

Tape three, side one:

JF: You were telling me that you had been stopped for talking while you were working?

KK: Yes, I didn't know what it meant, but he wrote my number down. In the evening, my number was called up and one of the S.S. men told me I was talking at work and I get *dafü r* [for that] punished, one hour hanging.

JF: One hour of hanging?

KK: One hour of hanging.

JF: What did that mean?

KK: They put me with hands on the back. Hands have to be like this. Crossed behind your back. Then they put a chain around the hands and around the wrists and I had to stand up off a little step-ladder, had to step on top of this, and he put, in the air was a big *Balken* [beam] with a ring and the end of the chain came through this ring, you put the chain from my hands, a round chain, through this ring and tighten it, then he throwed, with the foot, he throw the little step-ladder away and I started to hang like this. The hands go up higher and higher till you were hanging like this.

JF: You were bent over and your hands were behind your back?

KK: Behind your back and hanging in the air, around two feet from the floor. Two or three feet from the floor. This was a whole row with prisoners. Not only me. And they had maybe 30 or 20 prisoners that they hanged at the same time. The S.S. was sitting across from us playing cards, with their watch on the table so they see when our time was up to take us down. The pain is unbelievable. The pain. The shoulder...socket go out. And you were hanging there...And the *Schweiss* [sweat] is the right word? When you perspire for...*Angst* [fear] you think you have to die. Your feeling...you get wet, your body is perspired. The drops fell down from your face on your chest. And the pains [unbearable]. You can't stand it. And people start to scream. In different kinds of languages. "Mamma, mia," and the Polish in Polish...[started to scream]. I wasn't screaming, I was seeing what they do. The S.S. come to those prisoners who was screaming and with their feet, they were kicking them so that they were swinging on their chains through the air. And the pain was worser then. So I see what they did to them, I want to scream too. "Let me out, let me out of here, let me go." But I see they did to the other. Then you see, this is like eternity, one hour, to hang like this. And then to see [how] the prisoners who helps them—the S.S. comes on with this little step-ladder and put it under every prisoner's feet so that he could setp on it and then he opened the chain and let them down. Until he comes to you, you feel like...this waiting till they let you go down, is terrible. So they let you down and you're sitting there with the hands like this.

JF: Behind you?

KK: Behind me, but then it is impossible to take the hands to the front. They are like a piece of wood. The hands were like without life, the arms.

JF: Even though the chains had been removed?

KK: Yes. The hands are still there like this, and so we marched to our barracks like this, we tried to take the hands to the front but we couldn't. We march to our barracks and the [fellow] prisoners massaged the arms and they slowly came a little bit alive again. Slowly we could move the arms to the front again. This was number one. And I had the pleasure to hang twice.

JF: What was the other offense for which...?

KK: The other offense was they said the prisoners...we were working, we should [report] for a certain work. And I went, on the [not clear] the German, I went, and some wouldn't work, wouldn't go. So they forced them. And when they had a bundle of people together they said, "We'll show you. You don't want to work." I said, "Sure we want to work. I am one of the first that said I want to go. [He wrote everyone down—all the numbers.] One hour hanging. But this second time I had an easier feeling, because I know how this tastes...how this hanging felt. When you know what happened to you, when you know, you feel different. If you don't know your feelings is another thing, is another one, if you know what happens to you.

JF: You were not quite as afraid?

KK: Yes, that is what I mean. I wasn't so quite afraid anymore. I know about what I went through the experience once, so I was thinking, "O.K., what can you do?" They treat you like a prisoner, you come *vor* [before] S.S. men, higher S.S. men, *Reichsführer* Himmler, you are sentenced to hang, one hour on a chain in the air because you did this, [refused] to work. Nothing you could do, nothing. Many of my friends hanged once, but I was hanging twice. And, we were lucky, because before this whole thing was, they were hanging the people outside the camp on the wood...on the trees. There were nails in the trees and they hanged the prisoners there in the woods. Most of them came never back. They killed them [or what].

