

We Have Ways of Making You Believe: The Eichmann Trial as seen in "The Specialist"

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The witness is asked why he got on the train and why he did not resist. He is silent for ten seconds and then the film cuts away. The reason he did not answer those questions is because he was never asked them. The film is "The Specialist," produced and directed by Israeli-born Eyal Sivan. This paper will attempt to put the above moment and others like it in their correct context.

The 1961 Jerusalem trial of Adolf Eichmann was recorded on video by producer Milton Fruchtmann. Four courtroom cameras were manned by a team headed by Rolf M. Kneller. The director, Leo Hurwitz, determined which of the four points of view would be recorded, so that for any given moment in the trial, only what one of the four cameras saw was ever taped. After the trial, the original material and a partial duplicate set made for preservation reasons were sent to the United States, where the company that had taped the trial had its offices. The tapes returned to Israel in the early 1970s and were housed at what is today the Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive. It appears that the duplicate set was then intact, though some originals were missing. These two-inch tapes, together with others held by Israel's State Archive, were subsequently copied onto 176 U-Matic ($\frac{3}{4}$ inch) videocassettes and were accessible, for a fee. Throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s, the Archive continued to give prominence to this collection in its publicity and use was made of it in many productions dealing with the trial. In the mid-1990s, as the result of a decision by then-State Archivist Evyatar Friesel, the State Archive funded the creation of two duplicate sets to the Beta digital format. All surviving two-inch material held by both archives was copied in this project, including originals, preservation duplicates and broadcast selections. Of the two Beta digital sets, each containing over 350 cassettes, one was kept by the Spielberg Archive for use in research and production; the other, created for preservation purposes only, was to remain unused at the State Archive. It was at that time that production of "The Specialist," or, as it is also known, "A Specialist," began.

"The Specialist" is a two-hour film made, bar one shot, from the original trial tapes. It claims its inspiration from Hannah Arendt's book "Eichmann in Jerusalem." No less a Holocaust authority than Professor Yehuda Bauer has suggested to me that a film based on her book cannot be worthy of analysis. I feel "The Specialist" merits attention for at least two reasons. One is the degree of public acceptance it has garnered. The other is that it affords the opportunity for a particularly rare type of case study, owing to the fact that almost everything seen in it comes from a single archival source.

I wish to be open about my own involvement in this story. I knew Eyal Sivan personally in the late 1970s when we were both high school students in Jerusalem. In the early 1990s, as film critic of "The Jerusalem Post," I defended his film "Yizkor: Slaves of Memory" against hostile reactions. As a staff member of the Spielberg Archive I was privy to what took place during production of "The Specialist" and had access to the unedited originals of the trial tapes. My position at the Archive does not require me to engage in critical evaluations of films made using the Archive's resources. These lines are written in my capacity as a private individual to whom the truth is important. Although the political ramifications of this topic are many, any assertion that I hold political views opposed to those of Sivan, which might conceivably motivate an attack on "The Specialist," would not withstand scrutiny.

I wish to commence with a hypothesis. If one were a filmmaker with a political agenda that could

benefit from a re-evaluation of the Eichmann trial, one that made Eichmann seem a harmless pawn used by the Zionist establishment to consolidate the myth of Jewish victimhood that provides the moral authority for the existence of the State of Israel, how might one proceed? A film backing that position would seem credible if it were made from authentic material. Public relations strategies could ensure exposure for the film. It could claim to be based on a controversial book. It would attract more attention than a television documentary if it were produced on film for cinema exhibition, thus becoming an "event." It could be claimed that the original material was difficult to find, or partially inaccessible, or even that the film was the result of a successful battle against political censorship. In all the above cases, the public could be enticed by the promise of seeing material never before available. In addition to the usual plethora of press releases and interviews that accompany film festival screenings, a book could be published to attract still more serious attention and help to slant the issues in a way that suits the filmmaker.

