



SIGMUND (ZIGGY) GORSON
International TV & Radio Variety Shows

WOODLAND TOWNHOUSE APTS.
7 LOWRY DRIVE
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19805
(302) 633-1266



(11B) "ASHES OF MY PEOPLE"

BY: ZIGGY GORSON

Returning back home from my trip into Poland and not finding any living member of my family. Coming home to Jean waiting for me in Bergen-Belsen D.P. Camp in the British Occupied Zone of West Germany...

For more than 3 weeks, I was relentlessly and mercilessly searching throughout Poland for at least one surviving member of my family, I went from village to small village and from city to city looking and asking questions and not receiving any honest answers to my shattered heart and the vanishing hopes for my lost cause.

The fire still burning inside of me and the images of my loved ones constantly before my eyes infused in me that certain mysterious desire to push on and on without giving up my holy quest of successfully succeeding in my pursuit, on many occasions I was chased by wild dogs at night times in certain small villages wanting desperately to tear me apart but I was always somehow lucky to chase these hungry and half frozen animals away from me, only on two occasions was I badly bitten by these dogs.

My blood kept running down my legs and arms and there was absolutely nothing that I was able to do, I remember that I was covering my bloody wounds with snow and pieces of ice shivering with frostbite at the same time, and yes, the white blizzard was still continuing at a furious pace not letting up for even one moment.

It was Christmas time throughout Poland when I finally decided to give up my futile search and trying to return to my wife waiting for me in the Bergen-Belsen D.P. Camp.

Only one more try, I was saying to myself, please God, let me endure one more search of my Polish Home Town, Lodz, where I saw my family for the very last time alive shortly after the Nazi invasion of Lodz, in September of 1939.

I walked for miles hungry and wet to our home on the Kopernika number 55, where we lived before the Nazi onslaught. I finally reached the street and my home and met there a Nazi collaborator during the German occupation of my city and who immediately after the war and while Lodz now was being occupied by the Russians, put on a red armband with the Communist emblem serving willingly the new masters of Poland. His name was Antoni Juzwiak, whom my beloved late dad hired before the war to keep the property clean and in order.

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My father paid him well and he together with his 5 member family was fully accepted as one of us. I remember that my parents gave Juzwiak a three room fully furnished apartment in one of our large buildings on Kopernika Street 55, and even supplied the Juzwiak family with heating fuel during the cold winter months of Poland. He was a peasant without being able to sign even his own name, in other words, he was completely illiterate and so was his wife however, two of his teenage children, my father placed them at our local school to get an education.

The family came to us from a small poor Polish village where there was hardly enough food on their table to feed the Juzwiak family. My very compassionate parents saw to it that this hard working Polish family had always plenty of food to eat during the meager months of the year.

When I finally reached my home where I grew up and knocked on the doors to let me in and to get away from the blizzard, I've noticed that our house was now occupied by the Juzwiak family and that they didn't live any longer in their own apartments in the middle of the property as before.

After knocking on our doors several times, he, Juzwiak, finally let me in and after I told him who I was because he didn't recognize me thinking that perhaps I too perished in the Nazi gas chambers, his frightened face turned white and was unable to communicate with me for quite a long time.

With a broken heart I've noticed that my parents expensive paintings was now adorning as always before the walls of my former home now being occupied by the Juzwiak family. He and his wife saw me looking at the portraits by world famous artists., but not saying anything to me for awhile, I also have noticed my beloved mother's expensive cut cristal and porcelain which they had displayed on several tables and shelves.

I asked the Juzwiaks what has happened to my family shortly after the Nazis took over our city. I saw Juzwiak trembling and mumbling to his wife to say something to me, but I knew that they were lying to me and that somehow they were guilty of my families disappearance in one of the Nazi death camps.

I was right, because across our street lived a very close childhood friend of my parents who ate and drank many a times in our house and even played on our grand piano. He was a respected Catholic priest with whom my parents grew up and went to school together in their younger years. He was a good man and a proud Pole who loved my family. The minute I arrived in his warm house he



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recognized me immediately and started to kiss and embracing me and at the same time we both cried our eyes out. He kept saying its a miracle, God's miracle that you Ziggy survived the Nazi death camps. He went to his desk and pulled out several pictures of my parents and my three sisters telling me amidst his running tears that these priceless to me photographs were now all mine and that my parents gave him these rare pictures shortly before they were brutally taken away by the Nazis with the help of Mr. Antoni Juzwiak, our so-called erstwhile devoted friend and worker who was also at certain times a Polish fellow compatriot, so I thought, but I was wrong indeed.

