

1

00:00:20,200 --> 00:00:27,360

[FRYDMAN] This is November 1994 and we are going close to next spring when it will be 50

2

00:00:27,360 --> 00:00:33,440

years after the liberation of the concentration camps in Europe during the second world war,

3

00:00:33,440 --> 00:00:39,120

at the end of the second world war and we have with us one of the liberators of Dachau

4

00:00:39,760 --> 00:00:47,600

concentration camp, Mr. Fred Long. Mr. Long, tell us about when you went into the army,

5

00:00:47,600 --> 00:00:51,120

where you were born, and where you went into the service in the year,

6

00:00:51,920 --> 00:01:00,480

and then how you got to that place, that time

[LONG] Well, I went in our service in 1942

7

00:01:01,920 --> 00:01:10,960

and I went in the local board 58 Harlan, Kentucky
and I left there and went to Fort Thomas,

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00:01:10,960 --> 00:01:21,280

Kentucky and I was sent then to Count Button,
North Carolina where I took my medical training

9

00:01:24,240 --> 00:01:34,480

and then we left there and went overseas to
England and we took more training in England

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00:01:37,280 --> 00:01:39,840

and uh yeah

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00:01:40,600 --> 00:01:47,280

[FRYDMAN] You were how old at this point?

[LONG] I was 19 years old at that time

12

00:01:49,600 --> 00:01:59,040

and we uh we went from
there on to Omaha, Beachhead

13

00:02:01,440 --> 00:02:04,240

and from Omaha, we went up through St. Lowell

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00:02:06,560 --> 00:02:11,920

and we went through uh Southern— Southern
France that would be Southern France.

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00:02:14,080 --> 00:02:15,920

We uh

[FRYDMAN] You

16

00:02:15,920 --> 00:02:18,320

were with the third army?

[LONG] I was with the third army

17

00:02:18,320 --> 00:02:24,560

[FRYDMAN] And the regiment that you were with?

[LONG] Yes, ma'am. the uh the

18

00:02:24,560 --> 00:02:31,193

uh the regiment— well the army— third army was uh

[FRYDMAN] And the medical corp?

19

00:02:31,193 --> 00:02:40,440

[LONG] Medical corp, yeah and I was with a 92nd medical battalion and we were supposed to uh

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00:02:41,840 --> 00:02:50,960

treat for gas— phosgene, chloropicrin, and all that kind of stuff— if the Germans had used gas.

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00:02:52,560 --> 00:02:59,520

Instead of that they uh they didn't use gas which I think uh a good lord didn't, that killed a lot

22

00:02:59,520 --> 00:03:11,440

of people and we uh we left uh there and went to Bastogne. I was in the Battle of the Bulge

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00:03:13,280 --> 00:03:24,880

and when we got the war was almost over, they captured— they captured some medical troops of the

24

00:03:26,720 --> 00:03:32,800

U.S.— well, I just say U.S. medics,

I don't know who they were but they

25

00:03:32,800 --> 00:03:37,440

captured them, the Germans did and they left uh

26

00:03:40,160 --> 00:03:46,880

I don't know they uh they generally wouldn't've
capture anybody like that. Well they'd shoot them

27

00:03:47,920 --> 00:03:56,400

and that got to get them out of their hair you see
and then we went through the Battle of the Bulge

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00:03:58,720 --> 00:04:01,840

and after the Battle of the Bulge we left

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00:04:03,440 --> 00:04:11,440

uh Bastogne and we went directly
into ducal— Dachau concentration camp

30

00:04:11,440 --> 00:04:15,280

[FRYDMAN] Did you have any— You had
a special insignia that you wore

31

00:04:15,280 --> 00:04:21,920

as a member of the medical uh team right

[LONG] Yes ma'am, yes ma'am. Which is that

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00:04:22,720 --> 00:04:34,880

medical— uh U.S. medical over there. The uh uh oh

[FRYDMAN] The special medical uh insignia that you

33

00:04:34,880 --> 00:04:38,880

wore to designate who— what group you were

[LONG] What group I was in, yes ma'am.