A film with such an aim must make Eichmann look as good as possible while making the other side look as bad as possible. Admittedly, it is not easy to make a man look good when he does not deny that he played a major role in sending millions of innocent people to their deaths. But one can highlight his willingness to talk and focus on his most harmless traits. One can give the most serious attention to witnesses who recall him as fair and reasonable. One must avoid showing any evidence that could contradict this impression. The prosecutor, on the other hand, must be shown as menacing, impatient and manipulative and most of the witnesses he calls must seem irrelevant, unreliable and prone to exaggeration. Once again, one must avoid showing any evidence that could contradict this impression. Whenever possible, similarities between Eichmann and the prosecutor should be stressed. This could help subtly to push the message that both men are somehow equivalent, the prosecutor eagerly carrying out his task on behalf of the Zionist establishment, in much the same way as Eichmann had merely been doing his job for the Nazis two decades earlier. The task of conveying this message is eased slightly by the fact that Gideon Hausner is a vigorous prosecutor, whereas Eichmann is seen only as a mild-mannered prisoner in the dock.

The above task would be facilitated if one could show on screen:

- 1) The external parallels between Eichmann and Hausner;
- 2) Hausner's bloodlust contrasted with Eichmann's calm concern for detail;
- 3) Eichmann's replies to questions contrasted with Hausner's disdain of them;
- 4) Witnesses who
 - a) cannot answer questions about their own behavior
 - b) make preposterous statements with an air of great authority
 - c) seem to be entertaining the court in an atmosphere of fun
 - d) cause criticism of Hausner for bringing irrelevant witnesses;
- 5) Witnesses who recall Eichmann as a civil official who obeyed superiors.

"The Specialist" contains all of these and all are fakes, from obvious feats of editing to

fabrications of exchanges that never took place. Following are their descriptions and those of the corresponding moments in the unedited video.

1) Eichmann asks to leave his booth in order to see a map on the wall. There is a tense pause and eerie musical tones begin softly to sound. Hausner looks earnestly at the judges' bench. The judge agrees and Eichmann leaves the booth. The quality of both picture and sound deteriorates, rendering his words largely unintelligible, and the eerie music grows in intensity. Hausner joins him and the two are seen from the back standing side by side. Both are dressed in black and are balding in a similar pattern and the picture quality is by now so reduced that the two become almost indistinguishable one from another.

In the original the camera never leaves Eichmann as he requests and receives permission to exit the booth, nor is there any tense delay as the judge grants it. Images of Hausner and the judge at that moment were never recorded. The shots came from elsewhere. Sound and picture for the shot of Eichmann and Hausner at the map are unimpaired. The reduction in sound quality, which forces one's focus to the picture, and the reduction in image quality, which, in the absence of detail, emphasizes the broad similarities between the two, were both artificially introduced. There was, of course, no music.

Later in the film Hausner and Eichmann are seen in successive shots, both engaging in similar mannerisms with their hands. The two shots came from different parts of the original.

2) Hausner describes Eichmann as the destroyer of a people, an enemy of the human race, who was born a man, but lived as a tiger in the jungle, committing deeds that placed him beyond the boundary dividing man from beast. He asks the court to find that he acted out of lust and enthusiasm. A montage of shots and phrases, lasting about 55 seconds, begins, accompanied by nightmarish music. The visuals include Hausner wagging his finger and using exaggerated gestures. One close-up shows only a clenched hand. Among the words and phrases, some shouted, that can be made out are "six million" (followed by a sibilant effect on the soundtrack), "they are all Fascists, they are all dictators" and "they are all antisemites." At the end of this montage the music abruptly stops and Hausner demands the death penalty. The music resumes as the film's main title appears, again ceasing abruptly. Eichmann is seen in medium close-up in the glass booth, cleaning his glasses, blowing away dust on his desk and whisking at it with his handkerchief. There is a blackout and then a member of the public, shouting abuse, is removed from the chamber.

That this sequence differs from the original trial record is clear; the vehement, relentlessly attacking, wildly gesticulating figure of Hausner is transparently the result of nothing but editing. The subsequent shots of Eichmann and the man shouting come from different parts of the trial. These scenes introduce both Hausner and Eichmann to viewers of "The Specialist."

