

The Callous Heart



09

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In the movie *What's Love Got To Do With It*, rock star, Tina Turner, had just been beaten up by her husband, Ike Turner. She decided that she had to leave him before he kills her.

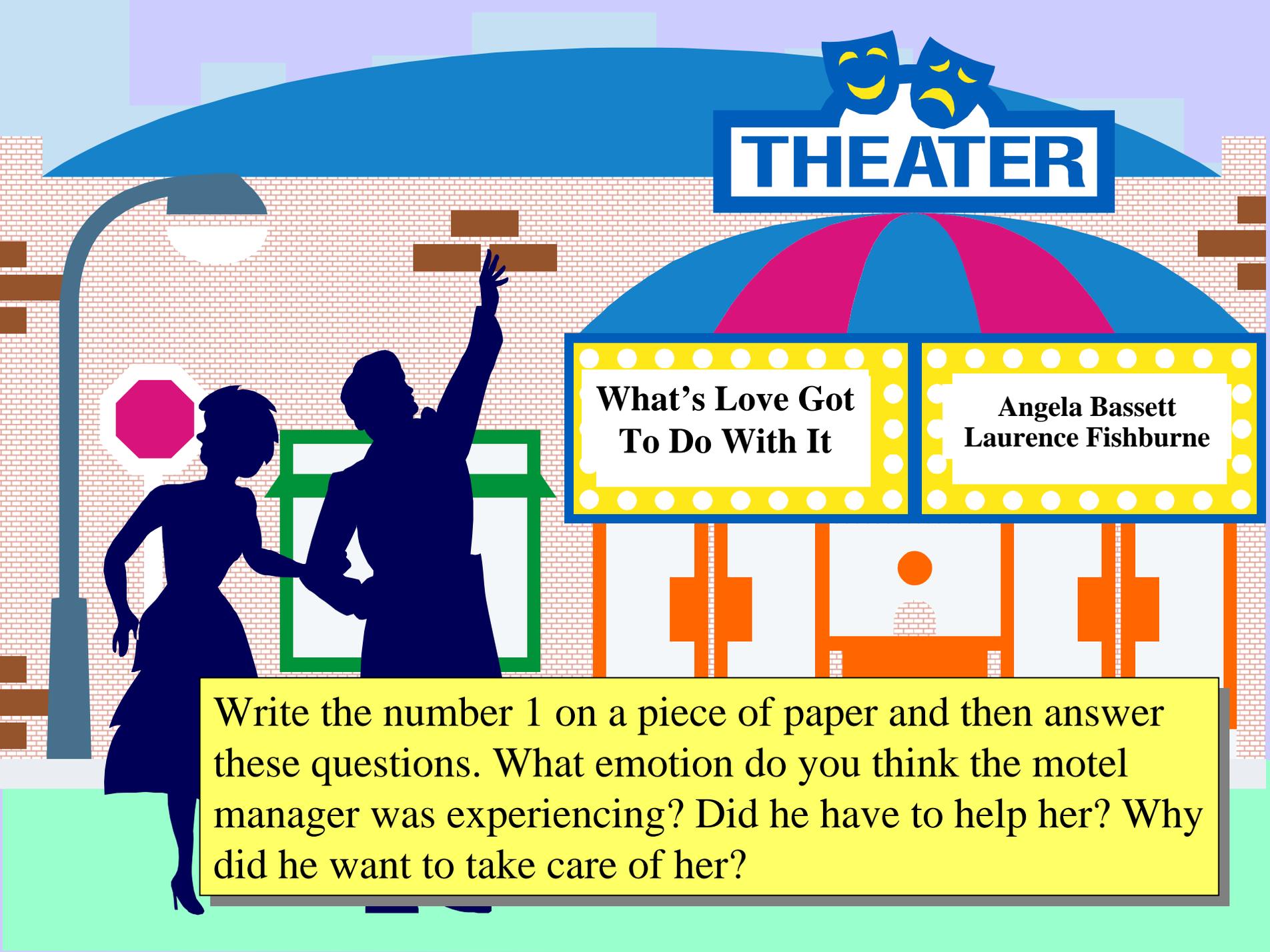


THEATER

**What's Love Got
To Do With It**

**Angela Bassett
Laurence Fishburne**

She runs across the street dodging cars right and left. She runs into another hotel. Her face is covered in blood. She tells the manager that she had just had a fight with her husband and doesn't have any money on her. But if he gave her a room she promised that she would pay him back. The manager looks her over. His face is full of emotion. He says, "Don't worry. We'll take care of you."

