

Imperial War Museum  
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SCHINDLER

Henry Rosner

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'SCHINDLER'

SLATE 14 TAKE 1

INTERVIEW HENRY ROSNER

JON BLAIR: Henry, going back to when  
you were in the camp at ~~(NAME)~~ PLASZOW

HENRY: Yeah.

JON: Did you used to play in  
prison clothes, or what?

HENRY: No, no, I got special  
permission to have a special luggage which opens.  
I got full dress, I got tuxedo, I got ~~STREET~~ suit.  
So whenever I played to the Commandant I use one of  
those three, never prisoners ~~GARB.~~ ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~  
And, ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ ... just called the  
police, and they told me ~~...~~ ROSNER - come down,  
that's it. Usually after killings, to clear his  
conscience ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ ... ~~- MOST OF THE TIME HE~~ call us, for  
not long, But parties we'd play for very long.

JON: What kind of man was the  
Commandant?

HENRY: He was er a man very ~~(NOT)~~ ~~CHANGEABLE~~  
~~CHARACTER - CHAMELEON IS THE RIGHT WORD?~~ ~~(NOT)~~  
~~(CLEAR)~~ ... unbalanced. I suspect he ~~was~~ ~~(NOT)~~  
~~USED SOME DOPE~~ ~~(CLEAR)~~ I suspect ~~so.~~ Anyway, he never knew what was,  
because some - sometimes he called me and he was pretty  
drunk. He wear the jacket just here - the belt with  
the gun, and here he carried another gun in his right  
pocket. Sometime without er expecting - ~~TALK~~ ~~stopped~~ to  
someone, he said, why don't you look at me? Boom.  
Why don't - ~~WHY~~ don't - ~~WHY YOU~~ - ~~do~~ look at me. ~~BOOM~~ So he  
got ~~THE~~ dog, this big doberman, called Rolph. The  
prisoner had to say, ~~HERE~~ Rolph - Mr Rolph. So once I  
come to him, he was drunk (NOT CLEAR) .... I come  
with my brother Leo, and he says, Rolph - bite him -  
get him - get him! And then (GROWLS) ... I felt

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SLATE 14 TAKE 1 - INTERVIEW HENRY ROSNER CONT'D

HENRY: CONT'D I SAYS  
...Are you afraid? <sup>A</sup> No.  
That's my boy. Take ~~s~~ me and give me a drink (NOT  
CLEAR) ... Can you imagine how I play? I told my  
brother ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>-WATCH ME</sup> ... And I played, you know, the  
violin, usually it's a vibration, very quickly, but  
it was very slowly, but I did it and was happy to be  
alive after I left. But my - my ~~STRANGEST -~~ <sup>STRANGEST -</sup> ~~strangely ..~~ <sup>MY WORST CONTRACT IN</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> life!  
~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> life!

JON: What kind of people used to  
go to the parties at the villa?

HENRY: Mostly officers.

JON: Can you just say that again  
after I've finished. ....

HENRY: Mostly officers went to the  
party. Sometime some big-shot civilians and sometime  
German woman. Sometimes Polish girls and er that was  
it.

JON: Did you see Oscar Schindler  
there often?

HENRY: Very often.

JON: Just - if you could say....  
~~OSCAR SCHINDLER WAS AT THE PARTIES VERY~~  
~~OFTEN and then tell me the story about one of~~  
~~those occasions.~~

HENRY: Oscar Schindler was very often.

JON: HOLD ON -

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SLATE 14 TAKE 1 - INTERVIEW HENRY ROSNER CONTD

JON AND HENRY TALK FOR A BIT -

HENRY: ~~And yeah~~ And she -  
~~liked very much my music...~~

JON: O.KAY

HENRY: Oscar Schindler was very  
often at the parties. He liked very much my music,  
he was very musical - very musical, and whatever he  
asked I knew, and especially he liked the song 'under....  
....

JON: Don't worry about the song,  
tell me about Oscar being at the party.