3) Hausner asks Eichmann a question. As Eichmann answers, Hausner turns away and is later shown still looking away with a disinterested expression.

There was originally one shot of Hausner looking in Eichmann's direction. It has been removed and replaced by those described above.

4)

a) Hausner asks "Why didn't you resist? Why did you get on the train?" The witness seen onscreen is silent for ten seconds and is not seen again.

Hausner originally posed those questions to Ya'acov Gurfein, who replied that by 1943, when the events under discussion took place, he and the others with whom he was to be deported to Belzec no longer had any strength and wished it all to be over quickly. In "The Specialist," though the questions to Gurfein are heard, his reply is not, nor is he shown. The soundtrack of the questions has been laid over the image of another witness, Avraham Lindwasser. At that point in Lindwasser's testimony, he had just related how, while working at Treblinka extracting gold teeth from corpses, he had recognized his sister's body. A pause in the questioning ensued, to permit him to recover from the emotional strain of recalling that moment. In "The Specialist" it is that pause which is shown as the response to Hausner's questions to Gurfein.

b) A witness states firmly "He said to me that Eichmann influenced Hitler."

This statement is presented totally devoid of context. The witness is Judge Michael Musmanno and the "he" of his statement was former German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, who was interviewed in captivity by Musmanno shortly after the war. Musmanno actually continued: "Of course, I'll be frank to say that I did not accept that, because I could not conceive of anyone influencing Hitler any more than one could influence a belching volcano. Ribbentrop was a cringing sycophant of Hitler and attempted to defend him, indicating and stating vociferously that Hitler was not in the wrong and he regretted so much that Hitler had made the mistake of putting so much power into the hands of Adolf Eichmann." Eichmann's counsel, Robert Servatius, asked Musmanno once more whether he believed Ribbentrop. Musmanno's response was "I disbelieved him when he said that Eichmann influenced Hitler. That to me seemed nonsense. But I did believe him, and there was no doubt whatsoever in my mind, that Hitler had the utmost faith in Adolf Eichmann and put into his hands, through Himmler, this program of the extermination of the Jewish people to which Hitler had referred in his speech in the Reichstag in 1939."

c) Sandwiching the shot of Musmanno are two in which a man barks grotesquely in German. In the first, he exclaims "Do you know who I am? I am in charge of the operation!" In the second he rasps "Goods for blood! Blood for goods!" As the second shot ends, the man seems to be indicating his satisfaction at having entertained, while the cut away from him truncates the beginning of what promises to be a loud burst of courtroom laughter.

The witness Joel Brand is attempting to convey Eichmann's tone when he offered to sell one million Jews for goods. Unedited, he next says "That was his tone of voice then." The satisfied expression is illusory, a fleeting grimace from the effort of impersonating Eichmann. Brand is serious throughout. The laughter heard at the same moment as that expression flits across Brand's features is "canned laughter" not present on the original soundtrack. (This is not the only use of "canned laughter" in "The Specialist." Witness Leslie Gordon, seen earlier in the film, is asked whether Eichmann looks "now" as he did "then." Gordon says "No, he looks much better - much better than he should look." The judge rebukes Gordon for this comment and Gordon apologizes. In "The Specialist" Gordon's remark is followed by scattered laughter, including the laugh of a woman close to the microphone. In the original, there is only a ripple of murmuring in response, but no laughter. Although Sivan claims to have used audio tapes of the trial, of better sound quality than the videotapes, on his soundtrack, comparison does not reveal differences that could account for laughter being audible on one, yet totally absent from the other.)

d) Just after a five-minute montage of forty witnesses (the penultimate witness is Lindwasser not answering Gurfein's questions), partisan and poet Abba Kovner expresses his

abhorrence of the hint that the question of why the Jews did not revolt could contain an accusation. The judge then tells Hausner that many parts of this testimony have strayed from the subject of the trial and that the prosecution must conduct itself according to the court's view of the proceedings. Hausner claims that the prosecution does so, but the judge says he does not see that this message has gotten through sufficiently. Hausner suggests that maybe this is because the court does not yet know what else the prosecution wishes to bring before it, but the judge cuts him off by stating that the general picture was given in Hausner's opening address. During this exchange Eichmann is seen most energetically straightening a pile of papers, with a concentration that, by contrast with the dialogue heard, seems almost comical. After a momentary fade to black, Hausner is seen shouting at Eichmann in German, demanding a "yes or no" answer to a question.

