

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	83

Interviewee Surname:	Adam
Forename:	Sir Kenneth
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	5 February 1921
Interviewee POB:	Berlin, Germany

Date of Interview:	24 November 2004
Location of Interview:	London
Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Anthony Grenville
Total Duration (HH:MM):	2 hours and 10 minutes

INTERVIEW: 83**NAME: SIR KENNETH ADAM****DATE: 24 NOVEMBER 2004****LOCATION: LONDON****INTERVIEWER: ANTHONY GRENVILLE****TAPE 1**

AG: I am conducting an interview with Sir Kenneth Adam in London on the 24th of November 2004. My name is Anthony Grenville. First of all, Sir Kenneth, I'd like to thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview with us. Could I just start by getting you to state your name as it was at birth, please?

KA: My name at birth was Klaus Hugo Adam.

AG: And where were you born?

KA: In Berlin.

AG: And your date of birth?

KA: Was the 5th of February 1921.

AG: Thank you. Could you tell me a little about your family history, please? What sort of family did you come from?

KA: Well, I would call it a sort of upper-bourgeoisie Berlin Jewish family. My father was the co-owner of a very elegant sports shop on the corner of Leipziger and Friedrichstraße which was called S. Adam, which was founded by his father in, I think, the 1860s. But he was also interested in many other things. He was one of the first ones, I think, who realised the importance of merchandising, so he equipped Amundsen's expedition to the North Pole; and I still met Amundsen at tea.

AG: You met Amundsen? Oh well, I'll have to ask you about that later!

KA: And also he promoted, I think, Murnau's film 'Schloß Vogelöd', and sports films like 'Wunder des Schneeschuhs'. So he was dabbling in the arts as well. And he really was quite a modern man, because, I only found that out much later, after we were in England, that in 1928 he had commissioned Mies van der Rohe to rebuild S. Adam, the store. It never happened because it was already pretty late. And he was quite flamboyant, a bit of an adventurer, and he adored my mother, there is no question about that. They must have married, I think, because my older brother was born in 1914, so they probably married in 1913 or 1912, I'm not quite sure.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 23 seconds

AG: Could you tell me your parents' names, their first names?

KA: Yes. My father was called Fritz Adam. And my mother's maiden name was Lilly Saalfeld. Now, I don't know, out of interest, but you know, in Berlin in particular, the Berlin Jews were terrible snobs; not quite as bad as the Hamburg Jews, but they were bad. And my mother's family had been living in Germany since the Spanish Inquisition. So they were considered aristocracy; and in fact, in the 1920s some Spanish grandee came to visit my family and said we are related. Whereas my father's family came from the East, from Russia or Poland and were really second generation. So my mother's family looked down a little bit, they considered him somewhat parvenu. But it was a charm [sic], which finally won through my mother, and it turned out to be a very, very happy marriage.

AG: I'm interested in your mother's family. That must have been a Sephardic family.

KA: Yes, they were Sephardic.

AG: Do you know the family name before it became Saalfeld?

KA: No. Well, I probably can check it. It probably was Gebert or something. My late brother used to write an unofficial biography, but it was not allowed to be published because it was quite outspoken about members of the family. But her grandmother was a very famous socialite in Berlin, rather like Gertrude Stein in Paris. And her name was Jettchen Gebert. And, you know, she had quite a lot of books written about her; unfortunately committed suicide, I think, because she had a row with one of her sons, at the age of 68. So that was one of the ancestors.

AG: So this was a family that had been well settled in Brandenburg?

KA: Ja, I think they lived in Stettin. They established themselves in Stettin and then moved to Berlin.

AG: And did you have the impression that you were born into this, well, you can't say Jewish aristocracy, but Jewish haute bourgeoisie?

Tape 1: 6 minutes 13 seconds

KA: No, I didn't. My mother was rather frugal: there are four of us and she tried not to spoil us. And the strange thing is, I only became aware that I was Jewish much later in fact, when the Nazis – just before the Nazis came into power. Because they were very liberal and they had been married at what was called the *Liberale Reformgemeinde*. And for some reason which I never found out, my older brother, who was seven years older, was bar mitzvahed and circumcised and all that, whereas myself and my younger brother were never bar mitzvahed or circumcised. Why, to this day I don't know. And so we certainly weren't brought up religiously in any way. I don't think as a young boy or a child you realise that you are part of a privileged family. I think, you know, we also had a small property in the country on the Baltic. And obviously I mixed a lot with the village boys. And then suddenly I got quite annoyed when they said: 'But you are rich, or your family.' You know, I would not accept that in a way. But remember that Berlin in the 20s, there was a cultural revolution. Rather like what happened in this country in the 60s. And so both my brothers and I went to a very

famous school in Berlin which was called the 'Französisches Gymnasium', which is still existing today. And it had a very high standard of education. And my brother, who was seven years older, mixed a lot, he was very liberal, but mixed a lot in political and artistic circles. So my ears pricked up whenever he told me about his adventures. Strangely enough he didn't get on with my father. Because my father was very Prussian, very German. He'd been a cavalry officer in the First World War.

AG: Can you tell me about his exploits in the First World War?

Tape 1: 9 minutes 0 second

KA: Yes. He served with the Hussars, with the Red Hussars. And during the war with the Uhlans. And was several times decorated with the Iron Cross first and second class. He was a very courageous man and a very good horseman, too. And I remember when we were children, two or three times a week he took the whole family riding through the equivalent of Hyde Park in the Tiergarten. And of course I was born in the Tiergartenstraße, which was where all the embassies were, and considered the old West. Whereas the new West, which was the Kurfürstendamm, was considered nouveau riche and not quite right.

AG: And where you grew up, was this a large house or an apartment?

KA: A large apartment. Remember in Berlin, except in the outskirts like Grunewald or Dahlem, you always live in apartments. But the Berliner apartments were famous because they were enormous. They were about, I suppose, those rooms must have been 18 ft high and they took up a whole floor of a building. So they went round the inner courtyard, so the main reception rooms were facing the front, and in our case the Tiergarten. And the other rooms, like bedrooms, were more towards the courtyard. They were enormous.

AG: Because you were quite a large family. Actually, I should ask you if you could just say for the film the names of your brothers and sisters.

KA: Yes. My oldest brother was Peter; and he unfortunately died about 20, 25 years ago. My sister, who is just a year and a half older than I am, is Loni, and still is Loni. And my younger brother was Dieter, and is now Denis, and lives in New Zealand.

AG: So is your sister the only one of your siblings that settled in Britain?

KA: And my brother Peter. In fact, Peter was very much responsible for getting us out of Germany into England.

AG: We will come on to that a bit later. Did your parents go to synagogue or were they at all observant?

KA: Not that I remember. Not at all. I can't remember celebrating any Jewish New Year or anything like that. I'd never been to a synagogue. I suppose I was too young when my older brother was bar mitzvahed. So I wasn't very aware of it. And so it came even as more of a shock to me when I heard anti-Semitic remarks for the first time and I didn't know what was wrong with me.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 25 seconds

AG: What about your parents' social circle? What sort of people did they mix with?

