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CAMP: BUCHENWALD
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Q: Mr. Wile was a member of the 1270th Combat Engineer Battalion as a photographer. Of course, our topic is the German practice of putting people into various kinds of prisons, and doing all sorts of things to them, and I think what we're really aware of is that these were all kinds of people; that they weren't just the Jews but they were French and Rumanians and anybody the Germans caught. And it was the experience of the American soldier in his regular line of duty, almost, as he swept across Europe to once in a while encounter one of these camps. So, if you don't mind, just tell us what happened to you in your own military career about 1945, April, someplace in there.

A: We had just been witness to the most fantastic episode to witness in terms of military might, when the Third Army and First Army were ordered in different directions. We were on our way to Berlin, as we saw it, and then we were ordered south. We had the planes overhead and we had the half-tracks and the tanks and the trucks...it was just one constant din for three days of all of this materiel and this tremendous war machine, these two armies, changing directions. And here I was along with my buddies witnessing that aspect of the war. It was shortly after that that every photographer within a range of a hundred miles of Buchenwald was ordered into that camp. The reason given was that Patton didn't ever want it to be forgotten, and so he was recording it pictorially for all those that came after....

Q: And your assignment in those days was as a photographer?

A: Since the Third Army was moving so rapidly, they had a shortage of bailey bridges. And as I understand it, the function of the 1270th Engineering Combat Battalion was to go beneath the bailey bridges that were up and construct fixed timber bridges and as soon as they were usable to tear down that bailey bridge and transport it ahead to use it again for another site in a crossing over a river or stream or whatever it was. In order for this to work in each instance and to give Patton the direction he wanted, what we were doing was taking bridge site pictures ahead of putting up the next bailey bridge, and we might take three or four site pictures and then come back and develop them in the field and then deliver them to Patton's war room. One of them was at...gosh, it's been a long time ago.

Q: It's been a long time.

A: It was one site near Bad Neustadt. Neustadt was the SS Officer's training facility, a very substantial quarters, a stone building as I recall. In fact, I might have a picture here somewhere of that facility, and we were taking these pictures in to that location on several occasions. And then the next thing, a Captain said that he wanted us to go to the concentration camp Buchenwald and be part of taking pictures of that site.

Q: What do you remember of that experience?

A: We parked outside of the gates into the camp....

Q: Did you have any trouble locating it?

A: No, I never had the opportunity to have to check maps. I always had drivers and people that were taking me somewhere, and so I paid very little attention to that, which now I can see is a terrible weakness in my recollection of where I was or what I was doing. But it seemed to me that it was just a very short time after we left our location that we arrived at Buchenwald and parked outside. I would judge that by the time we got there, it must have been maybe three in the

afternoon of whatever day that that occurred. The first thing that I think I can remember was people coming up to me and pleading with me for handouts of either cigarettes or anything of that nature. And that there was a variety of age groups that were obviously prisoners here. But the majority of everybody I saw were not walking. They were sitting with their knees up against their chests and leaning over, their backs against the walls of what few buildings were there or fences. Then scattered throughout there was stacks of the dead. And on one stack outside of the ovens, draped over the emaciated bodies of the inmates, were these strapping, young husky individuals in their twenties maybe or younger. About that time an individual whose name I don't have but who looked very well fed began showing us around.

Q: This picture is of the crematorium. And the person in the middle of it is the person in civilian clothes who was well fed and who was now showing you around.

A: And could speak some English. In fact, he spoke quite a bit of English, as I recollect, and it sticks in my mind that he told me that he was a New Yorker, and my obvious first question to him was "How can you explain your condition versus what I'm seeing around me?" since he had already explained that he was Jewish. And he said "One has to live!" and then explained it no further. What they had conveyed to me or he had conveyed to me was that these strapping, husky, young people that were draped over the piles of the emaciated bodies were the guards of the camp that were pummeled toward the very end by the inmates themselves using maybe just their fists or whatever they used. All of that detail is very vague to me. I was seeing so much and it was such a shock, then again it wasn't a shock. Possibly, in war, there is no horror that you're not prepared to see, really, and only after all these many years when you see something on TV to resurrect it does it have an impact on you in such a way that

it shakes you up.

Q: How many people were with you in your jeep or in the group that went through there?

A: I would say that we probably went over in a three-quarter ton and that all of these soldiers in this picture here in the crematorium were part of my group. I would say maybe with the Captain and myself there could have been as many as eight people.

