REALTIME FILE

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
FIRST PERSON: CONVERSATIONS WITH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
FIRST PERSON ALFRED "FREDDIE" TRAUM
JUNE 6, 2018

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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*. We are in our 19th year of the *First Person* program. Thank you for joining us. Our First Person today is Mr. Freddie Traum, whom you shall meet shortly.

This 2018 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 twice-weekly 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 serves as a volunteer here at this museum. Our program will continue through mid-August. The museum's website, at www.ushmm.org, provides information about each of our upcoming *First Person* guests.

Freddie will share with us his "First Person" account of his experience during the Holocaust and as a survivor for about 45 minutes. If time allows, we will have an opportunity for you to ask Freddie a few questions. If we do not get to your question today, please join us in our online conversation: *Never Stop Asking Why*. The conversation aims to inspire individuals and new generations to ask the important questions that Holocaust history raises,

and what this history means for societies today. To join the *Never Stop Asking Why* conversation, you can ask your question and tag the museum on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram using @holocaustmuseum and the hashtag #AskWhy. You can find the hashtag on the back of your program, as well.

A recording of this program will be made available on the museum's YouTube page. Please visit the *First Person* website, listed on the back of your program, for more details.

What you are about to hear from Freddie is one individual's account of the Holocaust. We have prepared a brief slide presentation to help with his introduction.

We begin with this photo of Alfred, or Freddie, Traum. Freddie was born in March 1929 in Vienna, Austria.

On this map of Europe the arrow points to Austria.

And on this map of Austria to the arrow points to Vienna.

Freddie had one sister. His mother and father owned a business. Pictured here are Freddie, who is on the bicycle, and his cousin Joseph in 1938.

On March 12, 1938, German troops invaded Austria. After Freddie's parents learned about the Kindertransport, a rescue effort which brought thousands of refugee Jewish children to Great Britain between 1938 and 1940, they decided to send their two children to England. In 1939, Freddie and his sister Ruth went to live with a family in London. This photo was taken on the afternoon of Freddie and Ruth's departure for London. Pictured from left to right are Ruth, Freddie's grandmother, his father, Freddie and his mother.

And here we see Freddie's passport that he used on his journey to England.

When England declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, the Traum children and thousands of others were sent to live in the English countryside. Freddie spent the next three years of his life there. Here we see 12-year old Freddie and his sister Ruth at an evacuation residence near Luton, England.

After the war, Freddie became a merchant seaman and eventually moved to Israel. He met his wife, Josiane, on an Israeli ship upon which they would be married. We close with this photo from Freddie and Josiane's wedding aboard the Israeli Passenger Liner SS Zion in 1958. In fact, June 24, 1958, 60 years ago, will be their anniversary here in just a couple of weeks.

After the birth of Freddie and Josy's first child he gave up his career as a merchant seaman and went to work for IBM in Israel. Their daughter Yael was also born in Israel. Upon the advice of Israeli medical experts, Freddie and Josy relocated to the United States in 1963 to obtain medical care for their son Michael, who is disabled. Freddie was able to transfer to IBM in New Jersey and they began their new life here. Their third child, son Jonathan, who is also disabled, was born here. Eventually, Freddie went to work for Boeing as an engineer in telecommunications and they moved to Silver Spring, Maryland, where Freddie and Josy live today.

Freddie is accompanied today by Josy, as well as their daughter Yael and granddaughter Sophie, who has just completed her first year at the University of Wisconsin. They're all seated right here in the front row.

Freddie is retired from Boeing. Josy retired 10 years ago as a clinical social worker for abused children with Child Protective Services in Montgomery County, Maryland. Josy and her mother, Fanny Aizenberg, are both Holocaust survivors. Fanny, who is 101, was last with us for First Person in 2017 at age 100. Josy will be our First Person guest on August 8.

For many years Freddie chaired the local Kindertransport Association which is made

up of fellow survivors of Nazi persecution. His volunteer work here at the Museum has included being a researcher with the International Tracing Service Archive, and serving as a tour guide for the museum's special exhibitions including the exhibition on Nazi Propaganda, State of Deception: the Power of Propaganda, and the 2008 exhibition about the 1936 Nazi Olympics.

Freddie has also spoken about his experience as a survivor on behalf of the Museum at various colleges and government agencies including such places as the Federal Housing Authority, Black River Technical College in Pocahontas, Arkansas, Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida, and the Stennis Space Center in Mississippi.

