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THE ANATOMY OF THE NUREMBERG TRIALS

===== A PERSONAL MEMOIR =====



TELFORD TAYLOR

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OF THE
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A Personal Memoir

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Skyhorse Publishing

MRECIC - ISEN - BIBLIOTECA
INVENTARIO: 171330
UBICACION: 612.330
CDU: 341
FECHA: 23-04-2019
PROCEDENCIA: DOMINIO (ANS. ZERILIA)
PRECIO:

To Toby Golick

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available on file.

ISBN: 978-1-62087-788-3

Printed in the United States of America

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Introduction

In the spring of 1945, I was a reserve colonel in the intelligence branch of the United States Army. My duties had to do with information derived from the deciphering of enemy messages, the product of which in recent years has become publicly known as "Ultra" or "Magic." My base of operations was in southern England, but I had been given general responsibility for the security of Ultra and its distribution to the principal American army and air headquarters in Western Europe, and this required frequent trips to the Continent.

By April, it had become apparent that the Third Reich was in its death throes and that a total Allied military victory in Europe was imminent. Accordingly, early that month I embarked on what I expected to be, and was, the last of my circuits around the commands that we were servicing. On about April 20, en route to General Patton's headquarters at Erlangen in northern Bavaria, I drove through nearby Nuremberg, where I had never been before.

Little of its famed beauty was to be seen. The city had been heavily bombed by the Royal Air Force in January and March and taken, only after heavy fighting during the past few days, by General Wade Haislip's XV Corps. Most of the city lay in ruins, parts were still burning, and the streets were so choked with rubble that I could hardly get through.

Returning to England a week later, I was met at the airfield by my colleague Lieutenant Colonel Ted Hilles (in peacetime a distinguished professor of English literature at Yale), bringing a message to me from my superiors at the War Department in Washington. Its burden was that Robert H. Jackson, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, had been appointed by President Truman to represent the United States as chief prosecutor at a projected international trial of "war crimi-

An Engrossing and Reflective Eyewitness Account of One of the Most Significant Events of Our Century

In 1945, the Allied nations agreed on a judicial process, rather than summary execution, to determine the fate of the Nazis following the end of World War II. Held in Nuremberg, the ceremonial birthplace of the Nazi Party, the British, American, French, and Soviet leaders contributed both judges and prosecutors to the series of trials that would prosecute some of the most prominent politicians, military leaders, and businessmen in Nazi Germany.

This is the definitive history of the Nuremberg crimes trials by one of the key participants, Telford Taylor, the distinguished lawyer who was a member of the American prosecution staff and eventually became chief counsel. In vivid detail, Taylor portrays the unfolding events as he "saw, heard, and otherwise sensed them at the time, and not as a detached historian working from the documents might picture them."

Taylor describes personal vendettas among the Allied representatives and the negotiations that preceded the handing down of sentences. The revelations have not lost their power over the decades: the chamber is reduced to silence when an SS officer recounts impassively that his troops rounded up and killed ninety thousand Jews, and panic overcomes the head of the German State Bank as it becomes clear that he knew his institution was receiving jewels and other valuables taken from the bodies of concentration camp inmates.

The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials has proven to be a defining piece of World War II literature.

TELFORD TAYLOR (1908–1998) graduated from Williams College and Harvard Law School. During World War II, he served in Europe as a US Army intelligence officer and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. After the Nuremberg trials, Taylor practiced law in New York City, taught at Columbia Law School and the Benjamin Cardozo School of Law, and published a number of books, including *Munich: The Price of Peace*, which won the National Book Critics Circle Award for best nonfiction work in 1979.



SKYHORSE PUBLISHING, INC.
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
WWW.SKYHORSEPUBLISHING.COM

Cover design by Liz Driesbach
Printed in the United States of America

ISBN-10: 1-62087-788-0
ISBN-13: 978-1-62087-788-3



5 1 6 9 5

9 781620 877883