INTRODUCTION TO THE TESTIMONY OF

Sidney Bruskin

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Introduction

Sidney Bruskin was interviewed by Joanne Rudof and Frances Cohen on February 17th, 1994 at the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University. The two interviewers sat down with Bruskin, then 89 years old, to discuss his life—before, during, and after the Holocaust. Nine years later (November 13, 2003), a New Haven high school student named Tamar Rubin interviewed Bruskin for the New Haven Oral History Project, and that document also proves useful in understanding Bruskin's life experiences.[1] Both a recording of Tamar Rubin's interview and a transcript are housed in the Yale University Archives. Sidney Bruskin passed away in 2005, two years after the Rubin interview.

Bruskin was the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, a product of New Haven and its schools, a Yale graduate, a member of the Counter Intelligence Corps that arrested French collaborators and Nazi war criminals, a liberator of a concentration camp, and a person whose wartime experiences shaped his faith and identity. The non-observant youth who was raised by secular Jewish parents discovered his spiritual side during the war, and returned to New Haven in 1945 to become active in his temple and in the local Jewish community.

Bruskin was the son of Louis Bruskin (1880-1953), who arrived in the United States in 1907 and Bessie Feldman (1889-1972), who immigrated in 1909.[2] They married in Brooklyn and then moved to Ansonia, a town near New Haven. His father was a barber and established a shop at 409 Main Street in Ansonia; his mother worked as a dressmaker. In 1919, Bruskin's father purchased a barbershop in New Haven on Broad Street (a street that no longer exists—but was

[1] Sidney Bruskin interviewed by Tamar Rubin, New Haven Oral History Project (13 November 2003), NHOHP 003.

[2] Ibid.

near Oak Street), and the family moved from Ansonia to New Haven. Bruskin later asserted with considerable pride, "I'm one of the Oak Street boys."[3]

Bruskin's family is representative of broader immigration patterns. Between 1881 and 1914, over 1.5 million Jews fled persecution in Tsarist Russia; more specifically, the emigration from the Russian Empire was linked to two waves of pogroms: those in 1881-1882 and those from 1903-1906.[4] The latter were certainly a factor in motivating many Russian Jews to flee (historians generally believe that the earlier wave of pogroms was not as great a factor in motiving emigration). But the fact remains, as Yannay Spitzer noted:

> Jewish migration from the Russian Empire to the United States in the years 1881–1914 was one of the most intense mass population movements in history. Over a single generation, more than a quarter of the Jewish-Russian population was resettled overseas…. The Russian Empire was home to some 5.3 million Jews in 1897, approximately half of world Jewry. Almost all of them, 94 percent, were residing in a restricted territory known as the Pale of Settlement, comprising the 25 western provinces of the Russian Empire…. Under the Tsars, the Jewish population experienced a very rapid population growth, according to estimates as much as five-fold during the nineteenth century… The 1881 crisis that followed the assassination of the relatively liberal-minded Tsar Alexander II, and the ascendance to the throne of his reactionary son Tsar Alexander III, is often considered a "turning point" in Jewish History… [leading to] the notorious May Laws of 1882 and a series of anti-Jewish legislations that further restricted the rights of residence, education, occupation, and political representation of Russian Jews.[5]

The Bruskins, like many turn-of-the-century immigrants, assimilated fairly quickly. They began in the more industrial town of Ansonia, which is located on the Naugatuck River in New Haven Country, about twelve miles northwest of New Haven proper. Known as 'Copper City' due to the important heavy machine manufacturing industry, Ansonia had a large working-class population, including many who were first generation immigrants, like the parents of Sidney Bruskin. Ansonia can also be considered the birthplace of the American bicycle: in 1866, French-born inventor Pierre Lallement submitted an application for a patent for the first pedal bicycle.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Silviu Costachie, 'The Immigration of Jews from the Russian Empire,' in *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations* 3/2 (2011), 248-53; Yannay Spitzer, 'Pogroms, Networks and Migrations: The Jewish Migration from the Russian Empire to the United States, 1881-1914,' in https://eh.net/eha/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Spitzer.pdf (accessed 9 March 2021).

[5] Spitzer, 'Pogroms,' 3.

Sidney Bruskin would go on to own a bike shop in New Haven, evidently influenced by local pride in the important invention.[6]

As Bruskin notes, his family moved from Ansonia to New Haven when he was four years old. Bruskin would reside in New Haven until his retirement, when his "wife became ill and handicapped," and they moved to Oronoque Forest, a development in West Haven (but not far from New Haven). As Bruskin told a high school student in 2003, "I've always considered New Haven as my real home, where I was brought up and all my friends—most of my friends—live here…. I'm a New Havener."[7]

Bruskin's family moved within New Haven and he ended up attending Winchester School, then located at 68 Gregory Street. To give a flavor of New Haven's history: the school was named after Oliver F. Winchester, "who founded Winchester Repeating Arms, one of the largest gun manufacturing companies in the world. He was also Lt. Governor of Connecticut in 1866 and founded the Winchester Observatory at Yale."8 The school facility now houses the Wexler-Grant Community School, where 96 percent of the students come from minority populations.9 At the time Bruskin attended the Winchester School, he estimated that there were 600 pupils there, half of them black and half white.

He eventually went on to New Haven High School, known as Hillhouse High School, where "there were very, very few Black at the Hillhouse. Very few."10 He does not explain the reasons for the reduced African-American student body in high school, although he notes that the high school is now "over ninety percent Black." Bruskin also recalled that the school was over-crowded, with some four thousand pupils (about a thousand per class): "there were no high schools in the outlying territories, like Hamden, West Haven, Branford… they came by bus." School authorities had divided the students into morning and afternoon sessions ("We called it the AM and PM school"): Bruskin recalls, "it was crowded, but we got a pretty good education."11

Bruskin attended Yale University between 1932 and 1936. In gaining admission to the prestigious institution, he overcame the *numerus clausus*, which limited the number of Jewish students. Author David Oshinsky notes: "In 1935 Yale accepted 76 applicants from a pool of

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[6] See the Wikipedia page for 'Ansonia': https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ansonia,_Connecticut.

[7] Sidney Bruskin interviewed by Tamar Rubin, New Haven Oral History Project (13 November 2003).

[8] See 'Walk New Haven': https://walknewhaven.org/winchester-school.

[9] See https://www.publicschoolreview.com/wexler-grant-community-school-profile.

[10] Sidney Bruskin interviewed by Tamar Rubin, New Haven Oral History Project (13 November 2003)

[11] Ibid.

501. About 200 of those applicants were Jewish and only five got in." He adds that Dean Milton Winternitz's instructions were remarkably precise: "Never admit more than five Jews, take only two Italian Catholics, and take no blacks at all."[12] According to the *New York Times*, "Not until the early 1960s did Yale University end an informal admissions policy that restricted Jewish enrollment to about 10 percent."[13] Dan Oren, a 1979 Yale graduate, documented "anti-Semitism reaching from fraternity brothers to board trustees."[14]

Oren references one file in the university archives labeled "Jewish Problem," which contains a 1922 memorandum from the head of admissions recommending limits on "the alien and unwashed element."

> The next year, the admissions committee enacted the 'Limitation of Numbers' policy, an informal quota. Jewish enrollment was held to about 10 percent for four decades…. Today, Jewish students account for about 30 percent of the Yale enrollment, far greater than the proportion of Jews in the United States population, which is listed at 2.5 percent in the 1985 American Jewish Year Book…. Not until 1946 would a Jew become a full professor at Yale College. Not until 1947 did the Corbey Court eating club for law students accept Jews, finally extending membership to a small group that included Robert M. Morgenthau, [who went on to become] the Manhattan District Attorney. And not until 1965 did a Jew become a member of the Yale Corporation, when William Horowitz, a banker in New Haven, was elected to the board that sets university policy…. In 1948, Yale ceased automatically segregating housing between Christians and Jews, blacks and whites. Still, the number of Jewish students remained relatively fixed at about 10 percent.[15]

Despite the quotas, Bruskin recalled that there was an expectation that Jewish boys would receive an education. As Bruskin explained, "Our ethnic background and so-forth, it was just where you got to go. You go to high school and you supposedly go to college too, if you can afford it."[16]

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[12] David Oshinsky, *Polio: An American Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_quota.

[13] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_quota..

[14] Ibid.

[15] Dirk Johnson, 'Yale's Limit on Jewish Enrollment Lasted Until Early 1960s, Book Says,' *New York Times* (4 March 1986) at https://www.nytimes.com/1986/03/04/nyregion/yale-s-limit-on-jewish-enrollment-lasted-until-early-1960-s-book-says.html. See also Dan Oren, *Joining the Club: A History of Jews and Yale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); and Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* (New York: Mariner Books, 2006).

[16] Sidney Bruskin interviewed by Tamar Rubin, New Haven Oral History Project (13 November 2003).

Bruskin lived at home during his time at college. He recalled, "I didn't want to go to Yale. We were very poor and I didn't have enough money to stay in the dormitory and I wanted to go to either Princeton or Dartmouth," but his father said to him, "'SIDNEY, you're staying here,' just like that. Well, that settled that."[17] During college, he and his father lived on York Street near George Street, which, he admitted, "wasn't too bad." Nonetheless, he observed, "But I did miss the college life."[18] In other works, he felt socially marginalized. Bruskin added that he was "a little bit unhappy" at Yale, "because I lived at home and, you know, the friends I had were the Jewish boys who lived at home like myself. That's all during the Depression days."[19]

Sidney Bruskin was not religious as a youth, but he grew up in a Jewish household (though his parents divorced when he was a teenager). But he abided by certain Jewish cultural norms. He later recounted, "I remember the first time I had a ham sandwich. I was teased into it because I wasn't supposed to, but I could see some of the guys were—some of the Jewish boys were eating ham sandwiches, so I said, 'All right, here goes.' I took it and I said, 'Oh, boy, I'm probably going to drop dead,' but I survived. I survived."[20]

Bruskin recalled of his Jewish friends from high school, "They went to Hillhouse with me, and as a matter of fact, a lot of them went to Yale and when they got out of Yale, they changed their names. They were too Jewish sounding, so they changed their names to get jobs and they'd find jobs, but I wouldn't do it. Maybe I would have gotten a job earlier. I don't know."[21] He adds, "Seth Bickoff changed his named to Bickford. Dave Shapiro became David Shepard…" Bruskin conveys the antisemitism on the ground in Depression-era America and how he and his friends navigated the hostility and prejudice. "We Jewish boys accepted the fact that we were sort of outcasts. Not exactly outcasts, but we were at the [unclear]. We accepted that and we didn't do anything about it. We didn't protest." He then references Dan Oren's *Joining the Club*, saying, "It's a book you should read. It's very good."[22] "As a matter of fact, in my case, I did face anti-Semitism, but I couldn't do anything about it. I didn't feel I should do anything. I resented it."[23]

Bruskin majored in French at Yale, but he learned other languages too, including German and Italian (he would later also learn Yiddish). Languages had long been part of Anglo-American university education—classical languages predominated until the nineteenth century, with the

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid. On the book *Joining the Club*, see note 16.

[23] Ibid.

shift toward modern languages growing more pronounced in the twentieth century. Still, relatively few students at Yale majored in a language in the 1930s. Bruskin's European-born parents had realized the importance of languages. This was common among European Jews—the belief that persecution was always a possibility and that languages helped provide an escape route. Cultural critic George Steiner, who was born in Paris in 1929 to Viennese emigres, recalled how his father moved the family from Austria to France to escape the growing threat of antisemitism. He believed that Jews were "endangered guests wherever they went" and ensured that his children learned languages: Steiner grew up with three mother tongues: German, English, and French. Steiner's mother was multilingual and would often "begin a sentence in one language and end it in another."[24] Sidney Bruskin, although not matching George Steiner in ability, developed language skills that would be instrumental in his wartime service.

The Great Depression often yielded unexpected life choices: while Bruskin aspired to be a teacher, he ended up a bicycle-shop proprietor. It remains an unanswered question why he did not know how to cycle: he was not too poor to obtain a used one. While he was a good student, he was not overly cerebral (he was on the wrestling team). Perhaps New Haven was too urban? At that time, the city was more compact and it was possible to travel most places by foot. Regardless, Bruskin ended up with a bicycle business. He recalls that because there were no teaching jobs available in the USA when he graduated from Yale, he looked to go abroad and teach. On the train back from New York, where he had visited teacher agencies, he met a man in the bike business who suggested he start his own rental shop. Sidney managed to obtain $110 from an insurance policy his father had taken out when he was a year old, and that allowed him to buy "dozens of used bicycles" and start his business.[25] He opened his shop on 4 April 1937 (on a bitterly cold day when no one wanted to rent a bike), but he persevered and expanded operations to include repairs. The Bicycle Shopremained a fixture for a long time in downtown New Haven. It was located in the Oak Street District, where Italian- and Jewish-Americans predominated.[26] Bruskin's shop was located at 1129 Oak Street, which is near the corner of York Avenue. The building in which the shop was located was torn down in 1961 and replaced by Paul Rudolph's famous and controversial Yale School of Architecture building. Architectural historian Elizabeth Mills Brown comments:

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[24] See the Wikipedia entry for George Steiner: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Steiner, which cites Maya Jaggi, 'George and his dragons,' *The Guardian* (March 17, 2001). Retrieved March 27, 2008.

[25] Sidney Bruskin interviewed by Tamar Rubin, New Haven Oral History Project (13 November 2003).

[26] See 'Death of a Neighborhood,' *Mother Jones*: https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2000/09/death-neighborhood/ give date of access. See also the *Yale Daily News*, 5 January 1973: https://ydnhistorical.library.yale.edu/?a=d&d=YDN19730105-01.2.24&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN-------.

> This building has probably caused more furor than any other American architectural work of the mid-20th century…. A storm center from the start—praised as the prophet of a new architecture, damned as willful and egocentric, dogged by misadventure; victim of arson, student vandalism, remodeling, and endless complaints—the A &A Building has had a bitter and embattled career. But despite the storm, what no one disputes is its magnificent presence.[27]

Bruskin's small bike shop therefore gave way to an important building in the history of modern architecture. The site on Chapel Street between Park and York also housed a Jewish Community Center, of which Bruskin noted, "I started that."

As Bruskin relates in his testimony, it was his experiences hunting Nazi war criminals and liberating the concentration camp at Ebensee, Austria, that changed him so dramatically and helped him develop a sense of a Jewish identity. His experiences as a liberator proved especially powerful and transformative.

The liberation of the Ebensee concentration camp occurred on 6 May 1945. Ebensee was a satellite camp of Mauthausen, established in 1943 largely to make armaments (for tanks and trucks, but also for components of a planned intercontinental rocket).[28] The camp held a total of about 27,000 inmates, with estimates that between 8,500 and 11,000 prisoners died in the camp, most from hunger, forced labor, and malnutrition. In May 1945, the camp had around 16,000 inmates, of which by that point about 300 died every day.[29] The location of the camp in the Austrian Alps made for difficult conditions, with some prisoners perishing due to exposure. The camp contained tunnels where prisoners worked, and conditions there proved especially lethal.

On 4 May, the camp commandant reportedly told the prisoners that they had been sold to the Americans and that they should wait for them in the tunnels. The prisoners refused to obey the command and remained in their barracks. Hours later, some of the tunnels were destroyed by mines, which may have been intended to kill the prisoners.[30] This story may be part of the mythology of the camp, but it likely contains significant elements of truth. The SS fled Ebensee

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[27] Elizabeth Mills Brown, *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 69.

[28] See the History of KZ Ebensee: https://web.archive.org/web/20110706093346/http://www.memorial-ebensee.at/english/history.html.

[29] Florian Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement: Das Konzentrationslager Ebensee und die Raketenrüstung* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1991), 424-25.

[30] See the testimony of Ebensee survivor Max Moneta (26 February 2013): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVXjwcbqIjI&t=4925s.

on 5 May, and subsequently, prisoners attacked those who had collaborated with the SS, killing 52 of them in the uprising. According to inmate Bevor Barta, the prisoners formed brigades of armed troops who then hunted the SS in the neighboring woods. When they found a guard, they brought him back to the camp where he was immediately shot.[31] Retribution was common after liberation, with even American troops killing (or 'knee-capping') SS guards at Dachau.[32]

When the Americans from the 80th Infantry Division arrived on 6 May, they were not sure what they had discovered. One prisoner later commented that the Americans seemed a bit fearful of the prisoners. Certain U.S. officers arriving at the camp on tanks invited inmates to climb up and tell them more about the site (although other inmates were pushed off the tanks—the Americans fearing being over-run). The Americans then radioed back to their headquarters what they had discovered. One prisoner who spoke English, Max Garcia, directed the American troops to the stacks of bodies near the crematorium. After evaluating the situation, the Americans reported that 300 prisoners were dying of starvation every day. They requisitioned local food and made soup for the prisoners, but some died from 'refeeding syndrome' (not being able to handle solid food after a long period of privation). After liberation, many prisoners died, and 1,000 stayed in hospitals for an extended period of time.[33] The survivors set up a cemetery just outside the camp, and although it was moved in 1952, it contains the graves of around 4,000 victims.[34]

Robert Matteson offered the following account of what he and Sidney Bruskin experienced:

> Proceeding the same day up the long Traunsee shore into the Redoubt area with a tank battalion, Sid [Bruskin] and I were afforded the opportunity to examine a concrete manifestation of Kaltenbrunner's work, the concentration camp at Ebensee. Part of the Mauthausen extermination system built up by Kaltenbrunner when he had been the 'Little Himmler' of Austria, it seemed more horrible even than Dachau or Ohrdruf. Bodies that one would never have believed could exist alive were walking around, covered with sores and lice. The filth was indescribable. Adjacent to the crematorium were rooms piled high with shrunken nude bodies, lye thrown over them to combat the stench and vermin. The excess bodies that couldn't be handled at the crematorium were hauled by the wagonload to another part of the enclosure, where they were dumped into open pits

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[31] Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, 423.