KA: Well, a) we had a gigantic family. Because there were— I think my father had— there were ten children in his family. So there were four brothers and six sisters, I think. And my mother had two brothers. But also, remember, he was very active in athletics and sport. So we met a lot of the sports people of the period. He was interested in the Olympics and also in flying and sponsoring a certain— I told you— Amundsen exploration of Tierra del Fuego, by an ex-German pilot of the First World War called Günther von Plüschow, who then wrote a book called 'Die [Abenteuer des] Flieger[s] von Tsingtau', which was quite a—. And I met him, of course. And my mother and my brother were very much interested in classical theatre, so they went to the Deutsches Theater and Schillertheater. And also, which is very important, he was in the same form as Gottfried Reinhardt, the son of Max Reinhardt. You know Max Reinhardt, the famous theatrical producer. So, through my brother I met Max Reinhardt, too.

AG: Do you have any memories of Max Reinhardt?

KA: Yes, I mean, he was God to me. And he also helped in producing the Christmas play at the Französisches Gymnasium. And Gottfried I was very friendly with, even though I was seven years younger. But Gottfried eventually became a producer in Hollywood and we carried on our friendship in Hollywood. And later, when he went back to Leopoldskron in Salzburg in Austria.

AG: What about Amundsen?

KA: Well, I met him at tea. And I mean I was goggle-eyed because to me he was a—. I think it was a trip when he was going to rescue the Italian general Nobile who had disappeared in this airship.

AG: Where was this? Was that up in the far north?

Tape 1: 15 minutes 22 seconds

KA: Yes, in the Arctic, near the North Pole somewhere. And I knew about that trip. When I heard that they had found Nobile and the airship but Amundsen had disappeared, vanished, I was very bitter against Nobile and it took me a long time to get over that. Because I was fairly— even though I only had an afternoon with him, but I was fascinated by this man, this Norwegian.

AG: Any other celebrities, sporting or otherwise, that you met?

KA: No, I can't off-hand remember any. Yes, my father was very friendly with Dr Karl Diehm who was the president of the Hochschule für Leibesübungen. Who was a very great man, really. One of the few Germans who never became a Nazi. And as a result, he was offered to be *Reichssportführer*, and he turned it down.

AG: What was his name, I didn't catch it?

KA: Dr Karl Diehm. And in fact, you know I was in the air force, I was flying as a fighter pilot. When I visited Berlin in about— I suppose it must have been 3 or 4 weeks after the Russians had conquered it, or maybe a couple of months, the first person I looked up and I found in hiding, was Dr Diehm and his family and they were starving. They'd been starving

for a long time, because the Nazis were looking for them and so on. And he then became— I helped him with food and so on, he then became Rector of the Cologne University and he died in that position. He was a very honoured person. And other people off-hand — I'm not prepared really. I also remember that we children were always kept a little apart. I mean I met Jackie Coogan because my father arranged a big festivity for him, and I'm photographed with Jackie Coogan. And, oh yes, I met also the ocean fliers who crossed the Atlantic for the first time from West to East. There were three of them: one was an Irish major, Fitzmaurice, and the other two were German. One was a German aristocrat called von Hünefeld and the pilot was a man called Köhl. And they were the first ones to cross in a German Junkers, I think it was, from the West, they made a successful crossing, that was after Lindberg, obviously.

Tape 1: 19 minutes 10 seconds

AG: Sounds as if, on the whole, you and your family mixed with a fairly elevated stratum of German society quite smoothly?

KA: Absolutely, ja.

AG: And what about when you were at school? Could you tell me about the first school that you went to, if you went to one before the—

KA: No, I was fortunate to have a private tutor, Fräulein Lina, whom we were friendly with until she died recently. Well, recently, everything is recently by the time, you know, 15 years ago. But Fräulein Lina was very Catholic, strangely, came from Bavaria. And I was completely in love with her. And she spent years with us. Until I was nine years of age, she taught us everything. And of course we learned more about Catholicism than about Judaism in a strange way. But she was a great sport in a way. And also gave us a very good sort of grounding education. So when I joined the Französisches Gymnasium in the *Sechsten* (which was the bottom form), I had a pretty good basic education.

AG: What sort of school was it and how did you get on there?

KA: Well, the Französisches Gymnasium was very famous. It was founded by the Huguenots in the 17th century, 1650 or 1660, I'm not quite sure of the exact date. It was the only school in Germany in which all subjects with the exception of mathematics were taught in French. So we all learned to speak French fluently. And it was a very liberal school. It had a lot of children from diplomatic households as well as a few girls, so it was mixed, but very few girls. And a very high standard of pupils. In fact, it is still existing today and still has the same reputation. There were two schools, I would say, of equal academic standing: one was the Französisches Gymnasium, the other one was called 'Das Graue Kloster', 'The Grey Convent', and that's existing still. And then there was, completely different, the Hahn School, you know, which then also went to Scotland, where Prince Charles was educated.

Tape 1: 22 minutes 19 seconds

AG: How did you get on at school?

KA: I got on, but I was very lazy. And also, I had some brilliant close friends. And so I never really did any work, I let them do all the work for me. I mean it was unbelievable. One ended up to be professor emeritus at the Caltech in California, still is a friend of mine.

AG: Who is that?

KA: Zaberski, Wolf Zaberski. He's now retired in Santa Barbara. But he did a lot of work on the first moon landing, too. Incidentally, Wernher von Braun went to the Französisches Gymnasium, but he was a different generation. And the other one, Karl-Heinz Kahn, became also professor emeritus at McGill University in Canada, I think, in psychiatry. He's now retired, so he still does some work. So with these two as my best friends I never did any work, which was very unfortunate, you know.

KA: What about the rest of the classmates? Were there many Jews amongst them?

AG: There were, yes, quite a large number of Jews amongst them. Who all made careers, eventually, abroad. And also of the gentiles, with one or two exceptions, they all made good careers. But there was one whom we considered stupid, who, after the Nazis got into power, suddenly arrived in Hitler Youth uniform, but we never took him very seriously. In fact, in those days we made fun of him, you know. And there was only one teacher who was, I think—by this time I had been four years at the school, a mathematics teacher, and his name was Winters, I never forget that. And he was a bloody sadist, because he arrived in SS uniform and when he punished me, he did that to my cheek [gesture of gathering skin of cheek together] and ran a ruler through it. It was quite painful. But he was the only one. But the headmaster, the formmaster, were all wonderful people, and right to the bitter end. Because Zaberski did his baccalaureat in 1938, I think, he was allowed, you know. We left in '34. But so the Französisches Gymnasium had a very good record, basically.

Tape 1: 25 minutes 31 seconds

AG: Did you mix, before 1933 especially, with non-Jewish pupils?

KA: Yes, yes. I don't think there was— we felt, before 1933— I mean, they were just like us, you know. Then eventually it became, but I don't think— I mean certainly not by the time I left, which was April '34, did I feel any animosity in that school. Where I felt it was in the village, with some of the village boys, whom I considered my friends, you know. Who suddenly called me a Jew boy or something like that. And I didn't realise, you know, but you learn very quickly.

