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**Mr. Death: The Rise and
Fall of Fred A. Leuchter,
Jr.**

By Unknown

[Fred Leuchter, Jr.]
I became involved...
in the manufacture
of execution equipment...
because I was concerned
with the deplorable condition...
of the hardware that's in
most of the states' prisons,
which generally results
in torture...
prior to death.
A number of years ago
I was asked by a state...
to look at
their electric chair.
I was surprised
at the condition
of the equipment...
and I indicated to them
what changes should be made...
to bring the equipment
up to the point of doing
a humane execution.
Beyond making
recommendations for changes,
I sat down, on my own time
and at my own expense,
and made a new design
and new equipment...
available to the states...
utilizing electrocution...
at a price far lower than
they would have to deal with...
if they hired
an engineering firm
to redesign a specific item.
The equipment
is all standardized,
it all meets the current
electrical requirements
for electrocution...
and the pricing is such...
that it's similar
to what you'd pay for

an off-the-shelf item,
even though it's made up.
They essentially pay
for the parts, the labor
and the installation,
and a 20-percent markup,
which is more than fair.
We are testing
the electrocution system...
here at
the Tennessee State Prison.
This is connected to
the execution system...
in place of
the electric chair,
and the system thinks
that this is a human body.
It consists of a series
of heavy-duty resistors...
cooled by four fans.
I will now switch on
the fans...
[Click, Fans Humming]
and begin
the cooling process.
We then proceed
to the power supply.
We turn on
the main circuit breaker.
You can see the voltage has
increased to 2,640 volts.
We begin the test
at the control console...
for the electric chair.
We turn the fail-safe system on
to operation.
Power up.
Computer on.
And then I push the button
for operation.
The human body
is not easy to destroy.
It's not easy to take a life
humanely and painlessly,

without doing
a great deal of damage
to the individual's body.
Excess current
cooks the tissue.
There have been occasions...
where a great amount
of current has been applied...
and the meat will come off
the executee's body like meat
coming off a cooked chicken.
The execution
must be conducted
in two jolts.
In 1/240th part of a second...
the first jolt disrupts
or destroys the individual's
central nervous system.
Current is then applied...
for a time
approaching one minute.
The adrenaline
is being driven out
into the bloodstream.
The second jolt
now seizes the pacemaker
a second time.
There's now no adrenaline left
to restart the pacemaker.
The person is dead.
If the voltage does not exceed
throughout the execution,
the individual's pacemaker
is not permanently seized.
In some 20, 30 minutes later
the individual's heart
restarts itself on its own...
and the person
is now alive again.
They would have to call
all the witnesses back,
strap the vegetable
back into the chair...
and reelectrocute him.

There's no difference
in a life support system
and an execution system.
Uh, the system has to
function flawlessly...
for the time period
that it's operating.
With a life support system,
if it doesn't function,
the person dies.
With an execution system,
if it doesn't
function flawlessly,
the person lives,
but he doesn't live
as a human being.
He lives as an injured,
brain-dead vegetable,
which is probably far worse
than being executed.
[Film Projector Running]
[Film Projector Running]
My father worked
in the Massachusetts
correctional system.
He was a superintendent
of transportation
for many years,
first at the old state prison
in Charlestown,
and then at the new prison
in Walpole,
which has now since been
renamed Cedar Junction.
As many youngsters do,
I went to work
with my father.
I'd been
accompanying him to work
since I was four years old.
I visited all of the cell areas,
including the death house area.
I was in the same room that
people like Sacco and Vanzetti

were executed in.
I learned a number of things
from the inmates that
normally would be illegal...
but have proved
very useful to me
in my later life,
things like picking locks
and cracking safes and--
I learned all kinds
of strange things
as a youngster.
I came into
the execution field...
from a back-door
standpoint,
because I was very concerned
about the humanitarian aspects
of death by torture,
similar to what happened
in the state of Florida
two years ago...
with Mr. Jesse Tafero,
where they actually
set the man's head on fire.
Once the chair broke in half
in the state of New York,
and the individual
lay writhing on the floor
of the death chamber...
crying for 35 or 40 minutes
while the carpenters
repaired the chair.
They burnt
the transformer up.
Fortunately,
due to the quick thinking
of the prison electrician,
they had some cable,
they ran some wires
over the prison wall...
and tapped into
the outside power line...
without the consent

of the power company, but
there was no objection later.
They had one execution...
where the transformer
caught on fire and blew up,
and it occurred
in such a sequence...
that all it did was knock
the individual unconscious.
He came out of it with
no apparent brain damage,
no problem.
Six months later they repaired
the electric chair...
and they did successfully
execute him.
But, I mean,
he was very lucky.
He was hit with
a full jolt of electricity,
the equipment blew up,
burned up...
and he walked away from it
without any damage,
not even a burn.
One by one,
I determined that this state's
equipment was not functional,
this state's equipment
was not functional.
Then suddenly one day I said,
"None of the equipment
is functional."
Many of the electric chairs
were built by inmates
and electricians...
who had no idea
of what they were building.
They took a picture of another
state's electric chair and made
something that looked like it.
[Film Projector Running]
Tennessee contacted me...
with the construction

of their new prison.
I was asked to
inspect the equipment
at the old facility...
and make a determination
of what could be salvaged.
The only consideration was
that they wanted to maintain
the electric chair,
which they've had in place
since 1898.
The reasoning being
that the wood
from the electric chair...
not only had the tradition
of all of their
electrocution executions,
but it also formerly served
as the wood of their gallows.
The chair itself...
was much smaller
than one would expect.
It looked more like it was made
to accommodate a youngster...
or a woman.
So, we essentially
made the chair wider,
we made the chair higher.
We supplied them with
a completely new power supply...
so there's
no excessive cooking.
And then finally,
because we were unable to match
the old wood with the new oak,
it became necessary for us
to paint the chair...
with a special,
high-quality epoxy paint,
the same basic paint
that's used by NASA...
on the nose and body
of the space shuttle.
[Steve]

