

I based a lot of my knowledge on my parents' conversation. And things were getting so much more intense in the town of where we lived. And people would stop by and try to warn my parents and say, you know, you need to be prepared. And my parents, ah, they felt like, oh, we can stay, we'll wait. We'll wait. We may be OK. And they were prepared to send my sister and I to some friends who lived on a farm.

And one day, my sister had lost her gold star. And the Nazis had grabbed my sister and said, where's your star? My sister ran home and she didn't have a star. My father asked her where her star was and she didn't know so my mother had to sew a new star for her. The fear was just getting so intense, increasing constantly till my parents sent my sister and I to a farm for our safety to some friends.

Ever since that time until now, I have nightmares about that whole experience. For example, I was always afraid they would try to take my children away even after my children were grown. I would have these nightmares of them taking my children away and then I wake up and everything's fine and they're fine. And I do. I still have these nightmares and I realize that that's just something I have to live with for the rest of my life.

The Nazis knew who the Jewish were based on our names and where we lived. It's like the ghetto. I guess you might consider it the ghetto. And we had to wear the stars. They had our names, our addresses, they had everything. They checked every day.

The day I was bought out from the company and took the early retirement, I let my sister know that I was retired and my sister was so excited. And she said, you know what, now that you're retired, I can take you to Bratislava. And I said no. I didn't want to go because I didn't think I could face the pain. And my sister her begged me, please, please. And I thought you know, she had gone out of her way for me many times and now it's my turn to go out of my way for her.

So I agreed to meet my sister at the JFK airport. And we got on the airplane and we were sitting next to each other and I said you know what, the last time we sat on a plane together was when we came to the United States. And now, we're sitting beside each other to go back to Bratislava. And this is the first time and now I'm 56, 57.

I asked my sister, I said, you know, I don't understand. Why do you want me to go there? You went there a year earlier. And she said to me, you know what, nothing is the same without you. And so I understood. And when we got to Vienna, we flew overnight, we met my son there in Vienna and the next day, the three of us took the railroad to Bratislava. We went overnight by train and we got to the station.

It was scary to see that it had gotten so much smaller. And I thought, what happened to this station? It's smaller. And my sister said, no, this is the same. And I said no, I remember it was a big, beautiful station. And my sister said, no, no, no, you must have been dreaming that.

And I said you know what, I remember that this station has an eagle up on top. It wasn't a symbol of Nazism, it was just an eagle. And my sister said, no, you must be dreaming. So my son walked away from the station ahead of us and he turned around and he looked and he said, you know what, you're right. And I said, what? And we turn around and looked and that eagle was still there. My sister was in shock. And it's due to me and my memory being visual. I observed everything.

Well, let me back up a moment. I would always have this dream. From the time I arrived in Sweden until I went back, I always had this dream over and over again that there was this landmark in my town of a tower with a clock in it. And I would just dream of this tower. It was black and white. Sometimes I would even dream in color. And the name of the tower was Michael. I would see that tower and I'd think, oh, my home is a block away. And just as I'd turn around, the dream would go away.

And I had that dream over and over again until I got there and I said, what is so special about this tower that I just always have this recurring dream? And I saw where I was living and my heart was just broken. And I got to see that my grandmother lived around the corner and it just-- oh, I was so heartbroken. All I could do was cry and realize that I was facing the pain.

Before I left Bratislava, my sister told me, the reason I wanted you to come so that you and I could say farewell to our childhood because we were taken away and we never got to have our childhood all due to circumstances beyond our control. So I wanted us to come back here so that we could have peace. And you know, sure enough, when I got back in the United States, I had one more dream of that tower and this time when I turned around and looked, I saw my home, with the shades drawn but the edges were glowing. And ever since then, I've never dreamed of that tower again. And it shows that I'm at peace now. I've seen my home one more time.