

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,723

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:06,723 --> 00:00:17,732

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

3

00:00:17,732 --> 00:00:26,739

World War II is not just a memory in the coastal mountains of Brazil.

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00:00:26,739 --> 00:00:31,743

The date is April 22, 1978.

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00:00:31,743 --> 00:00:36,748

The place is a small hotel outside Rio de Janeiro.

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00:00:36,748 --> 00:00:45,755

A noisy party at the hotel till is broken up by police who discover the people are celebrating something odd.

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00:00:45,755 --> 00:00:50,759

The 89th anniversary of the birthday of Adolf Hitler.

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00:00:50,759 --> 00:00:55,763

The raid resulted in the capture of a wanted Nazi named Gustav Wagner.

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00:00:55,763 --> 00:01:06,772

The capture was made possible by Simon Wiesenthal, who is known as the Hunter, for he has brought more than 1,100 Nazi criminals to justice.

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00:01:06,772 --> 00:01:12,777

World War II

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00:01:12,777 --> 00:01:19,783

In Vienna today, World War II is not just history.

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00:01:19,783 --> 00:01:28,791

Every corner of the city holds memories of the war, especially for those who cannot forget.

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00:01:28,791 --> 00:01:33,795

World War II

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00:01:33,795 --> 00:01:38,799

Simon Wiesenthal cannot forget.

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00:01:38,799 --> 00:01:45,805

It would be easy to say that what motivates Wiesenthal are his nightmare memories of the war.

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00:01:45,805 --> 00:01:49,808

But many others have vivid memories of the Holocaust.

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00:01:49,808 --> 00:01:54,812

Yet Wiesenthal is the only man who remains as a Nazi hunter.

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00:01:54,812 --> 00:02:00,817

From the beginning, what drove Wiesenthal was his will to impose justice.

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00:02:00,817 --> 00:02:10,825

And from the beginning, Wiesenthal's will for justice has been matched against Joseph Mengele's will to escape it.

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00:02:10,825 --> 00:02:21,834

Joseph Mengele was a doctor of philosophy and medicine who performed horrifying experiments on humans and was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.

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00:02:21,834 --> 00:02:28,840

Simon Wiesenthal's training as an architect would have little bearing on his life's work as an international detective.

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00:02:28,840 --> 00:02:36,847

Joseph Mengele allowed himself to be caught up in the Nazi tide. Simon Wiesenthal had no choice.

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00:02:36,847 --> 00:02:42,852

Mengele's life as a Nazi criminal began at Auschwitz.

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00:02:42,852 --> 00:02:46,855

Five million people died here.

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00:02:46,855 --> 00:02:52,860

Every day, train loads of men, women and children arrived at this train siding.

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00:02:52,860 --> 00:02:59,866

When people stepped off the train, the man they were most likely to see was Joseph Mengele.

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00:02:59,866 --> 00:03:09,874

He was always immaculate in his sharply pressed uniform and he was always unruffled as he decided each person's fate.

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00:03:09,874 --> 00:03:14,878

If he would nod to the left, it meant hard work and starvation.

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00:03:14,878 --> 00:03:21,884

If he would nod to the right, it meant a brief walk to what people believed were showers.

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00:03:21,884 --> 00:03:26,888

Either way, the results were the same.

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00:03:26,888 --> 00:03:36,897

Today, in a quiet corner of Vienna, there is a woman who remembers the totally unemotional character of the angel of death.

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00:03:36,897 --> 00:03:44,903

Dr. Ella Lingens was a prisoner and physician at Auschwitz who was forced to work as an assistant to Joseph Mengele.

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00:03:44,903 --> 00:03:50,908

Well, you might say he was especially bad because you felt that he was a cynic,

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00:03:50,908 --> 00:03:59,916

had he didn't believe at all in the idea behind this extermination of Jews in the way they always did.

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00:03:59,916 --> 00:04:07,922

Somebody told that he had once said he didn't despise the Jews, he didn't think they were inferior,

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00:04:07,922 --> 00:04:10,925

what all the others really believed.

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00:04:10,925 --> 00:04:14,928

But he said, no, there are two gifted people in the world, the Germans and the Jews,

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00:04:14,928 --> 00:04:20,933

and it's just a struggle for world domination and one of them will win.

