

## Lost Childhood

Ann Shore, previously Ann Goldman, was born in Zabno, Poland on April 13, 1929, and is unfortunately one of the millions of victims of the Holocaust. She explains the horrors that she had to witness as a child in her testimony recorded on March 24, 1998. This three hour testimonial, recorded by Hilary Helstein, exposes Ann's lost childhood, stolen by the horrors of the Holocaust. Ann was born into a culture of hatred, and sadly, did not know of anything else. When watching a testimonial, you can't help but compare your childhood to the traumatic childhood of these survivors. Testimonies of the youngest victims give us an inside look on the traumas forced onto them, and help us understand how this cruelty affected the rest of their lives.

Ann's testimony outlines her fear as a child and how it took over her life. As a child, her family had to always be on their toes for unexpected raids or break-ins. Nothing leading up to March 20 1942 mattered anymore to Ann: "These are secondary memories because what had followed had imprinted itself in my mind." This is referring to the agonizing moment when Nazi's broke into her house putting guns up to her family's heads, demanding to know where her father is. The fact that it was accepted to be able to involuntarily break into a sleeping family's house at any time is shocking. The intruders then searched the house top to bottom until they found Ann's hiding father in the basement. The actions that occurred next have scarred Ann since the incident: The Nazi's then shot Ann's father with their entire family in the house to witness it. Shocked, Ann's sister attempted to revive her father, but sadly, all hope was lost. The Nazi's did not appear to have any sympathy for the well-being of the Goldman family.

In these times, almost any action coming from a Jew could cause the Nazi's to think that they were rebelling. The Nazi's trigger was to immediately approach Jews with violence. For example, one of the most exciting parts of being a little girl is trying on a new dress that you feel good in. Unfortunately for Ann, this simple thrill was taken away from her. In Ann's case, she was stopped by shouting Nazi's on a street wearing her mid-arm length dress. They beat her up and threatened to kill her simply because they thought that Ann was attempting to hide her yellow star on her armband. After the Nazi agreed to let her go, she walked away in fear knowing that they could shoot her in the back and took as many shortcuts as possible to escape the possibility of death. You were not safe ANYWHERE as a Jew.

Ann had no chance to have an innocent childhood, and it has affected her everyday life decades later. Some of the experiences Ann has had to endure have imprinted themselves in her brain and prevented her from being happy. This is clear when she said, "when the moment comes, children overnight become adults. We became responsible. We helped smuggle" After a catastrophe such as the Holocaust, it is hard to find happiness in yourself and forgive those who caused your pain. A child should never have to witness people of their same beliefs get their lives taken before the child's eyes, as Ann did. Instead of looking out her window and seeing trees or her friends playing outside, she saw a line of people from her own religion being killed off one-by-one, and the most devastating part is that these tragedies were occurring in a town previously filled with energy and community. Ann's thoughts were drowned in fear that consumed her childhood: "I don't remember the pain I remember the fear."

Hard work is expected from adults. But for children, society expects an innocent childhood consisting of mistakes and learning. During this catastrophe, children were forced to grow up overnight and pull their weight to save the Jewish religion. Only from hearing first hand experiences from the youngest victims can we realize that they sometimes can teach us the most.