

Introduction

THE MAKING OF THE *SHOAH* ARCHIVE

P.S.: [...] I calculated that a can of film (the metal can+half an hour of sound and picture) weights [*sic*] 2 kilos and a half. I multiplied that, including the negative, the ¼ inch [audio] and the resumés and transcriptions and arrived to 2.600 kilos. (2 TONS+600 KILOS). Filminger would ship by plane to Washington the whole thing, including their work to the customs for 15.000 Francs.

—Letter from Sabine Mamou to Raye Farr, Film and Video Archive
Administrative Files, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

ON JANUARY 21, 1997, the *Shoah* archive reached the warehouse of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). Sabine Mamou had prepared the transfer from Paris to Washington, DC, of more than two tons of original materials accumulated during the making of Claude Lanzmann's cinematographic opus between 1973 and 1985. The sound editor of *Shoah*, Mamou later edited Lanzmann's *A Visitor from the Living* (1997) and *Sobibór, October 14, 1943, 4 p.m.* (2001), the first two documentaries made from the film's outtakes. The 155 cardboard boxes shipped by Filminger contained tin canisters with sixteen-millimeter silent color negatives and negative trims, quarter-inch audio tape reels, and interview transcripts and summaries.

Following the release of *Shoah*, this monumental filmic and paper archive remained scattered between the filmmaker's apartment in Paris and the LTC film laboratory in the suburb of Saint-Cloud. In 1994, Lanzmann discussed with the Holocaust historian and *Shoah* protagonist Raul Hilberg the possibility of selling the 220 hours of outtakes (originally estimated at 350 hours) to the USHMM, which had opened its doors only a year before. Hilberg had played a decisive role in the creation of the museum and, in particular, of its Permanent Exhibition, which Raye Farr directed between 1990 and 1993. On March 18, 1994, he recounted his conversation with Lanzmann in a letter addressed to Michael Berenbaum, the director of the museum's Research Institute that

housed the Film and Video Department. “I would be happy to be an intermediary in any feasible deal that would make the museum the capable custodian of his film, outtakes, transcripts, and records,” Hilberg wrote, before adding that Lanzmann wished for *Shoah* to be screened several times a year in the museum.¹ That fall, only a few days before Yom Kippur, Lanzmann visited the USHMM for the first time and met with Berenbaum and Farr, now director of the Film and Video Department, to discuss a possible acquisition. Lanzmann had prepared an eight-page document titled “Material of ‘Shoah’” detailing—and succinctly appraising through adjectives like “unique” and “extraordinary”—the contents of a filmic archive comprised of 185 hours of testimonies and 35 hours of location footage captured in Germany, Greece, Israel, Poland, Switzerland, and the United States. Only days before Lanzmann’s visit to the USHMM, and in the wake of the success of *Schindler’s List* (1993), Steven Spielberg had announced the creation of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation (today the USC Shoah Foundation). Motivated by the imminent passing of one of the last generations of survivors, he pledged to collect at least 50,000 filmed testimonies around the world over the next three years, effectively generating the largest oral history repository.²

Two decades earlier, a similar sense of urgency had permeated the making of *Shoah*, resulting in the creation of a unique archive of Holocaust testimonies. In a 1977 letter addressed to Roswell McClelland, the former War Refugee Board (WRB) representative in Switzerland, Lanzmann explains that the protagonists of his film “are the surviving witnesses” before deploring the fact that “in a few years from now it will be too late.”³ While working on *Shoah* for more than a decade, he accumulated the vast majority of nearly 200 hours of testimonies during the years 1978 and 1979. In a subsequent letter to McClelland, Lanzmann’s research assistant Irena Steinfeldt captures this rushed shooting schedule when she describes the filmmaker as “travelling all over the continent, working around the clock, without being able to pause for a moment.”⁴ This accelerated collection of testimonies over the course of two years attests to what Thomas Trezise terms a certain “anxiety of historical transmission” that itself accounts for the creation of equally colossal video archives such as the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation.⁵ At the same time, this “archival impulse” bears witness to Lanzmann’s own sense, revealed in his 1977 letter to McClelland, of a certain failure of cinema to represent the catastrophe—a failure from which emerged the production of a monumental film and, ultimately, an equally monumental archive intended to “restore this major event of contemporary history in all its magnitude.”⁶