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00:04:20,933 --> 00:04:25,937

The Germans did not win and Mengele saw it coming.

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00:04:25,937 --> 00:04:30,941

He realized that the Russians would soon reach Auschwitz from the east,

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00:04:30,941 --> 00:04:38,948

so he headed west towards the allies who were liberating Europe and towards his home.

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00:04:38,948 --> 00:04:48,956

While the entire continent was reeling from the shocks of war, Mengele actually had his Auschwitz chauffeur drive him home.

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00:04:48,956 --> 00:05:00,966

Home was near Munich in the Bavarian town of Gunsburg, with a Mengele family owned a large factory and was the largest employer in town.

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00:05:00,966 --> 00:05:09,973

Even today, in search of crews encountered outright hostility when trying to film there.

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00:05:09,973 --> 00:05:17,980

Mengele would remain in Gunsburg totally free for almost six years.

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00:05:19,982 --> 00:05:25,987

Just after the war, Mengele went largely unnoticed in the crowd of Nazi criminals,

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00:05:25,987 --> 00:05:31,992

and it was not until 1950 that his name came to prominence in connection with Auschwitz.

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00:05:31,992 --> 00:05:40,999

Mengele then fled Gunsburg with the aid of Odessa, the secret SS organization that helped its members escape Germany.

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00:05:40,999 --> 00:05:49,006

He went to Italy, making the border crossing at Ration Pass, near the northern Italian town of Murano.

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00:05:49,006 --> 00:05:54,010

From Italy, Mengele sailed to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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00:05:54,010 --> 00:05:59,014

He arrived here sometime in 1952.

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00:05:59,014 --> 00:06:04,018

Mengele found it easy to hide in Buenos Aires.

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00:06:04,018 --> 00:06:12,025

Large German migrations in the last century created what are now substantial German colonies in South America.

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00:06:12,025 --> 00:06:19,031

These colonies were natural havens for Nazis on the run at the end of the war.

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00:06:19,031 --> 00:06:29,039

Mengele not only lived here on Sormeento Street as a free man, but actually practiced medicine without a license in this house.

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00:06:29,039 --> 00:06:37,045

He is reported to have met in this palace with Argentina's then president Juan Domingo Perón.

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00:06:37,045 --> 00:06:47,054

With this kind of protection, Mengele felt completely safe, but he could not know that his safety was only temporary.

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00:06:47,054 --> 00:06:56,061

In Vienna, Mengele's movements had been carefully reconstructed at a place called the Center for Documentation.

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00:07:00,064 --> 00:07:08,071

The patient years of tracking Mengele finally paid off for Simon Wiesenthal in 1957.

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00:07:08,071 --> 00:07:15,077

I find Mengele in Buenos Aires as a practicing doctor.

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00:07:15,077 --> 00:07:23,083

I give the information to the German to the court in Freiburg and Breisgau,

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00:07:23,083 --> 00:07:32,091

and through Bonn, through the German ambassador in Argentina they asked for his tradition.

63

00:07:32,091 --> 00:07:40,098

Berti's 968 was the address of the house where Wiesenthal found Mengele.

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00:07:40,098 --> 00:07:51,107

It would take almost two years until 1959, before Argentina replied to Germany's request for Mengele's extradition.

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00:07:51,107 --> 00:07:54,109

Argentina's answer came as a shock.

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00:07:54,109 --> 00:08:03,117

The Procurator de la Nation gave the answer that crimes of Mengele are political and not criminal.

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00:08:03,117 --> 00:08:13,125

And I think this was the green light for Eichmann, because if they don't ask the right man who was in charge of field operations

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00:08:13,125 --> 00:08:21,131

to send hundreds of thousands of people to the gas chamber and they see in this crime a political crime,

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00:08:21,131 --> 00:08:25,135

they would not ask for Eichmann.

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00:08:25,135 --> 00:08:30,139

Adolf Eichmann was kidnapped in Buenos Aires in 1960.

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00:08:30,139 --> 00:08:38,146

His capture was the direct result of information supplied by Wiesenthal to Israeli agents.

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00:08:39,146 --> 00:08:49,155

Eichmann's trial lasted nine months, and as Wiesenthal had hoped, it reminded the entire world of the Holocaust.