That was back in '89,
I believe it was.
At that time
I was still in school.
I just remember coming home--
"What is this big box
in the front yard?"
"Well,
it's an electric chair. "
"Oh. "
Fred and my uncle were here.
They'd come out
with the crowbars.
They had to break the box open,
unscrew all the parts.
There was an electric chair
sitting in the front yard.
It was very unusual,
something I wasn't expecting.
I guess Fred
was expecting it.
[Laughs]
It was very difficult
getting up and down
those stairs...
with a couple hundred-pound
piece of oak chair.
Of course, before we even
brought it inside, had to
have Fred sit down in it.
Strapped him in--
[Laughs]
I said,
"No, thanks. "
[Camera Shutter Clicks]
[Leuchter]
I had processed
a couple of rolls of film,
photos that I took
for engineering purposes--
detail stuff,
so you'd know how it looked
before you took it apart.
I went through it and said,

"What the hell's this?"
We had a magnifier
and we were trying to
figure out what was there.
We saw what appeared to be
more than one image.
As far as I understand it,
certain objects
give off auras,
and some objects that have
been exposed to high-intensity
electromagnetic fields...
absorb some of that energy
and would give off an aura.
I don't know
what we photographed.
We don't know
if we photographed an entity.
We don't know what's there.
It may still reside
in the parts
that are in Tennessee.
When I tore the chair apart,
maybe it was freed.
I don't know.
That's assuming there was
something there to start with.
Because of my work
in electrocution,
I was contacted by
the state of New Jersey...
to consult with them
on the construction of
a lethal injection machine.
They realized that
lethal injection is a difficult,
if not impossible problem,
even for trained
medical personnel.
They determined
that there should be
some kind of a machine...
that could repetitively deliver
the necessary chemicals...

at the proper
time intervals...
for all executions.
This completely took
the human factor
out of it.
I studied
for several months,
and I put together a proposal
on how this machine should work.
The syringe is driven
by a weighted piston...
that floats
on a column of air.
This causes
a push-pull relationship...
between the machine
and the individual's
vascular system,
and it allows the executee
to take the chemical...
at a rate that his body
and vein will accept.
The doctors were satisfied.
Now they had
to make the presentation
to the prison officials.
The deputy commissioner
was sittin' there through
most of the meeting very bored,
probably because
he didn't understand
what I was talking about...
most of the time.
But then he finally heard
something he understood.
One of the doctors said,
"Fred designed the helmet that's
used on the electric chair...
in the state
of North Carolina."
At that point
the deputy commissioner said,
"Wait. Stop the meeting."

He looked at me and says,
"You designed the helmet,
the one that they just used?"
I says, "Yes."
He said, "Okay, that does it."
He turned around
to the doctors and he says,
"Do the necessary paperwork...
and see that Mr. Leuchter
gets the contract. "
Now, what lethal injection
has to do with electrocution
is beyond me.
Simply because I'm capable
of building an electric chair...
doesn't mean
I'm capable of building
a lethal injection machine.
They're two totally
different concepts.
[Beeping]
With electrocution,
unconsciousness takes place
in 1/240th part of a second.
Gas chamber,
within three or four minutes.
And with the gallows
it doesn't matter,
because you're being dropped
almost immediately after being
brought onto the scaffold.
None of the procedures require
that somebody lay on a gurney
for 35 minutes...
looking at a ceiling.
You have to have the man
immobile.
He has to be unable to move,
or else he's gonna damage
his arm with the catheter.
But you certainly can
make it more comfortable.
You could put him in
a contoured chair like they have

in the dentist's office.
Then at least
he'd be sitting up.
You could give him
a television, music,
some pictures on the wall...
rather than put him
in a concrete room.
That's not humane.
Essentially, the states
talk with each other.
We immediately got Illinois,
and we got Delaware.
They had a hanging problem
that they totally were not
able to deal with.
They had a gallows
that had been stored
for 25 or 30 years.
They took it out,
they screwed it together
and it fell over.
The only thing left
that was functional were
the hinges for the trap door.
The reasoning here is that
I'd built helmets
for electric chairs,
so I could build
lethal injection machines.
I now built
lethal injection machines,
so I'm now competent
to build a gallows.
And since
I'm building gallows,
I'm also competent
to work on gas chambers...
because I'd done
all of the other three.
What really makes you competent
is the fact that you have
the necessary background,
you do the investigation,

you find out what the problem is
and you solve it.

It's not anything different
than any competent engineer
could do.

The difference is that
it's not a major market.

A lot of people
are not interested...
and are morally opposed
to working on
execution equipment.

They think it's somehow
gonna change them.

As you've probably guessed
by now,

I am a proponent
of capital punishment.

Uh, I'm certainly not
a proponent of capital torture.

We must always remember...
and we must never forget...

the fact that the person
being executed
is a human being.

One of the things
that I've had to deal with...
is the feelings of the people
who are doing the executions.
The guards that work
with the execution equipment...

are generally
the same guards that have
dealt with that inmate...
for the last five,
ten, fifteen,
sometimes twenty years...

while the man
was on Death Row.