[32] Harald Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 52.

[33] See Florian Freund, *Concentration Camp Ebensee: Subcamp of Mauthausen* (Vienna: Austrian Resistance Archives, Dokumentationsarchiv des Oesterreichischen Widerstandes, 1998 [1990]), 62.

[34] See the 'Gedenkstättenportal zu Orten der Erinnerung in Europa': https://www.memorialmuseums.org/eng/staettens/view/86/Museum-for-Contemporary-History-and-Ebensee-Concentration-Camp-Memorial# (accessed 21 July 2021).

> filled with a chemical solution. Worse still was the hospital, where the dying and sick had been herded for experimentation before being carted off to the crematorium. There were no beds in it; the inmates lay on shelves covered with dirty rags, groups of two or three huddled together like mice to keep warm. As we entered they put out their hands and begged for food. When we told them we had none, but that the American medics and military government personnel would be along immediately, they broke down and sobbed, "We have waited for you four, five, six years. Now you come empty-handed."[35]

The encounters at liberation were rather extraordinary. One American recalled that the inmates looked like aliens—as though they came from another planet. The inmates in turn stared at the Americans. One response was for the different nationalities to sing songs in their native language: gathered in the Appellplatz, the Poles sang a Polish hymn, the Greeks sang a national song, and the French sang *La Marseillaise*.[36] Soon after the arrival of the Americans, the prisoners offered the officers food and directed them to the canteen, where they offered their thin gruel. At first, the Americans hesitated, but when told that not eating was a serious insult, they relented and tasted a couple of spoonfuls each of the wretched soup.[37] The liberators and prisoners then shook hands and moved on to address the calamitous situation at hand. There is a scholarly literature on Ebensee.[38] Historian Florian Freund provides a careful study, adding details such as that the liberators of the Ebensee camp belonged to the 3rd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron of the 80th Infantry Division under the command of Lt. Col. Wallach and the A-Troops under the command of Captain Howk.[39] There is an even larger corpus on the liberation of concentration and death camps.[40]

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[35] Robert Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner' (CIA Library's Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2007), 4: https://www.cia.gov/static/eb2a597a1af439815b52e9b7ab190daa/Last-Days-of-Kaltenbrunner.pdf.

[36] See the history of KZ Ebensee: https://web.archive.org/web/20110706093346/http://www.memorial-ebensee.at/english/history.html (accessed 21 July 2021)..

[37] Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, 428.

[38] Florian Freund, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee: KZ-System Mauthausen–Raketenfüstung–Lagergeschehen* (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2016) and *Arbeitslager Zement: Das Konzentrationslager Ebensee und die Raketenrüstung* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1991 [second edition]); Willi Mernyi and Floritan Wenninger, eds., *Die Befreiung des KZ Mauthausen. Berichte und Dokumente* (Vienna: ÖGB, 2006); and see also the story of Dario Gabbai in Stephen Spielberg and David Cesarani, *The Last Days* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 1999).

[39] Freund, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee*, 62.

[40] Robert Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). See also Stephen Goodell and Sybil Milton, *1945: The Year of Liberation* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1995); Ben Shephard, *After Daybreak: The Liberation of Belsen, 1945* (London, Jonathan Cape, 2005); John McManus, *Hell Before Their Very Eyes: American Soldiers Liberate Concentration Camps in Germany, April 1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015); Stiftung Gedenkstaetten Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora, eds., *60. Jahrestag der Befreiung der Konzentrationslager Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora* (Weimar: Stiftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald und

Sidney Bruskin stated in his interview that he may have been at Ebensee on May 6th – that is, the day of the official liberation. He acknowledges that he may have arrived on a subsequent day, but from his testimony, it appears highly likely that he was at Ebensee on the 6th or 7th of May. Bruskin evidently saw the prisoners so soon after liberation that they had had little opportunity to recover from their harsh treatment. As the statistics above reveal, many prisoners were barely alive and could not be saved by the liberators. The sight of the crematorium also seems to have shaken the young Bruskin. Even though 'only' one-third of the Ebensee inmates were Jewish, the experience had a profound effect on him spiritually and in terms of his own identity.[41]

Mittelbau-Dora, 2005). See also the authoritative study by Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KZ: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015).

[41] See the History of KZ Ebensee at https://web.archive.org/web/20110706093346/http://www.memorial-ebensee.at/english/history.html (accessed 21 July 2021); http://memorial-ebensee.at/index.php/de/geschichte/20-regional-schwerpunkte/20-geschichte-kzgedenkstaette.

Transcript

Part 1

[00:00:39] My name is Sidney Bruskin. I was born at May 17th, 1914 in Ansonia, Connecticut. My parents were immigrants. They came from Russia. And when I was four years old, we moved to New Haven. I was educated here. I went to Hill House High School, class of 1932. And then I went to Yale, the class of 1936. I majored in French, and I also always liked languages, so I took a couple of years of German and two years of Italian.

[00:01:14] And I, personally, I just briefly want to say that during the Depression time, I was qualified to be a teacher. I had a certificate, but I couldn't get a job. And through some strange circumstance, I wound up in the bicycle business, even though I did not know how to ride a bicycle.

[00:01:33] Well, I was married and on August 8th, 1941. And our daughter, Phyllis, was born on May 30th, 1943. Most of my friends were not married. They were drafted. I was not drafted right away. I guess when they got to the bottom of the barrel or something, then they figured they needed guys like me, who were, you know, we were married and had a child.

[00:02:09] So, there was a problem, though, because I didn't want to give up my bicycle business. And we were having problems hiring mechanics to work for us. Because as fast as we hired them, they'd be drafted too. Finally, we located one gentleman who weighed 250 pounds. He was overweight. So he stayed with us for a while. But eventually, they took him also. But anyhow, my wife kept the business going while I was in the service.[1]

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[1] Sidney had married Shirley Levine (1917-1990) and they had a daughter, Phyllis, in 1943. U.S. draft policies in World War II were such that, with a wife and child, Sidney was not immediately drafted. The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, also known as the Burke–Wadsworth Act, enacted September 16, 1940, "was the first peacetime conscription in United States history. This Selective Service Act required that men who had reached their 21st birthday but had not yet reached their 36th birthday register with local draft boards. Later, when the U.S. entered World War II, all men from their 18th birthday until the day before their 45th birthday were made subject to military service, and all men from their 18th birthday until the day before their 65th birthday were required to register.… By the early summer of 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked the U.S. Congress to extend the term of duty for the draftees beyond twelve months to a total of thirty months, plus any additional time that he could deem necessary for national security.… After the United States entered World War II, amendments to the Selective Training and Service Act on December 20, 1941, made all men between the ages of 20 and 44 liable for military service, and required all men between the ages of 18 and 64 to register.… From October 1940 until March 1947, when the wartime Selective Training and Service Act expired after extensions by Congress, over 10,000,000 men were inducted." More broadly, the U.S. federal government has turned to the draft six times in history (American Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts). Conscription came to an end only in 1973 when the United States Armed Forces became all-voluntary. See "Selective Training and the Selective Service Act of 1940, at

[00:02:36] I got my letter from the president in September of 1943. And then in October, I was inducted at the armory on Orange Street here in New Haven. And I went along with a lot of other young men to Fort Devens in Massachusetts. I remember it was--I was not too reluctant to go. I was full of adventure then. I knew I'd have to go.[2]

[00:03:09] And so for, of course, I remember I was very sad, because my daughter was just a few months old. And I'll never forget, it was the-- only time I ever saw my father cry-- and I was shocked-- was at the railroad station when he saw me off, along with Mayor Murphy there. And I just couldn't fathom it, as if to say maybe he won't come back.

[00:03:30] Well, anyhow, Devens-- from Devens, one day, we-- just had to sit around and wait, do nothing, close order drill and so forth. And then they said, OK, men, we're moving out tomorrow morning, and, um, leave your heavy clothing on top of your duffel bag, overcoats and so forth, and heavy underwear and all that. So we figured we were probably going to a place like Alaska or something. Well, the Army of course, was vice versa. They sent us to Mississippi, down south.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selective_Training_and_Service_Act_of_1940 (accessed 21 March 2022). From October 1940 until March 1947"49 million men had been registered, 36 million classified, and 10 million inducted." See "Conscription in the United States" at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscription_in_the_United_States (accessed 21 March 2022).

[2] A brief word on the facilities mentioned by Bruskin: "Armory Court," one observer noted, "is a building of power. Located at the north end of Orange Street, right before East Rock Park, this 'medieval castle' stands out imposingly from the residential surroundings. Its hexagonal towers and battlements have an instantly recognizable silhouette, an homage to Romanesque architecture that creates a sense of security for the condominium complex that lies behind the large iron gate. While the owners of Armory Court have changed through the last century, the building has retained its present form for more than a hundred years. Built in 1906, it was used as a barracks and stable for the Troop A Cavalry, a part of the Connecticut National Guard. It remained in use by the military until 1970, when it was acquired by the former South Central Community College, which used the building's powerful image to house their administration office building. After renovations in 1987, Armory Court assumed its present function - a condominium complex divided into small, single-family rowhouse apartments." See (https://nhba.yale.edu/building?id=5e596a2ab5abb055a040dfc0 (accessed 21 March 2022) more detailed account of the Armory, with its rich material history, adds: "When the armory closed around 2009, and the City of New Haven gained possession, veterans from the 102nd Regiment removed a portrait of Sargent Stubby, the 102nd regiment's famous war dog, as well as the furnishings and restaged the room for exhibit in the West Haven Veteran's Museum and Learning Center circa 2010. 7 WPA murals feature the Foot Guards' most famous lore: Benedict Arnold's famous march to the New Haven Green to demand the keys to the powder house on the eve of the Revolution. Around 2010, original light fixtures and wood paneling were removed to Yale University, the West Haven Veterans Museum, and the new Foot Guard headquarters at the armory in Branford, Connecticut…. From the end of its construction in 1930 through 2009, the armory has served as a center for military preparations and disaster relief, and as a clubhouse for those serving. The building is also significant at the state level in the category of Social History as a host for large community, state, and regional celebrations and events over several decades. This includes New Haven's African American activist community, who in the 1970s, continued to work for social and economic justice in the later years of the Civil Rights Movement." See https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Historic-Preservation/06_About_SHPO/State-Review-Board/Dec-4-2020/New-Haven-Armory-NR.pdf.

[00:04:04] So, we went to, Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, Mississippi. And I was put in the 65th infantry division, uh, 261st regiment, the headquarters company. And there, we had the usual, the basic training and so forth, which I survived. It was pretty rugged, but I managed.[3]

[00:04:29] And then all of a sudden, one day, you know-- I'd only been here just a few months, and they said that they-- they're desperate, they need troops overseas. So they were ta—taking all the privates and PFCs, private first class. And I was a PFC at that point. And they were taking us, so they shipped us up to Fort Meade.

[00:04:58] And there-- as soon as we got there, be-- before we had a chance to do anything, they told us to report to the artillery range to fire a hand grenade. It seems that it-- with all the training that we had in Mississippi, we had not used or thrown a hand grenade. So we had to make sure to do it. Because they had some disastrous results with some of the soldiers who had never thrown before.

[00:05:22] So I remember throwing the grenade. It was a little scary, but I made it. And then we sailed to England. Uh, I don't remember the name of the ship. It was a tremendous ship. It took us only six days, whereas--

[00:05:39] JOANNE RUDOF: When was that?

[00:05:39] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: That was in March of 1944. And, then I remember the boat landed at Liverpool. And then we went to a little town, a quaint English town called Market Drayton. And we were there for several weeks. I remember sleeping in a Quonset hut, which was very uncomfortable. It was cold then, and there was just a little wood fire in the hut, maybe 50 GI's sleeping there.

[00:06:22] I remember one little incident where I didn't know how long I was going to stay there. One of the things you're doing is pulling guard duty. And one morning, I was pulling guard duty, and a young English boy came along-- about nine or 10 years-- riding a bicycle, a Raleigh bicycle. I said, gee. I said, I'd like to buy that bicycle. He said, OK.

[00:06:42] I said it. So, I made an appointment with him. The next morning, I was going to give him I don't know how many pounds-- a few pounds-- to get the bicycle. Well, eh, eh, my

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[3] Camp Shelby in Mississippi. The camp is the largest state-owned training site in the nation (546 square kilometers), and now houses the Joint Forces Training Center. Established in 1917, the camp was named in honor of Isaac Shelby, an Indian fighter, Revolutionary War hero, and 1st Governor of Kentucky. During World War II, Women Army Corp (WAC) units also trained there. Notably, Camp Shelby also housed a German POW camp, with most of the prisoners coming from the Afrika Korps.

plans were changed, because we-- they said we're going to France instead. So that took care of that.[4]

[00:06:55] So anyhow, we crossed the Channel, landed at Omaha Beach. I figured it was about D-day plus 30. Omaha Beach was clean then. We'd heard the stories of all the corpses of the American soldiers on the beach and all that, but it was perfectly clean, I remember. And it was peaceful there too.[5]

[00:07:17] And then we-- they trucked us a few miles away to what we-- I was not assigned to any outfit at that point. I was a replacement -- we called it a repo depot, a replacement depot. And, I remember staying in a little pup tent with another guy, Holmes, his name was. He's from Philadelphia. And we stayed there. And then one day, I was told to report, um-- no, I know-- that somebody would pick me up and I was going to be assigned to the 80th infantry division Counterintelligence Corps, CIC.[6]

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[4] As the Allies prepared an invasion of the Continent, hundreds of thousands of American soldiers were stationed in Great Britain. This sometimes resulted in friction, with the phrase 'over-paid, over-sexed, and over-here' becoming commonplace. In Bruskin's case, the new father evidently was not interested in British women, but in making some money. His account relates how he sought to transact business, indeed, to ply his trade, while stationed abroad. While Bruskin's wife had taken over his bike business back in New Haven, he still hoped to contribute to the family income while in the service. That he found time to entertain purchases indicates the relatively relaxed atmosphere prior to D-Day and the actual fighting against the Germans. See Juliet Gardiner, *"Overpaid, Over-Sexed, and Over There": The American GI in World War II Britain* (New York: Canopy Books, 1992); and also, Norman Longmate, *The GIs: The Americans in Britain, 1942-1945* (London: Hutchinson, 1975).

[5] Omaha Beach proved the most contested and difficult of the five landing beaches for D-Day on 6 June 1944, with between 4,000 and 9,000 Allied casualties. The beach is about six miles wide and as the Allies landed some 34,000 troops that day (most delivered away from the planned locations), they came under heavy fire from the Germans and their allies. They eventually prevailed in the days that followed. The Allies removed the obstacles to amphibious landings, including taking out 250 massive steel "Belgian Gate" barricades and 11,000 beams used as anti-tank and anti-landing craft defenses. By the time Bruskin arrived at D-plus-30, Omaha Beach had become a transit center that facilitated the liberation of Normandy and then all of France. Infrastructure and logistics would prove crucial to the Allied victory. Among the many works concerning D-Day, see Max Hastings, *Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985). See more generally, Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005 [1994]).

[6] For the history of the 80th Division, see the website regarding the 80th Infantry at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/80th_Division_(United_States). On 5 August 1944, the 80th Infantry landed at Utah Beach and then fought its way across France until they ran out of gas at the river Seille. They later fought at the Battle of the Bulge, where they helped rescue the 101st Airborne Division under siege in Bastogne. The 80th Division crossed the Rhine on 27–28 March, near Mainz and subsequently fought in Kassel, Erfurt, Weimar, Jena, and Nuremberg, among other locations. The U.S. Army's 80th infantry division had a storied history during WWII as part of General George Patton's Third Army and the division featured a notable branch of the Counterintelligence Corps, or CIC. The CIC had evolved from the Military Intelligence Service's Counter Intelligence Branch. Utilizing information provided by the Office of Strategic Services, or OSS, which was another branch of the War Department and a precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency. The CIC was tasked with "locating criminals, Nazi records, and looted property." Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States, *Plunder and Restitution* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), SR-218. Journalist Guy Walters notes of

[00:07:59] And, uh, that was in France. And I remember the first place, we went to Dieulouard in France, which is near Nancy. And, there, I had no briefing on what I was supposed to do, but I knew I was picked because of my knowledge of languages. And then I was assigned to the CIC unit comprised of maybe 25 men. They were divided into three or four different groups. And I was with a group of about four or five men. Tom Eddington was the sergeant in charge of our group.

