

Imagination versus Memory

by Kristin M. Kellett

On September 9, 2007, I began interviewing Mr. Sidney Newman. As I drove to Mr. Newman's residence, the Masonic Home in Burlington, New Jersey, I felt as if the only thing Mr. Newman had left from his time during the Holocaust was the thing that I suddenly was without; my voice. As much as I could I tried to prepare notes, searched in my soul for questions to ask Mr. Newman about his life. This was my plan – to ask Mr. Newman to tell me what he could about his life before the war. I planned on telling him about my life growing up; the facts: I have two sisters, I am the oldest of three girls, discuss the vacations I went on as a child, talk about my parents. That's it! I was set, ready to go in and meet who I considered to be a World War II hero. The heavy doors that served as the entrance to the Masonic Home had nothing on the weight of my heart. I felt sick with nervousness and knew there was no turning back now. Armed with my notebook, my tape recorder, and my memories I felt semi-confident that these would help me get through the first interview. When I signed in at the front desk, the secretary said "he's been expecting you. He has a lot to say." I felt better. He was excited to meet me, so much so that he told the secretaries I was coming. As I left the secretarial station, the ease that I briefly felt once again subsided and now all I could think is, "wow, I better make one hell of a first impression." I timidly walked down the hall to the elevator and pressed the key to head up. As the elevator doors opened for the third floor a strange feeling of relief came over me. If I remained nervous, what good would this do for me or for Mr. Newman? I took a deep breath and rounded the corner to room 303N. Mr. Newman sitting in a chair beside his bed turned and said, "Hello."

Mr. Newman appeared poised yet shy. His expression, under the slight smile, was a mixture of sorrow and pride. I said, "Hello" back. He asked my name and as I said "Kristin" he said, "beautiful." Although still timid I took a seat on a chair at the foot of his bed. His room was small yet comfortable. Mr. Newman watched every move I made as I withdrew my pad of paper, pencil, and tape recorder from

a bag. I asked if it would be ok if I recorded this interview. He said, “of course! Will you share this with your friends?” I smiled and said, “I’m hoping to share with many more than that!” Before I turned on the tape recorder, I explained to Mr. Newman why I had come to see him. I gave a brief synopsis of the class I was taking and justified its purpose. I described my reasoning for taking the class elucidating that I felt I had a responsibility to listen in order that I may share his story with others. He stared at me with elusive eyes, almost as if he wanted to ask, why? I asked him if he was ready to begin and he said yes. I turned on the tape recorder and he said, “Hello, my name is Sydney Newman. I am a Holocaust survivor.”

I first asked Mr. Newman to describe his childhood. Through a veil of tears, Mr. Newman began to describe his difficulties:

“What town were you born in?”

“I was a child and I came from Eastern Europe. It was Yasinya. I was born there.” (9/9/07)

According to my research, Yasinya is a small town located somewhere within the Carpathian Mountains. There is not much to be found about Yasinya during WWII however, today Yasinya is known as one of the top ski resorts in the Ukraine.

“In 1941, they took us away. They took us away to a concentration camp. I was in Auschwitz, I was in Mauthausen, I was in Melk, and I was in Ebensee. Ok...in 19...in the 1940s, the Americans came along to the concentration camp and they would bomb the concentration camp and we were ten thousand people and I was the only survivor from ten thousand people.”

Noticing that the interview was jumping I tried to guide Mr. Newman back:

“What year were you born, Mr. Newman?”

“What year was I born? I was born January 5, 1925.”

“What was your childhood like, Mr. Newman, before the war?”

“What do you mean?”

“What did you like to do? Did you go to school?”

“Well, over here in the United States or before?”

“Before the war, in Eastern Europe.”

“We were ten people: me, my brothers, my sisters, and my mother and father. We were ten people together. We were a big family and we loved each other. We loved each other. Our problem is, our problem was, there was too much prejudice against the Jewish people. You see, there was too much hate. I remember when I was a little boy and I used to be beaten up as a child and they hated for many reasons Jewish people. And I can’t

understand that. You see, and there is too much hate. So, I miss my family I get flashbacks from the war. I would like to help somebody else.” (9/9/07)

I thought it was my questioning. I thought it was that *I* was unclear. Mr. Newman consistently strayed from any topic I asked him to discuss and fast-forwarded to his life here in America. He unfailingly stressed numerous times his love for people and his inability to understand why there was so much hate. Mr. Newman asked again why I had come to see him:

“Did you do this, write down for somebody else before or am I the first?”