34

00:04:40,240 --> 00:04:43,760

[FRYDMAN] Had you heard

anything about a place like,

35

00:04:43,760 --> 00:04:48,000

that you knew what you were getting

into as far as concentration camps?

36

00:04:48,000 --> 00:04:52,880

Had you heard rumors along the way or anything?

[LONG] No ma'am, never heard any rumors whatever

37

00:04:52,880 --> 00:05:03,040

about uh about [unintelligible] concentration—
none of the concentration camps, uh but I did

38

00:05:03,040 --> 00:05:13,920

know that uh the concentration camps were
something else. I was taught— I was told that now

39

00:05:15,680 --> 00:05:28,400

but uh uh in duquel— Dachau I guess uh why you
uh it really opens your eyes and I didn't realize

40

00:05:28,400 --> 00:05:37,920

that one human being regardless of its color
or creed could do another person as they done

41

00:05:38,800 --> 00:05:46,160

the Jews and the people that they didn't
want nothing to do with— the Germans did.

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00:05:47,600 --> 00:05:49,360

So—

[FRYDMAN] Do you remember

43

00:05:49,360 --> 00:05:55,680

the date when you— when you got to Dachau?

[LONG] Uh somewhere around the 16th or 18th of

44

00:05:55,680 --> 00:06:07,600

April 1945. and we went in uh Dachau concentration
camp early in the morning. It was before daylight

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00:06:08,960 --> 00:06:15,040

and when they uh opened— when daylight came

46

00:06:17,120 --> 00:06:24,960

while we uh we looked around and there was dead
people laying all around. All around this fence—

47

00:06:26,720 --> 00:06:37,200

all around the fence dead people and there
was a pile of bodies right close to the uh

48

00:06:42,160 --> 00:06:45,280

close to the incinerator where they burn them

49

00:06:47,200 --> 00:06:54,960

and uh they had this shower— the
shower was set up uh as a gas chamber

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00:06:57,920 --> 00:07:04,160

and it was all kinds of
lice and filth of all kinds

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00:07:06,960 --> 00:07:07,680

and we had

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00:07:10,000 --> 00:07:20,080

over here we had a real railroad cattle cars
in here that run off this side track and

53

00:07:21,280 --> 00:07:29,760

it was full. It was full of dead bodies—
this whole car was full of dead bodies—

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00:07:29,760 --> 00:07:35,200

were nothing but uh they were skin

and bones— that's in my language

55

00:07:38,160 --> 00:07:42,160

and they [unintelligible] to
us there was a platoon of us—

56

00:07:42,160 --> 00:07:46,240

[FRYDMAN] Which would be how many approximately?

[LONG] Well approximates

57

00:07:48,120 --> 00:07:51,680

[FRYDMAN] Several

[LONG] Well, I was out of the uh

58

00:07:54,000 --> 00:08:05,360

platoon— a platoon— Company A and
also Company uh A platoon and uh

59

00:08:08,800 --> 00:08:18,160

when we was billeted in this concrete— or not a
concrete but it's a brick building right there

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00:08:18,800 --> 00:08:31,440

that housed us and we stayed in there 93 days,
93 days and these huts that I have drawn here

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00:08:31,440 --> 00:08:46,160

you can see they were used for uh people uh that
they were used for people to— well to sleep in

62

00:08:47,920 --> 00:08:54,640

and they had straw beds— they had straw
beds and iron boards nailed to the wall

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00:08:55,600 --> 00:09:01,600

all in uh all on in these
buildings here and there were

64

00:09:04,160 --> 00:09:12,080

boards and they put straw in there for the people
to sleep on and as soon as one person died why

65

00:09:12,080 --> 00:09:21,200

they'd— this gentleman here, he was more or less
the undertaker I suppose uh he would put them on

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00:09:21,200 --> 00:09:25,520

a cart and haul them out the gate. Now, after they got through the gate I don't know where

67

00:09:25,520 --> 00:09:30,640

he went— where they went to. I guess they took them out there and buried them that's just a—

68

00:09:30,640 --> 00:09:33,560

[FRYDMAN] So, there were piles of bodies?

