# Adolf Eichmann Trial Transcript



I have heard the Court's severe verdict of guilty. ……. I cannot recognize the verdict of guilty. I understand the demand for atonement for the crimes which were perpetrated against the Jews. The witnesses' statements here in the Court made my limbs go numb once again, just as they went numb when once, acting on orders, I had to look at the atrocities. It was my misfortune to become entangled in these atrocities. But these misdeeds did not happen according to my wishes. It was not my wish to slay people. The guilt for the mass murder is solely that of the political leaders.

I did try to leave my position, to leave for the front, for honest battle. But I was held fast in those dark duties. Once again I would stress that I am guilty of having been obedient, having subordinated myself to my official duties and the obligations of war service and my oath of allegiance and my oath of office, and in addition, once the war started, there was also martial law.

This obedience was not easy. And again, anyone who has to give orders and has to obey orders knows what one can demand of people. I did not persecute Jews with avidity and passion. That is what the government did. Nor could the persecution be carried out other than by a government. But I never... I accuse the leaders of abusing my obedience. At that time obedience was demanded, just as in the future it will also be demanded of the subordinate. Obedience is commended as a virtue.

May I therefore ask that consideration be given to the fact that I obeyed, and not whom I obeyed.

I am not the monster that I am made out to be. I am the victim of an error of judgment.

Retrieved from:  
<http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Sessions/Session-120-03.html>