

## Rick Kool Interview 9.5.2019 – Defying Hatred Project

**Stanger-Ross:** Usually we give a little situating information at the beginning of these. I'm Jordan Stanger-Ross with the Defying Hatred Project at UVic and I'm here with Rick Kool. Richard? Rick?

**Kool:** Richard. My mother calls me Richard. When I was in kindergarten virtually every boy in my class was called Richard.

**Stanger-Ross:** Okay, and that's when you became Rick?

**Kool:** Yeah, we had to separate ourselves somehow.

**Stanger-Ross:** We're at 117 Menzies St. in Victoria.

**Kool:** Correct.

**Stanger-Ross:** And what's the date today?

**Kool:** May 9th. My parents' anniversary.

**Stanger-Ross:** May 9th 2019. Mazel Tov. We're here to do an interview for the Defying Hatred Project. I guess if we start with a little bit of biographical information cause we might derive from this also a little biographical sketch. So --

**Kool:** My biography?

**Stanger-Ross:** Yeah, just some details.

**Kool:** Right. So, my parents' anniversary today. Sam Kool came to Boston from Amsterdam in 1927 with his parents, my grandparents, and his mother's parents. My mother, Hester Waas -- W-A-A-S -- grew up in Zandvoort on the sea in Holland and is the only survivor of her immediate family. She was hidden and they were killed. My father also lost virtually all of the family that stayed behind in the Netherlands. So both my parents are Dutch and they met very shortly after my mother came to America. They met in Boston. Their first date was to the town that I ended up growing up in which was really a kind of funny coincidence. So I was born in 1950 in the city of Boston and lived in the city of Boston, in the Jewish Boston, in Dorchester, until we moved out to the beach in 1960. In 1960 we moved out to this little beach town. Three catholic churches and a synagogue. I didn't know what a Protestant was for most of my upbringing. So in Boston, it's catholic also. I was a biologist as a 10-year-old and that hasn't changed. I grew up right on the ocean, that hasn't changed. Went to high school and no one in my family had finished high school before. Got a scholarship to the University of New Hampshire. I wanted to come to the west coast and go to the University of Washington but my parents couldn't afford to get me there and back so New Hampshire was okay. Came to graduate -- my degree, I have a BA in Zoology,

my background and my minor was in philosophy. I studied music all through university. Came to graduate school at UBC in 1971. Did a Masters in science and resource ecology as part of a large international project looking at lake ecology and my piece was microscopic things that live in mud. Was a high school teacher for a couple of years in Ucluelet on the west coast of Vancouver Island. I was the hippie science teacher in my high school. And came back to Vancouver, taught for a while in Douglas College and was a substitute teacher in high schools, then got a job at the BC Provincial Museum, now the Royal BC Museum, in 1978. So Enid and I moved here and got married later that year, 1978. Been in Victoria ever since. Went from the museum to the Ministry of Environment to BC Parks back into the Environment Ministry per se, and then in 2003 had a secondment to Royal Roads and set up a new Masters program and have been at Royal Roads since 2003.

**Stanger-Ross:** Yeah.

**Kool:** Yeah and so, kind of fun to, you know, leave my career as a university professor and a family that never got around, through history or whatever, to finishing high school, secondary education. So that's kind of fun.

**Stanger-Ross:** Yeah.

**Kool:** Brief biography.

**Stanger-Ross:** Brief biography. So you have family history that leads you toward Holocaust memorialisation or --

[00:04:26]

**Kool:** Yes. Well, leads me towards thinking about the subject. I gave a talk last week at Royal Roads, a seminar. We had all the faculty give, you know -- we're so small as a faculty at Royal Roads, we're like a big department. So it was my turn last week and I've been doing this research on environmental violence. And as I was cycling -- 'cause I bike from here out to there -- and as I was cycling up the hill by the car lot on the Old Island Highway I thought, "why have I been writing about violence for the last few years?" And it was on Yom HaShoah. And I thought, "of course I'm writing about violence." Violence pervades my whole life, both on my father's side and my mother's side of the family. Sometimes I'm amazed where I stumble into areas of research. My doctorate was on the moral weight of knowing things. Like what's the relationship we have with our knowledge and our actions. And that was before I knew what happened to my mother. Through my dissertation process I actually found the people who hid my mother and of course that's the ultimate question right. She wasn't meant to live, I wasn't meant to exist. She lived, I exist because of the moral knowledge of the people that hid her. So this question that I was doing in a philosophical way, it was the central question in my life and I never could've articulated it but that's where I ended up doing my doctorate. So this stuff really, it sits very deeply in me and every once in a while I stumble on how it expresses itself in my professional life.

**Stanger-Ross:** When did you start to encounter the topic of the Holocaust as something of concern to you?

**Kool:** Well I think growing up in a family that has this stuff in it, you know there's something wrong from an early age. Like why don't you have, you know -- your Irish Catholic friends have four grandparents and I had two grandparents but I was the only one of my cousins who had any grandparents. So you knew something -- when the neighbours with the tattoos or my aunt with the tattoos. And the fact that we never spoke about my mother's family -- that something was goofy. And I think I knew about that from a very early age. I knew from the time I was, I think, 7 or 8 -- 7 probably -- when I chose to go to an orthodox yeshiva for after public school Hebrew school. One of Rabbi -- sort of the new orthodox movement -- Rabbi Soloveitchik's movement was big in Boston and that's where I wanted to go but I didn't have a Hebrew name cause Richard is not an easily translated Hebrew name. So I went with my parents to see the Rabbi who ran this little shtetel and they had to find a name for me. It was the first time I ever heard -- and I remember it really clearly -- my mother's father's name. His name was Benedict -- Benedictus -- which is a benediction, a blessing. So the Rabbi thought maybe my appropriate name would be Beruch, you know, a blessing. So that was really -- that was the first time he was ever there and the first time he became real to me was when this bank account stuff came out and I was hunting -- and life insurance policies came out -- and the first time he really was real was when I went through the life insurance policies from other people, survivors in Victoria. I thought, "I should really go look and see if there's anything for this lumpen proletariat guy in Zandvoort" and there he was. With a fifty guilder life insurance policy. And that made him real. Otherwise they were just completely absent. My mother's brother and parents and most of her family was absent. So I think I've known from the time I was very young. But in my adulthood, you know, put it all away. It was when I met Enid that -- and she gave me the book from the early-90s or published in the late-80s maybe -- *Children of the Holocaust*, that was really something. I thought, "other people think this way? I've had these issues too." That was really where it began and it ultimately led to being involved with the [organization] [REDACTED] here.