[LONG] Piles of bodies, yeah.

69

00:09:33,560 --> 00:09:37,360

[FRYDMAN] Is that what you saw or—?

[LONG] Yeah. And this is a

70

00:09:38,960 --> 00:09:47,840

uh— This pile of bodies here that— uh I say with two semi-trailers couldn't haul them

71

00:09:49,120 --> 00:09:59,920

all in one— all one load. They would be— they would be 200, 300 in that pile. They couldn't—

72

00:09:59,920 --> 00:10:10,480

as fast as they died— they uh they couldn't get
rid of them uh fast enough and they would uh uh

73

00:10:11,600 --> 00:10:18,240

just ship them out uh this gate on
this on these carts— on this cart

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00:10:18,960 --> 00:10:29,520

and then they would burn what they could
to get rid of them and the uh the stink

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00:10:30,960 --> 00:10:37,120

was beyond anything I ever smelt in my
life and I don't know, I'm an old farm boy

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00:10:38,240 --> 00:10:43,440

I was kind of raised on a farm and I've smelt
a lot of stuff, I smelled dead cattle and

77

00:10:43,440 --> 00:10:56,040

stuff like that but this— a human being has
a smell with all of its own. It can't be uh

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00:10:57,920 --> 00:11:07,840

can't be said, "well that smells like a dead cow."
Not so because each the uh they got a smell just

79

00:11:09,200 --> 00:11:16,640

uh it's something terrible that you uh and you
walk in there— We went in and when we went in

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00:11:17,840 --> 00:11:27,920

we was given a mask to go on— to go on our face.
Just a little cup-like one on your face and uh

81

00:11:29,840 --> 00:11:36,960

they were uh there was uh all like all kinds
of disease there. There was Tuberculosis,

82

00:11:38,160 --> 00:11:42,160

there was uh
[FRYDMAN] Dysentery.

83

00:11:42,160 --> 00:11:46,480

Dysentery, probably. Dysentery or—

[LONG] Oh god yeah that— that was—

84

00:11:46,480 --> 00:11:52,400

well that's come from them folks

not eating, see. There was uh

85

00:11:53,600 --> 00:11:56,640

there was you know they had—

[FRYDMAN] You said here,

86

00:11:56,640 --> 00:11:59,920

"there's no water to be found"

[LONG] No, no water, no. No

87

00:11:59,920 --> 00:12:04,960

there's no water in here to be found no

[FRYDMAN] So, they were just literally

88

00:12:04,960 --> 00:12:12,080

without food or water or anything at all?

[LONG] Now, when— when uh we uh when we got really

89

00:12:12,080 --> 00:12:21,920

organized we would uh we would send— take these people up, you know in a line, and we had a table

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00:12:21,920 --> 00:12:30,640

there for them. We'd give them shots of typhus and so forth and then we figured how to change—

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00:12:30,640 --> 00:12:32,320

FRYDMAN] Right

[LONG] —but their little

92

00:12:32,320 --> 00:12:42,560

arms and hips and so forth were so small— uh I mean by being small that they were uh

93

00:12:45,280 --> 00:12:47,360

skin and bone

[FRDYMAN] From starvation

94

00:12:47,360 --> 00:12:55,120

[LONG] And yeah. And it was pretty hard to find a place to give them people shots and so we uh

95

00:12:55,760 --> 00:13:03,760

we done the best we could and I have been asked
the question why, why did you— why didn't you

96

00:13:04,560 --> 00:13:14,240

do more than you done. Well, when you
are a uh private first-class (PFC)

97

00:13:15,680 --> 00:13:22,720

well you do what you are told and
not anymore. If you do uh too much

98

00:13:23,600 --> 00:13:33,200

while they'll uh they'll say well uh they'll
give you a good scolding, you know. And that was

99

00:13:33,200 --> 00:13:41,280

why that uh they told us when we went in
there not to give these folks anything to eat.

