

Q: I tell you what, why don't we start with one of the questions, if you feel like diversing.... First, of all, can you tell me your full name?

A: Malcolm C. Webber.

Q: And your address?

A: Home address is 95 Kohary Drive, in New Haven, Connecticut.

Q: And your Date of Birth?

A: June 20, 1916.

Q: And mine's the 22nd,

A: A few years later.

Q: Can you give me your age at liberation? At the time you went into the camps?

A: Uh, '45. I have to do the calculations.

Q: All right, I'll give you a minute.

A: I must have been 29, yes that's right. I got out of the army when I was 29 years old. Correct.

Q: And did you have any prospects of a profession at the beginning of the war?

A: Well, you've got to go back and realize that at the beginning of the war, that was the depression year, I came out of college, I was down in school in North Carolina, you couldn't get a job, I finally managed to get one - that took a friend to get it for me - where I earned \$10 a week for 70 hours a week, in a cigar store. Then I had a brother-in-law that got me a a very small-time meat job.... and before that I went down to Pennsylvania and did some printing for awhile, but that was no good, you couldn't make a living, and I came back and I had a brother in law who was a very small time meat jobber, and while I wasn't at all enthralled with buying, lugging, and selling meat, I went with him, because it was a matter of something to do, and at the time, at that time, I was probably - had more feeling about Hitler, well, basically about Fascism, was a terrible anathema to me, I guess I was pretty far Left, I don't guess, I don't think I ever became a Communist, but certainly a Socialist, and so that when the
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A: U.S. so that U.S. actually entered the war. No, I'm sorry, ^{when} we started the war effort, and we had a one-year-term, ^{you know you could go in the Army for one year.} and so I decided I would go in for the one year and get it over with. As far as I was concerned, that's what I said, but basically it was a commitment, the anti-Fascist commitment that did it, and I can remember discussing with who is now my wife (we got married during the War) and we decided it was a good idea for me to go in and get the year over.

Q: And what is your present occupation?

A: I am Connecticut Regional Director for the Anti-Defamation. After the war, I went with industry, I was with industry for 17 years, and all during that time, I was active generally with civil rights, civil liberties, kinds of activities. A man whom I was very close to became Governor of Massachusetts, Jeb Peabody, and I Jeb asked me if I would take on the post of First Commissioner, and then chairman of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, which ~~xx~~ ^{was} actually the operating office from the kind of title bit. And my wife said, well, all right I will go back to teaching and you take it, and we'll make up part of the loss in pay, so anyway I took on the job as Chairman of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, which led me into the field professionally and from there to this Anti-Defamation League job.

Q: And what was your military unit when you were in the service ?

A: Well, I ended up with the 786th Tank Battalion, but when I was drafted I went down to Kentucky, Ft. Knox, Kentucky, and through the Armored Training Center, and at that stage the war was not on, and they were very anxious for anybody with any college background for Officers Candidates School. I didn't have any desire to go to Officers Candidate School, so I ended up as a clerk after I got out of OCS, even though I couldn't type very well. But, because I had some background, a little education, which of course the vast majority in those days didn't have, I ended the day that war was declared, December 7th, 1941, I was a Technical Sergeant in charge of Intelligence for the Fifth Armored Division, and that day when war was declared, I said I wanted to go to OCS, and ~~for~~ of course being where I was, in division headquarters, running an Intelligence Unit, the general immediately said yes, and I pulled out go somewhere....

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A: I forget where... I think it was out to California, and I stayed at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, and went through Officers' Candidate School.

Q: And what was the rank at the time of liberation?

A: At liberation, I think, yes, I was still a captain. I am not sure whether I was a Captain or a Major.... the whole thing got scrambled up and the majority came later, but I don't know whether it was earlier, so it was - as the papers came earlier, but I was a Captain through most of the time I spent in Europe, which is about a year.

Q: And which camp did you actually become involved with?

A: That is difficult to find. We came - at the - after the crossing of the Rhine. The Ruhr pocket, if you remember at all, the Ruhr was not taken, there was a pocket, and we were part of the force with the Third Corps of the First Army. Our job was to collapse the pocket, and there was a town by the name of Hemer, which is somewhere near Dorton, that we came into, and I think there was a prison.... I am not sure whether it was a prison camp or a slave labor camp in this town, that we - my company - took, and it was up on top of the hill, and we came into it and there was just emaciated bodies just lying all over the place, many of them already dead. There was a very few... and they wore gray uniforms, I assume they were Wehrmarts... they weren't black uniforms, so there might have been one in there, it is hard to go back that far in time.... You have to realize I had been two or three days without sleep, you know, then you are not quite clear in everything you do, and the immediacy in your mind is always life and death, you are really, it's a crazy kind of mental state when you are in warfare, especially the front line troops. Maybe not if you are following up with military government, that's different, but as front line troops particularly, we did mostly reconnaissance and spearhead, so you get into a very curious _____ where everything is dull, everything is rote, where it is horrible, anyway we came into the camp, and there were a few German guards left and some inmates seemed to be in comparatively good shape, at least they could stand up. Well, my guys in the tanks we carried, D Rations. We had no other food, except our D rations, we were way ahead at the time. And my guys started handing out the rations, including.... the the thing that got me was that they handed out the ~~EEE~~

A: they would hand it out, including the DDT powder that we were using for de-lousing. And the people were starving so, that they would take the DDT powder and mix it up with water from the mud puddle and eating it. Seeing this, I realized we were doing more harm than good in there, and I pulled my guys out, just leaving guards inside, because we had given away all the food we had and we could do nothing; I knew that if we opened the gates (I had had a previous experience with this with displaced people), that the roads were liable to get blocked, I didn't know how many were in the camp.

