

CHAPTER SEVEN The L.A. Survivors' Club

“And I didn't talk about the Holocaust, not even to my own child.”

In Chapter Seven of **Revenge of the Tipping Point**, titled "The L.A. Survivors' Club," the narrative focuses on the lives of Holocaust survivors in Los Angeles, primarily Fred Diament, Siegfried Halbreich, and Masha Loen. Fred, known as Freddie, was a "low number" survivor who endured the horrors of Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen and Auschwitz, losing his father and brother along the way. Despite his traumatic past, he became a respected CEO in L.A. His dark humor, as noted by Rachel Lithgow from Spielberg's Shoah Foundation, stood out amidst his anger and grief. Freddie's deep friendship with Sig, who survived as a pharmacist treating inmates, is highlighted through Lithgow's accounts, emphasizing their inseparable bond, characterized by both laughter and bickering.

Following Freddie's death in 2004, a dramatic eulogy delivered by Sig had the entire community laughing, reflecting their unique camaraderie. Another survivor, Masha, also had a gripping story. Surviving multiple typhus infections, she vividly demonstrated her resilience even during a Pesach (Passover) celebration, humorously dismissing traditional dietary restrictions due to her harrowing past.

Freddie, Sig, and Masha became pivotal figures in forming the Los Angeles survivors' club, where they began to share their experiences and efforts to remember the Holocaust. Their small gatherings evolved into a significant community, where they curated mementos of their memories, leading to the establishment of the Martyrs Memorial Museum—the first Holocaust museum in the United States—in 1961.

Over the decades, this project grew into something larger, prompting the creation of Holocaust memorials across the U.S. The chapter ends by highlighting the significant cultural shift regarding Holocaust memory, particularly after less focus on the Holocaust in early American histories.

Lithgow's experiences greatly emphasize how these survivors created a community, revealing a transformation in public perception and acknowledgment of their traumatic history through storytelling and shared experiences .