“You are the first, Mr. Newman.”

“What made you write, what made you do an interview?”

“I wanted to know more...I wanted to know why this happened from your perspective.”

“Why? Because Jewish people have their religion as Jewish people. Other people hate against the Jewish people and because there is hate and jealousy they don’t like Jewish people for many reasons. For instance, Jewish people killed Jesus Christ and the whole thing and I was not around but what I was, I was in a concentration camp and the year that I was in the concentration camp went very bad for me. As a Holocaust survivor went very bad because I worked in an ammunition mine. I was working and there wasn’t too much things to eat. For instance, we have to eat coal or spinach. You see and another thing there was too much hate against Jewish people. They didn’t like Jewish people because of Christianity because they called us “Christ Killers” and things like this. I had nothing to do with Jesus Christ. I don’t hate other nationalities or other religions. You could be another religion but I don’t hate you because that is a very, very bad thing if we hate each other. As long as we hate each other we will have problems and discrimination.”

“Could you talk more about your family?”

“The story is I miss my family.”

I continued to ask as many questions as I could think of in order to find out more about who Mr. Newman was before the war. I asked him to tell me about his parents and their occupations. He could not. I asked him to tell me about his favorite game to play when he was young. He could not. I asked him if he could remember approximately the age at which he began to feel the effects of the war and again, he could not. Finally, I asked him who else in his family survived the war. He said “I am the only survivor.” (9/9/07)

Nearing the end of the interview, Mr. Newman asked me if I wanted to see a video. The video was an interview between an interviewer who was a man Mr. Newman could not identify and Mr.

Newman's brother. I started in confusion and asked Mr. Newman to repeat again who the man in the video was being interviewed. He said, "That is mine brother." I again asked if this brother also survived the war and he said, "No." I was completely lost. If I questioned before, I now knew something was wrong and that Mr. Newman's story just was not logical. It was impossible that he had eaten coal for nearly a year to survive. If Mr. Newman was the sole survivor of his family, then who was this man in the video Mr. Newman claimed to be his brother?

I decided it best to continue asking Mr. Newman questions and decided on asking a very personal one. Upon entering his room, I noticed that his feet were missing, amputated. I asked him to explain what happened to his feet:

"You see mine feet? That's from the Holocaust. I went in snow in the cold weather and we used to work in dirt, you see. And, that's why I have feet like this, not like you, not regular feet." (9/9/07)

This interview lasted approximately one and a half hours and by this point I felt as if I knew three things about Mr. Newman: he was born in Yasinya, he was one of ten people in his family, and from 1941 till the end of the war, he was in four different concentration camps: Auschwitz, Melk, Ebensee, and Mauthausen. I left the interview feeling perturbed. How would I be able to tell Mr. Newman's story if he could not? Where would I go from here? It was as if the only thing Mr. Newman had left from the war failed him; the memories he spoke of were questionable, inconclusive. How could this have happened? How could he forget the details of such a tragedy? He remembered bits and pieces but why not more? I set up a second interview three weeks later.

The second interview was much like the first. Every specific question I asked was given a long, unwarranted speech that always came back to Mr. Newman telling me about the charities to which he donated or the time he spent in children's hospitals. For this interview, I compiled a list of questions I had about our first interview and asked him to explain certain details. I began by asking him to explain a little more about his time in the camps. He explained that he was first taken to Auschwitz and was there for approximately one month. This was the camp that separated him from his family. He could not recall

specific jobs that he had in the camp but described the surroundings as “very, very bad.” Next, he was taken to Mauthausen where he also spent only one month. There, he worked as a laborer. Third, he was taken to Melk where out of all of the concentration camps he was in, spent the most time. Mr. Newman was held prisoner in Melk for approximately eight months. At Melk, he was a miner and worked in an ammunition factory. His job was to blow out the sides of mountains in order to hide supplies. He would run with the ammunition to the mountain, place the ammunition within the side of a mountain, and then run. If you could run fast enough, you survived. Apparently Mr. Newman was a good runner. Mr. Newman claimed that this was the camp of which he was the sole survivor of ten thousand. Lastly, he went to Ebensee where he spent one month until liberation.

I questioned the time periods Mr. Newman provided me with. Referring back to the first interview, if Mr. Newman was taken in 1941, it is impossible that he was liberated in less than one year for the war did not conclude until 1945. Mr. Newman stood firm in his accusations.

