



I WILL NEVER GIVE UP

David Wolkowitz

As David Wolkowitz dressed for breakfast in his dormitory at the orphanage, he heard a strange rumble in the distance. Glancing out the window, he saw a billowing dust cloud advancing along the country road. David began feeling jittery. *What is it?* he wondered. The noise grew into loud throbbing sounds that resonated off the hilly French landscape. *Oh, please don't be what I think it is.* The morning sun finally revealed the source of the racket: motorcycles and army trucks. David gasped and yelled, "The Nazis are coming!"

At lunch in the dining hall the day before, the director of the orphanage had made an announcement that stunned the 100 Jewish boys who had been living there for the past 18 months, waiting out the war: "The mayor and the police chief have informed me of a report that the Nazis might carry out a raid on the orphanage sometime in the near future and take away everyone who is sixteen and older. We must stay on the alert."

When David heard the news, he turned to his friend Samuel and moaned, "They said we would be safe here, that the Nazis would leave us alone."

Seeing the color drain from David's face, Samuel said, "I know it's bad for the older boys, but we won't have to worry. The Nazis won't take us because we're only thirteen."

"But I *look* sixteen," David claimed. "I'm tall for my age and I have no papers, no proof of my real age. What's to stop them from taking me away with the others?"

"I never thought of that. I don't have any proof, either."

So, when David saw the German army vehicles roaring toward the orphanage that summer morning in 1943, he knew exactly what he was going to do. "I won't let the Nazis take me! I'm leaving right now!"

"So am I," Samuel said.

The other boys in the dorm at the time were much younger and didn't have the same reason to fear the enemy, so they made no attempt to run off.

David and Samuel climbed out of a second-floor window and scrambled down the vines that covered the wall. Just as they landed on the ground, a horse-drawn wagon carrying garbage rattled past the orphanage. "Follow me," David urged his buddy. They hopped on the back and made their getaway.

After a few miles, they jumped off and ran into the woods. "We should go our separate ways," David said. "Two Jewish boys wandering the countryside together will attract suspicion." Samuel agreed. They shook hands and wished each other luck.

Watching Samuel disappear into the forest, David felt his body tremble with misgivings. Running his shaking fingers through his curly dark hair, he took stock of his situation: *I'm all alone. I have no money and only the clothes on my back. The countryside is crawling with Nazis who would kill me and collaborators who would turn me in. I'm scared to death. What do I do?*

To calm himself, he summoned warm images of his early childhood in Leipzig, Germany, the music capital of Europe and home to famous composers such as Bach, Mendelssohn, and Wagner. David grew up surrounded by music. His father, Abraham, was a conductor, arranger, composer, and superb musician. His mother, Regina, was a concert pianist and music teacher.

Leaning against a tree, David imagined hearing the music of his childhood.

Musicians come to the Wolkowitzes' large apartment for their weekly get together with his parents and play chamber music. It's after David's bedtime, so he quietly sneaks out of bed and opens the door so he can hear them better.

Now David is seven, and he's watching in fascination as his father conducts the orchestra in Leipzig. David is wearing a black velvet suit with short pants, frilly white shirt, and knee-high white socks with tassels hanging from their tops. Abraham hands him the baton, which is almost as big as the boy is, and David proudly conducts the orchestra.

Stop daydreaming, David scolded himself. That was a lifetime ago. I need to concentrate on finding a way to survive. He had assumed he would remain in the orphanage until the end of the war, but here he was, miles away, having just fled from the Nazi raid. Mustering his courage, he decided, *I'll walk to Switzerland. It's a neutral country, so I'll be safe there.* He wasn't sure how far it was, but he knew he had to head east toward the Alps. He had a few things in his favor: He was fit, resourceful, and could speak French.

Off he marched. Occasionally, he would stop at a farmhouse and tell a made-up story of how he was a poor French boy who had been separated from his parents during the chaos of war, was trying to make his way back home, and could the good farmer please spare some bread and cheese? Sometimes his plea worked; sometimes it didn't.

More than once, a farmer's wife fed him, but her husband became suspicious and left to get the authorities. David always managed to leave before he was confronted. He never knew whom he could trust, so he relied on instinct. Trekking from one village to the next, he stayed focused on his goal—reaching Switzerland. Throughout the days, mental pictures of his family never strayed far from his thoughts.

