

Hidden in Plain Sight: A Family Memoir and the Untold Story of the Holocaust in Serbia

Julie Brill

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Julie Brill's family memoir *Hidden in Plain Sight* is about her Holocaust-survivor father and her experiences learning about his life.

Brill's father was young when the Nazis attacked Belgrade. He survived the war on a farm outside the city with his Christian grandmother. Brill knew little of his story during her own childhood in the United States: "I matter of factly learned my father's war stories as simply the stories of his childhood." Later, she spent years doing extensive research into her family history. In the process of her quest to learn about her father, she also learned about the history of Serbia's Sephardic Jewish community, whose members became early victims of the Nazi genocide.

Descriptive prose is used to draw distinctions between Brill's American upbringing and the horrors her father experienced: "Throughout my childhood, I had considered which, if any, of the Gentiles I knew would hide me in their attics." Her grandfather was taken to a camp and his fate was never confirmed, with his wife holding out hope after the war that he might return.

As Brill's research raised more questions, she traveled with her father and her daughter to Belgrade. Locations she'd seen only on Google Earth become real to her, while her father's memories flowed as he returned to familiar places. They visited sites from his former home to the city's Jewish cemetery and the local temple, which the Nazis had disgraced by making it a brothel. "Emotion is a glue that cements memory," Brill writes, and her father's recollections answered questions that she'd carried her whole life.

Recounting a search for a father's memories and family history, *Hidden in Plain Sight* is an excellent memoir that bears witness to the loss of a community.

JEFF FLEISCHER (March / April 2025)

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