The warden
of the institution...
is, in many respects,
the surrogate father...
is, in many respects,

the surrogate father...
of the inmate
who's being executed.
He sees that inmate
maybe five or six times a week.
He's concerned
if the inmate is sick, if
the inmate doesn't feel well--
the general welfare
of the inmate.
Then, at the end of the time,
he must take that inmate out,
strap him into
his electric chair,
his gas chamber,
strap him into
his lethal injection machine...
or put a noose
around his neck.
Most people think
of a hardened criminal
and a murderer...
as someone who is in a cell
and gonna be executed,
but these people are really
no different than somebody
that we work with every day.
The only difference is,
the inmate doesn't go home
and the guard does.
And now, at the end of
this ten or fifteen-year cycle,
they now are faced with the task
of executing this man...
with equipment
that's defective,
with equipment
that's gonna cause pain.
Even with
a good execution...
you get some burning
at the electrodes.
It's a very
distasteful thing...

for the guard who
has to unstrap the inmate
from the electric chair...
after the execution.
Normally, if we think of a belt
with holes in it and the pin
that goes through the holes,
that guard has to then
compress all the flesh
and everything on the body.
It's oozing,
because it's been cooked.
He has to get the body fluids
on his hands.
With the equipment
we designed,
all of the straps
are instant-release.
They're the same
as the safety belts in your car.
You hit a button
and the strap opens.
Another thing that we do is,
our electric chair
contains a drip pan.
All executees,
during the execution,
lose control
of their bodily functions.
They urinate and defecate
in their pants, on their chair.
This normally winds up
on the chair and on the floor
directly beneath the chair.
This is a disgusting thing
when it occurs.
It's a very inhumane thing
to allow a person
who's being executed,
a human being...
who should be afforded
the greatest dignity of all
because he is losing his life--
It's a disgusting

and a degrading thing
to allow him to defecate...
and, quite frankly,
piss on the floor.
Additionally,
the urine,
when it hits the floor--
and I think everybody knows that
urine is highly conductive--
it's normally mopped up.
If there's a second execution
or a third execution--
and this sometimes occurs
when they have more than one
execution at the same time--
the guards in the death house
now have to work and stand
on a floor...
that's dampened and wet...
with this
highly conductive urine.
Fortunately, there has
never been an accident.
But it's quite possible for
the urine to conduct electricity
and shock a guard.
And nobody should have to
place his life in jeopardy...
because an execution
is being conducted.
This is much the same thing
that goes on
with the gas chambers.
With the defective equipment
that exists,
every time
there's a gas execution...
it's an accident
waiting to happen.
There is a major danger
of leakage,
and I honestly believe
and I wish...
that those remaining few states

that are utilizing gas...
would do away
with the gas chamber...
and go to lethal injection
or some other procedure...
which wouldn't place in danger
the lives of witnesses
and prison officials...
who have to be at that execution
to see that the execution
conforms with the law.
Being familiar with
all of the four systems
that we use,
I would much rather
be electrocuted,
providing that you were gonna
electrocute me on the system
that's in Tennessee.
I don't want to be
electrocuted in Virginia.
I don't want to be
electrocuted in Florida.
I don't want to be
electrocuted in Alabama.
I don't want to be Mr. Tafero
or have my eyeballs
blown across the room.
I'd like the execution procedure
to go smoothly.
I have often been asked,
generally by some type
of adverse party,
whether I sleep at night,
or how well I sleep at night.
My answer
is always the same.
I sleep very well at night,
and I sleep with
the comforting thought...
of knowing that those persons
that are being executed
with my equipment,
that these people

have a better chance...
of having a painless,
more humane
and dignified execution.
Been drinking coffee
for a long time,
since I was, probably,
around four or five years old.
Yes, it's still true.
I love coffee.
I think it's running
through my veins.
Coffee never
bothers the ulcer,
but I remember,
must be 15, 20 years ago
when I went to the doctor--
He was asking me, "How much
coffee do you drink a day ?"
" About 40 cups. "
So he's writing it down.
"How much coffee do you drink
a day ?" " About 40 cups. "
He says, "How much coffee
do you drink a day ?"
And I says, " About 40 cups. "
He says,
"Look, I'm not kidding. "
I says, "I'm not either. "
He said, "Oh?
How much do you smoke a day ?"
I said, " About six packs. "
He said,
"Six packs of cigarettes,
You should be dead by now. "
[Laughs]
If I don't drink the coffee,
I get headaches.
They're terrible.
My body's
so used to the caffeine
that it doesn't bother me.
I'm asleep before my head
hits the pillow.

Somewhere along the line,
she just appeared.
I was a good tipper,
and she used to bring me
extra coffee.
[Woman] I was a waitress,
he was a customer.
I was working nights.
He'd come in on his way
to the gun club.
He taught me how to shoot.
I have a .22.
This guy Joe asked me
if I knew what Fred did
for a living.
I said "No, " and he said,
"He kills people. "
That kind of surprised me...
until he explained
exactly what he did,
which wasn't
that he killed people,
but he made things
that killed people.
He was having problems
at home with his mother.
She wasn't talking to him,
and we just got married.
Because of my expertise
in the construction
of execution equipment,
I was asked to testify...
by the defense team...
of Mr. Ernst Zndel,
a German national
living in Canada
for some 20-odd years...
who published a pamphlet.:
"Did Six Million Really Die?"
[Reporter]
As in most of
his public appearances,
Ernst Zndel arrived at court
surrounded by supporters

wearing hard hats.
They are bodyguards
for a man who says
the Holocaust is a myth...
and who's prepared to argue that
before a judge and jury.
Zndel is charged
under a rarely used section
of the criminal code...
that he published statements
he knew were false,
statements that could cause
racial intolerance.
Forty-five years
of undetermined hatred
is enough.
The Holocaust is nothing
but undetermined
hate propaganda...
posing as history.
I, with the help of my friends
from around the world,
Jews and gentiles,
am going to finish
the Second World War,
I guarantee you.
[Zndel]
We can solve the mystery
of the gas chambers...
in Auschwitz
and all these other places...
if we find
an American expert,
because America
is the only country that
dispatches people with gas.
You can't open up
the phone book and say "gas,"
then "chamber," then "experts,"
and out come
ten Fred Leuchters.
No, there's nobody.
Fred Leuchter
was our only hope.