I asked him to describe what it was like at the conclusion of the war in Europe. He did not have much to say. He did however tell about his cousin, Dave Newman who was responsible for bringing him to the United States. Dave Newman, an actor, first brought him to California but the lifestyle was too much for Mr. Newman. He moved to New York and for two years he lived in the Bronx. He worked as a pipe fitter and although he was no longer in Europe, he still felt the effects of the war. Mr. Newman recalled a time he was referred to as a “Jew Bastard” from his boss who lost his temper. He left the job shortly after this incident and decided to wash windows. He stumbled across an ad for people who were willing to wash the highest windows of the Empire State Building. Mr. Newman gladly signed up for the challenge. When asked how long he did this for, he could not recall.

A short time later, Mr. Newman felt that it was time he begin a new chapter in his life. He noticed those who were successful in starting their own businesses and decided that he would try to make it on his own. He moved to Camden, New Jersey and opened one business for window washing, floor

waxing, and the selling of cleaning products. He declared the name of one of his business as “Newman Maintenance Company of Camden” and proudly he held this business until two years ago.

“Mr. Newman, could you tell me a little more about your businesses?”

“What does your father do?”

“My father is an engineer.”

“That’s pretty good. I had a maintenance business like window cleaning, floor waxing, and I used to sell. And that worked out for me pretty good, I worked very hard. I lived in a place like Cherry Hill and mine wife was a sick woman. I chose her because what I like to do, I like to help people like myself who are sick; who don’t have capability. Our problem is in this country you find women. Women are very sick and nobody cares for these women. So mine interesting thing was to care for you. Before you leave, I’m gonna give both of you some nice jewelry just because I want to show you mine appreciation.”

While straying from the topic of his business, Mr. Newman shed light on his married live. All while starting his new life in America, Mr. Newman married not once but twice. From the first time I interviewed Mr. Newman, he repeatedly remarked that he was always looking to help someone. His first wife, Vivian, was only married to Sidney for two years. She passed away from a heart attack. Mr. Newman knew of her heart troubles and said that he wanted to give her the best life he could before she passed. When she did, he said he was happy to know she was happy at least for a little while. Although Vivian was sick, she bore a child, a son. Mr. Newman hastily discussed his son saying that when he grew, he wanted nothing more than drug money and so Mr. Newman no longer speaks with him. Soon after Vivian’s death, Mr. Newman met and married a woman named Martha. He and Martha moved to Cherry Hill where they resided until Martha’s passing. Sidney could not recall the specific date but broke down when questioned about her. He would laugh when he thought about the silly things she would be jealous of. In Mr. Newman’s room are two paintings, one of him as a younger man, and one of a woman. When I asked if she was Martha, he said yes. I asked where he had those paintings done and he said “I was good friends with Maria Von Trapp and her artist did them for us as a gift.” (10/7/07) Staggered, I looked into Mr. Newman’s honest eyes and thought to myself, maybe. What cause would he have to invent something like that? I asked him where he met the Von Trapp family and with no hesitation he

said, "In Vermont on a skiing trip." She spoke German and so did I so we talked." It could be possible...after all Mr. Newman's hometown is known as one of the most prestigious skiing resorts of all time. Curious I asked Mr. Newman how he skied without feet and casually he remarked "they make things for people without feet." I accepted it as truth. It adds up, right? Maria Von Trapp lived in Vermont. She is from Europe. It could be true.

As much as I hate to admit it, I left the interview angry. Why did Mr. Newman sign up to be interviewed if he could not remember much from his time during the war? Why was it that he for the most part avoided talking about his time during the Holocaust and insisted on telling me repeatedly about his time in America after the war? I began to think that his life story was told through his imagination and not his memory but who was I to judge? What if these "memories" were true? What if he really was good friends with Maria Von Trapp? What if he really did ski without feet? What if he really was the sole survivor of ten thousand after the bombing at Melk? Something told me to look further into Mr. Newman's memories and that is what I did.

