

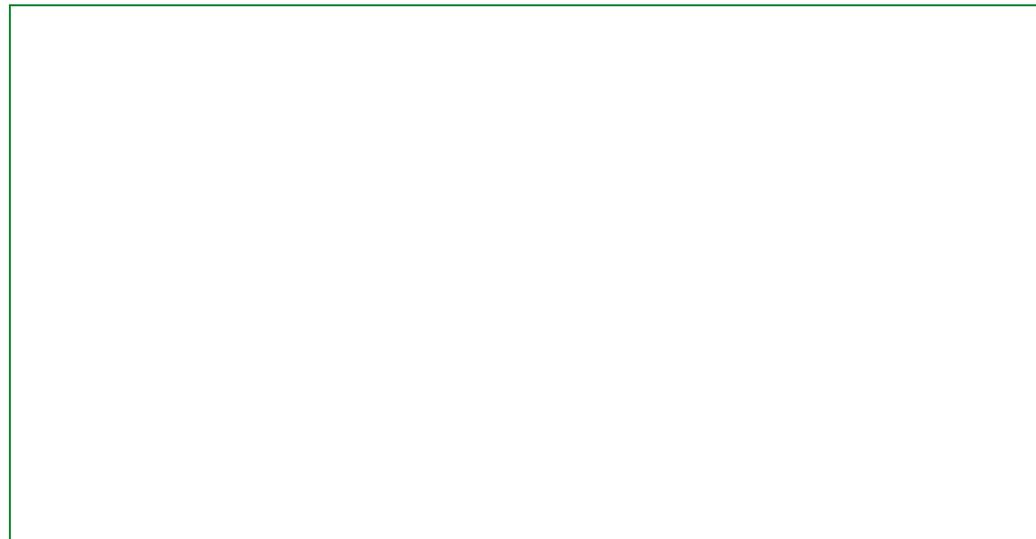
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"Our Stories"

We have decided to devote a portion of our magazine to non-fiction. These are stories of things that have happened serendipitously, being in the right place at the right time or just heartfelt musings, thoughts, and feelings on life. Join us in our non-fiction section. These stories speak to anyone and everyone and are told by anyone and everyone who has a story to tell.





"Study; Suddenly a Serpent" by Jan Collins Selman; <https://jancollinsselman.com/home.html>

About this image: *"Lilith and Eve: The Garden Series. Jan takes the time to hand enhance every original limited edition Garden print with metallic German Silver inks and/or 24k gold (ground) applied by brush, and at times some pastel colors."* —from the website of Jan Collins Selman

What Price Paradise

by Susan P. Blevins

We chugged into Phuket, the largest island in Thailand, by bus from Bangkok, after a long and arduous twelve-hour trip hunching over the wheel hub. As we'd all entered the bus at nightfall in Bangkok, an

official had been photographing us. *Why?* I'd asked the photographer. *So we know who is on the bus should bandits brutally attack you all, like they did to this same bus a week ago.* After being told this, I spent the whole journey planning my escape, should we be attacked. I would place my money in my shoes, and slip out of the window. How delusional was that?! To make matters worse, it poured rain during the entire twelve hours. *Did I leave the dismal climes of my native England for this depressing downpour?*

I was nearing the end of a solo three-month trip around Asia, looking forward to warm sun, pristine beaches, and sparkling seas, after slogging around India, Nepal and Bangladesh, with their hordes of people, abundant germs and lack of acceptable hygiene. We finally disembarked from the bus into the early morning light, safe, but hungry and grubby. Clutching my copy of *Southeast Asia on a Shoestring* (the forerunner of the "Lonely Planet" series), I made haste to hail a tuk-tuk to take me to the beach hut accommodation on Patong Bay that my limited funds allowed me to rent for a few weeks.

The hut was very simple, but quite adequate, and for only \$10 a day I could sleep there, buy my food and even rent a scooter, the only way to get around the island with ease. I soon settled into the relaxed life, making friends with other people traveling round Asia like myself, and enjoying the fact that I was swimming in warm seas, sipping coconut water straight from the coconuts, and living in my bikini, while watching the Pope's Christmas blessing at St. Peter's on the one TV in a bar on the beach, and a few days later, images of people all over the world leaping into icy waters to celebrate the new year. I felt smug and very pleased with my current situation, having the passing thought that this was almost too good to be true.