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00:08:49,155 --> 00:08:54,159

But Eichmann's capture also had another effect.

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00:08:54,159 --> 00:09:02,165

Joseph Mengele vanished from Buenos Aires.

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00:09:02,165 --> 00:09:07,170

At the very moment that Germany was trying to extradite Mengele from Argentina,

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00:09:07,170 --> 00:09:15,176

he actually returned home to German soil for his father's funeral.

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00:09:15,176 --> 00:09:18,179

He stood on this spot for the funeral service.

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00:09:18,179 --> 00:09:22,182

Although he was widely known as a wanted man in Germany,

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00:09:22,182 --> 00:09:31,189

no one in Gensburg reported his presence to the authorities, even though he stayed here for six weeks.

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00:09:31,189 --> 00:09:42,198

Later, Germany's public prosecutor would say that the people of Gensburg had acted like a group of conspirators to help the Mengele family.

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00:09:42,198 --> 00:09:50,205

Mengele helped himself after Eichmann's capture by going to Egypt, where there was a large German community.

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00:09:50,205 --> 00:09:55,209

Unfortunately for Mengele, the Egyptian government did not want him.

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00:09:55,209 --> 00:10:00,213

The Eichmann trial had created a strong anti-Nazi sentiment throughout the world,

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00:10:00,213 --> 00:10:08,220

and the Egyptians did not want to antagonize the Americans or the Russians.

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00:10:08,220 --> 00:10:16,227

Mengele's German comrades in Egypt chartered a yacht to take him to the remote Greek island of Kipnos.

86

00:10:16,227 --> 00:10:21,231

These photographs were taken by a reporter hired by Wiesenthal.

87

00:10:21,231 --> 00:10:27,236

The reporter was part of a group sent by Wiesenthal when he discovered Mengele was on the island.

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00:10:27,236 --> 00:10:36,243

But it was too late. Mengele had sailed away two days before the group arrived.

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00:10:36,243 --> 00:10:45,251

South America had kept him safe for most of the last ten years, so he went to the heart of the continent.

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00:10:45,251 --> 00:10:52,256

Joseph Mengele, now Jose Mengele, openly became a citizen of Paraguay in 1960.

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00:10:52,256 --> 00:10:56,260

He could not have picked a safer place.

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00:10:56,260 --> 00:11:05,267

A big number of Germans emigrated after the war to Paraguay, after this war to Paraguay,

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00:11:05,267 --> 00:11:09,270

and they reorganized the police.

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00:11:09,270 --> 00:11:15,275

Today, many of the children of the SS are members of the police in Paraguay.

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00:11:15,275 --> 00:11:21,280

In the small Jewish colony in Paraguay, they receive every week threats from the Germans.

96

00:11:21,280 --> 00:11:26,285

When something will happen to Mengele, they will kill them.

97

00:11:26,285 --> 00:11:32,290

I had here in my office a delegation of this Jewish community from Paraguay,

98

00:11:32,290 --> 00:11:40,296

and they asked me to promise them to do nothing against Mengele and Paraguay because their life is in danger.

99

00:11:40,296 --> 00:11:43,299

And this is, and I believe them.

100

00:11:43,299 --> 00:11:48,303

Even so, Mengele did not feel entirely safe in Paraguay.

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00:11:48,303 --> 00:11:55,309

During his first years here, he kept moving from place to place in the capital city of Asuncion.

102

00:11:56,309 --> 00:12:03,315

He is known to have stayed at the Hotel Colonial, which is now a bank.

103

00:12:03,315 --> 00:12:11,322

His neighbors at the Hotel Ostra would hear him in this corner room screaming in the night.

104

00:12:11,322 --> 00:12:18,328

Number 508 on this street was probably his last residence in the city.

105

00:12:18,328 --> 00:12:25,333

Even though Mengele is never sure about his own safety, he is legally free in Paraguay.

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00:12:25,333 --> 00:12:29,337

The fact is, however, he is wanted by several countries.

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00:12:29,337 --> 00:12:32,339

One of these is the Federal Republic of Germany.

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00:12:32,339 --> 00:12:39,345

Its ambassador to the United States, the honorable Bernd von Staden.

109

00:12:39,345 --> 00:12:52,356

Joseph Mengele continues to be a wanted man and will continue to be a wanted man until he is put on trial or until he dies.