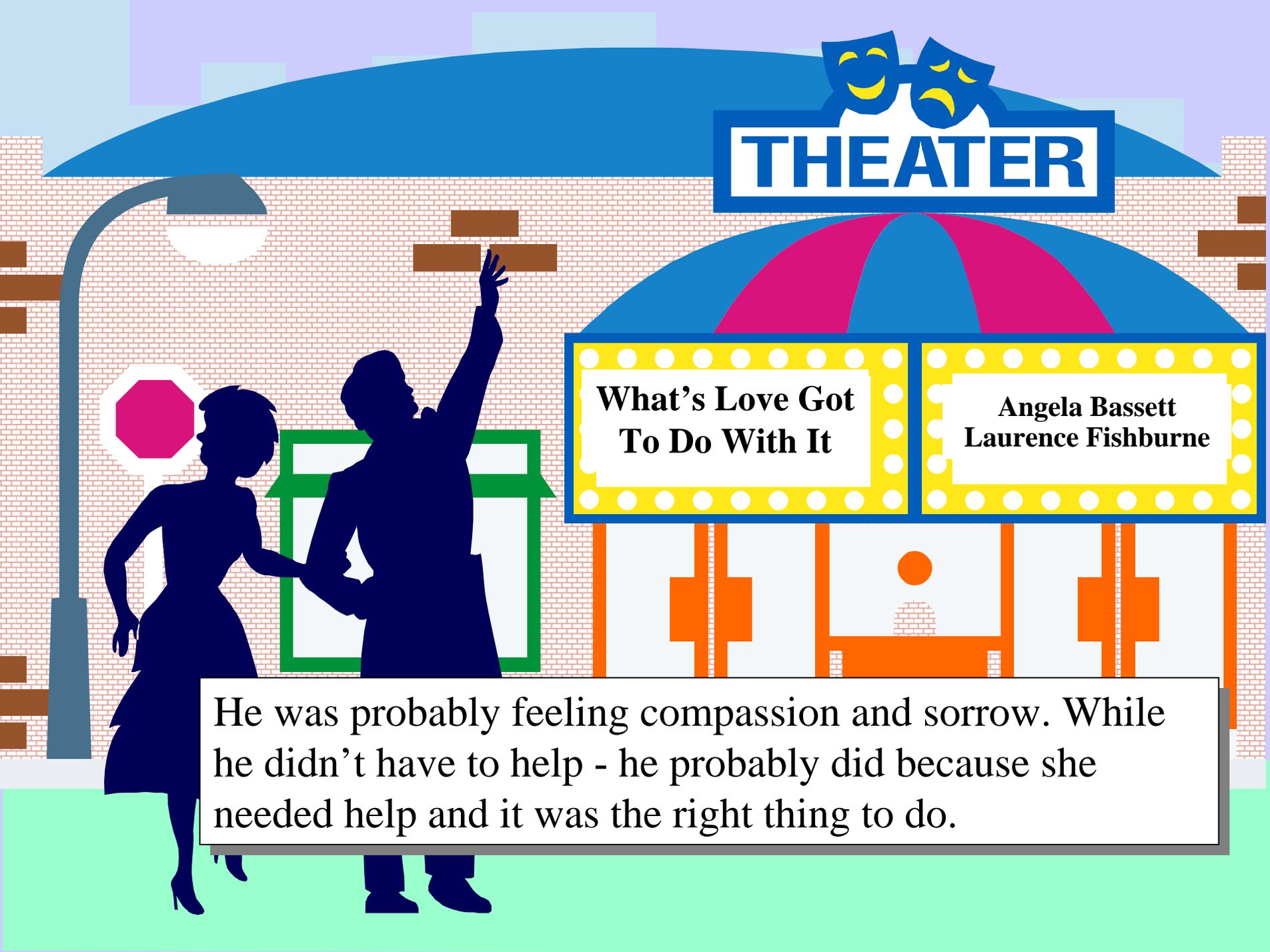


THEATER

**What's Love Got
To Do With It**

**Angela Bassett
Laurence Fishburne**

Write the number 1 on a piece of paper and then answer these questions. What emotion do you think the motel manager was experiencing? Did he have to help her? Why did he want to take care of her?



