

Five seconds.

You were saying that you had time before your event or your supposed event in the Olympics. And you were able to go into Berlin and all of that. In this, did you feel anything about the atmosphere? Was it charged? Did you see signs saying no Jews here? Did you experience any of what was to come?

In my time in Germany, I felt and saw nothing overt. I saw no signs. I heard no verbiage of any sort. I speak a little German because of the Yiddish that I know. And I took some German at school.

And I heard nothing and I saw nothing which was anti-Semitic in any way, except for the day that I was supposed to run the trial heats of the 400-meter relay. And that was the first and only anti-Semitism that I experienced. And I experienced it from American coaches and not from Germans. There was no overt sign of any anti-Semitic feeling or activity at all that I saw in Berlin or wherever I went in Germany.

Now, Herman Goldberg, your pal at the Olympics, mentioned a trip into Berlin where I guess you hitched a ride with some German soldiers. What happened there?

One of the ways of getting from the Olympic Village to the Olympic stadium, which was about eight miles distant from the Olympic Village, was to hitch a ride. And Herman Goldberg, my buddy, and I hitched a ride in what amounts to a German Army Jeep. And it was driven by a German Sergeant who looked like a Nazi Sergeant. And he sat alongside of his passenger, who was a very handsome blond Lieutenant in the German army-- blond, blue-eyed, a most attractive looking man.

And as we got into the Jeep, hitching the ride, they asked for our autographs. And we said, we'll give it to you when we get off the Jeep, which we did. We took these eight miles at what we thought was a reckless speed to begin with. We could see the speedometer going up to 70, 80, 90, 100-- 100 kilometers, we finally realized, and not 100 miles an hour, only half the speed.

At any rate, we get to the Olympic stadium and they give us some paper to sign our names. And we scrawled our names-- Herman Goldberg, Marty Glickman-- and left almost immediately. We didn't want to have them ask questions about our names-- Goldberg, Glickman. Were we Jewish? Or do we have German-Jewish background or whatever? We were aware of the fact that we were with this German Lieutenant and this German Sergeant who looked every inch the typical Nazi army officer and under-officer.

So you knew that there was potential for problems?

We were aware of the fact that there was anti-Semitism in Germany. We were aware of the fact that these were obviously German soldiers, perhaps Nazis. But we thought all soldiers, certainly, were sympathetic to the Nazis. And we just didn't know what Nazism was. Remember, this is from the perspective of two years before Kristallnacht. The Holocaust was not only not a thought, it didn't exist in our imagination, in our dreams.

We didn't have nightmares about the Holocaust. It was a word that I didn't even know in 1936. Certainly, had we any inkling of what was going to happen, we wouldn't have been in Germany in the first place. But the feeling about anti-Semitism for me-- and probably for Herman and the two other Jews whom I knew on the team. There was a fine basketball player named Sam Balter who was on the team. And Herman and I. And there was another Jewish athlete.

The German athletes who I knew on the team were Herman Goldberg, who was my buddy much of the time, and Sam Stoller, who was my teammate on the 400-meter relay. And Sam Balter was a wonderful basketball player, a guard on the basketball team. And the four of us were the only Jews I was aware of. I understand now there were three other Jews who were on the American Olympic team, but I didn't know them then. I didn't know they were Jewish.

But the four of them I knew-- the four of us were the Jews whom I knew. And we certainly were not aware of what was to come. I guess the whole world was not aware of what was to come.

So Berlin was like any other big city, but very beautiful?

Berlin was like any other big city. If I would use a single word to describe Berlin during that period of time, the word would be carnival. There was an atmosphere of carnival about Berlin, with the flags flying and the beautiful weather almost every day.

It was golden. Fleecy white clouds occasionally overhead. Late in the day, on a couple of days, there was some rain at the stadium. But most of the time, it was just lovely.

The city was immaculate. As I understand, it still is. And as I saw a couple of years ago, when I was back there again. And the people were well-dressed and seemingly well-fed. The beer flowed. And it was a carnival atmosphere.

I want you to tell me about how you were basically dumped from the race. But I just wanted to ask you on the boat or in the Olympic Village, did you get to know John Woodruff at all.

I knew John Woodruff slightly, from the various track meets in which we competed at the same time. He ran the half-mile. I was a sprinter running 100 meters and sometimes 200 meters. And John and I were among the younger members of the team.

John was a wonder athlete. He was taller than virtually anyone else on the squad, except for some basketball players-- 6 feet 4. Quiet, reserved, and a magnificent runner. He had the longest running stride in the world at that time. And he ran a marvelous race to win the gold medal at 800 meters.