100

00:13:42,480 --> 00:13:46,000

Now, that is a hard thing to do—

[FRYDMAN] Right

101

00:13:46,000 --> 00:13:55,200

[LONG] You see people starving and they're on their way out, you know you know they uh that just

102

00:13:55,760 --> 00:14:01,600

they'll be walking along and just fall over dead
[FRYDMAN] So, many many more died after

103

00:14:01,600 --> 00:14:06,480

you got there because of their condition?
[LONG] Oh yeah yeah plenty of them yeah. And uh

104

00:14:09,200 --> 00:14:12,400

they were, well they were
laying all over the place

105

00:14:14,160 --> 00:14:20,560

uh you couldn't— behind the building, beside
the building, beside the fence, all over—

106

00:14:20,560 --> 00:14:24,000

[FRYDMAN] Thousands. Thousands?
[LONG] It was thousands of them, yeah.

107

00:14:25,200 --> 00:14:35,360

And uh then when uh when we got organized to where we could, well we went outside of the camp

108

00:14:36,640 --> 00:14:48,160

and dug holes— long, long holes uh with a bulldozer— the English did that— and they buried

109

00:14:49,200 --> 00:15:00,000

uh thousands and thousands of our troops— or uh the Jews and whatnot the people are. And I have

110

00:15:00,000 --> 00:15:10,960

been asked this before uh "how could you tell that they were uh English?" Well you couldn't tell that

111

00:15:10,960 --> 00:15:18,080

they were [unintelligible] unless they spoke in English and told you where they were from and how

112

00:15:21,360 --> 00:15:24,000

So uh that's

[FRYDMAN] Did any

113

00:15:24,000 --> 00:15:29,760

of them talk to you? Did you—Did you talk
to anyone to know what— what had happened

114

00:15:29,760 --> 00:15:36,880

before you got there or were you not able to?

[LONG] No, ma'am. Most I couldn't understand uh

115

00:15:37,600 --> 00:15:40,800

French and I couldn't understand Jewish

[FRYDMAN] or German.

116

00:15:40,800 --> 00:15:48,240

[LONG] Or German and I had a few choice words
for the Germans but it didn't work out that way

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00:15:49,640 --> 00:15:54,880

[FRYDMAN] Did you see any German troops?

There were none left by the time you got

118

00:15:54,880 --> 00:16:00,880

there there were no German— German soldiers?

[LONG] Oh yeah, the Germans. The SS troopers

119

00:16:02,160 --> 00:16:06,240

cleaned up the dead folks in here

[FRYDMAN] As your prisoners?

120

00:16:06,240 --> 00:16:10,720

[LONG] Yeah, that's the SS

troopers were prisoner that's after

121

00:16:10,720 --> 00:16:14,400

[FRYDMAN] After you got there

[LONG] After we got there and liberated them

122

00:16:15,600 --> 00:16:21,840

and they were— they would come in and

they'd drag— they'd drag these people and

123

00:16:22,400 --> 00:16:29,440

pick them up and carry them and whatnot. The SS

troopers had to do that and they didn't look so uh

124

00:16:30,240 --> 00:16:38,480

so high and mighty then you know because uh they—
they lost their prestige, I guess you'd call it

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00:16:38,480 --> 00:16:43,680

[FRDYMAN] Wasn't it hard to keep American
soldiers from just killing them? You know,

126

00:16:43,680 --> 00:16:49,840

just they were so angry
[LONG] Well yes, yeah uh

127

00:16:52,080 --> 00:16:54,240

angry has everything to do with it you know

128

00:16:58,480 --> 00:17:08,240

I couldn't— I couldn't get angry at even
my worst enemy but uh several times that—

129

00:17:10,000 --> 00:17:15,200

that I could uh maybe done— done
something that I'd've been sorry of now

130

00:17:15,200 --> 00:17:19,440

[FRYDMAN] Right. Were there men women
and children that you could tell or was—?

131

00:17:19,440 --> 00:17:27,760

[LONG] There's a— there was uh— there was children
in this camp, men and children in this camp,

132

00:17:28,720 --> 00:17:37,680

and to see a child that's starving like that,
why it's something else. That gets to me I uh

133

00:17:41,400 --> 00:17:47,520

[FRYDMAN] You actually spent 93 days within—?

