

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### **‘He’s very good at work *not* involving little creatures, you know’: *Schindler’s List*, *E.T.*, and the shape of Steven Spielberg’s career**

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Popular and academic criticism of Steven Spielberg’s work today tends to conceive of it as being divided into highly effective family entertainment and serious, issue-oriented films. *Schindler’s List* is often seen to mark a transition point in Spielberg’s career when he switched from an emphasis on the former to a much stronger concentration on the latter. By tracing Spielberg’s changing levels of involvement in the Schindler project from its inception in 1982 to the film’s release 11 years later, in this paper I offer a different perspective on the development of his career. I emphasise the extraordinarily rich diversity of the filmmaker’s output but also show that the unprecedented impact of *E.T.* led to a significant reorientation of both his reputation and his actual output, which was then counteracted to some extent by the success of *Schindler’s List*.

**Keywords:** Steven Spielberg; *Schindler’s List*; *E.T.*; critical reputation; career development; scripts; adaptation; Holocaust

In November 1982, only a few weeks after the American publication of Thomas Keneally’s non-fiction novel *Schindler’s List*, which under the title *Schindler’s Ark* had won the prestigious Booker Prize in the UK, the *New York Times* reported that Sidney Sheinberg, the president of MCA/Universal, had announced the imminent purchase of the film rights for the novel (Maslin 1982). The deal would assign scriptwriting duties to Keneally, but also involve ‘a group of Holocaust survivors, rescued by the late Oskar Schindler’. It later emerged that the most important member of this group was Leopold Page. Two years earlier Page had introduced Keneally to Schindler’s story and had acted as a consultant on Keneally’s novel; the novel in turn was based to a considerable degree on the testimony of other ‘Schindler Jews’, and also on the research carried out, and the script written, for MGM’s *To the Last Hour*, an earlier attempt to film Schindler’s life (Crowe 2004, 597). The *New York Times* article about Universal’s Schindler project stated that ‘(al)though no director has been named, Universal hopes the film will be directed by Steven Spielberg, and he has expressed some interest in the project’ (Maslin 1982, C4). Indeed, later reports suggested that Sheinberg had first drawn Spielberg’s attention to the book and only acquired the rights when he was sure that Spielberg was sufficiently interested (McBride 1997, 424).

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In this paper, I discuss the place of this project in Spielberg's career and the role that Spielberg took in shaping the filmic representation of Oskar Schindler's story. First, I examine why, on the basis of his extremely varied work up to this point, Spielberg could be considered an appropriate choice for the Schindler project in 1982. I then sketch the dramatic shift his work and reputation underwent after the enormous success of *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), when he became ever more closely associated with family entertainment and, consequently, his involvement with *Schindler's List* (1993) increasingly looked like a mismatch. I conclude with a discussion of the circumstances of Spielberg's final commitment to the project in the late 1980s, and of the ways in which he then shaped the film.

### Spielberg's career up to 1982

Sid Sheinberg had long been Spielberg's mentor. Back in 1968, he had given Spielberg his first Hollywood job as a television director on a seven-year contract at Universal, and ever since he had exerted some influence over the much younger man's career, although after 1975 Spielberg had also been working for other studios (McBride 1997, chs. 7–15). A few months before the announcement of Universal's Schindler project in November 1982, Spielberg had given Universal its biggest hit ever, *E.T.* Indeed, by November 1982, *E.T.* had overtaken *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977) to become the biggest hit of all time at the American box office. With reference to this box office phenomenon, Sheinberg told the *New York Times* about Spielberg's hoped-for involvement in the Schindler project: 'I thought of Steven right away.... I don't know what is or isn't a departure for him.... He's very good at work *not* involving little creatures, you know' (Maslin 1982, C4).

Of course, *E.T.* was the *only* film about 'little creatures' that Spielberg had made by this time, yet its impact – on cinemagoers, on American culture more generally, and on the public's as well as the critics' perceptions of its director – was so enormous that it began to overshadow the diversity of his previous work. Unfortunately, in later interviews (see, for example, Richardson 1994 and Schiff 1994), Spielberg has conspired with many of his critics to construct his career in terms of an 'immature' early period, associated with the kind of family entertainment best exemplified by *E.T.*, and a 'mature' phase which, despite earlier attempts at 'serious' filmmaking – notably his literary adaptations of *The Color Purple* (1985) and *Empire of the Sun* (1987) – was reached only with the critical praise garnered by *Schindler's List* in 1993.