On October 28, 1994, in the wake of Lanzmann's visit, the USHMM announced the establishment of the Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive. According to Berenbaum, this archive would serve—not unlike the mission of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation—as the “foremost repository for Holocaust-related moving images in the United States.” In turn, it would enable the USHMM to obtain and preserve “what otherwise might deteriorate—important material that would be lost to future generations.”⁷ There is of course some irony in the fact that the philanthropy of the director of *Schindler's List*, a Holocaust fiction that Lanzmann had dismissed only months earlier as a distortion of history, rendered possible the acquisition of the *Shoah* outtakes by the USHMM.⁸ Yet the mission of the newly founded archive perfectly encapsulated, in 1994, the status of the reels left on the cutting room floor of the LTC film laboratory and the urgency underlying their acquisition, restoration, and transfer to video format. Accordingly, Berenbaum and Farr spent the year 1995 making a case for the purchase of this unprecedented collection, all the while estimating preservation costs and potential technical challenges.

Neither archival footage nor oral history, the excluded material of Lanzmann's acclaimed work constituted a vast and distinct filmic record on the Holocaust. If the excluded footage was acquired, the role of the USHMM would greatly exceed that of a “custodian.” As envisioned by Berenbaum and Farr, the museum would effectively rescue, at a time when the last witnesses were disappearing, an immense repository of testimonies and ensure their transmission to future generations through public access. They also emphasized the constitutive openness of the *Shoah* collection, arguing that the excluded footage could be edited anew and deployed in museum exhibitions, films, and television broadcasts.⁹ In a letter to Berenbaum dated August 17, 1995, Hilberg further endorsed the purchase of the unused interviews of *Shoah*. Likening Lanzmann's opus to “a giant experiment in film making [*sic*],” he argued that existing scholarship on *Shoah*, no matter how insightful, could not be decisive without “the missing passages in the 340 [*sic*] omitted hours.”¹⁰

A crucial turning point in the acquisition process occurred in February 1996, when Berenbaum and Farr attended a screening of these “missing passages” organized by Lanzmann and Mamou in the Parisian suburb of Joinville-le-Pont. Over the course of nine days, they viewed portions of twenty-two interviews, out of the seventy recorded between 1973 and 1985. Among them were witnesses left out from the finished film and some of the most memorable protagonists of *Shoah*, notably the Chelmno survivor Simon Srebnik and the member of the Auschwitz *Sonderkommando* Filip Müller. The screening

included testimonies most highly regarded in “Material of ‘Shoah.’” In February 1996, Lanzmann selected the future protagonists of all but one—*The Karski Report* (2010)—of the documentaries he later made from *Shoah* outtakes: the “extraordinary” accounts of both Red Cross delegate Maurice Rossel (*A Visitor from the Living*) and survivor of the Sobibór uprising Yehuda Lerner (*Sobibór, October 14, 1943, 4 p.m.*); the “unique” narrative of Theresienstadt offered by Benjamin Muremelstein (*The Last of the Unjust*, 2013); the “heartbreaking” and “magnificent” stories of women survivors Paula Biren, Ruth Elias, Ada Lichtman, and Hanna Marton (*The Four Sisters*, 2017).¹¹ He also chose, among



FIGURE I.1. The cardboard boxes containing the *Shoah* outtakes in Joinville-le-Pont (Created by Claude Lanzmann during the filming of *Shoah*. Used by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority, Jerusalem).

several others, John Pehle (“Unique”) and Andre Steiner (“First class”), two protagonists in his investigation into wartime politics of rescue; the Kovno ghetto survivor Leib Garfunkel, who passed away shortly after the interview (“Heartbreaking”); and several perpetrators, including Karl Kretschmer, clandestinely recorded with a hidden camera, whom Lanzmann would recall years later in his memoir *The Patagonian Hare* (2009).

