

PETRIFIED SORROW

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Eduard Leuw tells the story mainly from his own perspective and from his mother's perspective. Apart from that, he plays a few other parts: his aunt, the soldier and the policeman. A wooden chair indicates the place of his mother.

FADE IN from black

slide TITLE 'VERSTEEND VERDRIET' (Petrified Sorrow)

FADE OUT to black

slide MOTHER, HEAD IN HANDS

This is my mother when she was about 25 years old. Three years ago my mother died. Before her death she wrote a book about her experiences during the Second World War. Especially for me. I would like to tell you her story now, in the hope that it will not be forgotten. Welcome mamma, take a seat.

slide WEDDING PICTURE

My mother worked as secretary of the board for a big department store in Amsterdam. In 1937 my parents were married. Then my mother stopped working because at that time, married women were not allowed to work. My father was a salesman and they lived in Amsterdam.

slide AEROPLANES 1

It is 1940, May the tenth, Thursday night. A thin cloud-cover hangs above the Netherlands.

slide AEROPLANES 2

Planes fly everywhere, followed by searchlights.

slide AEROPLANES 3

Anti aircraft guns thunder. From the sky paratroopers come down.

Near Amsterdam a howitzer is fired. My mother is frightened. She is 29 years old and she is pregnant.

On the morning of May the tenth my parents listen to the radio and they hear to their consternation that the Germans have invaded the Netherlands. They run to my grandparents' house and find them terrified. So they decide to stay overnight. A young woman who is a teacher lives with my grandparents. The five of them sit nervously and frightened together.

slide GERMAN ARMY VEHICLES

During the third night of the war my grandma suddenly awakes. She smells something. What is it? It's gas! She looks around and finally comes into the kitchen to find the oven door open and the teacher lying in front of it. My grandmother wakes everyone up. She opens all the windows to let the fresh air in. My father hurries to the doctor, but when they return, the woman is already dead. My granny takes my mother with her to the neighbours. They are Dutch Nazi's. They claim that they are not against the Jews, but who knows... Still my mother spends the night with them.

MOTHER: The war lasts only five days and then the Germans occupy the Netherlands. On the 15th of May in the afternoon and evening, the German soldiers parade through the city on motorbikes and in armoured cars. They pass in front of my eyes.

Slide GERMAN ARMOURED CARS

We return home. We are frightened and in doubt. I don't dare to stay at home on my own. During the first few months of the war, the Germans leave the Jews in peace. Everyone hopes from the bottom of their hearts that the Germans will not persevere. So do I.

Slide RENEE

In 1940, on the 1st of November I give birth to a daughter, my daughter Renee. And then the Germans begin to take measures against the Jews. Too many to mention. I have chosen a few.

Slide REMBRANDTSPLEIN

SOLDIER: October 1940. Everyone has to carry an ID card. The Jews' ID cards are stamped with two black J's.

November 1940 All Civil Servants who are Jewish are fired.

January 1941 Jews are forbidden to go to the cinema.

Slide BUTCHERS SHOP

March 1941 All Jewish businesses are placed under German management.

May 1941 Jews are forbidden to travel or to move.

Slide 'VOOR JODEN VERBODEN (Vondelpark)' (Prohibited for Jews)

September 1941 All parks, swimming pools, zoo's, café's, restaurants, theatres, libraries, museums, markets: off limits for Jews.

Slide 'VOOR JODEN VERBODEN (tree)' (Prohibited for Jews)

May 1942 Stamp collections, objects of art, gold and silver jewellery are confiscated.

June 1942 Jews are not allowed to drive cars. From 8 o'clock in the evening until 6 in the morning, they are not allowed in the street, in their gardens, on their balconies. Travelling by tram, train, taxi or bus is forbidden for Jews.

Slide 'JODEN NIET GEWENSCHT' (Jews are not allowed)

July 1942 Jewish telephones are disconnected. All bicycles are confiscated.

August 1942 In Amsterdam all Dutch Jews are taken to the National Theatre. From there they go to the transit camp of Westerbork to be exterminated in the death camps.