HENRY: And he sympathised very much  
- sympathised very much with me. And once there was a  
- how you call it - a police concert and they looks for  
~~RADZIA~~ - IN ENGLISH - THE RADZIA  
~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ .... And er they went to the  
camp, they took ~~WHATEVER~~ ... ~~DOLLARS~~ diamonds, gold,  
anything that was valuable, they took away. And I  
played this night ~~BY~~ Commandant, and Schindler was - ~~THERE~~  
he knew what was going on. ~~HE GAVE ME A TIP~~  
five hundred ~~2 LOTY BILL~~ - WHAT WAS A FORTUNE -  
~~lot~~ ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ that was fortunate,  
~~FORTUNE~~ I WAS THE RICHEST ONE IN THE LAGER  
~~fortunate~~ for us. ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ .A. So - and then  
he tried to get me to ~~ENALIA~~ .... and he asked the  
Commandant. The Commandant ~~SAID TO HIM - SO HE WOULDN'T.~~ ... But what  
happened ~~GOETH GAVE THAT - GOETH~~  
~~at~~ ~~(NAME)~~ ..A. got - get - sent some  
soldiers to the war ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ .. And eventually  
THIS soldier knew about get - he got once a whole train  
from Switzerland with sugar for the prisoners. He  
sold it on the black market, so he was arrested. He  
was arrested. He ~~FOUND THAT~~  
~~find out~~ A Schindler. He put me on  
the list and I got out. It - my wife and my brother  
and his wife, he got out and he came to ~~(NAME)~~ GROSS  
ROSEN FIRST, THEN BRINNITZ.

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SLATE 14 TAKE 1 - INTERVIEW HENRY ROSNER CONTD

JON: I'll come to that in a minute, but tell me a little bit - there was the party one night where you were being -- you were having to play ~~(NAME)~~ "GLOOMY SUNDAY"

HENRY: Oh yes. ~~IT~~ <sup>THAT</sup> was on his birthday, ~~and~~ <sup>ON</sup> his birthday, so - and it was his birthday - and his birthday was - I got the permission from ~~GOETH~~ <sup>GOTHERE</sup> to ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ ... with one ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>RUSSIAN</sup> S.S. which was a baritone, <sup>THIS</sup> beautiful singer. And he was driving in the car, the chauffeur, and he was <sup>WITH</sup> naturally, we came to Schindler party. He was a little bit high. He look and er - Fuhrer's picture - and look at me, takes the chair and look at the - the picture - lift the chair - my heart ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ <sup>STARTED TO - THE PICTURE</sup> ... HE gonna kill him! Then he turn - he broke that chair like ~~that~~ <sup>A</sup> - matchbox - you know. But he said what he meant, you know - wanted to show me that he's not sympathising with him. I was enchanted.

JON: What about the time when you were at ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>PLASZOW</sup> ... and you were playing at the party and the officer wanted you to play 'Gloomy Sunday' more and more times?

HENRY: So there was one officer - I could see that he was very unhappy. I suspected ~~IT WAS~~ <sup>IT WAS</sup> some love affair. Anyway he asked me to play, once more - once more, maybe 15 times, and er I knew that - I ~~loved~~ <sup>AMON GOETH</sup> liked it very much, but he got enough, he showed to me - ~~was scratched~~ <sup>JESUS CHRIST -</sup> And I was - I played so much - so many times, the melody, I tried to get the point why so many people commit suicide, and I start to suggest when so many people commit suicide, why don't this guy commit suicide? And a few minutes later he goes to the balcony and I hear a shot. The Commandant comes out. ~~Out - out!~~ <sup>AUS-AUS</sup> Now go with the ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>DOCTOR</sup> ... And the ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>DOCTOR</sup> was known - if somebody went to the ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>DOCTOR</sup> ... usually he got shot,

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SLATE 14 TAKE 1 - INTERVIEW HENRY ROSNER CONTD

HE WAS A BLACK UNIFORM -

HENRY: (CONT'D)... ~~as a~~ (NOT CLEAR) ...

PRUSSIAN,  
SS MAN ^

So I went out and I prepared myself - myself - get  
maybe outside the camp .. ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ ... I ~~was~~ DON'T  
KNOW nothing about ~~IT~~ ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ ~~[NOT CLEAR]~~ five minutes and

this officer said nothing happened. I started to run  
up the cinders to the - to the barracks, and the first  
thing I went to my wife to say that I'm alive, and  
that was it. The next day some Polish fellow came to  
the ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>LAGER</sup> ... and he got a - a German newspaper  
and I knew his name - of this officer - and I saw his  
name <sup>THAT</sup> He fall for the Fatherland.

JON: You'd played this man to  
death, hadn't you?

HENRY: (LAUGHING) (NOT CLEAR)  
he kill me for it.