Q: At this point, were you inside the camp?

A: Yes, I went inside, sure. I also knew that we would have great problems with disease from the bodies that were there - which were dead and who was alive, etc. What do you do? So, anyway I pulled most of my troops out, because they had done everything they could do. We pulled out a couple of Germans... I don't know what happened to the rest of them, the inmates may have killed them. We pulled out some of them when we first walked in, I'm really not sure what happened there. I managed to - a few hours later - to get up my field kitchens that were connected with the company. We went out and recruited with a gun, people to work on the kitchens. We went through houses and found turnips, and we found the turnips buried in a pile. And we managed to come up with some food. Then we managed to come up with almost ...go up ,and tried to organize a bit, but first of all the bodies were there. So I finally used (we had a tank with _____ blades on it), we would use them for mine fields for the bulldozer blades....going through mine fields with a bulldozer blade, we used them once, that was the theory anyway. We went in there and used the bulldozer blade and built a ditch, then used another one with a straight blade... we had a thing there, we pushed the bodies into the ditch and buried them, because of the problem of disease. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ There was no way of getting rid of them. Could hardly see any virtue to burning them and didn't have any way to do that actually, but unfortunately we had the problem that the Germans had with the Jewish bodies, so we buried them as best we could for the problem of disease.

Q: Could you tell what the population was? The prison population?

A: Well, we made an estimate of some 300 that we buried, if I remember correctly. You know that's give or take. There might have been, there must have been upward of a couple of thousand, how much upward, I don't know. A lot of them got out, those that could walk.

Q: As you opened the gates?

A: As we opened the gates. They knew we were coming, really, somehow.

Q: How do you think they knew?

A: I don't know, maybe word got up that the Americans were on their way. They knew, it is like at Wetzlar (where the Lika camera is made), when we came into Wetzlar, one of my tanks ahead was Lt. Sheely and his crew actually it was two that were blown up. Hit ~~■~~ by Panzer _____, which is a bazooka kind of thing.

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A: The camp...finally some military government came up and began to...that got it organized a little bit. We were able through the field kitchens to begin to get some food up there. I forget how I did it now, but I remember being very conscious the fact we couldn't give them too much at a time. You did get at that stage of the game very conscious of the problems with DPs, the problem of hunger, the problem of overfeeding. You were conscious of all this.

Q: You had run into DPs before on the road?

A: Oh yes. One of the problems that you got...we got into...and I can tell you one town. I don't remember whether it was afterward or before. Really, I think it was probably after. But it illustrates the point anyway. There was a crossroads somewhere down...it was probably Bavaria because it was so mountainous. I'm not really clear on that either. But there was a crossroads, and in the morning some infantry had gone in there, taken the town, and then the Germans had come back into the hills with mortars and driven them back out again. We got orders to take the town. We came in. There was one road in. It was crossroads. Well, actually, mountains on all sides of the crossroads. We went back in just about dusk. We took the town. I set up roadblocks on each of the four corners, a couple of tanks for control, to keep the town until morning. I didn't figure we'd hold it, and I had word that the infantry was coming up the next morning. But the crossroads was vital, because this was the only way to get up ahead and this _____ was breaking wide open unless you moved...if you didn't move rapidly, the Germans would have a chance to set up another defense line. We were afraid of that. Actually, I don't ~~know whether they could have done it at that stage of the game. They didn't have any~~ think they could have done it at that stage of the game. They didn't have any _____. But I guess it was almost dark when one of my guys came in and said, "Hey Captain, we have a problem." "What's the matter" "We got a...there's people lying all over the roads. What do you mean there's people laying all over the roads. He said, "That's it. They're just lying there." I said, "Are they alive?" He said, "Yes. I think they're alive." I said, "Let's go take a look."

I went out and there were literally hundres of displaced persons-- you could tell they were displaced persons who were staggering, laying all over the place, obviously drunk. Any way, _____ ~~was~~ exploration following where they were coming from and I found the wine cellar and went in there. Here are these huge casks of wine, and they had found them and opened them, and they were all starving practically, or at least on absolute minimal diets, and were drinking the wine. They had drunk, gotten out, and they were all over the roads. We couldn't pull them off fast enough. Especially with the new supply coming all the time. Where they all came from I really don't know. Anyway, _____ the Tommy gun blew some holes in the kegs and let it run down in the gutters, and got rid of it and by morning we had the roads cleared. But that's an example. They were all over the place.

You got into Germany itself. I don't know how many DP's there really were, how much slave labor, but God, it seemed like millions of people.