After attending services at the synagogue with his father on Friday nights, David, an only child, celebrates the Sabbath at home with his parents and maternal grandparents, Herman and Salomea Jedlitzki, who live with the family. His grandmother lights the Sabbath candles, and his grandfather chants the kiddush, the blessing of the Sabbath. For Sabbath dinner, they eat cold boiled carp, chicken soup, and roast chicken.

But his memories began to darken after 1935 when Germany passed laws that stripped all Jews of their civil rights, and anti-Semitism spread like a cancer, afflicting victims of all ages.

While walking to their Jewish school—Jews are no longer allowed to attend public schools—David and his cousin Wolfgang encounter non-Jewish children who taunt them, hurl stones at them, and strike them with sticks.

“Mutti, why do they call me a dirty Jew?” six-year-old David asks. “I took a bath.”

Months of walking dragged on for David. To stave off hunger, he picked fruit off trees and stole food from gardens and farms. He also ate in soup kitchens set up by churches to feed the countless number of displaced people who were roaming the battle-scarred countryside.

Some times David caught a short ride on the back of a farmer's hay wagon, but mostly he walked. He'd catch a little sleep in barns, on park benches, or in the forest. He had no change of clothes, so whenever he reached a stream, he bathed and washed his garb. His shoes were falling apart, so he wrapped them with string and stuffed the holes in his soles with rags.

He tried to stay positive, as best as a lonely 13-year-old could in his dire situation. But there were times he felt angry. It didn't have to be this way.

Believing it's best to leave Germany, David's parents, Abraham and Regina, make arrangements for the three of them to immigrate to the United States. His grandparents insist on staying. In 1937, the Wolkowitzes travel to The Hague, Holland, with just a few belongings, including his father's favorite violin. The Nazis don't allow the Jews to take anything of value out of the country, but they let Abraham keep his precious instrument. While waiting in The Hague for their final immigration papers, Regina can't bring herself to leave her parents, so she, Abraham, and David return to Leipzig.

Back home, the Nazis refuse to let Abraham resume his job as an orchestra conductor. He can find work only as a shoe repairman. It pains young David to see his father—an accomplished musician with such delicate hands—come home every night with fingers so bloodied he can't play his beloved instruments.

On his trek toward Switzerland, David was always on edge. Whenever he saw a German patrol or Nazi sympathizing French police approaching in the distance—a daily occurrence—he hid in the woods or behind a building. Nights were always the worst because they spawned such bad memories.

October 1938. Two Gestapo agents, backed by several armed S.S. officers with drawn guns, storm into the apartment and tell David's grandparents, "You have one hour to pack one suitcase each."

"But where are we going?" Grandfather asks.

"We're taking you to the train station. You're being deported to Poland."

His grandparents, who were born in Poland, had lived in Germany for nearly 30 years but had retained their Polish citizenship, so there is nothing they can do. No amount of pleading and crying can sway the Gestapo into granting them more time.

Now it's November 9, 1938—forever known as Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass). Roving gangs of Nazis trash and loot the stores of Jewish merchants, burn down synagogues, and brutally beat and, in some cases, kill Jews.

From the second-floor window of their apartment, David watches in stark terror the mayhem outside and sees the sky turning red from the fires. His mother pulls him away from the window because she doesn't want the Gestapo to see them. Still, David hears

screams in the streets as Jews coming home from work are attacked. At least his parents are home to offer him comfort.

As David approached the square in a small village near the city of Clermont-Ferrand, he noticed a young boy about his age leaning against a stone wall, playing French folk tunes on a flute. David, who hadn't heard such beautiful music in a long time, went up to him and said, "I admire your playing."

"Thank you. I'd go crazy without my music. It makes me forget about this ugly war."

David and the boy, whose name was Joel, hung out together for three days. But over the following two days, David couldn't find him. It's time to move on, anyway. As he headed out of town, David spotted Joel leaning against the same stone wall, but this time his flute was silent. Then David saw why. Both of Joel's hands were heavily bandaged.

"Joel, what happened?"

Joel stared glumly at his hands and replied, "A couple of days ago, I saw a metal thing lying in the grass and I picked it up. I was examining it when it exploded and blew off fingers on both hands."

"I'm so sorry for you."

Joel spat and said, "I hate that I won't ever play my flute again. I hate this war."

