

## **INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL**

QUESTION:

Talk about that picture right there.

MICHAEL:

This is a general which was in a town. I was come to here.

QUESTION:

I thought she was a spy for you.

MICHAEL:

She was a spy too. She was - - tell me all, all the,  
the information for the from the Germans when the Germans  
was go of the freeway.

QUESTION:

The road, it is not a freeway.

MICHAEL:

This is- - the general was living in a town une uh, I was come to here when I have fir- - first time une she give me information about the Germans. Because she, she lived near the m - - main, main road une she was ammunition she come with what uh, how many une uh, uh, I, I was a little friendly with her.

QUESTION:

What does that mean?

MICHAEL:

[LAUGHTER] Yeah, I was friends.

QUESTION:

Point out who's who.

MICHAEL:

This is my family before the war. This is me. Une, une this is my brother. Uh, he live in Israel. He survived.

With me he was a partisan too. My father was a  
partisan, no he was killed in the war.

QUESTION:

Which one was you?

MICHAEL:

My father was a partisan, and he was killed in war.

QUESTION:

Which one is you?

MICHAEL:

This is me.

QUESTION:

Do it again.

MICHAEL:

One car in town. Only my father have the car. We come

from a rich family. Was a small town was maybe about 200  
eh, uh, Jewish families. Une was maybe about 2,000 maybe,  
maybe Chri- - Christian families. This is me. Une, this  
is my brother what survived. Une this is my father. Une I  
survived two cousins, une my brother.

I show you here. This, this is me. This is my brother he  
live in Israel. He have a family. Une this is a cousin,  
une this is a cousin. They are both by in Israel.

QUESTION:

Can you talk about the other picture?

MICHAEL:

This picture is make from this.

QUESTION:

Talk about when these pictures were taken.

MICHAEL:

in wartime. I kill a German soldier and I took from him  
the, the camera.

QUESTION:

Where were you?

MICHAEL:

I was in the partisans. In forest and uh, uh, German knock  
me with the back from rifle in the mouth he break my  
teeth. I no have teeth. I have teeth but they were  
partials. The war er, when he knocked me down and I not  
see him because we was in bushes. And when I fall he  
knock me down and I fall and when I fall I push the trigger  
and I kill him. He was wounded too.

I say you son of bitch why you try to do this to me. And I  
stick my mouth I spoke with blood. When I speak of him with  
the blood. And he say I don't want kill you. I want to  
take you alive. Uh, you want take me alive? And, I want  
take you in, in dead and I finger it. This happen already

you know, I not see him, I not see him. The German  
because we was in, in bushes une, une he see me he knock  
me down with the back for rifle.

When he knock me down with back from rifle. I take a look  
of him une I see a big strong gentleman une I have my  
automatic rifle in my, in my hand. Une I pull the, the  
trigger une, une he falls down. When he fall down I asked  
him why you do this to me. I was speaking German good  
too. Une uh, he said I don't want to kill you. I say I  
want to take you alive. And he told me he want to take me  
alive une I say when I want too. I want you dead. When I  
finish with him.

When I took from his automatic rifle what he have. I took  
from him, uh, uh, the, the camera. Uh, une I, I took from  
him many things. I took his clothes too Une I brought  
to, to the partisans. Now I was bleeding from my mouth as  
go, oh, blood on this- -

QUESTION:

He knocked your teeth out?

MICHAEL:

He knocked me the teeth, yeah. Knocked une I come to hospital eh, the Russian took me to hospital. Une with the Une, uh, when I when I come again to the partisans a long story. You must, you, you must read the book. I was already maybe in the 18's une the Russian come uh. On this- -

QUESTION:

When the Russians came?

MICHAEL:

No, no when the when Germans come. When the Germans come. when the German's come, the Germans begin to take from us to rob the houses, to take everything what they want. Because they come in house, he sees some pictures on the walls. He takes the pictures he see,

carpet the Persian carpet or this we was in uh, a rich family in a rich house. The Germans took everything.