EDUARD: From the beginning of August, all Jews are summoned to work in Germany. My parents are among them. But my mother is expecting me. She has to undergo a medical examination by a German doctor, who is a member of the Secret Police. He gives her a document that guarantees her safety until September 1942. Then my father receives a summons, but he gets a reprieve until May 1943.

slide ADVERTISEMENT

MOTHER: It is Saturday night, I am in labor. The nurse is here but not the doctor. He is a Jew. And as you know the Jews are not allowed to be in the street from 8 in the evening until 6 in the morning. So the doctor waits and waits until at last it is Sunday morning and he arrives right on time, because at that moment, I deliver a son, you Eduard.

slide BABY EDUARD

Every night at 8 o'clock the streets are deserted. All Jews are at home. The German soldiers stamp through the streets. Everyone is frightened to death. Imagine that they ring your doorbell and ask to see the document that exempts you from deportation – will they honor it? I don't know.

slide MAN ON THE RUN

EDUARD: I am a two-month-old baby. My grandma and grandpa live in an upstairs apartment. They are my father's parents. My grandpa can hardly walk. The German soldiers take him by force from his home. They push him from the stairs and throw him ruthlessly in a truck. My grandma is ill in bed. The Germans leave her alone. But not long after that, she is also taken away.

slide GRANDPA AND GRANDMA

My sister Renee is very ill. The pediatrician sees us everyday to give us both an injection. He is active in the Resistance. On May the 23rd 1943 my parents' grant of stay expires. My mother is busy packing the suitcase. There are rumours that the Jews are being exterminated in the camps, but my mother doesn't believe this. She desperately hopes that the war will not last long. But my father does believe the rumours. He wants to go into hiding but he doesn't know how. The doctor urges my parents to go into hiding. He has an address for Renee and for my parents and me in a village called Veenendaal.

slide FATHER WITH CHILDREN

My mother calls a photographer. And he takes pictures of all of us. On the back she writes our names.

slide MOTHER WITH CHILDREN

I am 8 months old and Renee is two and a half. We are blond and we don't have to wear the Star of David because we are so young. But travelling is dangerous because my parents do wear stars. That's why someone who is not Jewish accompanies us. My parents have to leave, everything they own, all their furniture behind. They can't take anything with them.

slide LORRY WITH THE NAME OF PULS

MOTHER: (*walks in her imaginary living room*) It is May the 27th 1943. Our sixth anniversary. Today of all days. My table with the striped tablecloth. Round the table four chairs and the high-chair. On the table I always have a vase with flowers. In the cabinet of the sideboard is a stack of gold-rimmed plates. And in the drawer you'll find my silver cutlery. The velvet curtains, they are so beautiful. Every evening a little mouse trips across the curtain rail. Against the wall my tea chest. Little glass doors. Behind them the lovely cups. Above the mantelpiece hangs a clock and beneath it stands a Menorah. Behind the sliding doors our dresser, our bed. At the end of the long hall: the kitchen, the children's bedroom.

slide FADE TO BLACK

slide STAR ON COAT (follow light)

EDUARD: The three of us go into hiding with a poor family. The place smells like urine. It is horrible. The people don't work and they have no money. They give us bread and hot meals, but of course we have to pay for it. Renee is in hiding with another family but after two weeks she is back with us again, because they don't want to look after her anymore. Coming back to us is very dangerous. But we are all glad to be together again. My mother's sister in law visits us every month to bring us food coupons and money. She can travel by train because she is not wearing a star. When there is no more money, the Resistance movement helps us.

Then it is July 1943. My aunt Ro, my uncle Mau, and my cousin Selma walk in the street where they are picked up by the Germans. My uncle is released. He has a permit. But my aunt and little cousin are deported to Westerbork. My aunt writes a letter to her family and to her husband in Amsterdam.

slide MAN ARMS IN THE AIR

AUNT: My dearest sister, my dearest brother, my dearest husband,
The train arrived at six in the evening in Westerbork. In the camp there are rows of barracks. It is teeming with people. In the barracks there are bunk beds. Selma and I sleep in the middle one. That's not so bad, we are not fat. It is very overwhelming here. Selma is exhausted. In my arms she has fallen in a deep sleep. Do you remember what I said to you last week? Suppose that we are separated from each other, how cold my feet will be in the evenings. Now we are separated. But those cold feet... it's not so bad. I see so many people here that I know. I can't tell you, I can't write it down.
O yes, I am in need of a pillow case, toilet paper, a tin of salt, a pair of shawls and above all money. I better stop writing now. Selma sends you a kiss and I – I long for you.

slide KICKING SOLDIERS

EDUARD: My mother, my father, Renee and I are in hiding next door to my mothers' parents. Sometimes my mother walks outside with the children. She has red hair and she has removed the star. Nobody has an inkling that she is Jewish. But grandpa and granny are often standing in front of the window, trying to catch a glimpse of us. That's very dangerous. The neighbourhood begins to notice. There is a danger of being discovered, so we have to go back to Amsterdam. My parents talk about it and finally decide that Renee and I have to go back. And that my mother will take us there. But my mother has no ID card and she is five months' pregnant. Despite this, she goes with us by train to Amsterdam. She calls at the house of relatives and asks for shelter. She calls at the house of friends but she is not welcome there either. My mother has no papers. That's why the people don't dare to take her in. They are frightened. At last she finds a place to spend a couple of nights. There's also a hiding place for Renee.

slide PEOPLE WITH STARS

MOTHER: Renee, she won't let go of me. She clings to me. How can I tell her, she is only three years old, so small. I say, "Go, I will come in a minute," but I realize that I can't come at all.