The days passed into weeks, and I made friends with Henkie the Dutchman, also traveling alone. We spent time together enjoying the beach and sharing our stories. One morning Henkie suggested that we leave Patong Bay and set out for the adjacent bay with a less crowded beach. We could get there by following an inland path that cut off the headland separating the two bays. That sounded like fun to me, so we set off in our swimming gear and sarongs, sturdy sandals on our feet and a few bahts for food and drink.

The path was narrow and gnarly with tree roots, wending its way through luxuriant undergrowth and exotic trees, the only sounds our own feet and musical bird calls.

We then became aware that the bird calls we were hearing were rather too regular to be real, and they seemed to be coming from both sides of our track, like a call and response. We started walking a bit faster, but still were not worried until we heard men's voices calling to each other across our path, in a way that I would have to describe as threatening, and almost taunting. Henkie hastily gathered up a stout stick and we started running. The voices grew louder, and the men, it sounded like an army to me, started beating the vegetation and making a terrible racket, apparently with the intention of terrifying us, which they succeeded in doing. We had heard about the brigands on land, and the pirates which abounded on the Andaman Sea, so our terror was well-founded, and our fear-filled flight well-justified.

We heard them drawing closer and closer, and my imagination went to that dark place of horror, of multiple rape, of murder, our bodies never to be found, never having told a soul about our current expedition. As the alien footsteps of the invisible aggressors grew closer, we ran faster and faster, and fortunately my fear was greater than my asthma. Normally, when I run a short distance I cannot breathe, but on this occasion I had wings on my feet and was not even aware of my breathing.

We finally erupted from the jungle into the welcoming open spaces of the bay, not as crowded as Patong, but thank God, there were people around. We fell on the warm sand, breath coming in heavy gulps, hearts pounding, our relief palpable. We spent the day on the beach and rented a little boat to take us back to Patong in the late afternoon. Nothing would have induced us to return by the morning's path through the jungle.

Never again do I want to have to run for my life, though I do have the dubious satisfaction that I did it and survived.

Bio- Susan P. Blevins, an ex-pat Brit, lived in Italy for twenty-six years, traveled the world extensively, and has now settled in Houston, Texas, where she is enjoying writing stories based on her travels and adventures. She had a weekly column on food in a European newspaper while living in Rome, and published various articles on gardens and gardening when she lived in northern New Mexico, before moving to Houston. Her passions are classical music, gardening, nature, animals (cats in particular), reading and of course, writing. She has written a journal since she was about nine.

My Father's Wallet

by Patrick Byrne

A lost wallet, a chance encounter and an instance of mistaken identification temporarily tied my family name to one of the most infamous, disturbing crimes of the twentieth century... Now, many years later, everyone else in the family with any real memory of the tragic event having passed on, I am choosing to write about my childhood memories of that time and a surprising discovery decades afterward.

On September 28, 1953 six-year-old Bobby Greenlease walked out of the exclusive French Institute of Notre Dame di Sion in Kansas City, Mo., with a woman posing as his aunt. Bobby would never again be seen alive.

The woman claimed Bobby's mother had suffered a heart attack; she said that she was a relative come to take him to his ailing mother, in order to gain his custody from the nuns. Bonnie Brown Heady was a partner in the most shocking kidnapping murder since the infamous Lindbergh kidnapping in 1927. Today, it is inconceivable that anyone could walk into a school, day care center or any facility entrusted with the care of young children and take a child without identification or some verification of the circumstances. However, the early 1950s was a time of trust and vicious crimes involving children were extremely rare.

Bobby's father was a multi-millionaire having earned a fortune through ownership of numerous GM automobile dealerships throughout the central and western United States and he quickly agreed to pay the \$600,000 ransom demand. The perpetrators managed to escape capture after the ransom pickup and then headed to St. Louis, Mo., my hometown.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this case was that Bonnie Heady, and Carl Austin Hall, the architect of the crime, had no intention of returning the boy. Shortly after the abduction, Hall, accompanied by Heady, drove to a secluded Kansas farm where Hall shot the boy following a violent struggle. Although Heady remained outside the station wagon where the heinous crime took place, she must have heard the struggle as Bobby fought for his life. The murderous pair then drove to Heady's home in St. Joseph, Mo., where a shallow grave had already been dug. After dumping lime on the young boy's body they placed flowers on his grave—not as an act of respect, but to disguise the freshly dug grave.