**Stanger-Ross:** So in childhood you encounter your grandfather's name and this exchange.

**Kool:** No one talked about what happened to him, where they were. We never ever spoke to my mother about what happened to her. I think, in my maybe 20s, teens, we finally -- somehow I knew that she'd been hidden. But no, it was all absent. We have a picture of my father's family. As I said my grandparents, his parents, came to Boston. My grandmother's sisters and brother stayed in Amsterdam. In 1939 my great-grandparents, my grandmother's parents, had come to Boston also. They had their fiftieth wedding anniversary. So they had a formal picture of them taken in Boston and then they sent a framed copy of this picture to Amsterdam. And the Dutch family, my great-grandparents' children, and their children and grandchildren, had a big party it looks like. They had a portrait taken of all of them with the picture from Boston which they sent back to Boston. That picture has hung in our house but only one person in that picture survived. There are about 21 people in the picture and one person survived. And my dad was angry about that every day. That even though he was in America and he fought in the Pacific theatre, you know -- it was just not something that was really ever spoken of. My mother's never been very forthcoming about why she never spoke about these things but it's pretty clear. No one wants to

be seen as a victim or my dad said "they just got on." They were in the new world, right, and they were just going to get on with their lives. It just wasn't going to be an issue. It became an issue and part of my research into looking into my mother's story has been of great help to her, but it was all around her story that brought me to Holocaust memorialisation and my engagement with the [organization] [REDACTED] here.

**Stanger-Ross:** What do you mean when you say your father was angry every day?

[00:11:17]

**Kool:** Because this was his family and they were -- except for my aunt, his one first cousin -- they were all killed and he -- you know -- at the time he could do nothing about it. And it was a big family, all these Sephardi, Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam and, you know, it was a family of -- a picture of 20 or 21 people and one person survived and he was angry about that. The picture was there and I know he would say he was angry at times about that. His whole family was destroyed and what saved him was the fact that his father didn't get along with his father's father and so they left Holland and came to Boston.

**Stanger-Ross:** This is something I'm trying to get my head around, but just that experience with proximity, I guess, to the events. Did your father express to you as a child -- were you aware that all these people were murdered?

**Kool:** No, no no. We had -- no. I think my sister would attest to this as well, my brother probably too, that it was just an absence, it was an absence in the family. That there were, you know -- you just didn't talk about the family in Holland. It just wasn't. We were brought up to feel very very Dutch. Although in America people didn't teach children the home language like they would have in Canada for example. We felt very much Dutch, you know. That was really our identity, not as an American but as Dutch and as Jewish. But what happened in Holland was not something that was ever brought up. In fact when I went to the Netherlands, when I went to Europe the first time, I was 36 the first time I went there and I use the phrase, it was a place of dreams and nightmares. Because those were the experiences as a kid of -- Holland was this dreamy place. We could sing little Dutch Christmas songs and we had Christmas cookies or special, you know. At Pesach we would have Sephardi food that my Ashkenazi friends would go nuts about. But it was also a place of unspoken nightmares. Because something happened and we just didn't know. And we didn't know the details. We literally didn't know the details until 1994. For my mother's side of the family, for my mother especially. It was 25 years ago right now, at the Yom HaShoah service, that the beginning of my understanding of what happened to my mother happened publicly at the Yom HaShoah service.

**Stanger-Ross:** You were in your mid-30s then?

[00:14:17]

**Kool:** No, 44.

**Stanger-Ross:** Oh. You were born in 1950.

**Kool:** 1950, yeah.

**Stanger-Ross:** Is there a time when the Holocaust appeared as a topic outside of your family, but as a topic of education or --

**Kool:** Nope. I think maybe at the end of my Hebrew school life maybe something happened. Maybe we talked a little bit about it. But that would've been in the mid-60s. But no, not through university -- obviously in public school it wasn't something that was spoken about then. I studied -- I loved history. I could've minored in history too. But no, it never, it never really came up although I think it was sitting there. But it was never very explicit at all. Not at all. Nope.

**Stanger-Ross:** You would've had knowledge that, you know -- the notion of 6 million --

**Kool:** Oh yeah. Oh sure. Through my 20s and 30s and 40s, clearly. You know, very aware that - - yeah, by that time I knew maybe in broader strokes. My aunt and my father's first cousin who was at Auschwitz. We learned -- she spoke about the Shoah. She wrote poetry about it and she was much more -- she had been in Auschwitz, she had been ransomed by Count Bernadotte and taken to Sweden in exchange for German officers. That was a kind of a strange experience too. And she ended up marrying a guy from Berlin but she couldn't stand Germans, it was a very complicated family relationship \*laughs\*. But he was a completely fabulous guy who spent the war years in Shanghai. But the details, especially the details of my mother's story, was the big black hole in our lives. I mean all of our lives, my father's and mother's lives and my siblings' lives. And it wasn't until 1994 that something happened that allowed me, right after Yom HaShoah, literally that night in 1994 -- I can explain it if you want -- and that led to me finding the people that hid my mother. And that led me to getting involved with the [organization]

**Stanger-Ross:** So what happened in 1994?

**Kool:** So what happened yeah.

[00:17:02]

**Kool:** I'd been involved from the late-80s on in Victoria in a group called the Pacific Region Association for Telematics. One of your ex-colleagues at UVic, David Godfrey, was in the Creative Writing department. He was one of the real leaders of this. It was really -- you know, the internet was just happening, right. People were doing bulletin boards and all sorts of crazy things to begin to use this computerised communication stuff. So Victoria was the first city in Canada and the third place in the world that had public access to the internet through a technology called freenet. So we were the first freenet in Canada. I managed -- we had a little religion area. I mean it was a whole bunch of pieces. We had a religion area, a house of worship area, in the Victoria freenet. And there were three other freenets in the US. So one night I was looking at Youngstown, Ohio and this would've been maybe in the late-80s or maybe early-90s. Youngstown, Ohio. I go into the house of worship and there's a Jewish section of the house of worship and then something called Holocaust stuff or whatever and I look into that and it's just hundreds of pages which you can't jump to -- there's no hyperlinking, you just -- that this guy put