As a consequence of this view of his career, both Spielberg and his critics tend to agree that in 1982 he was not yet ready to make *Schindler's List*, having to wait for another decade's worth of personal and artistic growth before he could tackle the subject. Yet, notwithstanding Spielberg's relative youth in 1982 (he was 35 when Universal announced its Schindler project) and notwithstanding the desire and hope of any artist – indeed any person – to achieve further growth after their mid-30s, the question must be allowed whether it is reasonable to characterise Spielberg's work up to 1982 as 'immature' or as being focused on family entertainment.

As McBride's filmography (1997, 501–8) so powerfully documents, Spielberg had been making amateur films (some of which perhaps could more accurately be called

semi-professional) since the age of 10, and from the age of 22 he had steadily worked in Hollywood, initially directing episodes of television series as well as made-for-television movies, and also trying to develop stories and scripts for feature films. Generically, his work had ranged from medical, legal, and crime drama to historical action-drama, science fiction, and horror. Starting in 1974, he had released a steady stream of theatrical features, ranging from two box office flops – the critically acclaimed comedy-drama *The Sugarland Express* (1974) and the critically derided slapstick epic *1941* (1979) – to the suspenseful and hugely successful action-adventures of *Jaws* (1975) and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) as well as the epic science fiction blockbuster *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), the only film in this group for which Spielberg also received a writing credit. In addition, Spielberg had produced other people's work, starting with the comedy-dramas *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* (Robert Zemeckis, 1978), *Used Cars* (Zemeckis, 1980), and *Continental Divide* (Michael Apted, 1981), none of which was particularly successful.

For a 35-year-old filmmaker, this is an extraordinarily rich body of television programmes and films, many of which – judging by the reviews they received (see, for example, the *Variety* reviews reprinted in Perry 1998, 101–14) – were considered to be fully accomplished pieces of work, even masterpieces, and thus by no stretch of the imagination 'immature'. As far as I can see, none of Spielberg's output before 1982 focuses on 'little creatures' or on children, and not much of it can even be considered as family entertainment. Apart from some of the television programmes, this label can only be applied – judging by the films' marketing and reception – to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (see Perry 1998, 108–14).

If one is looking for important commonalities across Spielberg's varied output before 1982, one could (in addition to the surprising prominence of comedy) highlight his focus on material related to the Second World War, starting with his 1960 short film *Fighter Squad*. Regarding the features he directed, there is the inclusion of the Indianapolis speech in *Jaws*, the opening of *Close Encounters* with its discovery of military planes that had vanished in 1945, the wartime paranoia and comical military action depicted in *1941*, and Indiana Jones' pre-war battle with Nazis hunting for what they hope will be a super-weapon in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. One could also add that some of his films (including both *The Sugarland Express* and *1941*) had taken real incidents as their starting point, while others built key scenes around such incidents (notably the Indianapolis speech in *Jaws*); even *Close Encounters* was partly based on an in-depth investigation of actual UFO reports by scientist Allen J. Hynek (McBride 1997, 265). Furthermore, each of Spielberg's theatrical hits focused on an adult man who has to learn important lessons – about how to carry out his responsibilities towards his family and his community (in *Jaws*), about how to deal with his irrepressible desire for contact with a different and indeed higher form of life (in *Close Encounters*), and about love, faith, and humility (in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*).

Given Spielberg's proven ability to recreate the past filmically, to stage extremely large-scale action, and to depict or suggest important historical events as a backdrop for the action in several of his films, his work before 1982 would seem to qualify him very well for taking on the Schindler project, which was, after all, a true Second World War story with epic potential, yet focused on one man's moral transformation.