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00:12:52,356 --> 00:13:06,367

It has been our policy from the very beginning to prosecute and to put to trial these criminals ourselves, wherever we could.

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00:13:06,367 --> 00:13:16,376

And it is in line with this policy that whenever we find out that a criminal is abroad in a third country

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00:13:16,376 --> 00:13:31,388

and we have sufficient certainty of a crime committed to extradition, it is a policy consequent to ask for extradition.

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00:13:31,388 --> 00:13:39,395

But Paraguay's President Stroesner, who is himself of German descent, has always refused to give up Mengele.

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00:13:39,395 --> 00:13:50,404

On Washington's Embassy Row, diplomacy calls for polite language, even in the most strained circumstances.

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00:13:50,404 --> 00:13:55,408

The Minister of the Embassy of Israel, the Honorable Hanan Baron.

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00:13:55,408 --> 00:14:07,418

I certainly would very much hope indeed that if Joseph Mengele or any other Nazi criminal would be discovered in court in any country,

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00:14:07,418 --> 00:14:17,426

that this country would find it in its own ways and means to bring the person to justice

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00:14:17,426 --> 00:14:28,435

and if it cannot do so to extradite him as quickly as possible to either Israel or to a country in which he can be brought to justice.

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00:14:28,435 --> 00:14:38,443

I cannot perceive and conceive of a responsible government in the world which would not want to have Nazi criminals brought to justice.

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00:14:38,443 --> 00:14:42,447

The efforts to obtain Mengele's extradition proved to be fruitless.

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00:14:42,447 --> 00:14:49,452

Nevertheless, Mengele's fear of capture drove him deeper into the heartland of Paraguay.

122

00:14:49,452 --> 00:14:56,458

His destination was the remote eastern part of the country near the Piranha River.

123

00:14:56,458 --> 00:15:04,465

Very few outsiders are seen here and those that come to look for Joseph Mengele do so at their own risk.

124

00:15:05,466 --> 00:15:15,474

Just before in search of arrived, two film crews, one British and one Belgian, had their film destroyed and were expelled from the country.

125

00:15:15,474 --> 00:15:21,479

In search of could only film using a camera hidden inside a car.

126

00:15:22,480 --> 00:15:27,484

Mengele spent a lot of time in the Piranha region on the estate of Albin Krug,

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00:15:27,484 --> 00:15:32,488

a wealthy German industrialist who surrounded him with four bodyguards.

128

00:15:33,489 --> 00:15:39,494

But what protects Mengele more than anything else is his uncanny ability to avoid capture.

129

00:15:40,495 --> 00:15:45,499

This is the German-style resort town of Hornau in central Paraguay.

130

00:15:45,499 --> 00:15:51,504

It was here in 1964 that Mengele came closest to being apprehended.

131

00:15:51,504 --> 00:15:57,509

A group of survivors of Auschwitz learned that Mengele was staying at the hotel to roll.

132

00:15:58,510 --> 00:16:03,514

They came here and rushed up to his room only to find it empty.

133

00:16:04,515 --> 00:16:10,519

Mengele had left just ten minutes earlier after receiving a warning phone call.

134

00:16:10,519 --> 00:16:14,523

He was in such a hurry that he left in his pajamas.

135

00:16:18,526 --> 00:16:26,533

There are times when Mengele ventures outside Paraguay, but these times are rare because they involve a higher risk.

136

00:16:27,534 --> 00:16:33,539

One such occasion was in 1968 when Mengele went to Bermuda to meet some relatives.

137

00:16:33,539 --> 00:16:40,544

Wiesenthal learned about the trip and immediately sent a man to verify Mengele's identity.

138

00:16:41,545 --> 00:16:45,548

But once again Mengele was already gone.

139

00:16:46,549 --> 00:16:50,553

The closer one gets to Mengele, the more elusive he seems to become.

140

00:16:50,553 --> 00:16:54,556

In Paraguay today he is wrapped in legend.

141

00:16:54,556 --> 00:16:59,560

Wiesenthal must constantly guard against false rumors and mistaken identities.

142

00:16:59,560 --> 00:17:05,565

Wherever Mengele is in Paraguay, he has the protection of the Stroessner regime.

