

BROOKLYN

'Nazi' daddy gets 3¹/₂ yrs. Photographed his baby holding rifle

By **NANCIE L. KATZ**
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

"You turn my stomach," a Brooklyn judge said yesterday as he ripped into a former yeshiva student who collected Nazi weapons and memorabilia before sentencing him to 3¹/₂ years in prison on weapons charges.

"This is revolting," Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Albert Tomei told Michael Kneitel, 40. Kneitel was convicted of criminal weapons possession, endangering the welfare of a child and menacing, resulting from his hoarding loaded Nazi guns and photographing his baby daughter in Nazi regalia — with a rifle in her hands.

"The defendant was despic-

able ... disgraceful," added Tomei, lashing out at Kneitel for 10 minutes.

Kneitel was convicted in June of hoarding a stash of 14 weapons dating from the Nazi era and other charges after being arrested in Gateway National Recreation Area in late February 2001 by an off-duty cop who saw him shooting at a picture of his mother-in-law tacked to a tree.

'5,000 rounds'

But prosecutor Paul D'Emilia urged Tomei not to accept excuses for Kneitel's stash of loaded weapons.

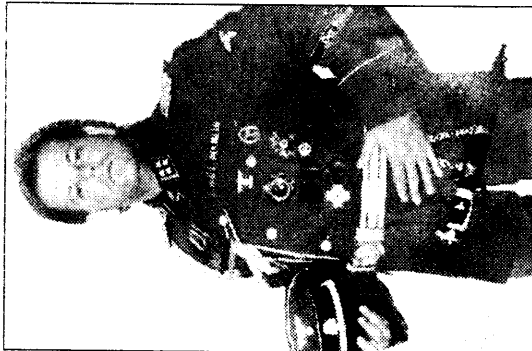
"This wasn't a guy who absent-mindedly was caught with a gun under a car seat. This was a

guy with an arsenal ... with every gun loaded," he said. "What gun collector has 5,000 rounds of ammunition?"

In a 45-minute plea to the court that was cut off by the judge, Kneitel blamed what he called ignorant law enforcement officials for his downfall, saying, "This is a last-ditch effort to convince you I'm not a maniac or a Nazi."

Kneitel faced up to 15 years in jail, but Tomei — despite his disgust — ordered him to serve a minimum of 3¹/₂ years.

"He is disappointed, but relieved he didn't get the maximum," said defense attorney Jeff Schwartz, who argued that Kneitel had no history of violence.



Undated photo of Michael Kneitel, who collected Nazi memorabilia, in Nazi uniform.