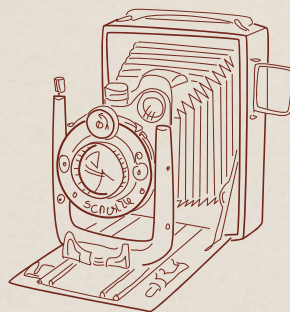
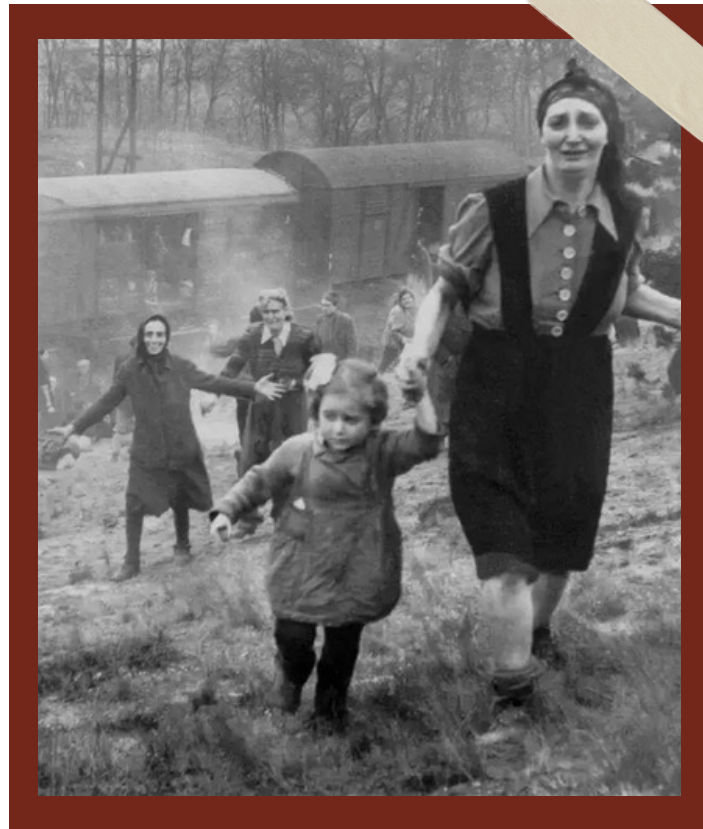


THE AUGUSTA CHIWY
FOUNDATION



A Forgotten Photograph...an Unforgettable Story



"The picture defies expectations. When the terms 'Holocaust' and 'trains' are paired in an online image search, the most common result is that of people being transported to killing centers—but this incredible photograph shows exactly the opposite. And there are many things about this story that will defy expectations. Fifteen years after I brought this haunting image to the light of day, it has been called one of the most powerful photographs of the 21st century..."

"For over half a century, a copy of this photograph and others were hidden away in a shoebox in the back of an old soldier's closet. By spending time with this soldier, I was able to set in motion an extraordinary confluence of events that unfolded organically in the second half of my career as a history teacher. Many of the children who suffered on that train found me, and I was able to link them forever with the men who I had come to know and love, the American GIs who saved them that beautiful April morning."

—Matthew Rozell, author, "A Train Near Magdeburg"

The photograph is unique in all of history. On a spring morning almost 80 years ago, deep in the heart of Nazi Germany, Major Clarence L. Benjamin of the 743rd Tank Battalion, US Army captured the moment when more than 2,500 men, women, and children were liberated. Entire families had been packed into cattle cars and bound for the gas chambers of Theresienstadt. The train carrying them was forced to stop to avoid a confrontation with the Russian army and was ultimately abandoned by the Nazi guards. In a forest near Magdeburg, the train and its occupants were found by US soldiers, who showed incredible compassion in the face of horrifying cruelty.

Now preserved in the National Archives of the United States, it is the only known photograph of the moment of liberation of Holocaust survivors. It is an image of unspeakable joy emerging from overwhelming despair.



A Train Near Magdeburg is a documentary film currently in production that tells the stories of the survivors, soldiers, and medical personnel whose paths all converged on that April morning. As their stories unfold, audiences will see how an act of mercy changed the course of the future for thousands. This story will have an incalculable impact when it is shared around the world.

