

Preface

Over the past 12 years I have written a number of books and articles. Most, not all, have focused on questions and dilemmas regarding national security. On occasion, I have stepped outside my comfort zone, addressing additional issues. Often, I draw on my professional experiences largely based on my 19-year career in the Israel Defense Forces.

This book has been a profoundly different experience. Unlike previous writing efforts, this book has become deeply personal, forcing me to examine—in an intimate manner—the impact the Holocaust has had on my family and me. That was not my intention when I began considering this book.

The book was prompted by a question regarding the Holocaust, which led to many discussions. It was humbling to discover how little I knew about the Holocaust, much less of my family.

While reading a great deal of Holocaust-related literature, I constantly had to remind myself that I am not a historian and that my primary focus is examining the bystander from a legal perspective. That required identifying a “link” whereby the question of bystander obligation would be relevant to contemporary society. Unfortunately, innumerable examples abound. Those are discussed in the pages ahead.

Writing this book has taken far longer than previous works; there were—as any author will attest—significant ups and downs. The tone and tenor of the book underwent innumerable changes. Perhaps that is intrinsic to a book that seeks to combine the personal with the professional.

I have made an honest effort to share with the reader my family’s Holocaust experiences. That, for me, became in the course of writing the book extremely important. I wanted to bring what they experienced to life. It was, obviously, not easy. My research trips to Europe were difficult;

my week-long visit to Hungary where my family suffered horribly was *brutal*.

In posing the question whether the bystander should be complicit for nonintervention, my focus was the vulnerable victim. The perpetrators of the Holocaust were not my primary interest. I leave that to the others.

What fascinates me is the bystander's decision not to intervene.

Fascinated may be an understatement; obsession may be a more accurate word. Whether obsessions are positive or negative is a matter of dispute; in this case, I would like to think of them as positive.

I could, literally, write a book about the writing of this book.

Over the past four years I have met and communicated with an innumerable number of people. Writing this book has taken me to Holland, Germany, and Hungary; I have interviewed people in the United States, Canada, and Israel. I have imposed on people's valuable time—undoubtedly, sometimes overstaying my welcome.

People willing to open their doors to a total stranger and share painful stories is remarkable to experience. Many of the conversations that made this book possible were difficult and emotional. Feelings were raw.

For me, it was essential to honestly convey their experiences and stories without doing so in an exaggerated or maudlin manner. That would be disrespectful. My sole purpose in meeting with people was to better understand the question of the bystander.

The number of roads traveled while writing this book are many—intellectually, emotionally, and physically. To travel that many roads requires the support, encouragement, patience, and understanding of friends, family, and colleagues.

All faults with this book are, obviously, mine. I have been overwhelmed by the generosity, patience, and graciousness of many, many people. The list of names is as long as the book itself.

To that end, I have chosen—after much reflection—to do a collective thank-you to many and an individualized thank-you to a smaller group. It is my fervent hope this decision will be met with understanding by those not named.

I owe an unimaginable thank-you to John Devins, Maura Fowler, Christine Hashimoto, John C. Lentz, Jr., and Jonathan Malysiak. Each made critical contributions, too numerous to count. I will be forever

grateful and in their debt, safe to assume—knowing them as I do—more than they will ever realize.

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I leave to the reader to judge whether bystander complicity must be understood to be a crime. I truly believe it is. Regardless of the reader's conclusion, my hope is that the pages ahead will enhance understanding of the consequences of bystander inaction for the vulnerable victim.

That, for me, is the essence of the Holocaust.