

IMPORTANT

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AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

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Ref. no:	152

Interviewee Surname:	Young
Forename:	Jackie
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	18 December 1941
Interviewee POB:	Vienna, Austria

Date of Interview:	30 July 2015
Location of Interview:	London
Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
Total Duration (HH:MM):	1 hour 43 minutes



REFUGEE VOICES

Interview No. RV152
NAME: Jackie Young
DATE: 30th July 2015
LOCATION: London, UK
INTERVIEWER: Dr. Bea Lewkowicz

[Part One]

[0:00:00]

Today is the 30th of July, 2015. We are conducting an interview with Mr. Jackie Young, and my name is Bea Lewkowicz and we are in London, UK. [pause] Today is the 30th of July, 2015. We are conducting an interview with Mr. Jackie Young. My name is Bea Lewkowicz and we are in London.

Jackie, thank you very much for having agreed to be interviewed for the Refugee Voices project. Can you please tell me your name?

Jackie Young.

And your name at birth?

Jona Spiegel.

And when were you born?

18th of 12th, '41.

And where were your born?

In Vienna. In the Rothschild Hospital.

Thank you very much. Can you tell me a little bit please about your family? About your own and your family background.

My birth family? Yes.

Tell us your story.

Well, basically, I - all the things I've actually found out about myself, has been told to me by other people... who... told me that I was born in Vienna, Austria. And... at... nine months old - do you want me to tell about...I went, apparently the Gestapo found me in a... orphanage, ...and they put me in Theresienstadt. I stayed there for two years eight months, until they were liberated by the Russians. And... I was flown over to England with 700 other children, in Sterling bombers. And we arrived in Windermere in the Lake District, north of England. We stayed there for a while, and we were then transported down to a little place in Sussex called Bulldog's Bank, where we were the youngest. There were six of us... in this Bulldogs Bank. And we stayed there... for a year with these two people, Sophie and Gertrude Dann, who looked after us. And they had a hell of a problem bringing us all up because we were ...slightly potty ...and...we stayed there for a year. We were taught to speak English. We dropped basically most of our German and a bit of our Czech. And we went to another place after that. A place called Weir Courteney, where the older children were kept.

[0:02:50.1]

And I think there were about twenty-five other... children there. This house was a place offered to us by a person who owned a furniture shop in Holborn in the West End of London. His name was Sir Joshua [Benjamin] Drage, and he stayed there, and watched - watched us kids doing what kids do. Uh...let's see now. So, but the- this particular place really was held in my memories. I - and I used to ask my mother about a large house with terrace and trees, going down to a racetrack. And she just sort of ...fobbed me off. They were very reluctant to tell me about my past...and - this is my adoptive parents. And I stayed there for probably about eight or nine months before I was eventually fostered by these two people who looked after me till...in- First of all I stayed in- for a few months in a place called... Upper Clapton.

And then we went to a place in Hendon called Walm Court in Finchley Road. Which is where basically I grew up. I went to Cheder - I did everything most Jewish boys do. Grew up, I had my Bar Mitzvah in a synagogue in Dunstan Road. And...as far as I knew I was - I didn't know anything about my past at all. ...I had my Bar Mitzvah there and everything. And, like I say, and... one day a boy in school told me I was adopted. This is my, in Whitefield School, my secondary modern school. And he said, he told me that, and I went home and confronted my mother with this information. She told me...took... "Who told you this?" and what have you and I eventually said - I told them, that a little boy told me. Apparently, most of my friends knew that I was adopted except me. Obviously, my mother must have probably primed every child in the school and told them, "Don't say anything".

[0:05:07.9]

So I...Eventually they came clean. They- My parents had their friends and their relatives around, and told me, that I- yes, I was adopted and- But that's as far as they told me; they didn't say anything about ...Austria. And then, a few years later I went around to my Grandmother, my adopted- my father's mother. And...There was a sort of a, a bit of a...a - a to-do with my mother - adopted mother - and her, so, this is where her opportunity to... get back to my mother, so she told... [Jackie breaks into tears] ...her, so she told me. [pause]

Take your time...Do you want a glass of water, or...? Yes...

[pause]

She told me I was adopted ...Austrian. So I went to my mother and again, confront her with this news, and she said, "Who told you?" And I knew, that I shouldn't tell her so...so when my father came home, he - he was told by my mother, he stormed out and after a huge argument with her and...they, again they confronted me and they said, "Yes, you were from Vienna, Austria". But again - again they were extremely reluctant to tell me my past so it - it all stopped there as well.

[0:07:38.0]

And, basically everything carried on until we got married. The Board - the big Jewish people wanted to...the, what was it? Jewish wanted to prove I was Jewish so my mother apparently had papers in the ...safe deposit in Chancery Lane. And ...eventually after a hell of a lot of troubles she reluctantly gave them up. She didn't want to cause... he said that, "Without these papers, they're not going to get married in the synagogue". So...She eventually came ...up with them. He said, "OK, we're satisfied". So, and then...I... took the papers from my mother to see that I was- my background being in a camp and all that which was also was a major shock. And... the whole horror of my past came up...Basically then I sort of really... we didn't talk much about it really, too much, did we? We just. Lita had a baby, Nicole in a year after we got married, and... I sort of got on with my life. We were- I learning to being a taxi driver prior to- just prior to our marriage. And I passed that just at the same time as I got married and that's about the size of it really. And- But my whole life has now been wrapped up looking for somebody related or photos of somebody, but unfortunately as yet, nothing has come forward. I've been to Yad Vashem. I'm on Yad Vashem's site. I'm... on the Google site, my name, and... what have you and it's...it's... hard... to swallow.

Mnn. Thank you. ...Jackie, I know-...so what are your earliest memories?

Well basically, most of my memories came in my dreams. I dreamt first of all of a swing, a- There was a see-saw in Bulldog's Bank and the chains- the poles were very, very high. And I used to dream about that. And...I dreamt about my father, who- he wanted to impress the people when we went to Weir Courteney, so he hired- He wasn't a rich man, he...he was...comfortable enough to hire a Rolls Royce so he came down in a Rolls Royce. And I stood on the foot plate of it, and what have you. I remember seeing the horses coming past in Weir Courteney, which was the race track, Lingfield Race Track. ...I remember the- some of the kids were there but I don't never remember names or anything like that. But like I say, most of the things I ever dreamt- thought about, was in my dreams and I used to confront my parents who - my adoptive parents - who, sort of, said, "You're dreaming", you know? That's about it.

[0:11:04.0]

Mnn. And you have no recollection of your time in Theresien...?

No...

You were too young...

No, when we went in '81 to Terezin- was it '81? No, '82 in Terezin we went to Cause it was a year after - that's right - after we went to Israel. There was the first reunion of the Holocaust Reunion. I decided to go to Terezin and... there was nothing.

Is there a record of you? Did you find a record of...?

Well in...the...In the archives in- in Prague, next to the Alte Neue Synagogue, there's a museum and also archive records and they had my- after long process of looking. Cause it was still then under the Soviet control there. The- the woman was very scared to talk to us. And a nice Jewish woman - and she... she found my papers.

And did you find out how...who took care of you? How...how it...?

No, we actually found that out more from...when we this Sarah Moskowitz did our..., this "*Love Despite Hate*" book and she told me it was a Marta Wenger, who was the Head Nurse there at Terezin, in- in the baby ward. And they- they said they- we had no toys. We... had very little time to play with them. They just kept us alive.

[0:12:24.0]

Which is an amazing story as a nine-month-old... baby...

Absolutely.

...that you were...

I pinch myself.

That you survived at all.

Yeah...yeah.

But did you...?

I don't know...

Did you find out how - how you were deported there?

Uh, we were- like I say, the...the Gestapo found me in - in an orphanage in Vienna. And the...the street doesn't exist anymore. It's the Moab Gasse, it was. And I think it was in the second district and...They just...that's as far as I got the papers. I actually got it from the... tracing service in...What's it called, the Ar...?

[Mrs. Young speaks [inaudible]]

Arolsen - Bad Arolsen.

Yeah, Bad Ar- ...that's it. And they -they, they've got it down as I was... picked up by them. And - and they shipped me out to Terezin. And there was a few Spiegels in Theresienstadt at the time we've looked at the records, and... but we still haven't worked out if any of those were related to my family.