Q: How did you first hear about the camp? What brought that to your attention?

A: I'm not sure. When I was in England, which would have been 1944 or 1943, we began hearing that there were extermination camps. Rumors, vague stuff. Nothing definite. Until we...even when we were actually in combat it was never 100% clear to us until right near the very end the nature of the extermination camps. I can remember right at the very end I must have known. How I knew I don't remember, but I must have known because when the planes went over -- the British Air Force most of the time, British or U.S. -- I could remember at that stage saying I hope they're bombing rail lines. I must have known at the very end. But I really didn't know. If I can read...I've been reading something very recently the last few days...a study done by somebody on what information was available in the United States and when it was available about the actual nature of the camps. He makes the point that it was very clear...the Jewish press made it quite clear. BUT it wasn't very much...

Q: That was my feeling too, that it was clear.

A: To the Jewish press. But it was not clear, according to his writing, it was not written up very heavily in the general press and we were actually into 1944.-- I'll see if I can find it. I've got it here someplace -- before it really became clear, and by that time I was in the Army. I was in places like Laughton, Oklahoma and Ft. Smith, Arkansas and to say the least the press was not the greatest in areas like this. Really, I didn't know much. In spite of the fact that I had...was probably more intellectually curious than most, I really didn't know. I don't think many of our guys knew. We hated the German SS. We had no lessening of that, because we saw atrocities. We actually knew....the first experience we had with an SS officer...we took one prisoner. I took him, ~~in~~ fact, told my guys to take him, and as they were bringing him in, he pulled a gun out of his boot and shot one of my tank commanders after his hands were up and he had surrendered. We didn't take many SS troops...many black-uniformed prisoners after that even though we took a lot of the Wehrmacht and the grays. My God, they were 14-year-old kids and grandfathers towards the end, particularly.

Q: What was the mood of your men as you came into the camps?

A: I think in spite of their exhaustion, everything, there was a tremendous amount of horror. With some, with most. I had my few who didn't care either. We had the range of human beings, but the great majority were good, decent human beings. I don't know that they actually....we all saw at that camp at Hemer which I think is the town we were in according to my _____. They all saw it there. They had a great deal of sympathy. We got in there and they started immediately giving away their D rations, giving away their food, anything they had they gave them. The American soldier basically was like the American _____, many of them without too much education, without too much sophistication, and certainly when you're talking about 1943 it's very different

from today. The educational levels are very different. The communication levels are very different. But basically they were decent human beings, most of them.

Q: What did the prisoners do when they saw you?

A: My memory is of them begging, standing looking at us, almost numb, or begging for food. Food was the item. Anything for food, and by the way that applied to some of the Germans after the war too. They were offering their women, anything. _____ influence. I don't know.

Q: Did their condition make it hard for you to think of them as human beings?

A: Very definitely made it hard. You could feel sympathy, but almost on a mass level, rather than an individual level. Part of it was you didn't have time to talk to anybody or identify as human beings and you didn't have the relationship. You could in certain cases. When we got down into Mueeldorf, I think was the town. That's on the Enns River, almost in Austria. That was later. My guys brought into me a woman who had lived in the catacombs underneath the city, a Jewish woman, who had been saved by some of the people and she had lived in the catacombs under the city, in the caves, for 3 years or 4 years. Her husband she didn't know whether he was alive or dead. He had been abducted. You probably know that the Germans didn't just kill all them. They needed doctors so bad that even if doctors were Jewish, many of them survived. They sent them to the army to take care of soldiers. This was the wife he left behind, and the people brought food down and kept her alive. They brought her up, and somebody like that I identified...I sat and talked and identified with this individual, but when you go into a camp, where you're going down the road and here's hundreds of people walking or half staggering along the road and you're going into combat and you've got a hundred guys or x number of men you're responsible for, where's your concern? It's hard to separate out. You may have a great deal of concern for that poor person. You feel sympathy for him, but you can't really relate or anything. They're part of a mass. You're going into combat. I lost a lot of men.. It's a very traumatic experience.

I carried 96 men...96 men was the company, and I ended the war with almost 96. We had 126 go through _____, either killed, missing, wounded. So that's a lot of manpower.

Q: You say there were guards when you came into the camp.

A: That one camp was the only one I actually got into. Why they didn't run I don't know. I don't know that. I've thought about that, why they stayed there.

Q: What happened to the guards?

A: I really don't know. We took a couple of them prisoner, but there was more than that when we came in. More than that when we came in. I don't know why the hell they stayed. I think the inmates may have killed a couple of them. We took the guns away from them..

Q: Did you have any special orders towards treatment of the SS if you had come in contact with them?

A: No. At least, I never received any special orders. Perhaps there were special orders that I never heard of. They were beasts, the SS troops. We came into one ~~the~~ German town where they had raped fifteen....the group we were chasing was SS. They had raped about 15 women. They had burned down buildings. This was a German town. They must have recruited SS out of the pits of hell, for God's sake.

Q: Going through did you wonder what kind of people could these be? Did you think they were normal, the SS? Did you wonder about that?