AG: When would this have been?

KA: I think probably in the late '20s or beginning of the '30s.

AG: And this was up by the Baltic, you said?

KA: By the Baltic. Actually, inland of the Baltic, near Stettin, called Stettiner Haff. And we were so happy there. I mean, we spent all our summers, and sometimes Christmas and winters. And yes, talking about Christmas, for instance, we celebrated Christmas. It was the most important celebration of the year. My father used to get the biggest Christmas tree you could find. And the night before Christmas Eve, he entertained all the staff at the apartment. And we weren't allowed to see the Christmas tree then. And Christmas Eve we were allowed in, and then somebody played Father Christmas, an employee from his firm. And those were very happy memories, except in, I think it must have been Christmas 1933, ja, 1933 till 1934, the store had been liquidated.

AG: Oh, as early as that?

Tape 1: 28 minutes 4 seconds

KA: Ja, in fact it was liquidated in 1932. Partly because of the Nazis and partly because, I think, my father had also done a lot of speculation in property, and had lost a fortune in property. And in any case, then he had really the madness to open another store called Sport Adam about two blocks down the road, and of course that became part of the boycott and so, so of course that went—

AG: On 1st April 1933?

KA: No, I think he opened it in '33, but it was over at the end of '33. And I remember at that Christmas, because there were my mother's brothers there and so on, they disappeared into the *Herrenzimmer*, which was a separate sort of room, and it was the first time I saw my father with tears in his eyes. And that had a dramatic effect on me and also the other children, except maybe my brother, to see this very flamboyant man destroyed, you know. I think that he realised that the writing was on the wall. Because he felt so German, so Prussian, that he never believed anything could happen to him, like so many of those German Jews. My brother, who had the Französisches Gymnasium education, who was much more liberal and who was no doubt the most intelligent member certainly of us children, but also of the family I would say, studied law in Clermont-Ferrand in France, in 1932. And he saw what was happening in Germany from a foreign country, where you get a much better perspective. And I remember he came back, and the one thing was always the whole family used to have breakfast in my parents' bed on a Sunday. That was one of those things that we all loved. And my brother said to my father: 'I think the kids will have to leave Germany, get out of it.' And my father had a big row with my brother. In fact, they never really got on. It was my mother who took my older brother aside. And she pushed— and eventually my father was arrested in Berlin, in the country, for no reason at all. It was, must have been in '33, the middle of '33, and they called it *Untersuchungshaft* or something like that. And, ironically, one of his employees in the new store, Sport Adam, who by now was high up in the SS, got my father out of arrest within 48 hours. But I think that drew the line and that's when my father decided also that we had to leave.

Tape 1: 32 minutes 6 seconds

AG: Did the coming of the Nazis affect your other brothers and your sister, I mean, not your elder brother, he was away, but your sister Loni?

KA: My sister left about three or four months later with my mother and father. And by this time we were living at the Matthäikirchplatz, and she still witnessed the— I think it was called the Night of the Long Knives, which was [at] a house opposite where we lived, when the SS arrested Röhm and all the SA and they put up machine guns everywhere, which was pretty frightening. I still, on my way to school, saw the burning of the Reichstag. That I witnessed. And of course one grew up very quickly, when you saw these ghastly thugs, because they were thugs in those days. These *Überfallkommandos* arresting people right and left and street fights and battles with the communists and so on. It wasn't pleasant. And so then my mother took my younger brother and myself on a steamer from Hamburg to Grimsby Harbour. And from there to a small public school in Edinburgh in Scotland.

AG: What was it called?

KA: Craigan Park School. And that's when I started with my first neurosis, I think. Because, first of all, we couldn't speak any English. And my mother— we dropped in a little hotel in Edinburgh, remember we lost nearly all our money, and she had to go to a loo outside, you know. And that I couldn't accept. And then we went to this little public school. I was introduced to some of the not so good parts of public school life.

AG: Such as? What sort of sides?

KA: Bullying, particularly bullying. And I never forget, because we used to swim a lot. And one day some of the prefects or seniors I thought were trying to drown me. They held me under water as long as they could. That was pretty frightening. And also, then my parents came over to London, after four months, five months or something. And I felt that they needed my protection. Don't ask me why, but that's my character. So I developed this neurosis and nothing could have kept me there. I would have actually left on my own. My younger brother didn't care at all, it was me. So finally my mother decided that she had to take us out from that school. And then we went to London.

Tape 1: 35 minutes 41 seconds

I first went to a prep school in Willesden called Vernon House School to learn English. And fortunately, we had a wonderful headmaster, he related a lot to me, because I had artistic talent and he liked that.

AG: Was he an ordinary Englishman?

KA: Yes. Dr Evans was his name.

AG: Where were you living in London?

KA: In Hampstead. By the time my mother had opened this boarding house in Hampstead in Greencroft Gardens, which is still existing now, where my sister lives and her two sons. They have apartments there. And we had a so-called English aunt; she wasn't actually an aunt, she was a distant relative, whose name was Constance Hoster, Tante Conny, who was very well known in diplomatic circles, in government circles in England because she had the most famous secretarial college.

AG: What was her name?

KA: Constance Hoster.

AG: Was it she that helped you, the family, come to England?

KA: Right. She helped and she was in love with my older brother and she introduced him to people from the Home Office and so on, and the Woburn House, you remember, the refugee organisation. She was very helpful to get my mother started with the *Pension* in Hampstead.

AG: You were saying that she ran a famous secretarial college?

KA: Ja, secretarial college in Grosvenor Place, not far from here. And her girls were called the Hoster Girls, I think. And they were mainly secretaries of ambassadors and diplomats and so on. In fact, in Berlin, the secretary - and I remember her name, Miss Hurran - of the British ambassador, had been trained in Tante Conny's school, the Hoster School.

Tape 1: 38 minutes 23 seconds

AG: That was a very good contact indeed.

KA: Ja, that was a very, very important contact.

AG: And when you were at this prep school in Willesden, did you experience any hostility or bullying there?

KA: No, not at all. If anything I-, it was very strange, because there was a weed of a pupil, and his name was David Sylvester. And he wrote a biography 2 or 3 years ago, just before his death. And he mentioned me in it and he says I was a sort of centre of entertainment in the class. And he almost sort of fell in love with me. And I completely lost contact with him because I considered- he was always collected at the school whereas we always went on our own bicycle and I thought he was a bit of a sissy and so on, you know. And then, when I eventually in the '90s got my doctorate of the Royal College of Art, David, by this time probably the most famous art critic in this country, was present and he came to me and he said: 'You don't remember me' - because he was enormous, like that [broad gesture]- 'but we were both together at Vernon House School.' And he already had cancer, and he said: 'And if it's the last thing I do, I'm going to get an exhibition of your work at a fine arts gallery.' And that's how the Serpentine Gallery exhibition in 1999/2000 was curated by David, you see. So he said I was very popular at that school. And I was also taking part in the sport activities; there we played soccer and cricket.