The night of the second interview, I sat at my computer with a cup of tea and searched. I searched through books, journals, all over the internet trying to find at least a hint of truth in what Mr. Newman was telling me. I began with my notes from the first interview. I had thoroughly researched the town in which Mr. Newman grew up. I skipped this step and moved to the part where he said he was the sole survivor of his family. Who was this "brother" in the video? This instance would be the first of many not to match up. It is impossible that Mr. Newman was only in the war for one year if he was picked up in 1941. It is possible that Mr. Newman was transferred from Auschwitz to Mauthausen. It is however, impossible that Mr. Newman was picked up in 1941. Mr. Newman must have been picked up in approximately early 1944. While researching information on Mauthausen, it is recorded that until mid-1944, there were relatively few Jews at Mauthausen, but then they arrived in large numbers from Hungary and from Auschwitz and other camps. Mr. Newman was most likely one of those who arrived from Auschwitz mid 1944. Mr. Newman also mentioned that the conditions of Mauthausen were very

difficult. He repeatedly said “the labor was very hard.” In my research I found that inmates of Mauthausen were subjected to barbaric conditions, the most infamous of which was being forced to carry heavy stone blocks up 186 steps from the cap quarry. The steps became known as the “Stairway of Death.” From Mauthausen, Mr. Newman said he proceeded to Melk. Melk was not established until 1944 proving that Mr. Newman could not have been there until this point in time. During the war, Melk was a sub camp of Mauthausen known as “Mauthausen-Gusen.” Initially a single camp at Mauthausen, it expanded over time to become one of the largest labour camp complexes in German-controlled Europe. Apart from the four main sub-camps at Mauthausen and nearby Gusen, more than fifty sub-camps, located throughout Austria and southern Germany, used the inmates as slave labour. Mr. Newman was more than likely one of those slaves. Several subordinate camps of the KZ Mauthausen complex included quarries, munitions factories, mines, arms factories and fighter-plane assembly plants. Its main purpose was to provide forced labor for the different tunneling projects in the surrounding hills. The hills consisted of fine sand and quartz and for this reason, a vast number of prisoners were buried alive beneath cave-ins while working inside the hills. Mr. Newman stated that his job was to place dynamite into the sides of mountains and that he only survived through his ability to run fast enough after planting the dynamite. In all of my research, I have yet to come across a piece of literature telling me of a bombing by American planes on Melk. From Melk, Mr. Newman was transported to Ebensee. Together with the Mauthausen sub-camp of Gusen, Ebensee is considered to be one of the most diabolic concentration camps in history. Mr. Newman spent one month within the walls of this camp until its date of liberation, May 9, 1945.

I was beginning to tire, not from simply lack of sleep but because I was beginning to realize how tiring this process was to become. I am on a hunt; a hunt to find out more about who Mr. Newman really is and not just who he says he is. I'm searching for the illusive in Mr. Newman's story and every step I take brings me closer to what I need to know, but I am feeling like I may never get there ... it is an incessant journey. It isn't just about uncovering the facts. It's about the journey that leads me to these

facts; it's about asking the right questions until the mystery who is Mr. Newman begins to makes sense. No longer could I spend time asking Mr. Newman surface questions. I now knew that it was time to dig below the surface to get to the core of the issue.

The sequential interviews that followed the second were much like the preceding. I was getting no where with my information and was beginning to worry that my efforts were pointless. It was time to ask someone for help. Approximately two months after my first interview with Mr. Newman, I contacted my professor for advice. On a list of papers buried deep in a cabinet, my professor was able to find Mr. Newman's contact information. Below Mr. Newman's information was an emergency contact number. She dialed and asked with whom she was speaking. It was Mr. Newman's lawyer, James Muller. Mr. Muller agreed to meet with me to discuss what he knew about Mr. Newman's life.

A few days before my scheduled interview date with Mr. Muller, I contacted him to confirm our appointment. I wanted him to know that I cared and that I was excited about having an opportunity to meet with him. Our phone conversation went a little something like this:

"James Muller's office."

"Hi Mr. Muller. My name is Kristin. I'm a student at The College of New Jersey. I was calling to confirm..."

"Yea, yea, yea, and?"

"Well, I just wanted to make sure that you were still able to meet with me on Wednesday, November 14th to discuss Sidney Newman's Holocaust story."

"Yea. I have a question for you."

"(Trying to pull my heart out of my throat) Yes?..."

"Do you like coffee?"

"Yes, I do."

"Good. Well you better like donuts too because I'll have some of those. See you Wednesday. (Click)."

I think it was Abraham Lincoln who said, "It often requires more courage to dare to do right than to fear to do wrong." I was scared. I'll admit it but I had a responsibility. Mr. Newman survived the Holocaust. His story is unique and I needed to find someone who could tell me what happened. November 14th arrived quickly and it was time for me to meet with Mr. Muller.

