



Testimony: The Legacy of Schindler's List and the USC Shoah Foundation

By Steven Spielberg, *The Shoah Foundation*

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This illustrated, large-format book, *Testimony: The Legacy of Schindler's List and the USC Shoah Foundation—A 20th Anniversary Commemoration* combines, for the first time, the behind-the-scenes story of the making of *Schindler's List* with the history of the remarkable organization inspired by that landmark film. Steven Spielberg's encounters with Holocaust survivors who visited the set and personally told him their stories set him on a quest to collect and preserve survivor testimony for generations to come. In 1994, he established the Shoah Foundation, and in the following four years nearly 52,000 eyewitness interviews were video recorded in 56 countries and 32 languages. This commemorative book relates how the foundation accomplished this feat through a worldwide network of dedicated people, pioneering interview methods, and state-of-the art technologies.

A special 140-page section tells the riveting story of the film in photos, script excerpts, and the words of the cast and crew, including Liam Neeson, Ben Kingsley, and Spielberg. Drawing from the Universal Pictures archives and exclusive interviews, here are details on Spielberg's struggle to bring Oskar Schindler's story from novel to script to screen, the casting, cinematography, and especially what happened during the difficult shoot in Poland in 1993—on locations where actual events of the Holocaust occurred.

Partnered with the University of Southern California since 2006, the USC Shoah Foundation has broadened its mission and now collects and preserves testimonies from other genocides, including those in Armenia, Cambodia, and Rwanda, while expanding its educational outreach, especially to young people. Its Visual History Archive—digitized, fully searchable, and hyperlinked to the minute—has become the largest digital collection of its kind in the world. As Spielberg writes in his introduction, “I believe the work of the USC Shoah Foundation is the most important legacy of *Schindler's List*.”

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Editorial Review

Review

An informative coffee table book for film buffs and those interested in Jewish history. (Kirkus)

From the Back Cover

Schindler's List was a success by any Hollywood measure and far surpassed all expectations for a black-and-white film about the Holocaust. Released in 1993, it won seven Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Director, and is ranked ninth in the American Film Institute's 100 Greatest American Movies. But its legacy is a far more enduring one. As director Steven Spielberg says, "The film was to be the prelude to the most important work of my life." Spielberg's encounters with Holocaust survivors who came to the filmmakers' location in Poland and told him their stories set him on a mission to collect and preserve survivor testimonies so that these eyewitnesses could become teachers of humanity for generations to come. This twentieth-anniversary commemorative book presents, for the first time, the behind-the-scenes stories of the making of *Schindler's List* and the creation of the Shoah Foundation, the remarkable organization that Spielberg established twenty years ago.

Drawing from the Universal Pictures archives and exclusive interviews, Part One portrays the filmmaking in dramatic black-and-white photographs that echo the film's acclaimed cinematography; in excerpts from the script and the Thomas Keneally novel; and in the words of the cast and crew, including Liam Neeson, Ben Kingsley, and Spielberg.

Part Two relates how the Shoah Foundation, in its first four years, raced against time to videotape nearly 52,000 testimonies in 56 countries and 32 languages, while Holocaust survivors and witnesses were still alive to be interviewed. The book also describes in fascinating detail how this worldwide network of dedicated people used pioneering methods and state-of-the-art technologies to collect, index, and preserve the video recordings. With its Visual History Archive digitized, fully searchable, and hyperlinked to the minute, the foundation then developed countless ways to share the testimonies with the world, especially young people. Since joining the University of Southern California in 2006 and renamed the USC Shoah Foundation—The Institute for Visual History and Education, it expanded its educational initiatives as well as its mission, which is now collecting and preserving testimonies from the Armenian, Cambodian, and Rwandan genocides, as well as the Nanjing Massacre.

The ultimate lesson of *Schindler's List*, and of the USC Shoah Foundation story, is rooted in the deeds of Oskar Schindler, who never planned on becoming a household name for heroism but acted out of his humanity to protect his Jewish workers. As Spielberg writes in his introduction, "One person can change the world, and that person is you."

About the Author

Steven Spielberg (Introduction)

The renowned director and producer of *Schindler's List* has also directed, among other acclaimed films, *Lincoln*, *War Horse*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Jurassic Park*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Amistad*, and *Jaws*. He established the Shoah Foundation in 1994, inspired by his experience while filming *Schindler's List*.

Stephen D. Smith (Preface)

The executive director of the USC Shoah Foundation, Smith is one of the world's foremost experts on genocide prevention and the inaugural holder of the UNESCO Chair on Genocide Education at USC. His books include *Forgotten Places: The Holocaust and the Remnants of Destruction* and *The Holocaust and the Christian World*.

The USC Shoah Foundation—The Institute for Visual History and Education

In its first decade, the Shoah Foundation accomplished its worldwide project of interviewing nearly 52,000 survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust, and making their testimonies widely available for scholarship and education. Now part of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive (VHA) currently encompasses 107,000 hours of video testimonies, and is an invaluable resource for education, research, and scholarship. Through innovative online tools, resources, and programs, the institute is teaching the world through testimony.

Users Review

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Debbie Davis:

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