And you later found out what happened to your mother... your birth mother?

Yes...well, yes, that's right. I'm not sure when I found, that out exactly but it came weeks...or...we thought that she...well, we didn't know what happened to her, did we?

When we got married we went to Swiss Cottage to...

Oh...there was a- yeah, we went to Swiss Cottage- you're talking about the exhibition of Terezin? But I don't know exactly when we found out, but I did find out that ...my mother for whatever reason, she never came to Terezin herself, and she went to Maly Trostenec. And that was a killing camp. Funnily enough I went to Vienna a few years ago to a... seminar

there and there was only about- a few people. Russian people, who came out of Maly Trostenec cause there was handful that actually survived and when I mean 'handful', I mean handful. It was, you either went into... a gas van, or you were shot. So there was no chance of ...survival.

You don't know actually why you were separated from your Mother?

None whatsoever, no, I've - we've toyed with the idea that she may have given me to a friend of hers to look after and then it became too difficult and then ... they decided to put me in an orphanage, or she put me in an orphanage, but we really don't know, no.... no.

[0:15:00.0]

So it's- it's interesting because obviously a lot of your memories, as you said, is what people... told you...

Told me... Yes.

...and what you found out much later.

Yeah...yeah. Yeah, yes.

So when you, you said there were two stages; first you found out you were adopted and a bit later that your [start?] was in Austria.

Austrian, yeah.

What did it feel like? What...?

Well... it's - it's strange. You just...you just really, you're...you sort of feel your head's messed up. You know, one minute you're somebody, and then you're somebody else. It's...it's...it's- Again, it's a very tough thing to - to come to terms with. ...In part, probably I'll never ever get over it.

Yeah...Did you know when you grew up in Hendon, did you know other refugees, or, or was it- did you grow up in a very English, Jewish...sort of...?

Yeah, there were just, well, there were a couple of people, the Kafkas, in the same block of flats that we were. And they were from, I believe, from Germany. And they spoke with an accent. I also used to go swimming... in Swiss Cottage where there's a Sainsbury's now, there used to be a swimming pool. And nearby there was a ...a - a what's it called, like a...?

Mrs. Young: A patisserie...

Patisserie. That's right. And it was called Dorice. And it was loads of... Germans and Austrians. And... I don't like eating cakes... [Jackie weeps]

[0:17:04.7]

It's OK...

And I... used to go in there [weeping]...I used to see...

Take your time...

Well, I saw these people...[pause] ...and something clicked in. ...I couldn't put a finger on it but I felt [speaking through tears] comfortable with them. [pause] Anyway...so I used to go get some cakes sometimes...I liked to meet them.

But you were drawn toward- you felt drawn to...?

Yes. [pause while Jackie collects himself] As you can see it still hurts.

Yes. It seems that if your adoptive parents had been more open, it would have helped you?

I think so, yes. I think so. I don't know, I'd like to think so, but- Yes, I think...as well as having bombshell after bombshell, ...family-wise, yes, it was- it was very hard. Very hard.

But they probably thought that after ...that was the best...

They were trying to protect me.

Yes.

But ...I know...I think people realise now that... protection is not really protecting. You've really got to... tell the whole store and share the thing. ...Unfortunately they couldn't share things with me and I...Lita and I had a very hard struggle with them. I remember when I first went to Vienna myself, I... phoned my Mother up and told her I was going to Vienna... just to see it.

[0:20:03.5]

And my mother came out with the statement saying, "That's another nail in your Father's coffin." They were extremely, I mean- doting parents, I couldn't have wished to have better parents for looking after me. Making me go to Cheder, making me do all the normal Jewish upbringing of a guy like me. But ...the one thing they couldn't do- My father could never touch about my past. He- I couldn't talk to him. My mother was like...was higher than the Berlin Wall; she was...she just wouldn't- you couldn't get over it. And she would, "Why do you keep on bringing this up? Why do you ask questions?" "Why?", this and that. And...it actually pushed us, pushed me and her away, pushed me- well, because, you know, when you hear these things you- it's just a normal thing. You think to yourself, "You can't lose your family and...", I mean people- My mother's one statement was, "Can't you leave it alone?" And I used to say to her, "You know, you can lose a wallet, you can lose your keys, but..."

[Jackie wells up]

Tell us a little bit about the background of your adoptive parents...and why did they...why...?

Well, my mother couldn't have children for... She was...she'd had surgeries and things like that she told us, and she said she couldn't have them. I think they saw in the Jewish Chronicle one time that us kids were coming over and would they like to foster children. My

father...actually it was my father who decided on me and said, "I'm taking this curly-headed kid home". And... that's about it...

Did he come by himself or...?

No, they... as far as I know, they both...came- yeah, they both came down to Weir Courteney. And...they both decide...I think it was more my father's decision to have me than my mother's, so... But at no time...You know, my Mother would one time say, "I understand your problem", then she'd come back and she said, "I spoke to somebody in Golders Green ...and he says, 'I don't know why he keeps on...'" you know- with this thing. These other people had adopted children from my circumstances and they said, "They don't even ask questions!" So I said, "Well listen, they- all right, they- that's them and I'm me" you know? But she was- it was a very hard...subj[ect]. And they...and they- on that score they didn't make it easier. I mean as far as doting on me, you know, there was no problem. I had... more than enough.

[0:22:50.0]

I mean, it's interesting that there was no - at that point - no institutional ...at that point they didn't have counselling and other frameworks you know, of... Because the idea I guess, of Bulldog's Bank was really to make sure that the children who come have this possibility to... grow and bond together.

Well we were very bonded, apparently. They said that... we were exceptional. We...we- We- If one of us got something we all shared; we had this... thing where if one didn't get it, we all didn't get it.

Which is quite amazing.

Yes, we did things that... were quite extraordinary, they said. I have files in the Wiener Library which, classified, can't be opened till 2046 and they're about the Danns, the two people, Gertrude and Sophie, who looked after us. And they have a- like a, day-by-day, asking us questions. So they sort of analysed- it was under Anna Freud, who was Sigmund Freud's

daughter. And she over- was the overseer, and she wanted to- it was, what was the title of it called?

Lita Young: An Experiment...

“An Experiment of Group Upbringing”. And that was- if you Google that you’ll find...

Yes, I have...

Oh, you’ve done it?

Yes.

So we were part of...basically not, actually experiment- we were analysed to see how we behaved.

And why are they classified? Why is that still classified?

[0:24:23.3]

Well, it’s...it’s under the Danns, they particularly said to, I don’t know, for ...personally for protection of us, or I don’t know, or of themselves. But they said that, there’s a D-, before them there’s a D-notice that you can’t see them. I’ve got them, but...

Oh, you’ve got them?

Mnn. [pause] I went to the Wiener Library and there was a girl, Rosemary, and she said, “You can have ‘em”.

And was there anything in there which surprised you?

[Jackie weeps, speaks through tears] No, there’s nothing in there. No, there’s normal... kids’ stuff.

Mnn...

But...

Are you mentioned by name, I mean...?

...They disguised the names in it.

Aha...

Yeah.

But could you- you could recognise yourself?

Yeah...yeah. Yeah. Yes, there's...there's a lot of... information there, asking how we spoke. How we- I apparently used to ...translate from Czech a bit to German... cause they couldn't speak Czech.

Mnn. So what is amazing to me, is that you had this environment for a year, by trained people?

Yes.

And then that they- there was no... follow-up. You know, it...?

Well Alice Goldberg, the - the Head of Weir Courteney... she was also German, who... was a wonderful, interesting woman. But you're right. There was no...I don't know. I think the... safety nets for children like us weren't there. They weren't there.

Maybe not only for you, but in the whole of England...

Oh, no.

... at that time?

Yes. Yeah, there wasn't. And in fact most of the psychologists came out of Germany, really, didn't they? You know, really the- and Vienna...Sigmund [Freud]...

But that's what I mean. For - for me, what is a startling is that contrast of being - in a way, a year with...

Yes.

... people who were ...

Yes, they...

so careful and...

Oh, there...

...and in a way that...

Yeah, there should be a statue to these guys...

But you know, I guess, if you look at the Foundling Museum- I don't know whether you know it. Foundling Museum, you know?

No.