up on Holocaust denial in North America. And I just, I couldn't believe this stuff, documents about the Holocaust. And when I got to the end of it where his information was, he was a guy who lived in Ladysmith. On Vancouver Island. He's got the stuff posted in Youngstown, Ohio. So Ken McVay -- I don't know if you ever ran across this guy and his core project -- but Ken had the first big online archive of Holocaust material from a trailer, you know, with a fan blowing on computers maybe in the early-90s in Ladysmith. We ultimately nominated and he was given the Order of BC for this work. He was hired to digitize the Nuremburg proceedings which had no index to them. So that really kind of -- that kind of got me interested in this. But then what happened was in the fall of 1993, *Schindler's List*, the movie *Schindler's List*, had come out and on the Holocaust list server, the discussion group for survivors and academics and anyone -- you know these list servers are still around, they're really useful tools. Before the worldwide web existed, list servers were how people did things. Through the winter of '93 and into the spring of '94 there was a lot of discussion about that movie and its impact. And in particular there was a lot of discussion about the last scene in the movie. That's the scene where the war's over and the Jews give Schindler the ring, you know, that says the Talmudic phrase "saving a life is like saving the universe." And Schindler collapses in the mud and cries and you know, "why didn't you save more people." And that didn't happen. It's not in Keneally's book and it didn't happen. So the question in one of the threads in the Holocaust list was "why would Spielberg have done that?" That was going on for months. On the night before Holocaust remembrance, a Yom HaShoah in early-April or mid-April 1994, a Dutch doctoral student from the University of Groningen, Bert-Jan Flim, posted something about his doctoral research which was about his father and his father's friends. They had hid like eighty plus children in that area of northern Holland and were very proud of the fact that they had done that and no one was caught. They thought everyone was hiding Jews. But you know, 80% or so of the Dutch Jews were killed. So when the war was over and it became very clear very quickly that in fact most of the Dutch Jews had been killed, Bert-Jan said his father went into a deep depression that lasted for the rest of his life. "Why didn't I save more people?" That's what Spielberg put into the mouth of Schindler when he collapsed in the mud after getting this ring. He said, "why didn't I save more people?" And Flim said, you know, that the people who did nothing seemed to have no worries at all about their lack of action. And the people who did so much felt guilty for not having done more. So he felt that while what Spielberg did might not have been historically true, he felt it was psychologically true. So that Sunday morning, the next day, I brought this letter with me and asked Rabbi Reinstein if I could read it because inasmuch as we remember the six million in Yom HaShoah, we needed to remember those who kept it from being six million and one. And Rabbi Reinstein said, "okay read this." So I got up to the microphone and I read this letter from this man in Holland and it was then that I realised that I didn't know who hid my mother. Who saved my mother. And that night I called her and I must have just got her at a good spot because she told me. She couldn't remember the name of the person who hid her but she remembered that he was a church organist in Haarlem in western Holland. One of my colleagues in the Minister of Environment was a church organist and I got him onto the "pipe org" listserv. So I wrote a little note immediately for David Ribery and asked him if he'd post it to the pipe organists of the world in 1994, April 1994, and in three days I knew the guy who hid my mother.

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**Kool:** All I put in, "I'm looking for an organist, 1940s, maybe known as an anti-Nazi, Haarlem. Any ideas?" And in just a very few days someone wrote back saying "I think I know who you're talking about." That night I called my mother and before I could say anything, she said "I remember his first name." And it was Paul Christiaan van Westering, very famous Dutch organist, composer, musical advisor to the Queen of Holland. Author of books on music, popularised music, interfaith stuff. And he was dead already at that point but that just opened up a whole lot of stuff for my family and for me. Yeah, it was pretty interesting.

**Stanger-Ross:** So what happened from there? Who were you in touch with that was connecting you?

**Kool:** Oh, this Dutch organist. So that was really great. A lot of this is in the book but I can tell you anyway. From that, and now opening this up -- and my mother wasn't very happy about this. But she later told me because she knew I really wanted to know this. My brother's never been happy with me doing this. And my sister is a psychologist and she was happy but she couldn't do it herself. Within, you know -- that was in April 1994. By the late summer of 1994 or fall of 1994, I learned that I could maybe get my mother's dossier out of the archive because she was a ward of the state after the war. She was under the care of what was called the OPK, the *Oorlogs-Pleeg-Kinderen* of war orphans. So I wrote to the archives in Haarlem and they said yes, send them a cheque for the photocopying fee and they'll send me the dossier. I received this huge dossier. Even with my baby Dutch I realised the story was much more complicated than I would have thought. I was hoping it was one of these totally good news stories and it was really obvious that it was very morally equivocal at the end of the war. But then I had this weird experience where I didn't know if my mother should really see this stuff. My sister and I went through it a lot and we find such meaning, this is her story. So in February 1995 my mother and my sister came to Victoria, my dad stayed in Seattle. We rented a hotel room 'cause I didn't know how emotional this would be and with all the kids running around the house I thought it may be better. My mum and sister came on the ferry to look at this document which had letters that she had written to her grandfather who was in New York City after the war. And so they get off the boat and, right, the Clipper. It's time to have a little lunch and then we'll get into the archive and we go to the Dutch Bakery down on Fort Street and if you've been there you know it's very crowded at lunch. And they'll often sit you in a partially full table. So my sister and my mum and I go to this Dutch Bakery and there's this little man, little grey-haired man sitting by himself at a table so the waitress says to him, "do you mind if these people sit with you?" And he said "of course." We sit down. Just as we're sitting down, I'm telling my mother -- I'm reading Erik Erikson, you know the Chicago School Psychologist -- and his last phase in his phase theory, the last phase, the last job we have to do psychologically in our life, is the job of what he calls "ego integration versus despair." Like can we make a story out of our lives and see it hold. A lot of Holocaust survivors in my experience have this hole in their life and they end up in despair in their old age because there is something in the middle there, those years can't be made sense of. And that was affecting my mother, she was having a lot of mental problems, mental health problems. And so I said that, I was just saying as we get to sit down, I'm reading Erik Erikson and this little man says I'm Erik Erikson.

\*laughing\*

**Kool:** My sister the psychologist, her jaw drops down to her chest. And we sit down with Erik Erikson. Now he's not the Chicago psychologist Erik Erikson, but we're sitting down with Erik Erikson. And Erik Erikson is sitting as you and I are to my mother. Kitty corner to each other. And he looks at my mother and he knows nothing about what we're talking about, and he tells her that he's a meditation teacher and he's very intuitive and he feels that she has some things that she's got to let go of. And he was exactly right. This was really for me, these moments were the beginning of my kind of realising that I needed to somehow be involved in this kind of work more broadly. I could see that I really had a deep faith that my mother was going to become somewhat better if she could confront this piece of her history. At one point in that, after lunch after we went to the hotel and looking at stuff -- there was a letter of hers that she wrote out in, I don't know, maybe August 1945 after the war, a few months after the war, to her grandfather who'd been in Antwerp who was a diamond cutter and they were more easily able to escape from Belgium than from the Netherlands and they ended up ultimately in New York. Very terrible depressing letter and my mother was crying and she said -- you know it's very hard to see your mum cry -- but she said she wasn't crying for herself she said, she was crying for the girl who wrote the letter. And it was really -- my sister said "but that was you." She had never put that part of her life, she had never integrated that piece of her life. It has been really a blessing for her, she's a much happier content woman now. My dad died a few years ago. She just turned 92. Pretty good health, pretty good mental health. And I just thought this is something -- it began to grow, through this early '94, '95. And I think I first got involved with the [organization] [redacted] probably in 95 or 96 maybe. Something in that time. Yeah, so it was really a, you know, probably in the right time of my life, it was the right time societally that was beginning to happen around that time. David Katz and Peter Gary and Doug Beardsley and that gang formed the [organization] [redacted] in that, I believe, mid-90s period and yeah, so I just thought this was maybe the time for me to look at my own past and my own issues around this and see what I can do for others as well. So I did. I was involved [redacted] for a bunch of years. I was the president I think from 1997 really till I started working at Royal Roads when I found out the leisurely life of the academic wasn't really terribly leisurely and I literally had no time to continue with the [organization] [redacted]. Then there was that -- as you said earlier -- there was that divergence in philosophy. While I was running the [organization] [redacted] we had amazing things. We were having around Kristallnacht, we almost had a week's worth of program activity. We had concerts, we had dramatic readings, we had lectures. It was like really full of arts and social science you could say, in a way that was trying to just look at all the different ways we could remember this and deal with it and use it to heal, you know. That *tikun olam* thing is very important and I just felt that the people who took it over after I just literally couldn't, they weren't interested in the same things. And everything began to decline. The last year I went to the Kristallnacht service, there was maybe 30 people, 35 people. We used to have the place full of people. I also was very aware that to simply -- and this is my feeling still -- that to simply say that the only people in the world who have really suffered tragedy are the Jews is just a mistake both in history and strategically as well. And so one service that I put together -- and I would write these liturgies essentially every year -- had at the end of the section sort of telling the story of Kristallnacht, but at the end of every section of the telling, we remembered another group, another group that had suffered genocide. So we remembered the Tutsis and we remembered the Cambodians and we remembered the Ukrainians and First Nations and slaves in America and Canada. Just to go out from our tragedy to see that it's, you know -- we're not alone in this and other people. And those to me were really important things



