

**Niklas Frank**

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## **Summary**

### **Part 1 – Three Hours**

Niklas Frank was born March 9, 1939 in Munich, Germany to Brigitta Herbst and Hans M. Frank. He had four older siblings: Sigrid, born 1927, Norman, born 1928, Brigitta, born 1935 and Michael born 1937. They lived in the German occupied part of Poland where his father served as Hitler's Deputy with the title, "Governor General of Poland" as the chief of civil administration. His father had started his career as Hitler's lawyer in 1935. Niklas felt that the family was happy and, until 1942, he did not realize his father wanted to get divorced to marry his mistress. His mother did not want to divorce and requested Hitler to stop it and it was agreed the divorce would wait until the war was over. Sigrid and Norman were forced to write their father not to leave. Niklas was taken care of by Hilda, the nanny, as his mother was often out with her own chauffeur. Niklas related antics he had with his siblings, especially Michael who was two years older. Visitors would bring the children toys. Niklas would go with his mother to the Warsaw Ghetto where she did business with furs with Jews she knew. There he saw Jews wearing stars who seemed to have hungry or sad faces. He felt his father was cold toward him. They had several luxurious homes and cars and his father often traveled in a special car in a train. Half the year they lived near Lake Bavaria, at Castle Choboroff and half the year at Castle Kreserdorf near Krakow where they were guarded by SS who played with them. The castles had long corridors and beautiful rooms filled with paintings and tapestries. Onetime Hilda took him to a Concentration Camp where the guards enjoyed putting the prisoners on donkeys and watching them fall down. There was an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate his father by some Polish men. His father was arrested by Lt. Stein, an American, for being in charge of the killings in Poland and was hung in 1946 as a result of the Nuremberg Trials. His father handed over his 42 volumes of diaries including all his speeches. Frank felt his siblings were affected by his father's life as Norman became alcoholic, Sigrid immigrated to South Africa and Brigitta committed suicide. He visited his father in prison in September 1946, a month before he was hung. When Norman visited his father in prison, he was told not to talk so much like he did. After the war, the Choborof Castle was plundered by forced laborers and the family took refuge with neighbors. They had to live on the jewels his mother had hidden and the books she published. His mother died in 1959. He was 22 when he married and announced he would write about his father but did not accomplish it until he was in his 50s. Niklas collected many documents about his father and in the 80s, he wrote the book in German but the Poles did not wish to read it and when it was translated into Polish, the Catholic Diocese bought all the books as they did not want their parishioners to read it. Niklas' siblings were against the book as they did not want the public to know the facts about their family. Subsequently, he wrote two more books about his father. Niklas believes the Germans have not admitted their guilt as they do not

have empathy. He thinks Germans are silent on their family history which they should investigate.

### **Part Two – One Hour**

This interview consisted of questions about Niklas' book to learn how his father progressed from being a lawyer to being a participant in mass murder. Niklas does not believe that his father was anti-Semitic but, rather, was motivated to have a career as his diary as a young man had no statements against Jews. Hitler succeeded in bringing Germany out of unemployment and obtaining Austria to get the country's honor back. Niklas wrote the book to break the silence of the Germans and be honest about the Germans' actions. Niklas feels the Germans are still silent at present. He wants to defend democracy and feels mass murder could occur again if there are significant economic problems. His mother gave a copy of his father's diary to the American Lt. Stein who had arrested him. Erica Noble has donated a home movie about the Frank family to the Holocaust Museum. When Niklas saw a photo of dead children and adults in a concentration camp, he thought his father would have no possibility to live. His father killed Jews, Poles and others. Before his father was in charge of civilian administration of Occupied Poland, he was Ministry of Justice and was responsible for the unification of county laws into Reich laws. Niklas believes that elderly Germans should still be prosecuted so that Germans will realize and acknowledge those crimes that were committed. He has no love for his father but longs for his father's love. His mother was not a Nazi and was disturbed by Kristallnacht.