It's an English institution.

Yes.

And that also closed... in the 50s, you know?

Yes. Well, they think their job was done?

Well, but so I- I think it's part of a general ...approach towards adoption, and...

[0:27:14.0]

But they have so- moved so much more in adoption now, haven't they now? There's much more openness which is... it's a - it's a good thing, really. Cause you hear- I watch sometimes the programs- these long lost families and what have you and you know, you see that some of them- a lot of the parents now, you know of, share the journey... together...which is...

Yeah. But instead your parents didn't change until their old age, did they?

No they didn't change. It was permanent. My Father, as I said, he could never talk to me about it. No. He loved me, but, and I loved him but he couldn't - couldn't talk to me about it.

Mnn.

It was an area that he just couldn't go to. And...I know he didn't mean to harm me doing that, but by not sharing the problem, it's...you know it's a sort of- I always say I was in like a...I was in a jail. ...Because the whole family obviously knew: his family, my family, my mother's family. But you know, I was the only one; I was the elephant in the room! [half-laughs with the irony]

And who were the, who was the...can you tell us a little bit about the family they'd come from...both?

Well they were originally, I think they were Russian Polish... their grandparents who came here, they came quite early in the 20th century, and... but... most of them were in business. And... he had a normal- he was born here, and he had a normal East End upbringing, Jewish upbringing. And my mother also came from the East End- she also had. But...and...but my Father, whilst he wasn't rich, he was- he'd got money. He'd got money, you see. He was a bookmaker- a successful bookmaker, and... so I never got- I was never thought of as short of anything - had a... new car at seventeen...accounts in restaurants, so I didn't have to pay... you know.

And what was the expectation of what- what you should do or what was expected from you in terms of your own...

Nothing really, I was...

...professional...?

No, see...I- at fifteen I wanted to leave school: I wasn't academic for whatever reason. And I- a lot of the Jewish kids were going into hairdressing, ladies hairdressing. So I joined the bunch. And... was in it for three years. I still cut my wife's hair. Yeah. And...I enjoyed it, but unfortunately I got a skin complaint, dermatitis on it. And, as soon as...and I was almost sort of getting a good career in it, I had to pack it in. And... that really put me back for a while. I couldn't do anything much for a while until my hands got better. I did a few other jobs. Worked with my Father; he had a- an office, doing betting. But I wasn't very good at that. So eventually, a...a friend of mine downstairs who was my friend, basically my first friend here, who I'm still in touch with. We go to schools now to talk about the Holocaust. And...he...

[0:30:43.8]

What's his name, sorry?

Paul Herman...and where was I? I've forgotten now where I was.

How to- how you got into taxi driving.

Oh, that's right. He...his, a lot of his relatives were taxi drivers, and had garages and what-have-you, so...and I was at a loss at this certain time and I said- and we decided to go on The Knowledge of London. And that was just the beginning of being a taxi driver in London. Within thirteen months I- we were both out and driving a cab! And I did it for forty-six years! Even got a Commendation from... the Public Carriage Office.

When did you qualify then as a London taxi driver?

In '63...'64...was it? Yeah.

And you said your friend- you talked about the Holocaust. What's his background?

His- he was born here, well, he was born in Oxford. And...like I say, he moved into the block of flats we were. It was a snowy day, I was looking out the window and he was there, and I said to my Mother, "Can I go down and play with him?" Went to school together, and strange thing I forgot to tell you he was born at exactly the same day as me, December 18th, 1941, so we sort of hit it off that way. And we were friends at school, and went to Cheder, got Bar Mitzvah on the same day at the same synagogue, and... stayed together for quite some time until we got- I got married to Lita and... we sort of drifted apart. And only a few years ago, we met in Brent Cross. He said, we were talking, and he said, "Well, I knew all the time you were adopted!" And I said, "What, even in school?" He said, "Yes!" And then I said, "Well, I bet you don't know the full story". He didn't...but he had, whilst being a cab driver he independently trained to be a psychologist... psychiatrist- doing all that thing. And when he heard that he said, "You've got to put yourself out- you've got to go to schools and tell them about your life". So... first of all I was a bit... scared to, so chased it, said, "No". And then I said, "All right, I'll have to have a go at it". And he's helped me do it and from time to time we go to... different schools. Rosh Pinner...there's one in the Emanuel School up in Stanmore.

[0:33:14.7]

Mnn...

And we go to different- Yavner, the college.

And talk...

And we do the talk, yeah. And he more or less holds my hand while we're was doing it.

Because it's so upsetting for you to talk.

It can get to you - me...

Yeah.

Yeah...Sort of walking through your history.

Yeah.

It's hard sometimes.

But what's your message? What do you feel you want to tell the children or what's...?

Well I like to -first of all I tell them the situation, how it happened and everything, and then- But I always leave them saying, "I want you to not- I'm telling you not to hate. I'm telling you to- this is information" I say, "you should treat people as you'd like to be treated yourself".

Yeah...The other question I wanted to ask you was in terms of your friends, that you had some support, in that way, but you said you...?

Not that they didn't. They only knew I was adopted which they couldn't tell me. And...We just- we used to go out...to clubs...whatever, just do the normal Jewish- well, boyish thing, teenage...going to different clubs. And this is how I met Lita...I...

Mn-hnn. Tell us.

I went to a- a few times with this fellow Derek, turned out to be Lita's brother. And...I went to this club also, and I saw this gorgeous girl. And...and I said, "Gosh," you know, "that's definitely..." but I thought, and I says, "No way I'm going to get a hold of there- of this girl!"
[Jackie laughs]

[0:34:49.4]

And, how did you do it? [Bea laughs]

So this friend Derek, we were going out a few times. I think I picked him up probably from- from the flat. Anyway, one time he said, "Well, why don't you come up to the flat?" ...You know, so- And...who opened the door? [breaks down] ...Lita.

And how old were you when you met?

[0:35:12.7]

Eighteen. ...And I thought, "Well, I got my foot in the door now!" [cries] ...and...at twenty-one... we got married.

And really then once you got married you found you had all this- more information...because of the...?

What, about my past?

Yeah.

...Yes, because at that time having to prove I was Jewish to get married and so on, they had to- my mother had to furnish me this information that she received... which proved I was Jewish.

Mnn... But do you feel it has come back then later in life to find out more? Or was it...?

Well...we've...

Or was it constantly from that moment that you wanted to...?

Constantly. Yeah, I- We went in '81 to the first Holocaust Reunion in Israel. I was hoping to find something there. Unfortunately, I didn't. I went to the- there's a kibbutz called the Givat Heim which is the... Survivors of Theresienstadt went there and built it. And they've got all the records there. Also of ...the survivors. I have a book here of all the survivors and people went through to Terezin; a thick book I got just recently. And...I... went to Prague. After that, I went to...I've been to, where else have I been?

Lita Young: Trostenec...

Maly Trostenec.

Tell us a little bit about that trip.

Obviously very sad to know the fact that... unlike some of the other camps, [where] there were some survivors, this place... most people have never heard of it. The figures bandied around are that anything from between 100 to 200 thousand people got killed there. And the thing was that it was controlled by the *Einsatzgruppen* who were... dedicated people to do one thing is to killing Jewish people. In fact, there's a woman we're in touch with in Vienna, Waltraud Barton, who is trying to get a memorial put into Maly Trostenec to tell about the Viennese Jewish people that went there.

[0:37:52.4]

And did you put a name- I thought that you can also put the name on a tree?

I put the- no, we...on the tree because there are no- there are memorials there, but nothing to tell about the - the Viennese. And... I also put the *Stolperstein* [0:38:11.0]

Stolperstein?

That's it...

Yeah.

I knew I'd pronounced it correctly- in Vienna, just not in her address- the address unfortunately I found out it wasn't her address, it was where they held about two or three hundred people just prior to being shipped out to Maly Trostenec.

What was the address?

In 12 Schreygasse, which is in Leopoldstadt in the Second District.

And where did your Mother - did you find out where she lived?

Well, we've got a few addresses. We've got one in the upper Donau Straße and there's a few addresses but we're not sure if...how genuine these addresses- I don't know. We have these just about three or four addresses where she's... maybe she was moving around in Vienna at the time. People have suggested in the past that he may have been not Jewish and he was protecting my mother- my father was protecting her.