They took away from us everything. Une we see said this is not so. We not can live like this. Une uh, this une my parent's tell me we go in forest. We go in forest we fight against the Germans. My father was a partisan une uh, une I with one of my brothers was in forest. Une two brothers was with my mother. She was in house. Une uh, my uh sister was in uh, in uh, big city in Bellastook for practice.

She finish university of physical matematica. Une she not come back. Une after the Germans kill my, my mother, kill my brothers une my father was killed as like a - - like a resistance fighter. Like a partisan. Une I with my brother we survive. Look this was not so easy to find the partisans. Because the partisan was live in the forest was the forest was very big.

It was uh, impossible to find in the forest. No me- - my mother decides that we run from house. Une should we not run altogether should we run separate. My father run separate. I with my brother what survive run, eh, eh, run separate. Une we become uh, she told me should I go

to a to a Christian guy what he was a very good friend.

With my father he was with my father in business. Une we run to this guy he, he live uh, three miles or four miles from our town this in a small town. Then we was crossing uh, uh, uh, uh, railroad une somebody stop us. This was very early in the morning. Une this was partisans. Partisans. Une uh, he check me on this. He ask me I say I'm Jewish une I want to be a partisan too. With my brother.

Une he say look come talking now about uh, uh, different things. We want to blow up the train sta, uh, station. Une, the, the, the railroad. The railroads. Now when you want to you can help us une after we talk about everything.

Good. When he show me how to put on mine une

- - -

uh, how you call it?

QUESTION:

Rails

MICHAEL:

Rails une metal rails. So he show me you must take a little take out the, the sand or the stones une you have a bottom. You must uh, uh, turn the bottom. Une the bottom come to the uh, uh, to the to the rail to the rail une when the train go the train make about two inches uh, uh, he press of the rail une the mine blew up. I repeat une, une I he said no he say we take care of you.

Une you go une put the, the mine onto the rail. Une I go une I put the mine on onto the rail. Une we was put the the rail to here when a train when a train coming when a train coming

you hear tick, tick, tick, tick, tick,

the, the uh, sound from, from this, this from the train.  
Une we was after every ten minutes I was go to the rail  
une, une listen put my ear une listen. Uh, a train coming  
or not. Maybe of the third or the fourth time when I run  
to the, to the rail I hear this a train coming. Une we  
was of the other side from the rails the partisans was on  
this side of the rails.

Une when uh, the rail the train come une it blew up blew  
up une uh, uh, we begin to run. We run to city partisan's  
une the partisans run in one direction with une we run in  
a different directions. I don't know how to find him.  
Une we lost the partisans. Lost the partisans une I  
decide with my brother to run from the place.

The Germans was a Germans train with uh, wounded uh,  
soldiers with uh, ammunition with this. We begin to open  
fire in all directions. The soldiers begin to, to

shot in all directions. Une, une we run une we run une  
after we come to a town what the town's name is Komarova.  
We come, when we come to the town une we run with the  
fields une somebody from the farmers see us.

Une see us une he know us. He know because he was come to  
our store. Une he begin to scream. My father was Shalom  
une we was Shalom chikees. Shalom Chikees is Shalom's  
children. He blew up the train. Une he begin to scream  
to his wife, she, she open the chains from the dogs. He  
have two dogs.

She the dogs. Was a barking of us. She open the chains.  
So now she scream to him don't open, don't open the chains  
from the dogs. When, when you do this I blew up your house  
too, I say. Une I burn your house. Don't do this. Une she  
was afraid une she not do this une we run, we run through  
the fields. So had the forest, une we was very tired they  
come. Une uh, sleep of the hay une I see but you talk.

I go up on the hay. Une I show myself. Une I hear une somebody was watching people. So I raise my hand. I raise my hand. He come he touch me. Who are you? I say I'm a buddy. Buddy guy was the farmer. Une he ask me, is he say, how long you work here? I tell him not long time ago. No I'm not Jewish. I say who are you? I ask him who are you. So he say he is a partisan.

He's a partisan. Oh I say I'm happy to see you. Because I want to go with the partisans too. He say look we not trick people. We go something for special action we have to do something. he say here between us we six people. Four Jewish people une one une two gentles. For he say we not can take you we give you others, we give you others here in the forest we have lot of forest surround the town forest.