He was far better than the rest of the field, as you probably know and have seen. He virtually came to a halt at the halfway mark of the race at the end of the first quarter, let the rest of the field go by because he was pocketed in. He couldn't get to the outside. He couldn't make a move, because there were runners in front of him and alongside of him, so he let the field go by him, ran around the entire field, and then came on to win handily down the stretch and down the backstretch first, around the far turn, and down the stretch. And quiet, self-effacing, and just a wonderful athlete.

Now, tell me about your anticipation for your event. I know you were training for it. And what happened?

The 400-meter relay was selected beforehand. And the four of us, in order-- Sam Stoller would start. He had the best start of the group of us. I was to run the second leg down the back stretch, straight away. Foy Draper on the third leg and Frank Wykoff on the anchor leg. He was the great veteran. This was his third Olympic team that he was on.

And we practiced passing the baton. And passing the baton is terribly important in a 400-meter relay, because the race is short and you want to make the best possible pass. We would practice this every day in that order, so that we knew each other and we knew the distance we had to start running and things like that. The morning of the day we were supposed to run in the trial heats, we were called into a meeting-- the seven sprinters were, along with Dean Cromwell, the assistant head track coach, and Lawson Robertson, the head track coach.

And Robertson announced to the seven of us that he heard very strong rumors that the Germans were saving their best sprinters, hiding them to upset the American team in the 400-meter relay. And consequently, Sam and I were to be replaced by Jesse Owens and Ralph Metcalfe. Now, there's no question that Jesse and Ralph were faster at 100 meters than Sam and I. They'd beaten us fairly regularly.

And we were shocked. Sam was completely stunned. He didn't say a word in the meeting. I'm a brash 18-year-old kid. And I said, coach, you can't hide world-class sprinters. In order to be a world-class sprinter, you must run in world-class competition. And we don't know of any Germans, outside of Erich Borchmeyer, who finished fifth in the 100-meter final, beaten by Frank Wykoff, as well as Jesse Owens and Ralph Metcalfe. He was the best German sprinter.

Later, I beat Borchmeyer in another post-Olympic track meet. But we all knew we could beat Borchmeyer. And you don't hide world-class sprinters. I said, coach, there can't be any German world-class sprinters. He said, well, we're

going to take no chances, said Dean Cromwell. And Jesse and Ralph are going to take Sam's place and your place.

At which point, Jesse spoke up and said, coach, I've won my three gold medals-- the 100, the 200, and the long jump. I'm tired, I've had it. Let Marty and Sam run, they deserve it, said Jesse. And Cromwell pointed his finger at him and said, you'll do as you're told. And in those days, Black athletes did as they were told. And Jesse was quiet after that.

But he volunteered not to run-- not to win his fourth gold medal, so that Sam and I-- the only two Jews on the track team-- could run and win or try to win. The only way we could have lost that race is had we dropped the baton. Frank Wykoff later said that we probably would have run just as fast because our baton-passing would have been superior because we had practiced.

I spoke up. I said something else-- I said, coach, no matter who runs, we're going to win this race by 15 yards. We won by 15 yards. When you see the finish of the race, all you see is Frank Wykoff crossing the finish line. You don't even see the next second-place finisher. He's out of the picture, he's that far back-- 15 yards behind.

The Germans didn't finish second or third-- they finished fourth. They were placed third, because the Dutch team ran out of their lane and so they were disqualified. But they finished third in the race, some 15 or 16 yards back. So the story given us was an out-and-out lie by Robertson and by Dean Cromwell.

I believe now that with Hitler's humiliation by having the Black athletes stand on the winning podium the many times that they did, in the 100, the 200, the 400, the 800, the long jump, the high jump-- they were dominating the Games-- that it would have been further humiliation for Hitler to have Jews stand on the winning podium. And as I said, the only way we would not stand on the winning podium, had we dropped the baton. We would have won the race by 15 yards or more. So we didn't get to run.

Now, you say now this is the way you look at it. Try to put yourself back to this time in the summer of 1936. As you were told that you weren't going to be running, what was going through your mind? What were you thinking?

As I was told that Sam and I would not run, I thought that track politics was taking place. That Dean Cromwell, the assistant head track coach, wanted to make sure that both his boys-- Foy Draper and Frank Wykoff-- were on the team. And so he was making sure they were going to be on, because in a trial race in the Olympic Village three days before the 400-meter race took place, we ran a trial heat and Stoller won the race, beating me by about, oh, a shoulder, a foot. And we both beat Foy Draper by a yard.

