

TO SURVIVE,
HE HAD TO
BECOME HIM.

TO SAVE THEM,
HE HAD TO
CHALLENGE
WHO HE WAS.

THE MAN I HAD TO BE

A STORY OF IDENTITY, SURVIVAL
AND THE COST OF MORALITY

A FEATURE FILM
WRITTEN BY SCOTT QUINN

THE MAN I HAD TO BE

Feature Film

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LOGLINE

A Jewish prisoner escapes a bombed transport during WWII, only to survive by assuming the identity of a dead SS officer—forcing him into a deadly masquerade where every lie brings him closer to saving his family, and deeper into becoming the very monster he’s fleeing.

GENRE

Psychological Thriller / Historical Drama

TONE

Tense. Controlled. Morally complex. Character-driven.

The film sustains a constant psychological pressure. Violence is not heightened—it is procedural, systemic, and indifferent. The tension comes from proximity, not spectacle.

Comparables:

- *Son of Saul*
- *The Lives of Others*
- *The Counterfeiters*
- *Come and See*

CORE THEMES

- Identity vs Survival
- Moral Corrosion
- Complicity within Systems
- Power Through Perception
- The Cost of Protecting Family

SYNOPSIS

After an Allied air raid shatters a prisoner transport, Jakob Rosenfeld escapes into the forest—only to witness his wife and young daughter recaptured and taken away.

Desperate to find them, Jakob stumbles upon a dying SS officer and makes an unthinkable choice: he takes the man's uniform and identity.

Now disguised as SS-Obersturmführer Karl Fischer, Jakob is thrust into the machinery of the Nazi war system. Soldiers salute him. Officers defer to him. And every moment requires him to perform the role of a man he despises.

His disguise grants access—to transport hubs, manifests, and prisoner movements—his only path to locating his family. But with each step deeper into the system, the cost escalates.

He witnesses brutality he cannot stop.

Signs documents that condemn innocents.

Maintains authority that protects him—but destroys others.

As suspicion grows around him, Jakob becomes entangled with Erich Vogel, a perceptive SS officer whose scrutiny sharpens with every interaction.

Jakob's journey becomes a psychological crucible:

To save his family, he must convincingly embody the uniform that is destroying him.

Each step forward demands a piece of his identity.

Each lie risks exposure and execution.

And each moment forces the question:

How far can a man go to save the people he loves before he becomes the thing he hates?

PROTAGONIST

Jakob Rosenfeld

A man forced into survival through transformation.

- Observant, controlled, intelligent
- Not driven by ideology, only necessity
- Emotion contained beneath performance

Arc:

- Prisoner
- Survivor
- Impostor
- Participant
- Father

His greatest conflict is internal: Maintaining identity while performing its opposite

ANTAGONIST

Erich Vogel

A precise and controlled SS officer.

- Intelligent and perceptive
- Patient, not reactive
- Represents ideological clarity

Vogel is not chaotic. He is composed.

He doesn't hunt emotionally.

He verifies.

CENTRAL CONFLICT

This is not a story of escape.

It is a story of: survival inside a system that demands moral surrender

The question is not: can

Jakob survive

But: what he becomes in order to

do so

STRUCTURE

ACT I

- Transport escape
- Identity taken
- First successful deception

ACT II

- Integration into the system
- Increasing authority
- Escalating moral compromise
- Relationship with Vogel
- Discovery of family

ACT III

- Exposure
- Camp escape
- System collapse
- Train confrontation
- Final moral resolution

WORLD

Occupied Europe during WWII.

A functioning system:

- rail infrastructure
- transport logistics
- camps
- administration The world is not chaotic.

It is:

organized, efficient, and indifferent

VISUAL LANGUAGE

- Intimate framing
- Controlled camera movement
- Natural light and desaturated palette
- Minimal visual stylization

The camera stays close to Jakob—trapped within his experience.

SOUND DESIGN

- Minimal score
- Environmental sound drives tension:
 - trains
 - boots
 - breath
 - distant gunfire

Silence is used deliberately.

AUDIENCE POSITION

The audience is placed inside Jakob's perspective.

They are not observing from distance.

They are experiencing:

the cost of each decision in real time

CASTING

Two central performances drive the film:

- Jakob (lead)
- Vogel (antagonist)

The film depends on:

- restraint
- control
- psychological depth

DIRECTOR REQUIREMENT

This material requires a director who can:

- sustain tension without release
- handle historical sensitivity with precision
- prioritize performance over spectacle

The film is defined by tone.

POSITIONING

A contained, performance-led WWII psychological drama with international appeal.

- Festival-driven
- Prestige positioning
- Actor-focused

FINAL STATEMENT

This is a story about survival through transformation.

Not resistance. Not rebellion.

But adaptation.

A man survives by becoming what he hates.

And must live with what remains.