



20 NOV, 2023

Spotlight on . RACHELLE UNREICH



Who Weekly, National

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Spotlight on ...

## RACHELLE UNREICH

THE JOURNALIST HAS PUT HER MOTHER'S SURVIVAL STORY TO PAPER

It was during the COVID lockdowns that journalist Rachelle Unreich had a brilliant idea, an idea that would culminate into *A Brilliant Life*, a tome about her mother Mira Blumenstock's survival. You see, Mira survived Holocaust. "I realised that readers could benefit from my mother's lessons," the author explained, so, she sat down with the family matriarch and recorded hours of interviews. "She was inspiring, and not only overcame one of the world's worst periods in history, but thrived afterwards. As a journalist of 38 years, I also wanted to uncover what I felt was a mystery underlying her survival – what did all the inexplicable occurrences that kept happening around her really mean?" For Unreich, it wasn't so much about preserving the past, but about "incorporating it into the present". Mira's since passed, and *A Brilliant Life* is now a cherished memento for her family, but it's also a story representative of so many who survived Adolf Hitler's concentration camps. "I discovered elements of her story that even she didn't know during her lifetime. I learned, for example, the identity of two concentration camp escapees that she met before she herself was deported there," Unreich said, ahead of the book's release. Incredibly, Mira had even encountered Josef 'The Angel of Death' Mengele at Auschwitz. He earned a reputation – and his infamous moniker – for performing deadly medical experiments on prisoners of war, and selecting which ones were sent to the gas chambers. It was on April 30, 1945 that Mira's captors fled the camp and she was finally free. It was her 18th birthday. Before that day, she'd survived four camps in total, and one death march. In the end it was terminal cancer that took her from the world in her mid-90s. "She taught me that a past trauma does not have to inform your future, or your happiness." (*Out now*)