and I think they had really important impacts. Maybe the most striking one was at the end of that night, at the end of the night when I'm putting the chairs away, these two guys with long black leather jackets were hanging around the back of the synagogue and they come over to me and they introduce themselves as members of the Ukrainian community. And the Ukrainians just at that point were beginning to understand or put a name to and try to figure out what happened to them during Stalin's time in the 30s. And I guess the Ukrainian church thought well maybe they'll send some people to the synagogue and see how the Jews do it. And one of these guys after they introduced themselves to me and explained what they were doing there, he said "never in a million years would I have expected to have come into a Jewish house of worship, knowing the difficult history between the Ukrainians and Jews, and hear the Jews remember the tragedy that befell us." And I thought that's exactly why -- I do these things in faith, right. That they have meaning and I never could have known that there would be Ukrainian guys there that night. But I felt I had to say that. And that was very different from the approach that I saw the direction of the [organization] ██████████ take and that's why I just couldn't engage with that, it wasn't engaged in a healing and a restoration and an understanding of we all have tragedies. And our tragedy's a tragedy-tragedy, but I can't say that the tragedy of the millions of Ukrainians who starved to death under Stalin was any less or the, you know, a million Cambodians murdered in the Khmer Rouge was any less than our tragedy. So that was sort of the philosophical divergence and then when the Victoria Shoah Project began, these were people I could work with and felt very congruent with and very -- I'm so happy that this is a group of people that don't stand on privilege or prestige or authority but are really collaborative and are trying to -- it fits the way I think about things.

**Stanger-Ross:** So I'm going to say something just to remind myself and you but then I want to pursue this a little further. But I do want to come back at some point: I'm partly just trying to construct what was going on, so I'll be curious to hear what was going on in the early 90s. But let's bracket those kind of reconstructions of the history and let's pursue that last bit a little further maybe. I guess one of the questions that comes to mind for me is, what do you think is at stake in that question of Holocaust memorialisation that tends to make singular the Jewish experience and this other approach that you find --

[00:35:04]

**Kool:** Yeah. So one thing, I think it's really -- and this comes back to really what I wrote in that book chapter and what I put in the back of the Yom HaShoah service. That stuff by Rabbi Schulweis really hit me because he was writing that at the time I was having my Bar Mitzvah, 1963. And he talks about the worry he has about leaving Jewish children thinking that Jews are always the victims and that the others are always the persecutors. And I think my interest in rescuers is, well, really the antithesis, is the opposite to saying, you know, "they are always our persecutors" because this person wasn't a persecutor, he was hiding people and she was hiding people. So I don't want both the non-Jewish world or the Jewish world to see Jews as always being victims. I mean there has been through the ages -- we understand, that's our history right -- but not always, right, not always. And we too can be persecutors and we know that from our recent history and even inside of our communities we can be intolerant and xenophobic to others. So at that one level that's a concern of mine, is that we're always the victims, they're always the persecutors. I don't believe that making people feel guilty, people who had no responsibility for

the events, is a particularly useful strategy for trying to get them to understand why those events might have happened. So while -- you know, when I would go to high schools, when I go to high schools still, I'll always sort of say "not all Germans were Nazis, not all Nazis were Germans." This sometimes has really interesting implications, like I was speaking at a high school in Nanaimo to a large group of History 12 students, those are all 17, 18-year-old kids, and I had about four young guys come up to me afterwards -- they were Rotary exchange students from Hamburg -- and they were nervous going into this class about what they might hear. And when I started saying that, they felt okay, I wasn't going to be targeting them. And my response is that they're not responsible for what their grandparents did. But they're responsible for how they understand the world and what they do now and that while they don't have any responsibility, they have obligations just like I have obligations. So I don't think by demonizing people we help them to understand what their obligations are. But we can be honest, we can't delude ourselves on what happened. I think -- you know, a little sideline -- that I tried when I was doing this work with my mother to engage the Dutch community here. That would be the Christian Reform Church out at the highway Pacific Christian School. No interest at all. A lot of the Dutch people who came to Canada were Dutch Nazis because they were never going to have a successful life in the Netherlands. There's a belief in the Dutch church about what they call a "moral stain" and if you were on the wrong side of history in Holland you had that stain and your children weren't going to go to good schools. So they came to Canada where everyone's grandfather was in the resistance and it's a difficult story but if we don't confront these things, I think it's a real mistake. So I didn't like the direction that was much more of a blame and shame thing and much more about pictures of us as victims. When I go to schools and talk about the Holocaust I don't show any pictures. When I go to a high school class I don't show any pictures at all, I don't even bring a PowerPoint. I simply write -- I assume that the kids in a senior high school class will know something about the Holocaust, much of it may be wrong. But it doesn't really bother me. I write the word Holocaust in the middle of the blackboard as geographically central as I can. And then I simply start off asking them, "how could this have happened based on what you know?" And so it surfaces all of their assumptions and beliefs about Jews and about Germans and about the Holocaust and then I can just go with whatever they say, going backwards on one side of the blackboard and then near to the end "well what happened as a result of the Holocaust" and go forwards. I did this up at Parklands Secondary School up in Sidney once and the first kid to put up his hand, grade 12 student, this was an exchange student from Austria. I said "how could this have happened?" so this guy -- I didn't know it was an exchange student from Austria, it was the first boy to put up his hand -- and he said "well it happened because the Jews had all the money," that's what his grandfather told him. That's how we began the class discussion \*laughs\*. I told him "for sure, my parents, my grandparents didn't have all the money, I can tell you!" They're lumpen proletariat. But that was his belief, that Jews had all the money. So that's how I try to approach it. It's not about showing endless pictures of dead bodies -- no. I went through my very brief phase of that and then I thought, no, that's not needed in this context.

