

About 'Dark Lullabies' and 'Shoah'

Interviews with the Directors

Children of the Holocaust

Question: When did you first conceive the idea for this film, and what made you go ahead with it?

Angelico: ... my parents are both survivors of the concentration camps. A year after they were liberated and finally reunited, my father wrote a manuscript about his experience. That was the year I was born... What I read amazed me. This was not only a story of horror and grief, as I had expected, but a powerful story of love and hope as well.

I then read *Anna* by Susan Fromber Schaeffer and began to imagine what my mother's experience had been like, from before the war in Warsaw to the beginning of a new life in the new world. It was still too difficult for me to discuss with her, but I began to understand her tremendous courage and commitment to life, and the effort she made to protect me from the pain she had experienced herself.

Question: What was the sequence of events once you decided to go ahead with the film? What was your parents' reaction to your decision?

Angelico: After a long period of soul searching on whether or not I should make a film on this subject, I began to imagine and plan what the film would be. I knew I did not have a meaningful contribution to make in terms of understanding the Holocaust. I had neither the experience nor the wisdom to do that.

What I did understand was how the Holocaust had affected the children of survivors... Very soon, I realized that it was not only the children of survivors that had grown up in the shadow of the Holocaust but also the children of the Nazis themselves, and my vision of the film grew to encompass their experience as well.

When the film was sketched out on paper, I went to speak to my parents. My mother supported the project from the beginning, and, after many intense discussions, I won my father's support as well. The issues that came out of these discussions came up again and again... how were [the children of survivors] different from anyone else? Even most children of survivors did not realize the common bond that exists until Helen Epstein's book, *Children of the Holocaust*, was published and the phenomena began to be discussed. The survivors who had tried to create a new life for their children after the Holocaust did not want to know that some of that horror had been passed on to their children.

Question: What was your experience while shooting, particularly in Germany.

Angelico: Montreal and Israel were filmed on a shoestring, but the experience was extraordinarily rich. We met survivors whose stories were painful to hear but who had built new lives that were vibrant and rich.

Going to Germany was, of course, a much greater mystery for us. It is ironic that Germany, which had been the most controversial aspect of our project and fund raising efforts, turned out to be the place where we had the most time and money to shoot. Everyone warned us that we could never find children of Nazis who would agree to be interviewed... We had many contacts in Germany but no one seemed right, yet we were sure that the key... was to find just the right person to work with. When time was running out, I happened to be in New York where I saw a film called, *Now, After All These Years*, by Harald Lüders and decided that he was the person we were looking for. We contacted Harald, and ... got our schedules to work together. Harald helped us with the preliminary research in Germany and choosing subjects and locations.

Question: Who do you hope to reach with this film?

Angelico: I hope the film will reach everyone because its issues are universal. They involve everyone who is concerned about prejudice and human dignity and, even more so, those who are not.