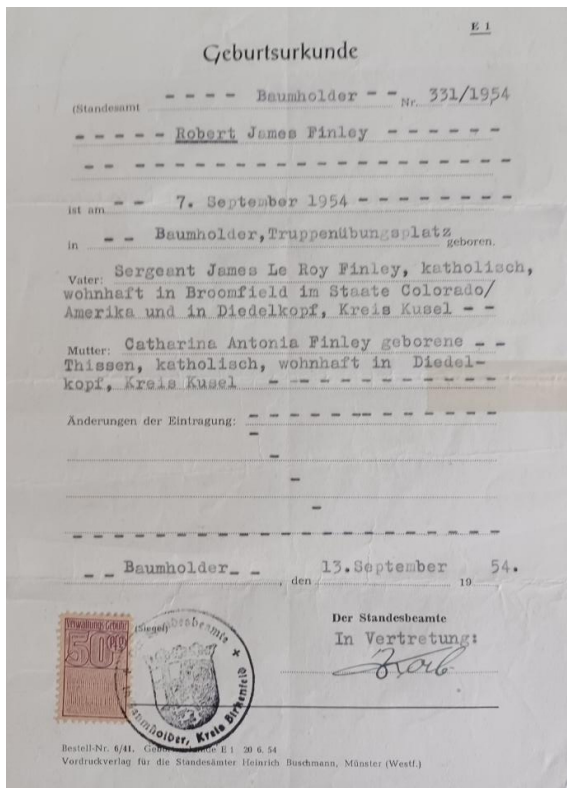


Who tells your story?

I was born in a black forest in Baumholder, Germany. My family and I lived in a four story apartment on a tank military base. We lived with working-class people. Baumholder was very hilly with many trees, and you would see a lot of hills and old buildings. I remember smelling the forest. I had moved every two years because my father was in the military and he kept getting new orders. **I really never had a home town.**



hours. I did that about five or six times. I was an okay child, but I also wasn't a normal kid growing-up because I went to a different school every year. I left Germany a second time because my dad was transferred to America. My father was in the military for 20-something years. I had to keep moving from Germany to America because my father was getting transferred. I felt excited that we were going because we had limited things, like no restaurants like they had in America. Therefore, I was always looking forward to things, and to see a McDonalds. The worst part was that we had to get shots so we wouldn't bring diseases. I had to get one or two shots every day.



I had a big family. We were a hard-working family. I have two siblings, their names are Dorothy and Michael. I had a good relationship with my siblings, but we weren't as close as we could've been, due to being separated a lot. My favorite memory with my family is traveling with them and seeing all of the cool castles. "Braveheart" is real. It is real *scheisse*. All of those head cuttings and *scheisse*.

The first time I left Germany I was just a little boy. I was put in a box on the back of the plane because some parents didn't want to carry their kids for 24

The trip to America was crazy. I remember I was around 15 and we had to go from England to Greenland, to Iceland to New Jersey. I never was able to make friends because I kept moving towns and countries. American schools taught different things than German schools. All of the German schools that I attended were on the army base. When we came to America, it was hard for us to find a home because we had to qualify to buy a house, and then we had to get loans. I never had a problem finding a job in the 70's because at this point, it was easier for companies to hire you.

I really didn't have any challenges, but I was so far advanced in school because Germany was so far ahead. It was easy for me in American school, but that doesn't mean I was smarter, it just means I was ahead of everyone else. That led me to take fewer classes than the other seniors.



I met my wife Starla when I was a paperboy. I would deliver papers to her because I lived just down the street from her. I really got to know her during my senior year of high school. Starla's family was a welcoming middle-class family, just like mostly everyone else in America. Starla was pretty and she had a good personality. We dated for one year, then I was sent to the Navy. A group of us left to report to San Diego. I remember Starla showed up to my graduation with my mom. When I was leaving to go overseas, I remember I got super emotional and cried like a baby.

When I joined the Navy, I wasn't scared because we grew up on an army base, so it helped me when I joined. I enrolled because of the education I received in Germany and I joined the nuclear program in 1972. When I got out of bootcamp, I enrolled in electronics school. We learned about miscellaneous electronic stuff for the navy. I received military orders to go to Florida for sonar school. Following the sonar program, I had orders to go to Connecticut for submarine duty.

About halfway through the program I got in a fist fight with my instructor because he didn't like me. I always put pencil marks on my test. When he saw a pencil mark, my instructor always failed me. He never looked to see if I got it right or wrong. We got into a heated argument and I hit him, having to leave before the captain came in. They said I could leave the Navy with an honorable discharge, or I could continue my four years in the Navy. I chose to stay, and I had gotten orders to go to USS Ranger, an aircraft carrier. When I went on-board, I became one of the ship's crew, which maintains the ship and the crew. Then I managed the ship's store, which held clothes, food, and comics. We then traveled to Vietnam, and when we got there, we saw bombs go off and witnessed people covered in blood. When we were loading the bombs, we used to sign our names on the actual bomb itself. It was very weird seeing people running without any limbs. As we were leaving, our ship caught on fire. None of us died, but we had to shut it down in the Gulf of Tonkin. It was fun to be in Vietnam, but the only thing that really wasn't fun was that we had to stay on a ship 35 or 40 days at a time.



One night I received a call that my parents were in a severe car crash. The doctors told the Navy I should go home and take care of my brother and sister. Ten months later, my parents got better. I had orders to go back to the carrier. I told them I didn't want to go back, and I was ordered to the Federal Center in Denver. I returned to America in May of 1976, and I got out of the military in Norfolk, Virginia.

When I came back, Starla and I dated one more year, and then we got married in 1977. **I don't remember if she was my first love, as I had many girlfriends growing up, but as an adult she was my only love and still is.**



I thought our wedding was messed up because we were poor and paid for everything. Other than that, I thought it was a good experience. In 1979 my wife gave birth to Jill. I remember when my first daughter was born and I cried like a baby. I was so overwhelmed about having kids because taking care of them was crazy, stupid, and fun. I always had a good time with my family, more good

times than bad times. It was fun to teach them and show them things, taking them around the country, seeing their eyes glow, and experiencing things with them. My favorite memories with my family were the vacations and the various moves to different states. My goals entailed me becoming a businessman and traveling around the world. I did that with UPS. My second goal was to go to culinary school and become a chef. **I reached my goals through perseverance and working hard. I also reached my goals by becoming a grandpa, going to culinary school, and becoming a chef.**

One thing that people need to know about immigrants is that they have mostly lived in a suppressed, mistreated, unhappy, unsafe, and not secure country or area. Immigrants want to come to a place where they feel safe and can practice their religious beliefs, work hard, and have families. **You don't immigrate just to immigrate. You leave a country where you were born because you're unsafe and unhappy. That's what immigration is.**

As I look back at my life, I am proud of my grandchildren and my children and enjoy watching them grow. Everything is good. My grandkids saw their grandpa get crazy and travel the world. I hope that not only made an impact on my kids and their families, but also their ability to take care of one another. I wouldn't change anything in my life, because if I change anything that happened I don't know where my life would be right now.



story told by: Kayden