Produced by the Augusta Chiwy Foundation, a nonprofit organization, the film will be accompanied by educational materials that will encourage student discussion about the dangers of bigotry and the power of compassion. The film and its curriculum will provide young people with a model of how to respond when they encounter hatred, discrimination, and violence.

Now, donors can bring this inspiring story to light. Through their generous gifts, they will honor survivors, celebrate heroes, and create a legacy of hope for future generations. Donors will work alongside artists, historians, and educators from all over the world. Together, they will create a fitting tribute to ordinary people who showed extraordinary kindness, and bear witness so that such cruelties might never be repeated.

ABOUT THE AUGUSTA CHIWY FOUNDATION



The Augusta Chiwy Foundation is a nonprofit organization that produces documentary films about acts of great personal heroism. Through its films, the Foundation inspires audiences to selflessly serve others today. Each documentary is accompanied by an educational curriculum that reinforces the themes and messages of the story, and is freely available for use in classrooms, community groups, and beyond.

“There are countless forgotten stories of men, women, and children from all walks of life who have had a major impact on people throughout history through their selfless acts of kindness and compassion,” says Steven E. Croft, Chairman of the Board of the Augusta Chiwy Foundation. “Each and every one of these amazing stories needs to be brought to life in film and through education so that generations to come will learn and believe that every person has a voice in history, and that the harmony of all cultures is paramount for humanity.”

The story of the Foundation’s namesake is told in its first film, *Searching for Augusta: The Forgotten Angel of Bastogne*. Augusta Chiwy was a Belgian nurse who showed extraordinary bravery treating American soldiers during the massive German offensive of the Battle of the Bulge. She faced incredible challenges. As a black woman, many of her patients treated her with racist contempt. The violence was unrelenting, and Augusta narrowly escaped death while caring for the wounded. She lacked running water, proper equipment, and medicine. Despite all this, she persisted in her duty.

The Emmy Award-winning film has reached television audiences of over 100 million viewing households in the US, and in more than 180 countries worldwide. It was chosen by American Public Television for broadcast on PBS stations across the United States, and it is currently streaming on Amazon Prime and available for purchase on iTunes. It has been screened for dignitaries on both sides of the Atlantic.

The success of *Searching for Augusta* has positioned the Augusta Chiwy Foundation as the ideal organization to bring *A Train Near Magdeburg* to audiences around the world. The Foundation’s team has the production experience and expertise necessary to create high-quality documentaries. They have relationships with distributors who will ensure the film gets the viewership it deserves. And the Foundation has earned the esteem of audiences and filmmakers alike. Now this team, led by Emmy Award-winning director and producer Mike Edwards, is ready to bring a new story of heroism to life.

About Mike Edwards



Mike Edwards is a gifted cinematic storyteller. In 2002, he founded The 5 Stones Group, a content development and production company based in Columbus, Ohio. Mike and his creative team at The 5 Stones Group are continually sought after by the world's leading brands for their excellent cinematic storytelling that connects with the hearts and minds of audiences worldwide. The company has won 18 Emmy Awards.

Mike directed *Searching for Augusta* and is currently directing *A Train Near Magdeburg*.

About Matthew Rozell



Matthew A. Rozell is an award-winning author, history teacher, blogger, and speaker. He is the author of "A Train Near Magdeburg: A Teacher's Journey into the Holocaust and the Reuniting of the Survivors and Liberators, 70 Years On." The book is the basis for the documentary being produced by the Augusta Chiwy Foundation. In the book, he recounts his chance discovery of Major Benjamin's photograph and his experience

reuniting over 275 Holocaust survivors with their American liberators.

During his 30-year career teaching high school History and Social Studies, Matthew specialized in the teaching of World War II and the Holocaust. His teaching experiences have been filmed for the CBS Evening News, NBC Learn, the Israeli Broadcast Authority, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the New York State United Teachers. He and his former students were featured as the "ABC World News Persons of the Week" in 2009.

Matthew has earned many honors for his work as an educator. He was named History Teacher of the Year by the Organization of American Historians in 2010. He is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Teacher Fellow and a graduate of the International School at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel's Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority. In 2016, he was the recipient of the New York State Education Department's highest award for teaching about the Holocaust and human rights.

Matthew's eight books on World War II and the Holocaust have sold over 250,000 copies.