I told this brave and gallant Pole, that I've noticed expensive belongings of my parents and the priest knew it but was afraid to do anything about this tragedy. He told me that as soon as the Germans marched into our city, he Juzwiak, started wearing on his arm the Nazi despised swastika and proudly telling the neighbors that he was now a German.

This decent Pole also told me that as soon as the Communists invaded our city after defeating the Nazis, he, Juzwiak, then became over night a Communist and wore proudly the Soviet red armband.

Millions of bitter thoughts and heartbreaks were going through my tired mind and I was still waiting for the priests inevitable confession to convey to me the real tragedy. I did not had to wait for it too long, because this valiant Polish priest told me finally the soul shattering news. He saw himself that Juzwiak brought several heavily armed Nazi SS-men and pointed out to them where my innocent family was hiding and even helped the murderers to push my parents and sisters on the waiting Nazi trucks to be taken away to their deaths.

The priest also told me that all the precious jewelry and other valuable items which my parents were hiding from the Germans under the grounds of one of our properties, he, Juzwiak was selling during the Nazi occupation of Lodz on the black market and some of these, he gave away to his Nazi friends.

The priest noticed that I was shivering with cold and that I was very hungry, he told me to lie down on his bed covering me with several warm blankets and offering me some hot tea and sandwiches but I was unable to swallow any food after finding out finally the truth. I eagerly drank the hot tea which he served me and immediately fell asleep.



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My mother's youngest brother who run away from Lodz shortly before the German invasion and who during the Nazi occupation of Poland joined the free Polish Army fighting in Russia the Nazi hordes and who because of his bravery was decorated by the then Polish Army General, Wladyslaw Sikorski with the highest Polish Military Order of Virtuti-Military and who also was promoted to Colonel and who was one of the very first Polish Army Officers to re-capture our city from the Nazis and whom I was lucky to find him being stationed in Lodz with his army unit and our tearful re-union cannot ever be described in words only.

Suffice to say, here in the middle of a heavy snow storm in the very center of our city two men were standing embracing each other and crying with tears of blood. One was a uniformed highly decorated Polish Military hero and the other was a 20 year old youngster dressed in shabby clothes with worn out shoes and with hardly any hair on his head, but they shared between them a close family love rejuvenated once again after six bitter years of forced misery, the only two living people of a once 58 member close knit family.

He was always one of my very favorite uncles and my mother and father loved him very much and so did the rest of our family. He was College educated and graduated on top of his class at the University of Warsaw, Poland.

He thought that I perished in the gas chambers of Auschwitz together with the rest of our family and I thought throughout the war years that he was killed in the battle of Stalingrad or while fighting to liberate Poland from the Germans.

He drove me in his military jeep to an army depot where he requested some new clothes and shoes for me for which I was very grateful to him. During our ride, I told him about the Juzwiak affair and what he has done in helping the enemy in destroying our family and that he has betrayed the Polish code of honor.

My uncle took good care of that traitor and his crimes against innocent mankind was fully avenged.



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After embracing my uncle for the very last time in Lodz, Poland (he later went to Israel where he was killed fighting the terrorists) I left Poland heart broken and very disappointed not being able to find at least one of my sisters or at least one of my parents. But that's life and I had no other choice but to accept the bitter reality of something which I was unable to change or bring back again into life.

I was on my way now to smuggle myself back to the D.P. Camp of Bergen and to be reunited again with my wife.

The arduous road leading me back home was just awful and full of daily dangers lurking at me from every corner and from every street and especially from every village.

I kept walking days and nights without hardly stopping but pushing on and on. The entire world before me was completely covered in white and as before the snow kept coming down without ever letting up. Throughout eastern Europe when there is heavy snowing, it continues to snow from the middle of September and sometimes to the middle of April.

I came into a large open railroad field loaded with parked huge empty box cars without any doors on them and this was an indication to me that some people ripped these doors out to heat their wooden shacks.

There were at least several hundred of these railroad box cars standing on the snow covered tracks and the snowy wind was fiercely blowing thru these doorless box cars. I remember trying to hide for awhile in one of these cars but it was colder for me being inside of them than outside.

From far away I've noticed a huge narrow building looking to me like an abandoned lighthouse, without any sign of life or light and the entire building was shrouded in ice and white snow.

Something inside of me told me that there was some kind of life in that scary looking tower and so I've approached the building with caution entering the same thru a narrow green painted steel door and I have found myself on a steel platform leading down on spiral iron steps leading below the surface and suddenly I heard voices from the basement. As I kept going down lower and lower on these spiral steps, I heard the Russian language being spoken mixed with laughter and song.