Q: Were there other Americans or allied soldiers there?

A: There were others there. Vaguely, it seems there were quite a few there, but there wasn't a tremendous number there at the time. At this moment, things were moving so rapidly that we were doing what we had been ordered to do when we were in, and I did see some other photographers there, but even that part of it is very vague in my mind now because I was wrapped up in what I was seeing. In fact, I didn't take as many pictures as I'd wished I'd taken now. I didn't realize that the time we were going to be there was going to be so limited and that we were going to be moving on, but the negatives are gone of many pictures that I did take. I was hospitalized shortly after that, and when I got back the outfit had moved and the negatives stayed with the outfit and I never saw them again.

Q: I noticed you've written some comments on the back at the time which to me are very interesting.

A: [Reading] "The civilian is a Jew. Polished apples for six years at Weimar concentration camp. Who knows what price he's paid for his life or what deeds he's done." [Long pause]

Q: Do you want me to see if I can read it?

A: Why don't you finish it for me, Dr. It's too rough.

Q: "We need a place to burn. Our prisoners will build it and run it. We will

supervise it. 6,000 in one day. 6,000 in one day. Russians, Belgians, Frenchmen, Jews, Americans, English. The Aryan Race-- the Nazis! The SS Troopers! The Supermen!" And you felt this. You lived this at that time.

A: Yes.

Q: And it's still with you.

A: It sure is.

Q: It's with us all.

A: The 6,000 in one day figure came from...as I understood what the guide was telling me, he said that they had moved out many bodies that they hadn't burned on flat cars or box cars to Dachau because this was one of the first camps that was overrun by the Americans. And they were trying to cover up and hide their deeds, but Patton's forces moved in there just too quickly.

Q: This is the second picture which we will mark "B." Tell us about it.

A: In the blocks where the prisoners slept on boards...the only thing I can liken it to is a broiler house like you might find here in Georgia, and there were either two or three tiers of these shelving arrangements, just boards laying down, and the prisoners slept on those. Each night as they died in their sleep or whenever they died in these blocks, there were details that each morning took the dead to the end of the blocks and stripped the clothes off of them and then they were moved out into this storage area here. At least, this is where we found this pile of bodies. Later, they were burned in the crematorium.

Q: I noticed on the back of this one, "If you starve them, when they die you have less to burn, and the more you burn the more healthy your workmen by replacement." This is obviously something that was written on the walls or that people told you. The German philosophy was really here.

A: Yes. I didn't dream that statement up; that had to be told to me.

Q: Was it written on a wall or a paper or one of the guides gave you an official

paper....

A: No, we weren't there at the time that they were passing anything out.

Q: He was just telling it to you.

A: He was just telling it to me. We were there at a time when they hadn't any printed matter or if they did have it, we didn't see it. I didn't get anything.

Q: And you were thinking about people at home, because the next sentence is "This is just another pile of dead people, America! The Nazis have many more at this place. This is typical on a small scale. 6,000, one day. The Jew! Burn the dead person." What else do you remember about that afternoon?

A: One of the things that I remember in detail was that in the crematorium in the basement, which was off of this end, was the chute that came down into the basement area and the drain in the center of this room. And there were meat hooks hanging up along the side of the room and looked like an oak club that had a thong through the end of it that was about that big around.

Q: About three inches big around.

A: Right. And what was explained to me was that they brought Russian prisoners in from the front in closed trucks; they had some sort of a way that they forced them in there, in cordwood fashion, and they drew this top over them and that many of them by the time they got to Buchenwald were dead. They backed the truck up to the crematorium where this chute that came down into the basement was, and as the bodies were pushed down the chute, any that were still moving, their skulls were cracked with this club, and then they were hung at the base of the skull on these meat hooks. They were stripped of their clothes, their teeth were knocked out and all the gold was rendered from their teeth, and then there was a cart on tracks that they loaded these bodies on. And an elevator arrangement, the details of which are too vague to me now...but this cart went up and these tracks down the center of this somehow...

Q: Yes. I can see those.

A: And they moved these carts up to these ovens and just kept throwing the bodies in.

Q: And, of course, that work was really done by other prisoners.

A: By other prisoners, right. I don't know what he had done or how he had managed to survive in that kind of shape, but that was that aspect of it.