Freddie is a contributor to the museum's publication, "Echoes of Memory," which features writings by survivors who participate in the museum's writing class for survivors.

With that, I would like you to join me in welcoming our First Person, Freddie Traum.

>> [Applause]

>> Bill Benson: Freddie, thank you so much for joining us today and your willingness to be our First Person. We're glad to have you here.

>> Freddie Traum: Thank you.

>> Bill Benson: There's so much for you to share with us in this our short period of time. We'll just start right away if that's ok.

You told me, Freddie, that you had a happy childhood. Let's begin with you telling us about your childhood and what you know about your parents' life in the years from the Holocaust.

>> Freddie Traum: Yes, I did have a happy childhood. We lived somewhat of the outskirts of Vienna but still in the town. As strange as it may seem, behind the building was a cow shed, and they had a store selling milk. I used to always go there and help with the cows and with the horse that he had. This is in addition to the kids that I played with in the street. So altogether I thought I was -- had everything.

>> Bill Benson: Your father was a disabled veteran of the First World War.

>> Freddie Traum: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: What do you know about his service?

>> Freddie Traum: I really don't know much. I know that he was in Italy. And what actually happened to him, why he was disabled, I don't know. He never talked about it. He was always in good spirits. And I spent a great deal of time with him. He taught me a lot. I suppose, if anything, he taught me how to live with adversities. Because he never complained about anything.

>> Bill Benson: You told me that you actually spent more time with your father than with your mother. Why was that?

>> Freddie Traum: Well, the business they had required a certain amount of outside contact and so my mother did that. And my father carried on in-house. So I spent a lot more time with him.

>> Bill Benson: Your parents had a really interesting, to me, business. Tell us what their business was.

>> Freddie Traum: Yes. Before the days of credit cards and when you can pay off sort of time payments in stores, it didn't exist, you had to pay the full amount if you wanted an article. So the business that grew up that my father was involved with is we had catalogs. People would come --

>> Bill Benson: They would come to you to look at the catalog?

>> Freddie Traum: Yeah. I want to buy seeds or anything. We would buy it and then give it to them and they would pay off in time. The trouble was, with that, is once the Nazis took over, the people thought there's no reason that they have to pay. So there was all the merchandise that had been given out and nothing was coming back.
>> Bill Benson: They felt they didn't have to pay now. And speaking of once the Nazis came, as Hitler's influence grew, you told me that your friends began to join Nazi youth organizations.
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah, everybody seemed to be roped into this. At first I was a little jealous because they seemed to be having such a great time. But then gradually they distanced themselves from me and shunned me. And then afterwards they became abusive.

So it's just amazing how this propaganda and this hate can be manifested with kids, with everybody. I was kicked out of my school. I went to another school which was a school for Jews. That was much more pleasant. It was much further away from my home, but it was a better environment. And also, the teacher we had, he had been a professor at a university but lost his job because he was Jewish. So we had the benefit of a very highly trained person teaching us.
>> Bill Benson: Freddie, you shared with me one of those abusive incidents that you experienced as a boy. One I particularly remember, you had a school satchel. Tell us about that.
>> Freddie Traum: Well, this is when I was still in my old school. We used to cut through a little park to get there. The kids came by. They ripped off that satchel off my shoulder and threw it on to the grass and then just ran away laughing. So I went over to pick it up and there was a policeman right there, must have seen the whole thing. And it's funny. In Vienna, you couldn't tread on the grass in these parks. Very different to England where the lawns were meant to be enjoyed and feel under your feet but there you couldn't do it. So he took down my name and address and gave me a dressing down that Jewish kids have no respect for the beauty of the parks.

A few days later we received a letter telling my mother to come to school. The practice in Vienna was when an adult comes into the class, all the kids rise. So my mother came in and the kids stood up and the teacher yelled, "Sit down! You don't have to stand up for her." More abusive kind of talk about how we don't know how to respect the beauty of Vienna.