In researching this vicious crime and reading in detail the horrible circumstances of the murder, I could not help but wonder how the Greenlease family must have suffered at the loss of such an innocent child. Today, Bobby would be 68 years old.

The most comprehensive chronicling of this tragedy can be found in James Deakin's book, *A Grave for Bobby*. Here Deakin delves meticulously into the events leading up to the crime including the capture, conviction and execution of the coldblooded killers in the Missouri gas chamber on December 18, 1953—incredibly just 81 days after the crime. However, while justice had been swift and final for the perpetrators, the mystery of what happened to roughly half of the \$600,000 ransom lingers until this day. Only \$300,000 was recovered at the time of Carl Hall's arrest.

In Deakin's book, my father's name is noted several times and on one occasion, according to Deakin, a police officer, due to the early mistaken identification of Hall, had thought "John Byrne" might have been Bobby's kidnapper. It was a shock to see my father's name accused of this unthinkable crime.

At the time of this event I was ten years old and like most boys my age, I was blissfully unaware of the major issues occupying the adult world; nevertheless, I did begin to hear the name "Greenlease" mentioned in muffled tones from my mom and dad. Then one night two men came to the front door announcing they were the FBI.

My two younger brothers, older sister and I all slept in the same room. Our house was a Pullman or shotgun layout, a straight shot from the living room to the kitchen with two bedrooms in between. The one bathroom was situated just off to the side. We were in bed but not asleep when the two agents looking like giants strode through our bedroom to the kitchen where all family business was conducted. My father was very agitated and my mother had a worried, frozen look that I had never seen before. I kept asking what was going on and mother just as often said, "Shut up and go to sleep." There was no way that was going to happen because even kids know when something big is brewing, especially if it is bad.

I could barely hear the conversation in the kitchen but my father raised his voice several times and on one occasion shouted to the agents, "Do you think if I had \$300,000 I would be living in this house with four kids

jammed in one room?!” The agents never raised their voices and left shortly after my father’s outburst. Several days later his picture appeared in the newspaper with an accompanying story of how he became entangled in this mess. After the article appeared I heard Dad tell Mom he was worried about his job and suspected he was being followed on his daily truck route.

My father was a hard working blue collar Teamster who came home exhausted after a day of jockeying his truck around the city. He would have supper and then begin working on the never-ending improvements and repairs to the house. Since there was no money to pay for outside help, my father undertook major projects that included installing a new furnace, hand-mixing concrete for a new basement floor, tuck pointing the entire house, electrical rewiring, installing new bathroom plumbing and constantly replacing broken windows that seemed to act as a magnet for baseballs and footballs thrown by my brothers and I.

Dad was Irish and on occasion, would cut loose with his buddies to a men’s lodge which shall remain nameless. The purpose of this lodge, besides drinking beer and bowling, was a bit of a mystery but my mom figured he was certainly entitled to go out once a month with the boys and as she put it, “get stupid.”

It was on one of these outings as I learned over the years that the guy with the car that night was too drunk to drive and Dad decided to take a cab. What Dad didn’t know was that when he stepped into that cab it was the beginning of a nightmare that would haunt him for many years and never completely leave his memory. The cab company was owned by an individual with known mob ties and the driver was a seedy character well-known to the police. It was in this cab that my father had the misfortune to lose his wallet.

The less-than-honest cab driver recognizing a chance to pocket a few extra bucks not only took money but also my father’s wallet and all of his identification. The cabby figured that in the murky underbelly of the city where he operated, that the right opportunity would eventually come along allowing him to sell my father’s identification for a sizable pile of cash. That opportunity presented itself in the person of an alcohol-soaked Carl Austin Hall. Hall was having the cabby chauffeur him to bars and cat houses throughout the city and in the process, throwing around large sums of cash.

The cabby, spotting a huge score but unaware Hall was the most hunted man in America (yet still unidentified), contacted his mob-connected boss to let him in on the potential fat payday his passenger represented. At some time during this several day cab tour of drinking, drugging and womanizing the cab driver gave or sold Hall my father's wallet replete with his identification. His boss and owner of the cab company, always looking to curry favor with certain police officials, had Hall delivered to the police station of a paid-off police lieutenant. Hall until that time was assumed to be an embezzler or other type of white collar criminal and an easy mark. What better setup than to steal from a thief!