JF: Why did those prisoners not last through the hanging in the woods? They would kill them afterwards?

KK: Then they killed them. They were screaming. Was nobody there for a witness.

JF: But when they did it in the camp...?

KK: In the camp we were in the *Badeanstalt* [baths]...in a big hole where we came in the showers. In the showers was a big *Balken* [beam] across the hall, you know, what keeps the roof, a beam, a big beam, with rings [through] where the chain came [through]. It was a long row with maybe 30 little rings, in those beams, and we were hanging all this in a row, maybe 20, 25 or 30 people.

JF: So you think that because it was done in this room that there were witnesses, and therefore, the men were not killed, as well as hung?

KK: Yes, yes. Then they never came back, many from us—this was before my time. Before I had this experience. There were men sentenced to hang. They went away

and we never saw them again. They never came back to our barracks. And some prisoners...fro perspiring, they were wet and the cold wind hit them...they got pneumonia, they say, from the wet perspiration, and they hanging one hour...and the cold wind hit them. Understand Dachau is 800 meters up over sea-level...When there is a wind, there is a wind.

JF: What happened with your shoulders after these episodes?

KK: The [fellow] prisoners make massaging our arms, our shoulders in the barracks...

JF: The massaging got the arms back in the socket? In your shoulder?

KK: Yes, yes. Then I know exactly, after maybe an hour or two, the life starts to come and again you feel the blood in the arms and you could move your arms slowly [again] and bring them to the front. You could raise the arms, not much, but you could, your arms could come from the back to the front again. Slowly after a long while, there came life again in the shoulders. You were normal again. Only you saw those big cut-ins from those chains.

JF: The scars around your wrists?

KK: The scars, deep scars insides...Suddenly, they put us on trains and sent about 400 of us Jews back to Buchenwald. Not back to Buchenwald, not back to Sachsenhausen, to Buchenwald.

JF: When was this?

KK: This was after I was a year-and-a-half.

JF: This was in September...?

KK: In September '41, no wait a minute, in September '41 I came to Buchenwald. It was *fast* [almost] a year there in Dachau.

JF: Why do you think they moved you?

KK: I don't know. Day to day, I don't know. Why they took me for medical experiments on my body in Buchenwald? Why Mengele was sitting on the desk and made a selection from us from Dachau when we came to Buchenwald? Only he made to me like this, and to others he made this. One, this was for life, this was for death. I don't know till today, why.

JF: Selection at Buchenwald happened right away, as soon as you arrived?

KK: Maybe a week later. Mr. Mengele, you heard of him, came to Buchenwald and gave a *Gastspielrolle* [star performance] and he was selecting us prisoners. We came from Dachau. The whole this is this. When Auschwitz with those gas chambers, were ready to *mein* [my] time when I was an invalid in 1940, they would have sent us right away to Auschwitz to gas. [But] Auschwitz wasn't ready in 1940. And in 1941 it [just] started, so they sent us to Buchenwald. [Lies on] a hill. The [not clear] barrack, it was called. And Buchenwald lies not far from Weimar. The city Weimar. Weimar is the city from those *gross*, *gross* German, big Germans, *Dichters*, poets. Goethe, you heard from Goethe, Schiller, they were living there. In Weimar, not to this time, maybe 100 years before and this was Buchenwald, next to Weimar. We had to run up to Buchenwald. They hit us, too.

When I came to Buchenwald, my legs were like elephant legs. Full with water [to my belly].

JF: Your stomach also?

KK: No, [till] here. Entire legs were swollen up with water. Like this. After the [not clear], Mr. Mengele came—I didn't know then—afterwards I know—and we came in in groups of about 100 in a big room. He was sitting on a desk with legs down with his white coat, like the doctors have, and under were his boots sticking out. And one after the other has to come *vor* [before] him, not so near, around like this, we have to stand at attention. He looked only at your face. He looked only at your face, not at your body. He looked you straight in the eyes, and he didn't talk. He made only a wave with the hand, like this, or this, this or this. So suddenly we were in two groups: one group was in this corner, and one group was in the other corner. And we looked at each other. We didn't know what that means. Then suddenly they took this group across from us where we were standing, they took this group away...the other group. We never saw them again. A couple of my best friends were [there]. And we could go back to the barracks.