[Leuchter]

We were married for less than a month when we went. Although she doesn't like to hear it, I normally tell her that was her honeymoon. That's not a particularly good place to go for a honeymoon, Poland. Every American, it would have done them good to visit there. Then they would have appreciated what we've got here. Specifically, I brought Carol and my draftsman Howard Miller. Sent with us from Canada... was a cinematographer who videotaped everything we did... and a translator... who's fluent both in German and particularly in Polish. We were small, but we had everything we needed. Our first night there we stayed at the Auschwitz Hotel, which, apparently, was the officer's quarters... for the German military at Auschwitz. They had a cafeteria-style dining area, and our first meal there... was, uh, starch soup. What they did is, they boiled noodles in water, removed the noodles and served the soup. It was terrible. Unfortunately,

I received a double portion,
because when I wasn't looking
my wife dumped hers
into my dish.
Good morning.
My name is Fred Leuchter.
I'm an engineer from Boston
in the United States,
and I'm here this snowy morning
at Auschwitz in Poland.
The date is February 28.
It's approximately 10:30 a.m.
I'm here to examine...
this alleged gas chamber.
Some people feel
it was an air raid shelter.
Other people feel that
it was simply a morgue.
And then there are those
that feel the structure
functioned as a gas chamber...
for sending people
on their way to their death.
Carol was outside
at one of the entrances,
essentially freezing.
She was
one of our lookouts.
We had her at one door.
The translator
was at the other door.
Howard, my draftsman,
and myself were inside,
taking measurements
and recording the locations
and bagging the samples,
and the cinematographer
was making the videotapes.
So everybody was busy at
what they were supposed to do.
We didn't have
any extra people.
We made paint scrapings
and chiseled plaster

from locations...
that are not
immediately noticeable,
but still were proper locations
for condensation of cyanide gas.
We made detailed
scale drawings of the rooms...
with arrows showing
the location that was removed.
The notebook, videotape
and the drawings...
were given to the court
and became part
of the permanent evidence.

[Man]

Zndel is on trial
for publishing false history,
for publishing books
of Holocaust denial.
He needs to prove...
that what others see
as false history
is true history.
Fred Leuchter
is their trump card.
He will be the scientist...
who will reclaim
from those ruins...
evidence that killing
didn't happen there.
Holocaust denial, for me,
is so revolting,
and the way for me not to
immediately become sick...
of having to deal
with Leuchter...
was by saying,
"Okay, I'm going to
map his journey. "
I have a job to do,
and my job, my first job,
is to try to understand
where this guy was
at what time,

to take that tape and record
every camera angle--
where it was,
what piece of wall
they were looking at,
where he took the samples.
It was important to be able
to follow that trail
very, very precisely.

I wanted to see
how he had done it.
Sixty-one feet.
Sixty-one feet
from the rear wall.

[Van Pelt]

Leuchter's a victim of
the myth of Sherlock Holmes.

[Leuchter Continues,
Faint]

A crime has been committed.
You go to the site of the crime
and with a magnifying glass
you find a hair...
or a speck of dust
on the shoe.

Leuchter thinks that is the way
reality can be reconstructed.

But he is

no Sherlock Holmes.

He doesn't have the training.

It was not that he brought
any experience,
the specific experience needed
to look at ruined buildings.

The only experience he had...
was design modifications
for the Missouri gas chambers
in Jacksonville.

[Carol]

Birkenau I never went in.

I stayed in the car,
with no keys,
and froze my... whatever off--
feet.

I was in the car
for hours.
I brought books to read.
Mystery books.
And crossword puzzles.
I do a lot
of crossword puzzles.
I didn't consider it
my honeymoon.
Let's put it that way.
I don't know that we ever
slept in the same bed
while we were there.
I try to forget
about going there.
[Leuchter]
I should note that
everything that was done,
was done
in the best possible taste,
understanding that these things
are national shrines
and national monuments.
The only thing that was
a little bit harrowing
or frightening...
is that I didn't want
to get caught.
Unfortunately, you have to
make a lot of noise when you're
chiseling brick out of walls.
[Van Pelt]
Auschwitz is like
the holy of holies.
I prepared years
to go there.
And to have a fool come in,
coming completely unprepared,
it's sacrilege.
Somebody who walks into
the holy of holies
and doesn't give a damn.
[Leuchter] I expected to see
facilities that could have

been used as gas chambers.
I expected to see areas
that were explosion-proof.
I expected to see areas
that were leak-proof.
There have to be holes in walls
or areas where they had
exhaust fans and pipes.
There has to be something
to remove the gas after
it's been put into the room.
There has to be
some kind of device
to heat the chalk pellets...
and sublimate the gas
to get it to go
into the air.
These things didn't exist.
[Van Pelt]
Auschwitz is very,
very different...
from the place it was
during the war.
Everything has changed
three or four times...
since that camp operated
as an extermination camp.
The barracks are 50 years old.
They're moldy, they smell bad.
It's not a smell of the war.
It's a smell of decay,
of 50 years of being exposed
to the elements.
There's no way that
when you go to the crematoria...
you really can understand
what it was to be led there
as a victim,
to have to undress
and be led in the gas chamber.
And when you are in
the building archive,
it is possible to reimagine
what the place was like...

during the war.
The first time
I came into the archive,
I was stunned.
I had found a mission.
I had found a task.
I had found a vocation.
When you go to Birkenau
there's very little left,
and to suddenly
have in that room...
that concentration
of evidence--
There is a tactile reality,
an incredible texture,
the texture
of making that camp.
[Train Whistle Blows,
Faint]
If Leuchter had gone
to the archives,
if he had spent time
in the archives...
he would have found evidence
about ventilation systems,
evidence about ways
to introduce Zyklon B
into these buildings,
evidence of gas chambers,
undressing rooms.
But then, of course,
I don't think he knows German,
so it wouldn't have helped
very much.
[Typing]
Telegram to
Topfwerke Erfurt.
"Send immediately
ten gas detectors.
"Invoice us later.
Signed, Pollok,
S.S. Untersturmfuhrer."
" Auschwitz, 6 March, 1943.