THEATER

**What's Love Got
To Do With It**

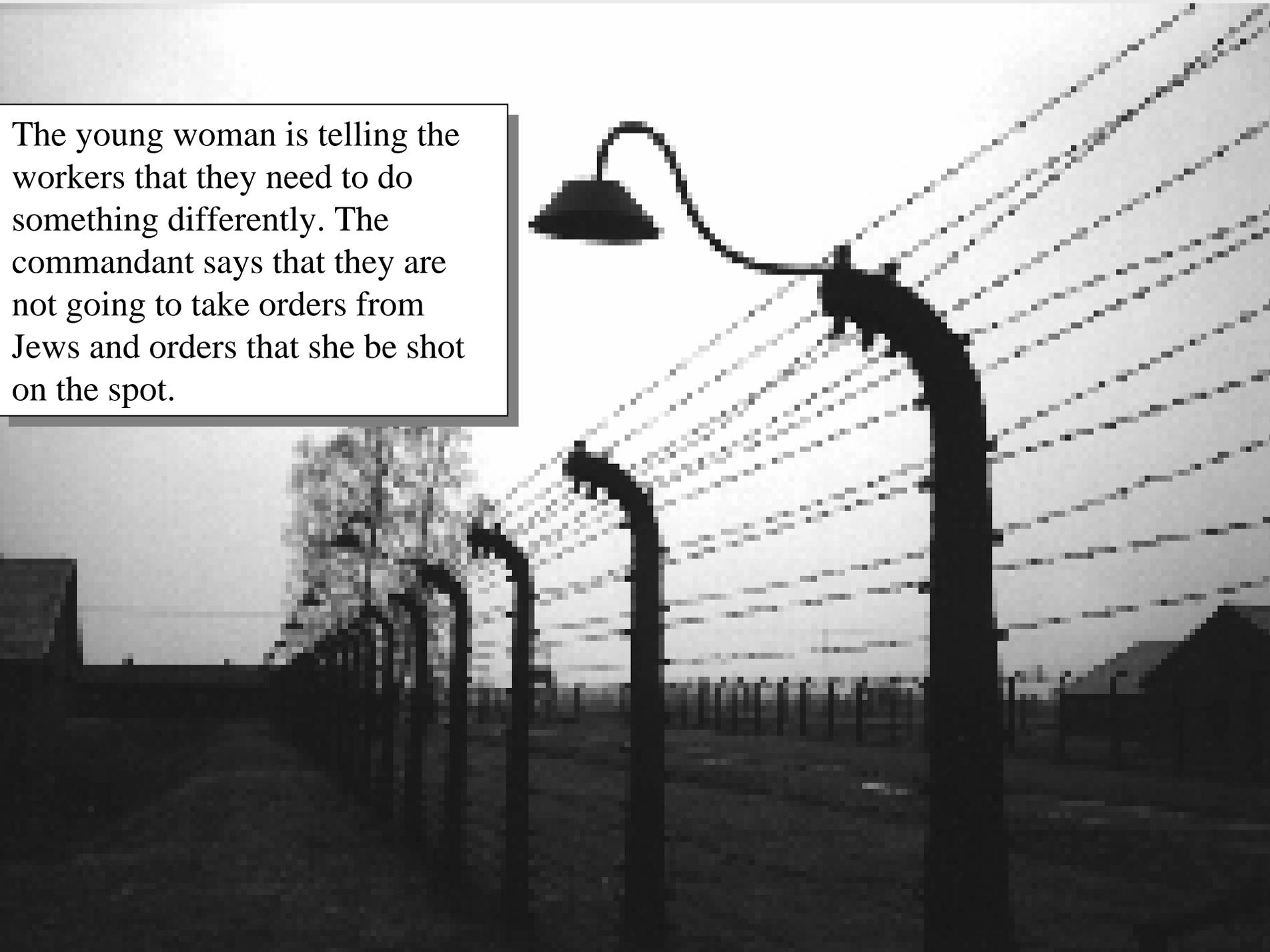
**Angela Bassett
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He was probably feeling compassion and sorrow. While he didn't have to help - he probably did because she needed help and it was the right thing to do.

