

THE BOOK

In the shadow of the infamous Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, Kalman and Leopold—two young boys—meet as unwitting subjects of Josef Mengele's twisted twin experiments. Pulled from their barrack, they are forced to become servants to the SS guards within Mengele's "hospital" camp, bearing daily witness to scenes of obscene viciousness. Within this nightmarish hell Leopold becomes Kalman's guide, helping him to navigate the terrifying complexities of the SS guard shack. Mengele's atrocities are relentless, yet within this darkness a friendship emerges, testament to the resilience of the human spirit. In January 1945, the Russian army liberates Birkenau and the boys part ways.

For fifty-six years Kalman searches tirelessly for his friend and protector, driven by the memory of a boy he knew only by a nickname he had given him: Lipa. Their story is a reminder of the depths of human immorality, and it is a testament to friendship, faith, and survival against all odds. As intolerance and hate intensify in the world, Kalman and Leopold's voices echo across generations, urging us to remember the horrors of fascism so that history's darkest moments remain in the past.

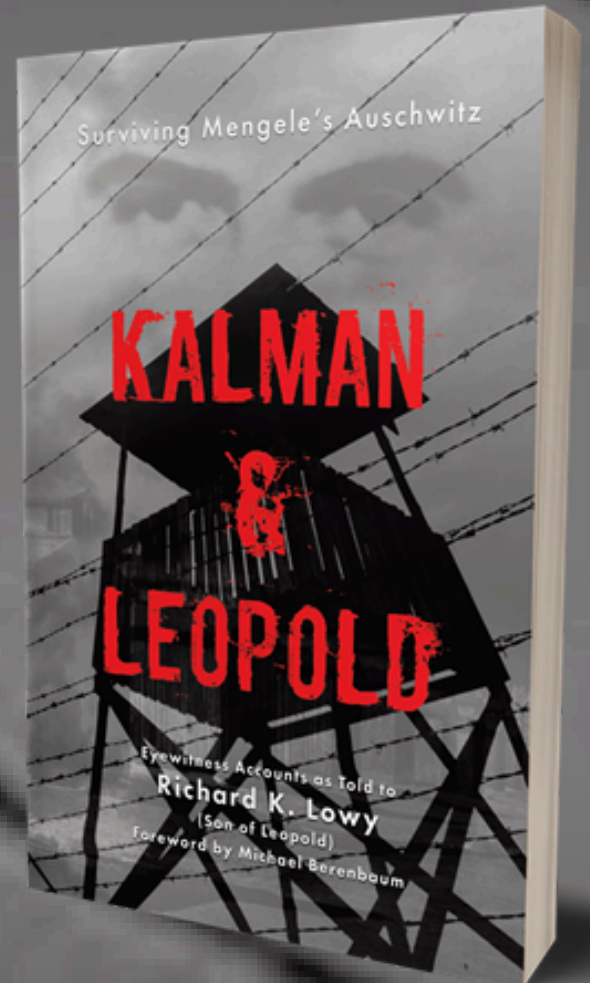
Never again!

THE AUTHOR

Richard K. Lowy is an internationally acclaimed producer and creative director in the global event industry, celebrated for delivering award-winning, high-impact experiences. His expertise in producing world-class events is exemplified by his leadership at the prestigious APEC CEO Summit, featuring seven world leaders, 21 ministers of state, and over 200 top executives. Lowy's distinguished career includes collaborations with legendary artists and thought leaders such as Van Morrison, the Doobie Brothers, Harry Connick Jr., Diana Krall, Malcolm Gladwell, William Shatner, Chris Hadfield, and George Foreman, consistently crafting transformative experiences that inspire and engage audiences worldwide.

Yet, after learning of his father's history, Richard embarked on what would become the most profound and personal project of his life. He dedicated himself to the painful but imperative task of preserving his father's harrowing Holocaust experiences. Immersed in the depths of this history, Richard became the driving force behind *Leo's Journey: The Story of the Mengele Twins*, a documentary narrated by the incomparable EGOT-winning Christopher Plummer. Doing so led to something both extraordinary and unexpected—the reunion of his father with a long-lost campmate, reconnecting threads of history that had been severed for over fifty-six years.

His journey, culminating in this book, the story of Kalman and Leopold, transcended any of his previous achievements. Richard's career was the foundation that allowed him to honor their legacy and share this vital historical testimony with the world. This book, one of resilience and courage, have become his own legacy—a testament to remembrance, survival, and the power of reconnecting lives.