It is at the police station that Deakin, in his book, connects the dots as to what most likely happened to the \$300,000. His conclusion points to corrupt police officers laundering the money through mob contacts but there is no definitive proof that this is what actually occurred. Two police officers were convicted of perjury in connection with the missing money; but it was determined none of the cash reached their hands. Other than a few bills surfacing over a period of years, none of the estimated 17,000 missing bills were ever recovered.

Hall, in his wretched physical and mental condition from days of drinking and debauchery, thought he had been arrested for the Greenlease kidnapping and opened that door in his drunken stupor. The police were dumbfounded and stunned in disbelief when they realized, sitting in front of them, was the Greenlease kidnapper. Checking his identification they quickly assumed his name was "John Byrne." After further questioning, he admitted his real name was Carl Austin Hall; but straightening out names and circumstances in such a high profile and twisted case kept my father's name in the news until the trial ended. As the years passed, my father and mother, to my knowledge, never mentioned the case, and friends and relatives knew better than to bring up the topic.

In 1975, 22 years after the case was closed, my wife Kathy was working for the U.S. Government in the Federal Building in downtown St. Louis and was friendly with many FBI agents headquartered in the building. One day she mentioned my father's involvement in the Greenlease case and the missing wallet. The following day, an agent handed her my father's wallet and identification amazingly still in good condition. He said the requirement for holding anything from that case had expired and the Bureau no longer required the wallet for their files.

That evening, Kathy and I presented the wallet to my father who was left speechless. Looking into his eyes, I could see a mixture of surprise, happiness and still a touch of embarrassment. What he did with the wallet is unknown and I never asked. It was a special moment and I believe Dad and Mom had a sense of closure about those trying days in 1953.

Author's Note: I chose to write this memory of my childhood after recently re-reading James Deakin's book, A Grave for Bobby. The book is a meticulous telling of a 1953 kidnapping-murder that was front page news across the country and around the world. In the book, my father's name appears several times and it stirred forgotten memories of our family's past. It was a trying time for my father and he remained embarrassed his entire life over an innocent but unfortunate circumstance that tied him to this infamous event. I chose not to mention the names of any of the characters involved in the case with the exception of the perpetrators and the victim, but their names are part of the public record. All of the major characters are deceased.

Bio- Patrick Byrne is a retired businessman currently residing in Delray Beach, Florida. Previous stories have appeared in *The Write Place at The Write Time* under Our Stories non-fiction. The narratives have centered on his time in the U.S. Navy as a young man in the early 1960s. He and his wife Patty enjoy travel and still participate in triathlon races, having completed three full Ironman distance competitions. A recent trip to Ecuador included hiking in the volcanic mountains near Quito, the capital city, and scuba diving off the Galapagos Islands.

Henry's Holocaust

by Roberto Loiederman

In 1994, in the wake of *Schindler's List*, Steven Spielberg founded Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, commonly called Shoah Foundation—*shoah* is Hebrew for holocaust. The organization's initial purpose was to interview those who could provide eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust. Time was of the essence: it had been 50 years since the war, survivors and other witnesses had aged, and some were growing feeble in body and mind.

It was a monumental goal: to find those who could attest to the Holocaust because of their personal experience, have them give testimony in a videotaped interview, and subsequently archive these accounts in a way that would make it relatively easy for future scholars to access the information. The foundation aimed to digitalize 50,000 first-hand accounts so that any future researcher would be able to go to the archive, input, for example, “Auschwitz,” “twins,” and “1943,” and a list of video links would pop up on a screen: interview segments that dealt with that combination of factors. Someone interested in that topic could watch and listen to those clips, or the entire interviews they came from.

Before the main interviewing phase was over, in 1999, the Shoah Foundation surpassed its goal; it conducted nearly 52,000 interviews in many countries and in many languages. Though most were with survivors, there were interviews with soldiers who liberated the camps, attorneys at the Nuremberg trials, those who lived in hiding, those who escaped to safer areas, and many others who had been personal eyewitnesses to some aspect of the Holocaust.

