

I was just asking if you remembered why General Wolff was in a mental hospital or a mental section of a hospital at a point.

Well, one of the major reasons was that he did not comply and didn't behave according to what they were asking me to do. He somehow rebelled against the way he was treated. He didn't want to say things he felt that one wanted to get out of him. And to put him in a mental place was a kind of punishment just to render him more pliable and all that to just simply make him comply.

And that, I think, was primarily the major reason. Also, because he was just getting out of hand. There was no question about that during that time, he was also disturbed. I don't question that as a real possibility. But I think it was more of a hysteria. It was a response from someone who was very high up to be treated in a way which he felt was not acceptable to a person of his rank, which he complained about, insisted.

And he was the only person, the only person. Of course, he was not accused. He was a witness. And he was the only person during the Nuremberg trials as a witness who was permitted to retain his uniform with rank and everything. He was the only person, period, because he insisted. And he could insist because he had a lot of support because of the special peace treaty, which he initiated with the assistance of Allen Dulles, who, then, was in Bern, Switzerland and official during the latter part of the World War II.

In your conversations with Steiner, how did he explain the apparent paradox between his attitude of observing Geneva Convention regulations and the sort of anti humanistic values of the SS. Well, he felt that this was a outcome of any type of dictatorship. I mean, he was very critical of Hitler in contrast to Wolff, who was not at all, on the contrary.

And he had some conflicts. And Hitler didn't like him because he talked back. And also, when he was receiving the order to defend Berlin during the last days and had the Army Corps. Army Corps Steiner was called. Army Corps Steiner was given a very-- to defend Berlin and actually for all technical purposes defend Hitler's last outpost. [CLEARS THROAT]

He refused to carry it out because he said, I was not going to risk the life of my man when it was perfectly clear that the war was lost, that the war could not be possibly won. But the war was lost. And I was not going to risk my man for a hopeless endeavor. And therefore, he did not act upon Hitler's orders. And Hitler as a consequence shortly before he committed suicide anyway, but as a consequence, he fell into a rage and said that none of the people, even the SS, now is disloyal to him.

Now, the coat he wears, Wolff has, because he didn't want to be photographed in just a shirt. So I let him have my coat. And so he just hung it over his shoulders, because it was, I think, too small for him. And so that was kind of funny because he didn't want to be photographed. And at that particular time, I was just beginning to annoy him that must have been during one of the early visits to his beautiful villa, which was almost the castle next to a lake on a lake in Bavaria.

So the gentleman on the left is Hitler's adjutant, SS adjutant whom he selected. And I interviewed him. I had a long interview with him and several relationships, several encounters with him. And he, of course, was still very much enamored with Hitler, and defender of Hitler. You can see him in the rank of a major in the major in the SS, or was it actually Lieutenant Colonel?

No, I think it was major then. And he was one of the younger generation who were socialized to be 150% Nazis. And he's one of the examples of a young officer who was in conflict with the older officers. He, for example, hated both and tried everything to lure him in. After the war, wrote bad things about him, badmouthed.

And the interesting thing is Wolff asked me to be a liaison between him, Wolff, and this fellow. [COUGHS] And I did it because that way, I was able to get to know more people and the problems within the SS. And without this sort of thing, I never would have been able to find out about some of the underlying conflicts which existed already during the Third Reich and were carried over into the [CLEARS THROAT] postwar Germany. Yeah, that's just about it.

This is a picture of General Wolff with his girlfriend, whom he wanted to marry. And when they went out and went to some official places, he introduced her as his niece. And people were laughing because most of the people knew that they had a relationship. And she met him during the trial in Munich and somehow fell in love with him while he was on trial and started initiating contact with him.

And that developed into a relationship very quickly. And he had quite a number of ladies, but she was the most loyal and most helpful. The other one, Nana, who was very close to him whom he liked much better than this one because she was a real beauty but was married and a Jehovah's Witness, too good, died of cancer.

And so he was left with her. And she really took care of him. She supported him financially. She cleaned for him and all that. Then, finally, she was transferred to Bavaria and with her brother, built some sort of a house or refurbished a house, which they bought. And he moved in with her. And he lived with her until he died. But they never married.