AG: Were you the only refugee in the school or were there others? There can't have been very many.

KA: No, there weren't. My younger brother - My younger brother who's three years younger also joined. And then I passed my Common Entrance to St Paul's in London. So by this time my English was a lot better - it never improved since.

Tape 1: 41 minutes 20 seconds

Then I spent till 1937 at St Paul's and that was a very important part of my education. Because what I found was that it had a similar high standard to the Französisches Gymnasium in Berlin. And strangely enough, which I didn't mention before, because there were many famous pupils at the Französisches Gymnasium, for instance the three grandsons of Sigmund Freud. Well. They then also went- you found them all at St Paul's again, so it was almost like going home, because there were a lot of the ex-Französisches Gymnasium pupils and other people we knew. The standard of education, particularly of the teachers, was probably and still is the highest in this country. And in those days they certainly were the highest-paid teachers. So that was a great, great experience for me. And more so, they had a very good art teacher, Mr Steer I think was his name. And he recognised my talent and pushed me and pushed me. And helped me, you know, when I got distinction in art in the Oxford and Cambridge School Certificate, I then became an external student at the Bartlett School of Architecture at University College.

AG: I just like to dwell on St Paul's a little bit. Could you tell me something about the atmosphere in the school and how you felt that you as, well, one of a number of refugee children, fitted in there?

KA: Yes, well, first of all, my mother was worried that I would not fit into a living/boarding school. And St Paul's had both, you see, they had boarders, but mainly day boys, as we were called. And so it was ideal, I could cycle every day to the school, or take a train or whatever it was. And I felt very happy there. Because it was very— we had to wear, as seniors, bowler hats. It taught me a great deal about the British character, which was invaluable, or proved invaluable in my later life, in later experiences. Particularly the feeling of team sport, and thinking for yourself, too.

Tape 1: 44 minutes 51 seconds

And I had to work for the first time, too. Because I had to pass examinations and I couldn't have other people do my work. I found I could do the work and so on. So it was a very pleasant, very pleasurable experience, even though I was caned once or twice by the— which was called 'interview with the high master'. But I liked it.

AG: You got on well with the other boys?

KA: Yes, very well indeed.

AG: Did you ever experience any antipathy towards yourself, either as a foreigner or as a Jewish refugee?

KA: No, I didn't. I didn't. But the interesting part was that at the same time I was living in my mother's boarding house in Hampstead. And my mother had brought a lot of her furniture still over from Germany. So she had that big dining table which could be pulled out to seat 26 people. So every dinner, every boarder had to be there at 7 o'clock sharp, you see. And if you spent several years with 20 to 30 immigrants from all over Europe, and all either professors or doctors or lawyers or you name it, and you listen to their experiences – and I was a very good listener – I found that I learnt more in those evenings at the boarding house than I might have learnt at school. Or it certainly was an important adjunct to my education.

Tape 1: 47 minutes 15 seconds

AG: Yes. Could you tell me a bit about life, or actually, if you could tell us the address for the film?

KA: Of the boarding house? Yes, it was in, and still is, in 18 [80?] Greencroft Gardens, NW6.

AG: What was life like there?

KA: Well, my mother had enormous charm and was very young, and she liked young people around her. So we had a lot of the pupils of Professor Carl Flesch, the famous violinist. And the son spent a lot of time at our house. He didn't live there, but he fell in love with Ruth Seligsohn, you see, who was one of Flesch's pupils and who was living in Greencroft Gardens. So there were all these pupils of Flesch and all these other young people. And then

of course it changed over the years. And other refugees came from Austria and Czechoslovakia and so on. And it also was partly responsible for getting me into films. By then we had a Hungarian painter whose name was Gábor Bogán, who used to paint Hungarian restaurants in Wardour Street, but who was a friend of the Kordas, and you remember the Kordas? And so Alex said to him: 'You know, don't waste your time painting Hungarian restaurants, you ought to work in films.' And he gave him his first break to become a cameraman, a colour cameraman, in Technicolor. So I was fascinated by that. And Gábor introduced me to Vincent Korda, who was the art director brother of Alexander. And it was Vincent who advised me, I think I was 15 or 16 years old, and he knew I was interested to maybe work in films or theatre. He said: 'But you should have an architectural background.' he said, 'I was a painter, but I think an architectural background is better to be an art director in films.'

AG: Why would that have been?

Tape 1: 50 minutes 2 seconds

KA: Well, because, you have to— even though you don't build like you would build in reality, but your sets have to look real. And you use the same principle of working drawings, and models before the sets are constructed and so on, so it's a very useful background.

AG: What sort of man was Vincent Korda as you remember him?

KA: He was very flamboyant. But very strange, too. And we became great friends the more success I had in films. So I'm talking in the last sort of 30 or 25 years. And he always considered me his protégé and that he started me. He didn't in fact start me in films, but he gave me that advice. There was never any envy; I was his protégé and he was proud of me. So every time I made a successful picture or got mentioned in the press, I always used to get a postcard or a telegram or whatever from Vincent. So I was very fond of him. And in fact, when I did 'Moonraker' in Paris, now that was in '78-'79, and Vincent came via Paris on the train from the south of France, and another great art director called Alex Trauner, who designed 'Les enfants du paradis', who was also a friend of mine, we all decided to have dinner together. So we had these three generations of art director/ production designers having dinner in some restaurant in Paris and I never forget that. Vincent died a couple of years later. So we had a very good relationship.

AG: And Sir Alexander Korda, did you come across him as well?

KA: Yes, but I didn't really know him. I mean, I talked to him once or twice, but I didn't know him. I knew his films then. I admired him because he really put the British film industry on its feet. These Korda studios, first at Denham and later at Shepperton, were fantastic because Vincent and Alex were very clever. They got the best people from anywhere in the world, but mainly Europe – artists - over and it was really like an art studio. And when I went to Hollywood in the '80s Coppola asked me if - because he had just built his own studio, Zoetrope - he asked me if I could advise him the way that Korda— he so much admired Korda and the way he ran London Films. Of course there were the smaller studios, like Mickey Borken with the Ealing Comedies and so on, but really the grand stuff was done by them, by the Kordas.

Tape 1: 53 minutes 50 seconds

AG: You mentioned that you went from St Paul's to the Bartlett School of Architecture. You must have done well in your school leaving exams?

KA: Yes, yes, I did. I got distinction in Art. I can't remember my other credits. But in those days you had also to be articled with a firm of architects. So I was articled in daytime to a firm of architects called CW Glover & Partners, who were architects and civil engineers, and Captain Glover from the First World War was an expert on acoustics and so on. Quite a brilliant man. And his partner, the architect, had been an associate of Mendelsohn, the architect. So he was very Bauhaus-orientated. Very much younger than Captain Glover. And since I was a rebel already in those days, he used to encourage me. Because Bartlett at that time was very traditional. It was run by Professor Richardson whom we all called Dickie, who later became President of the Royal Academy. Whereas the AA was much more modern. Now I think it's changed, Bartlett is more progressive.