Anyway, after that --
>> Bill Benson: Students didn't have to stand because your mother was Jewish.
>> Freddie Traum: Yes, exactly.
>> Bill Benson: Freddie, one of the things that happened when you then went to the Jewish school, you became part of the Jewish Boys Choir.
>> Freddie Traum: I used to sing in the choir in my synagogue but that was torched on Kristallnacht. There was a choir formed actually in the Jewish neighborhood in Vienna. And I was accepted in that choir. So we used to have choir practice a couple of times a week. It was the Jewish answer to the Vienna Boys Choir which is actually quite famous. They planned that we were all going to have sailor suits and all of that kind of stuff. They were living in a dream world.
>> Bill Benson: Go ahead. I'm sorry.
>> Freddie Traum: And shortly afterwards, I actually went to England with my sister.
>> Bill Benson: Before we talk about going to England, you told me recently about a memory that only recently you recalled. You remembered drawing a picture of a Nazi in a brown shirt

and that really upset your parents.
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah. If that would have been seen by anybody, they could have been killed for it. So they threw it in the fire and told me never to do it again. I didn't understand that it was such a terrible thing to do. I think they realized the gravity of it.
>> Bill Benson: You mentioned a few moments ago, Freddie, Kristallnacht. That was November 9-10, 1938. The Nazis had already annexed Austria in 1938, even though the war itself didn't begin until 1939. On the night of Kristallnacht, terrible things happened to Jews throughout Germany and Austria. What do you remember of Kristallnacht?
>> Freddie Traum: Well, I remember my sister's friend, their parents had a store in the main street. It was a nice store. And it was smashed, looted, and the father was taken off and sent to Buchenwald.

I know that the street we lived in, there were no Jews, no situations happening there. But I could see in the streets where there was stores and where Jews owned them, the devastation there.
>> Bill Benson: And the hundreds of synagogues were burned.
>> Freddie Traum: Yes.
>> Bill Benson: And it wasn't long after Kristallnacht that your parents made this profound decision to send you and your sister on the kindertransport.
>> Freddie Traum: I think the important thing is to note that after Kristallnacht, the prominent people in England, Jews and non-Jews, and especially the Quakers, were very vocal, appealed to the government to do something.
>> Bill Benson: To the British government?
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah, and at least save the children. And the parliament debated it. And the Jewish refugees questioned. And on the same day they came up with a decision that they would accept children up to the age of 17 who come unaccompanied. So that was the beginning of the kindertransport.

And just a month later, the first transport came. And, of course, when war broke out the 3rd of September, 1939, that stopped. By that time about 10,000 children had come to England.
>> Bill Benson: Including you and your sister.
>> Freddie Traum: Yes.
>> Bill Benson: Trying to imagine your parents making that decision to we're going to put you on a train and send you to England. You mentioned to me that you thought one of the things that might have helped them make their decision was because a cousin had gone to Palestine earlier; that they had already seen one member of the family go. Is that right?
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah. There were a lot of people leaving, going elsewhere, especially to Palestine. But we knew to whom we were going.
>> Bill Benson: You did know that?
>> Freddie Traum: Because in England the former prime minister, Stanley Earl Baldwin, made an impassioned appeal over the radio asking people to open their doors and their hearts to take in children. And the Griggs, the people we went to, answered that call. So when we found out that we were going, we knew we were going to this family who also had two children, similar ages to us. My parents made it sort of an adventure. Mr. Griggs, he was a locomotive driver. All kids were interested in locomotives.
>> Bill Benson: You liked trains and so you were going to like being there.
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah, so made it into sort of an adventure and said that we'll be together