[00:08:40] Incidentally, in the CIC, we never wore our-- our grade. Whether you're a colonel or a private or a sergeant, we were all known as agents. We had US here, and CIC, but that's all. Because this way, when we interrogated somebody, we didn't-- if we interrogated a high muckity-muck Nazi, we didn't want him to feel that I was a lowly private or a private first class, so we were all agents.[7]

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the CIC, "Originally established in August 1917 as the Corps of Intelligence Police, the fifty-strong unit ran counter-espionage operations in northern France toward the end of the First World War. Between the wars it underwent various mutations, and after the attack on Pearl Harbor it was renamed the CIC and authorized to recruit 1,026 non-commissioned officers. This was rapidly swelled to 4,431, with a provision for 543 officers. The men selected for the CIC were often expected to have some form of legal experience, although as the war went on this requirement was waived, and recruits were merely expected to have an adequate education, be of 'good character,' and loyal to the flag…. The CIC was not a haven for shirkers, however. Six of its units came ashore in Normandy on D-Day and counter-espionage work is not without its dangers." Guy Walters, *Hunting Evil: The Nazi War Criminals Who Escaped and the Quest to Bring Them to Justice* (New York: Broadway Books, 2009), 63. Walters adds, "After the invasion [of Normandy] the principal role of the CIC detachments was to screen displaced persons, and to determine whether they were enemy agents or war criminals masquerading as civilians. By the time the Allies had entered Germany, the CIC's role was to arrest Nazis and other Germans who represented a threat to the Allied forces. In addition to 'normal' counter-espionage work, the CIC had to secure Nazi party buildings in order to safeguard the documents they contained…. The British may have been envious of the resources the American Nazi-hunting units had at their disposal, but they were a little sniffy about their methods. 'They were very gung-ho,' recalled John Hodge, a captain in the British War Crimes Team; 'they all had pistols and went 'come on, let's go get him!'" Walters, *Hunting Evil*, 63. Despite the enthusiasm of CIC personnel, they suffered from a shortage of translators. As one history of the organization notes, "The greatest single CIC procurement problem during the war was the difficulty in obtaining linguists who were qualified for CIC duty... As reports poured in to the Office of the Chief from tactical units throughout the world, all stressed the need for agents who could conduct interrogations in the native languages of the countries in which they were serving." George Chalou, *Covert Warfare: The Counter Intelligence Corps in Action* (New York: Garland, 1989), chapter 7 (no page numbers provided). Bruskin, the former French major at Yale, therefore found a position in the CIC and became a Nazi hunter.

[7] The CIC developed strategies not just for tracking but also interrogating Nazis and their allies. For all the swashbuckling stories of capturing fugitive Nazis, the CIC was a bureaucratic agency, with protocols and methods. It was policy to have the high-ranking subjects interrogated by the more senior personnel. Bruskin's interaction with the most notorious Nazis and their spouses came mostly at the time of arrest, before the subjects were handed over and duly "processed," or when he pulled guard duty.

[00:09:09] Well, there wasn't much to do for us in France. Counter-intelligence was supposed to be protect the security of our troops. At first, that was it. In other words, we were supposed to find out if there are any uh, Nazi collaborators amongst the French people. We had a very-- a couple of very good informants for us from the FFI, the free French. We had one gentleman who was underground during most of the war. And he pointed out some of the Nazi collaborators, so we arrested them.

[00:09:47] Another thing we would do, it seems that some of the French boys were ardent Nazis, and they served in the German army, the Wehrmacht. And so some of them happened to be in-- oh, excuse me -- I'm jumping the gun. Tom Eddingtion's unit was in Clémery, France. Anyhow, so we rounded up a few of these French boys who had been in the German army, and we arrested them.[8]

[00:10:18] And, uh, one day, I remember, it was a little hairy. I remember I was in the Jeep with another man, and we arrested this-- this young boy. And he was about 6' 2" and built like a strong man, a real strong man. And we searched him, and we thought we had everything. Then I happened to look down at his boots, and he had a long knife there. Well, of course, that was taken away from him immediately.[9]

[00:10:41] Well, anyhow, in France, there wasn't too much to do. But then-- then shortly after, we went in-- the army went into Germany, crossing the Rhine. Then we got really busy. Then our job was to arrest certain Nazis. Primarily, in each town, the first person we would arrest would be the Ortsgruppenleiter. That's the head of the Nazi party in that particular community. And we had advance information who these people were. This had all been prepared.

[00:11:20] Of course, most of the men in my outfit had had training in intelligence. G2, they called it here. I had none, I just had the language. I had no background, but I was learning pretty

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[8] The search for French Nazis and youths who had fought in the Wehrmacht could turn brutal. Scholars talk of 'savage' justice as the war ended, which at times involved immediate execution of those believed guilty, as well as more bureaucratic justice for those who collaborated (*épuration sauvage* and *épuration legale*). This was a French-led effort, but, as Bruskin noted, the Allies also pursued certain Vichy officials. See Herbert Lottman, *The People's Anger: Justice and Revenge in Post-Liberation France* (London: Hutchinson, 1986); Marc Bergère, *L'épuration en France* (Paris: Que sais-je? 2018); Fracois Broche, *Histoire de la Collaboration: 1940-1945* (Paris: Tallandier, 2017); and Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2012). As Bruskin's testimony corroborates, the CIC was more aggressive in Germany.

[9] Bruskin's tenure in the CIC was not without danger. Radicalized fascists often exhibited extreme behavior, whether suicide or reckless attack on the enemy. German youth, who had been indoctrinated at an early age, subsequently posed a notable threat. While most German troops who surrendered hoped it would be to the Americans (among the four major Allies), and gave up their arms without incident, there were exceptions. Still, Bruskin's posting to the CIC was among the safer appointments in the European military theater and there is no record of him ever discharging his pistol.

fast. And, we would arrest them, and then there were other people who were influential in the Nazi party and so forth. And I remember one-- one man we arrested, he happened to be the Ortsgruppenleiter in his town in Germany, and he happened to own a restaurant and liquor store.[10]

[00:12:00] Well, the man I was with, my buddy-- we were-- always worked in buddy-- with buddy system-- John Vance. He loved to drink a little bit. So he says-- Syd, he says, let's take a couple of bottles before the GI's get hold of this. So we--we—I didn't care. So we took a few bottles, and then, we learned a few days later, the GI's just ransacked the whole place, you know? Anyhow, one of-- one of the bottles that we took was [?] wine, a sparkling burgundy.

[00:12:36] And John was drinking like a fish what we had. Then finally, it got to the last bottle. I said, John, I don't want you to touch that bottle. I says, when the war is over, you and I are gonna empty it. That's when we're going to celebrate. Of course, that--that's exactly what we did it. It was a struggle, but we did it.

[00:12:53] Anyhow-- and along the way there, little certain things that happened. I could remember, one, for instance, in Ludwigshafen I was with John Vance-- incidentally, this John Vance-- brother of Cyrus Vance-- you know, he was in the Carter regime. And I have his photograph here, along with me. Yeah, that's-- that's John here, and that's myself.[11]

[00:13:28] JOANNE RUDOF: And hold up. And where was that photograph taken?

[00:13:34] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: This is in Kempten, Germany, in Bavaria, in Bavaria. This was after the war, by the way.

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[10] The CIC officers arrived in a new location with an awareness of the key local Nazi officials. As noted earlier, the OSS, which utilized German émigrés in conducting research, had helped prepare the documentation. This included information on figures on the national level, down through the 35 Gauleiter, to the local Nazi authority: the Ortsgruppenleiter. The latter was more likely to be present than a Gauleiter (there were many more of them—the Gauleiter was a big fish), trying to maintain order in a locale.

[11] John T. Vance Jr. was a 1st Lieutenant, A. C., Station Weather Office, and one of his reports about weather conditions in the spring of 1945 is included in an important history of the CIC. His brother, Cyrus Vance (1917-2002), served as U.S. Secretary of State under President Jimmy Carter; during WWII, Cyrus served in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific, and then went on to a career on Wall Street and then in public service. Americans in Europe enjoyed the availability of alcohol as compared to the USA (even post-Prohibition). The politics of wine has been studied in several books: how the Germans attempted to seize the finest bottles, the French efforts to thwart them, and the Allies' custom of "liberating" supplies. See, for example, Donald Kladstrup and Petie Kladstrup, *Wine and War: The French, the Nazis, and the Battle for France's Greatest Treasure* (New York: Broadway Books, 2001); and Christophe Lucand, *Hitler's Vineyards: How the French Winemakers Collaborated with the Nazis* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2019). This story is also notable in terms of the use of objects as a kind of talisman by troops (superstition arises in response to the danger and trauma of war). Ceremonial events (drinking a bottle carried across Europe), also proved common.

[00:13:39] JOANNE RUDOF: Mm-hm.

[00:13:39] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: But anyhow, we were walking down the street in Ludwigshafen, and the town had just been taken that morning by our division. And we were just walking along the sidewalk. And I happened to look down at one place, and this-- this-- engraved in the cement on the sidewalk was a huge Jewish star-- Magen David. I says now, what the heck is this? And I stared at it, looking. Then I felt somebody staring at me. I looked up.

[00:14:09] There was this elderly woman with tears in her eyes. Well, anyhow, the way it developed, she was married to a Catholic. She was Jewish, but she was under house arrest for the duration of the war. She couldn't leave the house whatsoever. Well, she invited me into her house. And as we came in, this elderly woman, she says-- she beckoned to me to go into her bedroom. I went into the bedroom, and she looked around to make sure nobody was looking, you know.

[00:14:45] And then she opened a drawer of a dresser. And there were things like aprons and blouses. They all had the Jewish star on them there. And then she looked around very carefully. She was afraid. And she pulled out a siddur, a Hebrew prayer book. And she told me she had managed to hide it all during the war and so forth. And then finally, I told her I had to leave, so we went back into the kitchen. And she had baked mandelbrot. And she gave me the mandelbrot, and I left. I was very, very moved by that incident.[12]

[00:15:20] FRANCES COHEN: Who had her under house arrest?

[00:15:22] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Eh, the--the government. Pardon?

[00:15:25] FRANCES COHEN: The government--

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[12] Bruskin here speaks to the survival of German Jews, either due to being in a 'mixed-marriage' or as 'U-boats.' Even though the Nazis had made such marriages illegal as part of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, the law did not annul existing marriages. In 1933, there were about 35,000 mixed marriages in Germany and by 1939 there were about 20,000 (with the number dropping to 12,000 by the end of 1944). The decline was partly due to demographics, partly to Nazi authorities putting pressure on Christians to divorce Jewish spouses, and partly due to the genocide that occurred later in the war. For most of the Third Reich, the Jewish partners in a mixed marriage were considered 'privileged,' and, as journalist Yoav Sapir noted, "For the Jewish partner, being privileged meant a lot. Unlike other Jews, the privileged ones were not forced to wear the Jewish star as of 1941. And they were not included in the deportations until the end of the war." See Yoav Sapir, 'Mixed Marriages in Nazi Germany,' The New York Jewish Week (23 February 2017), https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/mixed-marriages-in-nazi-germany/ (accessed 17 June 2021). About 10,000 Jews in mixed marriages survived the war. Bruskin also relates the woman's efforts to sustain her identity with the clandestine prayer book and the Jewish cuisine. Note also the precarious nature of the timing of this "incident": the war was not yet over and the woman continued to fear the German authorities. For more on these issues, see Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Michaela Raggam-Blesch, ''Privileged' under Nazi-Rule: The Fate of Three Intermarried Families in Vienna,' in *Journal of Genocide Research* 21 (July 2019), 378-97; and the diaries of Victor Klemperer, who himself was part of a 'mixed marriage' (his wife Eva was not Jewish).

[00:15:26] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: The government--

[00:15:26] FRANCES COHEN: --the Germans?

[00:15:26] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: --oh yeah, that-- that was the police, the Gestapo.

[00:15:28] FRANCES COHEN: Had it-- I see.

[00:15:29] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Had her under house arrest. She was lucky she wasn't taken to a camp.

[00:15:32] FRANCES COHEN: Right.

[00:15:33] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: But because she was married to a Catholic, apparently, [INAUDIBLE].

[00:15:35] FRANCES COHEN: They spared her.

[00:15:36] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: --they-- they punished her by not-- by house arrest, not having her leave the house at all during the war.

[00:15:42] JOANNE RUDOF: Now at this point, you are within Germany?

[00:15:44] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Yes.

[00:15:46] JOANNE RUDOF: What did the word concentration camp mean to you?

[00:15:49] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Nothing. I had heard about it, but I had no I-- I had very little idea. I know that Jews were interned there, but I didn't know, uh, how they were treated, actually. I'd heard they weren't treated well. But, eventually, you know, when I saw what happened, it was a complete shock. I didn't know too much about it.

[00:16:10] First place, some of-- some of my colleagues that had had training in the G2 intelligence school, they had a little idea. But I think most of us didn't. We didn't. And, then-- so another incident at the same town, at Ludwigshafen-- one of the things you're supposed to do is check communications between the cities. And I found out that the telephones were still working between Ludwigshafen and the next city across the river. I forgot the name of it there.[13]

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[13] With regard to his knowledge of concentration camps, Bruskin's testimony contains certain inconsistencies: he first says he knew nothing about them, but then acknowledges that he had heard the inmates were not treated well. He seems to suggest that one didn't "know" about a concentration camp unless one grasped the tremendous suffering there. He comments that his colleagues with G-2 (intelligence) training had a better understanding of the camps, although he implies that one cannot really comprehend them unless one was physically there. The smells and the physical condition of the inmates, for example, defy easy description. Prior to the liberation of Ebensee in early May, other camps had been liberated by the Allies, including Buchenwald on 11 April (by the Americans) and

[00:16:49] Well, we decided that we had to put a stop to this. Because they could call there and tell us what armaments we had and so forth. So I went to the telephone company building, and I got hold of the manager there. And I told him to disconnect everything there. So he says, "Ich kann nicht, ich weiß nicht." He says, I don't know how to do it. He says he can't do it.

[00:17:17] I says, I'm sorry, you will do it, I says. Then I pulled out my .45, and I says, I'm going to shoot up the whole works here, I says, if you don't do it. So before he dismantled everything, he-- he did get in a word to somebody across the way. "Ich rede hier was -- ich -- bin gezwungen." I am talking-- I'm being forced to. I-- I says, "Nichts -- nicht sagen, nicht sagen." Anyhow, he took care of that.[14]

[00:17:42] Well, it so happens that there was a member of the Associated Press traveling with our outfit, and he heard about it. So he wrote me up. But I didn't know what-- what appeared, but my-- my wife did cut out the article-- I have it somewhere at home-- about that incident.

[00:17:56] JOANNE RUDOF: So you were right at the front line?

[00:17:58] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Yes. Yes, that's right, yeah.

[00:18:00] JOANNE RUDOF: And were you--

[00:18:01] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: As a matter of fact, I did get, among other thing, the combat infantry badge, and-- but I didn't actually fire at it. We were-- we were attacked, we were shelled, oh yes. In France, particularly, there was-- if I can go back to that-- where I'm-- well, that-- that was a very peculiar thing. I was in a Jeep with another man in-- in France. And four GI's were going on past to Paris, and they were half drunk-- they crashed into us.

[00:18:33] Well, the man who was driving was all right. He was a heavy man and he held a steering wheel. And I was thrown out of the Jeep. I landed on my head and my helmet came off. It wasn't strapped under my chin. And I still had a scar where I landed. And, I know my glasses were broken. And when I picked myself up, I could see blood all over my face.[15]

Bergen-Belsen on 15 April (by the British). Information regarding these camps was beginning to spread by the time Bruskin arrived at Ebensee.

[14] SIDNEY Bruskin did not kill anyone during the war, but he used his gun here (at least as a threat). In his account, he appeared prepared to commit violence (but note that he says “shoot up the place,” not shoot the official from the telephone company). The incident also shows how some Germans attempted not to take action and to evade responsibility. The manager of the telephone company lies (saying he cannot do it) and then requests that his actions be concealed.

[15] Accidents were frequently a cause of death in WWII. The combatants did not have safety gear to today’s standards and the technology failed more frequently. There were frequent airplane crashes (that took the lives of figures like Fritz Todt, Wladyslaw Sikorski, and the musician Glenn Miller). Motor vehicle accidents also took the lives of many

[00:18:53] Well, I said to myself, oh my god, what an awful place to die. I says, I want to go home. I want to die at home, at least. Then my next thought was, gee, maybe they'll send me back to Paris to the hospital or something like that, you know? No such luck. So they-- so the medic said, go back to where you're staying.

