

Fritz Kitzing

(December 28, 1905 - unknown)

Fritz Kitzing was born in 1905 in Neuruppin, a small town in north-eastern Germany. Records do not indicate how Fritz defined their gender, but they lived openly as a

man and as a woman



Police mugshot of Fritz Kitzing, March 1936. *Landesarchiv Berlin*

at different times throughout their life. The author has chosen to refer to Fritz using they/them pronouns to reflect this gender fluidity.

Fritz was trained as a bookkeeper and moved to Berlin in their mid-twenties to search for work. Discrimination and social marginalization forced Fritz into poverty. In late 1933, Fritz was arrested while in women's clothing and charged under Paragraph 361, the law against prostitution. Fritz served four weeks in jail and was then transferred to the Rummelsberg workhouse for six months of "protective custody."

In March 1934, Fritz escaped prison and fled to London with the help of their family. The London police soon arrested Fritz for prostitution and extradited them to Berlin in November 1934.

The police detained Fritz in June 1935 for allegedly making a sexual advance on an undercover member of the SA (stormtroopers). Fritz told the authorities that he was a gay man but had not solicited the SA man for sex. Fritz probably knew that solicitation was a convictable offence under Paragraph 361 while being a "homosexually inclined" man did not warrant a conviction under the current version of Paragraph 175 (that would change mere days later when the Nazis amended Paragraph 175). The police released Fritz with the warning that if Fritz were arrested again, they would be sent to a concentration camp.

In July 1935, one of Fritz' neighbors told the police that a "transvestite was making trouble" in the neighborhood. For unknown reasons, Fritz was not apprehended until March 1936. While in custody, Fritz' brother Hans Joachim



Police photograph of Fritz Kitzing, ca. 1936.
Landesarchiv Berlin.

wrote to the police seeking information and asking if he could send food to Fritz. In a letter to Fritz, Hans Joachim wrote, “I don’t know what they are accusing you of, but I will do everything in my power to help you through it.”

The police wrote to the local Gestapo office and asked that Fritz be transferred to a concentration camp, noting that “complaints about the shameless goings-on of transvestites were a danger to the public. It would be a great service to the public—and even to these morally depraved people

themselves—if we sent Kitzing to a concentration camp.” Two months later, they sent Fritz to Lichtenburg. It is probable that Nazi authorities treated Fritz as a male and forced them to live as male in the camp. After five months, Fritz was transferred to Sachsenhausen. Fritz was finally released on April 8, 1937, after twelve months in “protective custody.” They had never received a trial.

In March 1938, someone who had been in Sachsenhausen with Fritz recognized Fritz on the street wearing women’s clothing. They denounced Fritz to the police. When the Gestapo arrested Fritz, they discovered letters in which Fritz had told friends in London about life in the concentration camps. The Gestapo accused Kitzing of distributing “atrocities propaganda” and took them into custody.

Records do not reveal what happened to Fritz Kitzing after that.

Sources & Further Reading

- Evans, Jennifer and Elissa Mailänder, “Cross-Dressing, Male Intimacy, and the Violence of Transgression in Third Reich Photography,” in *German History* 39 Issue 1 (March 2021): 54-77.
- Sternweiler, Andreas, “Er ging mit ihm alsbald ein sogenanntes ‘Festes Verhältnis’ ein, ganze normale Homosexuelle” in Joachim Müller and Andreas Sternweiler, *Homosexuelle Männer im KZ Sachsenhausen* (Berlin, 2000), 59-63.
- Whisnant, Clayton J. *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany: A History, 1880-1945* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2016), 231.

Watch the video spotlight of Fritz Kitzing [online](#).
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