I have to get to Switzerland, David thought. And so he kept walking. Fall gave way to winter. His hat and light jacket were no match for the brutally cold winds that swept down the French Alps. Still, he continued his trek up the mountains toward what he believed would be his haven.

Of course, he once thought Brussels, Belgium, would be a haven, too. That's where he and his parents had fled to start a new life in early 1939 after his grandparents had been deported. Abraham and Regina resumed their music careers, and the boy went to public school, where he learned to speak French and Flemish fluently.

In the family's two-room Brussels apartment, David reads letters from his grandparents, who are living in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, Poland. But it's hard for him to know what's really happening to them because censors in German-occupied Poland have blacked out half the lines in the letters.

Mail also arrives from David's aunt and uncle, Golda (Regina's sister) and Leo Katz and their children, who had lived one block from the Wolkowitzes in Leipzig before the war. They write about life in their new home in the United States, where they had immigrated after fleeing Germany. David stares at the return address of every envelope the Katzes send

and wishes that one day he, too, could live at 316 Commonwealth Avenue, Buffalo, New York, USA.

The higher David climbed in the Alps, the lower the temperatures dropped. *I need to get across the mountains before I freeze to death*, he told himself. *I'm so close*. But as he neared the Swiss border, he heard spurts of gunfire. He scrambled to a vantage point and felt his heart sink. The Germans had set up a machine-gun nest at the mountain pass David had planned to cross. He tried a different route that skirted the enemy, but when he reached the next pass, he discovered that it, too, was patrolled by the German soldiers. *I can practically see Switzerland. I can't give up now*.

David felt desperate. He hadn't eaten in a couple of days, and his body ached from the frigid conditions. He was starting to feel panicky. He soon met a small group of refugees who were carrying bundles on their backs. "You can't get into Switzerland," the leader told David. "The Germans have set up machine-gun nests at every mountain pass. They're picking off people foolish enough to try to reach the border."

David was crushed. *All that walking, all that begging for food and stealing from gardens ... for what?* He was tired and cold and hungry, so the dejected boy turned around and hiked down the mountain with no goal other than to survive. He felt just as anxious and lost as he did in the days following May 10, 1940.

David is awakened by wailing sirens, explosions, and gunfire. Germany is attacking Belgium, which doesn't have an army strong enough to repel the rapidly advancing invaders.

Knowing they won't be safe anymore in Belgium, Abraham and Regina decide they and David will escape to neighboring France. But because they don't have passports or the proper papers, they must try to sneak in illegally. Abraham, taking his prized violin with him, leaves first and plans to contact them once he enters France.

Days go by without word from him, and David and his mother can wait no longer. They leave Brussels on the train for France—a country now partly occupied by Germany. The train carries mostly women and children. Wherever he looks, David sees death and destruction, chaos and confusion. Tens of thousands are fleeing in cars, in horse-drawn wagons, and on foot.

For more than ten days, the train crisscrosses northern France in a frantic journey to nowhere. It stops and it starts, is shuffled from track to track, and chugs in one direction

and then another in a desperate effort to avoid getting strayed, bombed, or caught in the crossfire between French and German troops.

Look out! David ducks for cover under the seat when German planes swoop down and pepper the train with bullets.

Just as the train pulls out of the station of the French town of Dieppe, German bombs rain down and destroy the station.

Finally, the train stops for good in a small town in northern France, where everyone is ordered off. When David and his mother can't produce any valid papers, they are arrested and sent to a crude prison in a farm compound, where they sleep on a bale of hay in a horse stable. Two weeks later, they are taken by train to the Rieucros internment camp in southern France, where hundreds of women and children are kept under armed guard in wooden barracks surrounded by barbed wire.

After turning around from the Swiss border, David walked aimlessly throughout southeastern France. He entered the cities of Lyon and Grenoble, but because they were teeming with German soldiers, he left for safer smaller towns. *I can't keep walking forever*, he told himself. *Who knows how long this war will last?*

Hearing about a Catholic priest who was sympathetic to the plight of the Jews, David hiked to the mountain village of Villard-de-Lans. He found the priest and told him his story. The priest, known as Monsieur le Curé, immediately sent a housekeeper to bring David fresh clothes and shoes to replace his tattered garments and footwear. That evening, the young teenager had his first hot meal in months and slept in a comfortable bed in the priest's residence. The two formed a quick bond, partly because the priest shared David's love for classical music and had a large record library.