And so when he told me that he was just about to thinking of getting married to her because he had divorced his second wife, the one I showed you on the other picture with whom he lived in this villa, in this castle, like a place at the lake. So I stayed with the two of us in his apartment in Dusseldorf and as well as in the other place where she then had half of the house and lived with him back in Dusseldorf.

And he told me that he was just about to considering marrying her since he obtained a divorce from his second wife. He also offered me that if I would last for his girlfriend, I could have her. And he would move out of the bed. And I could move in. And that it was part of the Germanic the Germanic customs to share this with a special friend. So that, to me, was a very interesting sort of experience, but I didn't take advantage of this offer.

Now, she's still around and whenever I'm in Germany, I visit her or at least talk to her. So I always go to that place, stay there for several days, and we discuss old days. And she introduces me to other people who are still very much infatuated with national socialism. And that gives me an opportunity to meet new people and talk to them and see what makes them tick. [COUGHS]

I forgot to say the name of the person with Hitler, the other officer. His name was Richard Schulze-Kossens. There may be another picture of him.

Does this woman know you're Jewish?

Jewish?

Yeah.

No.

Even now, after the radio show?

She may found out eventually, and I was going to tell him at an opportune time, and he would have accepted it, and he would have probably respected it. But he died on me before the time was ready for me to tell him that. She is very openly anti-Semitic to the present day. She comes out with very clear-cut anti-Semitic notions.

And we discussed them, and I challenged them, but she's very outspoken about that and in touch with the Himmler's daughter [CLEARS THROAT] and the other former Nazis.

I've heard about that as in both Native American and Eskimo culture. It really is the main place that that's been talking.

Yeah, well, when I was visiting the ex-general Wolff, SS General Wolff in prison in Bavaria, I went there once with one Swedish lady who was particularly interested. She was a relative by marriage of Hermann Goring. And after the war, she remarried, and then, I think, was widowed. He died, her husband. And she was known as the angel of political prisoners because she went there and aided the people who were incarcerated because there were Nazis or whatever, SS,

whatever.

So she specialized to aid these prisoners. And I got to know her because of my association with the German criminological association, member of the German criminological association. And I was introduced to her. And we then, for a while, had lots of common interests in discussing them. So she was not a Nazi, but she felt that these people were neglected and had no one who would render any support to them.

And that's why she did what she did. So during one of the visits, I met this person who was there, had several lifetime sentences for what he did at the concentration camp at Buchenwald. And he was known as the Hangman of Buchenwald and was a young, very cruel person according to people who knew him. And also, [Personal name] and many writers on Buchenwald invariably cite him as one of the most cruel persons.

Now, I was particularly interested in that. And he wrote me for very many years. I have about 100 letters or more. Hundreds of letters, actually, he wrote to me. He adopted me somehow as a family and some sort of a combination of family and father confessor. So the letters by themselves written by these persons are actually of tremendous interest and would be very useful to be applied to some sort of research project.

What was his actual name?

Huh? His name was Sommer, S-O-M-M-E-R. So this is again Gerhard Martin Sommer, known as the infamous Hangman of Buchenwald. And I took many of the photographs because he was totally invalid because what happened, he's commandant to Koch, was a Colonel in the SS, misappropriated funds, and did things which were against the type of sense of propriety of Himmler and the SS. And he was shot.

They sentenced him to death, and because some of us working very closely with Koch. He was also incarcerated for a while and then they sent him to the front. He was taken out of the concentration camp and sent to the front. And then he was wounded on several occasions or just once-- I forget now-- and was absolutely totally crippled. But that, of course, didn't prevent him from being then accused because he was an entity in Buchenwald and did untold damage and killed an untold number of people, murdered them anyway.

And so, therefore, he was sentenced and received a I don't know how many times life sentence. And he never was going to get out. But because they could not take care of him in the Bavarian prison, they sent him to a nursing home. And he was there under guard and under strict sort of situation, but, of course, a tremendous improvement because he was just like in a hospital, in a nursing home, very nice facility.