One might question, though, whether Spielberg and his films were taken seriously enough for him to look like an appropriate choice for a film dealing with the Holocaust – a doubt expressed by Sheinberg through his musings about whether or not the Schindler film would constitute a ‘departure’ for Spielberg (Maslin 1982). In response to this doubt, one can point to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences’ Best Picture nominations for *Jaws*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *E.T.*, and to Spielberg’s nominations as Best Director for *Close Encounters*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *E.T.*, and also to the success of these films at various other award ceremonies, and their inclusion in various ‘ten best’ lists of critical favourites (see, for example, Steinberg 1980, 158, 175, 178–9, 284). It is easy to forget how positive the initial critical response to some of Spielberg’s films had been, especially to *Close Encounters* and *E.T.*, which, incidentally, were also his most ‘personal’ films in so far as they were based on stories he had created himself. The fact that these two were science fiction films, that the latter told its story from the perspective of a child, and that both addressed all-encompassing family audiences did not disqualify them from serious – and often extremely positive – consideration by reviewers and cultural commentators in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Finally, as a filmmaker with a Jewish background (although he was not practising his religion at the time), Spielberg would also have seemed to be a good choice for the Schindler project. While his films up to 1982 had not dealt with Jewish characters, he had cast Jewish actor Richard Dreyfuss – with what one might call his distinctly non-WASPish looks – in both *Jaws* and *Close Encounters*. Furthermore, Spielberg had designed the story and imagery of *Close Encounters* so as to draw out parallels with the story of Moses, going as far as showing a clip from Cecil B. DeMille’s *The Ten Commandments* (1956) on a television set in the background of an early scene. And in his collaboration with George Lucas he had presented the ark containing the remnants of the stone tablets Moses had brought down from the mountain as a source of great, even divine power at the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Especially in light of later developments with the Schindler project (which would highlight parallels between Schindler and Moses, parallels that had already been noted by several people in previous decades), it certainly seems that Spielberg’s work had been sufficiently ‘Jewish’ for him to be considered a good choice for making *Schindler’s List* in 1982.

### **Spielberg’s career after 1982**

As it turned out, soon after Sheinberg had acquired the rights to Keneally’s novel for him, Spielberg moved away from the adaptation, partly, it seems, because another hugely ambitious historical project was brought to him. In 1983 his production partner Kathleen Kennedy recommended to him Alice Walker’s recently published Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Color Purple* (McBride 1997, 367–8). After considerable debate – which partly revolved around the question whether his own experience of anti-Semitism might help him to understand the African-American experience portrayed in the book, and whether he was the only filmmaker with enough clout to produce a big budget adaptation of Walker’s novel

for a general audience – Spielberg decided to make *The Color Purple* in close collaboration with Walker.

At the same time, Spielberg entered a period of enormous productivity, which for the first time was focused on family entertainment and in particular on ‘little creatures’ and child or teen characters, inspired no doubt by the enormous success in 1982 not only of *E.T.* but also of *Poltergeist*, the seventh highest grossing film of 1984 in the USA, which Spielberg had co-written and produced (for rankings in the annual charts see Anon. 1991, 81–2). Over the next few years, Spielberg directed and/or produced an unprecedented string of family-oriented hits, many of which were produced by his own company Amblin which used the image of the boy cycling across the moon from *E.T.* as its logo. Spielberg’s top ten hits – as a director and/or producer – ran from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (the third biggest hit of 1984 in the USA), *Gremlins* (Joe Dante, no. 4 in 1984), *Back to the Future* (Zemeckis, no. 1 in 1985), and *The Goonies* (Richard Donner, no. 9 in 1985), to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (Zemeckis, no. 2 in 1988), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (no. 2 in 1989), *Back to the Future II* (Zemeckis, no. 10 in 1989), and *Hook* (no. 6 in 1991). His lesser hits included the animated features *An American Tail* (Don Bluth, 1986) and *The Land before Time* (Bluth, 1988), each spawning several sequels, as well as *Back to the Future III* (Zemeckis, 1990) and *Gremlins II* (Dante, 1990).