JF: And you did not know at that point what was happening?

KK: No, no, we didn't. Not only to me, to me, not only to me, if I talk I talk not only for me for other prisoners too. This way...

JF: To the right?

KK: To the right. This to the left, means dead. You know, they killed them very easily. They put a needle with air in their veins. And they died instantly on the emboli, you know the air goes to the heart.

JF: How did you find out that's what they did to the prisoners?

KK: Later on, I find out.

JF: After the war?

KK: Not after the war.

JF: While you were still in the camp?

KK: In the camp, heard it from these personnel, were prisoners, too. Sanitation...some of these prisoners were working in the hospitals...they told. They talked. All this goings on news from prisoner to prisoner. From ear to ear, from mouth to mouth. In Buchenwald I worked, I *schlepped* trees. I schlepped trees. You know what *schlepped* means in English? Carrying trees. Two prisoners, one tree.

JF: You cut them down or you just...?

KK: No, no. They were cut down. They were laying in the woods in a place where no trees were; they were laid out, so [thrown about]. This were [only] Jews did that, only Jews. And I remember this was the first Christmas Day 1941. I was there only a couple months.

JF: In Buchenwald?

KK: In Buchenwald. We had to go out...the whole camp has holiday. The Jews had to go out carrying trees. And when you came to those trees, the S.S. was hitting you.

It has to go fast because they want to have their holidays. They don't want to get out of the camp. We had to go fast. Take a tree, you can't select the tree. You have to take the first best tree, put them on the shoulder, one man in the front, one man on the back and we have to bring them somewhere else, maybe 500 meters far away to another place, and throw them down. Crazy things. After the fourth round, we got both a tree and this was to our luck was a small tree. Not a thick tree. Because they hit us, we have to grab the first tree we could take, we select. Ahhh, one of the S.S. men on the way to carry the trees saw us. "Throw the tree away. Come here. You Jew, you dirty Jew, take a small tree, eh?" and with a leather glove his fist hit me in the mouth. And the blood was coming all over me. I was full with blood. And I felt that all my teeth upstairs were loose. I was working *schlepping* trees and the blood was coming down on me. My whole uniform was full with blood. I came back to the barracks and they saw me with the blood. "What happened? What happened?" I told them. They put me down to the *Revier*...the hospital barrack. And the doctor was to open my mouth and said the teeth has to come out.

JF: Your teeth?

KK: Yes, they couldn't grow anymore. They took the teeth out. All the teeth up front here, five or six teeth here...What happened then? Then come the Russian prisoners in the camp. They had so much Russian prisoners, they put them next to our camp, that they could see each other. What they did to them was only that they didn't give them food, those prisoners, those Russian prisoners.

JF: They didn't give them food?

KK: No, they let them stay outside. In the [not clear] in the snow in the rain. No barracks, they let them stay outside there.

JF: These were Russian...?

KK: These were Russian war prisoners.

JF: These were Jews...or were they soldiers...?

KK: No, no, not Jews, in uniform. In the Russian uniform [there were Jews, too.]

JF: Prisoners of war.

KK: Prisoners of war. And we at night time took a piece of bread from our mouths, saved up a piece of bread and threw it over to the other side. And gave them a little bit from our bread. and then the S.S. saw this. And the whole camp, three days no bread. [For] punishment...why we fed the Russians. Three days no bread [that went] on and on, three days no bread, two days no bread, one day no bread. Every week was something, because they saw that we sympathized with the Russians. Then one day it came a *Befehl* [order] the Jews who wants to learn to be a mason. Know a mason, a bricklayer. Should keep their hands up. I keep up my hands. I wasn't afraid for work, but of course I am a worker. Put up my hands, and around 200 were selected, what they said they want to be masons and the rest of the whole camp, all the Jewish prisoners, who didn't raise their hands, they sent away to Auschwitz. In the whole camp, there are 200 Jewish prisoners left, who want to learn to be masons, bricklayers.