“The significance of the story is always: you have to learn from history, or if not, history will repeat itself. That’s the biggest debt you owe your children. *Teach them how to be good.*”

—Judah Samet, Holocaust Survivor liberated from the train

The story of *A Train Near Magdeburg* takes place during one of the darkest chapters of human history. Vile words led to discrimination, discrimination led to dehumanization, and dehumanization led to genocide. The Holocaust is the ultimate outcome of hatred. It is our responsibility to bear witness to these horrors, to listen to those who experienced them firsthand, and to prevent hatred and violence from taking root in our own communities.

But the Holocaust is fading from our collective memory. In 2018, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) released the results of a survey on Holocaust education and awareness. [1] More than 1,000 American adults were surveyed on their perceptions and knowledge. The findings were startling:

- ▶ **22%** of millennials (adults ages 18 to 34) surveyed hadn’t heard or were not sure if they had heard of the Holocaust.
- ▶ **41%** of millennials surveyed believe that just two million Jews or fewer were killed during the Holocaust—a far cry from the true death toll of approximately six million.
- ▶ **49%** of millennials surveyed could not name a single concentration camp.

Despite these troubling findings, there is reason for hope. Ninety-three percent of those surveyed believe that all students should learn about the Holocaust. Eighty-three percent believe that Holocaust education is important because it will prevent similar atrocities.

As the number of living Holocaust survivors dwindles, it is paramount that their accounts be preserved. According to the Claims Conference, there are 400,000 Jews living worldwide who survived or fled persecution by the Nazis. [2] Many of them are now in their eighties and nineties. Future generations must see their faces and hear them recount their experiences in their own words if they are to understand the cost of hatred.

[1] https://www.claimscon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Holocaust-Knowledge-Awareness-Study_Executive-Summary-2018.pdf

[2] <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2020/01/25/archivists-are-racing-to-identify-every-jewish-holocaust-victim>

For *A Train Near Magdeburg*, the Foundation has fortunately filmed the accounts of many survivors and liberators who have since passed away. These pre-production interviews are precious resources. This documentary will keep their stories and their memories alive for years to come.

We are called to be witnesses, to share and remember so that this abominable cruelty never happens again. The best way that we can honor the victims of persecution and genocide is to prevent the spread of hatred around the world. By telling the story of *A Train Near Magdeburg*, we become a powerful voice for change.

History that Speaks to the Heart

The story of the train near Magdeburg is already inspiring students who encounter it. A high school teacher in Illinois recently incorporated Matthew Rozell's book into a history unit in her classroom. When asked about the impact the story had on them, students shared heartfelt responses:

"I cannot begin to understand how humble the American GIs were. They did not want to be known as heroes and I feel like today so many people want recognition."

—Ella

"They stopped everything they were doing to help."

—Adam

As part of the unit, students were asked to make a personal commitment to share the story with someone. One student wrote,

"[I will tell this story to] my children. The Holocaust is one of those historical events that must be remembered and shared for the sake of humanity."

Imagine the impact this story will have when it is shared on film with young people across the country and around the world.



U.S. Army Liberators George Gross and Carrol S. Walsh, 1945.

The Augusta Chiwy Foundation has assembled a prestigious team for *A Train Near Magdeburg*. Esteemed researchers will ensure the integrity and accuracy of the film. Artists will convey the emotional impact of the story. And distributors will bring the story to audiences around the world.

Confirmed partners and artistic elements of the film include:

- ▶ **Violins of Hope** – This private collection of violins, violas, and cellos collected since the end of World War II will feature on the film's soundtrack. Many of the violins in the collection were played in concentration camps. The Nazis confiscated thousands of instruments from Jews all over Europe. Violins of Hope provides the ultimate answer to their plan to annihilate a people and their culture.
- ▶ **Joshua Bell** – One of the most celebrated violinists of our time, Joshua Bell will score the finished film. His career as a soloist, chamber musician, recording artist, conductor, and director spans over thirty years. In 2011, he was named the Music Director of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields in London, one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world.
- ▶ **The Ervin Abadi Holocaust Artwork** – Ervin Abadi's ink drawings, sketches, and watercolor paintings depicting his experiences of the Holocaust will be included in the film. A Hungarian Jew from Budapest, Abadi was on the train near Magdeburg when American forces liberated the people onboard. He said of his artwork, "Let these drawings serve as proof of my everlasting gratitude towards those to whom I owe my life...to the soldiers of the United States Army."
- ▶ **The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** – Matthew Rozell, author of "A Train Near Magdeburg," is a teaching fellow at the Holocaust Memorial Museum. Through this connection, the museum's artifacts and archival materials will be available to the production team.
- ▶ **The USC Shoah Foundation** – Home to the largest audiovisual collection of Holocaust survivor testimonies in the world, The USC Shoah Foundation has committed to allow the film's crew full access to their archives. The Foundation endeavors "to develop empathy, understanding, and respect through testimony," sharing firsthand accounts of genocide to empower everyone to stand against hatred.

