

Imperial War Museum  
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SCHINDLER

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95 TAKE 1

~~Q~~ **JON!** EDITH! You were telling me a little bit earlier how you came from Krakow, didn't you? Tell me a bit about what growing up in Krakow was like.

**EDITH!**-

~~WOMAN:~~ Growing up in Krakow was very nice, you know, Krakow was a beautiful city 'til the war. Then they took us to the ghetto, <sup>YA.</sup> ~~year?~~ That start now the bad dream, people living in ghetto, going out to work — which we start, you know, they used to take us for a day shovelling snow, working very hard, and then one day being in that employment office there er came over a man from Schindler's factory...

~~Q~~ **JON!**-

Can we stop you for a second. We'll talk a little bit about what life was like before you had to go to Schindler's factory.

~~WOMAN:~~ **EDITH!**

Oh before - you mean before the war?

~~Q~~ **JON!**-

No, what was life like living in the ghetto? Tell me about how it was.

~~WOMAN:~~ **EDITH!**-

Living in the ghetto was very hard...

~~Q~~ **JON!**-

Just one second. It's a little bit difficult. I said it's like a conversation but in fact it's a little different from a conversation, in as much as you must wait for me to finish.

TALKING TOGETHER

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~~WOMAN:~~ EDITH:-

Living in the ghetto was very hard because they concentrate a lot of people in a small place; so like 2/3 families which used to live separate, they concentrate in 2 - 3 rooms, or 2 rooms with a little kitchen and that was very hard for a lot of people, like er...and we couldn't even wash ourselves, we couldn't do lots of things what we were used to. And that was - was very difficult, very difficult. But we knew that we have to, we must because there's not another way, so we had to. So I used to live with my mother, my baby, there was a sister with 2 children and 2 strange children which parents died, and there was a few people more which I even don't remember their names. But we were all living together, you see, It was hard.

~~WOMAN:~~ JON:-

You had to go out and do forced labour for the Germans, didn't you?

~~WOMAN:~~ EDITH:-

Yes.

~~WOMAN:~~ JON:-

Tell me a bit about the forced labour, what you had to do.

~~WOMAN:~~ EDITH:-

Like they used to grab us to clean up the streets, to - to clean up the snow in the winter, to go to some places to carry some heavy wood, or - it was very hard work. Very hard work. But we did it, because if we didn't they would beat us up, which they did anyway. So it was not easy in ghetto.

~~WOMAN:~~ JON:-

When you were in the ghetto do you remember seeing any round ups or people being sent away or anything like that?

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~~WOMAN~~: EDITH!- In the ghetto we used to see some people which they - they catch on the street, which they didn't have the - the paper that they can stay in ghetto, because to be in the ghetto you had to have ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ <sup>EIN KINKARD</sup> as they used to call it, like a paper that you can stay in ghetto, So they used to grab people and look for it, if somebody didn't have it they took away, and that was tragic because we didn't even know where they take them. So that I - that's what I saw, living in ghetto.

~~W~~ JON!- There was then the day when you went to the labour office to look for work. Tell me about that day from the beginning.

~~WOMAN~~: EDITH! That day I went in the morning and a few of my friends. We knew we have to go to work, so <sup>WE</sup> went there and <sup>WE WAS</sup> ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ staying around waiting, So came over Mr. ~~Bunker~~ <sup>BANKIER</sup>, who was the owner of the factory which Schindler took over, and he choosed a few of us. Like he choose the strong one...

~~W~~ JON Just start that again. ETC

~~WOMAN~~: EDITH!- So the morning I went to the labour office and we were waiting, who's going to take us to what kind of work. Came in a man from Schindler's factory. We did not <sup>KNOW</sup> who he is, his name, nothing. We know he was a Jew. And he choosed a few of us, the stronger and the younger. The older, he didn't take it, because it was hard work, so he choose the young girls and then he took us t here for the night shift, <sup>A</sup> And when we came to that factory, we saw a factory which made parts in, you know, a big oven that they used to burn out the pots there.