The selected testimonies partially shown in Joinville-le-Pont further underscored the uniqueness of the *Shoah* outtakes previously intimated by Berenbaum and Farr. “We concur that these interviews are among the highest quality personal testimonies on the subject that we have seen in our respective long careers in this field,” they boldly affirm in their report of the screening. Deeming Lanzmann’s interview methods “far more resonant” than those deployed by contemporaneous oral history projects of the Holocaust, whether that of the USHMM or the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University, they also stress the relative temporal proximity to the event of these testimonies captured two decades earlier and the heterogeneous nature of the collection as a whole. “It is not possible to place a specific dollar value on these films. On some levels they are priceless,” Berenbaum and Farr remark before listing potential documentaries that could be made using the *Shoah* outtakes. Anticipating *The Four Sisters*, *The Last of the Unjust*, and *Sobibór, October 14, 1943, 4 p.m.*, they specify “women in the Holocaust,” “Theresienstadt,” and “the uprising in Sobibor [*sic*]” as topics for these future films.¹²

Several months after the screening in Joinville-le-Pont, the Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive made its first major acquisition: the Claude Lanzmann *Shoah* Collection. The arrival of the outtakes at the museum’s off-site storage facility in January 1997 marked the commencement of an unprecedented preservation project more than twenty years in the making and estimated at two million dollars. The nearly twelve-hour-long Murlstein interview—the longest in the archive—alone cost over \$51,000 to restore and transfer to video.

What is today a digital archive comprised of interviews, location footage, and transcripts, jointly owned with Yad Vashem, began as “an enormous puzzle.”¹³ The first step of this puzzle entailed the minute reassembly of hundreds and hundreds of rolls and pieces of sixteen-millimeter original negatives, which bore not interviewee names but a manufactured edge code number. Then, these negatives had to be synchronized with the corresponding hundreds and hundreds of rolls and pieces of sixteen-millimeter magnetic

soundtrack. The initial organization of Lanzmann's filmic and paper archive was rendered all the more inscrutable by the absence of a master log during the making of *Shoah*, which would have contained interviewee names, interview locations and dates, and edge code information.¹⁴ Once re-created, interviews and location footage could be restored by an off-site film laboratory, transferred to video, cataloged, and, beginning in 2007, digitized and uploaded onto the USHMM website.

In 1998, the testimonies of Paula Biren, Ruth Elias, Leib Garfunkel, Karl Kretschmer, Filip Müller, and Gertrude Schneider were the first to be selected for preservation. With the exception of the testimony of Schneider, who appears briefly in the finished film alongside her unnamed mother, these interviews were partially shown during the screening in Joinville-le-Pont. In "Material of 'Shoah,'" Lanzmann deemed them among the most significant. All but two (Kretschmer and Müller) were in English, a language that, as an American institution, the USHMM prioritized. Finally, half of these inaugural interviews were conducted with women survivors. Largely missing from *Shoah*, they too were prioritized by the staff of the Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive during the early years of preservation.¹⁵



FIGURE 1.2. Tin canisters and reels of the interview with the Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg (Created by Claude Lanzmann during the filming of *Shoah*. Used by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, Jerusalem).

UNPACKING THE ARCHIVE

In his letter of endorsement, Hilberg never identifies the contents of the unused material—an archive of the catastrophe that the USHMM would only progressively, a handful of interviews at a time, reassemble and render accessible to the public. In 1995, the historian reiterates the now-familiar consecration of *Shoah* as an unparalleled filmic record of the Holocaust and of Lanzmann as a docu-auteur with a signature style.¹⁶ “The interviews were produced by one man,” the historian affirms. “They sprang from his conception and vision. Never did he use more than one camera. Never did he rehearse or repeat a series of questions and answers. Neither did he interpolate footage of 1933–1945. [...] For two or three years, Lanzmann cut and reduced these 350 [*sic*] hours to 9½ hours.”¹⁷