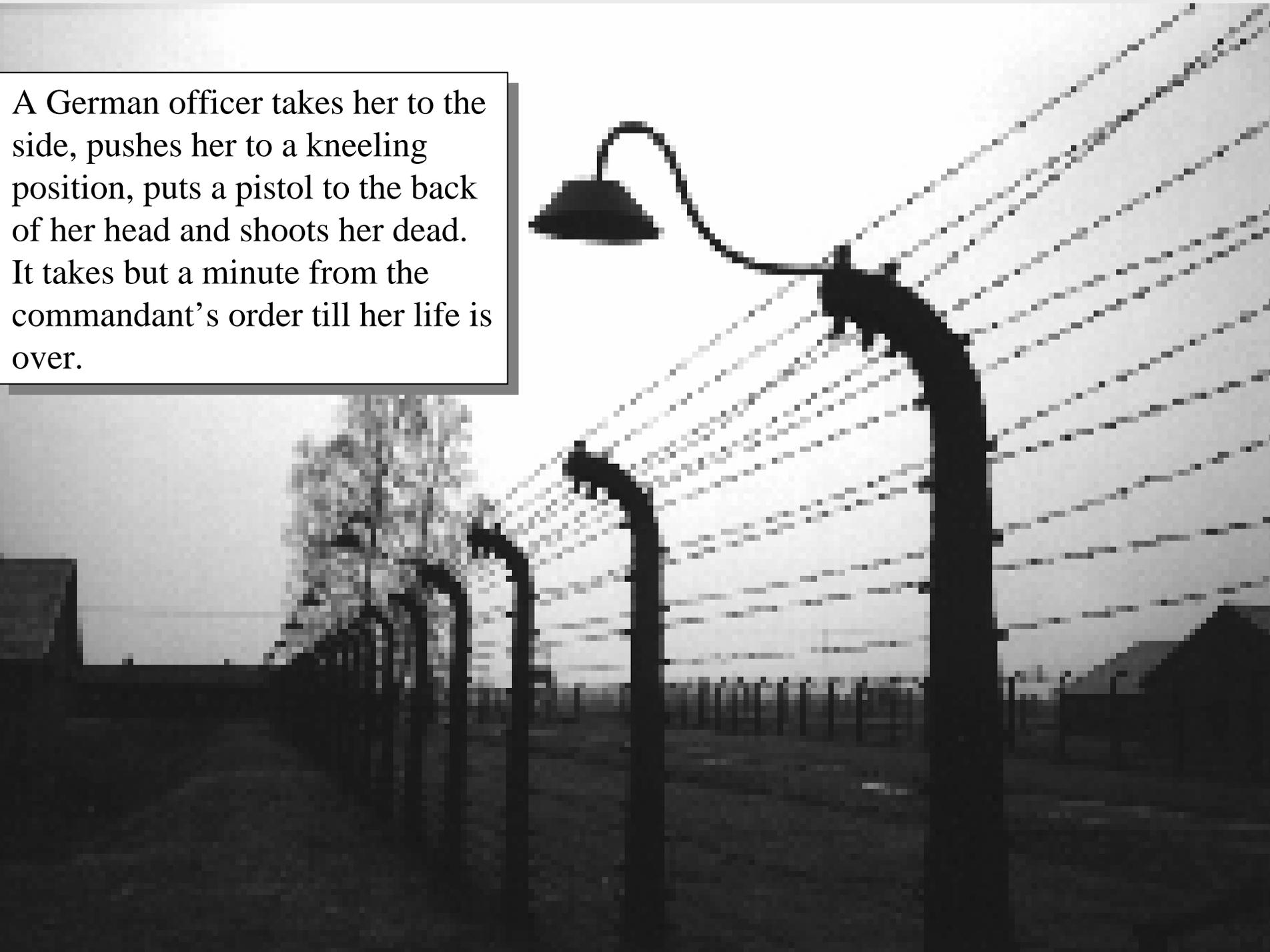
Now, let's discuss the movie *Schiendler's List*. The scene we're checking out takes place in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. The Nazis arrested Jews, just because of their religion, and put them in prison. A young Jewish woman is being forced to help assemble a building for the Nazis. She is a college-educated engineer