I was one of a dozen people hired by the Shoah Foundation to make sure that interviewers followed interviewing protocol. My job was to watch taped interviews, take notes, and then call the interviewers and give feedback. It was important for interviewers not to ask leading questions and to make sure that interviewees talked about the facts they themselves had seen and heard, and nothing else: no hearsay, no opinions, no political or social commentary.

We, the reviewers, got together once a week at the Shoah office for a two-hour meeting, and during a year’s worth of these gatherings, I became friendly with Henry—himself a survivor—who held the same position I did: reviewing interviews. Henry was charming, funny, smart, honest and self-deprecating—an altogether winning combination.

As a Polish-born survivor of concentration camps and death marches, Henry—short, compact, with thick glasses—had been interviewed during the early days of this Spielberg project, but that was before the Foundation’s interviewing techniques were systematized, so Henry’s interviewer kept interjecting his *own* survival experiences. As a result, Henry’s first interview came out choppy and truncated, and the story wasn’t told in a coherent way.

When we were reaching the end of the interviewing phase of the project, Henry requested to be interviewed *again*. Normally, that would have been denied; but Henry, as a respected employee and supporter of the foundation, was entitled to a second bite of the apple. He was scheduled for a second interview and he requested that I conduct it.

In the run-up to the interview, Henry and I got together several times. The pretext was to talk about the upcoming interview, but the real reason was that we enjoyed each other's company: he liked telling stories and I liked to listen. He came to my house a few times, where he met my younger son, Zeke, age thirteen at the time. Henry immediately sniffed him out as a "cool kid" and every time I'd see Henry, he'd ask me, "How's that cool kid Zeke doing?" In passing, I also mentioned that my older son Rafi was an undergraduate at an Ivy League school.

"So you have one scholar and one cool kid. Good for you," Henry said.

"Not so good for me," I said. "Rafi's education is costing us a fortune—which we don't have—and Zeke is too cool for school. Rafi tells us truths we'd rather not hear, while Zeke's always making up stuff and wouldn't know the truth if it hit him in the chops."

Henry laughed. "Count your blessings," he said.

On the day I was to interview Henry at his modest home in the San Fernando Valley, I arrived at 10:00 am, at the same time as Shmulik, an Israeli videographer. Henry, wearing a sport jacket and tie, showed us into the house and his wife Janet greeted us with tea and cookies.

As Shmulik set up his lighting, I asked him how many cassettes he'd brought. "Ten," Shmulik said. "That should be enough, right?" He was being sarcastic. Ten cassettes, at a half-hour each, would give us five hours, and our usual interviews were about two hours. However, I was familiar with Henry's story and figured it would be more than twice that long. I knew that if it went to a fifth hour, I'd have to juggle the ending to fit everything in.

Shmulik signaled that he was ready and we started. During the interview, I followed our protocol. The first half-hour was spent on the period before the war—where Henry's family lived, who they were, what they did to earn money, where he went to school, what his home life was like: playing

games, celebrating Shabbat and Jewish holidays, what foods they ate, what vacations they took. Since Henry knew the interview protocol as well as I did, it was only necessary for me to ask the simplest of questions, and he would respond in great detail.

Henry was born in 1925 and brought up in Czeladz, a Polish town not far from Krakow. His father was a coal-miner—odd for a Jew. His family loved classical music, but they couldn't afford to buy him a piano, so they got him a harmonica—according to Henry that harmonica would end up saving his life. When he talked about this, Henry's hand rested on a Hohner harmonica lying on a small table nearby, as if waiting to be called upon during the interview.

As we were coming to the end of the first cassette, Shmulik signaled that there was a minute to go, so I found an appropriate place to stop the interview. While Shmulik changed cassettes, Henry went to the bathroom. During the first cassette, Henry had mentioned that his mother used to sing him lullabies, so during the second half-hour I asked him if he could sing one. Henry agreed and sang a heartbreaking Yiddish melody, "Rozhinkes mit Mandlen" ("Raisins with Almonds").

Afterwards, he talked about the period before, during and after the Nazi invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. After the Germans crossed into Poland, his town was on the alert, knowing there was nothing they could do to stop the offensive. Still, two weeks later, before the Nazis swooped into their small town, Henry and his family were able to celebrate Rosh Hashanah.