A: Yes, we wondered about that. We wondered more at that stage about how they could be inculcated with such hate and such fervor for Hitler's system. The question we ran into some of the Hitler youth in the same way. Unbelievable.

A: After 30 years, do you still...do you have any answer to that question?

Q: No. The problem is the older you get, the more questions you don't have answers to.

Q: That's for sure.

A: That is completely incomprehensible to someone like myself. I've dealt with...

basically worked in human relations now for the past twenty years professionally and was an amateur before that, and I think ~~you~~^I know you can~~not~~ inculcate people, but I think it takes someone ~~who~~ perhaps with psychiatric training to really understand it. I just don't see how you can do it. One of my guys was enticed by a German girl into having sexual relations with her and in the middle of sexual relations, she found a knife and put it in him while the act was on. We found ~~in~~ her clothes this thing for Hitler Youth. She was doing her bit for the Fatherland.

Q: How about the German civilians as you come into...

A: Nicht Germanische. None of them knew what was going on. They were all innocent. They didn't know what was going on. I can remember back here at this Hemer. The camp was up on a hill. We went out and got some, brought in some of the Germans to work the kitchens ^{civilians}. I went around with this guy I had as an interpreter, this sergeant, and we started asking questions up the top. None of them knew it was there. No one knew what was going on there. It was ...you just couldn't get anything out of them. Nothing.

Q: Did they tour the camp at all or bury the dead or anything like that after it was open?

A: I really don't know. That I don't know. I don't know what military government did. When they got up....I think it was the military government. All I know is somebody took over from me fairly rapidly because we...

Q: In the next four days ...

A: Oh no. They took over in a few hours, actually maybe half a day. Somebody took over. It may have been infantry. We were a light tank company, and a light tank company was used for very special missions kind of. Remember we had 17 tanks worth \$200,000 a piece with all kinds of specialized equipment and we normally didn't do much housekeeping of any kind. They would want to get us moving out front again as rapidly as possible. So I think that was probably the reason why somebody took over and we got moving, but it was never very clear to me. I know

that somebody came up and said captain we're being relieve. Here are our orders. Or I got called some place and sat down with somebody and got new orders and moved out.

Q: After seeing the camp, though, did you think that the German civilians had any responsibility?

A: God, yes. A world where you can know those horrors are going on, it's impossible for it to be in the center of this populated area....it wasn't like Auschwitz which I've been to where it's way out in the country and they razed everything for two miles around so that actually you could say there are people out there who didn't know what was going on.

Q: A point of information about Auschwitz. I also have been there. I got the feeling that the Germans had built all the buildings I knew about. Everything was sent out to bid. I've read Hess's diaries, etc., but I was reading Sophie's Choice just last week and in there...

A: I haven't read that yet.

Q: Oh, you can't wait too long. It's excellent. IN there it seemed to me they said the buildings existed before...

A: Sure they did. It was basically...

Q: It was a National Guard kind of thing.

A: A National Guard thing. It was actually POLish or something because it had been so many ways, but historically those gray...red brick buildings were the original camp.

Q: Right. Because when I got there it seemed to me hard to believe that in the middle of the war they would build these buildings.

A: No. They built Birkenau.

Q: I saw that too.

A: Birkenau they built but not...

Q: It always confused me until I got _____.

A: Auschwitz itself was an old National Guard or whatever it was...I'm sure over the

years it was different things because Silesia I think went from Poland to Germany to Russia. I don't know. I'm not up ~~enough~~ on the history to know that. But it was definitely,...that was a camp. That was a military camp. That whole area where the museums are, the whole area where you walk in after you go through the entranceway where you walk in, that was all there and taken over.

Q: The trees had to be too old. They were so tall. I just couldn't figure it out.

A: Oh sure. That's a coal area. It's an important area, that area. It's in Silesia. That's coal producing, iron ore producing area.

Q: That's why they always fought about it.

A: Yes. I.G. Farben had a big plant not far away. I don't know. I didn't see that. I didn't see the plant.

Q: I didn't either.

A: But that was taken over. And some of the other camps had been something before. BUT these were distinguished from the kind of place I was at. The reason why I kind of suspected ~~the one we were in~~ the one we were in, Hemer, was a slave labor camp was because it was in the middle of, it was in this town, basically.

Q: How did you cope with this experience? In any particular way could you relieve your tension, going through have to cope with this?

A: You're talking about while it was happening, while I was in Europe and it was going on, I believe. Not the aftermath.

Q: Yes.

A: You discover a lot of things about yourself under this type of circumstance. You also discover there aren't any heroes and there aren't any cowards. You're built a certain way and you act a certain way and will doesn't have much to do with it actually. I suppose you could say you either have the will or you haven't the will, but the people, the men that broke and left at the first sound of fire, who ran, I don't look down my nose at them the way I would have without the experience. Either you could or you couldn't. I found that I could. I also found that within reason I could cope with the terrible tension and the terrible

problems. Being an officer helped, I think, because you had too much to worry about to be afraid. I found out a lot of things about myself. Only once did I actually break, and I was actually going to shoot an American officer who was ~~panicking~~ ^{convincing} [convincing]. Luckily, there was a medical guy there who grabbed me. Just the once did I ever really completely blow it. This was after I had had 26 men, 24 of them killed the day before. Some stupid Lt. Col. started to work me over about not turning in a morning report, and I lost my head and I was going for my gun _____ who was from Waterford, by the way, was next to me and grabbed me and that quieted me down.

