

Surviving Evil

The Holocaust through the story of Stephan H. Lewy

By

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Playwright's note:

The script is meant to be performed as a multi-media presentation that includes a live onstage performance as well as audio dialogue, photographs, video, and music. The photographs come from several sources including the Lewy family photo album, the Department of the Army, and the National Archives and Records Administration, and Acunet Media Archives.

Dialogue that is highlighted in yellow can be heard on voice-over, and the photos that will be shown on a large screen are shown in thumbnail format to give readers a sense of what is being seen by the audience at various points in the script. Performances in the New Hampshire area may have Stephan Lewy in the performance. In that case video of him will not be used.

There is also a musical score that goes with the script based on original music written by Peter J. Bridges as well as public domain music.

One final note: The photos and video during the Buchenwald Concentration Camp sequence are disturbing. The movies of the concentration camps were ordered by General Eisenhower to

document the conditions of the survivors prior to liberation. They are included because that is what Stephan saw when he was a liberator.

This was written from source documents, which can be seen in the footnotes, and interviews done with Stephen and Frances Lewy.

Several quotations were also taken from *Stephan's Journey: A sojourn into Freedom* by Lilian Belefante Herzberg (Baltimore: Publish America, 2003). All quotations were used with permission of Stephan H. Lewy.



(The play begins with several faces of Jewish people pre-Holocaust. See the appendix for the full set of 20 pictures.)

Prologue (Kristallnacht)

(Ax cue – several, different loud breaking glass sounds, followed by loud sirens, and riot-like commotion.)

November 9, 1938
Kristallnacht – The Night of Broken Glass
Auerbach Orphanage -- Berlin Germany

NAZI COMMANDER

All you Jew kids, in the temple. Move it.

(Ax cue: Commotion.)

KID CRYING

I want to go home.

NAZI COMMANDER

(Ax cue: slap.)

Shut up. (To soldier) Cut the gas line.

NAZI SOLDIER

Sir, they're only children.

NAZI COMMANDER

Jew children grow up to be Jew adults. Cut it.

NAZI SOLDIER

Yavol.

(Ax cue. Sound of gas escaping.)

NAZI COMMANDER

Let's get out of here. Lock the doors.

(Ax cue. Sound of Nazis locking the door and leaving.)

CHILD 1

I'm scared.

CHILD 2

I want my mommy.

CHILD 3

My eyes hurt.

CHILD 4

I want to go home.

(Ax cue: Sound of plaintiff pounding on the door)

ALL CHILDREN

Help, Help, they're trying to kill us. We can't breathe. Open up. [names of various teachers and adults at the orphanage]

Scene I -- Introduction.

(Scene: The actor Stephan Lewy enters in the darkness. He will begin his dialogue at the end of the Stephan Lewy video. There will be several pictures and videos shown during the play and all dialogue other than Stephan's will be done via voiceover.)



THE REAL STEPHAN LEWY (On video)

Hello, my name is Stephan Lewy. On November 9th, 1938 I was one of the Jewish children who was locked in the sanctuary of the temple at Auerbach Orphanage by Nazi soldiers. They cut the gas line that fed the eternal flame and left 40 children, including me, to die. This was part of Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass, in which Nazi soldiers and police terrorized German Jews.

What you're going to hear today is the story of my life from the time I was born in 1925 until I was 20 at the end of World War II. I was never a German concentration camp survivor. My first time in a concentration camp (STEPHAN THE ACTOR FINISHES THE LINE AT THE SAME TIME) was as an American soldier when I was in the Buchenwald camp rescuing the prisoners there. (STEPHAN ON VIDEO FADES)

STEPHAN



The Nazis enslaved Jews in many ways. Many of which are difficult to put into context in modern America because they did so by taking away the very freedoms that we Americans enjoy everyday. Let me put my experience into historical context for you because growing up as a Jew in Germany in the 1930's was a very different experience from anything you can imagine. But before telling you about me, let me tell you about my father, Arthur Lewy, Senior. My father was born in 1893.



In 1900 he became a ward of the Auerbach Orphanage in Berlin after his parent's had died. At that time, Auerbach was run very similarly to a German military unit. With military uniforms, and strict discipline, it was more like a juvenile military institution than a home.