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@ JON

They made pots and pans there?

WOMAN: EDITH:

JA, JA  
~~Yeah, yeah~~

pots and pans.

And it was terribly hard work, because we were carrying in our - here - in our arms, we were carrying lots of pots to the oven, you know, it was very hard. But when we came in we did not know what we going to do. Then showed up Mr. Schindler and we got very scared, very much scared because, you see, tall, handsome guy, good looking in German uniform, coming towards us, we didn't know what - what is it. But he came, and he looked in, and we saw no smile on his face, but his eyes were smiling, you know, like he wanted to say something but he couldn't. But then he said, don't worry, don't be scared, he said, because if you work with me you will live through the war. Somehow I believed him. Somehow, I don't know why, but his eyes told me I can believe him. And I wanted to believe him. And that what's ~~carry~~ **CARRIED ME** the whole war, believing him. And he kept his word. He kept his word. He tried to help, not saying nothing, but we felt that - that he is somehow helping us, you know, you can feel if somebody helps you. So that was the time in ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ **ENAMEL** factory.

@ JON:

Tell me about what conditions were like in the enamel factory.

WOMAN: EDITH:

Conditions, like we had barracks. On one side were the girls, on the other side were the men. And we used to get our food - food, like, you know, soup and a piece of bread and some black coffee, that was our food. Conditions were not bad in ~~(NAME)~~ **ENAMEL** no. We still got water where

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~~WOMAN~~ **EDITH**: CONTD: important for us. So the conditions were not bad, no. And the factory, working there, we got a very bad foreman who made it hard for us, like he wanted to make hard for us the conditions, ~~And~~ some of us couldn't take him, you know, we could not. So - but we tried our best. We tried our best.

~~Q~~ **JON**! In the early days that you were working there, you used to go home every day. Now, I wonder if...

~~WOMAN~~ **EDITH**! In the early days of **EMALIA** ~~(NAME)~~ we used to go back to our ghetto. ~~And~~ then when ghetto closed up, it was the **JUDENRHOIM** ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ in German, saying...

~~Q~~ **JON**! Can I stop you a second because I think you may have overlapped with me. When I stop, maybe you can start again the story about, in the early days... Tell me about you used to go home from the factory every day.

~~WOMAN~~ **EDITH**! Yes, that was the beginning when we start to go from the ghetto to **EMALIA**, ~~(NAME)~~ **S**o we used to go every day in the morning and come back in the night, day shift. Or night and come back in the morning to ghetto. So we used to do that for a few months.

~~Q~~ **JON**! Tell me what conditions were like inside the factory.

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~~WOMAN:~~ EDITH:- Inside the factory was  
er conditions were - what can I tell you about  
conditions? They were not good conditions, no.  
It was very hard. We used to walk without  
shoes, and it was a wooden floor and every  
minute we got splinters in our feet. That was  
terrible. Conditions were not good, no.  
But Schindler tried - he tried his best to  
help a little. But er what he did was a little  
good, and then he couldn't help it too much -  
because the foreman there, he was the whole  
boss in the factory. So...

CUT

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JON: Edith, I wanted to ask you the question about the time when you went to Schindler to ask for permission to come early. Tell me that story from the beginning?

EDITH: **JA.** ~~Year~~, we were working that time.. day time, **S**omehow came news, somebody broke news, that my brother-in-law got the accident, he fell off a truck, and he's dying in the hospital, in the ghetto, and he wanted to see me before he die. **S**o I went to Schindler and I ask him permission if I can go back to ghetto to see my brother-in-law, **H**e didn't say a word, but when I went back to the place, everybody was packing up, and ~~then~~ I saw that everybody was going back to the ghetto, so I knew that Schindler gave the order ~~that~~ because of me they should come back to the ghetto, I should see my brother-in-law, **A**nd ~~then~~ **WHEN** I came to the ghetto maybe a ten minutes later, he died, **S**o I was happy, and not happy, that I was there seeing him before he died, which thankful, which very much thankful I am -I was to Schindler. That was an unusual thing for a German boss to do that. **A**nd I still remember that. That was one of ~~the~~ **HIS** things, and other things what he did good for us.

