A talk by Elizabeth Rodgers, co-director of the PBS documentary Exodus 1947, narrated by Morley Safer.

How a Bunch of Nobodies Changed the World

The letters and home movies of Bill Bernstein

July 2027 marks the 80-year anniversary of the Exodus voyage.



About the talk

What do you do when people are in trouble and nobody in charge is coming to help?

Across Europe, 250,000 Holocaust survivors were stranded in DP camps. Bill Bernstein and his friends had no experience, no money, and no orders. What they did have was a rusting ferry and the stubborn belief that somebody should do something.

Told through Bill's letters and home movies by the filmmaker who has spent 35 years with his story, this is a talk about what happens when ordinary people decide to show up.

What audiences say

> "...What strikes me most is how she turns scholarship into intimacy, rendering history not as dates and events, but as human flesh, breath, and choice. A rare talk—the kind that doesn't just inform you, but changes how you carry the past."
>
> **Rabbi Johanna Hershenson**, Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel, Boise

> "I'd never heard this chapter of history, and I found it deeply moving. Elizabeth makes the story clear and personal, and Bill Bernstein's letters and home movies bring it to life. I've seen the talk twice. Our audience at St. Michael's loved learning what a difference a small group of people can make."
>
> **The Rev. Canon Dorota Wright-Pruski**, Canon for Parish Life, St. Michael's Episcopal Cathedral, Boise

> "Elizabeth's dynamic presentation offered us new information, insights, and a deeper understanding of an important chapter in history. ... We left not only better informed, but also inspired by the difference individuals can make in the world."
>
> **Suzanne Schweitzer**, Retired Clinical Research Director, UCLA; Avocet senior living community

Four ways to bring it in

- **In person.** The 40-minute talk, illustrated with archival photographs and film, followed by Q&A.
- **On Zoom.** The same talk and Q&A, live online for groups anywhere.
- **Screening and talk.** The PBS documentary Exodus 1947, followed by the talk.
- **School assembly.** The 40-minute talk, sized to fit a single class period.

At a glance

Length
40 minutes, plus Q&A

For
Schools and universities, Holocaust education programs, congregations and churches, libraries and museums, and senior communities

About the speaker

Elizabeth Rodgers is an award-winning filmmaker, novelist and screenwriter. She co-wrote, co-produced and co-directed Exodus 1947, the PBS documentary narrated by Morley Safer. She is finishing a Young Adult novel inspired by the voyage, and has developed screenplays and teleplays for Showtime, Carsey-Werner and Paramount Pictures.

Where Elizabeth has spoken

Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel · St. Michael's Episcopal Cathedral · Avocet

Next: Wassmuth Center for Human Rights, Boise
March 3, 2027

bring the story to your community

Book a talk

Tell us the date, your organization, roughly how many people, and where.

ElizabethRodgers.com/speaking.html