Uh, every place forest. So he say we give you uh, uh, uh, others uh, explanation how to come to the place une hear of

the - - - - Jewish people run from the, from the, from  
the, Jew from the towns from the shtetles. Une meet here  
these Jewish people no don't be late because the Jewish  
people must go to cross in the front.

To give us of the big, of the big land une in, in Russia  
by une he give me the Une he give uh, he give me the  
address where to find the Jewish people une he say you  
come to a town uh, forgot the name of the town. Une uh,  
the first house une a big tree near the house you'll see,  
on the left side.

Une here live a guy Ivan he call. He is a handicap with  
one hand. Une when you talk with Ivan, you first you must  
know uh, uh, uh, how we call this? A word- -

QUESTION:

Pass word?

MICHAEL:

A password. You must know the password. [COUGH] tell him the password that you told me to. Une the password is Vintovka. What is Vintovka? Vintovka is a, a rifle. When you knock him in window une he asks you who are you. Answer the word Vintovka. When he hear the word vintovka he tell you know so you uh, she he can talking with you. He open the door une I tell him vintovka he open the door une took one of the horses une I know to ride a, horse.

I took a nice one of the horse une I run to the place with the partisans give me. Say I meet this guy une the guy tell can, can tell me where the Jewish people is of the uh, in forest someplace. Une une I come une I knock him in window to this guy une he uh a - asked me who are you une I tell him. Vintovka. When he sees, see hears the word vintovka for you open the door une we say come in.

he say so what you want. I say I meet partisan une partisan told me share of the in forest you have some

place Jewish people. Une the Jewish people want to leave to crossing the front. Une this uh, to go the young people can go to the partisans. Une the older people the womens une children you must cross in the front.

Une he told me exactly where, how to go to the place he told me you go where he show me in what direction une you see uh, from tree. Une when you come to your foam tree tell you go left une you after you come to a place une you find une you find the Jewish people in forest. Good.

I took from his the information I thank him. Tell him thank you very much. Une I go to my horse une I [COUGH] I just watching the night. Une I come to my brother une I tell him the story. Say I meet partisans to partisan give me uh, directions to a Jewish camp with Jewish people in forest, what they run from the Germans une the Jewish people must cross in the front. Une some young people when want to go the partisan can be partisans.

He une my brother say come we go outside to sit down .  
Une my brother say to the, to his boss. We want to go  
with my brother out. Une we go out outside, we talk. We  
talk about this everything une he say you want to be here  
be here. I go. He say when you go I go too. The finish  
you say you decide yourself. See you life you decide. He  
say I go every place where you go I go with you.

Uh, my father uh, uh, uh, run to a farmers too in a  
different direction. In opposite direction. You know we  
run this side, he run to this side. Une he was by farmer  
une after from the farmer he go to uh, he find partisans  
une he go uh, with eh uh, partisans. Une the matter with  
two brothers the Germans catches une the Germans want to,  
to show were I am with my brother. Who is my father.

Une she go in the opposite direction too. She not showing  
where. So une the Germans kill her. Une he kill my two  
brothers too. You know we have enough to eat we us uh,  
taking from the farmers sometimes what the farmers was give

us food. Une we were stuck trains with food, but go to the front. Une we was taking uh, from the trains. for us to eat although we was stuff transfer with Germans we must kill the Germans une we was turn the truck different directions to uh, uh, more close to us.

The trucks not to go in forest, no some forests have, have, have. We was going this une we was have enough food. Une sometimes when we change the place, when we change the place we go another place. Sometimes we was hungry too. In uh, time from, from war what blockades. The Germans was making blockades.

He was surrounding a place with forest with forest une was lot of Russians was, was fighting against the Russians. You k now we have ammunitions from all from Czechoslovak, from America, from people was give us ammunition. We must buy from people ammunition sometimes. You understand? In the partisans but I was, wasn't too much Jews. I remember come to us uh, uh, a guy his name was, what was his name? Cossack.

Cossack was his name. He, he was a Jewish guy. Une he teach us how to use, how to make mines. How to use the mines. He was teach us. He come couple of times une he show us how, how to use the, the, the explosion which we have the une in the partisans we not have anti-Semitism.