"Subject. :

Crematoria Two and Three.

"In accordance

with your suggestion,

"Cellar One

should be preheated.

" At the same time,

we would ask you to send

an additional quotation...

"for the air

extraction installation

in the undressing room.

S.S. Sturmundfuhrer Bishof. "

"31 March, 1943.

"Three gas-tight doors...

"have been completed.

"We remind you

of an additional order...

"for the gas door

for Crematorium Three.

"This must be made

with a spy hole...

"with double

eight-millimeter glass.

"This order

is particularly urgent.

Signed,

S.S. Major Bishof. "

There was a code.

The Germans

had a coded language.

You never talk

about extermination.

You always talk about

"special action"...

or "special treatment. "

There was

a very clear policy.

Words like " gas chamber"

would not be used.

The letter of Bishof

of the 29th of January...

is a kind of exception

in this...

because it is a letter
which is written by a person who
manages the whole operation...
and who himself had established
a policy that you would never
use the words "gas chamber."
Somebody
in the architecture office...
underlined the word
"Vergasungskeller,"
literally,
"gassing basement,"
and put on top a note--
"S.S. Untersturmfuhrer
Kierschnecht,
exclamation mark. "
This means Kierschnecht
should be informed...
about this slip.
It doesn't occur after that.
The Nazis were the first
Holocaust deniers...
because they deny
to themselves...
that it's happening.
When my doubt
about the Holocaust
first came to me,
it took me
two and a half years.
I was like
a reforming alcoholic.
I was like one yo-yo...
back and forth--
believe, not believe;
maybe believe;
false belief; true belief.
Fred was able
to purge his own mind...
within a matter of a week.
That's amazing to me.
So I said,
"Fred, what convinced you?"
He said, "Ernst,

it wasn't what I found.
"It's what I didn't find
that blew me away.
"It never, ever
occurred to me...
that a man could be convinced
by something that is not there. "
That's what Fred said.
[Coughs]
[Leuchter]
Before I went, I had no idea
of their purpose.
I just knew that
they were concentration camps.
I knew because
I was taught that they had
gas executions there.
But I subsequently
found out...
that the concentration camps
were, in effect,
slave labor camps.
It doesn't make much sense
that they would take an
entire force of slave labor...
and execute them.
You get into a situation
where you start thinking
about what happened,
you look at the facilities,
none of it seems to make
any sense.
If I were to take
any one of the facilities...
and attempt to conduct
a gas execution in them today,
and the facilities
haven't changed at all
since 1942 or 1941,
then what, in effect, I'd do is,
I'd kill myself and everybody
helping me do the execution.
I certainly don't have
a death wish,

and I don't think
the German S.S.
had a death wish.
If those facilities
could be made competent
for an execution,
I would be the one
that would be able
to do that.
I assure you that nobody could
do that better than I could.
[Van Pelt]
Leuchter has said
a number of times...
that the place
wasn't touched.
Just open your eyes.
You realize that
this is utter nonsense.
Virtually every brick,
which was located in 1944
in one place,
has been relocated
to another place.
Where are all the bricks
of the crematoria?
It's an interesting question.
There's some mountain of bricks
in Crematorium Five,
but for the rest
there are no bricks.
I think I know
where they are.
The real places to sample
are the farmhouses to the west
of the crematoria,
the farmhouses
where people are living,
children are playing,
dogs are barking.
These were rebuilt after the war
with bricks of the crematoria.
This site
has been turned inside-out.

What was inside the camp
is now outside the camp.
And inside,
you have a big void.
We're standing at
Krema II...
at one of
the alleged holes...
where the S.S. officers threw in
the hydrogen cyanide material.
As you can see,
it's a rough-cut opening...
with metal
reinforcing rods.
I'm about to descend through
a hole in the roof...
in the gas chamber
at Krema II...
to retrieve samples
from...
below the structure.
I was saying to myself,
"Fred, do you really want
to go down in there?"
It came with the territory,
so I had to go down in the hole.
Excellent.
Excellent.
Can't actually
stand up in here.
Not sure if the whole thing
is gonna come down on me.
[Man]
Where are you?
Oh, there you are.
Beautiful.
Got a beautiful
piece of a roof.
I guess you thought--
I guess you're getting me.
A sample from the roof...
that I am now bagging.
Okay? Now I will find
another sample...

of brick...
from the wall we were not able
to get at from the surface,
which is over here.
I am again
going out of view,
and I will see
what I can find.
[Leuchter]
It was cold. It was wet.
It was kind of spooky.
It must feel like
the same way somebody feels
when they go into a tomb...
that they've opened after
a couple of thousand years,
and you don't know
what you're gonna see.
I didn't know
if I was gonna see
somebody's skeleton or bones...
or whether or not
there were gonna
be animals in there.
That would not have been
a particularly good place...
to encounter
some kind of a wild animal.
I have a sample
of the concrete...
from the alleged pillar...
that carried
the hydrocyanic acid...
into the chamber.
It would be nice
if I could obtain
a floor sample,
which I will seek...
in the lowest spot.
[Scraping]
I am at floor level.
And the floor
is covered with water.
I will obtain

some of the material
from the bottom,
bottom of the--
the sediment
from the bottom...
which should contain
residual cyanate.
Okay, there not being
much more I can do down here,
I will ascend to the surface.
Aah !

[Van Pelt]

Okay, let's go
slightly back.

[Audio Rewinding]

So Krema Tomb II was
the most lethal building
at Auschwitz.

