

ERIC RICHMOND

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.



Eric Richmond (born Erich Recimann), son of Hirsch and Pesche Rachel Reichmann, was born on June 27, 1924, in Vienna, Austria. Eric was an

only child. The family lived in the Jewish section of Vienna, and Eric attended synagogue with his father on Friday nights and Saturdays. Eric's father was a construction engineer. The Reichmann family had Jewish and non-Jewish friends, and Eric attended public school.

On March 12, 1938, German troops entered and occupied Austria in an event known as the *Anschluss*. The next day, Austria was annexed into Germany. Life quickly began to change for Eric and his family. Eric could no longer attend public school so he had to attend a Jewish school, and he began experiencing antisemitism. Former friends turned on him, and members of the Hitler Youth would wait for the Jewish children before and after school. Eric's arm was scarred from a knife attack by a member of the Hitler Youth. During the *Kristallnacht Pogrom*—"the Night of Broken Glass" (November 9-10, 1938)—Eric slept under the arch of a bridge. He did not return home for two days. He and his family began fearing for their lives.

Following the *Kristallnacht Pogrom*, there was a collective effort to bring nearly 10,000 refugee children to Great Britain from Germany, German-annexed territories in Austria and among the German Jews who had been forcibly pushed into Polish territory in October, 1938. These transports are known as the Kindertransport, or "children's transport." Eric's family secured him a spot on a Kindertransport by waiting in line for six days (his parents and family friends would take turns waiting

in line). Eric left Vienna on a Kindertransport on December 10, 1938. Eric's parents were killed in the Holocaust.

After arriving in the United Kingdom, Eric was sent to live at a series of holiday camps, summer accommodations consisting of cabins and cottages. He eventually was sent to live at a hostel in London. He attended school and synagogue, and began working in the shoe trade. He eventually enrolled in college and joined the civil defense, a group that protects civilians during wars and natural disasters. As an air raid warden, he was once trapped in a building that collapsed during a bombing; while Eric escaped, he suffered hearing loss that he never recovered.

Eric worked in various trades over the years. He met his wife, Ursula, at a dance. They married in 1963, and have one daughter, Jo. At the time of his interview, Eric had one granddaughter. This interview was conducted on April 22, 1998, in London, England.