So here is Draper running the relay, whom we had both beaten just a couple of days before, and Sam and I were not running. In the entire history of the modern Olympic Games, now going into its 100th year, no fit American track and field performer has ever not competed in the Olympic Games, except for Sam Stoller and me, the only two Jews on the 1936 team. Every other American track and field athlete has competed, so long as he was physically fit-- didn't have a pulled muscle or didn't have an appendectomy, as one of our track athletes did have and couldn't run-- a fellow named Harold Smallwood. But with that exception, every athlete has run.

OK, but you weren't thinking in those terms in August of '36. You were thinking it was basically favoritism again?

In August of '36, I thought originally-- I did mention in that meeting, I did say, coach, we're the only two Jews on the track team, Sam and I. There's bound to be a furor about this back home. We'll worry about that later, said Dean Cromwell. Later, of course, Dean Cromwell also was a member of the America First committee, that group in America, which was sympathetic to the Nazi cause. So my thoughts were that Cromwell was seeing to it that his boys were on that 400-meter relay. And about that threat of other German sprinters, that was just out of whole cloth-- it was a complete lie.

What were you feeling? Here, you've been preparing for this in a way for years. And you've been training especially hard. You were, I'm sure, very excited to participate in the Olympics.

I was fortunate. I was young-- I was 18. Sam was three years older than I. He was a senior at Michigan. And in those

days, when you finished your college career, that was usually it. And Sam was at the end of his college career.

He vowed never to run again, because of this terrible disappointment. He did run and won a collegiate championship the following year. He did change his mind a bit later on.

I, as an 18-year-old, just out of my freshman year, I vowed that come 1940, I'd win it all. I'd win the 100, the 200-- I'd run on the relay. I was going to be 22 in 1940. And I'd be at the height of my supposed athletic abilities in those years.

Of course, 1940 never came. There was a war on. 1944 never came. But I was frustrated and angered enough so that I could look ahead and get even, four years hence. Young enough to get even.

In addition, I was a football player at Syracuse. And a month from the Olympic Games, I was going to be playing football at Syracuse University-- my first varsity season, then. And I had something to look forward to. I had something to dissipate my disappointment, by having a football season looming for me.

So you weren't even temporarily devastated by this?

If you use the word devastated-- I was not devastated. I was angered. I was frustrated. And as I say, I was young enough to think ahead.

Say that again without the "as I say," please.

I was not devastated by not being on the 400-meter team. Terribly angry, terribly frustrated, but I was young enough to be able to look ahead to 1940 and perhaps win it all-- to win the 100 and the 200. I might be at my athletic peak when I was 22 years of age.

Here I was, only 18. So I had something to shoot for, something to look forward to come 1940 and the next Olympic Games. I also had a football season I was looking forward to, because I was going into my sophomore year, first year of varsity football, and that occupied my thoughts and time and energies immediately after the Games.

You mentioned that Owens stepped forward and said, let these guys run. Did you get that kind of support from the other athletes?

No one else said anything in that room during the course of this meeting. Ralph Metcalfe didn't say a word. I think he wanted to run on the relay and this justification-- why not, if he could run on the relay? And the only other athlete involved who didn't run was Mack Robinson.

Mack, Jackie Robinson's, older brother already had won the silver medal at 200 meters. And he was not as good at 100 meters as he was at 200 meters. In addition, he was not involved in the practice of passing the baton. That 400-meter relay was set, as I say, leading off with Sam Stoller with that great start. I was running the second leg, Foy Draper with the third leg, Frank Wykoff the anchor leg. And we practiced passing the baton in that order for two weeks in the Olympic Village.

Did the other athletes-- after this decision had been made, were they supportive? Or did you guys just not talk about it?

They were supportive. The other athletes were supportive afterwards, patting me on the back-- saying, oh, you should have run. Not en masse-- everybody was involved with his own achievements or striving. The feeling was tough luck.

But for me, as I say, it was the feeling of I'll show them, I'll get even. I was there. I sat in the stands and watched the race. The qualifying heats proved that we were by far the best team among the other countries of the world-- the best 400-meter relay team.

The following day, I was walking across the campus of the Olympic Village and I heard my name called to me. And 50 yards away was Lawson Robertson, the head track coach, with his cane. He was an older man. Marty-- and I jogged

over to him. I just want to tell you how sorry I am. I made a terrible mistake. And he said he was sorry.

Dean Cromwell didn't say a word. Never spoke to me again. I don't know what he said or thought to anyone else, but he never said a word to me. Wykoff later said we would have run just as fast had you and Sam run, because our superior baton-passing because of practice would have enabled us to run and win.

Now, you started to say you were there watching your meet. What was that like?