Q: Was there a chaplain who had an active role at this time?

A: We were a separate tank battalion. While once in a while when we got ~~close~~ ^{close...} when we were with a major outfit, there would be a chaplain around. Once I saw a rabbi. But being a separate tank battalion we circulated. We were attached to various places. We pulled missions on our own. The last day of the war I had about 400 guys that they kept pouring into me. I had the majority of them, I guess, but they sent these Lt. Col.'s over from the Pentagon to get a Battle Star. We were not part of a large unit. We were a separate tank battalion. And even at that my company, being light tanks, mostly ^{doing} reconnaissance work, most of the time was off...was usually attached to another outfit yet. So we worked very much as an independent little outfit with the nickname of Task Force Malt.

Q: Task Force what?

A: Task Force Malt. I was very proud the morning I got out of a _____ some place in the middle of Germany and ~~there~~ ^{that} was chalk ^{all} over the tanks. I was kind of proud of it.

Q: As you went on, did you tell anybody about the camps?

A: Not particularly. The only thing we ever put on paper...this chap that worked... actually he was my interpreter. He used to write kind of a history of the company. The only thing we put on paper in official reports was the number of men killed, the number on hand, ~~how many~~ ^{number} injured, how many missing kind of thing. Statistics.

I'm sure that varied from outfit to outfit. I'm sure there was great variance there. I can just see myself every morning dictating a memo.

Q: These next few questions I think will be very easy for you to answer, but I'll let you know what ^{are the} ~~other~~ things they would ask ~~other~~ people who wouldn't ^{normally} ~~ordinarily~~ be ~~as~~ involved as you are. For instance, I might have interviewed somebody for the first time, so there was the question, Why will you talk now? That doesn't seem pertinent to you.

A: No. I can only say that there's a lot...I talk about a lot of things now ~~freely~~ really kind of _____ me who's been working in Holocaust education. We went 3 years ago back to Germany. I'd been to Europe a number of times after the war, but for the first time we decided we'd go to Germany. My kids were teaching in the American School in Antwerp and they had a car and Ray and I went over and joined them. I'm glad my kids like to have us around. We went into Cologne and down the Rhine which is where I fought. I went over the bridge of Remagen and it was swaying and it was quite an experience on that one. But Ray tells me that when we got about 10 miles from the Remagen Bridge I started talking and I talked for maybe two hours. We got to the bridge and I was telling her all about that. It just kind of poured out of me. Since then it's been a lot easier for me to talk about that since we went that time to Germany. I'll never go back. It's like there was a...remember the Al Capp column. There was a _____ who always had a black cloud over his head? That was my wife and I in Germany. The weather was gorgeous. The accommodations were good, reasonable. The food good, reasonable. But we got into Switzerland and we both looked up and said the sun is shining. Never go back.

Q: What made you decide to go back?

A: I wanted to go back once through the area. I'd fought through the area. I was on the flank on the attack on Cologne. I was on the ^{cable(?)} ~~_____~~ Canal, the connector between the British and the American Armies, then we hit the Rhine, close to the Rhine up there then circled down below. Then I went all the way down through the

Rhineland, down the Rhine away and then in and we went over at the Remagen Bridge. I wanted to see it again. As long as the kids were so close. We set that up on purpose. Never again.

Q:

Q: What did you think of the "Holocaust" show on T.V.? The four-part series.

A: All right. I'll put this down because I think it might be of interest to somebody. We of course were aware of it a long time in advance that a great deal of the promotion...you maybe have seen this thing, "The Record," that we put out in connect with it.

Q: Yes. I saw it.

A: O.K. I called up a great many of my Christian cohorts, friends, professionals in Christian organizations, ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ religious people and so forth. And I arranged a showing down at Channel 30, a preview of the first two hours of that Holocaust program. And they ran that without the commercials. Well, they then distributed "The Record" and we had them assemble groups to watch, they didn't use this as an educational device -- all therest of it. I didn't want my wife to see it alone the first night it was on. I sat down with her. When I watched it the first time I thought that it was horrible but bearable. When I watched it with Rae, after the seocnd commercial I had to leave. The contrast of waht they were showing and the damned bit with pantyhose and shaving lotion...that contrast got under my skin so bad I couldn't stand it and I had to leave the room. I think it was because I had seen it without it. IT bothered a lot of people. I think it was because I saw it without it first and then saw it with. Maybe that's what did it because I did watch the later episodes. It was part of my job, but my reaction was so bad I just couldn't watch it. Anyway, I thought that considering the problem.. and by the way I did meet Gerald Green. I actually played tennis with him a couple of times. The...I thought that considering the topic and the difficulty of the topic and the fact that in television you've got to pitch it to the kind of audience you have or they're gong to go "click", I thought

they did a ^{very} ~~pretty~~ good job with it. The thing that bothered me, as I say, was the commercials. Of course, you can throw things at it factually here and there as being off. bThere's no question about that. But you can't do it. How can you take....if it had been straight history, nobody would have watched it. So I think all in all it was an amazing production of great value.