Henry—called Henryk at the time—was 14 and his family spent the holiday with some others from the town, including, Henry said, "a beautiful 12-year-old girl named Jadzia. I fell for her the moment I saw her." In the next few years, Henry held on to that vision of the lovely Jadzia. It sustained him, he said, through the camps, death marches and the deaths of those he loved.

In 1943, when he was 17, Henry was at Dyhenfurth concentration camp. "I weighed nothing, maybe 90 pounds, I probably could count the number of days of life I had left in the single digits, maybe a week left to live. It was winter and I was working with these heavy tools. A pick, a shovel, clearing roads. I didn't have long to live if that kept up. But I still had my harmonica, the one my parents had gotten for me. And I'd learned how to play some

pieces. So one night I was playing Schubert's 'Serenade.' You know the one..."

At my urging, Henry picked up the harmonica and played the familiar melody. His playing was rusty, but the Schubert music came through clearly and emotionally. After a few bars of the well-known piece, Henry carefully laid the harmonica on the small table beside him.

"So the Nazi commandant heard that I played, you know, those things get around, and he called for me to come to his office and ordered me to play. I was terrified. He told me to play the Schubert...so I did. The commandant heard me play and nodded and from then on I was able to get some more food. Substantial food. Because of that song, I survived. A miracle."

Later in the interview, Henry told a haunting story about a death march and his father's collapse. "The commandant had given me some bread, a whole loaf. You know how much that meant? A whole loaf? If only I'd been able to get some to my father, but there was no way. If only I could have helped him survive." Henry cried. He and I both knew that this situation called for me to be silent while the camera remained focused on his soft sobbing.

Cassette after cassette, Henry continued his story. I was the director and Henry the actor, going over stories and images that had not only been seared into Henry's blood and bone, they'd been seared into our collective post-World War II consciousness. With all the books and movies about the Holocaust, most people are now fully aware of the broad outlines of Henry's story. To be sure, each survival story is unique, but it's also generic in its broad shape, and Henry's story was similar to many of the testimonies we had reviewed: ghettos, camps, marches, death, gas chamber smells, screams, smoke from crematoria. As I listened to Henry's story, the hundreds of interviews I'd heard blended into a single story of human suffering.

When the interview was at the start of the fifth hour, Henry talked about a death march he escaped from. After escaping, he hid in the woods, where he joined local farmers and partisans, who protected him until liberation in May, 1945.

During the year that I spent at the Shoah Foundation, one of the puzzles I'd tried to sort out was whether there were common factors among those

who'd survived: Was it the result of definable reasons, or was it merely random, the luck of the draw? After the first few dozen interviews I began to think that it had to do with a certain contrariness, a refusal to go with the flow: trusting one's own instincts rather than following orders or conventional wisdom.

To a degree, Henry fell into that pattern of survivor behavior. At a time when others might have curled up and died, Henry dug out his harmonica, and played his guts out. It saved his life. At a time when others were following the person in front to what turned out to be certain death, Henry sneaked away from the pack and hightailed it into the forest.

Toward the end of the ninth cassette, Henry talked about how, after liberation—when he was 19—he returned to the village of Czeladz. Once there, he learned that his parents and many of his relatives had died. He looked for anyone he knew, any familiar face, and suddenly he found Jadzia, the girl whose smile had stayed in his mind through the years of dark terror. She had survived! They fell into each other's arms and vowed undying love for one another.

In the tenth cassette, Henry (nee Henryk) said he and Jadzia married and immigrated to the United States, where they became Henry and Janet, a couple that worked hard, brought up two sons and eventually settled in the San Fernando Valley section of Los Angeles. A frequent guest speaker at high schools, Henry repeatedly told student groups his miraculous story of survival and how, soon after liberation, he reconnected with his one true love.

Of course, all the people we interviewed with the Shoah Foundation had something in common: they had survived. They had suffered enormous tragedy, lost loved ones, been physically and emotionally tortured; but the fact remained: they had survived. This gave every testimony an in-built degree of happy ending: a Spielbergian happy ending. In order to underline this happy ending, the final scene of Shoah Foundation taped interviews with survivors was a touching tableau: the survivor surrounded by his or her family: spouse, children, grandchildren—as if to say, *You see? You tried to kill me but you failed. I survived and have a line of descendants who'll live their lives in spite of your efforts to snuff us out.*

When we reached that moment in Henry's interview, Henry quietly whispered that the final shot would be only of him and Janet. It was odd,

and Shmulik's eyes met mine: What's going on? No kids, no grandkids? I knew Henry had two sons. Though I'd spent a good bit of time chatting with him, though he and I had met at my house and at restaurants, I had no idea why Henry's children, or his children's children—if they had any—would not be in the final scene.

