



## EDWARD KICZMACHOWSKI

Tenth day of the hearing, 4 December 1947

**Presiding Judge:** Please summon the next witness, Edward Kiczmachowski.

**Witness Edward Kiczmachowski, 27 years old, a trader by occupation, religion – Roman Catholic, relationship to the accused – none.**

**Presiding Judge:** I would like to remind the witness of the obligation to speak the truth. The provision of false testimony is punishable by a term of imprisonment of up to five years. Do the parties want to submit any motions as to the procedure according to which the witness is to be interviewed?

**Prosecutors and defense attorneys:** We release the witness from the obligation to take an oath.

**Presiding Judge:** The witness shall be interviewed without taking an oath. I would ask the witness to inform us of the circumstances in which he encountered the accused, whom of them he has recognized, and also to describe their behavior with respect to prisoners.

**Witness:** Esteemed Tribunal! First of all I would like to give testimony concerning the accused Plagge. I first encountered him in 1940, when I arrived in Auschwitz on 28 August in the so-called second transport from Tarnów. I met Plagge on the very first day, when our transport was being unloaded, for he was the superior of the SS men who were to carry out the unloading. The SS men were arranged in double file, and they “helped” us get off the train with their rifle butts. Since the wagon was standing on a steep slope, the prisoners fell one onto another. A priest jumped out before me. He was still wearing his cassock. He was hit a few times with rifle butts by men from the escort who were standing next to Plagge; he died on the spot, probably suffering a heart attack. Since I was the last to jump off the train, I put the priest on a wheelbarrow that was standing nearby and made it to camp with the barrow and the priest’s body as one of the last. Such was my introduction to Plagge.

I next ran into Plagge when he was the *Kommandoführer* [squad leader] at the famous *Bauhof*[kommando] [construction *kommando*]. At the time I worked as an orderly

(Polish *kalifaktor*, from the German *Kalfaktor*) for Stiller, Plagge's close friend. One day he ordered to get the stove piping hot. A moment later he went away, but soon returned with two Poles – exhausted from the cold and frost – who were no longer able to carry the required number of bricks (five), and ordered them to warm themselves by the stove, by now piping hot. Soon they were streaming with sweat and indeed feverish, however when they tried to move away from the stove, the accused Plagge, who stood by them, forbade them to do so, and they finally collapsed, whereupon Plagge ordered to lead them out to the *Schreibstube* [office]. Next, he told me to bring up two buckets of cold water, which without further ado he emptied onto the prisoners, who by then were in such a state that they were unable to work in the biting frost and lay down between warehouse I and II, where in no more than two hours they died. That was the second incident.

The third occurred when Plagge was a *Rapportführer* [reporting officer] in Birkenau. At the time I was in the penal company. Plagge would frequently come up to the camp with a short carbine, and, in the spring of 1943, send transports of newly arrived Jews to the "Buna" *kommando*. Since I was then the clerk at block 27, I was able to determine that some of these people came from my block. While they were being readied to march off to another camp, it became apparent that two of them were so exhausted that they were unable to walk. The accused *Oberscharführer* Plagge then summoned the *Blockführer*, in all probability a Silesian, for he spoke very good Polish, one Perschel, and ordered him to take these prisoners to block 27, where the mortuary was located. Being the clerk, I was quickly summoned to write down the numbers of these two – previously being readied for transport – as *Totenmeldung* [reported dead]. As it turned out, I walked up just when these hapless men, unable to march with the rest, were standing naked in the shed. Perschel, his gun trained on them, ordered them to turn around. His first shot hit the first man, and he fell dead on the spot. I saw all this clearly, for I was standing at a distance of no more than six meters. This was after dinner, and the time was around 2.00 p.m. He next did the same to the other man and demanded that I write both down as *Totenmeldung*, and officially report them in the evening as "deceased". I responded that they had already been assigned to a *kommando*, however at the *Blockführer's* insistence I was forced to note down that they had not been transferred and died at their present location.