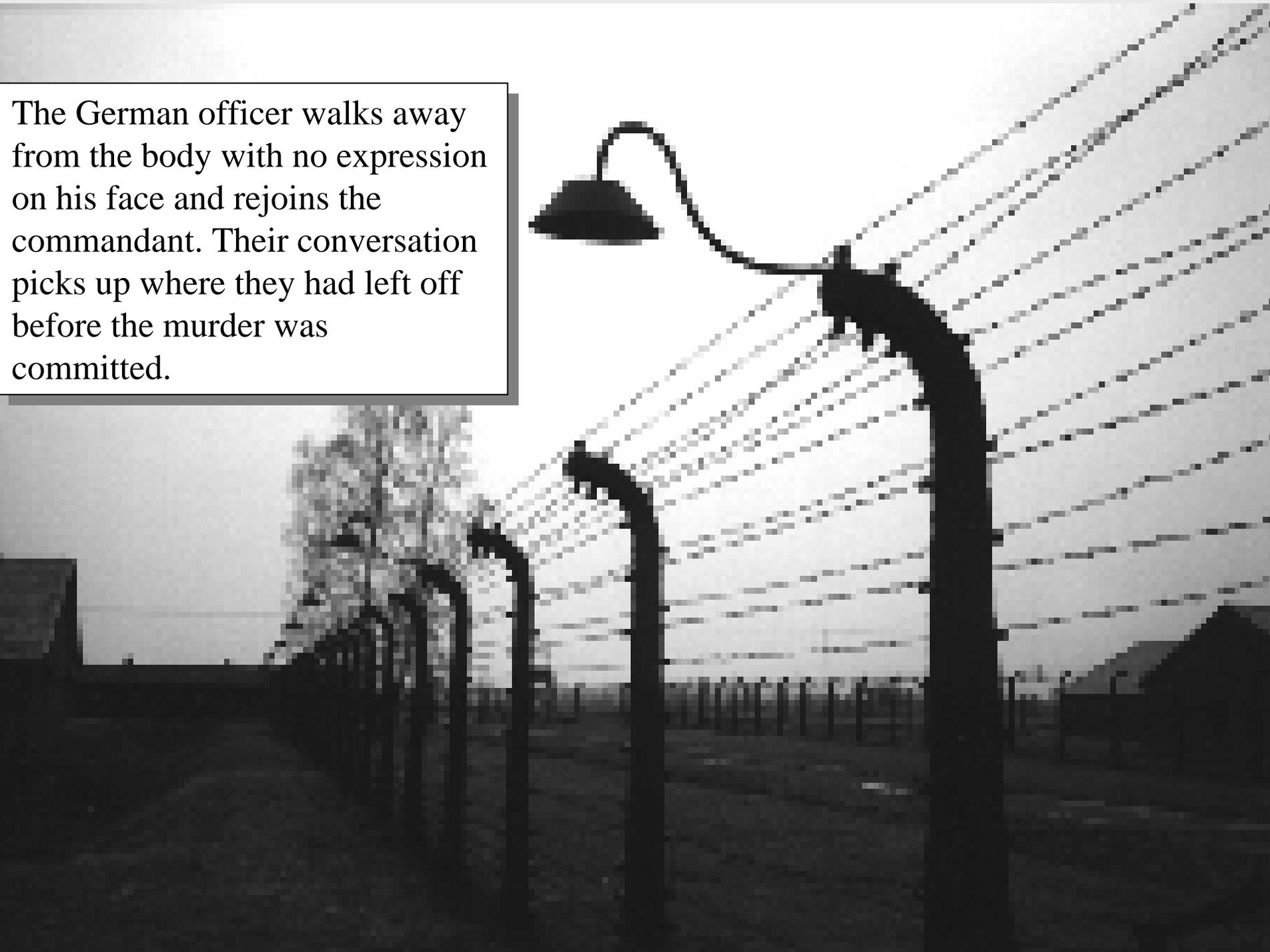
The young woman is telling the workers that they need to do something differently. The commandant says that they are not going to take orders from Jews and orders that she be shot on the spot.