Shmulik filmed the last shot with Henry and Janet pointing to pre-war photos that, somehow, had been salvaged. Shmulik carefully focused in on these photos, panning, zooming in. Then Shmulik turned off his video camera, packed his gear, said his farewells and left.

I was about to go, but Henry touched my arm, signaling for me to stay a short while longer. As Shmulik's car pulled out, a van pulled in to the vacated spot. Two men in their 40s got out of the van. From the way they walked, from their eyes and body language, it was obvious that both these men had varying degrees of psychological and developmental disability.

"My sons," Henry said, his voice breaking slightly. "Marvin, he's the older one, he sweeps up at MacDonald's, you know, they got this program, providing menial work for people [with disability]. And Harry, the younger one, he's at a day care center all day, where they take care of him."

I was shocked: frozen and ashamed. I had complained about my sons...my God! I tried to hide my reaction from Henry, but I couldn't. Was the impairment suffered by the two sons a result of drugs Henry and Janet were given at the camps—of experiments they were subjected to? Had their chromosomes been damaged by treatment they'd received at the hands of the Nazis? Is that what happened?

It seemed comparable to Job's plight. So: Henry and Janet will have no grandkids. This is it. The end of the line.

"I feel bad," Henry said.

In a shocked whisper, I said: "I understand."

"No," Henry said, "I don't think you do. I mean maybe...maybe I should have included the boys in that last scene, no? What do you think?"

I wasn't sure what to tell him. In a moment of clarity, Henry regretted having left his sons out of the final tableau. Had he suddenly realized that

he had bought into the idea of a happy ending for himself, and for Janet? A Spielberg ending?

All of our interviews at the Foundation had, if not happy endings, at least satisfying endings. The interviews provide important eyewitness accounts, of course, and no doubt Spielberg had noble motivations for preserving these testimonies. But had some of the other survivors interviewed, like Henry, unwittingly Spielbergized their own story? Because of the massive amount of testimony the Foundation had amassed, will the Shoah Foundation archive provide a slightly Spielbergized image of the aftermath of the Holocaust? And will that image be the one passed on to future generations?

Suddenly, in my mind, I saw the movie that could be made of Henry and Janet's life. With appropriate musical crescendo, it would end in 1945, when Henryk and Jadzia, still teenagers, like Romeo and Juliet, reconnect and fall into each other arms, astounded that the other had survived, totally in love, young and optimistic and looking forward to the rest of their lives.

Bio- Roberto Loiederman has been a journalist, merchant seaman, and TV scriptwriter, has had more than 100 articles published in *L.A. Times*, *Washington Post*, *Penthouse*, *Fifth Wednesday Journal*, *Santa Fe Writers Project*, etc. He was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2014 and 2015 and is co-author of *The Eagle Mutiny*, about the only mutiny on an American ship in modern times. More info at www.eaglemutiny.com.

Body and Spirit

by Mark Barkawitz

I wake in the semi-darkness in unfamiliar surroundings, then remember—we're on a family vacation in a log cabin at Big Sur. My wife sleeps peacefully beside me in the double-bed, our two kids likewise across the room in sleeping bags on cots. So I prep and dress quietly into shorts, long-sleeved T-shirt, and running shoes.

Outside the little cabin, I'm dwarfed by the forest of redwoods towering over me. Shivering in the brisk, morning air, I start my run quickly—to pump the blood and raise my core temperature—onto the trail through the campground, across a wood-beamed bridge, and onto Highway One. The

two-lane roadway weaves the only asphalt path north-and-south amongst the partitioning redwoods, as it loosely parallels the craggy, California coastline.

Its dirt roadside is tightly-narrowed by the enormous, red-barked trunks, dense ivy, and poison oak on my immediate right and the more-than-occasional, early-morning traffic—cars, motorcycles, RVs—whizzing past from behind on my left, only a few, unnerving feet away. An old school bus, hand-painted with flowers and peace signs, cruises past, wafting me with exhaust. I pass a dead squirrel by a telephone pole—road kill on the blacktop staring vacantly up at me—and decide to look for a less-traveled path off the main highway.