I would also like to stress that the accused Plagge had a special way of murdering people. He did not beat people, for this would have only tired his hand. While serving as the



*Kommandoführer*, he would order the prisoners to “roll about” (German *pollen*), thus bringing about their exhaustion.

On to the next of the accused, Grabner. In August 1943, while escaping from Auschwitz with two colleagues, I was severely wounded, being shot in the leg, right through my arm, and in the head. We were captured at 3.00 a.m. They brought us back to the camp under guard. I had considerable bloodloss. I was chunked into the mud, where I lay until daybreak. They threw me down near the orchestra stand while the columns of laborers were marching off to work; I was placed there [at that very time] so that everyone could see me and know that the same fate would befall anyone who attempted to escape.

But after the columns passed, the Germans did not know what to do with me. In the end they carried me off to the *Revier* [hospital]. Lachman was there, and he forbade putting any dressings on my wounds. Since during the escape I was forced to swim [across the nearby river], the wound had become filled with dirt; I continue to feel this residue to the present day. The next day, when I was in hospital, Boger, Lachman and Dylewski came in...

**Presiding Judge:** The witness had mentioned Grabner.

**Witness:** Since I was unconscious, they wanted to conduct a preliminary investigation in order to determine what had caused me to flee. They waited a few hours, however I stated categorically that I would not provide any details concerning my escape. They therefore went away, but returned after some two hours and said that they would take me to block 11, to the bunker. This incident occurred in Birkenau.

An ambulance drove up, and the Jewish doctor, one Herman, said that I could not be moved in my present state, however Dylewski stated that he had been ordered by the “chief” to take me. I do not know who he had in mind. The ambulance took me to Auschwitz, but stopped at the bunker gate. Since I was unable to walk, I was dragged by my wounded arm. They threw me into the cell, where I lay unconscious for a few hours. After a few days they again attempted to interrogate me, for two more prisoners had escaped in the meantime; both are present in the courtroom today. I categorically refused to testify and simply awaited sentencing.

One day in October, a whole commission turned up. As a matter of fact, during my detention I was visited by a few such commissions, usually on Tuesdays and Fridays. These were



the days when the Germans organized the “shootings”, in order to make room for fresh prisoners. It was a so-called purge, or cleansing.

I waited three weeks. Finally, in came Grabner, Schwarz, Boger, Lachman and two others, who were on duty at the bunker.

Boger held a list of those who had been sentenced to death. There were 43 surnames. Since I was in cell 15, at the end, I was able to observe everything. Colonel Bończa, one of our co-prisoners, was shot dead at the time. We decided to avenge the blood of those who had perished so disgracefully. Finally, I heard my surname being read out. I said goodbye to my friends well in advance, for I knew what awaited me. The guards opened the cell door, and Grabner, Schwarz, their whole entourage, and Boger, who was holding the list, all walked in. The latter marked the surnames that had already been read out with a cross, and mine was number 15.

Everyone looked to see if I had a camp number on my arm. I did not, for I had somehow managed to weasel out of having my forearm tattooed. Grabner was surprised that I did not have a tattoo. All 43 of us were led out. They took us to the *Waschraum* [washroom] and ordered us to strip; I even had to take off my wooden clogs. Jakub, the orderly of block 11, then came in and led the prisoners in twos towards the wall.

I am able to describe the whole procedure with great precision, for I observed it as clearly as I see the accused today – I was standing in the *Waschraum* and looking out through a crack in the boarded window.

The first two were walked out, a Russian and a Pole. I would like to stress that they were not led to the wall itself. Two SS men standing in the entrance finished them off using short carbines; I only heard a crack.