JON : Do you remember any other acts of kindness in the factory?

EDITH: I remember from **BRINNLITZ** ~~(S. NAME)~~ when our transport came from Auschwitz, to **BRINNLITZ.** ~~(S. NAME)~~ **A** He came out in person to greet us, and he saw us, with shaved off hair and we looked horrible, so he came over and he looked at us, and he says 'God, what they did to you, they he said, **A**nd he looked at us, and I knew that he was sorry for us, because we looked



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SLATE 96 TAKE/ONE(CONTD)

EDITH: terrible. You can imagine without hair, girls looking like boys shaved off. It was another kindness from him, another kindness. He helped us a lot, and when came our holiday, like, you know, Jewish (Yom ~~Kippur~~ <sup>KIPPAUR</sup>) which we fast for twenty-four hours, he knew that we were religious girls, we were fasting, we didn't touch the food, being very hungry we didn't touch the food. So in the evening when it was past that fast, he made for us the most delicious soup with a lot of meat and bread, like he wanted to say, you got so much hunger, so now you eat. And that was, I think, a most, most beautiful thing he did. And I think his wife helped him with that, because she was a very kind, a very fine woman....

JON: If I go back a little bit <sup>now</sup> down from ~~BRINWITZ~~ <sup>BRINWITZ</sup> and we go back to ~~EMALIA~~ <sup>EMALIA</sup>, not everybody got onto the list did they? Now I would like you to tell me about <sup>how</sup> your husband, didn't get on to the list, and what happened to him?

EDITH: I tell you what happened, it was er .. like they used to call us the old Emalia and the new Emalia. ~~and~~ We the eight girls, we were the old Emalia, the first girls. <sup>So</sup> my husband couldn't come down with me, he was not on that list. ~~And~~ I wanted him very much down, because I knew when he will stay up in the Plashow, he will die there, because it was very bad there, very bad. <sup>So</sup> I, again I ask Schindler, and I told him the story, ~~and~~ <sup>that</sup> this is the only friend ~~that's~~ <sup>who's</sup> left, and I wanted him to come down. <sup>So</sup> he said 'we will see what ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> can do'. ~~And~~ he did. ~~He~~ went to that camp, to Plashow, and not showing that he takes only one person, because that would

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SLATE 96 TAKE/ONE (CONTD)

EDITH: one person, so he took a group, that he needs the people to work in his factory, ~~And~~ he brought my husband, who was my friend at that time, he brought him down to our camp, ~~And~~ that really was again a beautiful thing, so you see he did a lot of good.

JON: Your husband wasn't able to come to ~~(B... NAME)~~ <sup>BRINWITZ</sup> with you, Tell me about the circumstances, why you got separated?

EDITH: Why he was on the list, so was another... (INTERRUPTION) **JON SPEAKS.**

EDITH: **So** - My husband was on the list, ~~So~~ other men, husbands, boyfriends, but somehow, that list was made over and Mr. ~~Banker~~ <sup>BANKIER</sup> put on that list people... (INTERRUPTION) **JON SPEAKS**

JON: Can I stop you Edith, the difficulty is that Mr. ~~Banker~~ <sup>BANKIER</sup> isn't alive any more to sue us... but there are people who might feel that we can't prove that Mr. ~~Banker~~ <sup>BANKIER</sup> was the man who changed it, so it's better to say...

EDITH: We can't prove it, but people know about it.... (INTERRUPTION).

JON: Let's start from the beginning and tell me how you and your husband came to be separated again...

EDITH: **JA,** ~~But~~ <sup>So</sup> when they made out the list, my husband was on the list, **Somehow** the list was changed, and we did not know nothing about it, **When** we did found out, when

EDITH: we came from Auschwitz...  
to ~~(NAME)~~ **BRINNLITZ** and we were looking, everyone was  
looking for their husbands, for their  
boyfriends, I was looking for my husband, and  
I did not find him, **So** they told me that the  
names were changed on the list, and they sent  
him to ~~(NAME)~~ **MATTHAUSEN**...