**Stanger-Ross:** What's the relationship between that more complicated story in which not all Germans were Nazis and not all Nazis were Germans and, say, acknowledging Ukrainian suffering at a Holocaust -- how do those connect?

[00:40:56]

**Kool:** Um...You know, the Ukrainians -- those two guys were very aware that the Ukrainians were very complicit in the Holocaust. But, I don't know if this will even sound right, I wanted them to see that we could relate to each other at the level of shared humanity, right. And that was what was missing through all of that time, that they could walk into a Jewish house of worship and hear the Jewish community honouring their dead without any reference at all to the complicity of Babi Yar or, you know, the Einsatzgruppen. Nothing. We could simply honour the fact that through Stalin's policies millions of Ukrainians were killed. And that makes a lot more sense to me. I don't deny the history and if I were to be talking about the Jewish experience in Ukraine during the Shoah, there's no way you cannot talk about Ukrainian complicity, but I was talking about just at the level of people and I didn't need to blame the Ukrainians. And I didn't know there was going to be Ukrainians there. I just needed to recognise that when we were talking about man's inhumanity to man if you want to put quotes around that, you know, the means of traumatization vary from machetes in Rwanda to factories of death in Poland. But the end result is the same, people are dead, and the sequelae socially are probably the same also, about traumatized people that take generations to deal with those traumas. And so, you know, I didn't want to place all the blame on all Germans, especially going into classrooms where there may be children there who have German families. I didn't know those boys were from Hamburg but they were there. They're not responsible for what happened but they have obligations. And that's true -- when I go to the Netherlands people still dine out on Anne Frank, even though 80% of the Dutch Jews were killed. But the Dutch have had a very hard time confronting their past. The Belgians, sometimes you wonder if the war ever happened in Belgium, right. In France everyone seems to have been out with the Maquis, right. And in Canada none of us oppressed the Indian people, the First Nations. I think it was important that we can both share -- the guilt isn't focused in one place and humanity is widely shared and I think we're better when we can understand that shared humanity, not turn people who weren't responsible for things into victims, and not make the victims feel like they're always victims and always going to be victims.

**Stanger-Ross:** I have a bunch of questions. Let me try to go one direction here. Do you think you think similarly about how other groups might portray history as a violence? Do you think if you were at a Ukrainian event or at a First Nations event, do you think you'd find yourself asking "where's the Holocaust?" or "where's Rwanda?" Do you bring a different set of expectations to Jewish memorial activity or a different set of priorities?

[00:44:46]

**Kool:** All I can be responsible for is what I can influence. I can't expect other people. In part -- I've gone around the sun another twenty or so times since I first stumbled upon all of this and I'm sure there's a developmental process in my own thinking that goes along. Although I think, you know, I can look back at those early documents that I wrote for the [organization]

█ -- I have them all -- and I can see that I was thinking then what I'm thinking now. I went to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission here in Port Alberni because at first I wasn't going to be here for the Victoria one. My First Nations affiliation has always been much more to the Nuu-chah-nulth people because of my time living in Ucluelet. And sitting in the audience listening to the hearing at the old residential school in Port Alberni, it was like hearing Holocaust survivors speak. There wasn't a lot of difference except that they -- you know, there were no gas chambers and hangings and things like that. But they were medically -- they were

experimented on, they were abused, and they spent their entire childhood in a camp where it was, you know -- my mother spent three years in hiding and other friends might have spent three years in a concentration camp -- but they spent their entire childhood in it. So it really hit me I think as something that the Shoah Project, we should be looking at that as a group ourselves. And Peter Gary years ago did, he did a workshop at Vic High with Aboriginal kids that was very very interesting. But I won't expect the Ukrainians to -- I think as time goes on they'll become more comfortable talking about these difficult histories. But that's not my job. My job is to engage with my community and the broader Victoria community from a perspective that I hope is informed from a Jewish set of thoughts from the idea of repairing the brokenness of the world and have that faith -- a faith that all teachers have -- a faith which you do have some meaning even though you may never know what that meaning is. When that meaning is revealed to you as it was that night at the synagogue, these guys telling me what they told me, that's a powerful reinforcement for continuing in that kind of work because most of our lives as teachers we never know what we actually do. When you get some feedback that actually had an impact, that's pretty powerful and that really gave me the confidence that that's the approach that I should be taking -- not even we, but I should be taking.

**Stanger-Ross:** And so what do you think the impact can be? What's your --

[00:48:02]

**Kool:** Well I think -- and there's no way of knowing this I guess -- but over the years we've had very very few Antisemitic incidents in Victoria. The synagogue hasn't been trashed, we don't get much graffiti. We had that one incident in 2012 at the cemetery. We've had thousands -- no, tens of thousands of kids -- [attend events] [REDACTED]. Both the ones before when I was involved and before I was involved and now [REDACTED]. Back in the day when I was involved with the Shoah Project [REDACTED] every year at around Kristallnacht, we would engage with a different church and we had deep engagement with the Lutherans, we've had deep engagements with the Catholic church, with the Anglican church, with the United churches. We'd go and speak in the churches and give sermons in the churches. I think that's the impact. That, you know, the history of the religious communities on southern Vancouver Island is really a history of collaboration and not really of intolerance and I think our work around Holocaust remembrance is -- if we do it right -- it's a tool to help us realise we're all in this together, we all live on a little island in the ocean together and these things that break us up as the Shoah did or as genocides do are not good for us living on an island. One year we sponsored a commemorative march honouring Martin Luther King and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel which was really amazing, the Black community and the Jewish community coming together cause Heschel's Yahrzeit is in the same week as King's birthday. So we did that, you know. We're all in this together and I think that to me is really the important part. We confess on Yom Kippur to being xenophobic and we need to do something about it and to me this is how -- one of the ways I live that, you know, working against that xenophobia that lives in all of us.

**Stanger-Ross:** Is your goal then pretty similar within the Jewish community and outside of it? Or do you have different goals?

