

RITCHIE BOY

Written by

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Inspired by the World War II experiences of George Robert Field

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***** All italicized dialogue will be spoken in German with English subtitles.**

INT. INTERROGATION TENT - UNDETERMINED

A lantern illuminates a small square wooden table between two folding chairs.

ON THE TABLE

- a shiny moleskin NOTEBOOK.
- a tattered soldier's PASSBOOK marked with German writing.
- a small full DITTY BAG.
- a PEN.

Bespectacled U.S. Army private, GEORGE FIELD (23) enters. Diminutive stature, he is world-weary for such a young man.

George on sits on the chair against the far side of the table facing the entrance and opens the moleskin notebook. It is blank.

He opens the passbook to read various dates and German notations.

George empties the ditty bag's contents onto the table: a shaving brush, wooden key ring, FLASHLIGHT and soldier's SEWING KIT.

George holds the flashlight and flicks it ON.

A WHITE FLASH OF LIGHT fills the screen for a split-second.

George shuts off the flashlight and clumsily places it back into the ditty bag.

*CAMP COMANDANTE BRUNS (V.O.)
You will not leave this room alive.*

LABORED BREATHING over:

*CAMP COMANDANTE BRUNS (O.S.)
...That is my job, prescribed by
the Führer himself. The world does
not wish to have you... so I have
the responsibility of fulfilling
that wish.*

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

CLOSE ON: George's ghostly face illuminated by the searing beam of a flashlight.

GEORGE
(stoic)
Then shoot me.

CAMP COMANDANTE BRUNS (O.S.)
I choose when, Jew...

BACK TO SCENE

George opens the sewing kit.

CAMP COMANDANTE BRUNS (V.O.)
So you like to sew, do you?

BEGIN MEMORY FLASH MONTAGE:

INT. TAILOR SHOP - NIGHT

George, now nineteen, sits at a small table sewing buttons. a jacket.

INT. CONCENTRATION CAMP BARRACKS - TOP BUNK - NIGHT

George sews two white sheets together into what appears to be a shirt.

CAMP COMANDANTE BRUNS (V.O.)
(chuckling)
An engineering student who sews.

EXT. VIENNA STREET - NIGHT

George is pushed off his bike. Mathematics books from his book bag spill out onto the street.

CAMP COMMANDATE BRUNS (V.O.)
Your God will not save you from me.
There is only one God, and he hates
the Jews.

EXT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

George (19), sporting a black eye, sits on a couch with his sister ILSE (16) as he tutors her over an open school book.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

George, wearing striped pajamas, is suspended from a gallows-like contraption, arms shackled behind his back. A silhouetted figure towers over him.

GEORGE

Noble be man, merciful and good!

CAMP COMANDANTE BRUNS (O.S.)

Goethe won't help you either. Mercy has no place in the New Order.

END FLASHBACK MONTAGE - BACK TO SCENE

INT. INTERROGATION TENT - UNDETERMINED

George breathes rapidly and wipes sweat from his brow.

BOOT FOOTFALS GROW LOUDER.

George adjusts his collar and eyeglasses.

A scruffy GERMAN POW stumbles in, pushed by an AMERICAN MP who sits him in the chair facing George.

AMERICAN MP

Another one for you.

The MP steps back and stands guard by the entrance.

GEORGE

(clears throat)

Name, rank and serial number, please.

POW

*Gunther Steisen-Leid. Upper Guard.
39344823.*

George hurriedly jots down the information in his notebook. George eyes the POW's insignia.

GEORGE

Very good. I see that you are a sniper.

The POW does not answer.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Correct?

POW

Yes.

GEORGE

You want some chocolate?

POW

No.

GEORGE

What I want to know is, what was your division's munitions supply situation when you decided to run?

The POW says nothing, standing his ground.

George clears his throat and scans the passbook again to buy time. This isn't how it was supposed to go.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

It would be good of you to tell me unless you want things to end badly for you... We already know that Helmut Steinmetz was your commanding officer because we captured him last night.

POW

No, he is not.

GEORGE

According to my information--

POW

An Austrian!

GEORGE

Yes.

POW

So when was it when you decided to betray the Reich?

GEORGE

If you continue to evade my questions, you will not be treated well.

POW

An Austrian is not a true German. We had to fight all your battles for you. Nothing but useless bureaucrats and bad artists.

GEORGE

You--Your Führer was born there and was a bad artist.

POW

You didn't answer my question. Why did you leave?... You a Jew, aren't you? That's it, isn't it? I won't bow to a Jew.

GEORGE

Your munitions situation, private Steinmetz!

POW

Steisen-Leid, you dirty Jew.

George sets the pen down, but it rolls off the desk. His jaw tightens as he stares down into the passbook again, a lost puppy.

The POW glances sideways to an UNSEEN OBSERVER.

POW (CONT'D)

(Southern accent)

Y'all want me to keep goin'?

We PULL BACK to see other U.S. Army CLASSMATES watching.

CAPTAIN HARDIN (O.S.)

That's enough.

The POW mouths "sorry" back at George and steps away.

An infuriated CAPTAIN HARDIN (50s) stands in a corner. He steps forward, leaning his hands on the table.

CAPTAIN HARDIN (CONT'D)

Congratulations, private. You've just demonstrated everything that we're not supposed to do in an interrogation.

GEORGE

Sir, I--

CAPTAIN HARDIN

I never said you could speak, private, did I... DID I?

GEORGE

No, sir.