JF: Two hundred out of how many?

KK: There were four Jewish barracks in Buchenwald. Around 800 Jewish prisoners. Two hundred left because they said they want to be...they selected from us 200. They went around, the S.S. and when they didn't like your face, "Come here, you're too old, you are too old to learn." Out...all went to Auschwitz. Many died in Auschwitz. So I learned bricklayer, to be a bricklayer. I felt very good. They give us a little bit more to eat, food, only soup they give us, more, no bread, soup, two...cups. And we learned to be a mason outside the camp, to build houses. We built factories outside the camp. Maybe a kilometer from the camp. Every morning we have to go marching through the gates, you know, and the *Kapo* said, "Two hundred *Juden Schweine* [Jewish pigs]...[march].

JF: In the area where Buchenwald was located, did you have to go through a populated area to get to this location?

KK: Yes, when we came from the station, from the railroad station, and march to the camp, there were people looking at us out the windows. But they didn't say nothing.

JF: And what about when you went to work, when you were building this factory? Did you have to do...

KK: No, nothing to do with civilian...it was still within in the camp wooded area. Yes, we built big factories there. Not high, only one story high.

JF: What kind of factories do you think these were?

KK: First we didn't know for what it is, but later they built war material [munitions] rifles, [very modern] rifles, so stuff like this. But not Jewish prisoners work there, only *goyim*, only Christian. Jewish prisoners say they didn't want to do this. It was very interesting. And the S.S. went around and around and tried to hit us. The *Kapo*...you know what a *Kapo* is? The *Vorarbeiter*...foreman was a nice *goy*. A nice human man.

JF: Your *Kapo* was nice...?

KK: There was a *Maurermeister*, a master of bricklayers. He could learn us, because he know this work. He was a very nice man. He watched over us. [So the S.S. would leave us alone].

JF: The S.S. were not there?

KK: Yes, yes, sure it was outside the camp. They were always running around looking for people so they can kill them, or hit them. But they saw us working. We worked, we mixed the mortar, and you know, learned to do this, how to mix the mortar with sand and with water, how to lay the bricks and to watch them that they're straight with a...You look up to see your building straight. This way or this way. Level. Then lines were put so you can see [if] your work is straight. You feel good, you know, because you felt like more like a human being. You do something. No crazy work [like] in Sachsenhausen where you had to put the jacket [backwards] with the sleeves the front or the back here and the buttons in the back and we had to take up the piece of jacket. So like this, should be...and another prisoner puts sand in your lap. And you have to keep it like this. To hold and run from one place to another. Senseless work, without sense.

JF: In Sachsenhausen you were carrying sand in the jackets?

KK: Sand in the jacket, and the buttons were in the back.

JF: Yes, made like an apron?

KK: An apron, yes. And you have to run and put it on another heap. Only to make us busy, you know.

JF: You did that before your leg became infested?

KK: Yes, yes...I can't tell you every little thing, this is impossible. It would take two days to sit here. And they put a blind, a blindfold on us, when you're running you couldn't see. You fell over the S.S. man's leg. And you lost the sand. "You dirty Jew, you lost the material. This is expensive material." And they hit them. In Buchenwald, I learned to be a mason. Another miracle comes now. We were building a higher building, we were up in the air, to build the walls higher. Was all trees, then planks where we could put our mortar things, and we were building, high up in the air. And one day the whole thing fell off, fell together. It collapsed. It wasn't built right. And I fell like this high up in the air, and certainly like a hand, keeps me up.

Tape three, side two:

JF: The scaffolding had collapsed...

