

The Drama House
Quality Film and TV Productions

Witness Against Hitler

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Helmuth James was an international lawyer, trained at Lincoln's, UK, now working in the Abwehr, who used his skills to try and circumvent - initially through legal means and eventually through illegal activity - the worst of Hitler's regime. He helped Jews leave Germany, tipped off suspects and got military information to the Allies.

He and his wife, Freya, (Helen McCrory), founded The Kreisau Circle - a secret group which debated and then wrote an alternative democratic German Constitution to be implemented once Hitler had been defeated.

Although there was no evidence against him, Helmuth was taken into "preventative detention" by the SS in January 1944. Six months later, as no evidence could be produced, Helmuth was due to be released in July 1944. However, in his absence, and against his wishes, some members of The Kreisau Circle joined von Stauffenberg's unsuccessful July 20 bomb plot. That failure sealed Helmuth's fate and that of many of his closet friends, including Peter Yorck (Colin Buchanan). He and they were tried and sentenced by the Nazi judge Freisler (Brian Cox). Helmuth survived until January 1945 when he was hung in Plotzensee Prison.

In his last letter to his wife, Helmuth wrote: "I stood before judge Freisler not as a Protestant, not as a big land owner, not as a noble man, not as a Prussian, not as a German, but as a Christian and nothing else."