Suppose I know where she is and I'm tortured by the Germans, I would betray her, it is horrible.

slide GIRLS WITH LITTLE HORSE

For you, Eduard, there still is no hiding place. I can't stay, I have to go, I have to leave you behind, even though you're deaf. How often have I stood behind your cot and clapped my hands? And you, you slept on. Who will take care for you now? I don't know. So I write a letter: "To whom it may concern, I ask you to take Eduard to a ears, nose and throat specialist to have him examined." I fold the letter and put it in the bag.

I leave Amsterdam. My children are gone. Today it is my sister's birthday. I don't know if she is still alive.

In the corridor of the train a German soldier paces up and down. He stares at me. Does he notice that I'm frightened? Perhaps that I have no identity papers? He enters the compartment, and sits down across from me. He talks to me and I – I can't utter a word. Then he stands up and walks away without having asked for my papers.

slide TRAIN

EDUARD: My mother and father, my grandmother and grandfather go into hiding in the city of Wageningen. My grandparents are in a policeman's home, my parents with a nurse. The nurse says she will help my mother deliver the baby. Every day my mother cleans the house and she has to go outside to do the shopping. My father can't leave the house. He has to stay upstairs because he looks so Jewish.

After a while the nurse suddenly says: you can't stay here any longer, go to a hotel! My parents enter a hotel. The manager says, "What are you doing here, a pregnant woman in the middle of the winter?" My mother makes up a story. "Well, all right," says the woman, "come in." Every day my father rises early, and pretends to go to work, but in reality he wanders through the town. My mother is frightened. "Suppose they pick him up?" But luckily he returns every evening. They wait and wait. Then the phone rings. A man says that the next morning at 7 o'clock they have to wait at the back of the hotel. A car arrives. A man sits

behind the steering wheel, next to him is the policeman. My parents get in, the taxi leaves but soon stops suddenly.

slide LINE WESTERBORK

MOTHER: What's the matter? Do we have to get out? Why? Here? Get out?

POLICEMAN: Yes. You'll come with me, and then you can deliver your baby at my home. But we will take your husband to the woods to kill him.

MOTHER: I scream, I shout, I cry. Why shoot him? He is not guilty. I won't let you take him from me, I will not allow it. At last he gives in, we both are allowed to come with him to his house. There, in a tiny room, are my parents as well. There we are, the four of us. It is very hard. The policeman can't keep his hands off me. He follows me everywhere and when I pass by, he touches me. I hate it. Besides he demands that we will name the baby after him or his wife, who happens to be German. We agree. In that tiny room I have to give birth, with all these people around me. And I give birth to a daughter. Her name is Bertje. She is still attached to me with the umbilical cord. Many hours we wait for the doctor, until he finally arrives to cut the cord. And, how nice, he has brought me some candy. It is the policeman's birthday and in the evening he has visitors. They want to see the baby. "She even looks Jewish," they say. And we don't utter a word.

My mother doesn't like the tiny room, so my parents start looking for another place to live. They meet a young couple with a little daughter. Kind people who treat my parents very well. But then it is September 1944 and the city of Arnhem is bombed. The whole area is evacuated. My parents also have to leave; they are picked up by a Red Cross bus and finally arrive in the city of Soest. In seven month's they stay at thirteen different addresses.

(Eduard walks with a suitcase across the stage, from place to place.)

EDUARD: In one house a man, a woman, my mother and father sit at a table. The man and the woman have plenty to eat, my parents have nothing. Nothing is offered to them. Sometimes my father steals a potato. On the black market everything is very expensive. My parents can't pay these prices. They have no money. Every day my mother goes to a soup kitchen and when it is finally her turn, she gets some soup.

My parents ring the doorbell at another house. A man opens the door. What are you doing here? Jews? Get out!

In another house there live a woman and a man. They have a dog. He shits everywhere. They demand that my mother cleans it up.

My mother still has some tablecloths and sheets. She trades them for some flour to make porridge for Bertje.

Finally, they end in a garden shed. My mother, my father and Bertje, the three of them. Finally nobody will bother them. The only thing is: There is a large villa next door where German soldiers are billeted. From time to time, a young German soldier visits them because he loves to play with Bertje. He has a little sister of the same age. My mother reluctantly allows him to.