Against this backdrop, it is understandable that the extraordinary commercial success of *The Color Purple* (an almost all-black and female-centred historical melodrama about incest, wife abuse, and female empowerment that became the fourth highest grossing film of 1985) had no significant impact on Spielberg’s public image, nor had the many other ‘serious’ and adult-oriented films Spielberg directed and/or produced during this period. These included the Second World War prisoner camp drama *Empire of the Sun* (1987), the spiritual romantic comedy-drama *Always* (1989), the family drama *Dad* (Gary David Goldberg, 1989), and the violent thriller *Cape Fear* (Martin Scorsese, 1991). Instead of associating Spielberg with such films, audiences and critics alike came to identify him mainly with family entertainment.

During this period, comments about Spielberg’s involvement with Universal’s Schindler project, both by him and by others, increasingly acquired a certain defensiveness and a sense of surprise. In 1984, for example, an article portraying Spielberg in *Newsweek*, entitled ‘The Wizard of Wonderland’, stated that Spielberg might return to his roots in more adult-oriented fare, listing the Schindler project as one ‘fascinating possibility’ (Kroll 1984, 80). Two years later, in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Spielberg mentioned his work on *Schindler’s List* as having evolved parallel to his involvement with *The Color Purple*; the article’s title was: ‘Spielberg’s Escape from Escapism’ (Champlin 1986). In 1988, he told the *New York Times* somewhat vaguely: ‘I’m still interested in making *Schindler’s List*’; the quote appeared in an article entitled ‘Spielberg at 40: The Man and the Child’ which was tied in with the release of *Empire of the Sun* and focused very much on Spielberg’s desire and need to grow up and to make more grown-up movies (Forsberg 1988, 131).

Thus, from 1982 to 1988, Spielberg seemed to be drifting ever further away from the Schindler project, while the public’s and the critics’ conception of him as a kind of ‘cinematic Peter Pan’ (Forsberg 1988, 126) – a gifted filmmaker with a childlike

sensibility who was desperate to make adult movies, yet could not quite succeed in doing this – grew steadily. So what happened when Spielberg finally committed himself to the Schindler project after 1988?

### **Spielberg makes *Schindler's List***

When interviewed by *American Premiere* on the occasion of the release of *Always* in 1989, Spielberg talked with renewed vigour about the Schindler project: '*Schindler's List* is definitely something my company is going to produce with Universal. But at the moment I'm not directing it' (Royal 1989–90, 147). Indeed, over the years numerous directors had been associated with the project, most notably Billy Wilder and Martin Scorsese. In his *Premiere* interview, Spielberg tried to explain the difficulties he had had with this long delayed project. Although later on he would mainly talk about his own lack of maturity, here he highlighted more practical matters to do with what he perceived to be the unique quality of this project:

a feature film about the Holocaust is going to be studied through a microscope and it's going to be scrutinized from the Talmud to Ted Koppel. And it has to be accurate and it has to be fair and it cannot *in the least* come across as entertainment. (Royal 1989–90/2000, 147)

In several interviews he gave during the production of *Schindler's List* in 1993, Spielberg talked at length about the script problems that had previously hampered the project's progress despite the best efforts, across the 1980s, of Thomas Keneally, then Kurt Luedtke (who had just won an Oscar for the romantic epic *Out of Africa* [Sydney Pollack, 1985]) and finally Steven Zaillian (who had written the acclaimed script for the psychological drama *Awakenings* [Penny Marshall, 1990]). Indeed, before all the talk about Spielberg's alleged immaturity completely took over the critical discourse about the project's delays in the 1980s, a very long article in *Newsday* soberly stated in February 1993: 'The problem all along has been the development of a suitable script' (Keeler 1993, 42). As soon as a solution for this problem was in sight – which appears to have been the case when Zaillian was working on the script in 1990 – Spielberg went back to Sid Sheinberg's original plan, which was for him to direct the movie (see Alexander 1994).

There also were a number of contextual factors which made *Schindler's List* a much more attractive and indeed a more urgent proposition in the early 1990s than it had been in 1982. To begin with, no doubt partly influenced by the enormous impact made by the TV mini-series *Holocaust* (1978) in the USA and abroad, the 1980s saw a dramatic increase in the production of Holocaust-related films; on average six such films were made every year in the USA alone, a trend that continued into the 1990s (Baron 2005, 25). What is more, among the 227 Holocaust-related films produced around the world during the 1980s, by far the most popular genre was the biopic and the most popular theme was rescue (Baron 2005, 66, 202). In the USA, many of these films achieved a relatively high profile – although none of them was a major box office hit. As Lester Friedman (2006, 295) has pointed out, five Holocaust-related films were nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar from 1979 to 1990, and two of them won.