What about your birth father?

Unfortunately, there is no trace of him. My Father- Mother didn't put my Father's name on the birth certificate. We still don't know. That is why the suggestion he wasn't Jewish, but as I said, that...I had a DNA test and that was - came back as that possibly that my paternal side, which was my Father's side, was that he was Ashkenazi blood, so... And I didn't tell the DNA people that information, that I was a Holocaust survivor, or Jewish. So they...

[0:39:37.0]

And they came back with...?

That's what they came back with.

But what, what do you [suspect? inaudible] because your Mother was- your birth Mother was quite young?

Well, thirty-two...so wasn't...she was thirty-two when she had me.

Oh...

So - and I always thought maybe there's a possibility that somebody else would have been- she may have had- I may have had more siblings. But... unfortunately records are very, very...I

don't know if you're familiar, Vienna was very badly bombed, and I think a lot of the records got destroyed.

And did you find out about her own parents?

Well my...Yes, I found out that my Grandmother which had no stone in the Friedhof in Vienna- the Central Friedhof Cemetery there. And so I had a stone put up for her. Her name was Emilie Schwartz, and she was- and she was married to my Grandfather, Leopold Spiegel. And I have an Uncle Rudolf... and an Auntie Hilda. And that's on my Mother's side. Other than that we have no...I know that my great grandparents were Tandlers weren't they? Yeah. Tandlers.

You found out quite a bit.

Yes, on that side. Yes. But... you know when you've only got one side of the thing, plus the fact that I have records that show that lots of Spiegels went to Terezin, and there's lots of...quite a few in- in Vienna. So there's a possibility there were some other relatives there.

What are you hoping to find? You said you are searching [inaudible] what...?

Well, I think- I think it's a no-go- it's a non-starter. I think we've- we've looked under every rock, and...

What were you hoping for?

Obviously photos, or some distant relative, a cousin, second cousin, anybody! But so far, not yet. Nothing's come. Not a thing.

Mnn...

But I, I would say I'm the luckiest guy going. I... married the girl I wanted...[cries] ...Two daughters.

Tell us a little bit about your children, and whether you spoke about this past or...your history, with your children.

Well... they know all my past, and... they've shared it a lot. And... I took my family, Nicole and my grandchildren to Vienna... one time. And Elisa, my younger daughter, she's been to Vienna. And they know all about my past and...like I say, I'm probably one of the luckiest guys going.

[0:42:52.0]

And are they interested in your history?

Oh, very interested, but I- I have never tried to, you know, too much to...they've got their own lives to lead. And- and I thought if they want to take it up, it'll be on their- for them to do it. Not for me to push them into it. And there- I'm going to a conference in a few months' time to Houston. There's gonna be a - what's it called? Every so often they have a - a gathering of the Holocaust survivors...

The Child Survivors?

Yeah. And I went to Berlin with Lita last year and I'm going to- Lita can't go on this one, because she just can't take the journey. So I'm going to ...Houston. I know a friend in Chicago who also was in Theresienstadt, a little bit older than me. I don't remember him, but he doesn't remember me, but we were kids together there, so we have a... sort of a get-together. So he's- we're in touch a lot of the time, and we're meeting each other there in Houston.

Is it important for you to go to these...?

I- I would say it's a sort of, you know, it's a bucket list. I always say, if I don't go, I'll be sorry I didn't go. So... You never know. That stone just might lift up one day.

Mn-hnn. Maybe tell us a little bit about ...why did you get involved with the AJR, or what was...[inaudible]?

I wasn't so much involved- occasionally they sent me... things. A long time ago- They have their place in Bishop's Avenue there's a sort of a get together. There's a Hazel Beiny...I don't know if you know her.

Yeah.

And she... and I went one time. There was something about adoption, and I wanted to hear what these people said about adoption, so I could you know, give them my tuppence worth, as they say. But I get the report, I get the news to let me know what's happening you know? But I don't- I try to keep as much as- as little as possible whilst still got my finger in it. It's a balancing act, cause you have to appreciate that I don't want to ruin. You know, you could delve, my kind of...my survivors, some of them have really gone into it... with a- a zest. I call them 'Holocaust Incorporated' you know, and I just can't live my life that way, even though it is a major part of ...of my life...

Yeah.

... or has been.

[0:45:39.8]

Yeah. You said you - you went to the Holocaust Survivors' Centre...

Yeah, I did.

And how was that?

Well, like I say, I felt very...we didn't feel comfortable; Lita and I went the first time, and you just, you know, you just can't identify. They look at it, A: Some would even say, "Oh, you're lucky you don't remember". I said, "Yes, your- you can probably from your point of view, you can say that, but you can't say that from my point of view 'cause, you know what you lost, and I don't know what I lost." Or, you know, it's just... You can't lose that and just say,

“You’re lucky”. But some people do seem to and when you hear that type of statement, you just don’t feel comfortable feeling that they don’t appreciate...my loss.

Yeah. So you didn’t feel comfortable?

No, not really. It wasn’t doing too much for me and...I would say, we’re like the Cinderella of the Holocaust, we youngsters. We sort of- You couldn’t put us into second generation and sort of ...Kindertransport, and...you know. A whole hotch- of things but not really up with the people who - who had agonising memories, which cannot be calculated.

And do you feel a certain affinity with the Kindertransport team, or... [inaudible 0:46:40.0]?

[0:46:59.1]

No, no, no, no. We’re a- we’re out- I feel we’re, I put- I won’t talk for them. I personally feel I’m-we’re out on our own; I’m out on my own, type of thing. Yes. No...I keep in touch occasionally with Joanna. There’s also another girl called Senka Herzel who I speak to; she phones up occasionally once in a blue moon. ...But you see the thing is that... believe it or not, they knew me more than I knew them. ...In fact, she’s younger than me, Joanna, and she could remember things I got up to in Bulldog’s Bank, that I couldn’t remember.

Was she one of the- she was at Bulldog’s Bank?

Yes, she was at Bulldog’s Bank. And she’s younger than me, and yet she can remember a few things that I did, that I couldn’t remember. And...You know some peoples’ memories are just better than others.

But the other interesting thing is that the...the, the children didn’t stay in touch.

We, no, well there was an instruction that we didn’t keep in touch. It’s actually the book that Sarah Moskovitz wrote, “*Love Despite Hate*” actually brought us together. She got us together. We went to a house in ...Hampstead - Gordon’s house - and she brought Joanna in the room and a few of the others. And that’s the first time I actually ever...You know, I knew there were children out there but I didn’t know - know...

What was that like, that meeting?

Well it was... interesting. We're in the same boat, but, you see, it's like everything. You can't - it's like a record- you can't put the needle back in the spot. Same spot as it was. So, yes, we all came from the same boat, type of thing, metaphorically speaking. But we...we, we...our whole lives had been changed. Her parents were at odds- at odds also with her past, and so she'd had a very difficult time as well. You probably...I won't say any more about her because, you know, it's up to her to say.

Yes. Yes...

But yes, it's...I see, the thing is I think, the information and the guidance from the authorities for adoption are far more sophisticated than they ever were. And Alice Goldberg did allegedly to my parents, "I can help you with his- with your problem", being me. But my parents said, "No, no, we want to do it by ourselves". So they really...

Tell us about Alice Goldberg. A little bit...

Well, that's about her...The, you know, she was this Germany nurse who came- she did Kindertrans- Kinder children from- when she was in Germany. So when she came here, she was already well educated to knowing how to do things. Obviously not with us, until we came over.

Right?

And had my parents listened to her, and...you know, taken on a lot of the information and help that she could have given, I think my life and their lives would have been a lot different.

[0:50:11.8]

We need to take a short break.

Yes, we were talking about Alice.

Yes. Alice was a- the matron in Weir Courteney. And as a kid she apparently lived in West End Lane which is about two miles away from me. And I used to see this woman, not knowing who she was, but I recognised her.

You did?