They wait and wait and wait until at last, it is 1945, May the 5th, and the war has ended.

slide JUBILANT PEOPLE

MOTHER: Flags are flying. Has the war ended? I don't believe it. I can't rejoice. I can only think of Renee, there in Amsterdam. I want to fetch her, look for Eduard. The next morning I put Bertje in the stroller. A friend gives us a saucepan with a little meat, for our journey. We walk and walk and walk. The whole area is flooded because they have breached the dike. We walk for hours and hours. I don't dare to sit down, because if I sit, I will not be able to get up. We walk and walk. A car passes us with German soldiers. They jump from the car to take the flags down. As unobtrusively as possible we walk on. At 8 o'clock in the evening we arrive in Amsterdam. We go to my brother's house right away. The next morning, as I am changing Bertje's diaper, a little girl enters the room. "Who are you?" I ask, I don't know you." "But that is Renee!" says my father. Renee!? But she had blond curly hair and now she has straight black hair! But her eyes are still the same. I want to embrace her, but Renee pushes me away.

slide ADVERTISEMENT

The next day we go to the city of Haarlem. I presume that Eduard is there. We look for him everywhere but we can't find him. We put an advertisement in the newspaper, but there is no reaction. The girl student who had arranged for Eduard to go into hiding, has been arrested and sent to an extermination camp. It is awful. We are so frightened because now we don't know where Eduard is. Every day my husband visits the Office for Foster Children From the War to enquire about Eduard. Lists with names hang on the wall, but his name is not among them. And his picture is not in the book with photo's. Many months go by. One day the doorbell rings. A woman stands at the door. It is the student girl! "How are you?" I ask, "And where is Eduard?" She tells me that he is in the south of Holland. We are so relieved. But there are no trains, no busses. My husband goes to the wholesale market every day and finally we can make the journey in a vegetable truck. I sit next to the driver. He makes my husband sit in the back of the truck. It is a long journey. At last, we arrive in the village of Helden. We ring the doorbell. Your foster mother opens the door. "We are Eduard's parents," I say. But she doesn't believe me. I show her a picture and a letter from the Office for Foster Children From the War. But she doesn't want to look.

slide EDUARD

EDUARD: My foster mother has a large house with a big yard, where I often play. My foster father is not there because he has been sent to Germany to work. My foster mother has taken me to the deaf school where I've been examined – and I am indeed deaf.

slide EDUARD

I am playing in the yard when my foster mother comes to me. What? Who are they? Mommy? Daddy? My mother wants to kiss me. But I am so scared that I hide behind my foster mother.

slide THREE CHILDREN

MOTHER: Your foster mother has not entered your name with the Office for Foster Children From the War. That is mandatory. Doesn't she know that? I keep silent. She has, of course,

hoped that we wouldn't come back. She can't have children herself. I set you on my lap. She sobs bitterly. And I also cry.

slide FOSTER PARENTS

slide MOTHER WITH CHILDREN

EDUARD: The three of us return to Amsterdam. I enter a house. I am surprised to see Bertje sitting in the playpen. And there is Renee. I don't know her anymore and she doesn't know me either. We have to get used to each other. Start again.

But to start again, that's not possible at all. Before the war there were 140,000 Jews in the Netherlands. After the war 110,000 did not return. Only 3,000 children returned. So few. In the Commemoration Book I find my mother's maiden name, DAVIDSON. 184 of them did not return. And here is my father's last name, LEUW. 56 people did not return.

slide AUNT AND UNCLE

My aunt, 29 years old, Auschwitz. My uncle, 35 years old, at Auschwitz.

slide AUNT RO

My aunt Ro, 35 years old, at Sobibor.

slide GROUP IN STREET

My uncle Mau, 40 years old, at Sobibor.

slide WEDDING PICTURE

The brother of my uncle, at Sobibor.

slide GRANDPA AND GRANDMA

My grandma Leuw, 62 years old, at Auschwitz. My grandpa Leuw, 62 years old, at Auschwitz.

My cousin Selma, only 12 years old, at Sobibor.

slide PHOTOCORNERS

slide FADE TO

slide COLOUR PICTURE MOTHER

MOTHER: As I look back, all those years in hiding: what did I do? I don't know. I do know that everyday I tried to find food for Bertje.

But did I read a book? I don't know. Or listen to music? I don't know anymore. I am totally confused. Did I talk to my husband? And what about? I don't know anymore. Was it good between us? Even that I don't know anymore. I don't even know that anymore! One thing I do know, I hope that what I have experienced, no one else will ever have to endure. After the

war there is another family living in our house. Who helped us? Nobody! I didn't have any money, I didn't have a job, I didn't have a house. I didn't have any clothes, I didn't have pots and pans, I didn't have beds for the children. I had nothing at all. I do not feel like a woman anymore. I cannot cry, I cannot be glad. It seems as if there is a stone within me. But then, there are Renee, Eduard and Bertje. And yes, for them I will go on...