KK: Scaffolding, I forget those words, scaffolding collapsed and everybody was falling down with the [not clear] bricks, the mortar fell down. It wasn't very high, around 10 meters, 10 meter high in the air. Not too bad, but you hurt yourself when you fell down, believe me! Suddenly, I was hanging in the air. I think, "My God, what's this?" You hang. My jacket was...the tree was through my jacket and keep me from falling down.

JF: A tree limb?

KK: A tree limb, yes. This scaffolding was *aus* [from] trees and then there were square pieces of wood, and then a piece of wood where you can stand on, you know. This collapsed. I got saved from this. I tell you, this is all my life. Little miracles. Saved me six years and I came out alive. So we built those factories that made a lot of material for the war and I think lots of sabotage, we heard from the prisoners.

JF: You heard from the prisoners?

KK: From the prisoners...they work outside, in those factories what we build. They made sabotage.

JF: Now these were not Jewish prisoners? Right?

KK: No *goyish*.

JF: They were sabotaging the...war materials?

KK: The Communists, a lot of Communists in the concentration camp.

JF: The Communists?

KK: The Communist prisoners. Germans. They made big sabotage [you can't imagine]. One morning, this was January 5, not morning. We came back from work, to the barracks back. We eat [a wonderful] dinner. Was only one *Gang* [course], not three *Gänge* [courses], [no soup, meat] only one *Gang*. Suddenly my number come through the loud speaker. Every barrack had a loud speaker. To give the orders, the S.S....my number, and another man's number comes out. [immediately to the *Revier* [hospital]] The [block supervisor] had to bring us [to the] *Revier*. In Buchenwald they were Jewish barracks and the *Blockalteste* was a Jew, too. They are a political prisoner, not a criminal. There were criminal Jews, too, there. Not in my barrack.

JF: This was in January of 1942. The first January that you were...

KK: 1942, now wait a minute, wait a minute it was maybe '43. Exactly I can't tell you...after so many years...

JF: Yes, it's hard.

KK: The dates get mixed up. I know it was January 5...I think it was '43. January, '43.

JF: In other words, you had been in Buchenwald for over a year when this happened?

KK: From September 1942 to...a year-and-a-half, like. A year-and-a-half.

JF: Yes.

KK: So it was '43. It was '43. It was the worst winter. The worst winter was this, '43. The *Blockalteste* brought us down [to the] *Revier*, this hospital complex, and he told us, "You have to stay here, you can't go back to your barracks. We gonna make experiments on you. Medical experiments on you." And I [not clear]. What is this? So they put us in an extra barrack, was still in the camp but isolated from the other barracks. Extra wire around. And they told us they want to make experiments on us, because there is an order from Berlin. They want to make us sick with a certain type of sickness and when we get healed from this sickness...this is right?...they gonna take our blood out from us and give our blood to the soldiers on the Russian front. Then the soldiers on the Russian front, German soldiers, died like flies there, on *Flecktyphus* [spotted fever]. They got infested with lice and the lice produced this sickness...the *Flecktyphus*. And they want to save their soldiers; many died there, and they want to make experiment with us prisoners and when we get through the sickness, our blood is then immune from this sickness, take our blood and give it to the Russians, on the Russian front to the German soldiers. And to save them. They first treat us very nicely, each one had a bed, like in a hospital. Give us better food...not better food, more food, than the rest of the camp. And outside we saw through the windows in the snow and cold, the prisoners fall like the flies. The prisoners died from the cold. The work was always outside, most of the work outside. And we were warm, we were warm. The barracks were warm, heated, and we came more food. They wanted to make us a little bit stronger so that we could stand the sickness that they gonna put in us. Around a month later, they put the sickness in our bodies. The camp doctor, Dr. Dink, his name...

JF: Dr. Dink?

KK: Dr. Ding, that was his name. D-I-N-G. *Obersturmbandfu hrer*, three stars, or four stars. He [vaccinated] us. No, not with a needle, with a knife. He put a scalpel in, [this little container, with the sickness] cut with the scalpel four times under the skin. Cut it in.

JF: And the typhus he got from a...