Q: Do you think it had any influence on the German vote in Parliament?

A: Sure it did. Probably the most important item. On the continuation...the elimination of the statute of limitations. Probably the #1 item. I think that's what actually made the difference. From everything I gather from our organization, we would have....Parliament -- I guess that's what it is in Germany. A Parliament-- would not have eliminated it without that showing.

Q: This is a question that is easy for you to answer, but somebody should hear it.

A: Maybe it's not so easy. Some of the easy ones are the tough ones.

Q: Right. Do you think that the "Holocaust" should be taught in school systems or in the religious school systems?

A: In both ~~and~~ ^{but} in very, very different ways. If we're talking about the Jewish... if we're talking about in a religious system, a Jewish religious system or we're talking about a Christian religious system...

Q: Right. Answer for both.]

A: You've got three...actually I view this...as an educator I happen to face it basically from three different ways. First, Jewish education. Any ethnic or religious group has a right, in fact a bit of a duty, to face things in a way that will affect their people in their particular role. Now, the role in a religious school of teaching Jewish kids is they're Jews. I think it can be taught and should be taught as what happened to the Jews. And why they picked on the Jews and teach it as a subject about the Jews and man's inhumanity to Jews and then take off on the whole history of anti-Semitism. I think that's part of Jewish history. I think it should be taught. I think that kids have got to know. I think they're not prepared for the world _____. Thank God

it's less now than it's historically been in the United States, at least, than ever before or reasonably like it's never been before. [Brief interruption in tape. Conversation resumes as follows]

Q: How about in the secular schools?

A: In the secular schools I think that the lack of use of the Holocaust as a prime and clear example of man's inhumanity to man is shocking because the Holocaust took place...[tape ends. Resumes as follows]

A:have to think of the Armenians, certainly what we did to the Indians, certainly the Mongols. ^{didn't to Europe} It's not the first one, but it came out of a civilized society.

Germany of the 30's was considered ~~the~~ the most civilized nation, the most civilized area in the world, Western Europe. And that's where it happened. It happened also where technology was used for the destruction of people. These two things are absolutely unique. It's size is unique but you can get an argument of "well, you killed one million or six million." What's _____.

This argument certainly has some validity. The old Talmud where they save one life, you save the world. But here it came out of civilized, modern society. And nobody can claim it was not. It also came out of an area where the Jew was completely integrated into the community, where he wasn't very different. The German Jew was part of that community. This is what makes it unique. This is also what makes it proper to at least kick off the subject of man's inhumanity to man. The question of moral responsibility vs. the state and

and all the rest of these areas that have opened somehow. It does mean also that the other cases of genocide certainly should be talked about. But this one is unique because it came from civilized society and that's why it makes an opening for talking for values courses, man's inhumanity to man sections, this whole kind of an educational area. It should not be taught in public schools as just what happened to the Jews. That's a complete waste as far as I'm concerned. I don't think you can take what happened to the Jews and isolate it out from the total

picture. It's got to be what do we do to people. I just wrote a column on boat people, and what I said in that column is that if we were back now in the time of World War II the boat people wouldn't be let into the U.S. because of their restricted^{ive} national origin basis of immigration. It was the Holocaust that raised the consciousness level of people to the point where we got rid of that damn thing. For instance, when the McCarran Walters Act lease came up and then eliminating it entirely. But without that, if it hadn't been for that, the boat people couldn't come i to the United States. That's what I'm talking about a raising of consciousness. I think that's the way it should be taught. Now, I think the basis of Christian religous schools, if they're gong to be honest, they're going to have to face it also with what has the teaching^s of Christiantiy done to help crate a climate where a Holocaust could take place. Some of them are beginning to do that.

Q: In the New Haven area?

A: In the Danbury area they're beginning to do it and a couple here in the New Haven area. In Danbury in particular they've begun to do that. I hope they'll continue. It's a very difficult thing to do, but they are beginning to approach it that way. What's his that that used to be at Yale? ^{God} ~~The xxxxxxxx~~ died at Auschwitz? Richard Rubenstein. That's basically his claim is that the Holocaust occurred because of the centuries of anti-Semitism. If it hadn't happened in Germamy it would have happened somewhere else. That's his thesis. I don't know whether I agree with it or not but certainly it has some validity to it. Basically, in an awful lot of short words, really it's a very complicated thing. That's the way I see the three...the differences in the three kinds of education.

Q: I'm sure you won't get that answer from too many people.

Q: No. The third point I hadn't even thought about. That was good. Do you consider yourself a religious person?

A: Non traditionally. I'm a reformed Jew. I have ^{great} ~~some~~ problems with some facets of traditionalism. However, since Judaism has never been able to figure out

the difference between religion per se and and being an ethnic per se...

Q: I'm glad ~~xxxxxxx~~ you say they haven't figured it out because I haven't either.