JON: Now when you were on the list  
to go to - to ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>BRINNITZ</sup> and you were lining up to go  
to ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>BRINNITZ</sup>, something happened to you, didn't it?

HENRY: <sup>THERE</sup> <sup>OFFICER</sup>  
Er ~~that~~ was one ~~of the~~  
<sup>WHICH</sup> ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ recognised I play for the Commandant  
didn't want to let me out, So later I came again once  
more time with a different guy. He didn't recognise me.  
And I put my violin under the coat, you see. And er  
there was another prisoner, I got another violin, cheap  
one, who put also the violin under the coat. And er  
my son came with - with er with the <sup>ACCORDIONS.</sup> ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~  
Nobody said nothing. And then <sup>WE</sup> he came luckily to - to  
<sup>GROSS ROSEN</sup> ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>GROSS ROSEN</sup> In ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>A</sup> they told us whatever is  
valuable, put it here ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ <sup>AFTER THE WAR YOU GET</sup> <sup>IT BACK.</sup>  
Anyway I came and I got a bright idea, I said that  
the violin and the <sup>ACCORDION</sup> belongs to Mr. Schindler.  
Then - and I came to - to ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>BRINNITZ</sup> Then Schindler  
saw me, <sup>WE</sup> was shaved here about 2 inches, you know,

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SLATE 14 TAKE 1 - INTERVIEW HENRY ROSNER CONTD

HENRY: (CONT'D).. to make it difficult to  
escape, and on the coat you've got painted cross - a  
red cross. He ~~said~~ <sup>MR</sup> Rosner, where is your violin?

~~HE~~ <sup>WHAT IS A ROSNER WITHOUT A VIOLIN?</sup> said, (NOT CLEAR) ... he said, - to (NAME) -

HAT DU GESACHT - you should have said that the violin belongs - belongs  
to me. I did so. Good. Meantime, <sup>AND</sup> they send me to  
Auschwitz, <sup>THEY WAS SURE</sup> ~~he must show~~ that I am no more alive. So  
he said to my wife they would have the violin. Some  
other guy played the violin, once <sup>WAS A</sup> ~~for the~~ party there -  
and he said to my wife, <sup>LOOK</sup> it's the same violin but  
different tone. And then after the war when she met  
him in Prague - Czechoslovakia....

JON!- JUST HOLD ON A SEC -

CUT

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SLATE 15 TAKE 1

INTERVIEW HENRY ROSNER CONTD

JON: Henry, taking you back to a little bit from what we were talking about, tell me what happened in <sup>GROSS ROSEN</sup> (NAME) .... You lost your violin, didn't you?

HENRY: So yes, I lost the violin, because I said it belongs to the Schindler. When I came back to <sup>BRINMLITZ</sup> (NAME) ... he said to me, what - where is violin? And I said I left it in <sup>GROSS ROSEN</sup> (NAME) ... He said, why didn't you say the violin belongs to me? I did so. Good. Meantime I was sent - my son - to Auschwitz. After a few months he was <sup>SURE I AM</sup> (NOT CLEAR) no more alive. There was some party over there and there was somebody who played the violin, he lend him the violin. And then he said to my wife it's the same violin but different tone. And then after the war, when my wife found out that I'm alive in <sup>DACHAU</sup> (NAME) .. she couldn't er - she couldn't go normal by train, you know, she had ... <sup>A COMBINATION WITH</sup> ^ train, carriages with the - with the cars, <sup>CAPTAIN</sup> She met some American couple then (NAME) you know, spoke Polish and she went to Prague, Czechoslovakia, And there she met Schindler and said I have something for you from your late husband. <sup>AND</sup> He gave her the violin and <sup>ACCORDION</sup> according from my brother Leo and from my son <sup>LITTLE ACCORDION.</sup> (NAME) ... Then somebody told my wife ....

JON: Let me stop you for a second. Oscar got your violin back from <sup>GROSS ROSEN</sup> (NAME) ... didn't he?

HENRY: JA - JA Yeah, yeah.

JON: Could you say that...