Q: Do you remember an odor about the place?

A: I had a terrible revulsion which I can feel stemmed to a great deal from odor, that being one of the senses that affects you, and if there wasn't an odor, subconsciously I was thinking there should be, maybe, because of the condition of the prisoners that were still living, breathing, and sitting around the buildings. The one building that I had the greatest abhorrence about going into and seeing was a building more or less in the center of the area, that had a single pipe that ran around the outside wall, and there was a trough in the center, a pit, and around this pit was a wall no higher than this desk and maybe three or four inches wide. And it was explained to me that this was the bathroom and that they could get their water. Now this was a camp, as I recall them telling me, that had at least fifty thousand prisoners, and they told me that in this particular part of the camp, this was the only building to which you could go to get water. There was no other source of water. So, I was looking at this and I couldn't even believe what I was hearing, knowing a little bit about how complex it is to feed 600 and whatever, a battalion of men, so in this pit was that aspect of it. Outside they had dug trenches between some of the buildings or off in one area in which bodies had been thrown. They were still in there, they hadn't cleaned that out yet. And there was just evidences of the worst condition that you could believe a human could be in and still be alive. And it sticks in my mind that there was an odor, but what your eyes were beholding was [what impacted you] and what the

people were saying to you and the way they were saying it -- in a voice that was devoid of all energy whatsoever. Just the lowest possible voice. A healthy person couldn't possibly speak that low. Even if he was whispering, he couldn't make that kind of a voice, because it's not possible for a healthy person to speak in this fashion.

Q: There's another picture, here, of survivors.

A: I think this is the famous Block 64, where the experiments took place. What was told me here, to the best of my recollection, was that these people had been injected with typhus and that if they survived, their blood was drawn from them and it was taken to Berlin and it was used to inoculate German citizens to prevent them from getting typhus. And all these people -- they were telling me, and this was being translated -- were dying because of typhus or being inoculated with the typhus germ to see if they would survive. I think this was the same block that the big tank was in where they were immersing as many as eighteen thousand people, and they found one fellow that lived, I think, eighteen minutes and they were pretty impressed with that where the average man was living about ten minutes. Inseminating women by hanging them by the ankles and I don't know what else, and these people were in the worst of shape than that same block.

Q: And here's another film that we'll put "D" on, and this is also in Block 64.

A: I think so. I don't know what I have written on the back there. I didn't even read that. According to what was told us, if we'd been any later the Germans would have machine-gunned 20,000 people in that camp, but because of the rapidity with which the camp was overrun, they didn't have time to do that.

Q: Is this a picture of you?

A: No, this is Arthur Goldberg, a man that drove for me in several instances, and we later came across one another at headquarters command that used to be in

Frankfort. Goldberg and I had been, I think, at Tech or some other place together in the States here, and we ran into one another and he was with me in England for a while, driving. When we first got to Germany, there was an old fraternization ban on. You could not fraternize with any of the enemy, and Goldberg said that he was going to fraternize and what he was going to do was to inseminate every German girl that he could in reprisal for what they had done. But to show you how the fates brew what you quaff in life, about the first girl that he met, he fell so deeply in love with her that it was impossible for him to carry out that particular design to seek vengeance upon the Germans. And it's one of the things that's stuck with me as to how the fates do twist the direction a person takes as time goes on.

Q: What time did you leave the camp that day?

A: It was just very close to last light when we walked out the gates and left the camp. I think the first thing we did was to go to a little town south of Weimar, in the mountains, and we were one of the first in the town, I think. They didn't have any military government in there, and we took over their facilities and I wound up in a wash house in a very old kind of a quadrangle-type construction and getting these prints ready for Patton's war room.

Q: You went ahead and....

A: It wasn't that night. It had to be the next day I started. I finished it that night. I think that's what it was.

Q: You developed them and went on. Are there other films in there that...?

A: I have so many here.

Q: These are the ones that really get after Buchenwald.

A: Right. Yes, the Buchenwald experiences.

Q: We'll come back to that again, and if you don't mind let me ask you some other things because we're getting this kind of information for everyone. What is

your date of birth?

A: November 23, 1922.

Q: Are you married?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you have children?

A: I have two sons.

Q: How old were you at the time that this experience occurred? Do you remember?

A: Let's see. I would be....

Q: Spring of 1945.

A: 1922 to 1945. I would be 23.