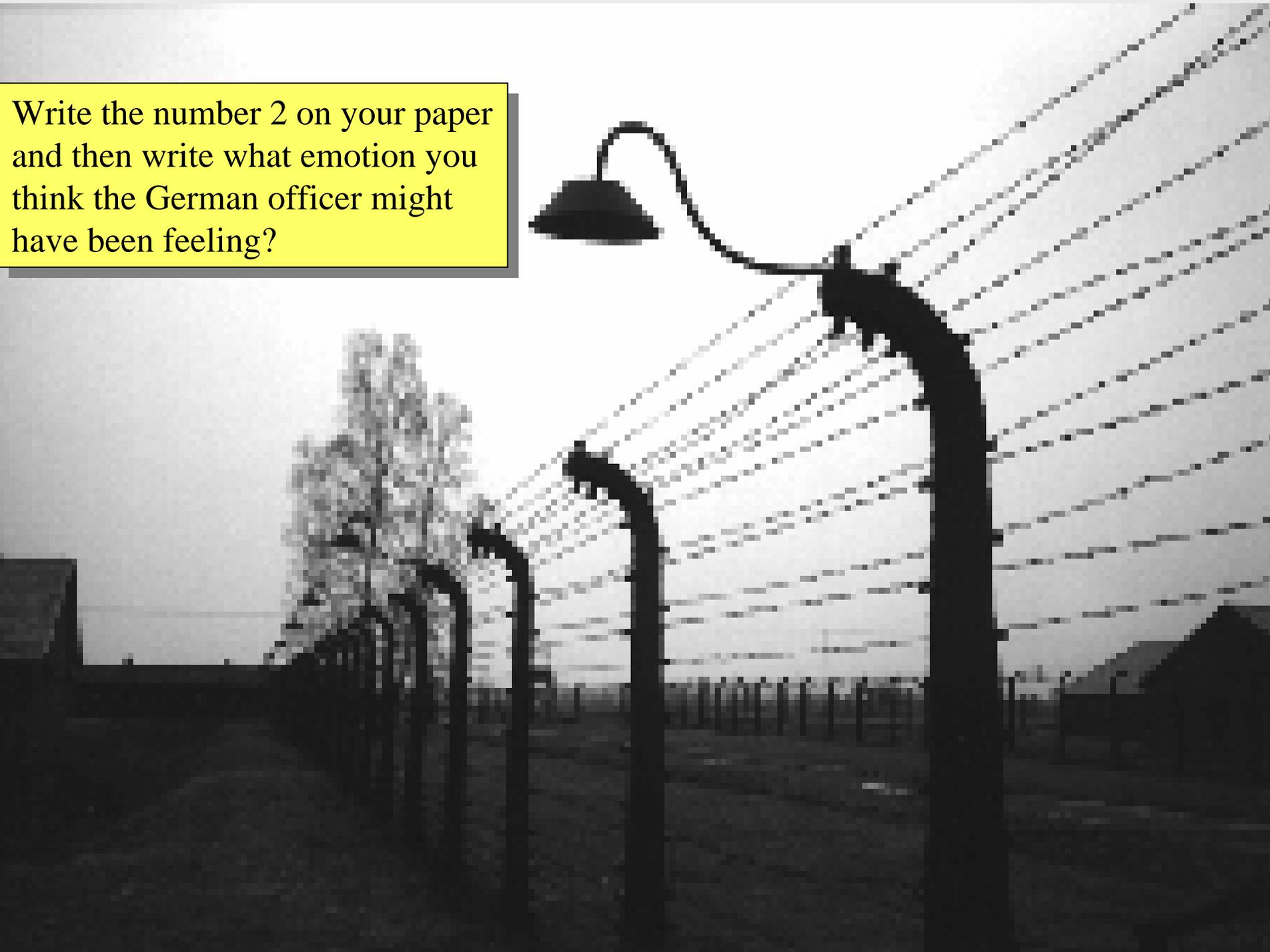
A German officer takes her to the side, pushes her to a kneeling position, puts a pistol to the back of her head and shoots her dead. It takes but a minute from the commandant's order till her life is over.



