



Rudi's Story, Chapter 1

I'm Rudi Leavor, although my original name was Librowicz, we changed it in 1959. I was born in Berlin in Germany in 1926 and spent my childhood there.

We were orthodox but not ultra-orthodox. We would keep a kosher home, quite strictly kosher, but my father worked on Saturday and we would use public transport on a Saturday. There was no question of having a car in those days. But I think the one thing that kept us together as Jews was keeping a kosher home. And of course we went to synagogue fairly regularly. I certainly went every Saturday.

And was it a Jewish neighbourhood you were born into?

Not at all. We were fully integrated and assimilated into German society, German culture and my parents had many non-Jewish friends. Jewish friends as well. So we considered ourselves to be Germans and we happened to be Jewish as well.

Can you describe your family home?

It was a flat which happened to have a long corridor from which the rooms went to one side. One of the rooms near the entrance served as a surgery for my father and the adjacent room, the one with the piano, served as a waiting room and dining room. And then the bedrooms and the kitchen came off this corridor.

I think my earliest memory would be when I was about 4 when my parents asked me what I wanted for my birthday. And I said I would like a tram or a train, something on wheels. And they even asked what colour I would like and I said orange and yellow. And I was presented with a very nice wooden tram about this long, a toy, painted in those colours. I think that was my first conscious experience of life, my fourth birthday. Which happened to be the day before my sister was born and my mother keeps reminding or kept reminding us that we had a party of mainly elderly relatives and when my sister arrived the next day they were all astonished that nobody knew anything about it. My mother was able to hide her pregnancy.

And did you go to kindergarten?

Yes I went to a kindergarten under the auspices of the Montessori which was one where they allowed children to do what they liked and one day one of the other children threw a brick into my face which made my lip bleed and my mother promptly took me out of this particular kindergarten [laughs].