JON: Were many people sent from  
~~(NAME)~~ **MATTHAUSEN FROM EMALIA?**  
~~(NAME)~~ **EMALIA?**

EDITH: There was many people, I  
can't tell you how many, but were many people,  
that was supposed to come with us together, **They**  
did not.

JON: Was this Schindler's fault?

EDITH: I don't know, I think so  
that not Schindler's fault, ~~they did not~~...  
no, Schindler wouldn't do that...

JON: Do you think it was  
Schindler's fault that er.. many of the people  
didn't get from ~~(NAME)~~ **EMALIA** to ~~(NAME)~~ **BRINNLITZ?**

EDITH: No, it was not Schindler's  
fault. Schindler wouldn't do that, to separate  
husbands from wives, ~~he~~ **he** tried to bring the  
husbands to the wives, and the boyfriends to  
the girlfriends, I don't think so, it was  
Schindler's fault, no.

JON: Schindler was a German,  
tell me about the first time you ever saw  
him?

EDITH: I got scared of him...  
(INTERRUPTION).... The first time I saw  
Schindler was that night when ~~I~~ **WE** came to work

SLATE 96 TAKE/ONE(CONTD)

EDITH: we was scared of every German, we was scared, Somehow he made the impression on me.. I don't know, as I told you, his eyes, they were good eyes, and I liked him, I was not scared anymore, After he said that to us about working with him, we would live through the war. Somehow I trusted him and I wasn't wrong.

JON: Did you trust him when you arrived at the gates of Auschwitz?

EDITH: I didn't know what to think. I did not know what to think. I thought it was a mistake because we knew we was supposed to go some other place, and we found ourselves in Auschwitz, so I thought this is the end of us, And I was thinking, 'where is Schindler, where is Oscar who's supposed to save us, and sitting in that big hall which was connected with the gas chamber, I really was praying to God Schindler should help, not so much that God should help, but Schindler should help, because I knew he promised, And he helped. We got news, somebody came into the window, he was yelling to us that Schindler came, and Schindler took us out from Auschwitz, He helped us, so it was like a miracle, So I wasn't wrong, believing in him.

CUT

JON: Edith, what did you think when you arrived at the gates of Auschwitz?

EDITH: It was night when we arrived. The first thing that we saw is the smoke coming out from the chimneys, and we already were prepared, we knew what it is. What I felt, how can I explain you, I was scared, I was terribly scared. And we knew that they're going to finish us here. Somehow we were afraid that they're going to finish us here. We didn't know what they're going to do to us, and it was <sup>YOU KNOW</sup> hunger, dark, so when we came there, they put us up in that hall, you know. And then, we, some people from the police there, they started to walk around, and they started to talk to us, you know. They tell us if you have something, you'd better give away because you know where you <sup>ARE</sup> ~~were~~ going, ~~because~~ they were preparing us for gas chamber. So we started to pray, and we knew we are going. That was the time I was really praying Schindler should show up. Schindler should help us. So a lot of us started to pray, <sup>REALLY</sup> ~~to~~ pray to God, ~~to~~ pray to Schindler. And we were sitting there a whole night. And like in the morning, when the sun came out, we got the news that Schindler is in Auschwitz, and then they called us out, the four hundred women...

JON: But you were in Auschwitz.. for three weeks altogether...

EDITH: Later on when we came out from that hall, we had to look at our girls.. if out of the four hundred girls, Schindler's girls, because a lot of people wanted to come to our group, because they knew that Schindler is a saviour, they heard about him...(INTERRUPT)

SLATE 97 TAKE/ONE (CONTD)

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JON: When you were in Auschwitz, what happened to the Schindler women?

