

## **Ronen Kozokaro**

I grew up in a town which is called Be'er Sheva. It's called the capital of the Negev, which is the southern area of Israel. Both my parents came from different backgrounds. Normally the Ashkenazis were living within their communities, and Sephardic was mingling with the Sephardic, and the Mizrahi with.. My father's from Romania, and my mother's from Libya, so she's dark skinned.

My father, he was born in '39, as the war started, and they had problems where they lived in Romania. Antisemitism was already rife in those areas, Jews were already prosecuted [persecuted], Jews had always been a scapegoat. But he remembers he was a little kid and running away from places to hide. And later on, I found out that they changed their name from Ariyeh – which is lion in Hebrew, and I think it relates to one of the tribes because one of the tribes was *Ariyeh* (lion) –and they changed their name to Kozokaro, which is a common name in Romania. It's like Smith here. So, they had forged documents. After they went on a boat to come to Israel, they never changed it. Only 10 or 15 years ago, when I played with a Romanian guy, and he said that Kozokaro is not a Jewish name. So, then I called my father and I said, 'Someone told me Kozokaro is not a Jewish name are you sure it's our surname?' He said he was not so sure, speak to my sister, his elder sister. She's very, very old, ninety something or what have you, and I called her and asked about the name, and she was saying: 'What? Is Kozokaro not good enough for you?' I said, 'No, I'm not going to change it. I grew up with it all my life, but I want to know.' And then she told me the story. They ran away from the Nazis. They had to change the documents.

## **Alec Nacamuli**

The family business, which, my grandfather started, was basically a paper import business. They virtually had the monopoly of paper importing into Egypt from newsprint rolls right through to virtually toilet paper.

And then, when my parents got married, my father was sent to Alexandria to open the Alexandria branch of the business. So, they moved to Alexandria except that then the war broke out and my father - because we were Greek nationals - joined the Greek navy in exile because, when Germany invaded Greece, the Greek government and the navy withdrew into Alexandria so the first Greek government in exile was in Alexandria as well as the royal family. So, actually, somewhere in the family album there's a photo of me playing on the beach with the baby King Constantine.

During the Second World War Egypt was a British protectorate. So, the British army was there, etc. the king had Nazi sympathies... they have found in the German archives, that was King Faruk, in the German archives they found telegrams he had sent to Hitler saying that he and his

subjects were praying for the victory of the Germans to deliver them from the British yoke. At which point the British high commissioner moved some tanks into the Royal palace and forced him to change his government. Then of course there was the battle of El Alamein which was actually incredibly close. You've got to realise that El Alamein is less than 100 kilometres from Alexandria. And my grandfather's house, and my uncle, lived opposite the British Embassy, and they were burning papers and ready to evacuate. And already then, a lot of Jews before that had actually moved to South Africa or Sudan fearing the German invasion.

We were reasonably safe. In fact, my father had a brother, my uncle, whom I was very fond of, and he signed up for, with Montgomery's Eighth Army, and because he spoke fluent Italian, they used him to interrogate Italian prisoners of war and then he followed up, you know when the Eighth Army, and Montgomery army went up to Sicily and then Anzio and all moving up Italy.

### **David Tachauer**

David was a very interesting character. He was orphaned very young, cause his father died in 1870 I think, or 1875, when he was only 6 or 7, and he grew up, probably, with the second father. We don't really know, that's the bit we don't know -assuming that Batsheva's second husband took on the role of stepfather - we don't know how happy or unhappy he was, but he was remarkably small. Looking at me, I'm 6 foot 1, he was 5 foot 1, and he was into entertainment. He was an entertainer, and he married a non-Jewish entertainer, and they both were in Vaudeville, music hall. He - I don't really know much about her, I think her name was Annie but I don't know anything else, and, interestingly, they lived in the south of London, in Cleaver Square, which is in Kennington, and he lived in the same street, and played with Charlie Chaplin, as a child. Charlie Chaplin you know went on and made a fortune in America. My grandfather, who was then born in Lambeth, he wasn't so lucky, because David signed a contract to go on a world tour with an entertaining touring company, and he was never seen again, and we do know that he entertained in Africa, India, the Far East, Australia, New Zealand, washed up in California, and eventually became an American citizen, in Seattle, Washington, in 1903, which was the same year that my grand-father Leon was being inducted to Dr Barnardo's because his mother couldn't cope with the four children that David had left. So, it was a kind of like a tragi-comedy, that David was out there making his way in life, touring the world and actually marrying four or five times, bigamously as far as we know, while his poor son was sort of sent to Barnardo's. And he would almost certainly have been... he might not have known him, but it would have been in the era when Barnardo was still alive. And he would have been aware of, you know, perhaps he came as a benefactor, you know, but he would have known him. But, in common with that era, Barnardo's, rightly or wrongly, decided that there was a better life available for these poor orphan children in the New World, so they got shipped off to Canada, and separated. There were two brothers, there were four altogether, four children,

two girls, two boys, that we know of. The two boys were sent to Canada, but on separate journeys, and separately. Subsequently we found out, after they were both gone, we found out that they were no more than two or three miles away from each other on separate farms. But David - which was Leon's brother, here comes that name David again - was quite happy, and his family are still in Canada; we were in contact with some, not all of them. But Leon my grandfather wasn't happy. As soon as he was sixteen he worked a passage across the Atlantic, which is another interesting thing, because the ship that he worked his way across on landed in Hampshire, in Southampton. And he came off the ship, and immediately joined the army, because he had no education, he had no trade, no... 'What do I do now, here I am in England? You know what, I'll join the army.' So, he joined the Hampshire regiment, and then funnily enough he kind of followed his father around the world, but as a colonial soldier, and obviously he had no religious upbringing whatsoever, I mean, you know, it meant nothing to him.