Yes. And I- But I didn't know from where. She used to smile and... it...well, and then, the Danns, when we went and visited Gertrude with Lita, my wife, quite some time ago they said, "Do you remember the Matron at Weir Court?" And I said, "No". Not knowing that I did know her, but cause I didn't know her name, and I had just this smiling lady. And ...so there was this program on television; it was called "*This is Your Life*". And I was just about to go out to work, and... I didn't like the program too much. And- and... all of a sudden this program came on, "*This is Your Life*" and I said to Lita, "I know this woman". [cries] Sure enough it was Alice Goldberg! And... the whole program showed all the other older survivors coming on to it. So I went to the studios afterwards and I managed to get into the studios and met them all. Well, going back also, with Alice... she used to come to the flat, to see how I was getting on. And I did find a report that Alice was very close to actually taking me back, simply because she just didn't feel that my parents were coping with me. A: I was a very, very naughty child. And... she could see that... that they weren't doing a- a very good job on me.

[0:52:40.0]

This was still when they were still in the fostering period?

Yeah.

So there was about three or four years...?

Yes. And so they- There were- there were reports from her that I have read, that she was very close to saying that this is not- not going to work out. But, for whatever reason she said that, I think she said that because of me and my attachment to them, she decided ...in her judgment at that time that I would stay with them.

[inaudible- Jackie speaks to Simon and v/versa]

And then later...

And my [inaudible 0:53:11.2]

... how did you get in touch with the Danns? You said you visited them.

Well, they the Danns... apparently found out I was a hairdresser. But by that time I wasn't a hairdresser. But they apparently visited practically every hair dressing salon in London to look for me; couldn't find. So... they desperately wanted to find out how I was getting on, so they apparently somehow got my mother- parents' address, and wrote a letter, just saying they would like to see. Anyway, and there's a few letters they wrote, and my Mother replied ...to them saying, "Do please," Excuse my stammering. "Please - please do not write". We are...At that time my Mother and Father were thinking of going to South Africa. Somebody, a- a friend of my father's was going to become a ...partner in a bookmaking business there. He said, fate came against them; he died suddenly, so that we didn't go to South Africa. Anyway the bottom line was that one day my Mother turns up here with some letters...say-blaming me for these letters and saying you know, that, "What have you done to me? Look, I've got these letters from these people." She was terrified that these people, old people, would come to take me away. [Jackie laughs] This is- this is now going- We were married and everything. It was just- it was hilarious, it was, in as much as that...And I said, "What? They only want to see me! They don't want to take me away." But they were so insecure...

Yeah.

[0:54:57.6]

...There-...and anyway virtually threw the letters at me. And they were horrible, horrible letters that my Mother sent back to them, and what have you. And they just wanted to meet me. Luckily, we did actually meet them. After that situation I got- we went down to- and we got in touch with them, and they invited us in, and then we had a really interesting time. She offered photos of me. And there was a get together with another woman called Judith, who

was one of the nurses, that were brought- well, a ‘nurse’- one of the people brought in to looking after us at Bulldog’s Bank. And...She also talks about me... how I spoke to her one day and asked her and I said, “Where do I come from? Who- who’s my Mother?” and, “Where do I come from?” And...And so she said to me, “Well, Jackie, I lost my Mother and you’ve lost your Mother”. And... apparently after talking to her on this type of subject, she said that I was very happy about knowing that...what she told me. [to Lita?] Anything else was there?

How was then, because they couldn’t find [you possibly when] you changed your name? Tell us when [inaudible 0:56:14] your name?

Yeah, well, I’m not- I’m not- this was my... teens. I’m not sure exactly how old. I think I was probably about seventeen, when...seventeen or fifteen. Fifteen to seventeen I would have said, and, yeah I think it was about that age. And my Mother- my Father and Mother said, “We’re going to change our names from Yanofsky,” which is what they started out of, “to Young”. So...so they made it sort of anglicised.

And when did you find out what your birth name was?

Only when the - my- was...

Lita Young: When we went to get married - the papers.

Oh, the papers. That’s right, the papers from when we got married...which my mother withheld, told me my mother’s name and... my family name.

[0:57:08.9]

So the ‘Jackie’, you grew up...as Jackie?

Yeah! I was...

You didn’t know you were Jona?

Absolutely. No, absolutely not. No.

But the Dann sisters, they knew you...?

Everybody knew me, straight away, as Jackie. I don't know who called me Jackie.

I see...

This was before my adoptive or foster parents came on the scene, yeah...

That's what I wanted to find out.

Yeah. Somehow...

So in England...

England decided to call me 'Jackie'. But only till I got the papers, just prior to getting married, that's when I found out it was Jona.

Mn-hnn. And did that bring some sort of closure, meeting with the Danns, or...?

Well, every window- every door, you know, opens some new passage. And basically, yes, it did, because A: it showed me photos that I'd never seen before. Me playing as a- as a young kid. I've got pictures here that- of that- those times.

We are going to film that after the interview.

Yeah. Yeah. So that was. And, obviously seeing me playing as just a normal kid, it, it's quite comforting thing to - to get that, you know. Even though we knew that we were real rascals in Bulldog's Bank. But I mean, I...I think they must have gone through a year of hell

practically, cause we rather spiteful. We'd- we'd...what was our favourite? - "Blöder Ochs"

0:58:38] we used to go. And Germany was...we used to...go round, anybody you see who it's, "Tot! Tot! Tot!". You know, things like that, so ...we knew.

Mnn.

...Obviously we were scared of dogs, and things like that.

Of dogs?

Terrified. And also...

Later as well, or, were you scared of dogs?

Not later on, but there...there. And... they said for some reason, feathers. Gertrude said, we were extremely scared of feathers. And she couldn't - couldn't understand why. But...I mean there was no cremation. There was- I think they were starting to do things, but they were- basically it wasn't a killing camp, like...

No. And do you- what- it's a difficult question, but what lasting impact do you think the experience had on you? And... are there any fears for example, you think are related...?

[0:59:48.3]

I don't think I have anything like that. But...I mean, humans lost their humanity there, didn't they? How you can go into an orphanage and get a hold of a nine-month old baby and put 'em on a train to Terezin is just...you think to yourself- and then the next day, or the next... hour, you go round to your family and say, "How you doing?" and what have you. You just...it's a- this terrible danger of humanity, that they can lose- just so much lose it. And you find today people do- do the same things. Srebrenica and Rwanda, and how people can just get hurt and lose it.

So in your own life, the - the impact is more the conflict with your parents and this issue, than the- your earlier- the camp experience, because...you can't remember it?

[The] camp experience is non-existent, no...no. And in fact when I went there I used to- I said, "I'm pinching myself. I can't remember a damn thing here". Not a damn- amazing! It's just two years, eight months and you just...not a thing. Not a damn thing.

Mnn.

It could be in my dreams that I've dreamt certain things, but I can't ...apparently, I think the baby ward was actually... knocked down. I think it was burnt because it was...you know, there was typhoid in Terezin, it was typhus in there. So it was, you know. What was it, about thirty-odd thousand people died there? Any- and when we went there, there was no mention of Jew- there was a plaque on the- where the... the camp's- you know it's a garrison town and there was a plaque there. But it had no mention of the Jewish people that died there... or the children - fifteen-thousand children that left there to Auschwitz - who were killed.

Mnn - mnn.

And I, I always say to myself, there was no rhyme or reason why us children... should survive there. There was no- I said, you know, I know it was used as a propaganda camp, but I know also that they could have shipped babies in any time they wanted to. So, there was just- I don't know what- I don't know if you know the elders of Theresienstadt? They were the ones that were given the- told to get a list every so often of thousand, two-thousand, three-thousand to be shipped to Auschwitz and... for whatever reason they didn't- they left us children alone! ...In the baby ward.

[1:02:28.7]

Yeah.

And like I say, and I say to myself, you know, how did I survive ...with very little nurturing at all? I mean you see today with the children so overindulged with their toys, and their- how they're- protection and what have you, and for the first formative three years of my life we were- it was a danger zone!

You were resilient...also.

I... I...you know, it's not meant to be. It's just one of those things, you know. People

sometimes used to say, “You’re...” you know, put me on...on a pedestal. I said, “Don’t do that”.

What- based on your own experiences, what sort of identity did you want to give to your own children?

What...? [inaudible 1:03:34]

In terms of...you know, Jewishness or in terms of...wellbeing?