In the 2,500 square feet
of this one room,
more people lost their life
than in any other place
on this planet.

Five hundred thousand people
were killed.

If you would draw a map
of human suffering,
if you create the geography
of atrocity,
this would be
the absolute center.

Every year remains
of human beings are found.

Bones, teeth.

The earth doesn't rest.

[Leuchter]

What happened
in all of these facilities...
is undoubtedly a mystery.

Whether or not
these facilities
were used for gas execution--
That's not a mystery.
I don't believe they were.

Because in my best
engineering opinion,
I don't think
they could've been.
It's a tough job...
to execute several
hundred people at once.
We have a hard job
executing one man.
I think it would be easier
to shoot them or hang them.
I probably could do
a reasonably good job by
building a multiple gallows...
and hanging 50 people
at once.
I probably could execute
more people...
within a shorter time frame.
Why didn't they
just shoot them?
Bullets would've been cheaper
than doing this.
Why didn't they
just blow them up?
Why didn't they take them
down into a mine
and seal the mine off?
Maybe we're gonna find
an execution chamber
under Berlin...
with 3,000 electric chairs
lined up.
I don't know.
It just doesn't seem
to make any sense.
I had a couple
of heavy bags of samples,
which we mixed
with our dirty linen,
dirty underwear
and all sorts of things...
because we figured the customs
people would not be willing

to go through our dirty laundry.
In the event
we got caught,
we did have
a contingency plan.
I had maps of Austria,
Czechoslovakia and East Germany.
And we would have made
some kind of a ground flight
across one of those countries...
to either get to Austria
or to West Germany.
We would've just
essentially taken off...
and hope we made it
to a border before somebody
figured out what was going on.
They probably wouldn't
have chased me immediately...
because I would've,
from a practical standpoint,
just been a vandal
chiseling holes
in their wall.
I was never so relieved
when we passed through the
West German passport control.
Because at least
I hadn't chiseled...
at any of the West Germans'
national shrines.
All of the forensic samples
that I took were brought back
to the United States...
and sent to a lab
here in Massachusetts
that was highly recommended.
They were not told
what the samples were
or where they came from.
They were told
that they were materials...
that would be involved
in a court case...

relative
to an industrial accident...
and they should be prepared
to testify...
and they should certify
all of the samples.
All of their tests
came back.
And they did
several types of tests...
to determine whether or not
there was any hydrogen cyanide.
They were negative.
These facilities
never saw any gas.
For virtually 40-odd years
I believed unquestionably
that there were gas chambers...
at these
concentration camps.
When I found that there weren't,
my next question is,
what do I do about it?
I completed my report,
and I testified at the trial.
The judge would not accept
the report into evidence.
So what the judge did is,
he accepted the report
as an informational exhibit...
as opposed
to an evidentiary exhibit.
And every bit
of the information
in that report...
had to be testified
under oath into the record.
My publishing imprint
in England,
Focal Point Publications,
we published
The Leuchter Report.
I can't remember
where I first met him.

He's not the kind of person
who would strike you.
He's a mouse of a man.
He's also a man
who is totally honest
and totally innocent,
innocent in the sense
of being a simpleton.
He went into this
as a glorious adventure.
He was taken out of oblivion.
He was given this task
to perform.
He traveled abroad,
probably for the first time
in his life, to Poland.
He came back with these
earth-shattering results.

The big point.:

there is no significant
residue of cyanide
in the brickwork.
That's what converted me.
When I read that in the report
in the courtroom in Toronto,
I became
a hard-core disbeliever.
[Zndel]
On April 20, 1988,
Adolf Hitler's birthday,
Fred Leuchter, not knowing
he's gonna be delivering a
birthday present to the fhrer,
steps into
the witness box in Toronto.
Devastation
reigns all around.
The prosecution
and the judge...
were in a visible
state of panic.
I could see
the facial muscles

working in the judge.
I could see the pale face
of the prosecutor.
This was history-making.
That was clear
to everybody present.
They cross-examined Fred.
Immediately, of course,
they zeroed in...
on his soft or inadequate
academic credentials
for what he was doing.
The judge made a decision
that could have been
very dangerous to us...
The judge made a decision
that could have been
very dangerous to us...
in that he said,
"The samples by themselves
are worthless,
unless the defense
can bring the man
who did the testing. "
[Man]
I went up to Toronto
on very short notice,
not knowing any
of the background at all
of what was going on.
They wanted somebody
from the laboratory to say,
"Yes, we analyzed these samples.
Yes, we produced this report
on the analysis."
And that's
what I was there to do.
I don't think
the Leuchter results
have any meaning.
There's nothing
in any of our data...
that says those surfaces
were exposed or not.

Even after I got off the stand,
I didn't know where
the samples came from.
I didn't know
which samples were which.
And it was only at lunch
that I found out really
what the case involved.
Hindsight being 20-20,
the test was not
the correct one to have
been used for the analysis.
He presented us
with rock samples...
anywhere from
the size of your thumb up to
half the size of your fist.
We broke 'em up
with a hammer...
so that we could get
a sub-sample,
placed it in a flask,
add concentrated
sulfuric acid.
And it undergoes
a reaction.
It produces
a red-colored solution.
It is the intensity
of this red color...
that we can relate
with cyanide concentration.
And you have to look
at what happens to cyanide...
when it reacts with a wall.
Where does it go?
How far does it go?
Cyanide
is a surface reaction.
It's probably
not going to penetrate
more than ten microns.
Human hair's
a hundred microns in diameter.