**Kool:** Really good point. I think within the Jewish community, it wouldn't -- well, I guess it would be. Yeah, actually I guess it would be within some of those Holocaust events we put together. It's also to tell us that -- well when I read that thing in 1994 my sense being that we need to remind the Jewish community about the people that kept it from being 6 million and one and their gentiles, right. And we have to have some gratitude to those righteous gentiles and it was just all so -- at that time, you know, the Yad Vashem thing was happening -- 1994, so we had I think by that point already had two or three righteous gentiles honoured in Victoria. All of them were Dutch. By Yad Vashem. And I think that's a really important message that we are not always the victims and not all non-Jews are persecutors and that people took huge risks. I mean, at some points, when I think about like my trajectory I could really also say in 1982 -- that was the year the synagogue was redone, when the green stucco was taken off the walls and the windows were put back in and the synagogue was very much this little cave. It was 1982 that the first of the righteous gentiles was identified here in Victoria and I went to that ceremony with my two-year-old and Enid and we're sitting in the synagogue which was not a place I was regularly going to at all at that point and this little tiny Dutch lady gets up on the bema and she's talking about her family and how her and her husband were both socialist lawyers and one night early in the occupation this guy knocks on their door in Amsterdam and says "the resistance has reason to believe" that this couple is going to be arrested tomorrow and they need to come with him but leave their two-year-old with the neighbours. And she said that was the last time she saw my two-year-old because the neighbours were taken. I had my two-year-old on my lap and, you know, it was pretty amazing and at the end of the service when the guy was giving -- Vim Vandervelt was his name here -- Vandeventer -- was giving this award and then there was a chance like a receiving line and all these people lined up to talk to him and they had all come like me with a picture of the family, you know. That they couldn't thank the rescuer, the person who hid or helped their family, but they could thank him and I was in line with all these people who could do exactly what I was doing. Which was I knew someone hid my mother but I couldn't talk to her about it and it was in Holland and he was a Dutch guy. It was really -- I don't even know if I told my mother about this because I know I couldn't. She'd get upset and she couldn't sleep for days and all that but that was again another little step for me towards trying to understand what had gone on with my family and it was also an attempt to thank the person who -- at that time he was still alive, I could've thanked him. But there was no way to come to understand that at that point. But in 1982 that was the first sort of dealing with a rescuer. I think that xenophobia that Jews have gets in our way, it isolates us from our larger community and if the Shoah Project and stuff we do doesn't exacerbate and maybe even can help to break it down as I've tried to do myself from those services that I put together, I think that's really good. *I think it's good.*

**Stanger-Ross:** And you think there's anything about your particular personal journey with this history in your family that encouraged your particular approach to wider public programming and events around the Holocaust?

[00:55:07]

**Kool:** Well I'm a teacher, you know. I'm kind of a public guy and I don't mind doing it. And I think in part -- I haven't thought of it quite this way before -- but like you I've got blue eyes and when I used to have coloured hair it was kind of light brown. I was always happy I didn't look Jewish. That I could pass, right. And pass games, like who gets -- whereas my sister, she's really

dark. My dad's, the Sephardi side of the family really comes out in her. So I've always been interested in seeing what that other, what that non-Jewish world is like. Also, Jordan, I've been a rescuer my entire life long before I knew about my mother's story. That's been the thread through my life. I was a lifeguard, I've done mountain rescue, I was on Vancouver's first urban heavy rescue team. As a teacher, right, you're a rescuer as a teacher. I stop for old ladies on the street. Rescuing is really a big part of it and I think that, in a way, I can't rescue the victims of the Shoah but by engaging the Jewish community and the larger community more solidly to see that we're all in this together. We may have different angles about what's legit or what's not or whatever, but we're all in this together. We're all in life together. So I think that orientation -- when I met Mr. van Westering's third wife when I was there in 2000 in the Netherlands -- in 2000 -- after I turned the tape recorder off, as I was walking out the door, she said "my husband would've liked you." She said, "would've liked you as a son." It was a very strong thing to say and inasmuch as parents give life to children, he allowed my mother to live and so in some funny ways he was like a parent to me. But he was a rescuer. And he did a lot of the same things that I do in our professional worlds. I had that sense as I walked out of the door of her apartment, that this guy's been sitting on my shoulder my whole life and I never even knew it. And I think it does affect how I see the Jewish community and how I see my relationship to the Jewish community and the broader gentile community. I've been a rescuer for a reason and I never really understood it until I began doing this work on my mother and then having Mrs. van Westering the third just really kind of crystallize it for me as I walked out of her apartment.

**Stanger-Ross:** I feel at a crossroads. It's an amazing story. I wonder in respect to the conflicts that have existed in Holocaust memorialisation in Victoria, could you tell me about them?

**Kool:** As it began, I think, with David -- have you spoken to David already?

**Stanger-Ross:** I haven't.

**Kool:** You know, David and Peter Gary. I think Doug Beardsley is still around and you should probably try to find him. It wasn't just Jews who started it. There were Jews and gentiles who did this and they very much felt it was important to deal educationally with the Victoria community. So we ended up growing from small school auditoriums to the UVic auditorium and literally packing the UVic auditorium -- 1300 kids. And presenting a range both of speakers, of dramatic performance, of, you know -- stuff that was trying to get at these issues in many ways and I think the general spirit was not one of -- it was still early but it was much more of people telling their stories and it wasn't meant to I think attribute, to make people guilty, the students. I began to feel that the direction that David was taking, it just didn't have any of the sophistication or nuance that the earlier events had. The Kristallnacht services were very, just kind of blunt, and that wasn't where I wanted to go with it. I think it's historically interesting to see, both as we age and as the topic ages, where this goes. All the different ways we manage to talk about societal traumas, these large-scale traumas. I think it was really just a difference in orientation. You know, the people who were pursuing that direction that I couldn't get behind were historians. With all due respect to you of course sitting across the table from me. But telling the history is only piece of what this is, it's not just because there is -- the psychological component sits on top of and comes out of the telling of that history. And I struggle with it because I'm also kind of a history kind of, you know, "here's the details" and I like that. But I thought as it focused more on

the brutality of the history it lost some of the subtlety and the potential for insight that comes when you don't hit someone over the head but you try to engage them through their emotion maybe. I mean we had kids -- it was just astonishing. We had performances. Hopefully Helga now has those tapes that we can convert that were filmed. But Spectrum Secondary School had a great arts program and they would do theatre. We had a lot of different theatre performances. We could've ended the whole [event] [REDACTED] after the first dance performance one year. These girls were doing this dance that ended up with all of them being killed and they're lying on the stage as dead and everyone's crying. The girls, the people in the wings, I mean it was -- the arts are just another way of doing this and so we didn't have to show pictures of camps and of piles of bodies. These kids would do things that were so deep and so meaningful and I didn't see that moving along with David and the group who took it over.

[01:03:03]

**Kool:** So I just had less and less interest, plus I was getting crazier and crazier at Royal Roads so we just went our separate ways. You know, we made the Holocaust exhibit that I guess David has now and I can give you sort of the proofs of that, I have all the text, it was written by a UVic grad student and it was meant to tell the story of the Shoah but through the eyes of people whose lives ended up in Victoria. It was very very useful, interesting -- I still think it's interesting, I still like to see it actually. Not having piles of bodies but telling the story in that personal way. There's a time and a place for having piles of bodies but -- you know -- it's not always and it's not always necessary. At least as I think about it today.

