



Video Story Transcript

The Day the Nazis Came

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Link to YouTube Video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs-el7IEA_s

Note : The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

When the Nazis said they were going to speak at Evanston at Lovelace Park, at first I didn't think much about it. They said they were going to march in Skokie a few years earlier and it turned out to be a publicity stunt. But as the time went on and it seemed like it was actually going to happen, I got more and more upset. I mean, being a Jew had never been a problem for me. I grew up in a Jewish neighborhood. There were synagogues, delicatessens...on High Holiday, school was empty. Everybody was out. And when I went to college, I went to Harvard, a liberal community. Now there was some anti-Semitism there. There were some final clubs that I couldn't join but they had a lot of Jews. And when my wife and I decided to settle down, we picked Evanston - a large Jewish population, a large black population.

And so being a Jew who had never been a problem.

And now the Nazis were going to invade my territory. Our Rabbi said, "Don't go there. We're gonna have a counter demonstration at the lake. Don't give them the honor of a crowd." But I had to go. I didn't want the Nazis to say, a mile from my house, you can kill Jews! Now, I didn't know what I was gonna do. I'm not a violent man. I thought, "Well, I could yell; maybe we'd just drown them out so we can't hear them."

Now when I got there, you got a 60's feel first. I mean, some people were singing, some people were doing horas. There were groups all over. Jewish groups; Never Again. Black groups; the Nazis hated blacks too. Women's groups; equality is genderless. Ecology groups; save the whales. Everybody marching around with signs. And a guy walking through the crowd, probably more, there were probably a lot of guys walking

through the crowd saying, "Ok. No violence. No violence. You know what we're going to do. We're gonna yell. When they speak, we'll drown them out but remember no violence." And he walked by me and there was a big guy standing there and he looked at me and he said, "No violence? Did they say that at Warsaw? Did they say that in Jerusalem? You know what I'm gonna do? As soon as a Nazi begins talking, I'm gonna rush down there and I'm gonna choke him to death." And then he walked away. And then I thought, "There are crazies in every crowd."

Now as the day went on, it got more and more serious. More and more police came. Their cars lined the park. There was a police helicopter in the air. And I saw what was going to happen. There was a maintenance building at the edge of the park. And I could see that the Nazis could park by it and take up a space in front of it and the maintenance building will cover their back. And there was like this concrete opening in front of it. And I figured the police would stand there to protect the Nazis. So we got the police, the Nazis and the building. Now when the riot police came, that's when it got really serious for me. They came off a bus and they looked like gladiators. They were wearing helmets and they had shields and clubs. Then, sure enough, they took up that space in front of the maintenance building. They had five rows of ten. I was standing right next to a yellow rope they had used to cordon off the area. And next to me was this little man and he was talking to himself and he was muttering and finally he looked at me. And he said, "Look, look, I was in the camps in Germany. They could do whatever they wanted. They were in power. But here... here we're gonna protect them?" His wife said, "This America. Everybody gets to say what they want." He says, "I can't believe. I can't believe it."

Now all of sudden, somebody yelled, "They're coming!" And a chant began, "Nazis no, Nazis no, Nazis no!" And I looked up and you know what I saw? I saw a junker. A junker. Its fender was dented, its bumper was tied up with a rope, it was burning oil. And I thought, "This what we're so excited about? Five guys in a junker?" And then they stepped out. It was like electricity went through the crowd. They were wearing Nazi uniforms. Two were in SS uniforms. And the chant changed, "Kill the Nazis! Kill the Nazis! Kill the Nazis!" And they did something that... I don't know... it was like I had seen it before. They just stood there in a circle ignoring us. Smoking cigarettes and talking. And then finally they formed a line and one stepped out with a blowhorn and he began to speak. Now the crowd got louder and louder but you could still hear that blowhorn over all of our yelling. Rocks began to fly through the air. That man with the blowhorn stepped back and everyone cheered. And then he stepped up again. He began to speak again, and again we were screaming so loud and yet you could still hear him. It was as if he was gaining strength from all the hatred around him. And then a brick flew through the air and hit a policeman, knocked him down. And the chant changed to, "Kill the pigs, kill the pigs, kill the pigs!"

And then, on my left, I saw a guy get under the rope and start to run to the Nazis. It was that guy! He got through the first two lines. I think they were surprised that he would actually do it. And they clubbed him to the ground when he reached the third line. And then a second man went under the rope and he was clubbed down. And then a third and then a fourth and both those were clubbed down. And then the little man on my right yelled, "Never again!" and he was under the yellow rope. And his wife, she dove at him, she grabbed his leg. He was dragging her along the ground. She was wearing a wig, you know, that was now coming off. She was yelling, "Stop 'em! Stop 'em! They're gonna kill 'em! They're gonna kill 'em!" And I was under the rope... And it wasn't to save that old man... I wanted to kill the Nazis. I wanted to take that blowhorn and

shove it down the Nazi's throat... Well, thank God, by the time I reached the police, they knew they had a potential riot on their hands. And so they had already bundled the Nazis into their car. And when I hit that first line, the policeman gave me a bear hug. And he yelled, "Ok. It's over. It's over. Calm down. It's over. They're leaving." And I looked up and sure enough, they were driving away. And then in minutes, the crowd left.

They would write this up as a victory. We had stopped the Nazis from speaking. But there was no victor on that field. I knew that, as I stood there shaking from adrenaline in me and feeling the rage, that only victor on this field was hate. I looked over and the men who'd been clubbed to the ground were leaning against the maintenance building field. An ambulance had arrived bathing the park with those blue and red lights. The old man, he was still sitting on the ground. His wife was smoothing his head. She kept saying, "It's ok, it's ok. It's over. It's over. It's ok." But he didn't answer her. He just sat there staring off into space.