As I walked into his office I scanned the accomplishments that lined the walls. His office was dark with a small window off to the side. He comfortably plopped behind the desk and said, "Let's talk about Sidney." I never expected to hear what would come out of Mr. Muller's mouth next: "He is a textbook case, which you have probably figured out by now, of post traumatic stress disorder. He has never recovered." (11/14/07) I knew something was wrong with the story that Mr. Newman told me but I never expected his case to be this severe. Mr. Muller asked me to tell him what I knew and as I began to rattle off the details of Mr. Newman's life he shook his head and simply said, "No" to most of what I had to say. Disbelief, shock, disgusted; I don't really think there is one word to describe how I was feeling at that point. Soon I would find out that most of what Mr. Newman told me was untrue; the stories he told through his sad eyes were no more than stories created in his imagination.

This is a brief summary of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from The National Institute of Mental Health:

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is defined as an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. Traumatic events that may trigger PTSD include violent personal assaults, natural or human-caused disasters, accidents, or military combat. Not every traumatized person develops full-blown or even minor PTSD. Symptoms usually begin within 3 months of the incident but occasionally emerge years afterward. They must last more than a month to be considered PTSD. The course of the illness varies. Some people recover within 6 months, while others have symptoms that last much longer. In some people, the condition becomes chronic. PTSD is known as a disease of the memory.

Upon first meeting Mr. Newman, Mr. Muller said he could see Mr. Newman was not all there and used the words "just crazy" to describe his character traits. Although I did not consider Mr. Newman to be "crazy" I did notice from my first encounter that the details of his story did not all make sense. Nonetheless, I continued to dig and developed a list of facts I thought I could note as concrete. Here are the facts that I learned about Mr. Newman through interviews:

1. His name is Sidney Newman.
2. Mr. Newman was born on January 5, 1925.
3. Mr. Newman was the sole survivor of his family of ten.

4. Mr. Newman survived four different concentration camps and as I was told, was the sole survivor of Melk.
5. Mr. Newman was married twice and had one son from his first marriage.
6. Mr. Newman's feet were amputated directly after the war because of the harsh conditions he was forced to endure.

Although it wasn't much, they were the facts I came to know as truth. But here's the reality. The reality is that only one of these "concrete" facts is true. The rest are either exaggerated or untrue entirely. Here is Mr. Newman's *real* story: His name is not Sidney Newman. Mr. Newman created this name as a way of escaping his past life. His real name is Isidore Neuman. Truth, Mr. Newman was born on January 5, 1925. Truth, of the family members that were in the Holocaust he is the sole survivor. Mr. Muller explained that Mr. Newman had an older brother who immigrated to the United States in the 1930s before the beginning of the war and settled in Cleveland, Ohio. Truth, Mr. Newman survived four concentration camps but here is what is not true: he was not picked up until 1944 at the age of 19, three years after he told me he had been taken. During our first interview with Mr. Newman, I watched a video taped interview he did many years ago with Fox News. This is what the reporter stated:

"Sidney Newman of Cherry Hill, New Jersey is a miracle of a man. In 1941 the Nazis stormed his family's village in Czechoslovakia forcing his family of ten to hide out in the neighboring forest for two years literally living in the bushes. Then in 1944, they were captured only to be taken to the most notorious of all the death camps, Auschwitz...Sidney was tortured and worked in Mauthausen then in Melk the site of an accidental allied bombing that Sidney relives in flashbacks to this day."

Mr. Muller said after all these years of knowing Sidney that he had never heard of him hiding before my telling of this to him. Mr. Muller did however say that Mr. Newman was not directly sent to Auschwitz but first spent time in a ghetto. Then, in May of 1944, Mr. Newman was taken to Auschwitz. Mr. Newman's sisters and mother were sent immediately to the left upon arrival and were probably murdered that day. Mr. Newman stayed in Auschwitz for one month, from May until June. In June of 1944, Mr. Newman was transported to Mauthausen where he would stay less than one month. Here, Mr. Newman was forced to do slave labour until begin transferred to Melk in June 1944. Mr. Muller explained that the Germans were building underground factories and in order to do this, they would blow out the sides of

mountains. Mr. Newman's job was to plant dynamite in the mountain then run. From Melk, Mr. Newman was transported to Ebensee where he would be liberated in May, 1945 by the American army. This is where it becomes evident that many of the details Mr. Newman provided me with are untrue.