'WHEN I WENT TO AUSCHWITZ, OSKAR SCHINDLER TOOK THE TROUBLE TO GET MY VIOLIN -



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SLATE 15 TAKE 1 - INTERVIEW ROSNER CONT'D

HENRY: ~~WHEN~~ I went to - no, I went to  
JA - While I was in Auschwitz ~~WHEN I WAS IN - IN -~~ Can I start now?  
When I was in Auschwitz Oscar tried to get the violin  
~~AND ACCORDION~~  
~~and I called him~~ back. And later I found out he got it  
back. But I was - I wasn't any more in ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>BRINNWITZ.</sup>  
So he said to my wife here's the instrument, and he  
let play someone else on the violin.

JON: That's fine. How come you  
got sent back to Auschwitz? Why did you get sent to  
Auschwitz?

HENRY: Because of the - as part of  
the boys.

JON: Tell me the story from the  
start, because now we're filming ...

HENRY: Yeah. So one of these DAYS  
~~WAS AN APPEL - A MORNING~~  
~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ ... and er Liepold the Commandant,  
his name was Liepold... Commandant of the S.S. -  
he said, all fathers with sons come out. And nine of  
us came - maybe ten or twelve SS soldiers with guns,  
ready to shoot. They took us this way to the railway  
station. They put us in a train, third class, you know,  
and people around - they were looking - What's that?  
What's that? ~~he said~~ <sup>THEY</sup> ~~he said~~ <sup>AUFSTANDER</sup> ~~(NAME)~~ ... that  
means <sup>ER</sup> rebels. So one lady asked, and the little one?  
It was my nephew, he was at the time six years old, a  
child. She said - he was very embarrassed, he didn't  
give her any answer. Now, that action was very interest-  
ing, because some woman - they move - and some were  
~~GIVEN~~  
~~eating~~ an apple - a piece of ~~PRETZ~~ - You could see  
all human ~~reaction~~ - all kinds. <sup>NOT</sup> Everybody was so bad,  
And while we were driving - the train - not driving -  
I was in the train, my son said to me, daddy, you know,  
I am so sorry that you have to die because of me,

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SLATE 15 TAKE 1 - INTERVIEW ROSNER CONTD

HENRY: (CONT'D)... because I am a child.  
And ~~then~~ <sup>WHEN</sup> he said that, I noticed that er <sup>THE SARGEANT</sup> (NAME)  
<sup>SAID</sup> this Christ, he has come down. - ~~He~~ said do you understand?  
He said, yes, I understand. I'm from <sup>KATOWICE</sup> Catholics and I  
know you. <sup>YOU'RE THE BAND LEADER FROM CAFE ASTORIA</sup> ~~Independently~~ from (NAME) ....  
<sup>IN KATOWICZE,</sup> Catholics. And he start to quiet me down. Don't  
worry, you will survive the war. He said - so  
sympathetic - so my brother-in-law <sup>FATHER</sup> (NAME) of  
er <sup>RICHARD</sup> (NAME) ... ask him would you be so kind,  
because he mentioned that he - he ~~had been asked~~ <sup>IS TAKING US</sup> to  
Auschwitz and taking the women to <sup>BRINNWITZ</sup> bring us - knowing  
our wives are going to be there. <sup>SO</sup> He took a letter -  
I wrote a letter to my wife too and I wrote it er  
~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ <sup>WE ALREADY GOT THE NUMBERS</sup> ... and the war <sup>SHOULD END</sup> and very soon,  
if <sup>WE</sup> he survive <sup>WE</sup> he meets - meet each other <sup>IN KRAKOW</sup> and (NAME)  
<sup>IN FLORENZA STREET</sup> and (NAME) ~~three~~ - 32. So, now my - my son  
noticed in Auschwitz that some movements under the  
trains could ~~save~~ <sup>SEE SOME LADIES LEGS, SO</sup> - he laid his legs <sup>he</sup> got some  
feeling and he start to whistle. (WHISTLES) <sup>= OUR</sup>  
signal. <sup>SO</sup> My sister had a <sup>SIGNAL</sup> (NOT CLEAR) ... she looked  
at a crack in the - in the wall of the train - it was  
a train for horses, and she noticed my son and her son,  
so she calls my wife and my wife saw my son - she  
became hysterical. She start to knock on the door,  
so the <sup>GERMAN</sup> General <sup>WAS 1ST</sup> said ~~to me~~ (NOT CLEAR) - What's  
happened? ~~She~~ said, listen. I see this - my son -  
maybe I see him the last time in my life - please let  
me out. He said, alright, go down under the train,  
make believe you're doing something - you know. So he  
said - my son - look mum we've got the numbers, we're  
going be alive. And daddys by work, in a few minutes  
he's coming back. He run to the entrance and I came,  
he said, daddy, daddy, mummy's here. <sup>OKAY</sup> And I saw my wife,  
with the hands I got <sup>ER-ER</sup> kisse. All I could see that er  
she's alive. And then they went. That was it.