[LONG] 93 days within that camp, yes ma'am

134

00:17:49,600 --> 00:17:56,560

We spent 93 days there and I hit uh

[unintelligible] said here now I'm

135

00:17:56,560 --> 00:18:04,080

shaking all over. Shaking all over and talking
about it 50 years later, but it never— it never

136

00:18:04,080 --> 00:18:16,000

goes away you know you— uh I dream of it and
uh I also have back— what they call backlash—

137

00:18:16,000 --> 00:18:22,720

[BOTH] Backflashes

[LONG] And I can be going down the road

138

00:18:23,600 --> 00:18:30,720

and uh— or driving down the road to highway
or anywhere and if I smell burnt meat

139

00:18:30,720 --> 00:18:36,800

or anything and that— that you— you know you'll
burn meat or something like that if you cook

140

00:18:38,000 --> 00:18:46,320

and uh then all this other stuff just flashes
right up before my eyes. It looks so real that for

141

00:18:46,320 --> 00:18:49,593

a second you think you're there

[FRYDMAN] Right

142

00:18:49,593 --> 00:19:02,160

[LONG] And it's hard to get out of your mind and
uh I don't think that anybody uh that ever had

143

00:19:02,160 --> 00:19:11,120

any kind of experience will ever uh get it
out— get that out of their mind I go to the

144

00:19:13,680 --> 00:19:23,840

psychiatrist now and uh once the week
or once a week or well every week

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00:19:24,480 --> 00:19:27,120

once the week

[FRYDMAN] At the VA

146

00:19:27,120 --> 00:19:28,240

[LONG] At the VA

[FRYDMAN] Because

147

00:19:28,240 --> 00:19:31,920

of that experience, that part of—?

[LONG] That experience and uh I guess

148

00:19:31,920 --> 00:19:38,080

I'll just keep it going but it don't— it
don't really seem like it helps any much

149

00:19:38,080 --> 00:19:45,520

[FRYDMAN] It had to leave a terrible impression
on a very young man— American person who had never

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00:19:45,520 --> 00:19:52,800

witnessed anything even close to that kind of—
[LONG] Well, most— most I ever saw when I was a

151

00:19:52,800 --> 00:20:00,480

kid is a dead cow or dead horse or something like
that you know but I never uh never realized that

152

00:20:01,520 --> 00:20:08,320

human beings could be that rough on anyone or
[BOTH] That cruel

153

00:20:08,320 --> 00:20:13,600

[FRYDMAN] And being there, you still probably
couldn't understand how it could happen.

154

00:20:13,600 --> 00:20:18,240

[LONG] No uh

[FRYDMAN] Did you talk

155

00:20:18,240 --> 00:20:23,120

at all with the other young men that were with
you? You probably were all just sort of shocked.

156

00:20:23,120 --> 00:20:31,040

[LONG] Well, we uh— when I— when we went in
there, well, we was all given a job to do and

157

00:20:31,040 --> 00:20:39,280

I never— I never talked to anyone. Except maybe
the sergeant come down. We had a sergeant out of

158

00:20:41,680 --> 00:20:44,920

Virginia that uh—

159

00:20:46,080 --> 00:20:54,800

He was Sergeant Williams. Maurice Williams
out of out of state of Virginia and he went

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00:20:54,800 --> 00:21:01,840

right— he went crazy right on the block— right on—
right in the camp and they had to send him back.

161

00:21:02,720 --> 00:21:07,840

Uh, I don't know where they sent him to.

[FRYDMAN] You saw the ovens,

162

00:21:07,840 --> 00:21:11,360

you saw everything that was—?

[LONG] Yes, ma'am. Well,

163

00:21:11,360 --> 00:21:20,240

uh I saw more than I wanted to, and uh I

uh— I get choked up about it now, you know.

164

00:21:21,760 --> 00:21:24,480

It's hard— hard to talk.

[FRYDMAN] Right, I understand that.