KK: From a little [container], terrible looking things. Not a solution...like, like meat [rotten meat, or what]. [It didn't even smell.] And when he came to me his scalpel fell out of his hand. And he said, "Now I'm going to put gloves on." He had no gloves. Afterwards we never saw him back again. Maybe [he infected himself] with the solution.

JF: Maybe he got some on his own hands?

KK: Yes, on his hand, yes.

JF: Now this doctor put the solution on all of you?

KK: On all of the prisoners...we were not all Jews. We were about a quarter Jews.

JF: About how many?

KK: About 150 men, people. The Jews were by themselves again, the Jews were extra, always extra...not with the others together.

JF: Now this was about February of 1943, then, about a month later?

KK: Around a month later, yes...February. I think it was 1943. Then they put bandages over those injections, those holes, you know, that we shouldn't come with our fingers, touch it or scratch it. After nine days, everybody got sick. Really exactly nine days. One hour earlier, one hour later, but we all got sick after nine days. Terrible headache, high fever, around, what you say, the highest fever is here is maybe 104° or 105° ? So high fever. The body swells and start to become spots. This is the spotted fever, the *Flecktyphus*. And we were laying in our beds like half dead. Pain was terrible, the headache, and some sanitation prisoners put cold compresses on our heads. They treat us very nice. They couldn't do much but they put cold compresses on our heads. They came different kinds of medicine we have to swallow. Different kinds of tablets. Then needles, different kinds of needles and injections. But the fever was so high that many of those prisoners couldn't stand it. The heart went out. Died. I lived through it. After two weeks, the headache went down and I was all right again.

JF: Did you have any idea when they called you, what you were in for? With these experiments?

KK: In the moment not, moment not. When they come down and said they were going to make experiments on our body, we feel very bad, we were thinking we are like rats now, [or] mice or guinea pigs like. We were thinking we never come out alive from it. What could we do? You are in their hands. Why me, why my number? Hundred, [hundred-eighty] people in the barrack, why my name? Why my number? Until today, I like to know why. Why me? My other friend got a cold the first night. We were in a cold house. Ice cold. We had nothing to cover. Was not organized right away, you know. It was a very ice cold house, many got a bad cold. They throw them out. People with a cold, they didn't take. Throw them out.

JF: How long did you have typhus?

KK: The sickness around was two weeks long. The high fever and the doctors came from all over and civil [civilian] doctors and studied on us, from Berlin, from all over. Fat big, big men with white [not clear], you know, we had to turn, and they looked at us, everybody from back to back, they went. They looked at those spots. I said nothing. Among themselves they talked but I couldn't because I was terrible sick. After fourteen days the fever went away a little bit, one day after the other. It was everything normal. They made different kind of experiments. They took out of the spine, they put a needle in the spine, and took out fluid from the spine. Took out. I had the feeling that they took something out, not they put something in but they took something out. And many different kinds of medicine it was. And then we were sitting there till the end of May. and they threw us suddenly out. The Jews. I know why. They said, "Why should we take the Jews' blood and give this to our Aryan soldiers?" You understand? Our blood was [worthless] to them. Jewish blood.

JF: Did they ever take your blood to be used before that time?

KK: No, never.

JF: They never did?

KK: Never did. They made us immune to this sickness, to the typhus. But they didn't take the end result. They said we can't take the Jewish blood and give it to our Aryan Christian soldiers.

JF: So all that they ended up doing was extracting the fluid from your spinal column? Anything else?

KK: As I tell you, different kinds of medicine they put in us. Different kind. Every day they give us another needle, or another injection, another medicines. A little bit I forget already...already so many years back. They throw all the Jewish prisoners out. I was there around five months. From January till May. And then we came from out of this barrack and the other prisoners looked at us. We had such a heads. We looked like we came from the moon, like from another planet.

JF: Your heads were...?

KK: Were swollen, our bodies...we had no exercise. Never went out of the barracks, never in fresh air. We always had to sit around.