David and Monsieur le Curé agreed to tell everyone that the boy was a Catholic orphaned by the war. That fib required David to attend Mass every Sunday and follow the rituals and traditions of the Church, which he tried to do—up to a point.

“Monsieur le Curé,” David told him, “I am grateful to be here. But I'm Jewish, and my faith doesn't allow me to kneel during Mass.”

The priest nodded. “I understand. From now on, when the rest of us kneel during Mass, just lean forward in the pew to give the appearance that you're kneeling. That way you can stay true to your religion and not raise any suspicions that you're not Catholic.”

“Thank you. I'll do that.”

Monsieur le Curé put his hand on the boy's shoulder and said, "The Nazis have taken away your parents and all your possessions. But remember, David, the one thing they will never be able to take away from you is your beliefs."

Like all the prisoners at Rieucros, mother and son sleep on wooden shelves with only a straw mattress and rough horsehair blanket for bedding. Night after night, David wakes up screaming as rats scamper over his body.

Breakfast consists of a piece of dark, hard bread and coffee made from roasted roots. Lunch and dinner are the same—a bowl of soup, which is nothing more than hot water with a few pieces of cabbage leaves or rutabaga. The food is barely enough to keep them alive. Because of horrible sanitary conditions and vermin infestation, the muddy and stinky camp becomes a breeding ground for disease. David and Regina are always sick, usually with dysentery. He is getting alarmed that his mother, once a blonde beauty, is growing old, gaunt, and pale with worry about their future—or if they even have one.

For weeks, David and Regina have no clue about Abraham's fate. Then one day they are notified that he had been arrested while trying to enter France and is now toiling in the notoriously awful Gurs labor camp in the Pyrenees, the mountain range that separates France from Spain.

But their spirits soar when, with the help of friends and relatives in the United States, they are given the necessary documents to immigrate to America. Uncle Leo in Buffalo writes that he has borrowed \$200 to pay for the Wolkowitzes' passage to the United States. For the first time since his early days in Brussels, David feels hope again.

Unfortunately, the U.S. government has strict immigration laws that allow only a certain number of immigrants to enter the country every month. So, David and his mother are moved to the Les Milles transit camp, an abandoned brick factory near the city of Aix-en-Provence, to wait their turn.

Although conditions there aren't much better than in Rieucros, David finds one reason to be happy—he and his mother are reunited with Abraham, who also has been sent there. Not having seen his dad in nearly a year, the boy is shocked at Abraham's scrawny appearance. His father explains that at Gurs he had been mistreated and forced to work long hours for little food, and he saw hundreds of slave laborers fall dead from starvation and malnourishment.

Despite the priest's protection, David didn't feel too secure, because every week German troops stormed into Villard-de-Lans, randomly searching houses, hoping to flush

out hidden Jews or members of the Resistance. During these raids, the priest concealed David behind a wall in the attic or had the boy mingle with the parishioners during Mass.

After a while, the Germans became suspicious of Monsieur le Curé's secret work helping Jews. Fearing that David could be at risk staying with him, the priest arranged for the teen to work in exchange for room and board for Monsieur and Madame Pouteil-Noble, an elderly couple who needed help on their small farm. They treated David well and accepted the risks of harboring a Jew. Although he had been raised in a cultured life, he easily adapted to shoveling manure, tending the cows and pigs, and working the fields.

But even the countryside wasn't free from danger. The enemy staged surprise raids on farms, hunting for Jews and Resistance fighters. Whenever that happened, one farmer would run to the next farm to warn people that the Germans were coming. David would scurry into the mountain forest until the threat passed.

During one of those times, he encountered a group of Resistance fighters who wielded small weapons that had been parachuted to them by the British. The teenager revealed the truth to them about himself and his life.

"You could be a big help to us," the Resistance leader told him.

"How?"

"You could be a courier, relaying messages and information between the Resistance groups in the area—things such as the number of Germans who are coming our way, the kind of armament they're carrying, what they're riding in. Nothing is ever written down in case you are caught. But that won't be likely. You're young and shouldn't attract suspicion. You can still work on the farm. But we will need to get you a new identity."

David became the youngest member of the group. Three weeks later, the French underground gave him fake identification documents. From now on, he was Daniel Dumont.

