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Nazi Germany's 'Angel of Death' Is Still at Large

There is nothing that produces as much exhilaration and all-around gratification for me as tracking down a notorious war criminal and bringing him to justice.

Several years ago, I found Adolf Cukers, a brutal Nazi overlord who had butchered thousands of Jews in Latvia. He was living quietly on a lake shore in the Brazilian countryside.

Not long after I confronted him there and revealed his whereabouts to the world, his body was found in the trunk of a car, with a note pinned to his jacket. The note said simply, "The Committee that Never Forgets."

But I failed to find the most notorious of the surviving Nazi war criminals. The real object of my search was Dr. Josef Mengele, the "Angel of Death," who consigned an estimated 2 million Jews to the gas chambers or the lingering horror of quack medical experiments at Auschwitz during World War II.

Over the years, I have continued the search. I have spoken to witnesses who have seen him. One witness met him at the home of a Nazi sympathizer in Venezuela. Another encountered Mengele at a ski re-

sort in Switzerland. Still another saw him in the south of France.

Apparently, he has traveled under various identities, using forged passports. His favorite alias, I'm told, is "Gregory" or "Gregorovich." His luxurious life style is financed by members of his family who live in the Bavarian town of Gunzburg.

Recently, I sent my associate Lucette Lagnado to Israel to seek out the surviving victims. They remember Mengele from Auschwitz as an exquisitely handsome, soft-spoken man who loved to play German ballads on an old-fashioned, hand-cranked phonograph.

According to reliable sources, he has not lost his good looks, and his manners are still polished. He is now in his 70s.

Meanwhile, he remains the world's most wanted fugitive, sought by at least three governments and various private groups. My sources believe he's under the protection of Paraguay's dictator, Alfredo Stroessner. At one point, a CIA document pinpointed his hideout as the southern Paraguayan city of Encarnacion, just across the Parana River from Argentina.

But I'm told he never stays long in one spot. He reportedly has holed up for brief periods with devout Mennonites in a Paraguayan village called Philadelphia and with fellow expatriates in a Nazi colony called Colonia Dignidad in Chile.

He may now be in a military zone, protected by a small army of mer-

cenaries. The former head of the Israeli secret service, Issar Harel, told Lagnado that, in his opinion, Mengele's security system is so strong it would take a combat brigade to penetrate it.

For years, Mengele lived openly in Buenos Aires—his name in the telephone book—under the wing of Argentine President Juan Peron. In 1959, West Germany asked for Mengele's extradition. The Argentines stalled, claiming that their investigation "disclosed no record" of Mengele's presence. The Germans provided more specifics, and renewed their extradition request in January, 1960.

But because there was no extradition treaty between Argentina and Germany, the case had to be submitted to the Argentine solicitor general. The foreign ministry didn't do this until June, 1960. By then, it was too late. A month earlier, Israeli agents had kidnaped Adolf Eichmann, another Nazi war criminal, on the streets of Buenos Aires. Not wishing to risk similar "extradition" to Israel, Mengele skipped to Paraguay.

The Paraguayans' official line, then and now, is that they don't know where Mengele is. Only a few weeks ago, they told me they'd be happy to arrest Mengele if I'd tell them exactly where to find him. Some day I may oblige.

Footnote: In a future column, I'll tell you about Mengele's U.S. connection.