In 1914 after finishing college, My, father Arthur, Sr. was drafted into the German army for World War I and was profoundly affected by the inhumanity he saw.

Scene II, Early Childhood for Stephan

STEPHAN



After his army service, Arthur, Sr. opened a tobacco shop on Koepenicker Strasse in Berlin. The business was moderately successful, but only because he worked there during almost all the hours the shop was open.



ARTHUR (VOICEOVER)

Frau Schmitt, how are you today?

FRAU SCHMITT (VOICEOVER)

I am doing very well.

ARTHUR

You are here to pick up Herr Schmitt cigars.

FRAU SCHMITT

You always know. Cuban – how did you get them?

ARTHUR

I got a shipment and saved the best for my favorite customer. Here you go.
(Ax of cash register)

FRAU SCHMITT

Au vertersain!

(Ax of door opening)

ARTHUR

Herr Jansen! How are you today...

(Fade out)

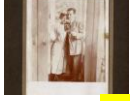
STEPHAN

(PHOTO OF GERTRUDE AND ARTHUR SR)



He soon met Gertrude, who would later become my mother. Gertrude came from a comfortable, but not wealthy, Protestant family. In 1919, Gertrude's family gave their blessing to the marriage, though reluctantly, because Arthur, Sr. was Jewish.

(PHOTO OF ARTHUR SR AND GERTRUDE)



GERTRUDE (VOICEOVER)

We don't have a wedding picture.

ARTHUR(VOICEOVER)

Gertrude, schatze, I have an idea. Let me get the camera.

GERTRUDE(VOICEOVER)

But how can you take the picture and be in the picture.

ARTHUR (VOICEOVER)

You'll see

GERTRUDE (VOICEOVER)

What are you doing?

ARTHUR (VOICEOVER)

Look in the mirror.

GERTRUDE

What are you doing, I don't want this dress--

ARTHUR

One, two...

ARTHUR

Three.

GERTRUDE

You're horrible!

ARTHUR

You're beautiful. I'm sure the picture will be perfect!

STEPHAN



In the early 1900's diseases that we consider nuisances, like strep throat, were potentially life threatening. Many of the medicines like antibiotics we take for granted, had not yet been discovered. Before I was born, my mother developed rheumatic fever, which left her very weak.



GERTRUDE (VOICEOVER)

Arthur. I'm Protestant and you're Jewish. How will we raise our children?

ARTHUR

Well, the boys can be Jewish and the girls can be Protestant.

GERTRUDE

Arthur, you're brilliant.

ARTHUR

Why do you ask? You know the doctors said we can't have children because of your rheumatic fever.

GERTRUDE

Well, Arthur, I'm not so sure the doctors know how much I want...

(FADE OUT)

STEPHAN



Fortunately for me, she ignored the doctor's advice and I was born on March 11, 1925.

My mother's illness made her very weak and by this time my father was making enough money to hire a maid named Charlotte, whom I loved very much, to take care of my mother and me.



My mother got progressively sicker and by the time I was six she was in the hospital with rheumatic fever – at that time there was no cure.

One day, I was with my father in the tobacco shop. We got the worst phone call a son and husband could ever get.

It was the hospital.

My mother had died.



My father somehow made it to the door and closed the shop. We cried in each other's arms for hours. Soon after, my father could no longer afford to have Charlotte take care of me. We soon had all of our furniture repossessed because my father had guaranteed a loan that my mother's brother defaulted on.

STEPHAN

(PHOTO OF ARTHUR SR.)



My father was now in financial trouble, and he couldn't properly care for me. He saw Germany's cultural changes, and decided to put me in the Auerbach orphanage, where he, himself, had spent several years.



There weren't a lot of options. He was an orphan at seven, my gentile relatives did not want to take me because they did not want to be seen as helping a Jew even though my father's financial problems were caused by helping them. From his experience an orphanage was the only logical place for me to go. Orphanages in the 1930's in Europe were much more common than Europe today, and certainly more common than in the United States.



By the time I got there, Auerbach was non-militaristic and religiously more observant.

Auerbach was not a workhouse or a sweatshop, but it was far from the loving home I had known with my mother and father.

(GROUP PHOTO AT AUERBACH)

