

Mieczyslaw Najman And His Wife Krystyna In Poznan



This is me with my wife Krystyna. This picture was taken in Poznan, probably in the Botanical Garden. We went to Poznan to look for my brother Michal, after I learned that he survived the war. I lived like that for five years without getting officially married because I didn't need that, I was an executive. But one beautiful day my wife tells me, 'Why the fibbing if you can marry me.' 'You're right, let's go,' I say. That day I was in town by chance, in the registrar's office, I went to the chief registrar himself. 'Listen, I live like that as a common-law marriage, I'd like to make it official.' 'Do you have any ID?' 'I have only this military ID, because I'm from beyond the Bug, but my wife has everything.' 'You can call your wife.' 'She isn't here, she doesn't have her birth certificate.' 'Come tomorrow, please.' And two days later my wife had all the required documents. I took two

colleagues from the office for witnesses, I had all the papers myself, and we got married. I found my brother Michal only after the war. A friend comes and tells me there's a guy named Najman in Poznan. 'I think he may be your brother, I talked to him, he says he's a Najman.' 'And where is he?' I ask. 'In Poznan.' I took my wife, took a car from the office, went officially on a business trip. Paid for the gas myself so that no one could find fault with me, and went. We arrive in Poznan, start asking people, no one knows anything. I ask one lady, and she says, 'Why do you ask me, there's the town hall, go there.' We did. 'Who are you looking for?' 'Michal Najman.' 'There's one, born 1913.' I say, 'It's? it's my brother. And where does he live?' 'Near the Okraglak, (Poznan's characteristic, round-shaped department store), house number so and so.' He was still in the army. We climb up the stairs, and he already had a child, his wife was pregnant. I enter, he was sleeping, and when he saw me, he was completely dumbfounded. 'It's you, my brother!' And we both started crying. 'Please, meet my wife.' She wasn't pretty, and when my wife entered, the blonde, the other one looked like she was about to choke. My brother says, 'You have a very pretty wife.' My wife kissed him and says, 'Let's go a café, we won't be talking here.' She didn't like the place. My brother's wife says she isn't going, and my brother says immediately, 'This is my brother, I'll go everywhere with him if he invites me, wants to talk to me face to face, you can't say anything.' 'And why is his wife going with you?' 'Because she's his wife.' In the end we went to a café, talked, I'm telling him my story. 'Mietek,' he says, 'I know she's ugly, but, you know, I was alone here, she had an apartment? I was looking for you, couldn't find you? You know how it is with a man, he'll fall in love eventually? She's pregnant, I can't leave here, it's my child.' And we sat like that for two hours until we woke up. 'Mietek, go,' he says, 'I'm still in service, carrying a gun, I stormed the citadel.' The Poznan citadel was defended fiercely by the Germans and captured by the advancing Red Army in February 1945. And so it went. He visited me all the time, I was in a directorial position so I invited him. I helped him, I had the top salary. I had everything, so he was always well equipped. He came, we spent time together. Then I fixed him up with a job in Poznan, a good one. He started earning decently and so it went. After all, whom am I supposed to like if not my own brother?