These words encapsulate not the excluded footage but a certain conceptualization of the finished film as a *sui generis* composition, devoid of archival images and indissociable from a certain discourse about the limits of Holocaust representation. This discourse is itself derived from Lanzmann’s writings; he was a director-critic in the style of the French New Wave, who in 1979, the final year of the shooting phase, published an essay condemning Marvin Chomsky’s award-winning American miniseries *Holocaust* and its fictionalization of the event—an artistic stance he likened to an ethical transgression and to which the film he was making would offer a counter-representation (in 1994, Lanzmann rebuked Spielberg in identical terms for his fictional reconstruction of the Holocaust in *Schindler’s List*).¹⁸ The significance of this authorial voice that, already in 1979 exceeds, all the while consecrating, *Shoah* finds an echo in Hilberg’s framing of the film as the work of the true auteur: “one man” endowed with an original “conception and vision” and a talent for eliciting testimonial performances sans rehearsal or repetitions. Since the release of *Shoah* in 1985, such uncritical panegyrics have repeatedly informed debates on the limits of representation and traumatic memory.

The outtakes salvaged by the USHMM, however, present a major challenge to this narrative of *Shoah* in rendering visible the significant contributions made by Lanzmann’s crew, as well as the process and inevitable selection over the course of which a work comes into existence. Rather than the “one-man” tradition of documentary cinema put forward by the historian, an important number of collaborators accompanied Lanzmann throughout the making of *Shoah*, among them some of the greatest talents of French cinema: William Lubtchansky, the celebrated cinematographer of the New Wave and of auteurs such as Jean-Luc Godard and Jacques Rivette; Dominique Chapuis, whose

career as cinematographer began in 1975 alongside Lubtchansky on the early video works of Godard; Caroline Champetier, Lubtchansky's assistant for *Shoah* and today the acclaimed cinematographer of Leos Carax, Xavier Beauvois, and Margarethe von Trotta, among many others; the sound engineer Bernard Aubouy, an expert of direct sound known for his contributions to the cinema of Jean Eustache and Diane Kurys; Mamou herself, deemed by the time of her death in 2003 "one of the most respected editors of French cinema," particularly of New Wave pioneers Agnès Varda and Jacques Demy;¹⁹ the editor Ziva Postec who, at the LTC film laboratory between September 1979 and April 1985, physically cut and spliced film frames, ultimately transforming the 230 hours of footage into a nine-and-a-half-hour work.²⁰

In 1983, Postec was filmed cutting *Shoah* reels by her director-neighbor Claude Thiébaud for his documentary short *Bernardins Bernardines*. The gesture she performs in front of the camera is far from insignificant: it calls our attention to all that Lanzmann had to exclude in order for the finished film to emerge as an unprecedented work of Holocaust representation, originating from his authorial "conception and vision." *Shoah*, in fact, is constructed around a series of omissions: the omission of the title "Holocaust" visible on the clapboard throughout the shooting phase, abandoned in the wake of the popular success of the eponymous miniseries; the omission of Lanzmann's investigation of politics of rescue, itself never evoked in the 1994 critique of *Schindler's List*, in which he condemns Spielberg's decision to focus on several hundred individuals saved rather than the six million murdered; the omission of the legacy of the foundational 1961 Eichmann trial, both in the selection of eyewitnesses and Lanzmann's significant engagement with the accusations leveled against the Jewish leadership by Hannah Arendt; the omission of archival images present in several interviews, beginning with the one filmed for *Shoah* in March 1976 with Leib Garfunkel; the omission of repetitions in unused takes; the omission of rehearsals in the form of preliminary interviews during which Lanzmann gathered extensive notes about each eyewitness that he subsequently used during their filmed testimonies; the omission of these notes visible in the outtakes; the omission of reverse shots of the filmmaker and the omission of a second camera used to record them; the omission of Lanzmann, whose largely off-frame authorial presence persists in the testimonial performances he elicits and produces, such as the tears of Filip Müller and of the "barber of Treblinka" Abraham Bomba; the omission of intersecting scenes of survival and remembrance—above all in the largely unedited testimonies of women survivors—that resist the momentary reliving of the past, or resurgence of deep memory, exemplified and universalized by *Shoah*.