[00:19:12] We were staying in a little house. And at night, we would sleep in the cellar, because the Germans were shelling us. And they-- and they say, and keep your warm. Oh, I had torn ligaments besides. And he said, stay warm. Well, there was a little stove there on the first floor. So I sat next to the stove, it's nice and warm, while the other guys went downstairs. Well, no sooner than I fall asleep, and brother, those shells start coming. And I never dove so fast in all my life down-- down to the cellar there. Well, I recovered from that.

[00:19:44] Now to get back to Germany, and a couple other things happened on the way. Oh, I remember, for instance, going to Weimar. That's-- that's a picture of the Jewish cemetery that was desecrated there, I remember.[16]

[00:19:59] JOANNE RUDOF: And is that you?

[00:20:01] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: That's myself, yeah, yeah.

[00:20:06] JOANNE RUDOF: Now when you were in Weimar, did you know that there were camps in that area?

[00:20:10] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: We didn't know.

[00:20:11] JOANNE RUDOF: No?

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combatants, including General George Patton. Note Bruskin's comments about being shelled applied to his experiences in France (a dangerous phase of the war for him), but he was later also under fire in Germany. Bruskin was quite nonchalant about the shelling. It is striking that he felt more endangered in France than later in Germany. This may have had something to do with his lack of experience—he became accustomed to artillery over time—but clearly the fighting in the Normandy region in the summer of 1944 was still intense.

[16] Jewish cemeteries were widely desecrated by Germans and their accomplices. There is a long history of damaging Jewish cemeteries, and many Nazis were cognizant of this history. Attacking burial sites was part of a broader assault on Jewish life. The use of headstones to pave roads offered a vivid act of cultural vandalism (Steven Spielberg included it in *Schindler's List* in the scene set at the Plaszów camp). A scholarly literature on Jewish cemeteries (including their postwar restoration) has developed. See Adolf Diamant, *Geschändete jüdische Friedhöfe in Deutschland, 1945-1999* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2000); Monika Schmidt, *Schändungen jüdischer Friedhöfe in der DDR: eine Dokumentation* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007); Joachim Jacobs, *Houses of Life: Jewish Cemeteries of Europe* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008); and Rudolf Klein, *Metropolitan Jewish Cemeteries of the 19th and 20th Centuries in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Study* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2018). See also the reflections of Benjamin Ferencz, who helped administer Jewish cemeteries after the war: 'Reclaiming Cemeteries,' at https://benferencz.org/stories/1948-1956/reclaiming-cemeteries/ (accessed 10 October 2021). It is interesting that Bruskin not only took this photo of the Jewish cemetery, but also retained it throughout his life.

[00:20:12] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: No. Were there at this point? I don't know. I should imagine there were. There were hundreds of them all over, but we didn't know about that. No, we weren't too much involved with the camps, actually. We were arresting Nazis and so forth. And then-- let's see, the other incidents that-- that occurred. Uh, oh yeah. And then-- at some time, I may go ahead of myself times.[17]

[00:20:40] JOANNE RUDOF: That's all right.

[00:20:40] FRANCES COHEN: It's all right.

[00:20:41] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: --and then go back. I [INAUDIBLE] it's-- when it comes to my memory. Right after the war, we were encamped in Germany, Bavaria. And we were arresting people, and I heard about this man who had bragged that he was the "Ich bin der älteste Antisemit" in-- in Kempten. I'm-- I'm the oldest anti-Semite in Kempten. He was bragging about it to his friends. Well, I went to his house and arrested him, and I found some-- a letter, some things that he had written which, I don't have, unfortunately, in which he bragged about his anti-Semitic activities there and so forth. Well, they wouldn't let me keep the letter, because they needed-- when they arrested him and tried him, they had to use that as evidence.

[00:21:28] Anyhow, he happened to be a tailor by profession. I had also heard of a Jewish man who had just been liberated from a camp who was also a tailor living in Kempten. And he came back, and he had no equipment, no machine or anything to start his business again. Well, I liberated the sewing machine from the Nazi and gave it to this guy. And, there was-- there was no-- no questions asked.[18]

[00:21:59] Um, then, let's see. There-- let's see now, these pictures may help a little bit. Yeah, now they go back to Nuremberg. This is a photograph of the tremendous destruction by our airplanes, our bombers, in Nuremberg. That shows part of it destroyed. And then this is also Nuremberg. This was a huge stadium where they had festivals where they honored the old German guards and goddesses, Thor and Woden and all those people. They also had the Nazi festivals.[19]

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[17] Note that Bruskin presents himself as a Nazi hunter, not as a camp liberator. While his experiences at Ebensee in early May 1945 left an indelible mark on him, they represented an exceptional chapter. Tracking Nazi fugitives was his primary task during the war, and that shaped his identity more directly.

[18] This episode represents an effort at what some have termed 'rough justice.' Bruskin tells a compelling story about 'liberating' a sewing machine from a Nazi and giving it to a Jewish victim. Stories of small but meaningful acts (giving a Jewish tailor an opportunity to earn a living in precarious times) are among the gifts of testimony from individuals who experienced this history.

[19] Nuremberg was bombed frequently during WWII, with over 90 percent of the city destroyed. But the Palace of Justice survived largely intact (a primary reason the International Military Tribunal was held there—it was one of the few structures that existed that could accommodate the defendants, the witnesses, and the guards and

[00:22:44] FRANCES COHEN: So you would go in as each city was liberated?

[00:22:47] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Yes.

[00:22:48] FRANCES COHEN: I see.

[00:22:49] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: We would go in, yeah. We had a list of the party functionaries, the Nazi party. We write up arrest reports. Excuse me. And then we would send them back with a vehicle to what we called the corps. Not-- we were in the 9th corps. That was a--a higher up unit over a division. And then from there, they did what-- they tried them or sentenced them or whatever, you know? We interrogated them.[20]

[00:23:17] And, of course, most of them, when we talk to them, they said the things they did "Ich war gezwungen," I was forced to do it. I didn't want to do it. And my great-- great uncle knew a man who was Jewish once or things like that, you know?[21] So then, finally-- well, not finally-- then came our big catch, Ernst Kaltenbrunner.[22]

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prosecution). Bruskin took photos of the Nuremberg tribune, which, like 'souvenirs' helped combatants feel connected to the history they were experiencing. The Nuremberg tribune, which was located on the outskirts of the city, had survived the Allies' bombing raids. The Americans, however, used a Howitzer to blow the Reich Eagle and swastika sculpture off the top of the Tribune, but the rest of the structure has survived (and is used for concerts today). It was designed by Albert Speer and there is a permanent exhibition in the structure (titled*Faszination und Gewalt*, 'fascination and violence').

[20] Bruskin offers more information on CIC procedures, including the hierarchical structure of the agency: note the importance of the Corps headquarters, who took over the interrogating efforts once the Nazis had been apprehended. The list of Nazis who were wanted was published after the war: Allied Control Authority, *The Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects: Consolidated Wanted Lists* (Uckfield, UK: Naval & Military Press, 2018 [1947]). Subsequently, the Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects (CROWCASS) was launched in September 1944: an American initiative, it utilized a punch-card index based on the Hollerith system. Walters has discussed the problems with the CROWCASS initiative ("it stumbled over its own ambition"), but CROWCASS lists were distributed to the CIC and other intelligence units (e.g., the United Nations War Crimes Commission) starting May 1945, and proved to be an important if imperfect resource. Walters, *Hunting Evil*, 51-53.

[21] It seems that the response of many Germans, *ich war gezwungen* ('I was forced to do it') is a version of 'I was just following orders.' And every Nazi seemed to point to a Jew or to Jews whom he or she had saved. Bruskin points out these common defense strategies.

[22] Ernst Kaltenbrunner (1903-1946), was an Austrian-born Nazi and SS officer who headed the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) from January 1943 until the end of the war. He was the highest-ranking member of the SS to be tried at the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg. The best study on him remains Peter Black's biography from 1984, which portrays Kaltenbrunner as a radical Nazi and chronicles the Austrian's rise to the top of the SS security apparatus. Black discusses Kaltenbrunner's last days, after he left his political headquarters in Salzburg to head to Altaussee, which attracted many high-ranking Nazis at the war's end (see below), including Kaltenbrunner's childhood friend, Adolf Eichmann, who also took refuge in the mountains surrounding the town. On Kaltenbrunner's trial before the IMT, Black notes: "Most remarkable in Kaltenbrunner's prison writings is the absence of any guilt, remorse, or even reflection on the millions of innocent people who had been murdered by the regime that he served or who had died as a result of its policies. On the contrary, he appears to have been convinced that he had always done right, that his actions had been necessary, and 'history' would someday prove this." Peter

[00:23:49] Well, I was assigned that time to work with Robert Matteson, who had a lot of training in intelligence and-- and history of the Germans -- of the Nazi party and so forth. He had a tremendous background. Unfortunately, he just died two weeks ago. And, I was assigned to work with him as an interpreter, and also to-- not only as an interpreter, but to make arrest reports and arrest people and so forth.[23]

[00:24:20] And, incidentally, I was more proficient in French than German. But talking to so many German people, after a while, I became fairly fluent in German too. And, so we were going to go to Altaussee, which is in Austria. That's in what they -- the area called the Salzkammergut. It's the foot of the Austrian alps. Very pretty town, a very pretty town. We set up our headquarters, our office.[24]

Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Ideological Soldier of the Third Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 257-59, 271. Kaltenbrunner was sentenced to death and executed at Nuremberg on the night of the 15th of October 1946 (his body, and those of the other ten defendants who were executed, were transported to Munich and cremated, with the ashes dumped in the Isar River).

[23] Robert Eliot Matteson (1914-1994) was born in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1914, the son of a St. Paul banker, and graduated from Carleton College in 1937. Loyal to his home state, the Minnesota Historical Society biography of Mattson relates that he received his M.A. in public administration from Harvard University in 1940 and then taught political science at Carleton College from 1940 to 1942. Matteson briefly served as a state department desk officer in 1943, before going on to serve in the 80th infantry division of Patton's third army in 1943-1946.

After World War II, Matteson was research director for Harold Stassen's 1948 presidential campaign (1946-1948), and when Stassen served as president of the University of Pennsylvania (1948-1952), Matteson worked as his assistant (and an assistant professor of international relations). Matteson's government career began in 1953 when he joined Harold Stassen in the Foreign Operations Administration. Matteson was then director of the White House Disarmament Staff (1955-1958). He stayed with the Eisenhower administration after Stassen left in 1958, first as assistant to Sherman Adams, White House chief of staff, then with the CIA's Board of National Intelligence Estimates (1959-1962). He then served in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1962-1967), in Vietnam as director of the military-civilian pacification program in the Agency for International Development as director of the Office of International Training (1968-1971), and with the Foreign Affairs Executive Seminar (1971). He also founded the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. Matteson's personal friends and professional associates included many top-level government officials.

After the war, Matteson became obsessed with Ernst Kaltenbrunner, and wrote *The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner*, published in 2007 by the CIA. Mattson knew a great deal about Nazi Germany—and his combination of intellectual firepower and spy-like daring-do made him a hero for SIDNEY Bruskin. See Robert Matteson, *The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner* (CIA Library's Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2007), https://www.cia.gov/static/eb2a597a1af439815b52e9b7ab190daa/Last-Days-of-Kaltenbrunner.pdf. See also 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner' at https://www.memoiresdeguerre.com/article-the-last-days-of-ernst-kaltenbrunner-83009915.html, which latter document states that Matteson's account was released by the CIA in 1993. In 1980 he also published a memoir, *A Search For Adventure*, the relevant section of which is part III, the war years (1940-1946).

[24] For a small town in an obscure location in the Austrian Alps, Altaussee had a storied history during WWII: the salt mine there was used to safeguard thousands of artworks, many belonging to Hitler and the Führermuseum (around 6,500 paintings were housed in the mine). Located at the end of a long road heading deep into the Salzkammergut, Altaussee was a good location to stash art and for Nazis to hide out. The town was part of the Ausseerland region, which Hitler and his associates envisioned as part of the so-called Alpine Fortress. The town

[00:24:54] We know we're going to be there a while in what was formerly the office of the Nazi party in that town. And we started doing some research. Now Ernst Kaltenbrunner was-- he succeeded Heydrich, the Hangman of Europe. Heydrich in 1943, was in in charge of the Reichssicherheitsamt. That's the security [service]. And he was ruthless and notorious. He went through several countries where he would take care of-- of exterminating Jews, rounding them up, and he was in charge of that. [25]

[00:25:42] And he was assassinated by two English-trained Czechs. Well, he lived after he was shot, he lived for a few days. But when he died-- you probably remember-- that's when Lidice occurred. In revenge for what they did to him, they massacred a tremendous number of Jews in Lidice. Well, Kaltenbrunner-- Ernst Kaltenbrunner -- took his place.

[00:26:11] Now Ernst Kaltenbrunner eventually became the head of security and intelligence-- both military and foreign intelligence—and the Gestapo. He became the head. He was a brute of a man, over 6 foot 2. He had a scar on his face. Supposedly, they said it was a scar-- a dueling scar he got when he went to Heidelberg University, we don't know.[26]

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attracted an array of leading Nazis, including Kaltenbrunner, Adolf Eichmann, SS commando Otto Skorzeny, Viennese Gauleiter Hugo Jury, Franz Stangl (commandant of Sobibor and Treblinka) and Anton Burger (Commandant of the Theresienstadt concentration camp). Walters offered an extension of this list: "In Altaussee… among those arrested were General Erich Alt of the Luftwaffe, Walter Riedel, the construction chief of the V-2 rocket program at Peenemünde; Günther Altenburg, the German Minister Plenipotentiary to Greece; William Knothe, General Counsel of the Foreign Office; and Dr. Bailent Homan, a minister in the Hungarian puppet government installed by the Nazis." In other words, Altaussee was an extraordinarily rich target area for Matteson, Bruskin, and their team. Most of the gold and other valuables disappeared at the war's end and have never been recovered. Walters, *Hunting Evil*, 14-15. See also Raimund Bahr, ed., *Für Führer und Vaterland: Das Salzkammergut 1938-1945* (Vienna: Edition Art Science, 2008).

[25] Ernst Kaltenbrunner had moved his headquarters from Berlin to the Villa Kerry in Altaussee in late April 1945. From here, with the help of an RSHA staffer named Wilhelm Höttl, he became embroiled in Operation Sunrise: an effort to conclude a negotiated peace for Italy and western Austria with the Western Allies. While those negotiations bore fruit (a separate peace was concluded on 29 April), troops from the U.S. Seventh Army arrived on 8 May (the day the Soviets concluded their treaty of surrender with the German government), and Kaltenbrunner again took flight. He headed to the hills near Wildensee, just outside Altaussee, where he hid out until 12 May 1945. At the end of the war a box of 50-60 kilograms of gold and other valuables was found near the house in which Kaltenbrunner had lived. Walters adds: "Kaltenbrunner's house in Altaussee was the Villa Kerry, which was situated on the outskirts of town and looked over the lake. Before he fled, like some villain in a potboiler, Kaltenbrunner buried his treasure in his garden. According to one estimate, he had shipped to Altaussee 50 kilograms of gold bars, fifty cases containing gold articles, two million US dollars, the same number of Swiss francs, five cases of jewels, and a stamp collection worth five million gold marks." Walters, *Hunting Evil*, 14-15. See the documentation from the U.S. Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States, https://web.archive.org/web/20120916042600/http://www.clintonlibrary.gov/assets/storage/Research%20-%20Digital%20Library/holocaust/Holocaust-%20Gold%20Series/Box%2053/902534-master-set-folder-58-230724-230814A-4.pdf (accessed 25 June 2021).

[26] While Kaltenbrunner received some of the scars from duels in his student days (he went on to receive a doctorate in law from the University of Graz), there are reports that some came as a result of an automobile accident. Reinhard Heydrich (1904-4 June1942), number two in the SS, the preceding chief of the RSHA (which included the

[00:26:39] Well, we didn't know where he was. But we knew that he had a mistress who was living in Altaussee. Um, her name was, um, Gisela. I have it right here. Well, yeah, Gisela von Westpark [sic. Her name was Gisela von Westarp]. That was his mistress. His wife helped us. She was an informant. She lived nearby, and we talked to her about his whereabouts, and she gave us a few leads on who might know.[27]

[00:27:22] Then after a number of leads, we did find out that he was hiding in the mountains with a Major Scheidler, his adjutant, his aide.[28] Well, it seems that Scheidler's wife was living in-

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Gestapo, Kripo, and SD), the man who chaired the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942, and the Acting Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, was assassinated by Czech partisans. Heydrich died from an infection (sepsis) caused by the horsehair fibers in the seat of his car, which entered his wounds after a kind of hand-grenade exploded near him. Hitler ordered a reprisal—the execution of 10,000 randomly chosen Czechs—but subordinates counseled that this measure could hurt the productivity of the important industrial region. The Germans instead decided to enact revenge in the towns of Lidice and Lezaky: on 10 June 1942, males over the age of 16 in both towns were murdered; and all the women in Lezaky were killed. Both towns were burned to the ground. Estimates are that some 1,300 Czechs were killed in reprisal for Heydrich's death, including at least 200 women. Edouard Calic, *Reinhard Heydrich: The Chilling Story of the man Who Masterminded the Nazi Death Camps* (New York: Morrow, 1982), 253.

