"His stories ended with the same moral:

'So you see son, in the end it didn’t matter if you had money or not, were smart or dumb. Life was worth nothing—absolutely nothing. You needed luck.'"
"Dolek's luck ran out on July 16, 1942

He's one of 23 "arrestees" ordered by the Gestapo Resettlement Division to appear for deportation at the collection point...
"No doubts. None at all.

My father’s calligraphic signature hugs the lower left corner. His Auschwitz tattoo number—177904—the upper right...
"A squat grey cement building...

Inside a locked gate is what looks like a small grey-and-black locomotive without wheels. This is the crematorium."
A signed confession?

Fifteen diamonds?

...It was clear Dad was more involved in black market smuggling than he had ever let on.
The sentencing form linked the smuggling of 15 diamonds to the escape plot.

On the back, under "Number of Strokes," 25 is initialed.

The lashing was inflicted by a fellow prisoner, Joseph Brassem.

I wondered, what makes a man like Brassem tick?
"...a marvel of Nazi bureaucratic efficiency at a time of retreat, chaos, and collapse...

Thanks to the efficiency of the SS, it takes me only five minutes to find my father's name on line 1,945, page 33 of the 56-page List II."
The French military evacuated Dolek to Paris in May 1945.

Dolek's four half-brothers and their families were never heard from again.