In our group I don't know what was in the other one. Because like people in a factory a good worker eh, have, have a how to say you more uh, not people like you more, you understand. Une we, we was good fighters. We was do which was do un unbelievable things you know. To, to fight the Germans. Une we no have, no have nothing against the, the uh, anti-Semitism or this.

We was like, like everybody. We was maybe about 200 hundred people. The commander's name was Fraolo. we belong to a brigade. The brigade have maybe six, six six units. Une we was the farmers was give us food une the,

the, the we was struck transfers from German car was, was  
go to the front une we was taking the food from him.

We was kill the, the guards une kill the Germans une  
taking the food. we was come with uh, with uh, horses une  
with wagons une we was loaded in the car the food. We was  
stop trains. Sometimes we was blew up trains. Une we was  
taking the food une ammunition. Une uh, not was too much  
problems with food, but some days we was hungry too. When  
was far from our camp there was problems too. Oh you call  
this sun how.

QUESTION:

moonshine?

MICHAEL:

Yeah, moon moonshine moonshine. What the what the farmers  
was making himself. He was come to the farmers, the  
farmers was give us we was, we was uh, to change with the  
farmer we give him something else une he give us moonshine  
une so we have this too. No this, une sometime when we  
move from the camps we this uh, winter was cold. We was

uh, in summer une winter do you understand.

The war in the daytime you make fire a big fire this une  
after in the day you not see the smoke. You understand.  
Like in the in the night you make fire but you can see the  
fire from far so you

you make fire une we was cutting the branches from the  
tree uh, like from the pine tree or une other tree. Une  
put of the of the hot coal we was put match.

In the first one can be burn up the second already not,  
but the warmth was come from the coal. When was sleep of  
the top of the branches to make a fire.

QUESTION:

So you slept on top of a live fire?

MICHAEL:

The fire is already- -

QUESTION:

the fire goes out- -

MICHAEL:

Yeah, the fire was out now the coal, the coal until you put branches the first branches may burn or this. But the second the third the four begin to be this we was put lot of branches maybe five for sheet on this. Uh, we was cover themself with what you have une sometimes you no have in the war we was survive the night in this. I come to partisans after two years I was in ghetto.

Une after I run from, we run from the from the ghetto for the Jewish people but the German was concentrate the Jewish people. So we was about three years we was in the partisans.

QUESTION:

On in the world.

MICHAEL:

We have a radio. Only from radio. We was hearing what go on.

QUESTION:

What did you think about it?

MICHAEL:

I was thinking only I one Jew survive, because I don't know nothing. About my brother I don't know about my cousins. I don't know about other Jews the Germans une the, the police uh, the volunteer police kill all the Jews. I was thinking maybe I survive only one. Everybody have his story. Everybody is damaged. You understand. The families was still.

No word we begin to, to understand this was a time like this. No we must go on to live. To make a living. Une after I marriage in Israel. My marriage, my marriage was not so good. I divorce. I come to America. I marriage

Ruth. The war the situation we decide to fo-  
- not to forget none no we decide to go on with life. Like  
now I have problems now too.

In the night I not sleep good in the night. Une every  
night come to me uh, uh, story or I was in the partisans or  
I was in the army or I was in with the family. You  
understand? Like une I was I was drinking very much. I  
was like I - - - I was lucky I am not alcoholic. I was  
drinking. Une I was in the beginning I was violent person.  
you know, after war. I was a violent person.

I was come when I was living in Vilna when we leave our  
town where I was living when I come in Vilna une we have  
already a house une uh, we was working une this. Une I was  
come in a, in a officer's club. I was already a civilian.  
I was nervous une then I come to our officer club in Vilna.  
It was called the officer club. Une here was ten things  
give us music he was everything.

Une I was come to the bar une drink. Drink when I was nervous, or was little crazy I don't know what was with me. You understand. Une when people was something say I uh, uh, against Jews or against me I was fight. I was fight. I remember one time I come home little drunk. Une always in house I have vodka. Une I drink little more une I go to sleep.