A similar picture emerges for historical epics. While films telling intimate stories set against the backdrop of important historical events did not do particularly well at the box office, they did achieve a high profile, among other things through the Academy Awards. Between 1978 and 1990, nine Best Picture Oscars went to historical dramas, and several of these were truly epic in scope. In addition, some of them were biopics, notably *Ghandi* (Richard Attenborough, UK/India, 1982) and *The Last Emperor* (Bernardo Bertolucci, China/Italy/UK/France, 1987). Finally, as James Russell has pointed out, throughout the 1980s – in the wake of the all-time television ratings champion *Roots* (1977) and of *Holocaust* – the historical epic achieved great popularity on American television in the form of several mini-series; and the enormous success of *Dances With Wolves* (Kevin Costner, 1990), both commercially and at the Academy Awards, signalled a possible return of the historical epic to the top of the box office charts (Russell 2007, 58–9). Thus, by 1990 the time seemed right for a big budget Hollywood epic on Oskar Schindler and the Holocaust.

As has often been pointed out (see, for example, McBride 1997, ch. 16; Friedman 2006, ch. 6; Russell 2007, ch. 3), by the early 1990s Spielberg also had more personal as well as political reasons for making *Schindler's List*. Personal reasons included:

- his admiration for the historical epics he grew up with in the 1950s and early 1960s;
- his need to prove himself in the eyes of his most admired Hollywood peers and also perhaps of his critics;
- his concerns about the filmic legacy he was going to leave for his children (the first of whom had been born in 1985);
- his return to Judaism in the wake of his first child's birth;
- memories of the anti-Semitism he had experienced as a teenager and of the stories about the Holocaust he had been told, sometimes by survivors, during his childhood;
- also, perhaps, the attraction of making a film about a successful businessman who simply tries to do good, which, it has been argued, at least partially mirrored Spielberg's image of himself (and presumably also the self-images of Sid Sheinberg, who initiated the project, and Time Warner chairman Steve Ross to whom the film was dedicated).

By the time *Schindler's List* was finally going into production at the beginning of 1993, Spielberg was increasingly talking to the media about the broader historical, social, and political context for his movie. He highlighted the following issues:

- The dying out of the remaining Holocaust survivors whose experiences needed to be documented. (Indeed, many survivors, including several Schindler Jews, made contributions to the research for the film, and key members of the production team were survivors. After the film's release, Spielberg used its profits to set up the Shoah Visual History Foundation to collect survivor testimonies.)
- Low levels of awareness of, and knowledge about, the Holocaust as revealed, for example, in opinion polls conducted in the USA, which needed to be countered through better education. (Indeed, both in the USA and in other

countries, *Schindler's List* would be used as a teaching tool in schools, complemented by all kinds of specially prepared written materials and documentaries.)

- The very public re-emergence around the globe of what appeared to be religiously and ethnically motivated mass incarceration, abuse, and murder – especially the so-called ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the former Yugoslavia, which was widely discussed with reference to the Holocaust – suggesting that a better education about the Holocaust was essential for helping to prevent its recurrence in the contemporary world.

It is in this context that one has to see certain decisions Spielberg took in the development of Steven Zaillian’s script. According to interviews with Spielberg and the various writers working on the script for *Schindler's List* from 1982 onwards, one of the main problems was the question of motivation: Why did Schindler do what he did? An important decision early on in the script development process appears to have been *not* to show, as Keneally’s book does to some extent, that upon his arrival in Poland Schindler was in many ways already predisposed to view his Jewish employees sympathetically. Instead his initial disregard for their welfare and his totally exploitative attitude towards them was emphasised so as to make his change of mind in the course of the story more dramatic.

