

Ryan Murphy

Maclay School

Ms. Davey

“What is your name, child?” The room was dimly lit and I could see just an outline of the officer on the other side of the desk. “I will not ask again! What is your name?”

“My name is Treue Zerrissen, sir.” Which it is. I was born to Blutlinie and Daeur Zerrissen on October 17, 1928 in Leipzig, Germany, just south of Berlin. Now, however, I am in some KLV training camp and I am 14 years old, and I am being interrogated by one of the SS officers. “Well Treue, we have heard a lot about you, and your town. Would you tell us about it? About your school, your friends? Tell us everything.”

“Why?”

“It is an order. Talk.”

The first thing that jumped to my mind was a fight in first grade. It was no ordinary fight, like the ones Jack Johnson or Max Schemling did where people cheered and there were champions, but a sort of tiny war. Basically, in my school, there were three cliques, and the fight only involved two of them. I was in the third clique with my friend Louis, and we watched the madness unravel before us. It started when one boy, Princip, in one of the cliques hit a friend of a boy, Ferdinand, in another clique. As if summoned by a bell, both cliques jumped to their friends' sides, calling themselves the Allies and the Centrals after seeing the names on the cover of a book, Allies vs The Central somethings. They began something resembling a blood feud,

competing in everything. They all worked for their sides, sabotaging the others' test, cheating in soccer, and even dug massive trenches in the snow to protect themselves from the others snow balls. Winter lasted forever that year, so the trenches became a sort of home. Kids were so dedicated that they refused to leave when they got sick or, due to the snow balls being packed into ice balls, when they started bleeding. Eventually, the parents and teachers got involved when someone returned home with pneumonia from spending too long in the snow. They made the Allies and the Centrals sign an agreement. The Allies' parents seemed to control most of it, namely Mr. Wilson, Mr. George, and Mr. Clemenceau. Mr. George and Mr. Clemenceau were hell bent on punishing the Centrals, hard, while Mr. Wilson seemed to want to be a bit nicer. "It's just children being children." He said. Mr. Wilson lost, however, and the Centrals were punished severely. Some Centrals came to school later and called the Allies a "big old group of mean old bullies" and that they would be back later, stronger than ever. But first grade was over and summer began so I didn't care and thought they would have forgotten by second grade.

"Treue, what do you know of history?"

"Not much, sir, why?"

"Just... continue."

They did not forget by second grade. If nothing else, they were worse, at least the Centrals were. The Allies actually seemed to have partied a lot in the summer, especially at Mr. Wilson's old house (Mr. Wilson moved away in the summer and Mr. Roosevelt moved in). That all stopped when Mr. Roosevelt went broke from a gambling problem, though. The Centrals had split, now calling themselves the Axis and the Centrals. The Axis had apparently been planning all summer while the Allies partied and went broke and the Centrals did what kids do: nothing

productive. My friend Louis was a Central now (Louis was Jewish if you were wondering, and then he vanished before I came to this KLV camp). The Axis had embraced a new kid from Austria, who they simply called A.H. He was... odd to say the least. And short. However, he had a solution on how to deal with some “problems”: namely the Centrals. If you weren’t part of the clique, though, you were also the enemy. I had no interest in being his friend and I could beat them all in soccer with Louis so I didn’t care what they did. Since I wasn’t in the Axis, they wouldn’t tell me the plan, which was aggravating, but life continued. They wore an armband similar to the red one I wear now, but they had to take it off in school. Then, one day, the Axis had a meeting during lunch. When they came back, they poured a drink on a Central’s head. Before he could do anything, they threw his bag and stole his money. Then they laughed, walking away from the humiliated, sobbing boy. Oddly enough, none of the Centrals reacted. They didn’t even tell their parents, or the parents didn’t believe them (I’m not really sure which it was). I asked A.H. why he did what he had. He said, quite simply, “He is inferior to us, because he is a Central.” I was about to say that all of his friends used to be Centrals but we had to go to class so I couldn’t. I was sick for a week or so after that, so I have no idea what happened in that time. When I returned to school, though, the Centrals were no more, at least as a clique. Now, you were a Neutral, an Ally, or an Axis, and the Axis hated everyone because they were “superior,” yet they always lost in soccer. Neutrals basically ceased to exist after one of us was attacked at school. She was walking down the hallway, going to class, and A.H. happened to notice her. He also happened to be eating a lollipop. She just might have been my crush at the time, and she was rather pretty, with golden hair and sapphire eyes that I could stare into for hours. She was what fit his description of the perfect Axis, but she didn’t want to be an Axis because she thought they were mean bullies, which they were, and that made her a target. A.H.

proceeded to trip her, breaking her nose on the floor and spilling her things everywhere. A.H. then put his lollipop in her hair, spun it around a bit, and pried it out, along with a good chunk of her gorgeous hair. I wanted to kill him then and there, but he had his Axis friends guarding him and, even though I was bigger, they grabbed me and wouldn't let me beat him down, so I spit in his face and kicked him, hard, before getting a detention from my teacher while A.H. walked away, laughing again, if not limping slightly. That was the last day of second grade and I hated it.

Third grade was when the Axis started going after the Allies. Third grade is also when the entire Axis was expelled from school. They began the same way they had with the Neutrals. They found one of the smaller kids, and then they beat him unconscious, took his things, and left an armband to remind people that they did this because they could. By winter, it was like first grade all over again, only the Axis was hunting down former members of the Centrals. They would steal from them, beat them, and basically torture them, and the parents and teachers didn't do anything. They didn't do anything until Mr. Roosevelt's daughter, Pearl, was attacked. She was an Ally, and everyone knew it, but she wasn't fighting like the rest. We were friends. She returned to her father one day with a black eye, a broken rib, and a concussion. That woke the parents up, and then they found Mr. Poland's daughter, Harmlos. After school one day... A.H. took her...

“What, boy? What happened?”

*You are a trained Hitler-Jugend. You are not allowed to cry. Finish the story.*

Harmlos was taken by A.H. and his Axis. They took her to his house, where they taped her mouth and blinded her. Not with a blindfold or hands, but with knives. They stabbed Harmlos eyes out. Then they had A.H.'s dog, Mengele, gnaw at her legs, and then he used her feet as toys

when they came off. A.H. then had his Axis tear out her hair, her nails, and anything they could get hold of. After that...

“Clean up his mess we have orders to hear his story. He will finish.”

The officer just said this because I just threw up.

I'm sorry. The Axis tore out her tongue, as a treat for what a good dog Mengele had been. Then they chopped-

“Enough! Get to the point.”

They took her outside when they were done. In the cold. She had no clothes on, nor feet, eyes, ears, hair, and arms, and they threw her in her front yard and left her to die. She did. Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Poland's neighbor, found her there when he got home from work. He believed the stories then. All the parents did. Mr. Churchill, Mr. Poland, and Mr. Roosevelt told the police what had been done. The police came to the school for answers. I had answers. They took every member of the Axis away. I don't know what happened to them. I don't know why they did what they did. A.H.'s Axis claimed to just be “following orders.” Why did they do it? Why did they kill Harnos? What did she do? Tell me why she deserved to die!

“Thank you, Treue. You may leave now.”

The officer never told me.