AG: We are going to have to have a break now because the tape is coming to an end

Tape 1: 55 minutes 55 seconds

TAPE 2

AG: Sir Kenneth Adam, Tape 2. You were telling me about the Bartlett and your time of studying architecture.

KA: Right. Yes, and I also said I was a bit of a rebel, because the advantage of being an external student at the Bartlett was that I went there in the evenings and I had much more attention of the professors. I remember one famous one was called Flatow [?], but then Dickie Richardson took me under his wing. And when I prepared my testimonies of study, which was an inter-RIBA examination, I came up with a reasonably modern design of a country house. And Dickie came in the evening and he said 'very good, very good'. And within half an hour he'd gone through drawings, which had taken me four weeks to do, with a red pencil and he said: 'Klaus', or whatever he called me in those days, 'if you want to pass your examination, you'd better design something in a period style like Georgian or Queen Anne. So that came as quite a shock to me. But they liked me because I argued all the time. And remember, with somebody like Quine Lay, who was one of the bosses of Glover & Partners, and some of the young architects, refugee architects, who were part of the Maass [?] Group School, Bauhaus, which was a splinter group of the Bauhaus, and I worked for them, too, over the weekend, I was by this time getting very Bauhaus-orientated in my thinking. And I was very much encouraged by Quine Lay, and that, without any doubt, eventually had a big influence on myself as a film designer. Though the traditional background also was very important, because I knew about composition, about periods, history of architecture, which were all part of the curriculum, which then proved very useful to me in my later life. I never forget that Quine Lay, because I always had a cold for some reason, I was 16 or 17 years old and was rather flamboyant in my dress and so on. And he said: 'Adam, so we are told, suffered a bit from a cold. Now he's taken to wear post-impressionist hair. And a tie with surrealist fold.' I never forgot it! You know, one of these bow tie things.

Tape 2: 3 minutes 24 seconds

But it was a happy period, though I worked very, very hard. And then actually, to jump ahead a little bit, but because I worked for Glover's, it saved me from being interned as an enemy alien. Even though we were all classified as 'friendly alien', we passed the tribunal and so on,

and my brother, I think, my older brother was just about naturalised, because he was 21 years old, but I was much younger. And Glover's were then, in 1938– started doing a lot of work for the government, air-raid shelters, designs of air-raid shelters, munition retooling and all that. And I did illustration for his books which he wrote and so on. So when, after Dunkirk, the police decided to intern me and my younger brother, and I came back from West End Lane Police Station and told my mother that they were collecting me in two hours' time, she said: 'But how is that possible, because you are working for the war effort? Ring up Captain Glover!' And I rang up Glover and he said: 'They can't intern you. I'll get on to Scotland Yard.' And I was not interned. My younger brother Denis, or Dieter, who was barely 16, was interned for some time on the Isle of Man.

AG: How do you remember the outbreak of war and the early part of it?

KA: Well, it was quite dramatic: I mean when, who was it who made the speech, Chamberlain? ja, Chamberlain made the speech that the war had been declared and then immediately afterwards the air-raid siren sounded. And, you know, I'd seen pictures of the Spanish Civil War, of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, and a film which I very much liked, 'Things to come'. So I thought, any moment now we are going to have bombs dropping over our heads, which didn't happen because, if you remember rightly, there was a sort of cold war, nothing happened for a long time.

Tape 2: 6 minutes 28 seconds

And I was in London during the Blitz. And quite crazy, climbing on the roof of our house in Hampstead and watching the London Docks burning and so on. And kicking incendiary bombs which fell into our garden and so on. Ridiculous. But I had that from my mother. She had her bedroom on the top floor of the house and she would never move down to the ground floor, you know, all this – 'If they get me, they get me', that was the attitude. And my first defeat, in a way, was, now I'm architecturally trained, I'm building an air-raid shelter in our garden in Greencroft Gardens, you see. And every one of the boarders were helping me with the digging and so on. And I'm a sort of ex-cavalry officer in his riding boots, commanding, very funny. And unfortunately that whole air-raid shelter - because also, in that first year, there was a lot of rain, and I can't have used enough strutting - and the whole air-raid shelter collapsed. So that was really a disaster! Because part of my job at Glover was to go and knock on every door in St Pancras. The government had introduced a scheme by which each house was entitled to either an Anderson Shelter, which was metal shelter, strutting up off the basement, or building a shelter in the garden. And it was an incredible experience: a) I still had my German accent, and just knocking on the door, people thought I was a spy and God knows what. And then you saw some of the most terrifying conditions, remember, St Pancras. But I did a lot and Glover decided to pay me half a crown for each air-raid shelter I designed. And after several months I made too much money for them, and they had to change the system.

Tape 2: 9 minutes 2 seconds

But in any case, I decided at the time of Dunkirk, in 1940, that I wanted to do something more active in the war. And I had previously applied to join the University Air Squadron and Civil Air Guard; I was very much interested in flying. But I was always turned down. And then eventually I was admitted into the AMPC, which you probably know about, the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. And since I had officer's training at St Paul's School I was immediately given two stripes; and I never forget the recruiting officer in King's Cross

somewhere, when they accepted me, he said: 'Corporal, I want you to take a contingent of the French Foreign Legion down to Ilfracombe. They've just been kicked out of Narvik in Norway, and so I hold you responsible for them.' And then I was stuck with the French Foreign Legion for about four weeks to teach them foot drill and so on. And some of them had been at Verdun in the First World War! And I learnt to compromise. And the Pioneer Corps was another incredible experience. We were in Ilfracombe and I was on the training staff. And there were people, you know, intellectuals, actors, there was Coco the Clown, famous tenors from the opera, professors, a lawyer, in their fifties, who were all wearing British uniform. Where the government had been very clever was that the staff were all ex-career officers of a very high standing. The commanding officer, just when I went there, was Lord Reading, then somebody else took over. And some of the officers I was very close to; there was one called Sir Gerald Balls, who'd been governor of Bermuda, because they had to deal with a very high standard of intellect of some of these people. And what I never forgot, and I was by this time 19, was the irony of people coming to me just before the weekend and say: 'Corporal, I knew your father in Berlin and I want a weekend pass because my family is living—' For this young corporal to have the power to give them a weekend pass to go and spend a weekend with their family. But at the same time I continuously tried to apply for a transfer to the RAF. And much to everybody's surprise including mine that came through in 1941, in spring of 1941.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 50 seconds

AG: It is surprising because I'd read in scholarly literature that the RAF was effectively closed to Jews, let alone German ones.

KA: I don't think so, there were quite a number of Jewish pilots in the RAF. But certainly I was still a German, and I still had a German passport, admittedly, with a 'J' in it, but a German passport. You see I couldn't be naturalised before I was 21. And I never know— I think it was a fluke or possibly— the anecdote is, I was flirting with the daughter of the colonel at the time. And I did something rather silly. While I was supposed to be training some people I was walking with her on the promenade in Ilfracombe. And of course I was put under open arrest and the Colonel, actually it was a man called Coles, Colonel Coles, a lovely man, said: 'You know you can't do that. If this would not be war, I would have no objection to you seeing my daughter, but this is a different situation.' And I sometimes think that he must have really been responsible for getting me into the RAF.