[27] The Allies sometimes used women to catch Nazi chieftains. Bruskin describes a classic ploy here to confirm the identification of Kaltenbrunner and his adjutant, Arthur Scheidler. Bruskin developed a curious relationship with the two women: even the fact that Scheidler's wife (Iris Scheidler) and Kaltenbrunner's mistress were living in the same house raises questions.

Countess Gisela von Westarp (1920-1983) had married Paul Wolf (1912-1943) in 1940, but he died in Tunis in 1943. Countess Westarp went on to have twins by Ernst Kaltenbrunner (a boy and a girl), who "had been delivered in a cowshed in the village [Altaussee] on March 12 [1945]." She and the children survived the war, initially living in a two-room flat in Munich, according to *Der Spiegel* magazine in 1947. Walters, *Hunting Evil*, 12-13. "Gräfin Gisela von Westarp," in *Der Spiegel* 9 (28 February 1947). Kaltenbrunner had married Elisabeth Eder in 1934 and they had three children, who also survived the war.

Walters says, "Scheidler's wife was a vivacious and attractive thirty-three-year old brunette called Iris. A Viennese by birth, Iris had previously been married to a Dr. Rudolf Praxmarer, who was a friend of Kaltenbrunner when they had studies at the University of Graz. The couple separated amicably in July 1943, and Iris became frau Scheidler the following month…. She combined parenthood with working for the official Nazi photographer Heinrich Hoffmann, which gave her access to what passed for high society in Nazi Germany, including Eva Braun and Baldur von Schirach, the leader of the Hitler Youth. In short, the Scheidlers were a well-connected couple, and they were at the heart of the Kaltenbrunner clique in Altaussee." Walters, *Hunting Evil*, 13.

Both sides used one another. The women sought information about their husband/boyfriend, as well as more lenient treatment. The Allies sought the location of the suspects and useful information. The interrogations of spouses and paramours became part of the archival record. Margaret Himmler, for example, was taken by US troops from the Tegernsee in Bavaria to Italy and questioned there for weeks. Katrin Himmler and Michael Wildt, eds., *The Private Heinrich Himmler: Letters of a Mass Murderer* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2014).

[28] Arthur Scheidler (1911-?) was the adjutant to Kaltenbrunner from 1942 to 1945. Scheidler had joined the Nazi Party in January 1930 and the SS in 1934 and become Heydrich's administrative aide in 1939 (a post he held until 1942). He had also been a guard at the Sachsenburg concentration camp near Chemnitz in Saxony. After Heydrich's assassination in June/July 1942, Scheidler continued as Kaltenbrunner's adjutant. Obersturmbannführer Scheidler was in Altaussee at the war's end, along with his wife, Iris. He was transferred to the Headquarters of US Forces European Theater Interrogation Center APO 635 on 23 May 1945. There are reports that Scheidler was executed by the Americans after the war, but this appears not to have been the case. Lt. Henry, "Final Interrogation Report:

- in the same house as Kaltenbrunner's mistress, and was right across from the hotel where we were staying there. And, we couldn't get any information from them. Of course, they tried to pump us, find out what we were doing, and where we were we looking for their men and so forth. We got to be very friendly.

[00:28:02] As a matter of fact, they catered to us. They even invited us to dinner once. They had Wiener schnitzel. It was excellent. Well, they brought out some rare wine too. And-- well, I suppose, I-- Ebensee. I should have come to, I should have -- But let me finish this, then I'll go to. Well--

[00:28:20] FRANCES COHEN: Excuse me.

[00:28:21] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: --then we decided on a plan of action. These two men were up in the mountains there.

[00:28:26] JOANNE RUDOF: About when was this, Mr. Bruskin?

[00:28:28] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Yes, this was-- yes, this was around the middle of May 1945.

[00:28:32] JOANNE RUDOF: Mm-hm.

[00:28:34] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: So the plan was that Bob Matteson would dress up in Austrian hunter's clothes, lederhosen and the hat with a feather and all that, and so forth. And he would go up, and he would be accompanied by a platoon of about 15 or 20 soldiers-- armed soldiers-- in case there were any problems there. But my job was to keep the household where the women were, and the children and the servants, under house arrest all night long.

[00:29:10] So what I did, I call them all into the kitchen. And I took out my .45, put it on the table. And I said, "Niemand wird verlassen hier." Nobody's going to leave this house here at all. Otherwise, I'm going to shoot you, just like that. Right away, they started asking me questions, what was going on and so forth. And I had a feeling they knew, but I-- I says, I'm not going to tell you what's going on.

[00:29:33] Well, we, uh-- and the next morning, um, all of a sudden, we hear a little h-- bustling and hustle outside. We go out, and there's Bob with two civilians and the soldiers. Everybody was very weary. It was cold. There snow and ice on the mountains there. They were tired, they hadn't slept, and they were very-- they were really exhausted.

Arthur Scheidler" (11 July 1945), in National Archives, UK, (Wo 208/4478), http://www.fpp.co.uk/Himmler/interrogations/PRO_WO208/4478_Kaltenbrunner.pdf. See the Forum der Wehrmacht for the claim by Peter Bergmann that the Americans executed Scheidler: https://www.forum-der-wehrmacht.de/index.php?thread/23866-ernst-kaltenbrunner/.

[00:29:59] We still didn't know whether these two men were, um, the people we were looking for. But all of a sudden, Mrs. Scheidler rushed off the porch to her husband and embraced him. Well, right away, we knew that we had that guy. And then before long, we knew he had them both.

[00:30:17] Well, then while Bob was on the phone making arrangements for high security to come in to pick him up and take him back to the corps headquarters, his mistress-- Kaltenbrunner's mistress-- requested that she'd like to speak to him before they took him away. Well, we looked-- Bob and I looked at each other whether we should or not, and finally said, all right, but I'm to be with them, not to leave them alone. So we went to our office in an adjoining room.

[00:30:53] The two of them sat at a table. And I sat between them. I didn't want any hanky-panky, anybody trying to liberate him or slipping him a gun or anything like that, you know. Well, they didn't say too much to each other. He was very silent, very depressed. I think he foresaw what was going to happen to him. Well, he was sent back. And, uh, eventually, of course, he was one of the Nuremberg criminals. He was tried.[29]

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[29] Bruskin offers a rich and accurate account of Kaltenbrunner's arrest. He leaves out certain specifics, of course, such as that Adolf Eichmann was with Kaltenbrunner in the escape from Altaussee and before he separated from his group and hiked through the mountains heading north (he was captured later and then escaped again to South America). Bruskin also did not note that the assistant Burgermeister of Altaussee, Johann Brandauer, was the one to reveal the location of Kaltenbrunner's hideout in the Todes Gebirg; Brandauer accompanied the detachment of ex-Wehrmacht soldiers and US troops. The mission entailed climbing over mountainous and glacial terrain for six hours in darkness before arriving at the cabin. See *The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner*, CIA–Kent School: Center for the Study of Intelligence (retrieved 14 July 2019). Walters tells a similar story, referring to Matteson as "a political–science teacher and a Harvard MA," with "his interpreter SIDNEY Bruskin." See Walters, *Hunting Evil*, 15. Regarding the capture that took place on 11/12 May 1945, Walters writes: "Matteson's motley crew departed at midnight, their leader sporting a pair of Lederhosen, an Alpine jacket and hat, and spoked shoes. The plan was for an unarmed Matteson to pose as an innocent passerby…" See Walters, *Hunting Evil*, 16. Matteson indeed approached the hut by himself, with his US GIs and four German guides remaining at a distance. Matteson knocked on the door, and one of Kaltenbrunner's assitants answered it. Matteson asked to come in, but was refused. At that moment, Kaltenbrunner's aide spotted Matteson's support team and slammed the door. A standoff ensued, but Kaltenbrunner chose to avoid a fire-fight and surrendered. Matteson brought him back to Altaussee. See Walters, *Hunting Evil*, 15-18. So, Bruskin was there for Kaltenbrunner's arrest. He assented to the decision to allow Kaltenbrunner to have a final meetingwith his mistress, Countess von Westarp. Bruskin and Matteson probably knew it would be difficult for her to see him after his arrest (unlike Kaltenbrunn'ers wife, who had some rights). It is somewhat surprising that SIDNEY Bruskin and Robert Matteson didn't recognize Kaltenbrunner, whose distinctive scars were famous.

At the International Tribunal at Nuremberg, Kaltenbrunner was charged with conspiracy to commit crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. He was acquitted of the first charge, but found guilty of the latter two. He had not been present at the beginning of the proceedings after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage, but when he returned, he protested his innocence, claiming that Himmler and Gestapo leader Heinrich Müller bore responsibility for the atrocities committed during his tenure as chief of the RSHA. Kaltenbrunner also maintained he was unaware of the Holocaust, and in a contradictor manner, stated that he had protested against the treatment of the Jews to Himmler and Hitler. He went so far as to claim that he deserved credit for bringing the Final Solution to

[00:31:22] And at one point, after they were sentenced to death-- he was one that was sentenced to death, along with Goring, and, well, Hess was in prison, but they had a whole bunch of them. He had a stroke, an apoplectic stroke. But the doctor says, oh no, this guy isn't cheating the gallows. So the doctors revived him. They made sure that he lived so that he would be hanged.

[00:31:50] JOANNE RUDOF: Did you have any conversation or interrogate him in any way?

[00:31:54] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: I didn't, no. As a matter of fact, even Bob had very little. Once we knew who he was, we left it to the higher ups. He wouldn't talk. But we know from-- afterward, you know, I did a lot of checking up on what his [task?] was. One of the things he had planned to do-- for instance, he was put in charge of forming the redoubt area in Austria.[30]

[00:32:16] The redoubt area is where Himmler had the idea of establishing an area there where there would have fortifications, where they would have factories there making munitions, and their last stand. And he was in charge of the program to build this place up. He also had an idea at one point that perhaps he could get in touch with John Foster Dulles [sic Allen Dulles] and some of the American people and make a deal whereby he could get a number of SS soldiers he collaborated with [to join] the American army to attack the Russians.[31]

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an end. On 30 September 1946, the International Military Tribunal found Kaltenbrunner not guilty of crimes against peace, but guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity (counts three and four). On 1 October 1946, the IMT sentenced him to death by hanging. Kaltenbrunner was executed 16 October 1946, and his corpse, like those of the other nine executed men and that of Hermann Göring (who had committed suicide the previous day), was cremated at the Eastern Cemetery in Munich and the ashes scattered in a tributary of the Isar River. See the Wikipedia entry for Ernst Kaltenbrunner at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Kaltenbrunner.

[30] The Allies, and in particular, U.S. intelligence officers, feared that an Alpine redoubt would be established in the mountains surrounding the Obersalzberg, with highly trained SS operating as guerillas in familiar territory. Timothy Naftali, 'Creating the Myth of the Alpenfestung: Allied Intelligence and the Collapse of the Nazi Police State,' in Günter Bischof and Anton Pelinka, eds., *Austrian Historical Memory and National Identity* (: New Brunswick/London: Transaction Publishers,, 1997), 203-46.

[31] Bruskin is referring to Allen Dulles and the undertaking known as Operation Sunrise, where Dulles negotiated the surrender of German forces in northern Italy and western Austria on 2 May 1945—five days before the German surrender at Rheims. In negotiations that extended back to February 1945, the U.S. was represented by OSS operative Allen Dulles (the brother of future Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who himself later directed the CIA), while the Germans were represented by SS General Karl Wolff, whom Hitler had entrusted to command that portion of Italy occupied by the Germans. Wolff was subsequently treated very leniently by the Allies, and faced minimal justice only late in his life. See Allen Dulles, *The Secret Surrender* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); Bradley Smith and Elena Aga Rossi, *Operation Sunrise: The Secret Surrender* (New York: Basic Books, 1979); Kerstin von Lingen, *Allen Dulles, The OSS, and Nazi War Criminals: The Dynamics of Selective Prosecution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and David Talbot, *The Devil's Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA and the Rise of America's Secret Government* (New York: Harper, 2015).

[00:32:59] JOANNE RUDOF: How did you learn this?

[00:33:01] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Afterward-- well, Bob Matteson made a career out of Kaltenbrunner. When he got out of the army, for years and years-- he took seven trips to Austria and Germany. He interrogated the families there, the children and so forth. And he read all kinds of books and so forth, interviewed people. That was his life.

[00:33:25] He had a very understanding wife. His wife went with him too. Jane went with him wherever he went. I remember he lived in Minnesota. He visited me here in New Haven. And for several days, we talked and talked, and we argued about certain incidents, what-- what happened. We differed on a few things, because-- but we straightened everything out.

[00:33:48] And then-- let's see, oh, yeah-- Kaltenbrunner-- he didn't cheat the gallows. And Bob stayed on during the trials too. The trials weren't until the following year, I believe, 1946. And he didn't go to the actual execution, but he did hear that when some of the men, when they stepped to the gallows, they repented. But when Kaltenbrunner got up and they asked if he had a statement to make, he says, no, Heil Hitler, that's it. He was just as strong a Nazi as ever. He went up very strong. Well, he was hanged.

[00:34:29] Now to get back to something which I should have had chronologically earlier, On our way, Bob picked me up at Kempten, Bavaria, and we were going to go down to Aussee. On our way, we had heard that there was a concentration camp, Ebensee, which was not far from Altaussee, so we drove there. Well, we got there-- there were-- Bob wrote a book I have at home, a sort of pamphlet. He claims that we broke the lock to get in there. I say definitely. I say that we were among the first troops there. I remember going in through the gate, and there were few soldiers there, very few.

[00:35:19] JOANNE RUDOF: Do you remember the gate?

[00:35:20] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Yes.

[00:35:21] FRANCES COHEN: You mean American soldiers there?

Many top leaders, including Reichsführer-SS Himmler, hoped that fanatical SS troops would carry on the fight and survive to bring about a resurgence of National Socialism (a Fourth Reich, so to speak). Himmler also presented a peace plan that entailed the Germans making peace with the Western Allies and continuing the fight, this time as a coalition, against the Soviets. For top Austrian Nazis like Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Adolf Eichmann, and the others previously mentioned as present in Altaussee, among others, they hoped that their knowledge of this region of the Alps would enable them to escape from the enemy. In certain case, this occurred, as with Austrian SS officer Adolf Wächter, who took refuge in the Alps and benefitted from the Vatican (and U.S.) aided 'Ratline.' Author Philippe Sands noted in his riveting account of Wächter that the Americans never climbed above 10,000 feet, a tendency known by Wächter and his wife Charlotte, who helped supply him during his flight. Philippe Sands, *The Ratline: The Exalted Life and Mysterious Death of a Nazi Fugitive* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2021).

[00:35:22] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: May 8th, 1945-- May 7th or 8th, 1945. Yeah. Beg your pardon?

[00:35:28] FRANCES COHEN: So American soldiers were already there?

[00:35:30] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: They were there, yeah, but they had come in the same day that we did, we learned later. Bob thinks that we broke the lock, but I don't remember that at all, but we went in.

[00:35:40] JOANNE RUDOF: And you were not attached to any unit? It was just the two of you on your way?

[00:35:44] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: That's right, on our way. That's right, yeah. We got into Ebensee. I didn't know exactly what to expect. And then I start to see the sights, you know? Men 60 pounds, you know, skin and bones. And I took this picture of one of them. It might have been May 6-- let's see, May 6th, 7th, or 8th. You may have some records about that that collaborate, because--

[00:36:17] JOANNE RUDOF: May 6th.

[00:36:18] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: May what?

[00:36:19] JOANNE RUDOF: May 6th.

[00:36:19] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: 6th? Well, that's what I wrote here.

[00:36:20] JOANNE RUDOF: Mm-hm.

[00:36:22] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: On May 6th, that's the day I took to be right.

[00:36:24] JOANNE RUDOF: Mm-hm.

[00:36:24] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: That's when I to-- took the picture. That's a picture. Well, this is typical of what I saw. Then we toured one of the lagers where they were, you know? They were sleeping on shelves, and bugs infested, scratching themselves, thin and everything else, you know?

[00:36:47] And then we decided we were going to go to the crematorium. Well, we, um-- we went to the crematorium. And first, we saw one room, probably the size of this room here, piled with naked corpses one on top of the other all the way up to the ceiling. And that-- that got me

right away. I-- I-- I had-- I had no idea that it would be this bad. And I-- I was just at a loss for words.[32]

[00:37:21] Oh, before that-- one thing, though-- we did go through one of the lagers where-- I-- I was talking to some of the inmates there. I was talking mostly in German, some I would talk to in Yiddish. And, I just couldn't understand why they were there. And I-- I made the mistake of asking one man, why are you here? And he got insulted.