EDITH: We were staying later coming out from that hall, we were three weeks in Auschwitz, first of all we went to shower, then they shaved our hair off, they changed our clothes, and they put us in the barracks. And we were there like in a quarantine, that's how you say in English 'quarantine', three weeks. During the three weeks we used to go every morning to work, like building barracks again, carrying very heavy wood, we worked very hard for three weeks. After the three weeks, came our order, we should all four hundred girls, come to the ~~uphill place~~ <sup>APPELPLATZ</sup> and they will look at everyone if it belongs to Schindler's group. So we came there and there was four hundred and one; one was a little girl 'Eva' if you heard about her, and two of us were supposed to stay, one on one side, and the other on the other side, and they were counting us. <sup>ASKING</sup> is this Schindler's, is this Schindlers, is this Schindlers? And we have to recognise if they are our women, because a lot of women from Auschwitz wanted to come to us, to go to Schindler, and we couldn't, we couldn't take them with us, because there was only a list for the four hundred and one. So that was our women; four hundred and one.

JON: What was being a Schindler women in Auschwitz, what did that mean?

EDITH: For us it was like prestigious, for us, our feeling was because we knew that we belonged to somebody, and he...

JON: If you start that sentence

SLATE 97 TAKE/ONE(CONTD)

JON: What was being a Schindler woman in Auschwitz, what did it mean?

EDITH: It meant that we believed that Schindler somehow will again take us out from Auschwitz, We believed in that, Maybe not everyone, but as I told you I lived with that feeling that he will help, and that kept me going. I believed in that, and then came the order, and he really called for us, and then when was ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ <sup>THAT ON THE APPELPLATZ -</sup> they took only Schindler women, four hundred women.

JON: Were there moments during the three weeks you were in Auschwitz, or even when you arrived at Auschwitz, that you believed that your faith in Schindler would not help you?

EDITH: I tell you the truth, a very bad moment in ~~our sheets~~ <sup>AUSCHWITZ</sup>, very bad moment.. sometimes.. sometimes I was doubting, but then it went away, I said 'let's have patience, let's wait what's gonna be, let's hold on, And that's what pushed me through the three weeks, I was holding on, sometimes physically I couldn't, but I had to believe that something will come. Maybe the belief what kept me going, And that's what happened.

JON: A belief in Schindler?

EDITH: I believe now that if he hear there, he will always help me, he went from there <sup>FROM</sup> to upstairs(LAUGH)

JON: When you were in ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>BRINNLITZ</sup> what were conditions like at ~~(NAME)~~...

<sup>BRINNLITZ</sup>

EDITH: In ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>BRINNWITZ</sup> ~~it~~ was not bad. No, ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>BRINNWITZ</sup> he gave us a lot of freedom, that means we had to go to work, we worked very hard, but we knew we are in ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>BRINNWITZ</sup>. <sup>A</sup> Schindler is there, and he used to show up, he made for us showers, and the food wasn't too bad, food was good, Christmas time we used to get another bread, and holidays we used to get better, a little bit soup, and we knew that he helped us. <sup>A</sup> And then when the war start to get to the end, he went and he took over a whole warehouse, <sup>[CHUCKLES]</sup> with silks and materials and thread, and all kinds of things. <sup>A</sup> And he gave everyone of us like er.. you know like when somebody gets married, the mother gives her materials for this, materials for that, and he gave everyone of us...

JON: You survived the war, tell me very quickly how you survived the war?

EDITH: How do I survive the war, I tell you. Maybe I was strong, I was healthy, I was young, not a spring chicken, but I was young, and I worked very hard, and I knew.. I knew that I have to work. <sup>I</sup> If I will not work, maybe I will not survive.

JON: If you had not known Oscar Schinder, would you have survived?

EDITH: It's possible, it's possible that I would survive working hard and avoiding punishments, and somehow, you know, try to avoid dangerous things, so maybe, maybe I can say, I was not in another camp, my whole war was with Schindler.

JON: Why did you think Oscar did this?