Watching the trial heat and watching the final the following day were strange, weird-- all sorts of emotions flashed through my being. Frustration, certainly. Anger, certainly. I look out on the track and I see Metcalfe passing runners down the backstretch-- he ran the second leg. And that should be me out there.

As they warmed up, jogging up and down the track. That should be me out there. And frustrated at it. And also feeling relief I wasn't running in this race. I didn't have the pressure of receiving the baton, running with it, and passing the baton. I wasn't fearful of dropping the baton.

And all relay runners have that uncertainty, that fear of the possibility. I've never dropped a baton in the many relay races I've run, but I've seen it dropped. So there was some feeling of relief. But mostly it was anger and frustration and the feeling that should be me out there.

Who were you sitting with during the event?

My recollection is I sat with Herman Goldberg during the event, for either the trial race, the trial heats, or for the finals. I don't believe I sat with Herman both those days. Very often, we would sit together and sometimes we would not. After all, he had his own assignments to take care of. He was practicing and playing with the American baseball team. But I do believe that for one of those races, either the trial heat or in the final, that Herman was alongside of me.

Did you talk about what was going on?

No, I didn't say a word. Words can't convey how you feel-- and not at that moment, anyhow. Words wouldn't have made me feel any better or less angry. I just sat there and suffered.

I felt all these emotions. And again, at the age of 18, the world is bright and glorious in front of you. I was a good athlete. I knew that. And four years hence, I was going to be out there again.

Now, when the American team did win and went up to the podium to receive their honors, were you proud for them? Were you happy for them?

When the American team was on the podium, I was not necessarily proud for them. I was pleased, of course, that they won. And I was particularly pleased that they won by 15 yards, to prove the point that anyone of the American sprinters could have won on the relay and won the event handily. But I don't feel as though I was an American athlete or that I was a Jewish athlete. I was an athlete.

I was a member of the Olympic team. I was in the Olympic stadium. I was part of this overall thing which I believe has done me so much good in all the years which followed-- 60 years now, which have followed those '36 games-- where I began to realize that I'm just like the other athletes of the world, the other people of the world, and they're just like me. We're all alike. We're all brothers.

And the whole point of the Games-- the whole point of all athletic competition-- is to learn to respect each other, to like each other, to love each other. To get to really know each other. And I was part of that. And I was also angry.

Were you envious?

I don't think I was envious. The only feeling I have today-- I'm the grandfather of 10 and I'm the great-grandfather of

four. So I don't have the grandchildren of the great-grandchildren I can show this gold medal to. That's the only feeling of disappointment I now have-- that I can't show my grandchildren this gold Olympic medal. That's the only feeling I have now.

I think it's wonderful that I was on the team. I think it's great that I made this trip. It exposed me to marvelous things. And also exposed me to the hurt of anti-Semitism.

Is there anything else you can tell me about what it was like, not necessarily for your competition in particular, but just what it was like being in the Olympic stadium? Can you describe it?

The Olympic stadium itself is a very impressive place. It was particularly impressive then, filled with 120,000 people. And it was virtually brand-new. And I'll never forget walking into the stadium, marching in along with my American teammates in the Opening Day Parade. And I use the word march loosely here, because American athletes don't march very well. We slumped in, in line, but walking in the manner of a loose-limbed, easygoing American athletes.

And I remember looking up at Adolf Hitler as we marched by. And he was glaring down at us, we thought. And the comment heard in the ranks-- and I said it also-- he looks just like Charlie Chaplin. And that's just the way we felt about him.

He was almost a comic figure, with his drab khaki uniform he wore. Khaki shirt and khaki pants, no decorations on it. That funny little mustache and a cowlick over his forehead. And he was a comic figure.

I thought of him and I think many of us thought of him as like a typical South American dictator of those years, who is here today and gone tomorrow. After all, he'd just been in power some two and a half years. And who knew how long he was going to last or how much power he ultimately would have.

But he was comic to us, along with the rest of his entourage. And certainly they were funny-looking, in terms of Goring and his uniform and Goebbels with his rat-like face and some of the diplomats in there with their long frock coats and ascots and some of the army uniforms and naval uniforms around them. It was an experience I'm pleased to have been part of. And I'm still angry at not having that medal to show the kids.

Was there something awesome about marching in with 100,000 people sitting there?

We felt no feeling of awe. We were cocky, young, well-trained, good athletes. And nothing awesome about going into a huge stadium. We'd been in huge stadiums before. We'd competed in these huge stadiums. One of the things I remember most was, as part of the opening ceremonies, these thousands of pigeons, which had been kept in cages--

I'm going to need to stop you here, because the tape's going to-- but I do want to hear that story. What is that noise?

That's just the wind.