AG: Do tell me about your experiences in the RAF.

KA: Well, it was incredible because I then went to, I can't remember, to Elenvar [?] ITW, which was a sort of initial training wing where you learnt a certain amount of navigation, drill, physical training. I think it was at Harrogate. And then I was posted to Scotland to Perth, to No. 11 EFTS, Elementary Flying Training School, where you learnt to fly on Tiger Moths, you know, these biplanes. And it was a very cold winter, so it must have been the winter of '41, freezing. And we actually flew these Tiger Moths and put skis under the wheels. And I was very fortunate; I had an ex-Battle of Britain instructor. I remember his name, Flight Lieutenant Welford, who was a lovely man and he taught me everything he knew. But this was just a preliminary flying course.

Tape 2: 15 minutes 49 seconds

And then they didn't have enough space in England, in the UK, to train pilots. So they sent me overseas – I'm cutting it fairly short – to Canada. And there was the Empire Training Scheme. So we went on an armed merchant cruiser. Being armed meant having one cannon at the back, you know. But fortunately we were escorted by two destroyers, because we were very valuable cargo, you see. And strangely enough the merchant ship was called the 'Leticia', which is my wife's name, except her name is spelled with a 'z' instead of a 'c', Letizia rather than Leticia. And the same ship was sunk on the next trip back. So in any case, I was in Canada. And I knew that there was this training scheme in the United States as well. Remember, the United States had just come into the war in Pearl Harbour. So I wangled a posting to Florida, in Georgia, in America; the training scheme was known as the Arnold Scheme, General Arnold was in charge of it. So I ended up first at Turner Field in Georgia, what they called acclimatisation. The heat was unbelievable by this time, it was in June. And then went to Lakeland, Florida, where I learnt primarily flying on Steerman. And they were the equivalent of the Tiger Moth, except better, really. And it was like a civilian flying school with civilian instructors. And you know, with quite a number of RAF cadets, but mainly American cadets who in those days came still from West Point and military academies. And since I had two stripes I was a cadet officer. Well, there are a lot of anecdotes which I shan't bore you with.

Tape 2: 18 minutes 43 seconds

I was a bit of a rebel, and the RAF– my pals in the RAF– remember, we'd been through three years of war, whereas the Americans had just come in. Remember the year before, Pearl Harbour. And we didn't take too easily to this way, I can only call it Germanic discipline, but they needed it, because they came from so many different groups and they had been immigrants themselves and so on. And in any case, from there I was posted to a basic flying school, which was at Cochran Field in Georgia where we flew monoplanes. By now we had military instructors. They were very good, I mean highly professional, and they taught you to fly by the seat of your pants. And one of my instructors was Michael Rennie, who was a British film actor.

AG: I remember him.

KA: Ja? Good-looking, too. Not a very good actor, but –

AG: Didn't he play in the TV series that came as a spin-off of the 'Third Man'?

KA: Absolutely right. So he was one of my instructors. And I was fortunate in as much as I think I am or I was a natural pilot. So I passed very easily through all the various graduations and so on. And got myself into trouble for various other reasons, but finished up at advanced training which was in Alabama of all places. A place called Dothan, Alabama, where we flew Harvard 86s, which were the nearest thing to a fighter plane, where we learnt aerial combat and we had cannons or machine guns. And we did air-to-air firing against drones and air-to-ground firing and so on. And I always had an above average grade.

Tape 2: 21 minutes 35 seconds

So when I finally graduated and got my silver wings and RAF wings, I was given, I think, two weeks' leave. I went to New York to visit my uncle. He showed me off everywhere. And I came back, and that's the interesting part, to Dothan, Alabama, and the American Commanding Officer called me into his office and he said: 'I don't know what to make of

this, but I just received this' – I suppose it was a telex or a wire – 'from British Air Staff, Washington, that pending further investigations, Aviation Cadet KH Adam will revert to the rank of sergeant pilot and will be posted back to the United Kingdom.' And I never found out why. Until about a week ago! Because I thought, you know, maybe because I'd been a bit of a rebel during my training. And Professor Sir Christopher Frayling who was writing my biography said: 'I'm sure you have something on your records.' But I said: 'No, I don't think so.' Maybe they suddenly decided because my father had been an officer of the German army—. An English writer— because apparently there was another pilot, but he was a bomber pilot of German-Jewish origin, who also had enormous problems getting his commission, and he investigated his RAF files. And he found out that they decided because we were still German, we were not supposed to fly on operations, one, and we could not qualify for the King's Commission. And I've got that letter downstairs. And in fact I sent it to Christopher, it's very interesting, I only got it last week! Well, to cut a long story short: I get posted back to England, or Scotland. I do more training, but now, you know, because I had advanced they had to decide whether you make a fighter pilot or bomber pilot, what your temperament is like. Or whether you don't make a pilot at all and become a navigator, a bomb aimer or air gunner or whatever it was. But I was mad and was a fighter pilot.

Tape 2: 24 minutes 40 seconds

So they sent me to Annan in Scotland, No. 11 I think, O.T.U. [inaudible] where I started flying on Masters and Hurricanes. And really learnt wartime flying; remember, we'd been in the war for over 3 years, so we had the Battle of Britain. And then I was posted, much to my surprise and everybody else's surprise, to the top-scoring fighter squad in the RAF. In the 11 Group, which was 609 West Riding Squadron. And they had just— when I arrived in October 1943, they were just celebrating their 200th victory. And here comes— by this time I think I was Flight Sergeant KH Adam, still with a German passport, not apparently supposed to fly operations according to the— And I stayed with the squadron, except for a short break when I had an operation in England until the end of the war.

AG: And did you fly operations?

KA: Yes of course. I flew operations. But that's a story in itself, my wartime experience. But in any case, I was with 609 and we were flying Typhoons, which were in those days the most powerful fighter in the RAF. They were the younger brother of the Hurricane, much more powerful. And when you look at it today, I mean, at Hendon Air Museum, and compare it with Spitfire or Hurricane, you don't believe it because it's twice the size, though it's a single-seater fighter. But it was very fast, we could fly straight and level at over 400 miles an hour, we were armed with four 20mm Hispano cannons. And the plane had one or two problems with the engine; it didn't have the Rolls Royce Merlin engine of the other planes, it had a Sabre engine, 24 cylinder, enormous beast. And I really loved it.