again soon afterwards. So it was not so difficult leaving with the expectations of it's a nice place to go and we'll be again together soon.
>> Bill Benson: It wouldn't last that long.
I want to ask you, Freddie, to tell us -- we had a photograph of you with your family taken in your backyard just before you left. Can you say a little bit about that photograph for us?
>> Freddie Traum: Well, my dad, he was an amateur photographer. So he took the photo. And that was the same day, the afternoon, that we left. I think it's a sad picture. No smiles. It was the last picture that we have.
>> Bill Benson: You shared with me that he wrote on the back of the photograph the farewell.
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah. In German he wrote [speaking German] which means farewell.
>> Bill Benson: So you went to the train station, I believe with your mother. Your father wasn't with you. You went to the train station. Tell us what you remember about leaving.
>> Freddie Traum: Well, we were standing by the open window and holding hands, not knowing what to say. Suddenly my school teacher was there. He knew I was leaving but he was there with his 5-year-old son under his arm. He asked if his son could sit with us and if I could look after him until we get to London where somebody will come and pick him up. So all of a sudden I had responsibility, and a job.
>> Bill Benson: He just handed you his child and said --
>> Freddie Traum: Look after him. The whistle blew. The train took off. My mom tried to run along for a little bit but very soon she was just a small figure at the end of the platform.
>> Bill Benson: Did your parents try to leave Austria?
>> Freddie Traum: I don't know if they did or not but it was pretty impossible. Because first of all, my dad was injured. He could only walk with the aid of two canes. He didn't have a kind of profession that was easy transferable. We had no money to speak of. He didn't know English or any other language. So their chances of going anywhere were very slim.
>> Bill Benson: You arrived with Ruth in June 1939. What happened once you got to London, when you arrived there?
>> Freddie Traum: Well, we met the Griggs family. They seemed very nice. And the following Monday morning I was enrolled in school there.
>> Bill Benson: In an English school?
>> Freddie Traum: I didn't know any English but there I was. But they were very kind. They took me immediately to a store room where they had the gas masks and gave me a gas mask and fitted it and all of that sort of thing. And to me that was a very important sign. Because in Vienna there were a lot of people walking around with gas masks, but Jews didn't get gas masks because it didn't matter. So this was kind of an important thing. That in this country, it did not matter.
>> Bill Benson: That you mattered enough to give you a gas mask.
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah.
>> Bill Benson: Once you left Vienna, did your parents know anything about what was happening to you? Were you able to be in touch with them?
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah. We would get a lot of letters. After the war, the letters stopped.
>> Bill Benson: And that was just a few months later.
>> Freddie Traum: And then we occasionally got a letter through a cousin of mine who was in Switzerland, and so they wrote to him and he forwarded it on to us. So we got a little thing. But then I think it was before 1942, we got a Red Cross card with 25 words and that was it. And

that was the last communication.
>> Bill Benson: And that was from the Red Cross?
>> Freddie Traum: I know from research here at the museum that they were deported in June, 2nd of June 1942 to Minsk. They were murdered there.
>> Bill Benson: Freddie, once in London, you and Ruth went to the home of the Griggs and he was a locomotive engineer but you weren't with them very long. Because of the war you were evacuated.
>> Freddie Traum: England had a very intense kind of program as soon as the war broke out. Thousands and thousands of kids from the London schools were evacuated to the country. They had it all figured out. We went to a little place. The woman's voluntary service had a list of the houses and just deposited kids as we went along. And we came to one house and the two of us kids.
>> Bill Benson: You were deposited at that house.
>> Freddie Traum: But the woman didn't really want us. Well, first of all, she was fairly young. She was I think in her 20s. But the person who took us there told us, well, these are not just evacuees from London. They are Jewish refugees from Austria. She said, I don't much care for Jews. And was really reluctant to accept us. But she said, well, the woman who took us there, she said, well, if you don't want them, you can have a family come from England, from London, or a couple of soldiers from an Army camp near there. So she looked at these options and decided that she'll accept us. But it was not a happy household.
>> Bill Benson: I know that was a very difficult time. Can you tell us a little bit about what that was like for you? Here you and your sister are sent out to a strange, new place in the countryside, she doesn't want you.
>> Freddie Traum: I was not allowed in the house except when it was time to go to bed or meal time. I had to be out the rest of the time.
>> Bill Benson: Rain or shine.
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah. There was a sheltering center near us. I used to shelter in the entrance there and ask people the times so I wouldn't be late. But the strange thing is I was never sick. I was there for three and a half years.
>> Bill Benson: Three and a half years.
>> Freddie Traum: I had a lot of friends in school. We were asked from the school to volunteer for potato picking at a farm that was close by. And I volunteered for that. I got very friendly with the farmer and the family. They used to invite me. In fact, they invited me for Christmas dinner. So, you know, with all of that, I had friends. It wasn't as if I was cowering down in some corner. I used to play with them. The only time it was bad was when the weather was bad and nobody was out.
>> Bill Benson: And you had to be outside. Where was your sister at that time?
>> Freddie Traum: She went to a different school, which was a high school where they teach home economics. So she was there. She went back to London after there for about a year and a half. Mrs. Griggs died. So Ruth, my sister, went back there to keep house. She was only 16, 17. And she had to do washing, cooking and everything. And somehow she managed that. So she went there.
>> Bill Benson: And you, at age 14, you returned to London at age 14 and started looking for a job. Why did you have to look for a job?
>> Freddie Traum: At that time the school leaving age was 14 unless you were enrolled in a private high school or some other place. So as soon as I turned 14, didn't wait until the end of

the school year. Your birthday and you were out. It was understood that obviously if you leave school, you have to start -- get a job and start working. I don't think there was any question about that.