Q: What was your profession or what did you hope to become before the time the war was started?

A: I had aspirations of becoming a civil engineer at that time because my father was a contractor and evidenced in his discussions with me that that was something that all good contractors could need more of, so I took off in that direction.

Q: What is your present occupation?

A: At this very moment, since December 5, I'm a senior environmental assistant with the Noise Program for the Environmental Protection Agency, and what's interesting is that some of the experience I had using the camera I've started using it again a little bit because they've asked me to take a few pictures for them. And this is under what they call the Older Americans Program.

Q: You're kind of in engineering anyway. What was your rank?

A: I was a technician, 5th grade, or a corporal.

Q: And where had you enlisted or where did you come in?

A: I was a Canadian citizen, and I was drafted when I was living in Waltham, Massachusetts, and the first place I went to was Camp Devons. The next thing I knew I was shipped to Spartanburg, S.C. to Camp Croft, and the Judge came up

from Greenville and there was 130 of us in a room in the courthouse in downtown Spartanburg, and he said, "Raise your right hand" and thirty seconds later I was a citizen of the United States.

Q: That's an amazing story in itself. I didn't realize it. Let me go back over some of the other questions that we hope to get some attitudes about. When did you first hear about the concentration camps? Was it before you got to Europe or was it after you got overseas?

A: I can't definitely say except that it does stick in my mind that there was a Jewish photographer on the SS Sea Owl which was a liberty ship that took us over that I believe was telling stories about what he'd been hearing on his previous trips and that he'd made several crossings. I think that was the first word that I can remember and I don't even know why I say that, but somehow that sticks in my mind.

Q: Had you heard anymore about them as you finally got into the continent? Was there any talk about them?

A: No, at that time we weren't talking about that.

Q: You were fighting a war and building bridges and moving out....

A: We were fighting a war and waiting to move up and waiting to find out what we were going to be doing. We landed at Cherbourg and moved in from there, and we did a lot of traveling very rapidly to try to catch up with Patton to get into position to do this very thing. And from that standpoint, we weren't talking about concentration camps because we weren't really getting any of that kind of news. It was just where are we going to be today or tomorrow or what are we going to be doing or what's all that noise and then when we got up to where the Third Army finally was caused to turn south, that was the last foxhole I think I dug. Right there. After that, no more foxholes because the war was moving so fast that there was no point in digging foxholes, and by that time we had isolated

so many pockets of Germans. All we were doing was posting guards every night and they were trying to avoid us, and we were trying to keep them from pulling any of their last minute stands, so we wound up in a copper mine and used all those facilities to store gallons of gasoline and barbed wire fence and ammunition, and I don't know what else. Everything we needed.

Q: But as Buchenwald was suddenly identified and it was there and the order went out "Go there," what were you thinking as you got up to those gates that you mentioned to us?

A: I just had very little concept about what I was going to see. I wasn't really prepared to see human beings in the condition that I saw them in or was I prepared to see humans stacked like cordwood, after they were dead, and, of course, then they did have the table out next to the opening there with the lampshades and the....

Q: Of skin.

A: And the bookcovers and that sort of [unintelligible] and tattoos that they had.

Q: Did you, in your own little unit, talk much about it after you left the place, or were you just shocked?

A: I don't believe that we talked about it a lot. We went back and were abandoned at a site, because they needed my truck for hauling barbed wire, as I recall. And there was about three or four of us left at this copper mine. The next morning when I was on duty, two prisoners came out of the woods, and one of the fellows [in my unit] -- I know he didn't go to the concentration camp -- wanted to shoot them right there, but I said "No, we're not going to do that" and then we turned them in to one of our sites where we just had...I couldn't even count the prisoners. As far as you could see -- German prisoners. And I took some [photographs], a classic one, showing a naval officer. How in the hell we ever got him makes no...I guess he might have been home on leave or something and

he looked pretty perplexed about what was going on around him, I know that.

Q: Have you ever heard anything about what happened to the people who were still alive in the camp? Was there any other comment or information that you picked up later about what happened?