Jakub, who was tasked with removing these prisoners following once they had been killed, dragged them towards the ditch so that their blood would flow off there. Finally, it was my turn. Firstly, however, I would like to add that each prisoner – Pole or Russian – while walking to his death would try to shout “Long live Poland!”, “May you drown in Polish blood!”. While the Russians cried out “Zdravstvuyte Stalin!”. However some of the prisoners did not have the time to make these exclamations in full, for they were shot in the back of the head at a distance of 20 cm by one of the SS men. Jakub carried me out into the courtyard, for I was

no longer able to walk. Grabner, propped up against a table, observed the execution. He did not take part himself. In the meantime he was approached by *Unterscharführer* Dylewski, who said something to him. Grabner ordered that I be brought to him. As I later learned, the matter of my escape had not yet been explained, and the political department wanted to learn the background to my attempt, and for this reason I was to be spared – for the time being. After much consideration, Grabner asked me why I had been sent to the camp. I replied that I had willfully extended my holiday following my return from Germany, where I had been deported for labor. He thought about my person long and hard; finally, Dylewski told him a few words more and Grabner ordered that I be returned to the block. Once the execution was over, I was led back to the bunker. They placed me in the same cell in which I had previously been kept. All of what I have said may be confirmed by my colleague who took part in the attempted escape and is present in the courtroom today as a witness.

This is all that I have to say about the accused Grabner.

Next, I recognized the accused Aumeier. I am certain that he recollects the massacre conducted in Königsgraben. We had planned an escape, and in the camp this was always viewed as a rebellion. The main *Kommandoführer* of the *Sonderkommando* [special squad] was Moll. The attempt was unsuccessful because five minutes before the end of work the *Kommandoführer* blew his whistle, which was the signal for the whole squad to gather. We were confused and thought that someone had betrayed us. Thus, we ran off in various directions, but only a few managed to flee through the forest and get across to the other bank of the Vistula. The Germans started shooting and many prisoners perished. The rest were taken to the first block in Birkenau, and a few moments later the accused Aumeier burst in there. They kept us in a squatting position with our arms raised. Aumeier and Moll started sifting through the prisoners, and all those who had red triangles were executed. Our company, which numbered some 600 men, was decimated; only 38 survived. Aumeier threw himself between the prisoners, reading out our surnames in quick succession and ordering the inmates to run to the block. And when a prisoner started running towards the first block, Aumeier would shoot him in the back of the head with his revolver. I clearly saw how Aumeier killed the inmates. Thankfully, Aumeier was recalled after a while and the rest of us were left in relative peace.

**Presiding Judge:** Are there any further questions to the witness?



**Prosecutor Brandys:** The witness testified about an incident concerning the so-called *Bauhof*. I did not understand who of the accused – Spiller or Plagge – was active there?

**Witness:** It was Plagge.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** What was the temperature at the time?

**Witness:** It was around minus 25 degrees.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Did the witness see people being selected to be gassed?

**Witness:** Block 7 – that was the last stage, and from there people would be sent to the gas chamber. I observed from the window of the next block how they handled prisoners intended for the gas chamber. These people endured the most horrible torture before they were earmarked for gassing. There were always thousands of them, and block 7 in Birkenau was known to all of us as the block of death.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** What did the “races” organized by the accused Plagge consist in?

**Witness:** Vehicles would drive up to the block and the prisoners would all be herded out into the courtyard, where they would be informed by Plagge that those who managed to run to the toilet and return would not be gassed. These people, although completely devoid of strength, started to run, however at least one half of them would collapse along the way. The rest – those who returned – would be sent to the gas chambers anyway. There was, however, an incident when Plagge allowed one of the poor souls to go to the gas chamber with the next transport; thus, the prisoner’s life was prolonged by a few days.

**Presiding Judge:** Are there any questions?

**The accused Aumeier:** The witness has mentioned the execution of the *Strafkommando* [penal squad]. Was Moll present then and when did this occur?

**Witness:** Moll was present. This occurred in 1942, although I do not remember exactly when; in any case, the weather was warm.

**Presiding Judge:** The witness may step down.