**Stanger-Ross:** What is the time and place for it?

**Kool:** Yeah. You know, so like our museums for example, when you're presenting visual evidence, I could see going into a school perhaps and I could see the legitimacy and the value of presenting that history. So the first time I started doing this where I decided -- cause I used to do that and I decided I didn't want to do that any longer. Because what I was doing was recounting history and what I wanted to do with these high school kids was have them think historically. I think that in the teaching of history, in a school context, different from a museum, I think too often we present history rather than asking kids to think historically. So by saying "I'm just going to write this word in the middle of the board. I don't care what you already know about it. I know a lot about it so I can go from wherever you start from and go backwards, try to look at -- what are the roots of all this? Where might all this stuff come from? From my perspective at least." I didn't need the bodies to achieve my goal which was to have these students think about this terrible moment in our modern history and to think historically about how or why might this have occurred. And I think that's just a much more valuable -- for me as a teacher, it's also not easy to do because it's very improvisational right. It's not like putting up PowerPoint slides. So I have to be prepared to start off with an Austrian kid saying his grandfather said it's because the Jews had all the money. But I think that's -- you know, in a museum education context of that sort, yeah -- you can't not deal with the Shoah and not deal with piles of bodies. I have been known to use a little bit of that movie from the liberation of Belsen but I decided at some point that's way too hard. Can't really have kids watching bulldozers, you know.

**Stanger-Ross:** I'm trying to puzzle through, as you're talking, that distinction between thinking historically versus whatever this other --

**Kool:** Yeah. I could put a slideshow together of the camps, right. So here's the story, you know. I have a movie. Have I given you the movie of Tom Kunstler who made this incredible movie about -- I gave it to Helga and it's on YouTube. It's about his time in Mauthausen. But there's no pictures of bodies. Tom tells the stories. Unbelievable stories, stories I've never heard told in the way he tells them. I didn't need to see the pictures of bodies to be deeply deeply affected by what Tom tells in this movie. He's buried in our cemetery. Depending what our -- I guess it's what our intent is, as educators. My intent was not to burden these high school kids with the trauma of bodies. But instead to try and have them think about like "why are things the way they are?" And I think those are important questions broadly we all need to be asking. And maybe they're some of the central questions that any educator should be asking students around almost any discipline. But in history especially, the question of why are things the way they are seems to be -- in history education in my limited understanding of it -- seems to be the question that's missing a lot of times. You know, we talk about what happened in 1066 but why did that happen in 1066? What's the context? Why are these things happening? Because a lot of people around reasonably well-known events like the Holocaust -- I think it was a way of making it at exactly connecting with what these students already knew. Making this crazy mind-map graphic on a blackboard based on what they were saying. To see how we can connect this. How does this connect with "the Jews had all the money"? Where does that come from? And then, usury laws were out, so okay we're connecting things. And that's where the Holocaust comes from. Early Christian Antisemitism -- you know, Elaine Pagels' stuff about the family conflict between Judaism and Christianity's never been resolved. That to me is a much more engaging educational experience for students. Pedagogically sounder and I think actually does better overall than giving a talk about how many people were killed at Auschwitz and showing the bodies and the endless tales of, you know, just depressing horror. It doesn't take much time to fill up an hour with tales of depressing horror during that time. But I don't know where that leaves students. I think it leaves them thinking "terrible things happened there." Right. But to start to think historically about it means you can maybe make -- you can begin, especially if the teacher is doing this and I try to -- how does that connect to the here and now? Because from the Shoah forwards -- international human rights, State of Israel with all the conflicts there -- bring it to today. So it was just my innocence, my pedagogical play that takes me there. But I do feel that it's a useful approach to take with students.

**Stanger-Ross:** Do you think that the proponents of a different approach, one that focuses maybe more on the detail that shows the photographs, that tries to bring the horror of the events into a high school classroom in Victoria today -- what do you think the proponents of that approach would say their aims are?

[01:10:43]

**Kool:** Just gotta watch here cause I have to catch a ferry. Right, so I'm going to have to go -- no, 1 o'clock, okay.

**Stanger-Ross:** Catching the 1.



**Kool:** 1 o'clock ferry so I've got time.

**Stanger-Ross:** We can break and resume also.

**Kool:** No it's okay. I think our goals are probably somewhat congruent. We're interested in educating people about the Shoah on one level. I don't know what they think, but it seems like it's a much narrower focus. I'm interested in educating about the Shoah because I'm interested in the fact that we have these -- it's not just about the Jews. I fear -- I don't think they're aware necessarily of the psychological implications of this kind of work. That we learn to separate ourselves from the psychological implications of talking about it. I remember reading about Phillip Hallie who wrote the book *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*. He was a philosopher of evil and he got so depressed by studying evil all the time that he needed to find something that was good. He couldn't any longer in the latter part of his life continue with that separation, that academic separation. To talk to Jewish kids about the Shoah or, you know -- what's the message of Rabbi Schulweis? -- his concern was exactly my concern of "do we leave them feeling victimized?" When we show them piles of bodies, what's the other message? It's that Jews are victims. They just walk in and let themselves be turned into ashes. The history itself is not sufficient I think, that our task has to go beyond that. That's why I've stopped showing those slideshows. I've gone into schools and I will be again in a couple weeks to talk about my mother's story to kids who are the same age as she was. I don't show piles of bodies. There's pictures of her parents and her brother. They were killed and I'm not hiding that either. But she was also rescued, she was hidden. People took great risks. None of us know when we may be called upon to take risks. This little book I wrote for the kids from my family was really for the descendants that I don't know. For them to remember that their existence hinged on the moral actions of the Dutch family. So you just never know when you might be called upon to take a moral risk and you have an obligation to do that because your life is totally hinging on the moral risk taken by a family in the Netherlands in the 1940s. That I feel very strongly about. I didn't realise it till I did this thing, wrote this stuff and found that story, that my life had really hinged around that issue a lot and it was really important to me. I think those are the kinds of things that I think are the important messages, not the piles of bodies. It's the moral message, both the immoral and the pro-moral messages of the Shoah that are really important and then when we talk to people it's really about us thinking about them and considering, you know, okay we're not going to never -- I mean it's very unlikely we're going to see guys with little moustaches walking around going Sieg Heil although we know that people are doing that here now. It's all the other things, all the other injustices that we have to concern ourselves with. And those are deeply Jewish concerns and have always been deeply Jewish concerns. So I think that when we do Holocaust memorialisation well, we're speaking to a much larger audience and we're speaking of much larger concerns. That the Jewish concerns have always had both a very particular and a very universal focus and I think when we do Holocaust education well, we're doing both of those. We're doing both that particularisation and when I do it I try to be very particular. But it's also the universalisation that I also think is very important for us, both morally and strategically as we have to live ongoingly with other people. With Muslims and Hindus and Sikh, Christians, whatever.

**Stanger-Ross:** I'm going to propose that we wrap up soon and maybe do a separate conversation where we talk a little bit more through the details of "okay, in the early-90s this is what was going on at the time." We could maybe meet next week or something.