143

00:17:06,566 --> 00:17:11,570

There are times when even the remote Paraguay region does not seem safe enough.

144

00:17:12,571 --> 00:17:17,575

Mengele then takes refuge in a large military zone in central Paraguay.

145

00:17:17,575 --> 00:17:22,579

It is a place so secure that even the Paraguayan police cannot enter it.

146

00:17:23,580 --> 00:17:30,586

In 1977, two events involving Mengele took place that are here reenacted for in search of.

147

00:17:30,586 --> 00:17:40,594

One of the last times Mengele was reliably spotted was when he was seen talking to two unidentified men on the Brazilian side of the Paranya River.

148

00:17:42,596 --> 00:17:48,601

Border checkpoints are few and far between here and there is no record of his having made a border crossing.

149

00:17:49,601 --> 00:18:01,611

The most recent attempt to capture Mengele was made in that same year when it was discovered that he was due to cross the border from Paraguay to Argentina at a given place and time.

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00:18:01,611 --> 00:18:07,616

On that day several agents were placed on the Argentine side of the border.

151

00:18:08,617 --> 00:18:14,622

Mengele's car was spotted and the license plate noted some five miles from the crossing.

152

00:18:25,631 --> 00:18:31,636

But at the last minute, the car turned around and headed back into the Paraguayan interior.

153

00:18:32,637 --> 00:18:40,644

Today Mengele's whereabouts can only be pinpointed by checking the most reliable sources in Paraguay itself.

154

00:18:41,644 --> 00:18:51,653

In search of made contact with members of Paraguay's opposition party who verified that this hardware store belongs to Joseph Mengele.

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00:18:52,654 --> 00:18:56,657

Those same sources brought us to the small town of Altos.

156

00:18:57,658 --> 00:19:12,670

This road, which leads to a well guarded gate which we were unable to photograph, is the access to a hacienda named Campo Condesta de Queue where Mengele lives today.

157

00:19:13,671 --> 00:19:20,677

33 years is a long time and the Holocaust seems far away.

158

00:19:21,678 --> 00:19:26,682

Now there are two men who remain as living symbols of that moment in history.

159

00:19:27,682 --> 00:19:32,687

The hunted is 67. The hunter is 69.

160

00:19:33,687 --> 00:19:41,694

Look, if she will die before me, he will not die in peace because I am a man of the heart.

161

00:19:42,695 --> 00:19:48,700

Because he has no rest, he is going from place to place. And this is also a part of a sentence.

162

00:19:49,701 --> 00:19:55,706

And you cannot make a deal with the Lord that I must survive Mengele.

163

00:19:56,706 --> 00:20:02,711

My last wish will be in this case to get Mengele, but nobody knows.

164

00:20:02,711 --> 00:20:14,721

I hope always there is no perfect crime and even the biggest criminal and the best criminal make a mistake and I am waiting for his mistakes.

165

00:20:19,725 --> 00:20:25,730

There was once a world in Europe that no longer exists, but it left behind an echo.

166

00:20:33,737 --> 00:20:42,745

The history of man is a history of crimes and a special. The Jewish history is a history of full of repetitions.

167

00:20:43,745 --> 00:20:47,749

It's only the technology is changing, but the hatred remains the same.

168

00:20:48,749 --> 00:20:57,757

We need Mengele before a trial as a witness of the history. The trial is a bigger importance than the sentence.

169

00:20:57,757 --> 00:21:09,767

Justice is a funny thing. No matter how man tries to impose himself, it follows its own course.

170

00:21:15,772 --> 00:21:23,778

Coming up next in search of continues with an investigation of the theory that the destruction of the airship Hindenburg was the work of saboteurs.

171

00:21:23,778 --> 00:21:30,784

Then 20th century with Mike Wallace puts perspective on the 1970 killing of four Kent State students by the National Guard.

172

00:21:31,785 --> 00:21:42,794

And later tonight, 100 vintage cars, 300 adventurous drivers, 14 lazy hazy summer days and 3,900 miles of prime U.S. roadway.

173

00:21:43,795 --> 00:21:49,800

It's the great race, the ultimate road trip at eight here on the History Channel where the past comes alive.

174

00:21:53,803 --> 00:21:58,807

The History Channel