Crush this sample up.
I have just diluted
that sample...
ten thousand,
a hundred thousand times.
If you're gonna go look for it,
you're gonna look
on the surface only.
There's no reason
to go deep...
because it's not going
to be there.
Which was the exposed surface?
I didn't even have any idea.
That's like analyzing
paint on the wall.
By analyzing,
they timber this behind it.
If they go in
with blinders on,
they will see
what they want to see.
What was he really
trying to do?
What was he trying to prove?
[Woman Reporter]
The jury said
Ernst Zndel is guilty...
of publishing news
he knew to be false
about the Holocaust.
In spite of that,
when he emerged from
the courtroom this afternoon,
Zndel still maintained
the Holocaust was a hoax.
No, this is just one
more hurdle to overcome.
And I have always
looked upon boulders
in the path of my life...
not as stumbling blocks
but as stepping-stones.
[Leuchter]

On my return from Canada,
I went about
my work and business
as I normally did.
And I began to notice...
that not as many
prison officials
were talking with me.
Orders weren't coming in
as expected.
The wardens and commissioners
were receiving
very heavy pressure...
from Jewish groups.

[Woman]

There is no slippery slope
for Mr. Fred Leuchter.

The man...
is an anti-Semite.

[Shapiro] There are
hatemongers in this country,
and he's one of them.

He handed over
his entire life
and reputation...
to the cause
of spreading hatred.

He didn't stop.

He kept on going.

He could've gotten out
any time.

What kind of man is he?
And why is he doing this?
And what kind of reflection
is this upon our community?

[Tabasky]

To me, he looks like
he's almost under a spell,
and I think he is.

He's under his own spell.

He truly believed...

what he was doing
was right.

[Leuchter]

I testified in Canada
for two reasons.
First, the trial was
an issue of freedom of speech...
and freedom of belief.
As an American,
one who supports
the Bill of Rights,
I believe that Mr. Zndel
has the right to believe
and say what he chooses.
I have this right
in the United States.
Secondly,
Mr. Zndel was not on trial
for a misdemeanor.
This was a major felony.
He could've faced
up to 25 years in prison...
for printing a document
stating that there were
no gas chambers at Auschwitz.
I believe that any man,
no matter what he's done,
has a right
to a fair trial...
and the best
possible defense
that he can muster.
I, unfortunately, was
the only expert in the world
who could provide that defense.
There was no one else.
[Shapiro]
I don't think he's naive.
I think he was empowered
by being part of this group.
Who is this guy ?
The bottom line here is,
you got a guy who basically
made a deal with the devil.
[Zndel]
Fred Leuchter is a hero.
Not every generation

gets a George Washington
or a Thomas Jefferson.
Our generation's heroes
maybe are more humble.

[Tabasky]

Fred got involved in this
and wanted to play this game.
And I think he thought
it was a game at first.
I really believe he did.
How nice to fly to Canada,
to go to Poland,
get paid a lot of money...
and come back
and have a lot of attention...
brought to him.
I think he really dug it.
I think that
he really thought
that that was great.
I pity him.

[Van Pelt]

In April 1988,
there was still opportunity
for Fred to redeem himself,
to apologize.
To apologize for having
gone down in that hole.
But he chose not
to consider the evidence...
of his own foolishness.
Holocaust denial
is a story about vanity.
It's a way...
to get in the limelight,
to be noticed,
to be someone.
Maybe to be loved.
I have a sympathy to Fred
who was lost in Auschwitz,
because I think he's lost.
But not anymore
with the Fred who appears
at these conferences.

You're ignored.
You're despised
by many people.
And then there is a home,
and the home is the Institute
for Historical Review.
You make new friends.
Go to one conference,
then you go to
the second one...
and a third and a fourth.
And it's nice to get up
and stand behind a lectern
and have people applaud.
They compare your logic
with that of any
university professor.
Maybe it's about choosing
the right friends.
Please welcome a man
whose work is a mighty blow
for historical understanding.
Mr. Fred Leuchter.
[Applause]
My paper is entitled,
The Leuchter Report,
the How and the Why.
In 1988-- 1988 was
a very informative and
likewise disturbing year for me.
I was appalled to learn
that much of what
I was taught in school...
about 20th century history
and World War II...
was a myth,
if not a lie.
I was first amazed
then annoyed
and then aware...
that the myth of
the Holocaust was dead.
[Shapiro]
Fred Leuchter

put blinders on himself.
He sat through
all of those speeches and
neo-Nazi rallies in Europe...
as he heard Jews vilified.
Whether he belonged
to a group beforehand...
has no relevance.
He joined and he took part
for many, many years.
I think Fred Leuchter,
when he was called upon,
became one of them.
[Leuchter]
I did this, but because
of what I have seen,
I have a compelling urge
and perhaps a responsibility...
to countless generations
who come after me,
a responsibility
to the truth.
[Man]
Hear, hear !
[Applause]
I thank you,
ladies and gentlemen.
I hope I've lived up
to your expectations.
[Applause]
And I will entertain
any questions.
[Applause Continues]
[Zndel]
The Leuchter Report-- about
There have been
translations.
A Leuchter edition
appeared in Russian.
In Latvia, in Hungary,
in Spanish.
The Leuchter Report
is out there
in dozens of languages.

and, I would dare say,
in millions of copies.
We will not go down
in history...
as being a nation
of genocidal maniacs.
We will not.
We can,
with historical truth,
detoxify a poison planet.
Holocaust Survivors
and Friends...
has asked
the Massachusetts Board
of Registration of Engineers...
to investigate
whether Leuchter
is properly credentialed.
Last week the board's
chief investigator told us...
that Leuchter
is not certified as
an engineer in Massachusetts.
And if he is working
or soliciting business here,
he could be liable
for criminal charges.
[Leuchter]
I have no question
that it's a conspiracy.
They even pressured
the engineering board
here in Massachusetts...
into bringing
a criminal complaint
against me...
for practicing engineering
without being registered.
Less than ten percent
of the engineers in the state
are licensed or registered.
But I'm the only one
that was ever prosecuted for
practicing without a license.