**Kool:** Okay, and I'll put all that stuff together. Yeah.

**Stanger-Ross:** Maybe I'll just end with a reflection -- we can talk a little bit about it if time permits. I guess I'm conscious that for me -- right, I'm working on Japanese-Canadian history which is a very different kind of history and then I've been getting a bit involved in the Shoah Project and so on. I guess I'm conscious for me that my interests in the two, my approach to the two topics differ. So in the case of Japanese-Canadians, I'm quite interested in perpetrators and complicity and the kind of subject-position I take -- I think about ways in which I could be complicit or the conditions of permitting political violence to unfold in your community. My mind goes to other contexts in which I am complicit. So in that context there aren't piles of bodies obviously but in that context, the kind of most specific brutalities of the process become really powerful, so that I will present that and my goal in presenting that is partly to make the audience take that position with me to ask that "well how is it that in Victoria neighbours looted a home as soon as the Japanese-Canadians were gone?" And where do we sit in relation to those? So that those details of the breaking in and looting and so on, I don't bring other histories into it particularly. Whereas I very much share your perspective on kind of piles of bodies. I took my kids to Yad Vashem when we were in Rome and we went through and we were -- I don't know if you've been recently to Yad Vashem.

**Kool:** They were building the museum when I was there.

**Stanger-Ross:** Yeah. So they built this thing where I think it's part museum exhibit, part an act of establishing a claim. Kind of a response to denial or something, right. I think those are different aims actually and they've got this thing where you go zig-zag through the building and at the very end is light and it opens up into the kind of desert vista. And you can see the end of the building -- this cavernous building -- you can see the end but you're stuck in this zig-zag through endless documentation. It felt like to me, I was there with children. But it felt like, "okay, we believe. Let me out of this place." \*laughs\*

**Kool:** I wonder if people with kids sometimes feel that about presentations, like "let me out of this place."

[01:19:28]

**Stanger-Ross:** So I'm much more interested in this kind of connective -- with the approach that you take. And I don't want to see those piles of bodies and yet in some ways I come close to those piles of bodies in a certain sense when I present --

**Kool:** Well, part of my sense is that one of the primary tasks of a teacher -- and we're all teachers -- is to reveal things that are hidden at the same time that we're open to revelation ourselves. So as a teacher, being conscious of the fact that we're teaching, you think out what is it that you're really trying to reveal. So yesterday for example, I was talking to a group of our

justice studies students at Royal Roads and because the professor didn't get to my -- I met her on the ferry last week and she wasn't able to get to my seminar. I was telling her about environmental violence and this is a course on environment law that she's teaching and she said "why don't you come and give your talk at my class and I can see it." So as I said at the outset, on my way to the university last week I was thinking, "why am I talking about violence?" So when I got to school last week I popped the picture of my father's family as the second slide -- the first slide after the introductory slide, just to tell the students -- or not to tell the students, to tell my colleagues, the university community last week, "I asked this question as I was on the bike an hour and a half ago and here's my family and this is why I'm interested in violence because Stella is the only one who survived." And I was using as a theoretical framework Johan Galtung's work -- are you familiar with Galtung?

**Stanger-Ross:** No.

**Kool:** So he's the father of peace studies. A Norwegian guy. He talks about three kinds of violence. He talks about direct violence and that's the gas chambers. That's the easy stuff, right, that's the stuff you can see. The stuff that's harder because it's invisible, the first one is what he calls structural violence and it's the stuff that Hannah Arendt talked about around bureaucracy. No one is really responsible for, you know. When Adolf Eichmann said he never killed anybody, he was complicit in structural violence that was -- although it wasn't the Shoah -- it wasn't even necessarily intended. So I used a slide yesterday of Cancer Alley which is the Mississippi River running down through New Orleans, upstream where all the petrochemical refineries are. No one gets old. They're all poor black communities. Everyone dies of cancer by their forties. No one in those plants, no executives really intended to kill people but the structural violence is stuff we're all complicit. So again going back to your comment about the Japanese-Canadians, we're all complicit even though we may not take part if a structure -- a government or business -- can be designed so that no one has to have responsibility but it effects violence. And violence in Johan Galtung's understanding doesn't even necessarily involve an intent to commit violence but the harm is done even though no one has any intent. And then he talks about cultural violence which is the justification, legitimisation of the structure that gives rise to the direct violence. So in your story you have this wonderful opportunity to really identify "here we have this violence done to Japanese people." The structures that were created after Pearl Harbour were then justified by Canadian society so even if you didn't believe it you were still part of this. And here it's very appropriate. I would try doing the same in talking about the Shoah and I did yesterday talking about environmental violence, but kept on referring back to the pictures of my family. The fact that they ended up in gas chambers -- there was intent there but none of the people who were turning the valves, I mean they didn't have any particular animus. They were just following -- it was their job. They drove the train or whatever. The structure was violent and the culture justified the violence and I think we can look very much at environmental violence in the same way. I get on my bicycle and that's how I get out to Royal Roads so I'm not being violent on my bike ride out there but I use fossil fuels too and that's part of the violence. So I think you can look at these things in those terms -- I think I didn't have the language when I started doing this work on presenting the Holocaust and trying to think historically. But in a way I was looking for the structures, right. And the cultural justifications for those structures that led to the direct violence was the Shoah. Everything else was trying to reveal what is really hidden which are structures and systems that ultimately lead to this even though no one person is necessarily

responsibly. You have to pretty much dissuade students that this was all Hitler's doing. And that's an important understanding. No it's not Hitler's doing just like it wasn't William Lyon Mackenzie King's doing. That kind of stuff. There's a lot here and one of the things I like about being what I call "an intellectual omnivore" is that I bounce around. Like Galtung was a huge find for me. Sitting next to that guy at the -- with Helga who studied with Galtung. But you know it gives me a lens for understanding even my intuitions about what I've been doing over the last twenty years or so. I think I've always been interested in looking underneath that surface and maybe that's -- I haven't thought about it this way -- but maybe that's really my critique of what the [organization has] [REDACTED] been doing. They just seem to stay with the surface and my sense was -- and I'm sure not, that they weren't just staying at the surface -- but my concern was that it was just maybe too simple an analysis of what the structure was, what the cultural violence was. And they weren't able to go outside of those bounds of the Shoah and see that all over the world through history we engage in -- and if you know Albert Bandura, the social psychologist, who has a lot of -- real amazing guy, was from Edmonton and has been at Stanford, he's like in his 90s now. And he does a lot of work on moral disengagement and I think, you know, the Shoah, what happened to the Japanese in Canada -- the psychological dimensions that Bandura's articulated around how we morally disengage is really critical and I think that when we can reveal those things it makes it a little clearer to us what we have to do. Yeah, so we can come back to this.

**Stanger-Ross:** Thank you.

-- END OF INTERVIEW --