Another key decision was to depict Schindler’s transformation as a very gradual process. Here, Spielberg seems to have played an important role in preventing the script from becoming too focused on easy explanations and a single transformative event. Thus, Steven Zaillian told the *Los Angeles Times* in May 1993 that Spielberg had approached this issue with the model of *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941) in mind. In the end there is no single explanation for the character of Charles Foster Kane, although the sled called ‘Rosebud’ is an important piece of the explanatory puzzle; instead of offering an explanation, trying to find one is the film’s story (Gritten 1993, 9). Similarly, Zaillian said, for the viewer the ‘mystery’ of Schindler’s motivations, rather than being resolved, ‘became the story’ of the film.

In particular, the appearance of the girl in the red coat during the clearing of the ghetto, which is often seen as a transformative moment for Schindler, is only one element in a series of encounters both with individual Jews and with Nazi terror that in the film reshape Schindler’s outlook. Interestingly, the description Zaillian and Spielberg give of the impact on Schindler of seeing the girl with the red coat is quite different from the one critics usually present. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Spielberg ‘concluded that if she was allowed to witness the murders, it followed that the Nazis also intended to eventually to [sic] exterminate the witnesses of their deeds’ (Gritten 1993, 9). Rather than being simply touched by the presence of the little girl, Schindler is here meant to realise the true scope of the Nazis’ genocidal plans. It is the scope of these plans and their progressive implementation which the script had always meant to convey to viewers, and initially it did so through a tight focus on Schindler’s perceptions and his gradual realisation of what was going on around him.

Yet, once Spielberg committed himself to the project after 1988, his main concern appears to have been to foreground the experiences of *Jewish* characters in the film, and to explicate the various stages of the Holocaust in a decidedly objective fashion



(notably through explanatory titles), rather than relying merely on Schindler's subjective responses to events. Zaillian later said: 'I wanted to focus on Schindler, and Schindler alone, and imagine events almost entirely through his eyes' (Weintraub 1998, 42). As late as the script he submitted on 31 January 1993, a few weeks before shooting began, Zaillian did not use titles explaining the overall progression of the Holocaust as the film would eventually do (Zaillian 1993). Also, at the end of the script there is no scene showing the Schindler Jews apparently walking from Schindler's factory into the Promised Land and gathering at Schindler's grave in Jerusalem.

Thus, going against what is often said about Spielberg and *Schindler's List*, his main contributions to the script development appear to have been a refusal of easy explanations, the foregrounding of the Jewish experience, and an emphasis on the broader political context of the personal story the film told.

### Conclusion

*Schindler's List* has had a similar impact on Spielberg's career as *E.T.* had after 1982, but whereas *E.T.* encouraged the public and the critics to associate Spielberg with family entertainment as well as encouraging Spielberg himself to focus on making family films, *Schindler's List* pointed in the opposite direction. Since 1993, Spielberg has become increasingly associated – both in his actual work and in the public and critical perception of his oeuvre – with 'serious' adult-oriented films. Such perceptions are no doubt useful shorthand for viewers and critics grappling with the enormous output of this most prolific of filmmakers. However, as I have tried to show, shorthand descriptions of the major trends and stages in Spielberg's career can also seriously distort the complex realities of his actual output. It is simply wrong to characterise Spielberg's output before *Schindler's List* as immature, or to reduce it to family entertainment. Indeed, before 1982, the many television programmes and films he produced contained little family fare, and despite his youth he was regarded already in the 1970s as a major filmmaker.

Any shorthand description of what kind of filmmaker Spielberg is can also easily misconstrue his motivations for selecting certain projects and his actual contributions to their realisation. The discussion of *Schindler's List* demonstrates that, however strongly he may be interested in visual spectacle, emotional impact, and/or serious issues, Spielberg was primarily concerned about having a workable script: in this case a script organised around the very gradual transformation of its central character. Once a workable script was in place, Spielberg was finally able to commit to the project, and he was compelled to do so by a whole host of personal, political, and other contextual factors. His specific contributions to the finished film would appear to include various elements not usually associated with the filmmaker, such as a refusal of easy explanations for Oskar Schindler's transformation and the broadening of the film's perspective beyond Schindler's experiences so as to capture both the systematic progression of the Nazis' destruction of Jews and the experiences of the Jews. Judging by the results of this investigation into the production of *Schindler's List*, we may conclude that perhaps we should ask more questions about this filmmaker rather than assume that we already know all the answers.

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