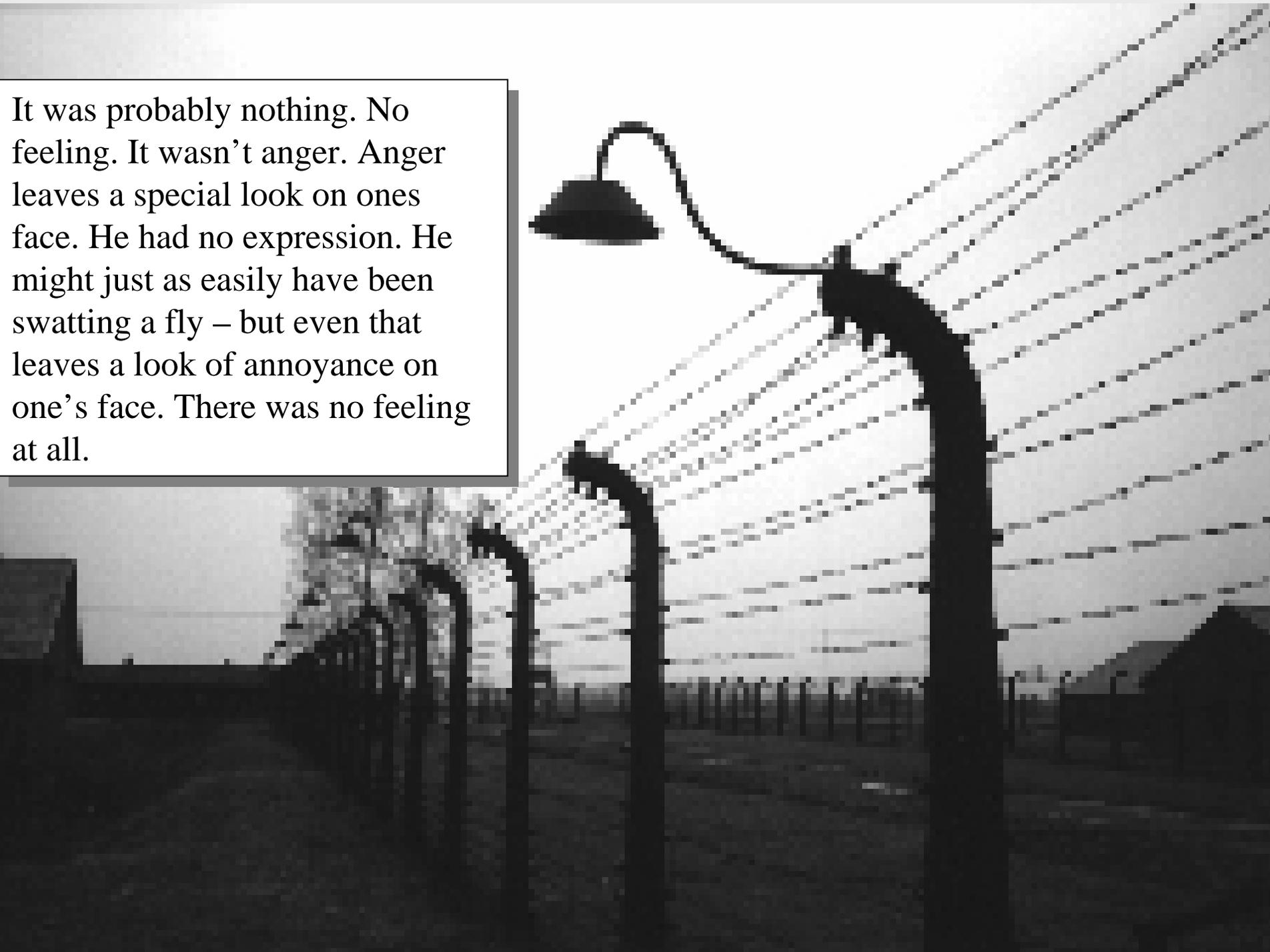
The German officer walks away from the body with no expression on his face and rejoins the commandant. Their conversation picks up where they had left off before the murder was committed.



Write the number 2 on your paper and then write what emotion you think the German officer might have been feeling?



It was probably nothing. No feeling. It wasn't anger. Anger leaves a special look on ones face. He had no expression. He might just as easily have been swatting a fly – but even that leaves a look of annoyance on one's face. There was no feeling at all.



The Hotel manager felt empathy. He could sense how other people felt and had feelings for them. In this case he felt sorry for Tina Turner and that sorrow stirred compassion in him and he wanted to help her.

EMPATHY (feeling for others)

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**
- 4.**
- 5.**
- 6.**
- 7.**
- 8.**
- 9.**
- 10.**

INDIFFERENCE (lack of empathy)

EMPATHY (feeling for others)

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**
- 4.**
- 5.**
- 6.**
- 7.**
- 8.**
- 9.**
- 10.**

INDIFFERENCE (lack of empathy)

The opposite of empathy is indifference –feeling nothing for others. The German officer could not feel the young woman's fear and pain - nor the tragedy of a life cut short. The violence meant nothing to him

Take out another piece of paper and make a chart like this. Then think about where you might fall on this chart and circle the number.

EMPATHY (feeling for others)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

INDIFFERENCE (lack of empathy)



Now for something a little different. Write the number 3 on your other paper and then answer these questions: Have you ever did hard work with your hands? Did you ever develop calluses? What are calluses?



When you do hard work, your hands get hurt some. Your body protects you from future pain by making your skin thicker. The thick skin is the callous and it lets you keep on doing the hard work without pain.

Now imagine what it would feel like to rub your hand on something soft – like a kitty and then on something rough – like a piece of sandpaper. The soft thing feels good and the sandpaper hurts.

Now imagine what it would feel like if you rubbed a piece of sandpaper wearing a thick pair of gloves. Like a callous, the glove would protect your hand. It wouldn't hurt.