...I wanted them to know they were Jewish, but I didn’t want to ram it down their sort of, you know, whatever. I- We used to- Occasionally I used to take them to synagogue but they didn’t feel comfortable, so I - I didn’t push them. They- they never went to Cheders, you know, to learn Hebrew or anything, like I did. And...strangely enough they both married out, which is no problem to me; I wanted my children to be happy, and... One, my eldest daughter’s- Nicole’s married to a Muslim, Raffia, who is a lovely boy. And... my Elisa’s first marriage was out to a...he was, I think he’s a- he was sort of Indian stock wasn’t he? Asian. But, that didn’t work out and now she’s married to a non-Jewish boy, Dorian, who’s- he’s an OK guy, and... they’re happy, I’m happy, and...Lita’s- we’re both happy. That’s, you know, it’s their lives. Not my life.

[1:04:51.7]

Yeah.

I certainly wouldn’t tell them what to do- no way.

And how would you describe yourself in your own identity?

... I’m just a- just an ordinary guy who...you know, just happened to get out of jail. And...happy to be here, happy to have a life. When you think of the 15,000 children that went to Theresienstadt, went to Auschwitz it’s... You know sometimes I have felt guilty for that situation. But, I know I’m not to blame, but... you still feel that sort of, there’s some... peculiar guilt feeling that, “Why me?” And, you know, people say, “You’re special”. And I

say, “Well, if I’m special, what about the 15,000 children?” You know? Which is a- it’s just a ridiculous statement to make.

[1:05:37.9]

But how- how different do you feel? And also how different did you feel when you grew up? You said you felt somehow...?

Well I- I always thought there was something, I never could put a finger on it. Before I knew all the whole thing, there was something there- but you never- I never knew. But... No, I just...I- nobody’s- in fact I never told a soul, when I was a cab driver, none of my friends knew; nobody knew about my past at all. Until, quite some time...I think it was when Beatrice Werm started doing it then I decided, cause she was doing filming in the- in the taxi cab places, and what have you. So- and so...they got to know. But I was very reluctant to tell about my past. I kept...I...

You [spared? 1:06:28.4] your colleagues.

I kept my...That was my little secret.

And what reactions- how did your...?

They were amazed! I think they were more amazed than I was, really. It’s ...it’s just a peculiar state to...to, to think that you can get out of a thing like that. I don’t think there’s anything else I want to tell about?

And your citizenship- I mean you are British?

I’m British. I have an Austrian passport. I claimed that back.

You did?

Yes. Yeah, I thought I’d get as much back as I can, and that’s part of my life. Also, like I said to you, I decided that ...they - the *Friedhof*- told me that, ... “your Grandmother’s buried”.

She didn't even know I was there, because she died in '39 in Vienna. So...I decided she- All I saw was a grass patch, so I decided to put a stone there for her, cause I felt that's important. And...You try to grab back certain things that...a normal person might not even think about doing, but I- I felt like doing.

[1:07:52.0]

Out of respect?

Yeah, out of respect for them, plus putting the two stones, the brass plates in the Schreyergasse in Vienna, for Leopold and my...I am intending to do that for my Aunt and Uncle as well. I haven't yet got round to doing that. I will do that.

And what about your Grandfather? You wanted to tell us.

What, Leopold?

Yes, you said he was also in Terezin.

He was- Yes, he was in Terezin, apparently, and then he was shipped to - I thought, at one time, to Auschwitz - but it turned out he was shipped to Maly Trostenec as well.

So you were there at the same time?

A similar time. I'm not exactly sure exactly how...and I don't know if he knew I was there or not, because as we know, there was quite a few thousand- there was something- at most there was about 80,000 people there - if not more. So...Yes, it was quite- it was quite interesting about that finding.

So it's quite important for you to have gone to Austria?

Oh, I've been a few times to Austria. And I probably intend to go back to Vienna... again. Possibly next year.

What is that like?

Well, you- I'm a stranger in my own town, as a birth town, really, aren't I? I'm - I'm actually a North London Jewish boy, aren't I? And, but, also there's a little toe, in Vienna.

And does the language sound familiar too, or...?

Not really, no. I've tried to...Lita and I, but she- she learnt it better than I did. But, you know, *vergessen Deutsch...*

Sounds quite good!

I can- I can say a few words, but it's only what I've learnt now, but ...usually I get- like I - you've heard it - I pronounce it pretty badly.

Mnn.

It's a shame that I lost it. But it was a constructive idea at that time they decided, because I went to a small school, primary school, when I was at Lingfield at that time. And apparently I do remember somebody calling me a Nazi. So, I think they only- I think they took me out after that. So obviously I... [becomes emotional]

Mnn. What do you think is the most long lasting effect or impact on your life, based on this?

[1:10:20.0]

It's- it's had a major effect. A major effect. You can't lose a fam- have a family killed, so much and not have a major effect in my life. I wish it didn't, and my mother used to constantly say, "Can't you just put it away? Forget it!" And- and she couldn't get her head around that one, could she? No. I used- I used to turn it around. I said, "Look, if you were my birth Mother, would you want me to forget about you?" I said...you know, she- no, she wasn't very rational with that idea. One day- moment she'd understand, and then the next day she'd come back to find somebody else to ...corroborate her ideas, not my ideas. And her- her brothers and, they...they sort of- I didn't communicate too well with them. Particularly

her eldest brother who was... seemed to think I had everything. But didn't realise I... [???had none and 1:11:30.0]]... I used to say, "I'm on the inside, and you're on the outside". I said, "Come on my side". They didn't understand that...they didn't understand that type of chat.

Mnn...mnn.

It's- it's been hard. But... I made...

Lita Young: You kept trying.

I kept trying. Oh...I have kept trying! As I say, like, I'm 73 years old. I'm still hanging in there.... [pause] got a pacemaker. Keep me ticking.

Mnn.

But Yeah, I'm ok. Try to keep... you know, we enjoy our- our life together. We go to see our children from time to time. They- Our- our daughter's coming back; she's just come back from France. And she's coming- our younger daughter, and she's coming to stay with us for a few days, Elisa.

[1:12:36.5]

And how many grandchildren have you got?

Three. One's- the eldest one is Omar. He's... nineteen. Yasmine is fourteen and Oscar is... six.

And is this something you discuss with the grandchildren? Are they interested in [inaudible 1:12:53.4]?

Not really. Not much.

Lita Young: Yasmine came with us.

They came to Vienna with us, but we don't- we haven't discussed it really. We don't discuss it. No. They know. They were- In fact they went to the *Friedhof* with me, didn't they? Yeah.

Mnn. And... have you ever, in order to deal with all this, been in counselling, or...? Sorry, that's a very private question.

No. I think probably- I think this is probably one of the things that... Could I have some water? I've run out of water. Yeah, I... Yeah, I've often said, not that it's going to sort me out, but, I think counselling- Lita's been my counsellor basically, really. That's...

She's been very supportive?

Yeah, very supportive, yeah. Absolutely. I c- I mean, if I wouldn't have had Lita's support I don't know where I'd be now. Very important. Very import- Yes, well, I'm sure today in a similar situations kids do get a hell of a lot of support but... I mean having Mum and Dad adoptive parents who were very difficult to...it just- just added to the problem.

It sounds like institutionally, there was no support for you?

Totally none- support. I was isolated... and that was it. Everybody else knew...everybody in my family- in my Father's and Mother's families' sphere and friends knew.

And they must have instructed them not to...tell you?

Absolutely, yes. Absolutely, yeah: It was a no-go area for them.

As you said, they were insecure. They were worried that you would run away.

They were worried that I would run away. Yes, they were very insecure in that side of it. I suppose there are situations where probably adoptees- children do sort of...whatever, depart from the scene. I don't think many do, but... that was definitely not on my sphere. They were my parents. They're still my parents. I loved them. But they didn't understand my problem.

[1:15:22.9]

No...Is there anything we haven't covered or anything else which is important?

[Jackie, commenting on recording equipment which is making a buzz] What happened there?

I think either it might explode, or, there was a fly. Careful because if it explodes....

It's getting hotter and hotter.

Cameraman: Yes.

I think maybe, we- it's calling: it's a wrap. [after recording pause] OK, we're in business.

Yeah, well we were talking about the effect, and how you've dealt with your past. And maybe, tell us a little bit more.