"The Specialist" shows forty-eight of the hundred trial witnesses. Forty are seen only in the five minutes before Kovner's appearance, 75 minutes into the film. The judge's complaint that his instructions had not yet sunk in implies that Hausner had been told before about irrelevant witnesses. Only one further witness is seen in the film. The sense is thus given that the judge's admonition could refer to all witnesses, bar one, seen in "The Specialist." Most of the witnesses seen in the film were called after Kovner's testimony, which did not originally end with the remark that appears to close it in "The Specialist." Hausner's reaction to the judge in "The Specialist" includes a cringing and whiny protest, absent from the original, that is in complete contrast to his otherwise steadfast insistence that his witnesses' relevance will become clear. In the original, the single shot of Eichmann during this exchange shows him doing nothing but listening. In "The Specialist," Hausner's shouted demand for a "yes or no" answer from Eichmann is seen to follow his apparent humiliation by the judge. The two events took place, in fact, nearly ten weeks apart.

5) The first witness seen in "The Specialist," Franz Meyer, says that Eichmann behaved correctly at meetings, addressed him courteously, let him sit down and usually, before taking action, said that he had to ask his superiors. The last witness seen in the film, Pinchas Freudiger, asked by Hausner's assistant, Gabriel Bach, whether he met with Eichmann in Budapest, replies that he did. Bach asks how long the meeting took and Freudiger states that it took no more than half an hour. Bach asks whether, as he had understood, the general tone was reassuring and Freudiger confirms that this was definitely the case.

In the unedited video, Franz Meyer added that the meetings in question were all before the end of 1937, before Eichmann had attained the rank and position he held when committing the crimes of which he was accused. Later in his testimony, Meyer recalled three further and final meetings with Eichmann in February and March 1939. He stated that Eichmann had changed so much that he wondered whether he was even the same man with whom he had previously met. He characterized the change by saying that Eichmann had gone from bureaucrat to autocrat, manifesting his powers of control over life and death, speaking crudely and impudently, not allowing the Jews he had summoned to Vienna to approach his desk and shouting and swearing at one man who put his hand in his pocket. None of the above details appear in "The Specialist."

The Freudiger-Bach exchange was created through editing. The half-hour meeting with the reassuring tone was not one with Eichmann. Freudiger was one of about fifteen Budapest Jewish community heads who attended a meeting called by the Nazis at the offices of the city's largest Jewish community. Three German officers, Krumei, Wisliceny and Hunsche, were present. The German army had just entered Hungary and Krumei explained to the Jewish leaders that Jewish affairs were henceforth to be under SS authority. Earlier, Freudiger had said

that the Jewish representatives were not afraid. Just before he confirmed that the tone was reassuring, he had stated that during the meeting a soldier had kept an automatic pistol trained on the Jews present. While this juxtaposition may seem odd, it becomes clear from the full testimony that the reassuring tone did not refer to the fact of being at gunpoint, but to what Krumei had said. This amounted to stating that though economic regulations were to be expected, along with other exigencies of wartime, Jewish cultural and religious life would be able to continue if calm and order were maintained. Freudiger did meet with Eichmann in Budapest, but this took place only later. The actual continuation of the exchange beginning with Bach's question as to whether Freudiger had met Eichmann in Budapest was as follows. Freudiger says that he did and Bach asks him whether he is able to identify the accused in the courtroom. Freudiger replies "In my mind's eye, Obersturmbannführer Eichmann appears in uniform, in high boots, standing with his legs apart and his hand on the pistol in his belt, and shouting at me from the heights of the Master Race, but, despite that, I believe he is the man." Freudiger goes on to describe his encounters with Eichmann. Only during the first of these, a chance meeting in which Freudiger did not know to whom he was speaking, was Eichmann not abusive. On the second such occasion, under similar circumstances, Eichmann made a shouted reference to what he had in store for the Jews. Explicit confirmation that this attitude was the norm comes in Freudiger's description of their final encounter when, in relaying what was said at the end of the meeting, he makes a point of remarking that it was the first time that Eichmann had not shouted at him. None of the above appears anywhere in "The Specialist."