I went to visit him there on numerous occasions. Also had, before he died, taped interview with him, which I had neglected to do. He wrote me an autobiographical account, which is exceedingly interesting, part of which I've published in my book. And so that is Gerhard Martin Sommer. And I took all these pictures of him when I visited him. And then he was just had undergone surgery. And I took the photo of him.

Surgery in several places, it looks like.

Yeah, it was all infected. He was a wreck. There is no question about that. So because he was a wreck, I was able to have a little bit of a different relationship with him because in a way, I felt sorry for him. I sent him money and bought him things occasionally and all that, sent him things. And he was very, very grateful because he was totally isolated.

In a way, in spite of what he did, I had some sort of compassion for him because he was left totally alone. His wife divorced him. Everyone just simply left him because he was bad news. I don't know. It was kind of strange. I had some feeling of compassion. On the other hand, I told him, hey, you know. But he was a person who denied many of the things and said, you know, you have to understand this and that.

And what [Personal name] writes, he doesn't really know because he didn't see what was behind. But there is absolutely no question that what the man did was terrible. And then he justified and said, well, you should have asked. Oh, yeah, and that's one thing. He also aided one doctor in Buchenwald in his killing people with injections. So he aided him. And

he said, well, what should I have done?

These people are sentenced to death. The order came from Berlin. And should I have said I would like to see the sentence. I would like to have proof of it and all that. And it couldn't be done. And so he went along and did these things. And some people say that he did all these things with relish, that he was actually sadistic and enjoyed doing that.

He was then in his early 20s and had fairly high non commissioned rank in the senate as a non-commissioned officer.

You say he denied doing these things?

No, he denied some of it and said, well, you know, there are certain things I had to do. I couldn't help it. But I didn't enjoy doing it. And when I could, I helped these people and make it a bit easier for them. And when I was supposed to, for example, beat them up officially in front of other inmates. I just hit them in such a way that it would not be that painful. So these sort of things he told me.

But I could write a book just on that person's story because I've got so much material. And as I said, probably hundreds of letters, which he wrote to me very, very consistently. He wrote to me just like periodically, just like him.

So what is redeeming about the man then?

Well, redeeming is--

Too far.

--not very much, actually. Redeeming is the thing that the man was a total wreck. And that he tried to come to terms, it was a very unsophisticated and, I would say, primitive person and who was not stupid but not very intelligent, totally uneducated. And so in his way, because I pushed and pressed him, he was trying to come to terms with what he had done.

But he tried and, to some extent, succeeded. Some things he admitted and some things he said, well, I wrote about things. I had to do certain things. And I very frequently thought when these people were sent to Buchenwald and were punished and all that, this person could have been my father. And so that was quite an admission I got in that fine. And we discussed this thing.

And unfortunately, I don't know what happened to my letters to him. And that would be interesting because I didn't-- after he died, I don't know what happened to his positions. The state took it. Whatever they did destroyed it. But of course, I have all his letters, and they all were going through the censure. You know, they all were read by the prison authorities or whatever before I got them.

But some of them are really very moving, and also, some of the autobiographic accounts. And he has written about two or three for me. And I always pushed him to go further and deeper. And so that was very helpful for him psychologically to have someone who was sufficiently industry in pushing him. And he was not towards me. He somehow adored me.

He thought I was the greatest, simply because I put up with him and showed concern.

Did he know you were a survivor?

Oh, yes, of course.

Did he know you were Jewish?

Well, yes. In this sort of way, he absolutely knew. But he also understood that people who were considered to be Jewish under the Nuremberg law were not necessarily Jewish. But, yeah. Yes, absolutely so.

So he admits to doing many of these acts, but he does deny his enjoyment of it?

Oh, absolutely. Duress and all that, yeah, absolutely denied it. But very interesting correspondence, very interesting autobiographic account. As I said, the most important things were published in the book. And then the interview, the last interview I had with him, I taped. Unfortunately, I used a tape recorder which was on its way out. The quality is not good, unfortunately. But it can be understood. OK, Gerhard Martin Sommer.

Since we're not allowed to say.

So this is after I've departed from a visit to Wolff. And you can see in the mirror there, in the glass, mirrored is Wolff who actually took the photograph during one of my visits. There ought to be some more of that, but maybe not. Maybe it's in the other batch.