### **Nadia Arditti**

In the archives of Lisbon, you can have the archives of the Inquisition, still in Lisbon. So, he found a story of a woman called Sebastiana Cavaliero who was deported at the time of the Inquisition to South America with her mother. So, in this report there was written that she was condemned because she was Jewish, and they sent her to South America. So, we suppose, and in this village in Portugal, most of the people are called Cavaliero and he found somebody called Cavaliero to whom he talked. Some of them know they were Jewish and some of them don't. So, some of them became converted at the time and so they called them 'Marranos' in Spain, Marranos means pork in Spanish, which was an insult. So, the Marranos were the Jews who converted to Christianity not to flee Spain at that time.

Well, I lived a long time in Switzerland. After I finished school, I was still there. My parents were in Switzerland. They left Turkey in 1959, but there was the problems in '56 so they weren't so comfortable. So, they left for Switzerland. They lived in Geneva; I was at boarding school in Lausanne. When I finished, I didn't know who I was, if I was Swiss or Turkish or Jewish. You are right, it's a very difficult situation because you don't know where you are, and I still don't know who I am because now I am in England. I feel I like this country too and then I like France. It's quite complicated, yes. But it's a big advantage when you are an artist to be somebody universal because you don't have to be from somewhere. You are yourself and what you create is inside yourself, so you just go together with yourself here and there and you are this personality.

### **Raya Brody**

I think the fact that I'm here is a miracle because I'm thinking about what my ancestors had to go through in Spain. You have to remember either they were burnt alive because they didn't want to renounce their religion or given a day or an hour to leave everything and all their

possessions to leave for a country and they didn't know what their fate would be or they had to obviously become Christian and secretly keep their Jewish tradition. There's quite a few of those still in Spain that for years have had the tradition of lighting candles on Friday and no one understood why and it's because they were originally Jewish and outside they had to pretend they were Christian but inside the house they were Jewish. Either one of those choices was horrible and obviously my ancestors decided not to become Christian and didn't want to renounce their religion, so they went to live miles and miles away in the Ottoman [Empire]. They had to start all over again after hundreds of years living in Spain. So, I think what the Spanish government has done is a little bit too late, too little, but it's better than nothing. And when we were in Barcelona, we went to visit a lot of the towns around it trying to find historic monuments. I think the Spanish government is doing more and more now to recognize. But you could see a lot of houses there that were built from tombstones from Jewish cemeteries. There's quite a few of them and the reason you know that is because of the name of the deceased or something like that is written. They do what they can right now but, as I said, it's a little bit, very much late. But I guess it's better than nothing.

My family, came from a small village, Floris or Floria, which is in Spain, and that's why the surname Farhi that I had before I got married mentions that village. Farhi. Farhi in Hebrew means a flower and they think, no one knows for sure, that the origin came from a small village in Spain. They spent some times in the south of France and northern Spain because in those days there wasn't a border. They moved in and out. So, when the Christians in France threw them out, they went to Spain and when the Christians in Spain threw them out, they went to Turkey. It was a continuous story of being thrown out. But they kept the family name from that small village they came from.

### **Sylvia Manasseh**

And then I taught in Singapore. First of all, I taught in a very old building and then they moved to a new building, and they said, 'The art department makes such a noise, push them away.' and they pushed me away and I got my own building. [laughs] Then they were furious because I did much better than they did. So, I designed, I planned my own building. There was a very nice architect. And he gave me everything I wanted. I asked for pottery which they'd never had before. So, I introduced pottery into schools in Singapore. And I used to encourage them to look in their own gardens and see if anything looked like clay. I said if the rain doesn't go through, it's probably clay and you can use that. My parents went to Singapore. My sister went out, and they couldn't cope with her. She was very, very difficult. She was redhaired and they thought I could help cope with her but she wouldn't listen to me. When we got there, she said, 'Don't interfere. I've got them there.' She put her thumb down.

### **Maisie Meyer**

I don't see myself as an immigrant anymore – so certainly not. Also, another thing I was 16 years old when I was reading Exodus by Leon Uris and at the time I realised that there had been a – I knew about the Holocaust only then. They didn't make it a point to tell us. Here, they are taught about the Holocaust when they are only 4 years old at school. I'm very happy I didn't get that education. But my parents didn't tell us and I wouldn't have told my kids.

### **Guy Sasson**

Dad worked in imports/exports out there but they were given notice to quit or some sort like that. And dad tried to set up certain black-market deals coming out of Egypt and again I believe we came the long way round-we came by ship. He had sort of different visas for different countries. He had helped his brother and brother-in-law to get out and they were supposed to help him in Paris set up business -never happened. He was let down. Mum'd tend to wear the trousers. Her father and her sister- her sister had married an English soldier, had come to the UK. So, we actually landed up here as penniless, with luggage etc and certain belongings and that was in September/October of '58. So, I was nearly 4 and my sister was 2 or 3 months old. And we stayed with our aunt. It wasn't the greatest time. Four of us lived in a room and she was quite, not selfish, but not nice- our aunt. That was in Kilburn. Then, Dad had saved some money, I think it was yeah, it was 500 quid and he was going to buy a three- or four-bedroom house in Harrow. And my aunt said, 'You don't want to live in Harrow. It's miles away. No, no, no! Live in Central London!' And that was a deposit on a private rented property which would be the biggest and probably the best mistake he made because, we lived near central London.