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Description

In June of 1985, an international team of forensic analysts meets in Brazil to begin testing remains thought to be those of fugitive Nazi Josef Mengele, the Auschwitz camp doctor known as "The Angel of Death." In Austria, authorities investigate Wolfgang Gerhard, who may have given Mengele his passport.

Keywords

Josef Mengele, Nazi, Fugitive, "Angel of Death", Remains, Identified, Indentification, Positive, Bone, Pieces, Skeleton, Teeth, Dental Chart, X-Ray, Document, Papers, Personal, Handwriting, Diary, Memorabilia, Grave, Exhume, Exhumation, Neal Sher, U.S. Justice Department, Department of Justice, Police, Sao Paolo, Brazil, West Germany, Wolfgang Gerhard, Hitler Youth, War Criminal, Most Wanted, Bodyguard, Passport, Odessa Organization, Graz, Austria, Body Examination, Forensics, Forensic Science, Forensic Anthropology, World War II, Adolf Hitler, Auschwitz, Concentration Camp, Death Camp, Medical Experiment, The Final Solution
**Transcript**

Are Remains in Brazil Those of Nazi "Angel of Death" Josef Mengele?

TOM BROKAW, anchor:

Testing began today in Brazil on the remains that could be those of Joseph Mengele, the Nazi death camp doctor at Auschwitz. There is still another puzzle, however. If Mengele died in 1979, why didn’t his family in West Germany come forward to acknowledge that? Tomorrow, for the first time, a statement is expected from the Mengele family. And tonight, we have two reports. First, from Dennis Murphy in Brazil…

DENNIS MURPHY, reporting:

West German police are here. So are three American investigators. Three more are on the way.

NEAL SHER (U.S. Justice Department): We are bringing down some documents with some of our experts.

MURPHY: The documents are samples of Mengele’s writing, captured by U.S. soldiers at Auschwitz at the end of the war. The most convincing evidence would be a clinical identification of the remains that were taken from a Brazilian grave last week. Today Brazilian police guarded the morgue where doctors began examining the bones. They have little to go on, just seven teeth in the skull and a skeleton with pieces of bone missing. West German authorities have provided Mengele’s dental chart from 1937. It is a written record, not an x-ray, and may be of little value. Meanwhile, Brazilian police are still gathering evidence. They broke into a house owned by Wolfgang Gerhard, an Austrian now deceased, who is said to be Mengele’s chief protector here. Inside the country bungalow they found Nazi books and memorabilia. An Austrian couple name Bossard admit to sheltering Mengele for five years. They gave investigators stacks of personal papers they say belonged to Mengele. West German police are pouring over them at Brazilian police headquarters. Today, the key figure in the case, Hungarian Gitta Stammer, emerged from a weekend of seclusion at her mountain home. She told police that Mengele lived with her and her husband from 1961 to 1964 at three different homes. She recognized Mengele, she said, but was afraid to tell anyone for fear the Mengele or his friend Wolfgang Gerhard would harm her children. Brazilian police have said there are discrepancies in her story. But a major witness changed his story today. A pathologist who had examined the body of the drowned man had said that he thought the man was too young to be Joseph Mengele. Now he thinks the age of the dead man was about right. The pathologist report on the remains won’t be complete until the end of the month. Dennis Murphy, NBC News, Sao Paolo, Brazil.

STAN BERNDARD:

The Mengele story began with death and is emerging out of graves. There is now talk of exhuming the body that lies here in Graz, Austria. This is the grave of the man thought to be the real Wolfgang Gerhard. Mengele is said to have taken his identity. Those who knew Gerhard describe him as a dedicated Nazi, who before the war was a leader of the Hitler youth in Graz, and after the war they say he became Mengele’s Chief of Security, the body guard for the world’s most wanted war criminal. Gerhard’s landlady said that when Gerhard lived here, after leaving Mengele in Brazil, he would crown his
Christmas tree with a Swastika instead of a cross or a star. While Gerhard is said to have had access to millions of dollars and having carried it to Mengele, Gerhard died a pauper after paying for his wife’s cancer treatments. But Gerhard’s crowning achievement may have been providing Mengele with his own passport. Could he have done it alone? Investigators are also trying to connect Mengele’s success at staying hidden and Wolfgang Gerhard with an international network whose role it is to help fugitive Nazis. There are reports the infamous Odessa organization of former SS members is just such a network and still operating here in Graz. The chief German prosecutor in the Mengele case was responsible for finding the letters and diaries that were in Hans Sedlmeier’s house in Ginsberg, Mengele’s hometown. Sedlmeier was the manager of the Mengele farm machinery factory. There has also been testimony that a man named Hans, perhaps, Sedlmeier, brought in large amounts of dollars from Germany to Sao Paolo. Sedlmeier will say nothing. This is Joseph Mengele’s wife. The pictures were taken in January, as the search for her husband was heating up, fed by millions of dollars in reward money. She has since dropped from sight and she and Sedlmeier are said to be among the two or three people who know all the facts about Dr. Joseph Mengele. Rolf Mengele, the son of the man who became known as the Angel of Death, works here in Freiberg, West Germany, and has been pressing the family to make a statement about all of this. The statement may come tomorrow. After the long silence, will he be believed? Stan Bernard, NBC News, Graz, Austria.