Well as I said, I went to Vienna to put these stones down for my Grandfather and for my Mother, Elsa. And...I thought I could move on, but time has shown me that I... still have that... stone in my shoe. [cries] And I think maybe I try and get this out, see what happens. Anyway, this is what I said when I was in Vienna, laying the stones down.

When was it?

This was about three years ago. Maybe four years ago...something like that:

"Cicero, a famous Roman philosopher said, 'Memory is the treasury and guardian of all things.' And I have no memories. And what I am doing today, is putting my past to rest. I

would like to thank everyone for being here with me today, and especially my wife, who has shared my problem with me. It has taken me all my life finally to arrive at this place and close the search for my past, the lost family I never knew. These two stones are the names of Elsa, my Mother, and Leopold, my Grandfather being placed at this last address in Vienna, show that these people existed, and to know the cruel facts of what happened to my family. It's extremely hard to bear. [cries] And for me the words, "Wien, die Stadt meiner Träume", is what could have been." I hope I pronounced that fairly right. And...I still think doing what I did

then... was a- a landmark for myself. And I - I think it was necessary. And like I say, I...
[pauses, speaks through tears] I'm going to put more stones down for uh, my Auntie Hilda
and my Uncle Rudolf. And that's about it. No more stones... No more family.

[1:18:46.3]

But you continue to search.

And I continue to search. Yes. Well, I'm going...I'm still searching.

*And you said, "Wien, Stadt meiner Träume". Do you sometimes imagine what your life could
have been, or would have been, or...?*

Well, yes, but then...I wouldn't have met my wife. He would have been different. I always say,
well, I always joke about silly things like that. I said, "Hitler was my matchmaker". [laughs]
And ...so he wasn't all bad. [cries]

*Tell us- your, your - your wife just said your name, Jona is still used by some people. Who
calls you Jona?*

My youngest daughter Elisa. Yeah, we- she- [weeps, speaking through tears] She always calls
me Papa Jona.

How did that come about?

She decided- My eldest daughter calls me Daddy, and she calls me Papa Jona, which is sweet.

And your grandchildren, what do they call you?

...Grandpa, really, yeah. I had to blow my nose again. Excuse me. Yeah... Yeah, they are the
treasures, aren't they? [blows nose] Yeah, the sad thing is that my adoptive parents didn't
meet my grandchildren and my birth parents didn't meet any of my family, especially... my
wife.

[1:20:55.0]

Jackie is there any message you have for anyone who is going to see this, based on your difficult experience?

Well, I'd like to think that even though they've seen a lot of pain in me, that... I still give that message out that, please don't hate... and try not to repeat the mistakes of the previous... people, cause killing people doesn't solve problems. That's about it.

And maybe something...based on your adoption experience?

Well like I say, they were wonderful parents. They gave me everything. But they didn't understand my problem. And that was the cause of a lot of anguish on my side. I know it caused them anguish on their side, because they couldn't cope with it. They were very insecure on that side of it. I wish they would have understood it more, and maybe this journey would have been a bit softer. But...

But you kept the relationship with them?

I always- always- I threw her out a few times, but I...[speaking through tears] I always asked her back.

So that's...

It's not good to...She came out with statements that... I'm sort of reluctant to repeat because... I know she- in her heart she didn't mean it.

[1:22:57.0]

OK, Jackie. I'd like to thank you for sharing your story. Is there anything else that you would like to mention that we haven't mentioned?

No, I think- I think that's about it.

In that case we'll take a little break. And then look at your- some of your photos and documents.

OK.

Thank you very much.

You're welcome.

[End of interview, addendum below]

[1:23:20.1]

[Interview addendum]

[1:23:38.1]

Yeah, we are just going to add- You wanted to add something.

Yes, please. Yes. OK, I wanted to add that in '81 we went to Israel to the Holocaust... Reunion. My...Lita's parents, ...Lou and Nilly, came with me to share my problem. And they, throughout the whole time, never- it was no problem that I- for my background, for them. They offered me... They looked upon me as a son and...and I, and ...I loved them both, and they were great parents to Lita, and they shared her- my problem They came to me with a Kibbutz- Givat Haim when I had- met... I don't know if you've ever heard of Willy Groag, who was one of the people who came out of Terezin but who was also one of the sort of high ups in... the Givat Haim kibbutz and the...they had to listen to my story, which was very hard to put out, and at that time. Yes. ...And the rest of the family who know my past - Lita's family all knew about my past - were very supportive. Yes.

So you're lucky with your...

[1:25:06.0]

I'm extremely lucky. Extremely lucky. I mean, I always felt with my Grandparents - my adoptive Grandparents, my Mother, on my- Grandmother on my Mother's side, and my

Grandmother on my Father's side, both, I think they didn't ...sort of, bond with me at all. They were...I think they...I wouldn't like to put a - a name to it, but they just- they didn't like to pick me up or anything. I didn't feel that they were, sort of, they possibly may have felt, you know, "who's this Austrian kid you've got here?"- You know...something like that. And I - I also- One little memory I have of how the English people - Jewish English people - conversed with my Mother. And there was - I used to hear the conversations when they were talking about the war, then they would say, "Well, they thought they were Germans, they thought they were Austrians, so they got what they got". You may have heard that type of statement before. Anyway, and...and I always used to- and knowing what I know now, historically, you...you just don't- they didn't realise that sometimes... German Austrian Jews had- could go back three or four hundred years! And...they shouldn't think anything else except that they were Austrian and German. And I'd realised that they were so close to the First World War. And there were German and Austrian Jewish people and the soldiers were killing British, which... is what a German or Austrian do! And that's another conundrum they had to get over.

So they- the...the English Jewish experience was quite...

That- that legacy was handed down...

They were quite far from the refugee experience.

Yeah, they, they didn't- they were hostile to the- This is why, in this... place, this Dorice patisserie, congregated Austrians and Germans who- It was known as Finchley Strasse.

Yes.

And things like that. And...and, so - the conductor would say it.

So your parents wouldn't go there as such?

No, my parents would go there, but they didn't go to the Dorice.

...To the coffee shop?

No, but I felt quite comfortable there. Some...So it may have been something as a kid I - I felt comfortable there, but...

Did you speak to people when you were there?

No - no, no.

You just...[inaudible 1:27:29.9]

I. Yeah. But- And - and I'd have one bite of this thing, and I - it was too sweet and I just...binned it, usually.

So despite the food, it wasn't the food.

Yeah. I think it was the, the - the people, yes.

And the language maybe, eh?

Mnn, yeah. I should imagine they were all...And there was another restaurant there called "The Cosmo", which was also, a lot of it, yes, well that area, whole area was... there was Czech, Austrian, Germans. It was, it was a... real, a little home from home place there.

[1:28:08.6]

I know one of the things that I still want- I want to ask you: The other five children. Was anyone adopted by...German Jewish refugees...?

No...

Or did they all go into English families?

No...no. As far as I know, no. I don't think Gerti 1:28:22.0 was, no.

And do you think mostly did they have similar experience to you, or very different?

I believe... I can only speak for one. I won't say the name again but I do know for a fact that... she had great difficulties with her parents as well.

So it is [a story - inaudible 1:28:42.0]...?

It didn't...No, they, it was a very difficult, very difficult as well. So you- we sort of came down a similar, parallel line. Yeah. Well, there you go. I - I think in truth, that- First of all I think my- both my parents were very close to forties or what have you, when they got me. Not that forty eliminates you from being a Mum and Dad but I think that...you know, this type of situation hadn't happened...so...so much. And I think that... they didn't really know what- they had a hot potato and they didn't really know how to help it. They didn't have... Mark's glove...[referring to cameraman's gloves for handling hot equipment] - is it?

Simon.

Simon. Sorry. Simon, sorry I forgot your name. ...Simon's gloves to pick up this hot bulb.

Yeah.

They just didn't know how to handle it. And had they, *had* they possibly listened to Alice... and taken a lot of advice and help from her they may have- it may have been a little softer. But we'll never know. And... Like I say, I don't - I don't hold any... dislike for my parents. They...I put it down to their lack of help that they decided not to take! And - and as I say, you know, 'the person that didn't do anything right, doesn't do too much'.

[1:30:12.7]

Right... You mean by not doing, you can't do anything... wrong?

Yeah, if you don't do anything...you know, so, we all do, I've made mistakes, you know, we all, to err is to be human.