► **American Public Television** – The Public Broadcasting Service has pre-approved *A Train Near Magdeburg* to air on more than 200 PBS television stations nationwide. The Augusta Chiwy Foundation is also in talks with a prominent international distributor to bring the story to audiences outside the US.

When it is complete, *A Train Near Magdeburg* will be a testament to the power of collaboration, and donors will be honored as valued contributors.





"It's not for my sake, it's for the sake of humanity, that you will remember."

—Steve Barry, Holocaust Survivor liberated from the train

Donors have a vital role to play in the story of *A Train Near Magdeburg*. The Foundation has been hard at work on the film for six years, conducting research, collecting footage, and reuniting survivors with their liberators. Mike Edwards and his crew have travelled to Germany, where they have walked in the footsteps of the men, women, and children who were aboard that train, and the soldiers and medical personnel who found them.

Now, generous visionary partners will ensure that this story reaches a worldwide audience. It will cost an estimated **\$2 million** to produce *A Train Near Magdeburg*, develop accompanying educational materials, and conduct screenings and outreach events.

- ▶ Research, Development, and Scripting - **\$150,000**
- ▶ Pre-Production - **\$150,000**
- ▶ Production and Principal Photography - **\$500,000**
- ▶ Voiceover Talent and Cast - **\$200,000**
- ▶ Editing and Completion - **\$350,000**
- ▶ Marketing and Distribution - **\$100,000**
- ▶ Educational Curriculum Development - **\$50,000**
- ▶ Administration and Development - **\$150,000**
- ▶ Screening Events and Outreach - **\$350,000**

Donor levels will be offered as follows:

- ▶ **\$1,000,000 – Executive Producer** (with appropriate naming recognition, based upon distribution confines). Up to a maximum of two Executive Producers (categorically exclusive).
- ▶ **\$500,000 – Co-Executive Producer** (with appropriate naming recognition, based upon distribution confines). Up to a maximum of two Co-Executive Producers (categorically exclusive).
- ▶ **\$250,000 – Contributing Producer** (with appropriate naming recognition, based upon distribution confines). Up to a maximum of two Contributing Producers (categorically exclusive).

- ▶| **\$100,000 – Screening Sponsor** (Sponsor will be afforded all naming recognition for the film’s screening tour throughout multiple locations in the US). Screenings will occur before the film’s worldwide distribution with venues and dates to be determined. Up to a maximum of three Screening Sponsors (categorically exclusive).
- ▶| **\$50,000 – Educational Sponsor** (Sponsor will be afforded naming recognition in all materials utilized for external education and related curriculum). Up to a maximum of three Educational Sponsors (categorically exclusive).

The film will be funded through the Augusta Chiwy Foundation, which is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. Once *A Train Near Magdeburg* is fully funded, any additional gifts will go toward the development of future films that reveal inspirational examples of personal courage and leadership, inspire cultural harmony through positive actions, and preserve stories of individuals whose actions affected the outcome of historic events.



Major Benjamin’s photograph captures the moment when thousands of lives were saved. When the people on board the train needed them most, he and the soldiers of his battalion did not stand by. They were not humanitarians, but in that moment, their common humanity mattered above all else.

Your gift will make a difference. When donors bring the story of *A Train Near Magdeburg* to life on film, they will inspire audiences around the world to stand for the rights and freedoms of all people. Young people who watch this film will see that they can make a difference by acting with compassion. In the face of cruelty, they will discover that they are capable of extraordinary courage.

This story must not be forgotten. This photograph must not fade into history. Because we know the story, we are called to share it. We have in our hands the means to build a more just, equitable, and humane future.

We owe it to the survivors. We owe it to the world.

Thank you for leaving a legacy of hope and inspiration.



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