MICHAEL:

I try to when I go to sleep. When I go to sleep, I see a in dream, I see my family, I see my brothers and my mother and my father, everything. My parents begin to talking to me. They say [SOUNDS LIKE: Misha], be a man, be a human being, what happened to you? We give you education, we give you love and this, we want to make for you, should you be a good person.

Wake up yourself, take a look what - - what go on around you. Why you drink so much? Why you smoke so much? I was smoking too. And I open my eyes and I see this was a - - a

dream. I go, to in the bedroom by the closet with a mirror,  
a big mirror over the door. And I stayed near the mirror,  
and I drink. What happened to me? We was, my parents said  
you, you come from a good family, you come from - - from -  
- from a normal person, what happened

[Misha], pick up yourself. And I stay and I drink and I  
drink, when I go I take the bottle, what left over may be.  
Left over half a bottle with vodka, I give one drink, only  
one.

When I take the cigarettes and I go to the garbage can  
outside and I break the cigarettes of pieces. When I break  
the bottle in - - in garbage can, when I throw out, no  
more. No more. You understand, my parents come to me in  
in dream and talk to me. Wake up yourself. When I stopped  
the drinking. I stopped the smoking.

When I begin little by little to be more - - more  
you understand? More human being. But I have problems in  
the night. When in the night I not can

sleep, come to me all kind of - - of, uh, stories. And the first time I take, uh, sleeping pills to go in bed. Some people don't want to hear this again but . Because the most people in - - in Israel accept the Arabic Jews, what come from Arabic countries, different people is different but the European Jews, everybody is a survivor. The people don't want to hear about this too much.

QUESTION:

They don't want to hear about your story or any survivor?

00:35:37

MICHAEL:

They want, don't want hear stories what , don't forget. People say to me, forget. One train what we blew up but I was, uh, like to say, uh, not too much smart in beginning. I put the mine and it blew up on the when I arrived in a different direction it be not . You say this I remember. The Germans was to, uh, uh, survive begin to shot in, uh, up and fire in all - - in all directions. When we was - - don't

know. We were some time come to a train station, we were put bunch numbers, we were put. We put the type and we were slow. Let's go. This one blew up. Understand?

QUESTION:

You blew up a lot?

MICHAEL:

Yeah we was, this was work for us. We were working a lot. Not to give the - - the trains to come to the front. This was our - - our - - our job to do. We were blew up bridges, we were blew up, uh, uh, train bridges. Uh, uh, this, uh, of the - - of the main ways, the bridges. Uh, here you call freeways, we was called we was blew up. Not to come work later to come to the front. We was like a cancer for the Germans, you see?

QUESTION:

How so?

MICHAEL:

See he not - - he not can, uh, he not can stop us because he not can find us. When he find us to he was, make blockades she was, uh, not in this neighborhood. But he was surrounding neighborhood and go clean up. To kill the . I was never thinking I survive. I was always thinking sooner or later, I be killed. Or in a - - in a fight or in a, uh, blew up something. I be killed. Understand? When I I was not thinking about politic, I was thinking about revenge. Revenge, this all. Because he killed my family, he killed innocent people, well I must kill him. He is my enemy. I not can sue him, I not can do much, I can only - - I can kill him and that's all. Look some Jewish families, believe in God. Believe in God. So, this is a sin for God, so we must pay for the sin, must go be killed. Some Jewish like me, like my [SOUNDS LIKE: father], my brother, was thinking so we must make revenge.

Revenge, kill. He kill us, we kill him, you understand? Not politic, no nothing, revenge and that's all. Because here

come the peaceful people when he was kill people only  
because we were Jews. With nothing. [UNINTELLIGIBLE] What  
do, what has happened with me, this is not - - not  
important. I can be killed or I can survive, I must never  
survive. This was - - this was a miracle, you understand?  
Be - - in the camera but I have I took from, uh, German .  
But I kill him before. I kill lot of - -.

QUESTION:

You killed a lot of Germans?

MICHAEL:

Yeah, maybe I don't say this in - - video. No .

in

MICHAEL:

No I - - I was a - - a good soldier.