165

00:21:25,440 --> 00:21:31,200

We— we— we do this, as difficult as
it is, because we want, for history,

166

00:21:31,200 --> 00:21:36,800

we want— we don't want it to happen again and we
want— we want people like you, that were American

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00:21:36,800 --> 00:21:43,120

soldiers from this country, who saw what had
happened— we need their testimony and we— we are

168

00:21:43,760 --> 00:21:50,560

deeply indebted to uh men like you that went
through what they went through um and— and finally

169

00:21:50,560 --> 00:21:58,160

brought uh liberation to these places because
it would have gone on and on. So, we're indebted

170

00:21:58,160 --> 00:22:03,840

to you. Is there anything else you would want—
[LONG] Uh I— I missed— I missed one thing that uh

171

00:22:05,040 --> 00:22:12,960

these uh bodies that outside the crematorium
they uh well I didn't put it on here, I guess.

172

00:22:16,560 --> 00:22:29,600

Oh yeah, furnace right there. And they would—
they had a thing running around here— uh rack like

173

00:22:30,320 --> 00:22:35,920

that held these hanging and held bodies on them
and they would put them on there and then this

174

00:22:35,920 --> 00:22:44,000

chain would uh— There would be a guy there that
would run up into the furnace on that chain—

175

00:22:45,120 --> 00:22:51,680

on— on the hooks and when we got there—
I'm skipping all over the place but that's—

176

00:22:51,680 --> 00:22:53,840

[FRYDMAN] That's all right

[LONG] That's the best I can remember.

177

00:22:54,960 --> 00:23:03,600

Uh, when we got there why uh there were still
three bodies hanging on these hooks— on uh

178

00:23:03,600 --> 00:23:16,480

close to this furnace and uh— like I say I don't
know why that one human being can be that cruel

179

00:23:17,440 --> 00:23:24,640

to another. I don't care what color they are
or what race they are or whatever but the Jews,

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00:23:24,640 --> 00:23:32,640

I think, took the worst beating of
all uh as— as— by that I mean that

181

00:23:35,040 --> 00:23:40,480

they— there was uh I think
six million of them killed.

182

00:23:41,840 --> 00:23:51,360

Six million Jews killed in this uh Holocaust.

183

00:23:53,240 --> 00:24:00,000

[FRYDMAN] It's hard for other people, but to see it in there— but you see it in you know every

184

00:24:00,000 --> 00:24:05,440

day because you live through seeing— seeing the results of what had happened during that period

185

00:24:05,440 --> 00:24:09,680

[LONG] Yes, sir— Yes, ma'am. I sure did, yeah, and we see this uh—

186

00:24:12,080 --> 00:24:22,160

we see it every night— almost every night in our dreams and we uh wake up ringing wet with sweat,

187

00:24:26,960 --> 00:24:34,080

jump out of bed, sit on the side of the bed, get up and walk to get, you know, to— uh everything

188

00:24:37,040 --> 00:24:40,880

When me— and I like to add this—

when me and my wife got married

189

00:24:42,560 --> 00:24:53,680

I come— I come home on December 13, 1945,
and I used to get up, I have these dreams,

190

00:24:53,680 --> 00:24:59,840

and I'd get up and go walk— just
go and walk and you know wherever

191

00:25:01,280 --> 00:25:09,760

and— just for a walk and I come back and uh relax
a while maybe have a cup of coffee— cold coffee,

192

00:25:09,760 --> 00:25:16,080

for instance, and then I would uh
go back to bed and go back to sleep

193

00:25:18,480 --> 00:25:22,240

and that's about the extent of our life I guess

194

00:25:26,120 --> 00:25:27,120

[FRYDMAN]

195

00:25:27,120 --> 00:25:32,720

We— we honor you as a liberator and we wish we could take away the pain and, unfortunately,

196

00:25:32,720 --> 00:25:38,800

we probably can't, but just know that what you're doing now, so that other people will know what

197

00:25:38,800 --> 00:25:45,520

happened is extremely important and we thank you for— for doing it in spite of the fact that it

198

00:25:45,520 --> 00:25:53,280

that it's very very difficult for you to do it
[LONG] I hope uh— I hope somebody— or all the

199

00:25:53,280 --> 00:26:09,840

people benefits but what I have said here today
[FRYDMAN] Thank you