Now imagine what it would feel like to stroke the cat wearing the thick gloves. While the thick glove protects you from feeling bad, it also keeps you from feeling good things as well.



Do you think the German officer was always so cold blooded? Do you think that long before the war he loved, laughed, cared for other people and had other people who truly cared for him? Before the war, do you think he might have been horrified if he had seen someone shot before his eyes? Write the number 4 on your piece of paper and then write your thoughts on this.



He probably was not always so cold blooded. At one time, he probably experienced all of the positive emotions we discussed in previous lessons and would have been horrified to have witnessed a cold-blooded murder, let alone commit one.



How does someone go from a decent person – like the manager at the hotel - to one who is so uncaring, so callous, so indifferent to someone else's suffering? Write then number 5 on your piece of paper and then your thoughts on this.



When he first did something that he thought was wrong, it was probably not something terrible, but he felt bad about hurting the other person. However, rather than allowing himself to feel bad, to feel remorse or be sorry, he somehow talked himself into thinking that under the circumstance what he did was ok. He told himself things like, "Jews aren't human." or, "I'm only following orders." Or, "If I didn't do it, someone else would have."

Just like the calluses on your hands, he added layers of beliefs that protected him from the pain and allowed him to continue doing what was wrong.

The thicker the layers, the easier it was to do worse and worse things. The callused heart not only protected him from bad feelings, however, but prevented him from feeling good emotions too. He lost the ability to feel pain and also to love, to laugh and to care for other people. Eventually, he didn't care about anything (good or bad) and nobody cared for him much either.

You'll remember from a few lessons back that what you think determines how you feel which directs how you act. People can tell themselves things that allow them to commit crimes and then convince themselves that it was unavoidable or OK for some reason. That makes them feel good – but also leads to a callused heart (hurting themselves and everyone around them).



1. They deserved it.
2. No one was really hurt that much anyway.
3. She's making too big a deal over this.
4. It's a tough world and I ain't any worse than anyone else.
5. It ain't my fault.
6. I was high.
7. I was just teaching her about sex.
8. They made me mad.
9. I didn't have a choice.
10. I really did them a favor.
11. If I hadn't done it, someone else would have.
12. They knew better than to do that to me.
13. It's a stupid law anyway.
14. Everyone else is doing it.
15. I didn't really want that to happen.
16. I was drunk.
17. They've got insurance, so no one was hurt.
18. Everyone is really crooked anyway.
19. I'm no worse than anyone else.
20. They screwed me, I screwed them back.
21. I don't want to think about it.
22. Screw everybody.
23. (Your idea)_____.
24. (Your idea)_____.

Pick the five excuses that you think have allowed the worst things to happen in the world. Write the number 6 on your paper and then write the five you picked.

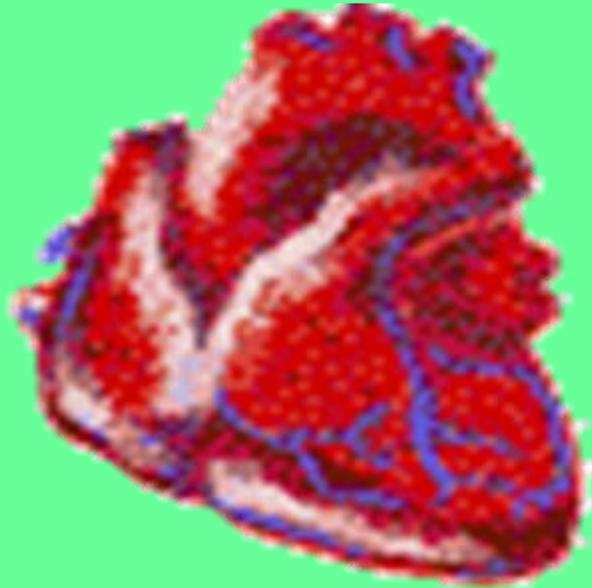
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22. Screw everybody.
23. (Your idea)_____.
24. (Your idea)_____.

Now write the excuses that you have used before on the left side of your other paper, the one with *empathy* on the top and *indifference* on the bottom.

Look at the “indifferent thoughts” that you wrote on the left side of your other paper, the one with *empathy* on the top and *indifference* on the bottom. Re-write those thoughts (on the right side of the paper) so that it makes you more sensitive to other people's feelings – that aren't excuses – that holds yourself accountable for what you do but also keep you from getting a callous heart.



Now write the number 7 on your other piece of paper and then write the advantages of not thinking callous thoughts.





**THE
END**