Lawrence Langer introduced—and privileged—the category of deep memory in his groundbreaking study of the Fortunoff Video Archive, which he published several years after the release of Lanzmann’s film. In recent scholarship on the mediation of video interviews, notably those archived at Yale, this form of remembrance persists as a dominant index of measure in determining the authenticity and depth of traumatic experience.²¹

Shoah, writes Michael Renov, is a “massive (indeed, obsessive) project [...] a work of mourning [...] doomed to failure for Lanzmann, as for many of his witnesses. There will never be words enough to fill the void left by the six million.”²² Akin to the finished film and its obsessions—the Final Solution, the painstaking excavation of deep memory, the tracking shots in killing centers or “non-sites of memory” (to borrow Lanzmann’s terminology) devoid of traces of the past—the *Shoah* archive is equally massive and obsessive.²³ Extending beyond the years of extermination, it encompasses detailed accounts of the years of persecution in Nazi Germany; extending beyond the East, it investigates politics of rescue in the West; extending beyond the narratives of the male members of the *Sonderkommando*, tasked with disposing of the corpses, it retrieves over twenty hours of footage with women survivors. Further capturing the docu-auteur’s unceasing attempts at engendering reenactment, particularly through song, the excluded footage of *Shoah* also bears witness to his untiring search for perpetrators, carefully staged in front of the camera, and to his efforts to snatch their testimonies at all costs.

RECOVERING THE SHOAH OUTTAKES

An Archive of the Catastrophe recuperates this colossal repository attesting to an “anxiety of historical transmission” and to a work of mourning always incomplete and never ending. The term “catastrophe,” the English translation of the Hebrew word *sho’ah* (a word popularized by Lanzmann’s film in France, where the Holocaust is called “la Shoah”), designates the destruction of the European Jews; it also conveys an annihilation of unprecedented magnitude, to which the hundreds and hundreds of reels of filmed testimonies obsessively amassed bear witness.

This book approaches the study of the Claude Lanzmann *Shoah* Collection at the USHMM by focusing attention to these words—no matter how insufficient—recorded and relegated to the margins; to the reception and, at times, nonreception of alternative accounts of the catastrophe, as well as to the momentary suspension of authorial intent; to the shaping of testimony by

witnesses unseen and unheard; to processes of remembrance yet to be integrated into theoretical discourses on testimony and trauma. Accordingly, it challenges the continued rhetorical deployment of deep memory as a referent to not only the limits but also the ethics of representing the Holocaust and, more broadly, genocide. Positing the outtakes as critical and significant texts in unearthing new meanings and mobilizations of both the finished film and audiovisual testimony, this book argues that the omitted interviews underscore not the resurgence of but a resistance to this process of excavating the past. In keeping with the tradition of genetic criticism exemplified by the scholarship of film historian Sylvie Lindeperg, *An Archive of the Catastrophe* reconstructs the making of *Shoah* through a study of the excluded material while framing broader questions about Holocaust historiography, traumatic memory, and filmic legacies.²⁴

“One common misunderstanding of Lanzmann’s purpose in making *Shoah*,” Stuart Liebman aptly observes, “is that he wanted to provide a comprehensive history of the Holocaust in all its dimensions.”²⁵ Despite its size, the archive of testimonies and location footage rescued by the USHMM also does not encompass the catastrophe in its entirety. Although spanning the years of both persecution and extermination, the outtakes first and foremost reflect the major historiographical trends and debates—and their own omissions—concurrent with the making of *Shoah*. If Lanzmann investigated Arendt’s controversial condemnation of Jewish leaders in 1961 and the equally tendentious topic of wartime Allied inaction, he explored only minimally the experiences and survival strategies of women in ghettos and camps, and he barely integrated them in the finished film. In the seventies, women were still largely missing from the history of the Holocaust. Questions of gender would only begin to be voiced around the time of the release of the film, notably through the work of the feminist historian Joan Ringelheim who, already in 1979, had started interviewing women survivors.²⁶ The Claude Lanzmann *Shoah* Collection, then, is at once “conservative and revolutionary” (to borrow Amit Pinchevski’s characterization of the Fortunoff Video Archive).²⁷ Notwithstanding the testimonies of the ten Jewish women filmed for *Shoah*, the unused material primarily focuses on the perspectives of male eyewitnesses. Similarly, while largely restricted to the contemporaneous scholarship that informs Lanzmann’s investigation of the Holocaust in the seventies, the outtakes include rare interviews of Jewish leaders, as well as Nazis, the latter secretly filmed using emerging video technologies in revolutionary ways.

