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Holocaust documentary packs a punch



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Television

Dark Lullabies is the kind of personal memoir that hits you in the gut. In the middle of a sea of mindless programming, it strikes out, grips you with its true story and won't let go.

The 90-minute documentary on TVOntario's Channel 19 tonight at 9, made by Irene Lilienheim Angelico, examines the feelings of children of Holocaust survivors. It's exactly that, a report from the second generation.

Angelico was born to Jewish survivors after World War II. Now, 35 years later, she feels compelled to search out the past. One starting point is a survivors' reunion in Israel, but Angelico is more interested in how the children have adapted, how they view events they cannot personally remember.

She interviews Germans in their 30s who have parents and grandparents who were war criminals. One young girl thinks of a loving, doting grandfather; he was also an adjutant at the Auschwitz concentration camp and was later convicted of war crimes.

Angelico did not start her voyage of self-discovery expecting to find many answers. Like most of us, she cannot fathom how such mass murders took place. She ends the film at Dachau, a picturesque German village filled with friendly faces. Off in the distance, through the wooded hills, you can still spot the smokestack of the crematorium.