Every morning at the Les Milles transit camp, David wakes up hoping, Is today the day they let us leave for America? And every night, when there was no word, he eases the disappointment by telling himself, Maybe tomorrow. Rumors (which later turned out to be true) begin spreading in camp that anti-Semitic American officials, including Breckinridge Long, who is in charge of immigration for the U.S. State Department, are dragging their feet because they don't want more Jews in America. Now it's early December 1941. Les Milles is buzzing with the stunning news that Japan has attacked Pearl Harbor, causing the United States to enter the war.

"What does this mean, Pappi?" David asks Abraham.

“It means, son, that we won’t be going to America.”

The disheartened Wolkowitzes are shipped off to another camp, Rivesaltes, where men, women, and children are separated from one another by barbed wire-fences. The children are cared for by the OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants), a French children’s welfare society.

Now it’s August 1942. Camp authorities order everyone to pack up their meager belongings and await transportation to “the East.” Everyone assumes they will be resettled in a labor camp until the end of the war. The OSE convinces authorities that rather than go with their parents, the children will be safer in various orphanages that the welfare society operates throughout France.

David, who is 12, begs his parents, “Don’t let them take me to an orphanage. I want to stay with you.”

“It’s for your own good,” his mother says. “You’ll be living in much better conditions. You’ll have your own bed and lots of food. It’ll be like a vacation.”

“I’m afraid I won’t see you again.”

“Oh, don’t worry,” soothes his father. “We’ve been separated twice before and we ended up back together. This time, Mother and I will be gone until the war is over, and then we’ll be a family once again.”

David wants to believe him, but the boy sees in Abraham’s eyes a haunting gaze that frightens him. It’s the look of a man who doesn’t believe his own words.

Regina hugs her son tighter than she has ever hugged him before and then steps away, sobbing. Abraham reaches for his cherished violin and gently runs his fingers over the rosewood. As tears trickle down his cheeks, he hands it to David and says, “Take this. Keep it safe until we’re together again.”

Gripping the violin, the heartbroken boy watches his parents get swallowed up by a mass of Jews who are being herded for shipment to “the East,” wherever that is.

When he wasn’t working on the farm, David was delivering messages for the Resistance. During one such mission, he was walking along a country road bordered by a deep ditch on each side. Without warning, a dozen German soldiers jumped out from the sides and ordered him to raise his hands. Once he got over the initial shock, he pretended not to understand them. *They’d become suspicious of me if I let on that I speak German*, he thought. He responded in French, “I don’t understand what you are saying.” None of the

soldiers spoke French, so one of them motioned for him to raise his hands, which he did. His knees began to shake. *How am I ever going to get out of this mess?*

As they marched him toward the village, he understood every word they were saying to one another. What he heard petrified him. *They're taking me to Gestapo headquarters for questioning! They'll discover I'm a Jew, and then they'll torture and kill me!* He looked around, frantically searching for a way to escape, looking for someone who could help him. The only person he saw was the wife from the neighboring farm. She was standing in the field, showing no expression on her face as she watched David's arrest. *It's useless to try to escape*, he thought. He stared at the ground, resigned to his impending death. When he glanced into the field again, the woman had disappeared.

David was so scared he wondered how his legs could function, how his lungs could breathe. How much time do I have left to live? When will they ...

Suddenly, gunfire erupted, and he fell to the ground. At first, he thought the soldiers were shooting at him, but then he realized that the bullets were coming from the edge of the woods next to the road. The soldiers scattered and leaped into the ditch on the opposite side. *Here's my chance!* He scrambled to his feet and sprinted into the woods, barely getting a glimpse of the Resistance fighters who had sprung him from certain death after the neighbor lady had alerted them. He hurried back to the farm. Despite the scare, he continued to carry out his duties for the French Resistance. Conditions were primitive for the fighters. They slept on the ground and moved all the time. They couldn't light any fires at night for fear of being spotted by German patrols, so meals consisted of raw horse meat and raw eggs. David learned how to puncture an egg at both ends and then suck out the insides without breaking the shell.

With their parents shipped off to "the East," David and other boys from Les Milles are taken to an orphanage called Château Montintin, south of the French city of Limoges.

