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SCHINDLER

Richard Horowitz

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SLATE 123 TAKE/ONE

INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD HOROWITZ.

JON: Let's start at a different point, maybe that'll make it easier for you, 'cause you said the thing that you remember was the end of the war, tell me about what you remember from that?

RICHARD HOROWITZ: Well I remember as a matter of fact very well the film clips that you were so interested in, that involves the moment in which er Auschwitz was liberated by er by a platoon of the Red Army, and they um.. gather us all together, and er I recollect one moment er then sitting us up around a what do you call it - ~~hanging~~ ^{UP - SITTING} ~~hanging~~ ^{HANGING}, what do you call the er contraption.. gallows... well they you know, well they sat us up around the gallow, just to use it as a wonderful background, you know, reference, and um..asked us questions. And er later on you know, we walk through the narrow path between barbed wires, and I remember this thing very well, and then when I found out that this piece of film existed, and I haven't seen that piece until, God, fifteen, twenty years later, it sort of er hit me very strong, so um this was the moment, and then you know um then when I was taken to an orphanage in-in Cracow which I remember quite clearly, so these are really last few you know, um..

JON: Let's come back to the liberation of Auschwitz again, and if you can tell me.. I mean that was fine what you were saying, let's try and do it again and what I'll I'll probably do is ask you the same question and if you could say - you were six years old I think in Auschwitz...

SLATE 123 TAKE/ONE(CONTD)

RICHARD HOROWITZ: No I was five years old...
I was born in '39... so...

JON: So if you could perhaps say I was
five years old when Auschwitz was liberated,
and I remember very well what happened...
and don't mention the film bits, but tell us
about the filming.. rather that the film that
I'm interested in... 'cause what I'll probably
do is use your voice underneath...

RICHARD HOROWITZ: Well I was .. I was about
five years old when um er Auschwitz was
liberated, sorry...

CUT

SLATE 124 TAKE/ONE

JON: Richard I'm going to ask you again what you remembered of that, and as I say if you can start off by saying 'I was five years old'....

RICHARD: I was just about five years old when I was liberated in Auschwitz by the Red Army, and I remember quite vividly a group — ^A ~~of~~ small platoon of soldiers who round us up — whatever children were left, and I was one of — probably the youngest, in front of the gallows to use it as a picturesque reference material, ~~and~~ then er later on we walked through a narrow path between barbed wires, and there was a group of children and elderly people who ~~had~~ happened to be there at the time, and then ~~UHM-~~ afterwards not knowing where my family was, er there was nobody around at the time, my mother and my sister ~~were~~ ^{WAS} in another camp, and my father was made to work, too, at ^{MATTHAUSEN} ~~(NAME)~~. And I was taken to an orphanage in Cracow, and ...I can't talk I'm sorry. **LEMOOTIONALJ**

JON: You were discovered in the orphanage, weren't they, you were actually reconciled with your parents weren't you?

RICHARD: Well, no, what happened, what happened first was that I was...

JON AND RICHARD SPEAK.

CUT

SLATE 125 TAKE/ONE

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JON: Let's start with, I suppose, what really is a more cheerful one, which is the story of how you came to be reunited with your parents?

OKAY.

RICHARD: Um, after liberation I was taken to an orphanage in Cracow, because nobody knew the whereabouts of my parents. And after a few weeks there, er some friends of my family learned that I was there, and er they came over and they er took me to their home. This was about, I would say, maybe February '45, and er about a few weeks later, ^{ER} my mother and my sister came back, liberated, in another camp, and somebody told them that I was at the orphanage. ^{SO} of course, you know, my mother couldn't ^{BELIEVE} you know, she came over, we were reunited. ^{AND} we still didn't hear from my father. ^{ER}, days later my mother met a mutual friend er who er testified that he had seen my father dead, you know, in the camp, ^{AND} er we were just about to give up any hope, although my mother always, you know, liked to believe in miracles, and er sure enough in May '45, my father reappeared with a group of er people who um returned back from ^{MATTHAUSEN} ~~(NAME)~~ which, as you know, was liberated by the American army. ^{SO} - yeah there was a miracle, then you know we all, you know, move in together into an apartment ^{WITH} some friends...

JON: I had heard that your mother found out about.. your mother was in ^{BRINWITZ} ~~(NAME)~~ of course, with Schindler, so ^{SHE} ~~WE~~ only got liberated in May, so she must have come back to Cracow in May/June.