A: There's one, by the way, on the Holocaust. There's some people. Arnold Wolff, at Yale, is one of them. He wrote it. Beautiful. Excellent piece that will be in ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ _____ in September on it. Worry about the taking over and making the Holocaust a Jewish religion, central point of the Jewish religion: become the Holocaust. Very worried about that. That raises the whole issue of the Jew as a victim.

Q: Yes. That's kind of destructive.
Yes, but it's happening.

QA: But I said to Arnold, "What the hell do I do about teaching it? Do I stop promoting it?" He said, "I don't know what we do. BUT I'm worried." Brilliant man, by the way. It's in the papers.

Q: Good. Were you conscious of any thoughts about God or religion when you went through the camps?

A: No, but yet you're seasoned. I'm sure that I did then what I did a number of times. I thought, "Oh, God." When you're going in and it's going to be dangerous up there and ~~itxnightxhexyxx~~ somebody's going to get killed and it might be you, you tend to pray a little bit. And I don't even know....they say there are no atheists in fox holes. That's an oversimplification, but you do kind of pray. It seems that every human being has a need for something beyond themselves which maybe they can't go along with intellectually but emotionally, yes. _____ your wife and _____ your kids. I don't know how to explain it.

Q: That's a good answer. Did you every have any irreligious thoughts?when you were confronted with the camp?

A: I think I had terrible horror and I don't remember if at that time--today I would I know--~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ *but at that time* just the piles of dead bodies meant more to me because they were Jews or at least some Jews. It didn't make any difference. At that stage I don't think so. They were just people to me.

It might today make a difference. I don't know. I don't think so.

Q: Did religion have anything to do with the way you viewed the prisoners or the SS or civilians?

A: I think that question's impossible to answer really because I come out of a Judeo-Christian liberal background. And if anybody can define to me and through the family basically, at least parts of the family, not all of them, parts of the family, great concern about people. And if anybody can explain to me where this great...whether it's how much religion has to do with this great concern, and I think basically a great deal _____ centuries, then I could answer it better. My guess is that it had a great deal to do with it but not direct because it wasn't my religious training that did it, but I think it was the culture and what I grew up in and the reading. Partly the fact that ~~xxx~~ in the thirties you and I were a bunch of pretty idealistic kids. Now my kids _____ . No, I don't think it was any consciousness _____ but I certainly don't think religion ought to,... I think it's a positive force.

Q: Do you think if you were a prisoner you would have had trouble "keeping the faith?"

A: I don't know what you mean by "keeping the faith."

Q: Well, to keep your faith if you had been a prisoner. Do you think you would have found it difficult?

A: NO. Because I'm not a traditionalist. A traditionalist it's a question of breaking _____ which _____ might be a sin. Not being able to even know when the religious holidays take place. This kind of thing would bother a traditionalist. It wouldn't have bothered me. This wouldn't have bothered me. But it would have bothered me terribly if I had lost my freedom, lost the possibility to say what I want to say when I want to say it, perhaps an inability to in my own _____ way try to help somebody every once in a while if I can. I _____ try every once in a while. That's what would have bothered me. Again, what's the religious sense though?

What's the best part of religion? You have to get into a terrible philosophical question around that one. I don't think you can answer it unless you're a real traditionalist. A traditionalist could answer it.

Q: Do you think religion had any effect on your attitude toward forgiving the Nazis? Do you feel that it should have?

A: It didn't ever make me forgive them. I think I hate them as much today as I did in 1944. I don't know if I had a black uniform in the sights of a gun that I would pull the trigger today. That I don't know. I would then. But beyond that I don't know. I feel just as strongly. I have terribly strong feelings about _____.

Q: Did you experience any change in your political views?

A: Not really. I think perhaps I became more of a realist. I did some growing up. There's no question about that. You grow up awful fast in the military, particularly in you're an officer. I think I became more of a practical sort. I think I began looking more at how to do kinds of things, but I don't think in my basic motivation there was any real change. Perhaps I also....mostly... some change politically. I lost my glamour for any kind of totalitarianism. I had some sympathy for the Communist before. I had none when I got out whatsoever. _____ . I had no sympathy for any kind of totalitarianism.

I _____ entirely within the degrees of free society value and I think it came out of _____. Out of disgust and hatred for any type of totalitarian government.

Q: How about your attitude towards the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam, towards the Middle East, Cambodia. I can imagine your answer exactly.

A: I've always worked _____. This has always been part of our life. I really find a frustration at this stage in the problems within the Jewish community so tremendous that I get caught up in this that I don't do what I really would like to do beyond or should do beyond. That's one of the problems.

It's from priorities, not from lack of motivation. I've always been caught up.

I back in the old days

I've always been this. I still however at this stage of the game must mention

that I would go to a....down to the state house and spoke....they had a big

meeting down there of the black political caucus, the Republican political

caucus...all the black politicians of this state. Green gave a

talk in which he....I got horrified because he classified everybody on your

position your zoning, your position on welfare, everything was part of affirmative

action. You ~~went~~ ^{either} with him all the way or you weren't part of the movement anymore.

Well, I've known _____ for _____ years. He's not new to me.