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INSIDE THE BOOK

INTRODUCTION

Kalman

This is part of the strange generation of ours.

I call it "the mad generation of the great fire," which, at the time, was most of Europe. Things happen out of the blue. Not just with us—other people have discovered a lost family member by pure chance. Somebody notices and says, "I know this lady. Her last name is such-and-such." In my case, I've been looking for fifty-six years. All I have in my head is the name "Lipa." We never formally introduced ourselves.

I am Kalman and he was Lipa.

We spent six and a half months working together in the SS guard shack of Josef Mengele's hospital camp in Auschwitz II-Birkenau. He saved me from beatings and looked out for me, but I knew very little about him.

In January 1945 the Russian army overtook Birkenau, and we were free to go. Lipa and I parted without much ado—it's like that in Birkenau. We just said goodbye without understanding it could be the last time we saw each other. This was how I parted from my grandfather on the train ramp. It was part of life. Lipa went that way, and I went this way.

Where's Lipa today?

Nobody knows. Lipa was a nickname.

He's someone else.

Wednesday, October 31, 2001: The 56-year search is over

The phone rings in the kitchen.

My wife answers it and calls out to me in the living room: "It's your sister. There's a program on channel 8 about the Mengele Twins."

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It's 6:30 p.m. Tel Aviv time, and there's a program on the National Geographic Channel called *Leo's Journey: The Story of the Mengele Twins*. It's detailed through the eyes of a "Leo Lowy."

What Mengele Twin wouldn't want to stop and see this?

I'm watching the show, and another yankel¹ is making the rounds of Auschwitz with his family. This guy, Leo, is showing his family around, like I did with my twin boys.

I'm impressed.

At twenty-one minutes and seventeen seconds into the film, there's a picture of Leo and his twin sister, Miriam, as youths. I can't believe my eyes.

I shout at the television, "It's Lipa!"

The ball in my mind starts rolling at twenty-one minutes, seventeen-and-a-half seconds. How could I know the old guy with glasses showing his family around was my Lipa? But there is no doubt. I know this face.

"Hold it everybody, this is him! It's Lipa!"

I worked ten hours a day with him through the last weeks of June 1944, all of July, August, September, October, November, and into December. Just after Christmas, the SS guards stopped our work and told us to get out, our job was finished. That's when Lipa and I parted. Shortly after, the evacuation began.

My wife calls out from the kitchen, "What are you talking about?"

I call back, "Come in here now!"

"What are you screaming about?" she asks.

A little annoyed, I respond, "Quickly, come here!"

The screen no longer shows the image of Lipa.

I curse quietly in Hungarian as the film goes on.

My wife comes in and says, "What's the problem?"

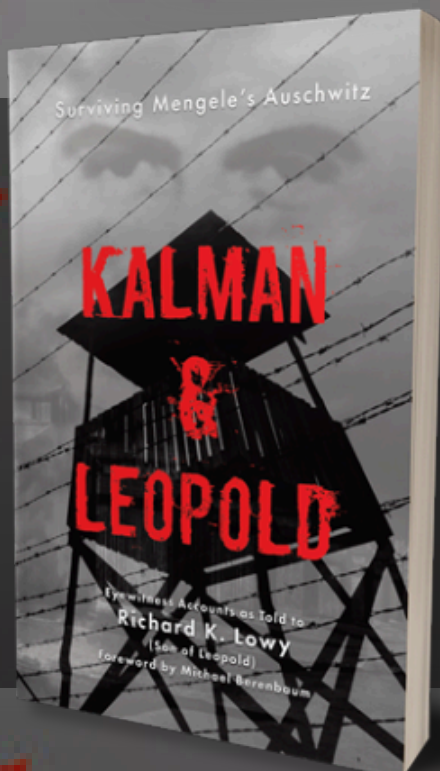
I tell her, "Sit here and wait."

At forty-four minutes and twenty-six seconds, as the film's ending, they're kind enough to show the same picture of Leo as a young boy. I point at the screen. "There! That's Lipa."

To me, the producers are making it clear: the time has come for these two mice to meet again.

¹ A way of addressing someone whose name you do not know. "He's a regular Joe" or "Hey mac" are sometimes used in English.

vi



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