JF: How many of you do you think survived those experiments?

KK: Only a couple. A handful, maybe. I don't know what happened to the other prisoners, I can't tell you. To the Christian prisoners, I don't know. We saw them at night when they took out the dead. At the night they took out the dead. We looked out the window so nobody should see us. So when they saw us coming across the barracks, they shake their heads. [And as] punishment, that we were so [fat and full] from the food. You know, like you give us every day double rations of this *Wasser* [water]-food, you get swollen, you know. They put us in the quarry. Buchenwald has a big quarry. You know what a quarry is?

JF: Yes.

KK: Goes deep down and they break stones loose, and you, a prisoner, has to carry them [on] the shoulder up out of the quarry and put them somewhere on a place. They put us all in the quarry. And most of us died there. Carrying the heavy stones, they couldn't work fast, the S.S. hit them on the legs, so they should fall over their legs. They have to carry those stones up. The stones were so heavy. My leg broke open again. My foot. The old, old sores. Broke open again and started to bleed like hell. And I shout this to my foreman. "Look, look, my leg, I can't walk anymore."...The blood is coming out like hell and I showed him my leg and he was nice to me. He sent me out of the quarry. "I can't do this work," he said. He sent me out. Me, and maybe two or three others.

JF: How long were you there when you...?

KK: I was only three days there.

JF: Just three days.

KK: When my leg broke open. Why I wasn't used to walk, anyhow, then we were sitting around for five months. Sleeping, eating or sitting. We never came out of those isolation barracks, those experiment barracks. He let me go out. I came to the hospital with

this open leg and they treated me nice, again, put me in the bed with the leg up in the air and after two weeks, it starts to get smaller and smaller, and then they throw me out again.

JF: During this time were you in any communication with your family at all?

KK: Yes, I got letters from them. But there was nothing in there. When they wrote something they don't like, they make a censor stamp on it.

JF: You were still hearing from your father at this point?

KK: From my father, not. My father was taken 1943 out of the Old Age Home in Berlin and put on a wagon, and they put gas in the wagon, and they gassed him. In the wagon.

JF: You found this out after the...war?

KK: And then I looked all over, after the war where my father is, in some camp, but he was in no camp.

JF: He was put in an old age home?

KK: They took them out, people who couldn't walk. You know what they were put in? The [not clear] carbon monoxide from the motor. They let it in the wagon, closed the doors, there...were no windows, closed the doors and they suffocated from the gas of the motors. That's what they did. They didn't put them nowhere, all those people, that was in 1943 in June. My sister told me.

JF: So after you were in the hospital and recovered again from your wound from the quarry, from your leg opening up, what happened then?

KK: I went back to work.

JF: In the quarry?

KK: No, not in the quarry any more.

JF: Where did they put you then?

KK: Then I went to work as a mason again. Till one day in '44 in July, [bright] daylight time, around 1 o'clock, the American flyers came and bombarded Buchenwald. They made so a job you wouldn't believe it. It was this high, you know, you could see the flyers like a little point and in daylight, you know. Hundreds of American bombers. And suddenly the daylight came to night. Everything was dark. You couldn't see nothing but you heard the bombs falling. And you were laying under the beds. I don't know what happened. I had the day off, or what. I was in the camp, I don't know yet, at the moment I don't know why. I was insides. The floor was trembling with us, and the whole camp was not one bomb...yes, one bomb fell inside the *Lager* [camp], next to the crematorium. The crematorium wasn't hit but next to it was a big crater from the bombs. And outside was like a *Wü ste* [desert] you know what a *Wü ste* is...in English, like a desert. *Alles* [All] was a desert. [Everything was destroyed]. The whole thing is this: The Americans know that the camp, that the prisoners, in this time of day, come in the camp, from outsides. One o'clock, twelve-thirty was a whistle blowing outside and all the prisoners have to march in the camp for the lunch hour. If they have something to eat or nothing, lunch hour. It was only for the S.S. that they have rest, understand? The Americans know this. They know at this time

when we gonna bomb. All the prisoners in the camp. So that the prisoners didn't get hurt. And it was like so, the camp wasn't hurt, not one bomb. But around a week before the [bombing] they changed the rule. They said we leave them outside, the prisoner. No more coming in the camp. Let them stay outside for rest period. And the Americans didn't know this. They came and bombarded the camp, outside the camp and we had 600 dead prisoners.