SAY - I WOULD -

RICHARD: I would^{er}-I'm er pretty sure that my father was liberated in May, so she must have been liberated earlier, whether it was a question of weeks or whatever, I'm not certain.

JON: Yeah, she-she was liberated right at the end of the war in fact, and your father likewise...

RICHARD: Yeah, except that as I said, you know my father... yes as I recall very well, because I was born in May, and always you know within the family, joke^d about the fact that he was liberated you know...

JON: ^dheard that the film played some part in your mother discovering that you were alive? **IS THAT NOT TRUE?**

RICHARD: I'm sorry...

JON: I heard that the film played some part in your mother discovering that you were alive, that she had seen the films, saw you in the films?

RICHARD: No, no, no. The story.. you're referring to the film er that er we're talking about at Auschwitz. ^{NO, NO, NO. THIS WAS -} she discovered the film much later, much later. She discovered it, I would say, maybe ten, twelve years ago...
No, no, no, she ^{SHE} just happened to see that film on television, and she recognised me, and er that's what happened, ^{SEE - SHE JUST HAPPENED} now. ^{NO -} No, she found out about me through some mutual friends, and she knew that I was ^{UHM} taken ^{ER} from the orphanage.

JON: Richard, ^{Do}~~so~~ you know from the stories your mother told you, about how you came to be in Auschwitz at all?

RICHARD: Well um.. I don't remember any details. All that I remember that er.. I was er under quite special circumstances in Auschwitz, that although they managed to ^{YOU KNOW} tattoo me, as ~~they did~~ with many others, I was in a group of er ^{SHALL WE SAY,} more privileged children in a sense that er there were some people, ^{UHM -} friends of my parents who managed to ^{ER} hide me when, you know, in peril. ^{ER} was to come, when executions were to be performed, or transfers or transport or whatever, ^{A ER} and I recall that, ^{ER} for a while I was put in the hospital, although I wasn't ill, and er I know that people tried to move me about and hide me, and somebody must have tipped them off.

JON: When you arrived in Auschwitz with your uncles and ^{YOUR} cousins, your mother and your aunts were about to leave?

RICHARD: Right..

JON: What were you told about that experience?

RICHARD: Oh, that, you know, ^{THAT-ER-} ~~you know~~ through-^{ER-}
^{TOTAL -} a totally miraculous circumstances, ^{NY -ER-} my mother, my aunt, happened to see us from a wagon, a train, er and er.. to their absolute great ^{GREAT -} disbelief, er ^{WE} ~~they~~ managed to ^{YOU KNOW} exchange sides and few words, I-er.. vaguely remember the situation, and I've been told about it, you know, er time after time, in the past, ^{UHM -} But it was a pretty incredible er coincidence, to be at the same place at the moment, and er I do recall being with my cousin, I do recall being with my uncle. We have ~~tattoo~~ numbers that follow

RICHARD: each other. I even recall an instance with a boy of my age at the time, who er was screaming so much when he was tattooed that they had to cross out his tattoo because the man who was putting it on made an error, so he's probably the only one with two tattoo's on his arm. I guess he'll make Guinness book of records!

CUT

JON: Richard, ^{IF} ~~were~~ you.. well, you know
what I'm going to ask you, ^{WHETHER} ~~do~~ you have any
recollection of the camp at ^{SCHINDLER} ~~(NAME)~~ Perhaps
if you start off by saying I was only five
years.'... [RICHARD SPEAKS] ^{WAIT UNTIL}
^{I'VE FINISHED} ETC.

RICHARD: I was er less, ^{LESS} than five, and I
have a recollection in my mind of er of a
good German, I assume it was ^{IT WAS} Schindler, who
would ^{ER} bring every so often bits of chocolate
that er was.. of course at the time totally
unheard of and er.. the other thing that I
assume may have some ^{UHM} connection with that period
was my ^{ER} incredible love for potatoes... ^[CHUCKLES] You'll
probably be surprised why.. when after the war
I could be bribed with potatoes ^{OR OTHER THING,} ~~and~~ you know
other sweets, because it was such a desirable
vegetable at the time, and ^{UHM} something that ^{ER} you
know one would be ready to die for and er it
was .. I assume, my ^{MY} main diet. ~~And~~ it stayed
with me as er something that even now I'm
terribly fond of.

YOU KNOW,

JON: Again, this may be difficult, because
you may not have any recollection at all, but
I wondered if you have any kind of feeling about
the contrasts between the time in Schindler's
Camp with the good German and the chocolates
and what happened afterwards?