A: Later, I had one experience. I read Frankel's *The Meaning of Life*. I think that was the title of the book. It was about how he survived six years of a concentration camp by either going right or left, or saying "yes" or "no", and his observation was that when the prisoners got out of the concentration camp, dressed in that horrible, God-forsaken, striped gown, pajama type uniform they were forced to wear...and since that time I've never been able to look at striped pajamas. And you'd see them on the roads, in ones or twos, maybe threes, but not often threes -- walking back, walking, going somewhere. Frankel explains in the book, which points up the selfishness of man, about when one of them got back home and his neighbor was standing there who hadn't been in the concentration camp, and he said, "Here I am. I just survived six years of Buchenwald!" And the neighbor said, "Well, it's been pretty rough here, too." And at that point, the former prisoner of Buchenwald wished he was back in Buchenwald because Frankel said that you knew what to expect each and every minute when you were in the camp. There were no surprises. But, you weren't prepared for that.

Q: What happened to the pictures you developed and printed?

A: Most of them went to Patton's war room.

Q: Very quickly after you had been able to....

A: Very quickly. I was asked to get the job done.

Q: And you got it done and....

A: The preservation of these prints for hypo and all that stuff. Some of these were done in tents out in the...the men would set the tent up for me, and they treated

me like I was General Patton himself because I was taking pictures of them and they were sending pictures home. And officers on down, it didn't matter, if you were a photographer, you had first class go about what you...they had all of England restricted to quarters, but they didn't restrict any photographers to quarters.

Q: Isn't that amazing. Interesting.

A: It was an amazing thing. They never seemed to pick out the photographers to do anything but to make him feel wanted.

Q: And let him do his job.

A: Right.

Q: Was the captain of your unit with you in...?

A: It was a different captain. He was anxious to go and I guess he wanted to see it and if it hadn't been for him, maybe some of the things we wouldn't have seen.

Q: Because he was an officer and they realized it.

A: Right.

Q: Did you say anything to your own officers about...of course, I bet they saw all the pictures of it.

A: Yes. Everybody saw the pictures. You see, this was the impact of my visit to Buchenwald, and I guess I did discuss it because everybody in headquarters company was always wanting to see what came out of the dark room.

Q: Everything.

A: Yes. And these were seen by all of the officers and many of the GI's that were with me and that I depended on to help me out. And there were some mean things going on by Americans at this time. There was this little town, if I could think of the name of it, south of Weimar, where we wound up and where I did the developing of these particular pictures. There was one military government person from PFC, and there was a curfew on. No German was supposed to be on

the road after seven p.m. or an hour before sundown, whatever it was. And he had gone out and brought in two men dressed in civilian clothes -- had them in the back of the jeep -- and wanted to know if anybody wanted to go with him while he interrogated them. And nobody did, and later it was discovered that he had taken them out in the field and shot them. He claims that he did that because he found a list of towns on these people where ambushes had occurred, but I didn't feel myself that the PFC had the authority to take life.

Q: Were these SS?

A: They were dressed in civilian clothes. Who knows what they were. In this particular town, we do know that every night there was an influx of people from out of the woods from the surrounding countryside. We could hear them coming in, but we were headquarters company and that wasn't our function at the time.

Q: Did you see any SS Troopers during your run through that part of Europe?

A: We captured an SS Headquarters in which I did not see any personnel.

Q: Yes, but there weren't any still at the prison? They'd all either fled or been killed or something?

A: What had happened in this same town that I'm describing where I did the developing was this driver [in photograph] standing with these dead....

Q: Yes. This is on film. Picture B.

A: We had two German prisoners working in the kitchen in German uniform, and when we got to this little town they were close to where they lived and somehow somebody in the kitchen got to talking about they wanted pancakes. But they needed some baking power to make the pancakes, to make them rise. One of these German prisoners said, "Oh, my home's not too far from here. We can go over there and maybe we can get some from my wife." Naturally he wanted to go home and see his family and see what's going on, so this driver, a carpenter by the name of Jones from Arkansas, and one or two of the cooks came to me

and said “Come on and go with us and get this baking power. We want to use your three-quarter ton.” And I said, “You’re going to have to check with the Captain first and see if you can do that.” So they came back and said, “Yes, he said we could use this three-quarter ton.” And now here it was about sunset of that second day when I was still working on these pictures and I said, “No, I’ve got to get this out. I can’t go.” And that truck, that three-quarter ton, was ambushed about two miles out of town. Everybody died, except the carpenter, and what happened was the carpenter got out of the back of the truck after he fired every round of his M1 and the rest of them drove off the pocket of Germans probably led by an SS Trooper. In fact, the two that we captured back at the copper mine said that they had escaped from an SS Trooper, that they didn’t want to fight any more. And Jones got out in his stupor and turned the truck around but fainted and drove into a bank, and the next morning a heavy maintenance outfit loaded that truck and everybody on it and took it to a field hospital. And late the next afternoon we discovered where they were and they went and got the story from Jones. So, this man standing here [in picture] that had driven us to Buchenwald, as the fates would have it, added him to the pile.