And my guardian was talking to his brother, both strong union guys, where I should work, what kind of job. Well, it boiled down to they thought newspaper printing was a good profession. So the next morning I went down to Fleet Street in London, the news capital of the world kind of. All the newspapers had their offices there. And standing outside The Daily Telegraph and a boy came and stood right next to me. He was in a page boy kind of uniform and one of those pillbox hats on. And I could just read Telegraph on the side. So I said, "What's it like working for the Telegraph?"

>> Bill Benson: Which was a major English newspaper.

>> Freddie Traum: Yeah. He said, "Oh, it's a great company. Are you looking for a job?" I said yes. He said, "Well, the head office isn't here, it's about 10 minutes away." So I fell into step with him and went with him.

>> Bill Benson: Fred, I know that you have such a wonderful story about that job and I'm going to do a short version of it if it's ok because we have so many more things for you to talk about. You mistakenly thought he worked for the newspaper The Telegraph and, in fact, you ended up way out in the countryside at a little factory producing telegrams that went -- for races right? Something like that?

>> Freddie Traum: No. It turns out the company was the Exchange Telegraph. And I just focused on the word Telegraph. I didn't realize there was something else. And they printed financial statements of various corporations and had mailing on it. So the printing that was done were these statements. It was very good because I did get a job there. We were in the country, about 20, 30 miles out of London. And I learned the process of lithographic printing, these old American machines they had there. It was interesting. And it was like an extended family there. It was really a wonderful experience.

>> Bill Benson: You had a place to live.

>> Freddie Traum: A place to live. They had a cook, provided breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There was a badminton court. Used to play.

>> Bill Benson: You're 14 years old when you started that. You were just 16 when the war ended in 1945. Once the war was over, what did you and Ruth do?

>> Freddie Traum: Well, the company moved back to London. So I continued working there. My guardian retired.

>> Bill Benson: That was Mr. Griggs, he retired. Mrs. Griggs had died.

>> Freddie Traum: She had already died. As soon as he retired he became sick and died. Now there were his children and myself and my sister who had to find someplace. His children went with one of their relatives. We didn't have anywhere but through a contact of my sister's, they found a place for us to go to Manchester where we could start up again. And we did that. And for the first time since I was in England, I came in touch with the Jewish community.

>> Bill Benson: Because you had had no contact.

>> Freddie Traum: None, absolutely no contact.

>> Bill Benson: Certainly none in this little community in the country.

>> Freddie Traum: So it was very nice. There were youth movements, some Zionist youth movements that I joined. And I very soon had a full life. And I had a job with a company who had a kind of machinery that I was using with the Exchange Telegraph. So I could use my skills there.

>> Bill Benson: Going forward a couple of years later, at age 18 -- before I get there, you were able to obtain British citizenship. Tell us about that.
>> Freddie Traum: That was another nice gesture by Britain. They knew they had thousands of kids, no longer kids but young adults, who had no citizenship and had lost their families. So they offered us citizenship. All we had to do was go to an office and sign and that was it. Got a certificate of citizenship. I could get a passport and travel and do whatever I want. And no longer am an enemy alien. I was now a fully grown citizen.

In the case of a boy it meant when you're 18, you get called up for the military. Which is something I actually looked forward to because all my friends were older, had gone in and I wanted to do that, too. So true enough, when I turned 18, I got called for selective services. Go and have a medical tests and all of that which all came out fine. I was A1. Would be notified shortly where to report.

And this happened to be in May 1948, 15th of May, Israel was created and immediately attacked by surrounding countries. And I thought to myself, I ought to be going there, not in the British Army but the Israeli Army. So I made inquiries. And there were kind of clandestine route to get there and I eventually got there.
>> Bill Benson: I know we don't have time for it but that clandestine route, I remember you telling about this Israeli man who recruited you in London and he wrote something on the side of the newspaper and you had to hide it in a bag of sweets on how to get out. So you make it to Israel. Tell us about that. You went there to serve in the Israeli Army.
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah. I got there. Actually, when they decided what to do with me, they sent me to a place where they had workshops. They received batches of walkie-talkies and all of this kind of stuff. But much of it wasn't working. And I had some experience in radio repair, so I was in a workshop there, you know, testing them and making them work. So I don't have any heroic battles to talk about. I was just in that workshop. And that was it.