[00:37:49] He was very angry with me for even asking. I knew they were Jewish, but still, it seems to me that they must have committed a crime besides being Jewish, you know? But anyhow, then we went in-- after the looking-- viewing the corpses, we went into the-- the crematorium. There were two ovens there.

[00:38:05] JOANNE RUDOF: How did you know about the crematorium even being there?

[00:38:09] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Well, we knew-- well, I don't recall exactly. But it was probably one of the other GI's told us about it while we were there. That's probably what it was. There was a crematorium. Well, we went into the crematorium, and there were two ovens there. There was a sign over one of the ovens. This one.

[00:38:34] JOANNE RUDOF: And that's a photocopy of the actual sign?

[00:38:36] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: That's a photocopy of the actual. The actual sign, I donated to the, um, eh, Holocaust Museum in Washington. As a matter of fact, when I was there in last fall, they, um-- they had a replica of-- of a crematorium-- the ovens of one of the camps-- might have been Dachau-- and there was no sign. So I wrote to Jack Nowakowski. He's the man in charge of the exhibits, and the memorabilia there.

[00:39:02] And I suggested that he take that sign and put it over the ovens there. I haven't heard from him. Uh, but my friend, George Havas, who I'll tell you about later-- he goes there frequently. He lives just outside of Washington. I told him next time he's there to look at it.

[00:39:19] FRANCES COHEN: Can you translate for us?

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[32] Bruskin retained a certain distance from the subjects of his testimony, except when discussing Ebensee, and in particular, seeing the bodies in the crematorium. In this segment of the interview, his eyes appear to well-up, and he is emotional later when recalling the Ebensee camp (see (46:35). Being shelled in France also brought back strong memories for Bruskin (19:12), as he paused to recall the fear he felt when the artillery fell around him, but quickly returned to story-telling mode, as he does here.

[00:39:20] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Yes, I'll translate it, yes. A translation says, "not ugly worms must in the future be nourished by my body. The clean flame should first eat me up or devour me. I always love the warmth and the light, therefore, burn my body and don't bury me."

[00:39:42] JOANNE RUDOF: And you just took that off the wall?

[00:39:44] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: I took it off. Actually, I couldn't reach it. There was a man there-- he was an inmate with the, eh, striped uniform. But he was not skinny like these guys. He was what-- found out what they call a kapo. A kapo is a person who is an inmate, but he's a privileged character. He has, eh, certain duties and certain powers over the other people. He wasn't-- they weren't very well liked by most of the inmates there.[33]

[00:40:08] This guy was pretty husky, you know? And so I--I told him to get a ladder and take the sign down, which he did. Then I didn't like his attitude, either. He says, eh, all right, I'll give it to you, because I think I have another one someplace else. I don't know what he was proud of or what. Maybe he-- unless he figured I was going to give him a pack of cigarettes or something, I don't know. Well, it was on heavy cardboard, and I managed to get her at home without breaking it, you know. And, now let's see, that-- that was Ebensee.[34]

[00:40:44] JOANNE RUDOF: Now then--

[00:40:45] FRANCES COHEN: Had the Germans all left the camp?

[00:40:46] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Yes, oh yes. They had all left. We-- in-- in-- in the, um-- in the-- oh, important. Before we went to the camp, we knew we were going to find something bad there. So when we arrested the Ortsgruppenleiter, we made him accompany us there to see what

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[33] With regard to the *kapos*: these prisoner administrators, who were "assigned by the SS guards to supervise forced labor or carry out administrative tasks," were controversial during and after the Holocaust, with the state of Israel instituting a policy in 1955 which made it possible to initiate criminal prosecution of Jews who had served as ghetto administrators or kapos in concentration camps. Dan Porat notes in his study of these prosecutions of kapos that "the trials exposed the tragic experiences of the kapos, over time the courts and the public shifted from seeing them as evil collaborators to victims themselves, and the fervor to prosecute them abated." Still, according to *The Jewish Chronicle*, the word represented "the worst insult a Jew can give another Jew." Primo Levi reflected on the challenges of evaluating the actions of the kapos: "Judgment becomes more tentative and varied for those who occupied commanding positions: the chiefs (Kapos….)… Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 45. For above quotations, see (in order) OK? (yes, ok): Tuvia Friling and Haim Watzman, *A Jewish Kapo in Auschwitz: History, Memory, and the Politics of Survival* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2014); and Dan Porat, *Bitter Reckoning: Israel Tries Holocaust Survivors as Nazi Collaborators* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019). Daniel Sugarman, "What is a Kapo? The History of the Worst Insult a Jew Can Give Another Jew," in *The Jewish Chronicle* (15 September 2019) at https://www.thejc.com/comment/analysis/what-is-a-kapo-the-history-of-the-worst-insult-a-jew-can-give-another-jew-1.482181 (accessed 18 June 2012).

[34]

was going on. Of course, he insisted-- even though was only a mile or two from his-- the town-- that he didn't know the-- of its existence. [35]

[00:41:16] Well, we took him there. And we were walking around, and showing, and looking at a few things there. And all of a sudden, he disappeared. He ran away from us. We couldn't find him. We did learn the next day, he committed suicide.

[00:41:32] Then we heard of two guards who had been arrested by the anti-Nazi group, and they were sitting in a prison. They were held there waiting for the Americans to come and pick them up. And there, one of them was a real brute. Well, we went there-- I remember it was toward dusk—and we decided that we would arrest him, but we'd wait till the morning-- uh, the light wasn't very good there-- so to write up the arrest report. Well, when we went there the next morning, he had committed suicide too.[36]

[00:42:08] And then-- or then-- then we went back to Altaussee.

[00:42:13] JOANNE RUDOF: Now did you talk about what you saw there with the other GI's?

[00:42:20] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Yes, we did, yeah. We discussed it amongst ourselves. Eventually, some of them had maybe-- well, none of them had been to concentration camps immediately upon liberation, like we were. They'd seen them much later. And, um-- and, um-- well, we--we did talk to them, yes.

[00:42:45] But it changed my whole outlook on everything. I-- I had never, um, had much of a Jewish upbringing. I -- we never belonged to a synagogue, I didn't have a bar mitzvah, and so

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[35] There may be some inconsistencies in Bruskin's account of his helping liberate the Ebensee camp: earlier, he indicated that he and Robert Matteson had been the first ones there—to the extent that there was a discussion whether they broke the lock to get in (Matteson said they did). But here, he says that he and Matteson sensed something ominous and then arrested the Ortsgruppenleiter, whom they took to the camp. This latter story does not sound as though they were among the first Allied troops in the camp. Perhaps they were among the first in Ebensee and in fact, had the Ortsgruppenleiter in tow?

[36] Suicide among Nazis was common at the war's end, including a number of Gauleiter (e.g., Karl Hanke, Paul Giesler, Gustav Simon) and many Ortsgruppenleiter. These Nazi Party functionaries often could not imagine a world without Hitler and National Socialism. The fear of reprisals from the Soviet Red Army also induced many Germans to take their own lives. See Christian Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). See also https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_f%C3%BChrender_Nationalsozialisten,_die_zum_Ende_des_Zweiten_Weltkrieges_Suizid_ver%C3%BCbten.

forth. But that changed completely. No, no, I went back to my roots after seeing, particularly the—the, the camp, and, uh-- and the women in Ludwigshafen and so forth.

Experience shapes his spirituality and helps him discover his Jewish identity. Shapes his friend in a similar way (see below).

[00:43:08] And right away, I-- I felt differently. And Bob Matteson, who was a devout Protestant-- you know, he felt the same way as I did too, you know? And the stuff that he's written there, he mentions all that there too.

[00:43:26] JOANNE RUDOF: So you were just in for that one day?

[00:43:28] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: One day, yeah. Because there were other, um, troops coming in to take care of de-lousing seeing everybody, and-- and feeding them and so forth, you know? And I remember that some of the inmates came up-- give me some food, give me some food. Uh, you guys took care of us, you liberated us, but where's the food?[37]

[00:43:50] Well, we learned other things later, for instance, that there-- there was a big, eh, eh, counterfeiting group there. They-- some of the inmates were making counterfeit British m-- eh, money they used there. And we found out that the few men who were involved in that, they had there-- the Germans-- the-- the-- the German guards had orders to shoot them before they evacuated the camp themselves. But it seems that they never got to do it. Although we did hear stories that some of the, um-- the German guards were-- were manhandled and killed by the inmates. They were bitter.[38]

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[37] The liberators faced tremendous challenges in terms of food and shelter for the former inmates. Initially, the Allies frequently overfed the liberated prisoners, whose systems were not prepared for the kind of solid food provided. This became known as 'refeeding syndrome.' The Allies soon learned to gradually increase the portions, and this worked in many cases, although, of course, many perished after liberation. The treatment of liberated inmates was by no means uniform, with some experiencing discrimination, mistreatment, and terrible conditions. Earl Harrison, an American representative to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, commented at one point, "we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazi treated them except that we do not exterminate them." Jennifer Orth-Veillon noted, "…not all soldiers acted equally when confronted with that responsibility, and some further mistreated them, extending the trauma they had endured while imprisoned." See Jennifer Orth-Veillon, "For Some Holocaust Survivors, Even Liberation Was Dehumanizing," in *New York Times* (28 April 2020).

[38] The Nazi regime undertook several programs to counterfeit British currency: the best known was at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and known as Operation Bernhard (named after Friedrich Walter Bernhard Krueger, who oversaw the program). The Nazis used over 140 mostly Jewish skilled inmates, who received better treatment. They actually forged some 70 million notes with a value over 100 million pounds. The quality of the notes was very high and threatened the British economy, but the Germans never found a way to insert the notes into circulation: they had considered dropping them from planes, but did not pursue that option, and instead used the fake money to fund special operations. In early March 1945, the inmates in the counterfeiting unit were transferred to the concentration camp of Mauthausen-Gusen in Austria. Some of the Sachsenhausen prisoners ended up at Ebensee, which, as noted earlier, was also part of the Mauthausen-complex. The prisoners were ordered to destroy the evidence of the operation. See Bryan O. Burke, *Nazi Counterfeiting of British Currency during World War II*

[00:44:28] JOANNE RUDOF: But you had no way to verify these stories? These were just things that other people told?

[00:44:33] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Well-- well, I wish I'd brought that book with me. No, these are, um-- well, things, of course, as far as-- things that I actually saw, you know, and people say that-- that-- there no, eh, Holocaust. But I-- when I saw bodies piled like that. And-- and-- and then-- then-- I saw the-- the-- crematorium and so forth, you know? There's-- there's no question about it.

[00:45:00] FRANCES COHEN: So they were making counterfeit money for the Germans?

[00:45:02] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: For the Germans, that's right, yes, yeah. There-- one of-- [INAUDIBLE] their plans was they were going to counterfeit, eh, eh, English money. They were somehow going to flood England with it to-- to lower their-- the value of their currency. That was one of their plans. And um, um, let's see.

[00:45:29] JOANNE RUDOF: Did you communicate with your family back in New Haven about what you had seen in Ebensee?

[00:45:34] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Not until I-- not until later when I came home. First place, things, eh-- things were, um-- we knew it was-- our V-mail was being censored and so forth. I-- I couldn't do it. But when I got home, I--I told. I-- I showed my wife all the pictures, and I told her all about it and so forth. And, um, I had to be discreet about things.[39]

[00:45:55] Like I remember when we were in France, we were-- we were at-- at Fontainebleau, 50 miles from Paris. And, um, I hope they don't put me in jail for this, but I went AWOL with another guy. We went to Paris. I'd always wanted to go to Paris. And I said to this man I was with, Bob Holmes. I says, you know, Bob, uh, we may not come back alive. I'd like to see Paris before I die. So we-- we--we went to Paris. And when I came back, I wrote to my wife and I says, I just visited the city that I've always wanted to visit.

(London: Book Shop, 1988). The liberation of the Dachau camp offers another example of retribution against German guards by both American liberating troops and camp inmates. Harald Marcuse writes, "At the slightest provocation or hint of provocation, captives and men in the process of surrendering were gunned down, perhaps forty to fifty of them… In the first hours the Americans also refrained from intervening when survivors attacked the most brutal of their former tormentors and informants." Harald Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 52.

[39] Bruskin reflects here on the challenges of communicating the horrors of the Holocaust to family and friends back home. The security protocols that limited what he could convey to civilians provided him a rationale for not saying more in his letters to his wife (his story about going AWOL and heading to Paris, where he used coded language with wife, shows that he was aware of military censorship). But Bruskin also grasped the broader challenges of articulating what he had experienced. Primo Levi addressed this issue in his last book, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988, 88), where he explored the "incommunicability" of the Holocaust.

[00:46:27] [CHUCKLING]

[00:46:28] And-- and she knew exactly what it was. So anyhow, getting back to, uh, um-- well, of course, my reaction-- let's go into this a little more, into Ebensee-- it was shock, at first, unbelieving. I couldn't believe that anything like this could happen, and-- and it was disbelief. And then, of course, it-- it was anger, you know. And then after that, I had no mercy on any-- anybody we arrested. It-- it just carried over into that too.

[00:47:00] And e--eve-- even in years later, when-- whenever I-- I ran into any, eh, personal incidents of anti-Semitism, I'd-- I'd bring that up there, like, eh, I'd say, gee, I thought that the war was over, and I thought that we killed Hitler. But I see guys like you are still around. I just lost my temper.

[00:47:18] Anyhow, um, I remember c-- coming back, a-- another thing, just to digress for a moment. When I came back, I decided that I was going to become a Jew boy again. I didn't know how to start. And then I got a letter from [INAUDIBLE] Lodge B'nai B'rith inviting me to a breakfast. And any group that approached me at that point, they were-- they were going to get me. I signed up right away. Because I figure this way, I could identify myself as Jewish.[40]

[00:47:48] And, um, then-- let's see, all right, then back at Altaussee, -- oh, there were other people that we arrested there. There was one gentleman. Eh, let's see, Joyce, I believe his name was. He was an Englishman. And he, together with Lord Haw-Haw-- Lord Haw-Haw-- had started the program under Goebbels of broadcasting, eh, Nazi propaganda in English -- yeah,

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[40] Bruskin's experiences in Europe, including helping liberate Ebensee, led him to discover his Jewish identity. In his testimony, he mentions experiencing antisemitism before the war, and also in postwar America. There is the curious use of the phrase "Jew boy": he is being self-deprecating, but the phrase also seems to grow out of his own experiences with antisemitism. His explanation of how he chose his temple is also interesting: he conveys he so wanted to develop a religious identity, to develop that part of his life, that there was a real urgency. B'nai B'rith is a Jewish service organization whose members are committed to the Jewish people and the state of Israel. Founded in 1843 in New York City by recent German-Jewish immigrants, the organization also undertakes anti-defamation efforts, educational initiatives, and provides scholarships to young people. By 1956, Bruskin was involved with organizing the 100th anniversary of the B'nai B'rith chapter in New Haven (he is listed on the program as responsible for "tablet dedication"). See https://www.bnaibrith.org/uploads/7/8/5/9/7859990/conn.pdf. Bruskin was not alone among the Jewish American soldiers whose wartime experience shaped them: see Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 2006); and the movie *GI Jews: Jewish Americans in World War II* (2018, directed by Lisa Ades), which examines the experiences of Mel Brooks, Henry Kissinger, and Carl Reiner, among others. Primo Levi recalled of the Allied liberators in *The Reawakening*: "They did not greet us nor did they smile. They seemed oppressed not only by compassion but by a confused restraint, which sealed their lips and bound their eyes to the funeral scene." (Quoted in Jennifer Orth-Veillon, 'For Some Holocaust Survivors, Even Liberation Was Dehumanizing,' *New York Times*, 28 April 2020). Clearly, the liberators experienced something so profound that it shaped many of them in fundamental ways.

Baillie-Stewart, his name was. Earlier, Baillie-Stewart-- we arrested him. Bob wrote out the arrest report form.[41]

[00:48:37] He was from British nobility. And he-- from 1933 to 1938, he was a spy in England for the Nazis. Um, he was checking the armaments, the armored vehicles and the tanks and so forth. Because eventually, you know, the Germans knew they were going to be in a war. And he was in that, and then he was captured in England. And he was sentenced to the Tower of London.