Q: Did you see many German civilians around the [unintelligible] or as you moved away from it or towards it?

A: This is very vague, and it may be that I’m thinking things that I’ve read more than I’m remembering things that I saw, but it does stick in my mind that we saw some civilians, but that camp was in a remote location from Weimar.

Q: What do you think the civilians knew about it? Do you think the German civilians around there knew the camp was there?

A: We were told that Patton had already made them come out and see it. We were told when we got there that they had already been out there and seen the camp.

Q: Did your own feelings about the German civilians change after you’d seen the

camp at all?

A: No. Part of the reason for this, I think, was some of the contact that I had in talking with the Germans. And I don't think I said to myself "I'm here out of no choice that I had, so what control do people have over their government if it goes bad?" I don't know that that happened until later when I was in Frankfort and I talked with some of the Germans and they posed the question "What could we do about it? If we were against him or against the government or if we didn't agree with it, what could we do about it?" And it was a good question.

Q: How long did you stay in Germany? In other words, when did you start back home?

A: I left Germany and I was in Paris for three months and went back to Germany and was in Germany another three or four months, and I started home in December from Antwerp and got home just before Christmas.

Q: But you'd been back and forth to Germany several times.

A: Yes. I've been in and out of Germany, from Holland and Belgium and France.

Q: That's interesting. Did you write home or say anything to your folks about...?

A: I sent all these pictures and I sent some to the newspapers. I sent some to the *Waltham News Tribune* which was our hometown paper.

Q: You thought it was important then that they knew.

A: I did. And I was disappointed in some of the responses that I got from my folks. I didn't feel as if they placed the grave thoughts about how did this happen or why did it happen that I placed on it, and which goes to show you that a picture is very descriptive, but there is a lot left out. And if you don't experience it first hand, then the picture can only tell you so much. It can only imply. It's not the territory, it's only the map.

Q: Only the map. Were you married at that time?

A: I married just before I went over. Had been married about three weeks when I

went over.

Q: Did you tell your wife about it when you came back?

A: I don't think I doted on it. I don't think she was inquisitive about any of it. She had one brother in the Marines in the Pacific, and they lived from day to day and wondered whether he was going to come back, and then she said that she was very concerned about me when I was over there. We would only see it on TV on National Education Television. It was not too many months ago now, maybe in the winter some time, that I had watched this accounting and it was difficult for me to watch it.

Q: What about your children. Did you ever tell them any of it?

A: Yes, I told them and showed them the pictures.

Q: About how old were they?

A: I didn't spare them if they wanted to look at them, and I can't remember now just how old they were.

Q: Were they teenagers?

A: I don't think they were. I believe they were younger than that when they first saw these pictures.

Q: It's really a fascinating pattern that we're seeing because there are some people who just put them away and don't even let their minds think about it. It's just destructive. Others wanted the world to see what had happened with their own eyes.

A: My experience with it went to the degree that when I got to Paris, I had these pictures with me. I was in the hospital and a lady by the name of Madame Susan Bouchie, whose husband M. Bouchie, had printed the [unintelligible], the French Underground Paper, and she was a Grey Lady and I was very surly in the hospital against the Red Cross and the Grey Ladies. I don't know. I think this was a semantical reaction I was having at that time. I didn't realize it. And she

persisted and was very kind and invited me to her home and wanted me to bring these pictures and show them to her husband. I didn't realize at this time the contribution that this family had made to the war. But, they had saved seventeen American and allied flyers, including their little boy, who was 7 at the time, and their little girl, who was 9, and by the time I met them they were 9 and 11, something like that. But, then she had a party and she particularly wanted me to come to the party and bring these pictures because there was a Swedish salesman there that had been selling material to the Germans, copper in particular, I think it was. And he would have none of this concentration camp stuff.

Q: It didn't happen.

