jill Pauly: And if you ever go to Europe and you get an opportunity, go to those cemeteries. They're extraordinary. They're kept beautifully.

With that I'm closing today.
>> Bill Benson: Thank you, Jill.
>> [Applause]