[00:49:12] You know, in England, when a person of nobility has to go to prison, they put him in the Tower of London. And with influence, they got him out in 1938. So then he be-- went to Germany, became a German citizen. And he, um-- then he was with-- of course, eventually, he was arrested, so I don't know what happened to him after that.[42]

[00:49:35] Uh, then there were, uh, other, uh people we arrested there. Oh yes, I personally arrested the Frau Eigruber. Eh, she-- you see, Austria was divided into four districts called a Gau. And her husband was the Gauleiter of this particular district, Eigruber.[43] And she, -- I remember

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[41] Norman Baillie-Stewart (1909-1966), came from a family with a tradition of military service and he himself attended the Royal Military College at Sandhurst prior to aiding the Germans with their propaganda efforts. In 1933, he had been court martialed for selling military secrets to a foreign state and served a five-year sentence. Upon his release in 1937, he moved to Austria and by 1940 had obtained German citizenship. Baillie-Stewart had an aristocratic diction and likely inspired the name, "Lord Haw-Haw." Because another British national, William Joyce, proved more effective, Baillie-Stewart only broadcast on German radio until December 1939, thereafter working as a translator for the German Foreign Ministry. When Baillie-Stewart was arrested by Matteson and Bruskin at Altaussee in 1945 he was wearing Lederhosen and trying to blend in with the local population. Subsequently he was sent to Britain to be tried and imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he became known as 'the officer in the Tower' (he was often confused with Lord Haw-Haw). Baillie-Stewart was subsequently charged with "committing an act likely to assist the enemy" and sentenced to five years in prison. He was fortunate: William Joyce, who had been captured in Flensburg on 28 May 1945, was treated more harshly: charged with high treason, found guilty, and executed in 1946. Baillie-Stewart moved to Ireland after his release and lived under an assumed name. His biography appeared in 1967, a year after his death. See his memoir, Norman Baillie-Stewart and John Murdoch, *The Officer in the Tower* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1967); and more generally, Sean Murphy, *Letting the Side Down: British Traitors and the Second World War* (London: Sutton, 2005).

[42] The Tower of London, founded soon after 1066 in the wake of the Norman Conquest, housed prisoners from 1100 until 1952, including Sir Walter Raleigh, Anne Boleyn, and Rudolf Hess (the latter was kept there for only four days in 1941). During World War II, 12 individuals were executed at the Tower for espionage. The British also made plans to imprison Hitler in the Tower of London if he was captured alive. The official name is Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress of the Tower of London and it attracts nearly three million visitors each year.

[43]August Eigruber (1907-1947) and his wife, Johanna Spatzenegger Eigruber (1905-?). The Gauleiter of the Upper Danube (Oberdonau) region, which included the Mauthausen concentration camp, and an SS Obergruppenführer. Eigruber counted among the most radical Nazi leaders (he had joined the Nazi Party in 1928, especially early for an Austrian). At the war's end, he ordered bombs to be placed in the entrance to the Altaussee salt mine, where thousands of artistic masterpieces, including the Ghent altarpiece, were stored. Eigruber issued an order that the treasures must not fall into enemy hands—an order that was thankfully subverted (with the help of Austrian miners). Eigruber himself fled Linz using forged papers, and he too was in the Salzkammergut at the time Kaltenbrunner was hiding out there. Matteson and Bruskin had intelligence that they were close behind Eigruber,

when I arrested her, I interviewed her at length for personal interest, and also for the arrest report.

[00:50:12] And I asked her one question, had she ever met Hitler? Very proudly, she says, oh yes, he was in my house once. She was thrilled. She was proud of it. And then another time, out of her-- out of the clear blue sky, she looked at me and she says, oh, my grandmother once was treated by a Jewish doctor. I don't know, now she should try to impress me, you know? And, that was one of them.[44]

[00:50:42] Let's see. There were, um-- [INAUDIBLE] now. Oh yeah there was-- there was the-- an ambassador from Latvia who came in on his own to be arrested. Because he didn't want the Russians to get hold of him. He figured that we would treat him better. Well, we arrested him, and I don't know what happened to him later either.

[00:51:08] Um, then when-- when I was-- then I was told I was to go home. Bob stayed on there. Um, he volunteered to stay on. And he arrested a few other people later, uh, some of the people who had been informants, telling us about different Nazi-- they themselves were guilty of collaborating with the Nazis. He arrested some of them. One of them was Prince von Hohenlohe, who spoke pretty good English. He had been married to, um, an American woman, an heiress, very wealthy woman.[45]

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but at the same time, they received the tip on Kaltenbrunner, and followed up that lead. Eigruber would not be captured until 11 August 1945, when he was arrested in the rural area of Sankt Pankraz in Upper Austria by a U.S. Counterintelligence Unit.

Gauleiter Eigruber was imprisoned at Nuremberg and then tried in one of the Dachau trials in 1946. The Dachau trials were carried out by the U.S. military between November 1945 and August 1948. They dealt with the significant Nazi war criminals that fell into American hands, including camp guards, SS doctors, and the perpetrators of the Malmedy massacre where 84 Americans were killed by Waffen-SS in late-1944. August Eigruber was found responsible for crimes at Mauthausen, convicted for crimes against humanity, and sentenced to death by hanging, a verdict that was carried out at the Landsberg Prison on 28 May 1947. The Eigrubers, who married in 1930, had five children (some sources say six), including FPÖ politician Hermann Eigruber. For biographical sketches of August Eigruber, see Christian Angerer and Maria Ecker, *Nationalsozialismus in Oberösterreich: Opfer, Täter, Gegner* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2014), 73-74; Gregor Holzinger, *Die zweite Reihe: Täterbiografien aus dem Konzentrationslager Mauthausen* (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2016), 158-60; https://www.ooegeschichte.at/epochen/nationalsozialismus/biografien/august-eigruber/ and https://www.biographien.ac.at/oebl/oebl_E/Eigruber_August_1907_1947.xml (accessed 15 September 2021); and Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner,' 3.

[44] Bruskin comments on Nazis pointing to treatment of a Jewish doctor as proof that they were not antisemitic; this tactic is similar to Nazis claiming to have rescued Jews. While there may have been an element of truth in these assertions (e.g., once upon a time—before the Nazi seizure of power—there may have been a visit to a Jewish physician), they do not make up for the antisemitic views and other anti-Jewish behavior of the subjects.

[45] Bruskin is likely referring to Prince Alexander Konrad Maria von Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingsfürst (1918-1984), who in 1939 had married New York-born Boyce "Peggy" Schulze (1921-1964). The Prince was a Polish national (with an American mother) and his wife was the stepdaughter of the U.S. ambassador to Poland, Antony

[00:51:49] And, um, then, um-- let's see, where were we? Let me just look at my notes here. Oh yeah, then-- then there's this guy, um, George Havas. It seems that on the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Ebensee, Bob happened to be in that area. On one of his seven trips there. And they had there-- apparently, there is a monument or a memorial or something there. And they had a ceremony, um, celebrating the liberation 40 years.[46]

[00:52:35] And while he was there, he happened to run into this man, George Havas. That's not his picture, although George showed me his picture once, which is very similar to this one. And the two of them became quite friendly. And then at-- Bob-- oh, then George wanted to know who he was with when he went to Ebensee. So Bob told him about me. And then, George contacted me.

[00:53:03] He had a little trouble reaching me. Uh, he didn't-- and-- and Bob-- later in years, Bob got hold my address, but at that point, he didn't have it. So he contacted the Yale alumni office for my address. They wouldn't give it to him, it's confidential. So what he did, though, he sent a letter to me care of them, and then they sent it to me.

[00:53:27] So after that, we talked on the phone. And we-- this was maybe 10 years ago or so. We talked on the phone, and we wrote to each other and so forth, you know? And he was an inmate there. And of course, he collaborated [sic. corroborated] a lot of things that I had seen too, you know? And he knew very well. But he didn't recognize this picture, though, of that person.

[00:53:56] JOANNE RUDOF: He was a prisoner in Ebensee?

Drexel Biddle, Jr. Prince von Hohenlohe and Peggy Schulze had married in October 1938 in Paris after a four-month courtship. At the start of September 1939, the Prince was mobilized with the Polish armed forces and Peggy stayed with her mother and stepfather. She endured the initial German attack on Poland before being evacuated with other officials on 5 September. This entailed a harrowing twelve-day journey across Poland to Romania during which they experienced bombardment from German planes and machine-gun attacks. Prince Alexander reached Budapest and then reunited with his wife, before heading to New York, where they arrived on 4 November 1939. How Prince von Hohenlohe was arrested in Europe in 1945 by Robert Matteson is not clear.

[46] George (Gyorgi) Havas (1929-2012) was born in Mukacheve, Czechoslovakia (today Ukraine). He experienced the Hungarian take-over of his town in late-1938, after the Germans were given the Sudetenland and arranged the award of land to Hungary. Havas was transported to Auschwitz on 15 May 1944, and then on to Mauthausen and then to Ebensee, where he spent one year prior to liberation. His father was a Sonderkommando in Auschwitz who perished in the October 1944 uprising. George Havas worked in the notorious tunnels at Ebensee. He lost his brother and several friends in the Ebensee camp. Only 16 when he was liberated, Havas was featured in some of the photos of the camp taken when the Americans arrived. See, for example, image 76788, at the USHMM at https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa7325. He immigrated to the USA in 1947 and lived in Virginia prior to his death in 2012. See the oral history interview with George Havas at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, RG-50.030.0378, https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504871 (accessed 26 August 2021). There is also an interview with Havas connected with the memorial at Ebensee: https://memorial-ebensee.at/website/index.php/de/geschichte/19-konzentrationslager/9-zeitzeugeninterview-havas (accessed 27 August 2021).

[00:53:58] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: He was a prisoner, yeah, an inmate.

[00:53:59] FRANCES COHEN: But you hadn't met him when you were there?

[00:54:01] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: No, no, no, not at all, no. He-- he was Jewish. He was-- his family came from Czechoslovakia. And Czechoslovakia was occupied by the Hungarians for a number of years, so he learned the Hungarian language pretty well. And he still does interpreting for the Holocaust museum now, for Hungarian. And he's-- he's a very pessimistic sort of guy. He never got over his experience there. He's done a lot of different things.

[00:54:31] JOANNE RUDOF: What is his name?

[00:54:32] SIDNEY BRUSKIN: Havas, H-A-V-A-S. And I invited him to come here sometime. I spoke to one of you about-- and I told him about what I was going to do, and about Ebensee, and how they have tapes of other people in Ebensee. He'd love to see them sometime. As a matter of fact, I just got a letter from him. He says, he-- if they want to interview me, he'd be glad to.

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[00:00:24] INTERVIEWER 1: You have an interesting collection of notes.

[00:00:26] SUBJECT: Oh, gosh, yeah. Oh, it's-- I sent him copies of a lot of things, too.

[00:00:34] INTERVIEWER 1: OK.

[00:00:34] SUBJECT: For ins-- OK, yeah. But one of the-- one of the things I sent to Robert [Matteson ?] who was my buddy when-- when we captured Kaltenbrunner, um, I remember was the copy of the secret orders from the colonel in our outfit telling us to go to Altaussee. It was a secret. My grandson was very much impressed with it.

[00:00:57] INTERVIEWER 2: [CHUCKLES]

[00:00:58] SUBJECT: But he-- he's only 13. Anyhow, this medal here belonged to a Major Scheidler, was the adjutant to General Ernst Kaltenbrunner. And when Bob captured him, uh, Kaltenbrunner had badge number two. Badge number one had belonged to Himmler. And badge

number two, uh, was, um, the badge of, uh, Kaltenbrunner. He kept that, and Bob gave me Scheidler's badge, which I have here.[47]

[00:01:36] Then just a couple of little, minor things. You know, in Germany, during the war, during the regime, Nazi regime, people didn't say hello to each other. They said Heil Hitler. And after into it so many times, because it was just a force a habit. Of course, I'd-- I would get on him.

[00:01:54] He says, uh, uh, [Sie dürfen nicht -- Sie brauchen nicht das zu sagen] You don't have to say that anymore. So they'd excuse themselves. But you know, the picture, Schindler's List was interesting. Um, whenever the Nazis greet each other, they'd all say hello. None of them said Heil Hitler. There's only one Heil Hitler in the whole movie. And that was when the, uh, that, uh, the notorious colonel who was in charge of the camp, uh--

[00:02:22] INTERVIEWER 1: Goth.

[00:02:22] SUBJECT: --where-- uh, beg pardon?

[00:02:23] INTERVIEWER 1: Goth.

[00:02:24] SUBJECT: Uh, d-- Goth?

[00:02:25] INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah. G-O--

[00:02:26] SUBJECT: What was his name?

[00:02:27] INTERVIEWER 1: --T-H.

[00:02:27] SUBJECT: Yeah, right.[48] When he went to the gallows, if you saw the picture, you'll remember it was--it was-- I liked where they kicked the boxes away. It wasn't very dignified, anyhow. He said Heil Hitler. It was the only time anybody in the whole movie said Heil Hitler. I'm just struck by that. I don't know. Was it an oversight, or what?

[00:02:47] And, um, let's see now.

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[47] While Bruskin retained Scheidler's RSHA badge, Kaltenbrunner's badge disappeared—until found by a Dutch tourist in a Styrian lake in 2001. Kaltenbrunner evidently discarded it at the war's end in an attempt to conceal his identity. Michael Leidig, 'Nazi Chief's Seal Found in Alpine Lake,' *The Telegraph*, 15 November 2001.

[48] Amon Göth (1908-1946) was an Austrian SS officer who served as the commandant of the Kraków- Plaszów concentration camp. Known for his extraordinary sadism, Göth was also corrupt and was relieved of his duties in September 1944 on charges of stealing Jewish property. He was captured by the Americans in May 1945 in the Bavarian Alps (wearing a Wehrmacht uniform and denying his SS affiliation). Göth was subsequently extradited to Poland where he was tried and executed by hanging in September 1946 at the Montelupich prison near the camp he had once overseen. He is a central character, played by Ralph Fiennes, in Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993).

[00:02:51] INTERVIEWER 1: You know, if you could tell us a bit, you said when you came back--

[00:02:54] SUBJECT: Yes.

[00:02:54] INTERVIEWER 1: --to the States, after you were--

[00:02:55] SUBJECT: Right, right.

[00:02:55] INTERVIEWER 1: --uh, decommissioned--

[00:02:56] SUBJECT: Yeah, yeah.

[00:02:57] INTERVIEWER 1: --that you told people about what you had seen in Ebensee.

[00:03:01] SUBJECT: Yeah.

[00:03:01] INTERVIEWER 1: And I am curious--

[00:03:02] SUBJECT: Yeah.

[00:03:03] INTERVIEWER 1: --about what the responses of people here were to what you saw?

[00:03:07] SUBJECT: Yep, yeah. Well, by that time, people were beginning to find out. See, I didn't get back-- the war was over in May, and I didn't get back until-- I think it was about the end of November, 1945. People were beginning to find out. Although I don't think they can still visualize it, unless they'd actually seen it. That's why I tell people to go to a museum and things like that, you know?[49]

[00:03:30] INTERVIEWER 1: And--

[00:03:31] SUBJECT: And my family, you know, they went to the museum. My grandson saw it, too.

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[49] Knowledge of the Holocaust among the American public during the war was limited, with newspapers like the *New York Times* burying coverage of the genocide deep in its pages; but the liberation of concentration camps and the associated newsreel footage in late-spring 1945 received broad coverage. The subject was also central to the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1945-46, which also brought greater public awareness. See, among other works, David Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1971); Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: Touchstone, 1993); Henry Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How American and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1005); Robert Abzug, *America Views the Holocaust, 1933-1945: A Brief Documentary History* (New York: Bedford, 1999); and Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[00:03:36] INTERVIEWER 1: Now, did you-- is this something you discussed once, and never talked about again?

[00:03:42] SUBJECT: Frankly, most times I discuss it with people who were involved, like Bob [Matteson] or George Havas. When I visited, I was in Washington three or four days. We spent hours talking about it. It was mostly people who were involved with it.

[00:03:55] INTERVIEWER 1: Mm-hmm.

[00:03:56] SUBJECT: You know?

[00:03:56] INTERVIEWER 1: So this was not something you told your children about, or--

[00:04:01] SUBJECT: Well, uh, a little bit. They didn't-- they didn't, even my-- I remember, my father knew about it, but they never pressed me for anything about it. But then-- then I though-- then-- then, all of a sudden, when people now are beginning to feel that we shall not forget.

[00:04:20] This movement, you know? It's-- it wasn't always that way. One point, I thought that people would forget about everything. But now this whole thing, is movement, you know-- remember [INAUDIBLE] Memorial and the-- the movie and so forth and so on, and what you people are doing here. Uh, I think it's wonderful, and it's reviving the interest in it.[50]

[00:04:39] So, um, um, now, I've talked to people who have seen *Schindler's List* and I've told them that I'd seen similar things like that, too. I'd been in the camp. But, um, s-- truthfully, no-- some people aren't interested that much.

[00:04:57] INTERVIEWER 2: Now, when Mr. Havas sought you out--

[00:05:00] SUBJECT: Yeah.