Jackie thank you very much again for this interview.

You're very welcome.

[End of interview addendum]

[1:30:31.0]

[Photographs and documents]

[1:30:37.0]

Jackie can you tell us please what we see on this photo?

You can see a photo of us kids and a place called Bulldog's Bank. And on the far left you've got a Lady Clark who was the good woman who gave us Bulldog's Bank to stay in for a year.

What was her name?

Lady Clark. She was a titled Lady. Not only a lady as a lady, but a titled Lady. She'd- We went to her house, and... which is not too far away and we're talking about a serious, large...a Bishop's Avenue-looking house.

And where are you in the picture?

I'm holding the...the...the little doll in my hand with a plaster on my knee. I must have... been playing around too much.

And when was it taken, this photo?

This was in- when I... probably a few weeks after I arrived in '40...5. [1945].

Thank you. Yes, Jackie, please.

Now we have a photo of me with this man who happened to be an American, a reporter, who came over to England. And these are the, me in the front, with my hand in my mouth, I think

it is, curly hair, the only one with curly hair, dark hair, curly hair. And... that's also at Bulldog's Bank.

And can you tell us, when did you get these photos?

When I visited the Danns, the two women - Sophie and Gertrude - who looked after me.

So how old were you when you actually first saw these photos of yourself?

Erm...we were...

Lita Young: In your twenties.

No, not in my twenties...these photos when we went to the Danns were not in our twenties. We were in our forties then. ...In my twenties...I don't know, we didn't... definitely not.

Anyway, so, quite late.

Yes.

Quite late. Thank you. Yes, please.

Right. Well as far as I know, this possibly, this photo is of me, I'm in the far left corner, so you can just about spot me. And I believe this is taken in Windermere, when we first arrived.

That's about it.

And who is the lady?

I have no idea. No. There was...

Do you remember any of the names of the other...children?

Well there was Gaddy, there was... Bella...and there was... Berl - Berlie, and Judithand I can't think of any others, of the names.

[1:33:23.6]

OK, thank you.

OK.

Yes, please.

And this is me at a table eating a potato at Bulldog's Bank. They had to put apparently sugar on the potatoes cause we wouldn't eat them. And that was the... one of the... statements of the files said that they had to put sugar on most things, otherwise- And the sugar came from America, it was sent over from America so, 'cause we wouldn't eat it.

Right, so again roughly around 1945, 1946...?

'45, '46, yes.

OK.

Yeah.

And who is the other person in the picture?

That I believe is Berl... on my right, or on my left, there in the picture.

Thank you.

Cameraman: OK?

Right, this is me, in the middle, in the lighter outfit, and we were supposed to be seeing the Queen actually passing our - our place in Bulldog's Bank and we were supposed to wave at her. We're not waving at the moment as you can see, but that's how we are dressed; it was pretty chilly, pretty cold and that's why they gave us these outfits to wear.

[pause]

Yes, please

[1:34:58.3]

Oh, yeah. This is a picture I had taken. Probably one of the first photos I had taken, where my Mother took me to a local camera shop and had a, a - a, a proper photo taken of me with my... silk shirt and bow tie...and my lovely curly hair.

And... when was that?

That was probably when I was about six or seven.

And where?

In Upper Clapton, in London...

Thank you.

Cameraman: OK.

OK, ready to go? OK, this is my adoptive parents, Ralph Young and... Annie Young at my Bar Mitzvah.! ... With a nice big juicy cake.

And which year was that?

[Jackie laughs] Nineteen...Oh...you've got me there!

1952?

It could be something close like that. 1952, '53...probably '53.

'53.

'53.

And where was it?

This was at the...what was it called? Grosvenor Rooms, Willesden. Strangely enough, the place where the Grosvenor Rooms stands is where my daughter, Elisa, who lives in Stratford-on-Avon, actually has a flat also in London and the actual flats sit on top of Grosvenor Rooms now. Grosvenor Rooms no longer exists.

Thank you. Yes.

OK, these are two buildings featured very much in my life early on. The top one is Bulldog's Bank and you can see the kids playing on the grass there. And the bottom one is also, the other kids playing is outside Weir Courteney which is a beautiful house, absolutely- always had these in my dreams.

Yes, please.

And this is Lita, my beautiful wife, on our wedding day. And we had a wonderful day, never to be forgotten.

And when and where was it please?

That's was when...we got married in "The State", Kilburn, in London, and...that was, what year was it?

Lita Young: '63.

[19]'63, that's it, I should remember that, shouldn't I? September the 15th.

Thank you. [pause] Yes please.

I can't tell you exactly what- we probably were going out one evening. And as you can see, my daughters all dressed up beautifully. I cut their hair nicely, and my own, and my wife's.
[laughs] That was it.

[1:37:39.9]

And when was it taken?

...They look like they're in their twenties so it was... quite a few years ago. [laughs] Exactly what year, I don't remember.

OK. Thank you.

OK.

OK, this is a picture of me, with my fabulously dressed up cab...it had been wallpapered by Dulux people, and, they- or was it Crown? No, it was Crown, not Dulux. And we were going on a... regularly annual year outing to take the kids down to Southend. And these children are... usually described as underprivileged children. And we had a real- good time that day.

And you were telling us about the famous people in your cab?

Well...I have had fabulous- famous people. I've had Alec Guinness, I had Raquel Welch...Ursula Andress, Kirk Douglas... who was that singer that - that...singer that was going around with Brigitte Bardot? He was the singer, Sacha Distel. Sacha Distel. Quite a few, they're just too many- numerous sometimes to tell. Remind me?

And you said Simon Wiesenthal?

And one day I was fortunate enough to... pick up Simon Wiesenthal, and even Martin Gilbert. Two people that seemed to have something to do with my past as well, or connection.

And did you speak to them?

I spoke to both of them. I was invited to... Martin Gilbert's house, and he subsequently put me in one of his books! And told a little passage about my story - my past.

Thank you. [Pause]

OK.

Yes, please.

Right, and this is me, in Maly Trostenec, and I've put a yellow... whatever you call it...and it's- has the name of my mother on it, and was there one with my grandfather here as well? Possibly... and my mother Elsa Spiegel you can't see on that too clearly, but that's what we did when we were in Maly Trostenec.

And when?

This was... about five years ago...five years ago when we went...

2010?

Something like that, yes. Very emotional time for... us all.

Thank you.

OK.

Yes, please.

[1:40:23.7]

This is a photo our daughter Elisa really, really wanted of the whole family. And on my left is- on the left is Lita, and there's Elisa in the green, Omar in the red, Nicole -my eldest daughter- in the black, and the little baby is Yasmin in the green, and I'm far right. And it was done by a professional one, so it looks quite sweet.

When?

Oh, that was...that was about five...

Lita Young: About ten years ago...

Yeah, probably about ten, eleven years ago.

Thank you.

OK. This is Oscar, our youngest grandson... with his curly hair, my curly hair that I had once like that. And it was school photo. And he's pretty cute there. He's about three years old there.

Thank you.

OK. This is a list of my family that I never knew. Their dates and place of birth. Sadly, their place of death and... where they died, most of them.

Just- Do you want to read their names? Just for the record?

Well, for the record: My Grandfather was Leopold Spiegel. My Grandmother was Emilie Schwartz...changed to Spiegel when she married my Grandfather. My Uncle was Rudolph Spiegel and my Aunt was Hilde Spiegel. And lastly, my Mother, Elsa Spiegel.

[1:42:00.0]

Thank you Jackie.

Cameraman: OK.

OK. This is the document I received from the ITS at Bad Arolsen, on the 28th of April 2014, showing that I Jona Spiegel, born 18. 12.[19]41, was picked up by the *Geheime Staatspolizei*

in Vienna and deported to the ghetto Terezin on transport 42 and stayed there for two years, eight months. That's about the size of it.

Jackie we would like- we would like to thank you again for giving us this interview and sharing your story and your photographs and documents.

Thank you. Thank you for coming and... sharing it.

Cameraman: OK.

And this is my transport number. My card that went with me to Theresienstadt, and as you see at the top my name is Jona Spiegel, born 18.12.41. My number was 1236 from Vienna to Terezin. Not a nice card.

Thank you again.

[1:43:28.8]

[End of photos]