Now, at the end of 1949, when there was an armistice, I was discharged. They liked the idea to join a Kibbutz or something like that, which I didn't want to do. I was just standing outside the office there when a guy came walking down who I knew in England. I stopped to chat and asked him what he's doing. He said he's a radio operator and he works for the ZIM lines. He said he's having a wonderful time, he loves it and all of that. So I decided there and then that's going to be my future. But I had to go back to England because I had an obligation. So I went back --
>> Bill Benson: Because you were still to be drafted over there.
>> Freddie Traum: Yeah. So as soon as -- I actually came with a boat. As soon as I arrived there, they looked up and said, you know you're wanted by the Army? I said, yes, I know, that's why I'm here. So they said, well, as soon as you get home, report to the police and they'll take it from there. And I did that. And a couple of weeks later I was in a camp in Yorkshire. I spent two years in the Army. Most of the time in Germany. And I was eventually a tank commander. I felt very good. I enjoyed my Army service.
>> Bill Benson: In the British Army.
>> Freddie Traum: Yes.
>> Bill Benson: And then after you were discharged from the British Army, you then attended a merchant Navy college, became a radio officer at sea which led to meeting Josianne. Before we turn to our audience for some questions, tell us what happened once you became a radio officer.
>> Freddie Traum: Well, at first I didn't get any reply from the Israeli shipping line. I took this

job on British ships. Then somebody told me that on the ships that fly a flag of convenience, Liberian, they pay very well but the downside of it, you don't know who is there and all of that. Anyway, it was strange enough a few days later somebody called me on the radio, must have heard me working. They had my call sign. So I answered. And he said -- do you have [Indiscernible]. I said yes. Can you send it for me? Yes. I went -- I sent to him. He was very grateful. And then he told me that he's on the Panamanian ship heading for [Indiscernible], the same port we were on our way to also. And then he said, "I'm signing off when I get there. Are you interested in a job here?" I said, "I might be."

So it turned out when we got there, I saw the ship. I walked over there. And the steward saw me and said, 'The captain's expecting you." And I went up there, saw the captain. He was British. Second mate was English. There was a third mate. It wasn't anything like somebody warned me about. They seemed to be really nice crew. Then he said, "Well, what kind of salary are you thinking of? "So I tripled my salary.

>> [Laughter]

>> Freddie Traum: I said that to him. And he said, "Oh, I don't think that would be a problem."

So I signed off and then had a few days leave and then went and joined. I was on it for almost a year until we came back to Liverpool. And when we got back, I signed off and it was paid off. There was more money there than I had ever seen in my life.

So it was very good because I wanted to continue my studies to become a radio officer. And there was a new course of radar for radio officers. So I wanted to go in that, too. So I had time to take all of these courses. And then I wrote again to the Israeli company and this time they said come to London, somebody will be there to interview you. And I did that. And he hired me to go to Hamburg and join the SS Zion.

>> Bill Benson: And it was on one of those journeys on the SS Zion that you met Josianne and then later you married on the SS Zion. Right?

>> Freddie Traum: The funny part was I was supposed to be on there only one trip. A lot of the guys wanted to be on this new ship. They had seniority. But as we were going through the Bay of Biscay, it was foggy, bad sea, and the radio broke and they called me and said, "Can you do something?" As luck would have it, I managed to trace the problem and find it and repair it. And the captain was delighted. He was taking a brand new ship through a heavy traffic shipping lane blind and so this radar gave him sight. And he said to me, "You want to remain on this ship?" I said, "You bet I do".

>> [Laughter]

>> Freddie Traum: So I was like a piece of furniture on that ship. People came and went and I was untouchable.

>> [Laughter]

>> Freddie Traum: I was there for four years.

>> Bill Benson: In fact, you actually have written a book about your seafaring days as a merchant seaman.

Freddie, a couple of other questions. I know it's really difficult to talk about your parents. And you mentioned earlier that one of the things that you got from your father was how to deal with adversity. But you've already shared with me that you feel -- we've heard it in what you said. You have sort of a self-confidence like, well, yeah, I'll do that. Tell us about what else you think you got from your father.