I knew him when I was chairman of the _____. It was about 150 people in that

room. There was one white girl in the audience, and I was

I told him that I thought what he just put up was completely racist propaganda,

that you cannot expect....cannot say to people you have to go with us 100%

or they're all done. I said what you've just done is make a bigot out of me.

After 20 years I'd hate like hell to think I'm a bigot because I don't

all the way on everything. So I'll grey hair, give a damn.

But I'm accepted fairly well in spite of that. I'm looked down a little bit

by the black community as a responsible critic at this stage

Q: This is a tough question. What would your reaction be if your child said he wanted to be a Nazi? What would you say?

A: With my kids I'd laugh. I'd really laugh. There's ~~nothing~~ could be less than a Nazi. I don't even know, because that's so far outside of the realm of any...oh my God. My kids actually would blow their brains out.

Q: Did you see this primarily as a Jewish persecution?

A: You mean the Holocaust?

Q: Yes. I would say the whole issue we're talking about. The camps. Everything. Not only Jewish people died in the camps. There were 11 million, if we're

going to talk statistics.

A: That's right. 11...13 million. You take the figure. O.K.

Q: Exactly.

A: All right. No. There are a number of reasons. First of all, of course, that. That a lot of people died besides Jews. It wasn't just the 6 million. But the main thing here to my view is that Jews do not exist all by themselves in a world of nobody else exists and what you do to the Jews has got nothing to do with ~~what's~~ anything else. What happens to Jews is part of total society and the viewpoint of total society and a viewpoint of total society. Jews are not... there's ~~and~~ also the Gypsies and also the homosexuals and all the rest of

The way the Jew has been treated by any individual society, by any individual nation almost has defined what freedom that state, that area will have. Look at the Jews as a barometer. But certainly it's not just a Jewish problem. It can't be. It's not just what happened to the Jews. It didn't stop at just what happened to the Jews. Unfortunately what happens to the Jew is almost a barometer, almost a fore something of what's going to happen to society. No nation that badly mistreats its Jews or even mistreats them--there's a question of degree. Some Jews no matter what happens and ~~mis~~ mistreated--but basically mistreats Jews in a legitimate sense. ~~But basically~~ No nation is ever going to treat its other minorities or even its people well. It's not going to be a state where Mr. Average Joe can live as a free man. I think that's the real significance of what happens to the Jews. I think

We're the first. When hatred begins, when pressure, when bigotry rules, some states like South Africa... of course, they go after the blacks first. But

Q: How about here in America? Do you still see that as we're no. 1 to go after?

A: At this second it's probably still the blacks they go after. Jews won't like me to say that. ~~but~~ but I still think the blacks are the target here at this stage of the game. Jew probably no. 2, maybe no. 3 behind the Puerto Ricans. Maybe the Puerto Rican's no. 1. Really, I don't know. I don't

know how you define it at this stage of the game. There's no question that hatred against the Jews is down at this level of the country. Kind of a comparable basis. It's up a little bit ~~since~~ from 1947-48. There was a recent survey that I just saw the figures on. I haven't looked at the survey to see whether it's got any validity or not.

looked very encouraging on that score, but I don't know what the future's going to bring. And history of the Jews says the Jew stays alert. I would say history of the blacks says the blacks stay alert. There are 22 million of them. There are 6 million Jews. We could revert. Under certain conditions if they occur we could still revert back to not the Holocaust but rather a downtrodden minority.

Q: Do you think it could ever happen again? The Holocaust.

A: I think the chances of it ever happening again are very very unlikely, but how can you rule it out? Look what's happened to the boat people right now. Would you believe that there are hundreds of thousands of people that get out on a boat and they go across the water in these things that are liable to sink at any minute and can't land anywhere and a repetition of that ship off of Miami all over again. How do you believe these things? It's a crazy world. It's a crazy world. Idi Amin in Uganda probably killed 200,000 people. Murdered them. How are you going to say it could never happen? There's no question there's been a weakening of image in our national government. At this stage it's still minor. That man in the white horse. continue the trend we're on now for another 20 years or whatever it is...I don't know. Continue this loss of faith in our government long enough and you can get the man on the white horse. You get the man on the white horse nobody can feed It's not all...civilization, in my view, is a thin veneer and thank God we have a veneer at least, but I think it's a thin veneer. I'll never forget there was this J. Frank Murphy before I went

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overseas in World War II. I went to an Advanced Officer's Tactics meeting back at Ft. . I was out in Oklahoma and I came back for this 6-week course. We were out in the field and we came in one weekend. In fact I came in that weekend and got word that my first child was born. But I had to go back out and then two weeks later I caught a up to Springfield so I could see the baby. But this guy, J. Frank Murphy, ~~Hx8x~~ resigned from military government. He happened to be going through that thing. For some reason or other we struck up an acquaintanceship while he was there. I'll never forget. I've said this about 1000 times since. He was the one who said "If Hitler wins, maybe 85% of the American people But the 15%. That's what counts. They're the ones whos lives are going to change. They're the one ." Maybe that's being a Fascist a little bit to say that only 15% of the people--which I remember as being his figure--are those that really sufer a great change in the way they live under a Fascist state. But I think there's a lot of truth to that. A lot of truth.