Although life at the orphanage is strictly regimented, the boys are well cared for. They receive adequate food, medical care, and an education, including carpentry classes and some religious instruction. They are kept busy, so they don't dwell on the war. Still, David cries himself to sleep every night because he misses his parents. He yearns for a letter from them—even one with blacked-out lines—but deep down he knows none will come. He has no idea where they are and he doubts they know where he is.

It's the summer of 1943. In spite of all the hardships the boys in the orphanage have endured, they never abandon their Jewish heritage. When David and five other boys near their thirteenth birthday, a rabbi is brought to inform Limoges to prepare them for their bar

mitzvah (the coming-of-age of a Jewish boy when he is responsible for his moral and religious duties). The bar mitzvah ceremony is held in a makeshift sanctuary of the orphanage. Each of the six boys is given an ink pen. What David wants most of all is to see his mother and father. Not having them there at the ceremony—the most important day of Jewish boy's life—makes his heart ache.

David's work with the Resistance ended after Allied forces drove the German army out of southern France in the summer of 1944. The OSE sent him to an orphanage in Montmorency, a suburb of Paris. Because he never forgot the address of his uncle Leo and aunt Golda—316 Commonwealth Avenue, Buffalo, New York, USA—he wrote to them. They responded by sending him care packages full of snacks and other treats.

When the war ended in 1945, David, like most people throughout the world, was horrified to learn that millions had been murdered in Nazi extermination camps. Hoping against hope that his parents were still alive, he contacted the International Red Cross and other refugee organizations that were trying to reunite survivors with their children.

While waiting for information about his parents, he wondered what it would be like to see them again. *How will I react? How much have they changed in my eyes? How much have I changed to them? It's been three years since we last saw one another. I'm no longer the little boy they remember. I'm fifteen now, and I've seen and suffered enough. But I survived. Maybe they have, too. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be a family again, to play music together again, to have a home again?*

David was eating lunch in the dining hall of the orphanage when an official came up to him and said, "We have news about your parents."

David took a deep breath and quickly studied the person's face, looking for a smile or a twinkle in the eyes that would tell him Abraham and Regina were alive.

"I'm sorry, David. They did not survive. They were killed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz in 1942."

Although he wasn't surprised, David still went numb. It was the tragic news he expected but didn't want to hear. He caught his breath and asked, "And my grandparents?"

"They were murdered in the Warsaw ghetto. My deepest sympathies."

I have nothing of my loved ones, David thought. Not even Pappi's violin. It had been left at Château Montintin for safekeeping and disappeared after he fled from the orphanage. All I have are my memories.

The heartbroken boy wrote to his aunt and uncle, who then set the wheels in motion to bring him to America. During the long wait, Leo's friend, U.S. Army Captain Irving Green, who was stationed in Paris, took David out to eat once a week.

One day, Green brought David to the American Consulate to see an official whose desk was stacked with files of people waiting to immigrate to America. Because the files were arranged alphabetically, David Wolkowitz's folder was near the bottom of the pile. "Do me a favor," Captain Green told the official. "David is an orphan. His parents were killed in Auschwitz. Put his file at the top so he can get to America. He's waited long enough."

When David, who had turned 16, arrived in Buffalo in 1946, Aunt Golda let him pour out his heart about the Holocaust. Then she gently cut him off, saying, "You have a new life now. Forget about everything that ever happened to you over there. Don't think about it. Don't even talk about it. You must move forward."

Over the next 50 years, he barely spoke about it. But every day since his arrival in America, David has vowed never to forget.

Embraced by Leo and Golda Katz and their five children, David blossomed in high school in Buffalo. He eventually served in the U.S. Army in Germany as a member of a battalion that provided security for military trains. He married Mary Anne Vineberg in 1953, and they legally changed their last name to Katz in tribute to his aunt and uncle and cousins. David worked in the family concession business while he and Mary Anne raised four children. For 20 years, he sang with the Choral Arts Society and in the choir of the Buffalo Philharmonic. He retired in 1994 and moved to Chesapeake, Virginia, with his wife, an accomplished artist.

Since 1996, David Katz has been a member of the Holocaust Commission of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater and speaks often to students and other groups. "I use my experiences during the Holocaust as an example of what happens when indifference, intolerance, lack of respect, and hate permeate our society," he says. "I speak to honor my parents, grandparents, and the six million other Jewish martyrs who perished during the Holocaust. I speak, because they can no longer speak."

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