Tape 2: 27 minutes 22 seconds

I had all sorts of experiences on plane fighter work, escort work, when half of my squadron was shot down by friendly fire, which wasn't very amusing. And then the Air Force decided that we were going to be the first squadron, our squadron and 198 Thistle [?] one too, to be equipped with air-to-ground rockets. They'd just been invented, so we thought this was fantastic. And we went to a place in Wales called Fairwood Common where they attached these eight rockets on our wing on rails, four under each wing. And we learnt to fire these rockets, which wasn't that easy. Because we had no particular gun sight, we used our cannon

gun sight, reflector gun sight. But we also had to calculate the angle of the height, the speed, and the wind. Because the rocket leaves the aircraft at the same speed, and, let's say in a dive you're going up to 500 miles an hour and more, and then the rocket pulls away. And I came out after training with an average error of about 50 yards which is pretty good, because if you think if you fire a salvo of eight rockets, each rocket is like a 6-inch naval gun shell. You have quite an explosive power. And 60 or 50 yards error is not that bad if you attack tanks and troop concentrations and whatever. And then we became second tactical air force and were attached to the army. So we had to live in tents prior to D-Day. We had an inter-op set up, all mobile in tents. And we thought we were the kingpins. In fact, we were the kingpins. But what we didn't realise is the enormous losses we had.

Tape 2: 30 minutes 15 seconds

Because by now, I mean the first operation I did was a crazy one. When we, before D-Day, were supposed to attack a German radar station at Le Havre-Bruneval. And there were, I think, two or three Typhoon squadrons before that, they were medium-sized American bombers which were supposed to bomb the hell out of these radar stations. But remember, they were built out of 8ft thick reinforced concrete, and the radar masts were steel, so the rockets would go straight through it. And I heard already on the way in as we were crossing the French coast, over the radio, over the RT, that somebody was shot down, others going down and so on. And I was one of the last men. The idea was to go into Echelon Starboard as we were crossing over the French coast and then attack out to sea in line astern, which was crazy, because the German anti-aircraft were very accurate. They only had to target the first aircraft; and if they didn't get the first, they'd get the second or third. So I saw that and I slid out more to one side and made a successful attack, except I don't think I did much damage. But three of our planes— and, you know, this was the first time we had big losses— Flight Lieutenant Wood burst into flames. He collided with another pilot who had my name actually, Adam, too. And we had a Belgian pilot, Sussmann, who baled out. And since I was the last one almost, I saw the parachute open, I saw him hit the Channel, and I circled around calling 'Mayday, Mayday' to get the Essai [?] rescue launches out. But he never got away from the parachute, he must have— So that was a big shock. And you know, when you have— you know, because the fighter work was relatively easy, there was no reason why you should be shot down: you had a better plane and we had great radar and Middle Wallop control and so on. But this was really unpleasant. And then we became, from just before D-Day till all through D-Day and all through the advance through Belgium, Holland and finally Germany, close support for the Canadian and British armies.

Tape 2: 33 minutes 22 seconds

And we had invented a system which was very effective, called Cab Rank. Strangely enough, there hasn't been that much written about the Typhoon, but now they've made a film with the help of the War Office, no, of the Imperial War Museum and so on. And I think, without a doubt, we were probably the most effective close support, aerial support weapon from D-Day onwards for the army.

AG: How did this Cab Rank work?

KA: Well, the Cab Rank worked— remember, we were operating from airstrips which the engineers had built, which were dangerous enough. Because firstly, they were out of wire, and often a bit of wire stuck up and you burst a tyre, and then you rolled on the wheel and then the undercarriage stuck and the plane turned over. And remember, we had this blister [makes

large round shape with hands] and you ended up with a broken neck. So I think it must have been a German refugee who invented Summerfeld tracking. Do you remember, those were these metal perforated sheets which fitted into each other. And named after a man called Summerfeld, I never found out who he was. But they did all the bridges and all that with that. And the engineers inside two days made these airfields. And we were at the end, four of us, four aircraft, and remember, we were in France, and the Germans were only two or three miles away, or four miles away. So the ACP, the controller in the chequered wagon at the end of the tracking, used to fire a Very light and we used to climb to 8,000 or 9,000 feet above the airfield, because if you straggle out you were already under German flak, you see. And I had a grid map of the area on my knees and then a controller, RAF controller, who was sitting in a tank or armoured car in the front line used to take over and say: 'Fly to grid reference so and so. And in 20 seconds you will see some red or blue or yellow smoke. Go down and attack!' Which we did, and then you could recognise German Tiger tanks or troop concentrations or 88mm cannons, artillery; and went down to attack.

Tape 2: 6 minutes 16 seconds

By the time you took off, immediately another section of four Typhoons took over. So the army had continuous support and we sometimes had to fly two or three times a day. They were only maybe 20 minutes or 25 minutes, but the German flak was unbelievable. Remember, we had glycol liquid-cooled engines. You only needed a revolver bullet in your radiator and the engine seized, so it wasn't very funny. And we had big, big losses. By now I'm a warrant officer and I've got flight lieutenants and squadron leaders flying No. 2 and No. 3 to me and I still haven't got my commission. So now it's August or something, '44, and my wing commander flying was a great man, called Scott, he was the most decorated group captain in the RAF and a great friend of mine. And I said to him one day: 'Scottie, listen, I've been flying with the squadron for eight months now. I'm still not treated by the Air Ministry as one of you. Unless I get my commission – because the commission was turned down every time – unless I get my commission this way, I want you to post me to Coastal Command, RAF squadron, flying Sunderland Flying Boats where I get eggs and bacon for breakfast because I'm not willing to do that.' And he said: 'You are absolutely right.' And he had a tennis partner he used to play with who was Sir Anthony Eden, then Foreign Minister. And through Anthony Eden I got specially gazetted in, I think it was October '44, as a pilot officer of the RAF. And apparently this bomber pilot also got his commission, but much later. And then he did this investigation and found out. May well be the reason, I don't know, I never found out. So in any case, I then had this short break from December to February in England at RAF Wroughton where I had an operation for a hernia. And then rejoined the squadron and was with the squadron until the end of the war. And my younger brother – because in those days you could apply for your younger brother to join the RAF and to join your squadron – I got my younger brother to join my wing, he didn't join my squadron, in about December of '44, so we were flying together in the same wing until the end of the war.

Tape 2: 39 minutes 42 seconds

And after the war the RAF decided, asked me if I would stay on another year to take charge of 10,000 German ex-prisoners of war, Luftwaffe prisoners of war. We were stationed at an airfield called Wunstorf near Hanover by this time. And to form them into labour units, to repair the airfield and extend the runways and so on. So I became their Commanding Officer and was with them for a year. And what is interesting is that Wunstorf became the main supply base of Berlin during the Berlin airlift.

AG: How did you feel when you set foot on German soil again?

KA: Strange. Very, very strange. I felt strange. But you know, I don't think you can change being a human being. You are what you are. I must say if I met anybody of the Germans who was arrogant or anything, I would have them locked up, or under certain circumstances I would have shot them. But with the other Germans, you were like— you treated them like human beings. And I had one horrific experience, and so did they. Remember there was the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen which had just been discovered by the British army. So I decided to take the whole officer staff who were still in their Luftwaffe officer uniforms with their badges of rank on them to Belsen to look at the concentration camp. And of course I hadn't seen it either. The inmates by this time were billeted in the SS barracks. But I got one or two to show us around. They were almost pleased to show us around.