Rather than proceed chronologically, the four chapters of *An Archive of the Catastrophe* focus on contentious and uncharted historiographical legacies that,

in turn, reveal the “conservative and revolutionary” contours of Lanzmann’s vast inquiry. Varied archival sources inform this book’s narrative: the *Shoah* outtakes, the interview transcripts and summaries whose annotations made in the editing room further evidence the selection process between 1979 and 1985, the correspondence between the filmmaker and several protagonists of his investigation, the footage of the Eichmann trial, and oral testimonies of survivors previously interviewed for *Shoah*. The book also incorporates Lanzmann’s writings and, in particular, his account of the film’s making in *The Patagonian Hare*, an account itself constructed around a series of omissions and here recast through the lens of the material preserved by the USHMM.

Chapter 1, “The Formation of a Paradigm,” grounds the book’s undermining of the finished film as a *sui generis* cinematic work and of Lanzmann as a singular auteur through a critical narrative of the four principal phases in the genesis of *Shoah*. This chapter takes particular focus on the historiographical influences informing the selection and performances of witnesses, the decisive contributions of the film crew members, and the evolution—and contradictions—of Lanzmann’s directorial method. I begin with the preliminary research phase between 1973 and 1974, during which Lanzmann and his research assistants Corinna Coulmas and Irena Steinfeldt defined the scope of their investigation of the Holocaust and conducted hundreds of preliminary interviews. A major source were existing testimonies from trials, including the first Treblinka trial held in Dusseldorf in 1964, where two future protagonists of *Shoah* took the witness stand: the SS officer Franz Suchomel and the survivor Richard Glazar. Prior to being filmed by Lanzmann, the two men were extensively interviewed by Gitta Sereny for her journalistic biography, *Into That Darkness* (1974), of the death camp commandant Franz Stangl. In analyzing these overlapping testimonies, recovered in the excluded portions of their accounts for *Shoah*, I argue that Sereny effectively rehearsed Suchomel and Glazar for their subsequent testimonial performances retained in the finished film. The first recorded interviews with the Jewish leaders Garfunkel and Marmelstein in 1976 further reveal the significance of postwar trials for the making of Lanzmann’s opus. More than an inaugural probing into the Arendt controversy, however, these two unused testimonies also signify the imminent passing of survivors. At the same time, they capture an ethics of representation still largely in the making, whether in the aforementioned presence of archival images or the centrality of not deep but common memory.

This chapter further subverts the auteur myth through an in-depth analysis of the interviews secretly filmed with perpetrators—beginning in 1976—by

means of a Paluche, a miniature video camera equipped with an ultra-high-frequency transmitter that relayed images to a monitor in a minivan. The Paluche was the timely invention of Jean-Pierre Beauviala, who created his equipment in close collaboration with New Wave filmmakers and technicians, including Lubtchansky. In my analysis of this clandestine footage, I reveal the cinematographer's crucial role in providing Lanzmann with the technological means to record perpetrators, first and foremost, in converting the crew's minivan into a mobile video studio. Finally, I turn to the editing phase. In *The Patagonian Hare*, Lanzmann likens his selection process to the Leibnizian notion of the impossible, which denotes the existence of an infinite number of mutually exclusive possible worlds from which God chooses the most just and harmonious one. Refuting the finality of choice in the use of the impossible as a metaphor for the inevitable selection in the editing room, I theorize what it means for the finished film and the digitized outtakes to coexist.