RICHARD: Well, as I said, you know, we're really
talking about ^{ER} the last few months of the war,
and er whatever good er Schindler had done, you
know, for my family, um.. once he disappeared,
er.. I assumed he was picked up by other er
whether.. they were family friends. ^{OR}
(INTERRUPTION)....

PLANE O/HEAD

RICHARD, WE'LL HAVE TO GO AGAIN, I'M AFRAID.

JON: If you have.. and I understand if you don't, any recollection of the difference between your memory of the place where the good German and the chocolates and what happened after to you then, when you left his camp.

RICHARD: Well, as I was mentioning, we were ^{THAT, YOU KNOW} talking about the last ^{FEW} months of the war, and ^{ER} once Schindler was gone, I was in a fortunate situation that there were others, whether ^{THEY WERE} ^{ER} my-^{ER} family friends, I assumed they were family friends because er.. er nobody from my most immediate family was around, ^{ER} I sensed some kind of supervision, that, you know, somebody was really er in charge of my destiny, and ^{ALTHOUGH} ~~all that~~ I remember ^{YOU KNOW} ~~was~~ a lot of tense and fearful moments ^{ER} ~~ER-~~ The reality of living in a concentration camp for me was ^{ER - WAS I MEAN} a norm, ^{HAD} ~~and~~ I absolutely no other point of reference, so er whatever horrors you know I faced, were er perfectly normal, so er - for me to say that I could distinguish at that age difference between er somebody, you know, er holding me, or somebody er ^{ER} helping me in any way, or moments in which I would be totally alone ^{VERY DIFFICULT.} would be very very difficult, ^{ER} ~~But~~ er no question, that I've a sense right now ^{ER} recalling the whole experience that er without somebody's supervision, and somebody's help, you know, um.. I would have not made it, and er most of my family members would have not made it.

JON: You were just about the youngest person who owes at least part of their survival through the war to Oscar Schindler, ^W what do you think about that, and perhaps if you started by saying "I was the youngest person...."

YEAH.

RICHARD: Well I was um.. I was the youngest person, or one of the youngest person, who ^{ER-ER} owes his life to, you know, to er Schindlers manoeuvres, I ~~er~~ you know ^{ER} looking at it ^{YOU KNOW} in perspective and ^{AND} er um.. sort of recollecting it as an adult, er there's no question that er I feel certain homage to, you know ^{TO-TO} the man, whoever he was, and however he did it, I mean who cares you know.. life is really what.. what counts, ^{AND} er ^{ER} I'm terribly fascinated to learn that much new things, and er ^{AND} also by er talking to people about it I er.. certain things beginning ^{ER- BEGINNING TO} to make sense, ^{AND} er I never really er sat down to recollect my experience in any chronological sense, and er with any understanding, you know, why and how I was moved from place to place, **I**t was just that when I'm asked you know 'how did you survive', I have better ideas, you know, what happened, what directed my destiny, that it was not just a matter of pure fluke and just pure coincidence, that there were some people who were working at it, so um er..

JON: Does it feel strange, too, when you think about it now as an adult, to think that er the orphan who walked through the barbed wire of Auschwitz for the Russians, had been saved I suppose because ^{OF} a German Nazi?

RICHARD: ^{IT'S} It's a funny thought, it's ^{A VERY} a very amusing thought, ^{But-er-look} I believe there are people, there are people. ^{I MEAN -} what can I say.. it's er definitely quite a profound thought.

JON: Perhaps you could tell me again about your recollection of the day of liberation and the Russians. ^{Again,} by starting, by saying 'I remember'.....

OHM
RICHARD: ^ I remember the ^{THE} time in Auschwitz
when ^{WHEN} the Russians came. I was about er five -
less than five, and er they rounded up a
group of children who were around, and they
er sat us in front of a gallow, to use it
as er background. And er they ask us questions,
and some of them brought us ^{ER} sweets, candies
and whatever was available. And er later on
they made us walk ^{WALK} in between barbed wires er
and er I don't ^{ER} recall any particular incident
in which, you know, I would ^{ER} be able to ^{ER} focus
on a particular soldier, or a particular er
you know situation, but I do recall that
moment very vividly, And later on they er
they put us into a military trucks and they
drove us ^{DROVE US TO} off to ^{ER} Cracow to an orphanage that
was formed to er er.. take care of er surviving
children without any er families.

CUT