Tape 2: 42 minutes 29 seconds

Well, I mean it was horrific. I mean, fortunately, there were none of the bodies left or anything, but you saw the ovens and all that stuff. The German officers were absolutely horrified by that. They knew things were going on which weren't kosher in these places, but they didn't know the details of what was going on. And to be faced suddenly with the details was a traumatic experience for them as well. In fact, one of the officers tried to commit suicide two days later. So in brief, that was my experience with the RAF.

AG: Did you encounter any former Nazis or anti-Semites in Germany? I mean, you could understand them when they spoke German after all.

KA: Yes, I did. But they didn't normally, when I was not in uniform, and they didn't know who I was, so then I had them immediately arrested by I think it was the SIB or something like that, the Military Police and so on. But it didn't happen very often. Yes, what I forgot to tell you: I also had to run a military government court, you know, of their district. Of course I'm not a lawyer, and remember, I knew nothing. So they sent a civilian lawyer, if I remember rightly, from England who advised me. And I couldn't of course sentence anybody to death, but only for minor offences basically. But what I found unbelievable was the letters of denunciation and verbal denunciation I received daily from people saying 'he was a Nazi', 'she was a Nazi'. I mean there was a complete moral collapse in Germany. Nobody had been a Nazi and everybody was a Nazi. It was an incredible experience.

Tape 2: 45 minutes 15 seconds

Even more incredible to some extent was, I got unofficial permission from my Commanding Officer to take one of the RAF jeeps and drive down to Berlin. And this was in winter, so it must have been October or something of '45, so three or four months after Berlin had fallen. And I had a terrifying experience on the autobahn which goes from Helmstedt to Berlin. There was a Russian convoy going the opposite way and one of the trucks started going into—the road was iced over, went over the centre divider and hit me in my jeep. And I was stuck. And I talked to the Russian officer, but we couldn't— I spoke German, French, English. He was quite friendly, but when I wanted a piece of paper, because I had the jeep unofficially and I didn't want to be court-martialed, then he could turn nasty and they all left me in a snowstorm, surrounded by woods. And then after about an hour - I was actually armed to the teeth - but you know, Russian deserters came out of the woods and wanted to get my jerry cans of petrol. But I put on my brave face and was smiles. After about 20 minutes they disappeared but I knew they were going to come back. So I decided by this time I'm going to

give it another half an hour or so. And if nothing happens I'm going into the woods myself. Also remember, I had my black flying boots on, I had my Irving jacket, I had a scarf, normal shirt, no uniform really. And I would try to get to the first German house and put on civilian clothes. But by this time the British military police patrol came in a 15 cwt. And I waved the thing down and they didn't stop, but they went at least 200 yards past me before they stopped. And I then ran towards them. And I said: 'I'm Flight Lieutenant Adam of the RAF.' and they said: 'I'm sorry, Sir, but we have to be very careful. This is no man's land and we didn't recognise you in your uniform.' I said: 'Well, you've seen my jeep; it's been pranged by a Russian convoy.' So they said: 'Don't worry about the jeep, we're going to call Helmstedt or something to get a truck or something to get the jeep, but you come with us.' And they took me to Berlin. And the jeep was eventually delivered to Gatow airfield, of course a British airbase. And I met some fitters there who had served with me in the squadron, and they pinched spare parts from other jeeps, so about three days later I was able to drive the jeep back to the British zone.

Tape 2: 49 minutes 10 seconds

AG: What was Berlin like?

KA: Unbelievable. I mean it was a complete ruin. I'd never seen such a ruined city. The one thing that impressed me and always impressed me, because I recently did a film about this period in Berlin, was the women who were working on collecting all the bricks and cleaning up the bricks. So you didn't see anybody except these women in these ruined rubble heaps cleaning bricks. And the other thing was, I was born in the Tiergarten – well, the Tiergarten didn't exist, there were just tree stumps, and the Reichstag was a complete ruin. But I never forget, there was an enormous black market going on. Partly by the Russian soldiers, partly by the Americans, partly by the civilians, partly by our lot. Everybody was trading with cigarettes, nylons, or whatever it was. But it was very dangerous. A) the black market of course was illegal. Any sort of nightlife went on underground, in cellars or in ex-air-raid shelters and so on. And I also wanted to have a good time and I went there anyway. But it was dangerous because the Russians used to drink a lot. And they very often – when they drank too much they started, you know, moving their guns and so it was – And I was unofficially there, remember. And also, another experience: I had an uncle who had a place at Potsdam near the river where we used to spend a lot of time as children. And I know he and my aunt were gassed at Riga concentration camp, but I wanted to visit the place to find out more. And I more or less remembered my way, but then suddenly I got lost and I asked some German civilians for directions and they said: 'Don't go to Nedels [Nedlitz?] It's the Russian GHQ Headquarters. And thank God they told me, you know, I could have been a spy. So you know, those experiences, when you think back.

Tape 2: 52 minutes 7 seconds

AG: Did you go to visit your former home?

KA: Ja, but it was a ruin. It was more ruined, eventually, when I came back to do my first film which was in '57, '58; then only the doorway stood. By the time I looked at it, the walls still were standing, but I don't think there was a building left intact, particularly not in this quarter.

AG: You mentioned earlier that you'd been to see this Dr Diehm. Did you see any other former acquaintances?

KA : No, he was the only one. And they were living in the Grunewald area in complete poverty. Practically starving. So I managed to give them a couple of packets of Senior Service cigarettes, some soap and so on which kept them going. And also, he was well known before the war. It was well known that he never was a Nazi. So the British Control Commission and the Americans then immediately got hold of him and got him back into the university.

AG: The tape is about to come to an end. I think this is a good point to end on, so I say thank you very much for this section of the interview.

KA: I hope it was interesting.

Tape 2: 54 minutes 5 seconds

TAPE 3

AG: Who are the people in this photograph? (1)

KA: That is my mother on the right and me, I must have been just under one year old or probably a few months old.

AG: And where was it taken?

KA: That was in Berlin, in the Tiergartenstraße.

AG: Who is the person in this photograph? (2)

KA: This is my father, and I think it was taken round about 1916 during the First World War in Belgium.

AG: What is the building in this photograph? (3)

KA: The building is the store S. Adam of my father, and it must have been taken round about 1910. And it was on the corner of Leipziger and Friedrichstraße.

AG: Who is the person in this photograph? (4)

KA: That is myself on my bicycle, so that's when I went to Vernon House School. So it must have been the end of 1934, beginning of 1935, at 18 Greencroft Gardens.

AG: Who is the person in this photograph? (5)

KA: That's me again, in 1944, I think on an airstrip called B7 in France prior to attacking some German tanks. It must have been probably in July or August, probably August '44.

AG: Who are the people in this photograph? (6)

KA: Well, that is myself getting my second Oscar in 1995 at the Motion Picture Academy for a film I designed, 'The Madness of King George', and next to me is Carole, my set decorator.

AG: What did you get your first Oscar for?

KA: 'Barry Lyndon'.

AG: Who are the people in this photograph? (7)

KA: That's Her Majesty The Queen who gave me a knighthood in October of last year at Buckingham Palace. I think it was the 6th of October 2003.

AG: Thank you very much indeed.

Tape 3: 3 minutes 25 seconds

THE END