In his account of the film's making, Lanzmann dismisses the significance of the Eichmann trial, which nevertheless foregrounded the public emergence of the witness and whose date—1961—constitutes a critical marker for the articulation of transnational memory politics.²⁸ Chapter 2, “Recasting 1961: *Shoah* and the Eichmann Trial,” offers an account of this obscured cinematic and historiographical filiation that unearths multifarious frameworks of remembrance. Likewise, this chapter repositions theoretical paradigms of testimony and trauma sustained by the finished film, notably including what Trezise terms “a silencing reenactment” exemplified in Bomba's oft-cited performance staged in a barbershop.³⁰ While further demonstrating the significance of the controversy sparked by Arendt's report of the trial, including in an unedited interview with the historian Yehuda Bauer, this chapter maps the ways in which Lanzmann's investigation and selection of witnesses for *Shoah* intersect with debates surrounding the emergence of Holocaust memory in Israel. Numerous outtakes address the contentious dichotomy between the supposed passivity of victims led “like sheep to their slaughter” and armed uprisings in ghettos and camps. Lanzmann not only filmed the two mythical figures of the Jewish resistance, Yitzhak “Antek” Zuckerman and Abba Kovner, but in fact, many of the male protagonists in the finished film either participated in revolts or escaped from extermination camps.

As this chapter demonstrates, these heroic narratives prevail in the excluded portions of their interviews and reveal, on the part of Lanzmann, a former member of the French Resistance, an admiration for and identification with these men, many of whom were his contemporaries. By contrast, the story

of the Sobibór revolt is silenced in the unedited testimony of Ada Lichtman, one of the most memorable witnesses of the Eichmann trial. An exceptional *mise-en-scène* premised on reenactment mediates her performance for *Shoah*: she recounts her experience as a seamstress in the extermination camp while mending dolls scattered over a coffee table. Beyond this staged performance, Lanzmann attempts to provoke the resurgence of deep memory by prompting her to sing several times. Lichtman, however, continuously reframes her testimonial performance through facial expressions of incredulity and by ultimately interrupting her own singing to comment on the lyrics. If her performance epitomizes the auteur's failure to mold her process of remembrance, such an analysis forces a sustained comparison in this chapter to the "silencing reenactment" of Bomba and other male protagonists. It also provides an opportunity to engage with the ethics of editing *Shoah* and the concept of the impossible. In omitting the striking verbal resistance of a woman survivor, Lanzmann, I argue, produced a universalizing—and overwhelmingly masculine—representation of traumatic memory in the present.

The recovery of Lichtman's testimonial performance calls attention to the absence of feminine perspectives in *Shoah*, an absence eloquently probed in a 1993 essay by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer. "What would it have meant [...]," they asked in their conclusion, "to confront masculine and feminine modes of survival and remembrance?"³⁰ This compelling question serves as the premise for the book's third chapter, "Off-Frame: Trauma and the Feminine," which recounts the exceptional stories of the remaining nine women survivors interviewed for *Shoah*. This chapter aims to respond to Hirsch and Spitzer not only by putting these narratives and performances in dialogue with the finished film. It also situates them within Lanzmann's broad investigation of the Holocaust, including the themes of Jewish leadership, Theresienstadt, and rescue politics. Central to my analysis is the reception of these gendered testimonies, which further illuminates the ethics of editing *Shoah*. Here I also stress the defining leitmotif of the tragedy of choice in these tales of survival that strikingly approximates the notion of the impossible.

I begin with Paula Biren, first of the five women to briefly appear in *Shoah*. Her testimony provides a rare portrait of the Łódź ghetto, as well as of its controversial leader Chaim Rumkowski and the Jewish police force. Biren herself worked in the women's squad. Rather than probe the moral choices that confronted Biren, however, Lanzmann unsuccessfully attempts to elicit from her an account that bears witness to the experiences of the men in the police. I then turn to his examination of the unique case of the Riga ghetto: in

December 1941, thirty thousand Latvian Jews were murdered to make room for the arrival of sixteen thousand Jews from the German Reich. In *Shoah*, Lanzmann never reveals that Schneider and her mother, who sing a Yiddish melody, are survivors of this ghetto. In the outtakes, the docu-auteur imposes his demands of Holocaust representation visible in the finished film through “a silencing reenactment” centered on songs from the Riga ghetto. The story of this unique ghetto is also recovered in the excluded joint testimony of Lore Oppenheimer and Hermann Ziering, the sole footage to juxtapose feminine and masculine perspectives.

