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August 3, 1978

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Dear Joe:

I am going on vacation tomorrow and the last few days have been too hectic to write all the information you want. In a preliminary way, the highlights of my career are as follows.

I was born in St. Paul in 1910 and have been a resident here ever since. My preparatory education was at the University of Minnesota and St. Paul College of Law (now William Mitchell College of Law). I was admitted to practice in Minnesota in 1933, after which I was an attorney in the Minnesota Industrial Commission for four years, then Assistant Ramsey County Attorney (felony prosecutor) for six years, until I enlisted in the Army in December, 1942.

In the Army I was a Private, took infantry officer training at Ft. Benning, trained troops until May, 1944, when I went to England, then to France on July 7, 1944. I was in the combat area on the northern flank next to the British in Normandy to the Elbe River at Stendal

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(just north of Magdeburg) where the war ended for me at the end of April, 1945. I have four battle stars and a bronze star.

After V.E. day, in May I continued ^{since} to serve as Assistant Judge Advocate General in the 102nd Infantry Division Headquarters. It was discovered that I had six years of felony prosecution experience, so I was tapped for war crimes investigation duty, first with the Ninth Army then with the Third Army Headquarters. For once the timing was good for me and I landed in the plush seat of a Colonel going home on points as Chief Prosecutor, War Crimes Branch, Third Army and stationed at Dachau.

I was seven months in this position until I had the necessary points to return home and terminated my duty in April, 1946.

At Dachau, I was in charge of a group of officer-lawyers and a good number of interpreters. We had over 30,000 war criminals from all over Europe in the compound, pursuant to an agreement among the allies that war criminals would be transferred to the place of their crimes.

Our job was to prepare the concentration camp cases for trial. I personally investigated and toured the camps at Dachau, Buchenwald at Weimer and Matthausen at Linz, Austria.

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In the course of this work, I discovered that we had in the compound five of Hitler's secretaries (whose memos you have), who were arrested at Berchtesgaden, as material witnesses.

I personally interviewed them and found they could and would help me in my investigations, so I elevated them to a true witness status, housed them in decent quarters, having suits made for them, and seeing that they had good rations. My kindness to them was obviously rewarded.

They were draftees in the Wermacht and when it was discovered they were top-notch linguists and recorders, they ultimately were assigned to Hitler's immediate use. They took the place of six S.S. officers who were less than competent and irritated Hitler a great deal. He wanted only loyal S.S. people immediately around him and reluctantly appointed six male secretaries who were the best that could be found. (The sixth was Eric Kempka.) Even though they were thoroughly investigated, Hitler still did not completely trust them and had them under guard at all times.

As I told you, they worked in pairs around the clock even while Hitler slept, recording every word he uttered even in his sleep. The transcripts were sent by S.S. courier to Berchtesgaden where they had a dry vault deep in the mountain where sensitive documents were stored.

Just before Hitler's death at the end of April, 1945,

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they were sent to Berchtesgaden to preserve the records.

Hitler had ordered at least 20,000 S.S. troops to the woods and mountains of southern Bavaria, called the Redoubt Area. Hitler was sure that when the Russians and western allies met there would certainly be a battle to the death, after which the Redoubt troops would come out of hiding and fill the void, the Third Reich thus emerging as ultimate victor.

There is more I can tell you about the last days in the bunker at Berlin and the experience of the secretaries there at Berchtesgaden, but I would have to review a lot of notes I have at home. I will do this later if you think it worthwhile.

I am enclosing copies of my letters home from Europe. Starting about the middle and toward the end, you will find references to my war crimes experience. These letters are not complete due to war time censorship and some restraints after the war and during the occupation, but I can fill the gaps to the extent you need.

Since the war I have headed our law firm since 1946. I am admitted in four Courts of Appeal and the U.S. Supreme Court. Our firm specializes, mainly in insurance and banking law.

I have lived in a suburb of St. Paul since 1950 with my wife and youngest daughter, my son and other daughter, both older, live away from home.

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If you need more on my career since 1946, I will give you more detail.

I hope this will hold you till I return from my vacation when we will be in touch. I hope your publisher sends you to Minneapolis. I would be delighted to arrange accommodations for you and spend some time discussing what you want to write.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Horace
Horace R. Hansen

HRH:lk

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