EDITH: The truth to tell you, I am not sure, or he was so smart, he knew .. he knew that something must happen <sup>-THE END</sup> and will come. And it's not going to be good for Germany, because he knew what's coming, and who was in the war, he knew America and Russia and two strong countries were against Germany, Maybe that's what er he was thinking, and he wanted to help us too, he wanted to help, he was good, he was a good man.

JON: I'm going to ask that in a slightly different way, and maybe you can start it by suggesting that I don't know why Oscar Schindler saved us... I'm going to ask it...

EDITH: Shall I tell the same...

JON: But perhaps you can say in the beginning, I don't know why Oscar Schindler saved me or the other people...

EDITH: Yes.. I <sup>-I-</sup> really don't know why at that time, because I don't know what was going on in his head, what he knows, ~~we~~ we didn't know nothing, he knew everything what's going on, Maybe he knew that Russia is close, America is close, and when the end will come, he as a German, if he saved so many lives, he will be saved too.

CUT

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SLATE 98 TAKE/ONE

JON: Edith, tell me how were you saved?

EDITH: I was saved by a German Nazi, Oscar Schindler. That's how I was saved.

JON: Let's try it again, because what would be nice, is if you said exactly that, and then also added the fact that he saved eleven hundred other people...ETC. ETC.

EDITH, HOW DID YOU SURVIVE THE WAR - HOW WERE YOU SAVED?

EDITH: I was saved by Oscar Schindler a German Nazi, who saved also eleven hundred Jews. He was saved close to twelve hundred I think was.. JA -

JON: Looking back at it now, do you think it's remarkable that you were saved by a Nazi?

EDITH: It is remarkable, because we never expected, and it is remarkable, because you don't have too many, Nazi's, Germans, who saved twelve hundred Jewish people. And a lot of times he saved us from a lot of bad things, That's why I'm always going to be thankful, and always think about him, And I tell it everyone, that that was really a German Nazi, Oscar Schindler.

JON: He saved you from Auschwitz, didn't he?

EDITH: He saved me from Auschwitz, He saved me also from when I was working with the pots and pans, we were supposed to go to Stuttgart, it was an order to send us to Stuttgart, And in Stuttgart, the women were put on pieces of wood or something, they called it 'boats', and they were made to drown the people. We were

EDITH:                   supposed to go there to  
death, but he pulled back that order, he kept  
us back. One day we should not go to Stuttgart,  
and next day he sended us to Plashow.. and he  
saved our lives that time.

CUT

JON: Edith, some people say that Oscar Schindler saved all the Jews from ~~EMALIA AND BRINNITZ~~ <sup>(NOT CLEAR)</sup> from ~~(B NAME)~~ just for the money, What do you say to that?

EDITH: I would say from my experience, from my knowledge, knowing Schindler, he did not do it for the money, because he spend a lot of money to save us, ~~He~~ spend a lot of money on food, he spend money to take us from Auschwitz out, he had to pay, <sup>THAT'S TRUE,</sup> we know.. and he was spending money for us, ~~He~~ couldn't do that for the money, because at the end of the war when he came to us in Germany, he did not have a penny. If he would make that for money, and put away some money, he would have money, but he did not have money. In 1945, at the end of the <sup>WAR</sup> ~~war~~, he was in Munich, we were living in ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>REGENSBURG</sup> in Germany, ~~He~~ came to us, to my wedding, he gave me away, he was like my father, ~~Then~~ we kept him going, we gave him money, we gave him a room, we helped him a lot, because we loved him. He did not do it for the money. ~~If~~ somebody will tell me that he did for money, I will argue very very hard, ~~No~~, I would never say he did that for money.

JON: When you got married, who gave you away, was it your father?

EDITH: I did not have my father, because my family died, they were killed. ~~So~~ Oscar Schindler took the place of my father, he gave me away, he got the speech on my wedding, and he was crying, he was very happy, he said 'here are my two children, whom I so happy to see, and they are getting married', ~~And~~ that was a very touching moment, very touching, because I had Schindler at my wedding.. that's how I felt.