In this chapter, I examine as well the unthinkable trauma underlying the story of Ruth Elias: pregnant when she arrived from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz, she ended her newborn’s life with an injection of morphine. This narrative, I argue, epitomizes the absence of gender differences in the finished film, while tragically exemplifying the impossible. I then turn to the years of persecution in Nazi Germany and the story of Inge Deutschkron. While she provides the longest testimony of any of the women survivors, the exclusion of a gendered narrative defines its reception: on camera, she never recounts how she and her mother survived the war in hiding. This chapter concludes by returning to the question of Jewish leadership in the material captured with Hansi Brand and Hanna Marton, neither of whom appear in *Shoah*. Their testimonies center on a unique episode that once more invokes the impossible: the 1944 negotiations between Eichmann and Jewish leaders in Budapest resulting in the rescue of 1,684 Jews, while four hundred thousand others were deported from Hungary to Auschwitz.

The book’s fourth and final chapter, “The Question of Rescue and Refugees,” details the unused investigation—unique in the *Shoah* archive for having been entirely left on the cutting room floor—of wartime efforts to save European Jewry. The year 1944 itself constitutes a pivotal moment in this chapter of the Holocaust. Invoking a shot reverse shot, it moves from East to West: from the Jews of Hungary, the largest Jewish community still alive, to the War Refugee Board, established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in January of that year; from the en masse deportation and annihilation of Hungarian Jewry between May and July, to the WRB’s attempt to rescue them. A tragic multidirectionality, I contend, also informs the year 1943 in the unused footage of *Shoah* and offers a unique counterpoint to the story of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, with which the finished film ends. On April 19, 1943, the day the revolt began, American and British delegates gathered in Bermuda to discuss possible measures to rescue the Jews of Europe. This conference, held thousands

of miles away from Warsaw, produced dismal results. More than the question of rescue, then, these outtakes reveal an extensive engagement with the controversial topic of Allied and, in particular, American inaction.

In this chapter, I frame my analysis of this excluded material in conversation with the so-called “Karski affair” sparked by the 2009 French publication of Yannick Haenel’s novel *The Messenger*. In his fictional portrait of the *Shoah* protagonist and Polish courier Jan Karski, who informed the Western governments of the annihilation, Haenel decries Allied indifference, despite their knowledge, to the plight of the Jews—a *parti pris* Lanzmann bitterly condemned in an article before making *The Karski Report*. As this chapter demonstrates, several of the “bystanders” in the West interviewed for *Shoah*, among them Karski, level on camera similar accusations as those subsequently voiced by Haenel. This excluded footage, I reveal, concomitantly recovers an attempt to recast, and effectively diminish, the controversy through the lens of a crisis of representation, encapsulated in a single question repeatedly posed by Lanzmann: how to imagine Treblinka from Washington, DC, or New York. Accordingly, those among the “bystanders” whom I term “messengers of the catastrophe” occupy a central position in this chapter. Beyond Karski, they include the story of Szmul “Artur” Zygielbojm, who, in the final days of the Warsaw ghetto revolt, committed suicide in London to protest the silence of the Allied governments he had tried to warn.

In 1994, Lanzmann returned to the question of rescue when he published his critique of *Schindler’s List*. Never invoking his unused investigation for *Shoah*, he does intimate the ways in which these outtakes with “bystanders” in the West established the roots of a representational dilemma. As though projecting onto Spielberg the very predicament that awaited him at the LTC film laboratory between 1979 and 1985, he writes: “I told myself he was going to be faced with a dilemma. He could not tell Schindler’s story without also saying what the Holocaust was.”³¹ In the end, it was Lanzmann himself who could not tell the story of both the destruction of the European Jews *and* of the efforts to save them. Nor could he include the condemnations against Jewish leaders or the gendered narratives of women survivors. Unvoiced, then, in his critique of *Schindler’s List* is the making of *Shoah* and the five and a half years Lanzmann spent composing with impossibles in the editing room.³² This book aims to tell that story.