[00:05:01] INTERVIEWER 2: Um--

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[50] Bruskin speaks of an increase in Holocaust awareness and education in the 1980s and early 1990s. This represented a shift from those affected to a topic in the broader culture. The opening of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993, and the treatment of the subject in movies, books, and other forms, has increased public knowledge of this history exponentially. When Bruskin speaks of "the movie" above, he is likely referring to Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, also from 1993, which was based on Thomas Keneally's best-selling 1982 book, *Schindler's Ark*. Spielberg's movie was nominated for twelve Academy Awards and won an Oscar for Best Picture and Best Director, among other awards. From this point, the subject of the Holocaust became more visible in much of the West. Among other works, see Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Mariner Books, 2000); Peter Hayes, *Why? Explaining the Holocaust* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2018); and Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

[00:05:01] SUBJECT: Well, at Ebensee. He was thrilled that-- that I had been to Ebensee, that he'd met somebody who'd been at Ebensee.

[00:05:07] INTERVIEWER 2: And that's what he was looking for, people who--

[00:05:09] SUBJECT: Yep, yep, yep, yep.

[00:05:10] INTERVIEWER 2: --had, uh--

[00:05:10] SUBJECT: Yep, yep, yep. People who were connected with it.

[00:05:12] INTERVIEWER 2: Connected with that.

[00:05:13] SUBJECT: Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Matter of fact, he told me about, um, well, I don't know-- well, I think there's something here. Maybe we can talk about it. Nurses. He-- he had heard that there were some nurses there. Now, this picture, I have to call him or write to him. It's a little bit mysterious. I'm not sure-- is this-- do you recognize anybody-- women here?

[00:05:42] INTERVIEWER 1: It would be hard for us to--

[00:05:43] SUBJECT: Yeah, I--

[00:05:43] INTERVIEWER 2: Yeah.

[00:05:44] SUBJECT: Now, this-- supposedly, this gentleman here was an inmate. And he was working with the counterfeiters. But he doesn't look like an inmate here. He looks pretty well fed.

[00:05:53] INTERVIEWER 1: Mm-hmm.

[00:05:54] SUBJECT: So the picture might have been taken later.

[00:05:55] INTERVIEWER 2: Later.

[00:05:56] SUBJECT: I have no idea. But he--

[00:05:57] INTERVIEWER 1: And where did you get that?

[00:05:58] SUBJECT: George sent me that a few days ago.

[00:06:01] INTERVIEWER 1: From-- that's--

[00:06:02] INTERVIEWER 2: Mr. Havas?

[00:06:02] SUBJECT: [INAUDIBLE]. Yes. He knew I was coming here. That's why he sent it.

[00:06:05] INTERVIEWER 1: Uh-huh.

[00:06:05] INTERVIEWER 2: Oh, I see.

[00:06:05] SUBJECT: Mr. Havas did that. In other words, he wanted me to have you people get this picture. Um, let's see. Uh, here. Well, just-- I'll just read briefly here. Um, "If you can do so, please get this copy of a photo to that museum which has the photos from the nurse." He thinks that people are the photos that the nurse--

[00:06:31] INTERVIEWER 1: Mm-hmm.

[00:06:31] INTERVIEWER 2: Oh, I see.

[00:06:31] SUBJECT: --but apparently not.

[00:06:32] INTERVIEWER 2: Yeah.

[00:06:33] INTERVIEWER 1: Mm-hmm.

[00:06:33] SUBJECT: Just "Ebensee with the, uh, she was with the US Army 30th Field Hospital, and ask them to send it to that nurse as soon as possible."

[00:06:42] INTERVIEWER 1: Well, that--

[00:06:42] SUBJECT: Send her--

[00:06:42] INTERVIEWER 1: --we could do for you.

[00:06:43] SUBJECT: You could?

[00:06:43] INTERVIEWER 1: Yes.

[00:06:43] SUBJECT: Great, great, good. "I hope she's still alive and well. She is one of the three well-fed babes in this photo which I have"--

[00:06:50] INTERVIEWER 2: [CHUCKLES]

[00:06:51] SUBJECT: --"which I have from Adolph [? Burger, ?] the healthy-looking fellow in sporty civilian outfit with decent long hair." Yes, he does have long hair. "Former member of the counterfeiting detail, all of whom were supposed to be shot before the Americans got there. Give them my address for transmitting to the nurse, and I'll get in touch with [? Burger, ?] who can send her a regular print as a photo, as he has the negative for this."

[00:07:18] INTERVIEWER 1: Mm-hmm.

[00:07:19] SUBJECT: So, next time I talk to him, I'm going to find out when this picture was taken.

[00:07:25] INTERVIEWER 1: Mm-hmm.

[00:07:25] INTERVIEWER 2: Well, he may have been in better health because of not going to a work camp. The others were going to--

[00:07:30] SUBJECT: True. That's true. Yeah, well. I don't know. I can't fit my-- I suppose the u-- uniform-- yeah, the uniforms look like nurses' uniforms, I guess.

[00:07:42] INTERVIEWER 1: [INAUDIBLE]

[00:07:42] INTERVIEWER 2: Were there very few that looked like him in his condition? When you went to the camp?

[00:07:47] SUBJECT: The only other one I saw was this kapo I saw, in the-- in the ca-- in the crematorium. Yeah.

[00:07:51] INTERVIEWER 2: The others were all--

[00:07:52] SUBJECT: All emaciated, absolutely. But-- but then-- then I-- I-- I've got to ask George. It-- it seems to me that there are awful lot of young men. This is typical age, young people-- late teenagers, early 20s. And I-- I-- I don't-- I don't know why they w-- it was the younger men what seemed to be predominant there over the others. George was a younger man, too, when he was there. And in fact, the picture he showed me resembles this guy.

[00:08:22] Oh, a couple other little things. I remember in France, I-- I developed a toothache. And I went b-- back, way behind the lines, to where there was a-- a dental office. Uh, there was a Jewish dentist that t-- took care of it. He wasn't, uh, he didn't have very good equipment. As a matter of fact, just a side thing, his drill was not electrically operated. It was foot treadle, which is very slow and painful.

[00:08:51] So anyhow, he knew I was Jewish. And I went. W-- just before I left, he says, by the way, he says, uh, what outfit, he says?

[00:08:59] I'm with the 80th Infantry Division, CIC.

[00:09:01] He says, well, he says, if you capture any German soldiers and they have Lugers or guns, would you please take them and bring him to me?

[00:09:11] I says, why do you want them?

[00:09:11] He says, so, he says, someday, we're going to fight for Palestine. And we're going to create a new country there. And that's why we want the guns.

[00:09:22] INTERVIEWER 1: Huh.

[00:09:22] SUBJECT: So it was very interesting. Unfortunately, I did get a couple Lugers, but I couldn't get in touch with him. Oh, -- one thing I did get-- I sent it home. It was a shotgun that had belonged to Scheidler. And, I finally sold it. I got well over $400 for it. I just did-- I didn't know what to do with it at the point. There was no museum around. It was several years ago.[51]

[00:09:52] INTERVIEWER 1: Mm-hmm.

[00:09:52] SUBJECT: I might have given it to a museum. The Luger, I don't know what happened to it. It just got lost or stolen somewhere, the Luger itself. Oh, and, um, let's see what else I have in here. [INAUDIBLE].

[00:10:44] Oh, I had to correct my grandson. He used to talk about the-- the war-- well, when he was very small, he wanted to know what kind of tanks I rode in. [CHUCKLES] What kind of artillery I had. He was interested in armaments. Then he used to say about the Americans and the Germans fighting each other. Well, his—his father is of German descent.

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[51] Allied soldiers took home an enormous quantity of 'souvenirs' and war trophies. While the Red Army troops plundered with abandon—the image of a Soviet soldier with his sleeve rolled up and half a dozen wristwatches lining the exposed arm has become iconic, American troops also took a great deal of Nazi memorabilia and the like and brought it back to the USA, often in their footlockers. Flags with swastikas, firearms, and silverware were all popular with the GIs. Schloss Friedrichshof near Frankfurt, which belonged to the princes von Hessen, was turned into a U.S. officers' club, and nearly all the silver was taken by visiting soldiers (while the Hessen jewels were discovered in the cellar by the two Americans in charge, who proceeded to abscond with them—a great deal was never recovered). For Bruskin to take home Scheidler's firearm is typical for his cohort. That he later sold it in early 1990 is also telling: this date coincides with the rise of the market for Nazi memorabilia, which took off in the early 2000s with the advent of the Internet. A number of the dealers and collectors of Nazi objects are Jewish: an estimate from the mid-1980s suggested that forty percent of the collectors of Hitler memorabilia were Jewish, and that number has probably remained fairly constant. Robert Harris noted that 50 percent of collectors were "old soldiers." Journalist Peter Wyden quoted one Jewish collector, Alec Tulkoff: "It's a matter of feeling victorious. You may have killed my relatives, but I own you now." Peter Wyden, *The Hitler Virus: The Insidious Legacy of Adolf Hitler* (New York: Arcade, 2001), 235. See also Kenneth Alford, *The Spoils of World War II: The American Military's Role in the Stealing of Europe's Treasures* (New York: Carol Publishing, 1994); Kenneth Alford, *Allied Looting in World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012); William Honan, *Treasure Hunt: A New York Times Reporter Tracks the Quedlinburg Hoard* (New York: Fromm International, 1997); and Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States, *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims' Assets* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000); and Konstantin Akinsha and Grigorii Kozlov, with Sylvia Hochfield, *Beautiful Loot: The Soviet Plunder of Europe's Art Treasures* (New York: Random House, 1995). Some of the objects brought home by American soldiers are now found on the market as 'collectables': see, for example, James Yannes, *The Collector's Guide to 3rd Reich Tableware: Monograms & Logos—Historic & Collectible* (Indianapolis: Trafford: 2011).

[00:11:07] So I says, Benjamin, I don't want you to use that word "German" anymore. Use "Nazi" instead. So to this day, whenever we discuss it, it's the Nazis against the Americans.[52]

[00:11:23] Uh, well, I can't think of anything particular. I'm sure when-- I'm sure when I get home I'll remember other things. Let's see. Did I show you all my pictures?

[00:11:37] INTERVIEWER 1: Well, why don't you show us the one of you [INAUDIBLE]?

[00:11:39] SUBJECT: Yeah, all right. Oh, there's a couple of me.

[00:11:42] INTERVIEWER 1: The portrait in the, uh, folder is very--

[00:11:44] SUBJECT: Oh, in the folder? OK. Yeah, this was taken in Mississippi. And there's one more here. This is when I was dressed up during-- [INAUDIBLE] pass. [INAUDIBLE] the other one when I was-- did you see this one?

[00:12:10] Oh, this one, I gotta tell you about. This one-- these two men are anti-Nazi civilian guards. Some of the lower people that we arrested, we keep 'em a few days. And this is-- this building is part of our office building. And we jailed them there.

[00:12:29] And these two guys were-- uh, were guards there, and I would post the guards myself. So that's myself here. You can't see it, but I'm carrying my .45 here. And these are the two civilian guards. And it says CIC there, Counter Intelligence Corps.

[00:12:45] INTERVIEWER 2: How did you determine that they were anti-Nazi? These were civilians--

[00:12:48] SUBJECT: Well, they--

[00:12:49] INTERVIEWER 2: --in the town?

[00:12:49] SUBJECT: --they-- they volunteered themselves to us. Uh, but we checked them very carefully, too. They-- we-- we interrogated them. Frankly, it was a matter of judgment. They-- they came to us. They said, we-- we were anti-Nazis. Can we do anything for you? And

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[52] Bruskin draws a distinction between "German" and "Nazi," which perhaps represents an attempt to avoid a blanket condemnation (similar to that articulated by racists). From his experiences, Bruskin knew that there are distinctions between Germans. A number of scholars have also made this distinction: e.g., Professor Jane Caplan, who writes: "Everyone 'who cares about the Holocaust and historical accuracy' needs to distinguish between the Nazis and 'the Germans' precisely because explanations of the Holocaust must grasp its political causes, and not rely on lazy—and in fact racist—equations of Nazism with Germany." See Jane Caplan, "The Nazis, Germany and Lazy Equations," in *The Guardian* (letters) (1 July 2015) at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/01/the-nazis-germany-and-lazy-equations (accessed 5 December 2021).

so forth. And they gave us information, which was very helpful in getting Kaltenbrunner. And, um, and then it was a matter of judgment, primarily, too, to find out if they really were.

[00:13:15] We'd never let them in on anything-- any of our literature that was secret. We had secret documents. For instance, we had a tremendous directory of people who were-- who were supposed to be arrested. It was a top-secret book, but we kept that under lock and key, and we never let these guys, uh, get ahold of any of our information.[53]

[00:13:35] Matter of fact, they didn't even-- we learned through them where, possibly, Kaltenbrunner was hiding. But we never told them when we were going to do the actual capturing.

[00:13:51] INTERVIEWER 2: When you mention that, um, one of the people you arrested said he didn't know about the camp, would that be possible, that someone in the town not know--

[00:14:01] SUBJECT: At that point, I--

[00:14:01] INTERVIEWER 2: --about the camp?

[00:14:02] SUBJECT: --feel very unlikely. I-- I-- I can't possibly see it. I-- I tell you this. He probably knew the camp. He may not have known about the slaughtering. He may not have. Uh, that's something else.[54]

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[53] The directory, or a version of it, was published in 2018, and it is indeed an extensive documentation of leading Nazi officials. See Allied Control Authority, *The Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects: Consolidated Wanted Lists* (Uckfield, UK: Naval & Military Press, 2018 [1947]). But due to the limitations of technology, the Allies' watch-list was not enforced with rigor. Notorious SS-physician Dr. Josef Mengele, for example, flew from South America back to Europe to visit family in the mid-1950s; according to Mengele's biographer, David Marwell, "In March 1956, he flew to Switzerland with a brief stopover in New York City." See David Marwell, *Unmasking the Angel of Death* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2020), 164. That this Nazi war criminal could fly via the USA at this time is evidence of the limited tracking and investigative capabilities of Western authorities. Many Nazi officials revived their careers in the postwar period. As the Western Allies pushed into Germany in 1945, they became aware of the need for German personnel to prosecute the war and to care for the civilian population. This included the need for translators, guards, and support staff. This issue elicited a range of reactions, from those who were more 'pragmatic' like General George Patton, who wanted to utilize the expertise of Nazi officials, to others who were more critical. See Mary Fulbrook, *Reckonings: Legacies of Nazi Persecution and the Quest for Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Giles MacDonogh, *After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied Occupation* (New York: Basic Books, 2009); Paul Roland, *Life After the Third Reich: The Struggle to Rise from the Nazi Ruins* (London: Arcturus, 2018).

[54] There is now a sizeable literature regarding the knowledge of the German people about the camps and of the extermination process more generally. Gordon Horwitz penned a path-breaking 1990 study on Mauthausen and surrounding communities. Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) deals with the general awareness of concentration camps in Germany going back to the spring of 1933. David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion Under Nazism* (London:

[00:14:17] But, well, in the first place, he knew that as a Nazi, he was supposed to hate the Jews. That's part of the creed or doctrine. He knew that. But to what extent they were to be-- and he knew that there were-- as a Nazi functionary, he was supposed to report any people with Jewish blood in them.

[00:14:39] But that's something we were skeptical about it. And we couldn't prove anything, but I personally was skeptical that he didn't know what was going on. I don't know what the reaction of other people was. Yeah.[55]

[00:14:58] INTERVIEWER 1: Well, we'd like to thank you for coming today--

[00:15:00] SUBJECT: OK, you're welcome.

[00:15:00] INTERVIEWER 1: --and sharing with us.

[00:15:01] SUBJECT: Thank you for the opportunity.[56]

Blackwell, 1992), takes up the German people's more specific knowledge of the Holocaust. Also useful is Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[55] Bruskin grapples here with the antisemitism and the question of whether it changed after 1945. Most surveys conducted after 1945 indicated the persistence of antisemitism in the populations of what would become the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. See, among other works, Richard Merritt and Anna Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970); Rainer Erb, ed., *Anti-Semitism in Germany: The Post-Nazi Epoch from 1945-95* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Götz Aly, *Europe Against the Jews: 1880-1945* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2020) and Deborah Lipstadt, *Antisemitism: Here and Now* (New York: Schocken, 2019).

[56] SIDNEY Bruskin died in Hamden, New Haven, CT, on 13 August 2005. He is buried in Congregation Mishkan Israel Cemetery (CN 55), which dates back to 1843 (it was founded by about twenty New Haven Jewish families, mostly from Bavaria). Located in the Westville section of New Haven (near West New Haven, and close to his old high school, Hillhouse High School), the cemetery is the final resting place for many of the most prominent Jews in the area. Ancestry.com says that they have 19 photos and 128 records about SIDNEY Bruskin. See https://www.ancestry.com/genealogy/records/SIDNEY-bruskin-24-tmk8zk. See also The New Haven Jewish Cemetery Database at: http://www.newhaventorahcenter.org/cemetery_search_ext.asp?lname=BRUSKIN&fname=SIDNEY&maid=&dd=13%20AUG%202005&db=17%20MAY%201914&par=&spo=&heb=&cem=Congregation%20Mishkan%20Israel&loc=CN55.