Did Christ have a diploma
in Christianity?
Did Marx have a diploma
in Marxism?
Did Adolf Hitler
have a diploma
in national socialism?
No, they did not.
But they knew
one hell of a lot...
about their field.
[Leuchter]
I have a half of
a lethal injection machine...
which belongs
to the State of Delaware.
We had a contract to repair
the lethal injection machine...
and to repair their gallows
and write their protocol
for hanging.
I was told that
the deputy attorney general,
Fred Silverman,
would not allow me
to complete the contract.
A conference call
was set up...
between corrections officials
and the deputy
attorney general...
and several
other attorney generals
whom I had worked with...
in terms of the development
of the hanging procedure.
And Fred Silverman told me that
I would not be allowed to deal
with the State of Delaware...
because
I testified in Canada.
They did not pay me...
for the \$7,000 work
that I put into the repair

of the machine.
I lost all
of the contract work
for the gallows.
And the State
has effectively said,
"Take the half
of the machine
that you've got...
and stick it someplace."
I put an ad
in the Want Advertiser.
The second week
that the ad was running,
someone saw the ad.
Determined
that the instrument
shouldn't be sold...
because I was the one
that was selling it.
Subsequently,
there was write-ups...
in both major
Boston newspapers...
and pressure was again
applied to the district
attorney's office...
and the attorney general's
office...
to prosecute me
for selling the machine.
And it was necessary
for the attorney general's
office...
to explain in the newspaper
that it is not illegal...
to sell a lethal injection
machine to anybody.
Delaware turned out
to be a major problem,
but I still have their machine.
And anybody who's interested in
buying half a lethal injection
machine can contact me,

and it's available
for the cost
of the repairs.

[Carol]

I went a lot of places that
I probably wouldn't have gone.
But basically,
it was a nightmare.
He had a job offer
from California.
He thought
I was going with him.
I told him that
he could give his speeches,
he could do whatever he wanted,
but I would not be there.
And I told him
I went to a lawyer.
And I explained to him that yes,
I could get a divorce and yes,
you have to leave here.
I don't want you here.
And he hemmed and hawed
and whatever, but he left,
like, a week later.
When he left,
he took his phone.
The other phone
was being shut off.
The gas and electric
was being shut off.
And that was how he left.
If I never saw him again,
that'd be fine.

[Leuchter]

The guy that brought me
out there didn't have any money.
He wound up
with everybody suing him
and all kinds of stuff.
So I said, "Well,
I'm not getting anywhere. "
I was locked out
of my hotel room three times.

It's kind of tough when they
take your car away and they
drop you off on the freeway.
You're looking around trying
to figure out how the hell
you get back to your apartment.
Then you find you got this
super-size doorknob on your knob
so you can't get the key in,
and all your clothes
and razor's inside.
I had my car taken away from me
while I was driving it
on the freeway.
I had another car taken away
in a garage.
These are rental cars
that had been assigned to me.
It's pretty tough when
you're out in the middle
of nowhere all by yourself.
[Irving]
He's been destroyed
as a human being.
He's had
his marriage destroyed.
He's had his life destroyed.
I frankly am surprised
he didn't go and commit suicide,
jump under a train.
He saw everything
he had built up in his own
quiet, humble way destroyed...
by these people
he had never met,
whom he had offended.
All he did was
take the bucket and spade
and go over to Auschwitz...
and come back
with the samples.
And that was an act
of criminal simplicity.
He had no idea

of what he was blundering into.
He wasn't putting
his name on the line
because he had no name.
He came from nowhere,
and he went back to nowhere.
[Leuchter]
Of course I'm not
an anti-Semite.
I have a lot of friends
that are Jewish.
I've lost Jewish friends, too,
because of what's happened.
I bear no ill will
to any Jews anyplace,
whether they're
in the United States
or abroad.
I bear a great deal of ill will
to those people that have come
after me,
those people who have
persecuted and prosecuted me.
But that's got nothing
to do with them being Jewish.
That only has to do
with the fact that
they've been interfering...
with my right to live, think,
breathe and earn a living.
As far as being
a revisionist--
At this point, I'm not
an official revisionist,
but I guess
I'm a reluctant revisionist.
If my belief that there
were no gas chambers...
at Auschwitz,
Birkenau and Majdanek...
makes me a revisionist,
then so be it.
They've expressed
their unquestioned intent

of destroying me...
simply because
I testified in Canada,
not because I have
any other affiliation with
any anti-Semitic organization,
not because I'm affiliated
with any Nazi or neo-Nazi
organization.
I have no work.
I haven't sold a piece of
equipment in almost three years.
And I have no idea
if this situation
is gonna change.
[Man]
Have you ever thought
that you might be wrong?
Or do you think that
you could make a mistake?
No, I'm past that.
When I attempted to turn
those facilities into
gas execution facilities...
and was unable to,
I made a decision
at that point
that I wasn't wrong.
And perhaps
that's why I did it.
At least
it cleared my mind.
So I know that
I left no stone unturned.
I did
everything possible...
to substantiate and prove the
existence of the gas chambers,
and I was unable to.
In 1957,
I actually had the opportunity
for the first time
to sit in the chair.
There's a legend

that goes with the chair...
relative to prison personnel
and their families.
There was, um,
a youngster,
much the same age as I was
when I sat in the chair,
whose father was a guard
at the institution,
who toured the institution
and who sat
in the electric chair.
Some ten or twelve years later,
he was executed
in that same chair...
for the commission of a murder
during an armed robbery.
And so the legend grew...
that prison officials
shouldn't allow their children
to sit in the electric chair.
I kind of sat in the chair
waiting for something to happen.
But some 20 years later,
I wound up making
execution equipment,
instead of being the person
that the execution equipment
was used on.
So, maybe the legend
got turned around,
and maybe we created
a new legend,
and some good came
out of it after all.