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SLATE 15 TAKE 1 INTERVIEW ROSNER CONTD'

JON: She was saved by Schindler?

HENRY: **JA** ~~Yes~~. She - I know that she went to Schindler. **JA**.

JON: Tell me what kind of man you think Oscar Schindler was.

HENRY: He was a charmer. Charmer and he could do anything with people, like that. After the war I was in Vienna, in a nightclub and sit <sup>IN</sup> on the bar. I got the money - he got the money - you'd think that the barman took the money from him, <sup>?</sup> No. He's got something, I don't know - some - born millionaire. The money was flowing through his fingers. The way he did it, I could never - never - never do ~~it~~ **THAT**.

JON: Why do you think Oscar saved you and your wife?

HENRY: He told me once the story. I believed that was the main reason. There was a time - there was the time - not the concentration camp <sup>PLASZOW</sup> (NAME) - when the first labour came, but short - about time that they supposed to liquidate the ghetto, some two **GIRLS** years escaped from <sup>PLASZOW</sup> (NAME) ... **ONE WAS** 17 years old, **THE OTHER WAS** 19 years old. So the Commandant gave the order to the ~~er~~ <sup>ER -</sup> how you call this police - <sup>JEWISH POLICE</sup> (NAME) **UHM- [00]** -he had to find those two years <sup>GIRLS OTHERWISE I</sup> (NAME) **WILL HANG 10 OTHER MEN.** Naturally they found <sup>THOSE GIRLS. THEY FOUND</sup> us again. And after <sup>PLATZ - THE APPELPLATZ</sup> (NAME) to see it. He choose one tall fellow from the Jewish police - hang them. They weren't hanging even two seconds. He took - not again - gone - which - <sup>HANGS HERE</sup> things from the pocket. And this moment came the Schindler and he saw this with his own eyes. And he told me the story that he vomit, and he said to himself that he - now

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HENRY: (CONT'D).. he will work against the  
Germans. He did ~~this~~ <sup>THAT</sup>.

JON: When he was at the parties  
at ~~(NAME)~~ <sup>GOETH'S</sup> house, how was Oscar?

HENRY: Jovial, laughing, singing.

JON: Can you start that again.....  
BY SAYING "WHEN OSKAR WAS AT THE PARTIES"

HENRY: When Oscar was at the parties  
he was very jovial, happy, laughing and always conducting  
the parties, always. ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ <sup>HE GOT A CONTACT</sup> ... always,  
and he was like a sunshine when you saw him, like a  
sunshine..

JON: When you saw Oscar for the  
first time, what did you think?

HENRY: I thought he was a charmer.  
I didn't know that er he's ~~blessing~~ <sup>BLUFFING</sup> them. He was so  
- so different than the other people, you know. He  
got so much soul, and when he had music, his action was  
so good and he was very witty. ~~he~~ <sup>THEY</sup> like him very much.  
He was absolute a charmer. But <sup>A</sup> wonderful artist.

JON: Very good. Lovely.

HENRY: <sup>CAN'T FORGET HIM - THIS GUY -</sup>  
~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ .. <sup>THEY GOT</sup>  
After the war when he was in Frankfurt, ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~  
<sup>YOU</sup>  
SHELLACKING FROM the Germans, they told him ~~he~~ shouldn't help them at  
all. But later on he got er very big er .. praise from  
~~(NAME)~~ POPE.

JON: That's lovely. Very good.

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SLATE 15 TAKE 1 INTERVIEW ROSNER CONTD

ER-HAT LIKE  
HENRY: He got ~~(NOT CLEAR)~~ ...  
NAPOLITON and er later - after the war - he got some  
money from the joint in Paris, ~~he'd been (NOT CLEAR)~~ <sup>I THINK \$20,000</sup>  
He went to Argentina, ~~He~~ bought a farm, mink farm.  
But there was some sickness, the mink died, he lost  
all the money. He left his wife over there, but he  
came back to Munich, <sup>IN</sup> ~~and~~ Munich - was a poor guy. ~~He~~  
~~took him~~.

CUT