As I finally reached the bottom of that building I saw several uniformed Russian soldiers with their machineguns leaning against the wall, the sold-



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iers were all drunk and resting on the bare cement floor. The smell of the alcohol was uncanny and rough, they were passing bottles of their vodka among themselves and at the same time eating large chunks of a black bread and also taking bites of salty frozen herring which they were keeping in a large wooden box.

On the other side of that basement a group of several Catholic nuns were huddling together in total fear and bewilderment. The youngest nun was very pretty with big eyes and a friendly face and she motioned to me as I came down to rest next to them.

She spoke both Polish and German and so I wanted to know what was going on there and she told me that all of them were waiting for an incoming train to take them all away.

The nuns destination was the city of Berlin in the American military sector and that the Russian soldiers were there for at least one week eating and drinking and continuously playing on their small accordions and singing along Soviet military songs.

The young nun also told me that their order was Franciscan and that they were there for the last two days hiding below from the snowy blizzard, they had very little food among them and did the very best with their meager ration and I've also noticed that they drank water made from melted snow.

One of the Russian soldiers told the others that he would like to have some fun and sex with the young pretty nun. I heard him saying in Russian that he was ready right there and then to rape that innocent young woman and that anyone stopping him he would shoot to kill. He was unable to get up on his feet to reach the young nun because of his alcoholic stupor and so he started to crawl on his knees toward the terrifying nun falling down each time as he was trying to get up.

Her frightened beautiful big eyes looked at me as saying; please help me, I beg of you, please help me and get me away quickly from here. I suddenly got up and grabbed her at her wrist and run towards the spiral steps to reach the top level. We both kept hitting our shinbones from the edges of the steel steps and in the meantime the Russian and some of his men got up somehow and started to shoot after us and their powerful bullets were flying all over the upper level of the spiral steps but by heavenly miracle not hitting us.



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She told me that her name was Sister Theresa and that I was risking my life in order to save hers. We kept running at top speed and falling down not being able to see the deep holes between the tracks because they were covered totally with a soft snow. I was holding her and pulling her alongside with me not looking back for one single moment. However, the Russians were still shooting at random and yelling after me; come back you SOB because we will get you sooner or later and we will kill you on the spot together with that whore.

From where we took the super-human strength to keep running and running is still a great enigma to me to this very day. I suppose, it was God's will for being there when needed. I have no other truthful explanation, I believe that we both covered several miles since leaving that building. Danger has an imminent certain way of succeeding any facing peril at any cost and at any odds.

As we were running away from the Russians, I've noticed that she was hemorrhaging and that her legs were covered with blood.

I have tried to stop several times trying to wash away her blood with snow but she kept begging to get away from danger farther and farther and so we kept running not knowing where we were heading on that snowy dark night.

From far away we saw a barn or home standing in the middle of our path and we also saw a light flickering in one of the windows and as we came near this wooden old house we've noticed a lighted candle and an old man standing over it. The windows were covered with ice and so I started together with Sister Theresa scratching the ice away with our finger nails and at the same time knocking gently on the frozen glass.

The old man finally decided to open his door and inviting us inside. I've noticed that he was an elderly German farmer and that he lived there all by himself. I told him what the Russians were trying to do to the young nun and he understood our grave problem. He told us to follow him into another section of his barn and to climb up the wooden ladder leading us up above the many rolls of straw and hay and hide there for the time being, we did just that with deep appreciation.

He left us for a little while bringing back with him a large wooden pot full of hot water and so I was able to wash the still shivering with fear this innocent young woman. She had blood all over her body and I did the best I could to clean her up. The old farmer was feeding us for the few days that



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we were there hiding. Sister Theresa and I, kept ourselves warm by covering up each other with the many rolls of straw and hay and with some rags that the old man gave us.

The nun was now completely relaxed and was not afraid any longer, she told me that she trusted me with her life and that she will forever pray for me. Indeed, with her rosary beads constantly in her tiny hands she kept praying day and night and always having on her pretty face that certain angelic smile for me.

Three days later the old man returned once again to speak with us and giving us the good news that the rest of the people together with the Russian soldiers left that morning on a commercial train destination unknown.

We packed up the few belongings which the farmer gave us and after embracing him for the very last time, the nun and I, left for Berlin to find her convent and the other few nuns.

I was lucky, because I indeed, was able to find for Sister Theresa her assigned order and the others who were waiting with open arms for her.

She told her Mother Superior all about our terrible experience with the Russian soldiers and that I saved her life from potential danger.

I was asked by the Mother Superior to rest up with them for a few days before leaving for home...