JF: 600?

KK: Around 600 *tote* [dead] prisoners from the bombs.

JF: 600 died?

KK: Yes, many we never find. Maybe eight or ten from my barracks, we never find them.

JF: And this was the day you were inside the camp? For whatever reason?

KK: I was in the camp. So after the bombardment, after the air cleared and it got light again, the prisoners has to come and to collect all the dead people...dead bodies. And we went out with a big wagon. We were with horses you know, has to push the big *Leiter wagen* [farm wagon] and we came outside and the first thing that we saw outside the camp was this big symbol from the Nazism lay broken in fifteen pieces, maybe, on the floor. The big swastika with the big eagle, with the spread eagle, their symbol you know, a big ornament.

JF: A statue or a...outside the camp?

KK: Yes, outside the camp...big [not clear] and broken in a lot of little pieces. That's what we saw first. We were happy. And we came and saw those dead people. With their bellies open, with the inside out. Terrible, from the bombs, air pressure. Their belly burst and the intestines came out.

JF: Were there S.S. as well who were killed?

KK: Yes, the S.S. was killed, too. We saw many S.S. men. They were hiding somewhere, but they got killed inside. They were so burned that you could see [only half S.S. men.] From the head to here, the [breast] bones sticking out, with the uniform, with the steel helmet on it, the head was shrinking from the heat...the head was like this. But the helmet was still there, big. They didn't allow us to touch the S.S. men, the deads. We had big things to load those wagons full with arms, heads, with [half] bodies. It was terrible, to touch them and to throw them on the wagon, was terrible. Many Hungarian Jews, hundreds Hungarian Jews. They went out to work there, and this day died. I saw it on the *Mogen Dovids*. I know they were *Hungarische*. They had different uniforms, cleaner [and newer, you know? We had the old uniforms, but they had new ones.] And then we brought them back in the camp. Many we saw had [bullet holes] in their bodies, and they had little holes from *schieszen* [shooting]. We had Ukrainian S.S. this time in Buchenwald.

JF: You had what?

KK: Ukrainian S.S. The war was going on and they needed all the men they could get. The German S.S. and the Ukrainian S.S. They had brown uniforms on, brown with black...the cuffs are black. And they shoot at those prisoners. They only wants to hide

themselves, from the bombs. They shoot at them and we saw many with holes in the bellies, and in the head. So we put all the dead in the crematorium. The first time I saw the crematorium from the inside. [Piled the dead] Twice we went outside to bring them in. And then we had to wash our hands in that solution. I don't know what it was.

JF: After you touched the dead men?

KK: After we touched the dead. And we were happy. Still we were happy. Then everything outside what we had built with our hands, whole factories, there were nothing left. Were burning for days and days.

JF: The factories that you had built, were they ever put into operation?

KK: Sure, they were in operation. This is what they bombed in '44. They were in operation, burning, but I never forget the big hill with all those shoes from the Auschwitz from Maidanek, what big trains came and brought to Buchenwald shoes from those people what they gassed in Maidanek and Auschwitz.

JF: The mountains of shoes.

KK: The mountains of shoes, little, children's shoes, women's shoes, men's shoes.

JF: Those were also burned?

KK: Yes, outside the *Lager*. For days and days it was burning, from the bombs. The hill was so high, I tell you with cranes [they piled them up]. What they did, every...the prisoners of war done this, had to take little [piles] from shoes, in little buckets, one man in the front, one on the hand and had to bring this to our barrack and they took all the shoes apart. They find dollars in there, [hidden], diamonds among the shoes, you know. That's why they brought all these shoes...