



Eugene's Story, Chapter 1

My name is Eugene Black. I was born Jeno Swarcz in Czechoslovakia, a place called Munkacs or Munkacevo. On the 9th of the 2nd, February 1928 that's the date when I came and arrived in this world.

I was born into a Jewish family. My mother had a very strong orthodox background, my father didn't. I personally used to be taken by my father twice a year to the synagogue so religion, the orthodox Jewish religion played very little part in my younger days or later on in life. The family consisted of five children, 3 girls, myself and my older brother. I was the youngest one. There was 16 years difference between my sister Blanka and myself. My father was a master tailor, he employed a number of people and he had 2 or 3 shops where he sold cloth in the town. I came from quite a comfortable home, never knew what hunger meant or to be deprived of anything. As I grew up I was very interested in education and in sport. I was soccer mad. I actually played for the school team. But in 1941 I recollect coming home, my father meeting me at the door and he says to me, "Jeno I'm sorry to tell you but Blanka has had a heart attack," and she died, that was in 1941. Of course I wasn't aware of what went on in Poland and in the old occupied countries as far as the Jewish population was concerned but I soon learned as from 1941 onwards they were sending young men between 20 and 40 into labour camps and I understand that the young man who my sister was engaged to, he was one of them, taken to the Ukraine and they were part of the Hungarian and German forces doing slave labour for them. As time went on I became very aware about anti-Semitism, there were certainly, there were certainly obviously to be noticed that the Jewish population are being selected out on various, in various ways they were limited in professionally whether they were doctors or lawyers, things became noticeably different than in previous years.