A: "It never happened." And so she wanted me to shove these pictures up in his face. And I can remember her absolute distaste for this person but determination in every way to rub it in that he had done wrong and that he was not neutral as they claimed and that Sweden was more guilty of acts than France was in letting Germany overrun them. So, at this party in her apartment, I had these pictures in a pocket secretary, like I always have carried them, and I whipped them out and said, "What do you think of these?" and he said, "What are these?" And I said, "These are the pictures I took in Buchenwald concentration camp in Weimar, Germany" and looked him in the eye. He said, "You could have taken those in America." So, I didn't beat him to death or anything like that [laughter], I just said that just shows the [unintelligible]. That's exactly what his answer had to be. It could be nothing else, you see, unless you were to drag him by the scruff of the neck and taken him back there and show it to him.

Q: When you thought of this, then, did you think that it was just Jews or did you...?

A: No! No!

Q: Were you aware that it was as you'd written on the back of it?

A: They knew.

Q: They knew that it was everybody.

A: Yes, it just wasn't Jewish people.

Q: Were there any religious overtones that you might have had? Did this do anything to your religion or make you think anything about religious questions?

A: I can't recall that that was....

Q: Did you ever talk to a chaplain about it, or did you ever see a chaplain?

A: No. No. I never did that and I never dreamed about that [my Buchenwald experiences], because I'd had an experience earlier in my childhood when I went to Brandeis University. It wasn't called Brandeis at the time, but I can't think of the name of it. Anyway, before it was Brandeis, it was a medical school of less than perfect reputation. It was an old castle type place, and they had cadavers that they operated on. This fellow took me there when I was about nine and we looked through the windows, and I dreamed for a solid year after seeing this about a dead person down in the basement, so I must have gotten over death about that point. I didn't have any need to go see a chaplain.

Q: I just wondered if anybody did.

A: I can't recall that. My religious experience in the Army was absolutely zero as I recall, excepting when I was in Paris. This family, the Bouchies, their children would take me into Paris and I would photograph Notre Dame, and I had great reverence for this evidence of history and of the timelessness of what it represented in terms of what these people adhered to and believed in. And only when I got back and I had reached the age of about 30 did I have a religious experience. And it was because of a man that I met while I was having my car repaired. He invited me to come to Sunday School Class. And shortly after I

joined the Church I became one of the youngest elders of the Church. So, that was a very enriching experience

Q: But, during that period of the war and after war, there just wasn't a problem of religion or...?

A: There wasn't that sense of values or I wasn't calling on God to explain to me why this happened or how it happened.

Q: What about your political beliefs?

A: I'm an Ike man. I mean he was supreme commander and he was....

Q: It didn't really matter if he was a Republican or a Democrat.

A: I would have to say that I'm biased towards the Republicans because my family is. My parents have been Republicans. My father's a Republican.

Q: Yes, but political questions didn't come into this either, did they?

A: No. Not at that time.

Q: Did it affect any of the political interests and activities that you had?

A: None.

Q: You did mention that you had seen on the television some of the Holocaust things. Was it the *Holocaust* show?

A: No, I avoided that because that to me was trading on the war in a fashion that was not a historical documentation. I cannot bring myself to be interested in that kind of show.

Q: This is why you did make the very exact distinction between the educational television that actually had parts of those stories that were so real that no one can deny them, but not for the commercialized version.

A: You can't trade on that. In my mind, you just can't do it. No matter what you do, there's no way that you're going to fake this and you're not going to relive it and you're not going to act it and there's nobody that's going to portray it. They can forget that. In my mind, there's only one way that you have to discuss this and

that's totally on the basis of the facts and the historical significance of it from that aspect. That is my neurosemantical feeling about it.

Q: Do you think it can happen again?

A: Absolutely! And I wouldn't even doubt that it's not happening this very minute somewhere.

Q: What in your own life do you think the impact of that experience at Buchenwald has been on yourself?

A: To recognize that a human is a very difficult thing to get rid of, number one, and that there isn't anything that a human will not do to another human, and that the leadership of this world has not paid close attention to the tremendous pressures that population is causing us to have to contend with at some point and not too far down the road. This is my impression and feeling and observation of what's going on here. I mean, here was civilization, as old as it is, and what's very obvious is that our ability to communicate to each other and to exact commitments as to what I feel is the worst dereliction of our leaders, and that is to permit us to think we can just go on and on and on.

Q: I deeply appreciate your sharing this with us.