It was not in America, but rather in Europe that Mr. Newman met his first wife, Vivian. Vivian did not have heart trouble but she did have tuberculosis. She herself was also a survivor of the Holocaust and together they had a son. Mr. Newman did not feel that he could raise his son so he sent him to his brother in Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. Newman did not have contact with his son. The stories about the drugs, the stories about the stealing of money are all untrue. What is true, is that Mr. Newman's son did contact Mr. Muller when he found out his father was alive. He wanted to be sure that he would not be responsible for any of Mr. Newman's bills in the case that Mr. Newman passes away. Vivian did die two years into their marriage.

Shortly before the Korean War, Mr. Newman immigrated to America and immediately contacted Mr. Muller. Mr. Newman wanted payment from the German government. Mr. Muller could not share with me the details as to why emphasizing that he is Mr. Newman's lawyer and there is to be "some client confidentiality."

Mr. Newman came to America being semi-literate but here is a fact that I did not know. Mr. Newman is pent lingual. He can fluently speak Russian, English, French, German, and Hebrew. His linguistic abilities are a result of the consistent changing of his home country. At one time, Yasinya was a part of Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, and Hungary. Yasinya's location necessitated that Mr. Newman learn these languages to communicate.

As far as his work within the United States, Mr. Muller knew nothing of Mr. Newman's job as a pipe fitter but could account for Mr. Newman working for the Empire State Building. Mr. Newman did work from the 86th floor and up because he received special pay.

From New York, he moved to Camden where he met Martha. From my interviews with Mr. Newman, he spoke of Martha as if she had been dead for years when in reality she died almost one year

ago. She and Mr. Newman were married for forty years and together they came to the Masonic Home. Here is the problem. Martha took very great care of Mr. Newman until she contracted Alzheimer's at which point she could no longer take care of him. It is also important to note that Mr. Newman is a diabetic and that Martha did an excellent job of always ensuring that Mr. Newman stayed healthy. Mr. Newman said that his feet were removed shortly after the war due to the conditions he was forced to bare. Here is the reality. When Martha fell ill, she could no longer ensure that Mr. Newman receives the best food and the best care. He became sick as well and the diabetes took over his body. Three years ago, his feet were amputated. The amputation was not a result of the Holocaust.

Camden was not only where he met Martha but where he went to business for himself. During an earlier interview, Mr. Newman said that his company's name was "Newman Maintenance Company of Camden." (9/9/07) In reality, the name of his company was "Newman Window Cleaning Co." I could not find much about it online but did however find its address. The address that he gave for his business was the same as his home address in Cherry Hill.

From my interviews with Mr. Newman I had approximately ten full pages of notes plus several hours of tapes. I spent approximately two hours with Mr. Muller and had eight pages of notes plus the recorded interview. When he asked me if I had more questions I didn't know what to say. My mind was swimming and my thoughts were drowning. So much of what I believed to be truth was not real or exaggerated. There were many inconsistencies between my interviewing of Mr. Newman, the Fox News interview, and details given to me by Mr. Muller. I gathered enough of myself to profusely thank Mr. Muller for his time. As I was leaving his office, he frantically called me back saying, "you've gotta hear this" and anyone reading this should as well. On the phone was a man who the weekend before attended a wedding. Both the families of the bride and the groom attended. Throughout the entire ceremony, the bride's grandmother and the groom's grandfather stared at one another with eyes that screamed "I know you." Nearing the conclusion of the ceremony, they approached one another expressing how familiar the resemblance was to someone they once knew. They shared where they each had come from which was

the same town in Poland, and came to find out they were in the same concentration camp together. The voice on the phone said, “that’s not all...here’s the real story.” It turns out that the bride’s grandmother and the groom’s grandfather were married in the camp. They had been separated and thought both had died by the conclusion of the war and married other people when they came to America.

I left that day with a sense of satisfaction. Mr. Newman had a story to tell and although his memory did not serve him well through time, his imagination certainly did. His story is unique and although not all he says is truthful, *that is who he is*. It was now up to me to make his story his own.

Albert Einstein once said:

“Strange is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to a divine purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: That we are here for the sake of others...for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day, I realize how much my outer and inner life is built upon the labors of people, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received.”

At least for this short period of time, my purpose is to tell Mr. Newman’s story.

Sixty-two years after the conclusion of World War II, the difficulty continues to comprehend the experiences suffered by Holocaust victims. The mass murders, dehumanization, destruction, and death were common incidences. From the millions murdered, survivors were few, enclosing within their souls infinite anguish and misery. However, within each of these survivors lies a story. Mr. Newman’s story is only one story of many but the images presented to me through countless interviews have seized my imagination and will forever remain in my memory. This is the story of Sidney Newman, a Holocaust survivor.

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