>> Freddie Traum: Confidence, as you said, maybe good and maybe stupid because I used to tackle things that most people don't tackle, like building an in-ground pool because I bought a

pitch, and it was 16-by-32. People thought this is crazy. But I had a guy with a backhoe dig up, you know, make a hole for the pool and I finished it up. I actually had a very beautiful pool. It was very nice.

And then later on when we went to a house where we're living now, I wanted to build an addition so, again, I designed it, had drew up the plans and had it Ok'd and I had somebody build -- what do you call it? Build a shell. So from the outside it looked as if it was finished but from the inside, electrical, insulation, dry wall, floor, ceiling, I did all of that.

>> Bill Benson: And you had said your father, despite his disability and the things he had gone through, could do almost anything. And you have approached your whole life that way, it sounds like.

Freddie, if you don't mind, there's so many other things I'd like to ask you about but why don't we turn to our audience and ask if they have any questions they want to ask. We have a few minutes for that.

We have microphones in both aisles. I'd like to ask you to all stay with us through the next few minutes because Freddie will close our program and I want you to be here for that if at all possible. If you have a question, we do ask that you use the mic. Make your question as brief as you can. I'll repeat it as best I can just to make sure we get it right before Freddie answers it.

So if you have a question, and if nobody has one I'll continue on, but anybody with a question? We have two in the front row. Go to the mics, yeah.

Sir, if you want to go to this one.

>> First of all, thank you so much for doing this and for continuing to increase awareness all over the world. Thank you so much, Freddie.

What happened to your sister during all of this time?

>> Bill Benson: What happened to Ruth?

>> Freddie Traum: She married -- after we moved to Manchester, she met a nice guy and about a year later they married. They went to live in Israel. They have two boys. The youngest one actually was killed during the '73 war. And the other one is still living there and he's got two children, a very nice family. My brother-in-law died in '74 and my sister died in 2000. But otherwise, before, they had a very nice life there.

>> Thank you.

>> Bill Benson: Thank you.

Yes, sir?

>> Freddie, I wanted to thank you, again, for sharing your story with us. I walked in the whole museum and there seems to be certain milestones which led us to the Holocaust. Do you see certain milestones happening since then that could possibly bring us to another -- maybe not something as horrific as this but to a big, huge problem like this?

>> Bill Benson: The question is, Do you see milestones that could -- that are taking us in a direction of worrying about another Holocaust. I think what we do want to do is avoid getting into any political discussion here but do you have any thoughts about that?

>> Freddie Traum: Well, there was a honeymoon after the war, a few years where Israeli ships went anywhere and people were really welcoming us. Maybe they still do that but the fact is anti-semitism has risen, especially in places like Denmark, Sweden, quite a lot of places. The thing is, the hatred seems to persist but I think it's important for governments and the people in charge to make sure that this doesn't get out of hand. But it's unfortunate that it is not something that is finished in history.

>> Bill Benson: Thank you very much.

One last question from me. Even though Mr. and Mrs. Griggs died early, you did stay in contact with the Griggs family.

>> Freddie Traum: Oh, yes. They came to visit us here. We went for quite a few times to England and saw them there. So we were in contact up till the last minute. But they both have died. That's one of the problems of getting old.

>> [Laughter]

>> Bill Benson: I want to thank all you have for being here with us today. I remind you that we'll have a *First Person* program each Wednesday and Thursday until the middle of August. So we hope that you might have a chance to come back. Our programs are on the museum's YouTube -- on the website, on YouTube. So you can see our programs on there and we encourage you to do that if you can.

When Freddie finishes in just a moment, two things. One, our photographer, Joel, who is right here, will come up on the stage and take a photo of Freddie with you as the background. That's one of the reasons I wanted you to stay, if you will do that. And secondly, because we had such a short period for questions, Freddie will remain on the stage up here and we welcome you, genuinely mean this, we welcome you to come up here, meet him, shake his hand, get a photograph taken with him, or ask that question if you have one on your mind. So, please, take advantage of that if you can.

It's our tradition at *First Person* that our First Person has the last word. So on that note, I'll turn to Freddie to close our program.

>> Freddie Traum: Well, I have stated that one person can make a difference. And in the case with Mr. Griggs, when they took us in, it made a difference. I think people should always think it doesn't have to be someone else that can do something and they can make a difference. I value that. I think I'm alive because of it. I think that's something to remember.

>> [Applause]