Most are marked with private property signs. A mile or so along, I spot a paved road with a sign that reads: “St. Francis of the Redwoods. Mass Service 10:30 Sundays.” A carved wooden gate is locked across its asphalt roadway. No one’s around—*What the heck?*—I figure St. Francis won’t mind. So I hop the fence and run surreptitiously off the roadway through the ferns and undergrowth until spotting a wooden, single-storied building—the humble, little church with its smiling statue of the patron saint of animals and our natural environment—appropriately nestled in a clearing amongst the dense growth and giant redwoods. For the congregation’s viewing, a large, picture-window in the western wall overlooks the stream below.

I run down to the stream and squat on its shore, where the water gurgles like a hymn over the rocks and fallen trees. Golden rays from the just-risen sun lean through elms, bays, and evergreens, brightly speckling the coarse sand and smooth rocks, camouflaging me like a chameleon. Upstream, downstream, I’m alone in Nature.

I plot my course, then rock hop across the rushing water, aware that any slip will incur the penalty of a soggy running shoe. I maneuver past mid-stream to where a large, gray rock was long-ago positioned by a greater power. I climb the altar-like boulder and sit atop it under a leafy, lower limb with my feet dangling.

Back across the stream, the little church looks empty—no *mass service* today. That suits me. Otherwise, I wouldn’t be sitting here—exposed to the flock. From my sock, I remove a baggie, inside of which are blue tip

matches and a smoke. I don't usually smoke—the kids—but vacation isn't usually. So I strike a match on the smooth rock, light up, and suck the grayish-white smoke deeply inside, then exhale slowly. I blow a few rings and watch them fall apart in the crisp, morning air. Clear water flows beneath my bare legs and sneakered feet. I search the pebbled bottom for fish. Polliwogs congregate in still water near the shoreline. A lone, blue-clawed crayfish pokes its pop-eyed head out from under a submerged rock but ventures no farther. Water bugs skip across the liquid surface.

A small, yellow-eyed, black bird swoops down from the tree above me and barks like a dog: *You're too close to my nest!*

I smile back, *Don't worry*, draw on my smoke and tap a harmless ash that disappears to nothingness in the current. *I won't be here long.*

A silver-blue dragonfly—perched like a lookout—floats downstream on a runaway leaf, passing over a speckled trout, who effortlessly holds its indigenous position in the current. I sit perfectly still and likewise try to become one with my surroundings, while letting the smoke curl from the red cherry like a stick of reverential incense held between my fingers, exposing my pantheistic position. (It's easy to forget in the city.)

On shore, two ground squirrels bicker over some kind of nut. My stomach gurgles: *I won't be here long, guys.* I finish my smoke and put the extinguished remains back into the baggie and inside my sock. I'm careful to leave no evidence of my presence. I rock hop back across the stream. Retracing my tracks past the little church, I wave goodbye to the contagiously-smiling statue—*Thanks for the hospitality, St. Francis! Nice place you have here.*—back up the paved roadway, and over the fence.

Back on Highway One again, I run facing the traffic now, which is no less harrowing. (Maybe even more so?) But I'm comfortable in my running shoes after the meditative powwow with my kindred spirits. Just the same, I pick up my pace, beckoned by an appetizing thought: my wife's cooking breakfast with the kids—scrambled eggs, bacon, and maybe pancakes, too—on a propane stove on the picnic table back at the cabin!

Bio- Mark Barkawitz has earned local and national awards for his fiction, poetry, essay, and screenwriting. His work has appeared in newspapers, magazines, literary journals &

anthologies, 'zines, and on dozens of websites. He has IMDb feature film credits as screenwriter, actor, & associate producer (Mark Bark) for *Turn of the Blade* (NorthStar Ent.) and supporting actor in *The Killing Time* (New World Pictures). He's taught creative writing classes, coached a championship track team of student-athletes, and ran the 2001 L.A. Marathon. He lives with his wife, two dogs, and has two grown children in Pasadena, CA. His new book *29 Again & Other Cancer-Fighting Stories* from Woof Books is now available in both print and e-book @ Amazon.com and other outlets. Fifty percent of all proceeds from this book will be donated to City of Hope. To learn more, see the ad on the Feedback and Questions page.

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