I do not claim that the above confirms my hypothesis. If a filmmaker acts in ways that may benefit an agenda, it does not prove that he supports it or that that was the reason for his actions. It is possible that all that I have described was either innocent in intent or had been found necessary for artistic reasons. But, while the film cannot prove intentions, Sivan has been sufficiently voluble about "The Specialist" and other issues to leave little doubt. My hypothesis was, in fact, derived from his statements. A number of them ought to be noted.

Rony Brauman, Sivan's cousin and partner on the film (who has described Sivan as an "Israeli anti-Zionist"), co-authored a book with him on the subject that includes the script. Eichmann's rise, Israel's use of historical memories, the complicity of European Jewish leaders with Nazi aims and the reduction of the hours of tapes to the dimensions of the film are all discussed in the book.

So are Stanley Milgram's experiments, in which subjects thought they were giving ever stronger electric shocks to "victims," who were only feigning the shocks, as punishment for mistakes made in tests. A high degree of obedience was revealed among subjects instructed to inflict pain, and even dangerously high currents, upon others. Brauman and Sivan note the moral ambiguities inherent in the experiments' results: if there is scientific evidence that so many individuals will act against others in obedience to authority, does this not make a majority of the population potentially as murderous as Eichmann? And if it does, is not Eichmann's personal guilt for his acts thus somehow reduced?

Without attempting to invalidate the findings of the experiments (which were, it is claimed, partly inspired by the Eichmann case), I do wish to question the validity of the way in which Brauman and Sivan attempt to apply them to Eichmann. How far can one reasonably take comparisons between Milgram's test subjects and Eichmann? Are the obvious differences between them of no relevance whatsoever? Milgram's subjects, on a once-only basis, believed they were functioning within the framework of a scientific experiment (although they didn't know its true nature), believed that their "victims" had also volunteered for the tests and were not told before the beginning of the experiment that it might involve administering a lethal dose of electricity.

Eichmann worked every day for years under a strictly political authority, knowing both that his victims were innocent and that they had not volunteered to go to their certain deaths. No one has claimed that Milgram took his subjects from a group of known sadists. In his film, Sivan attempts to cast Eichmann in the role of a run-of-the-mill bureaucrat, an average person who could have been tested by Milgram. There is a gap in credibility between what Eichmann seems to be and the atrocities resulting from his actions. In their book, Brauman and Sivan try to fill this gap with the analogy to Milgram's experiments, saying, in essence, that most of us are like that. But the only reason the gap exists at all is because Sivan has artificially removed what naturally filled it in the first place: the testimony revealing Eichmann's cruelty and arrogance. In the case of Franz Meyer, Sivan has removed it, leaving only the bland description of Eichmann before he attained a position of power. In the case of Pinchas Freudiger, he has not only removed it, but, through clever editing, has contrived to place in the witness's mouth an utterly spurious assertion to the contrary.

Elsewhere, Sivan suggests approaching Eichmann as if a court had never proven his guilt: "My point of view is to show the criminal and listen to him. I say: let's assume he's telling the truth and judge him afterwards. Not according to what we know or think that he did, but according to what he admits he did." He has also contended that the trial was not actually about Eichmann at all. "The trial in Jerusalem was the trial in which Zionism tried National Socialism. He was in a certain sense a second-rank figure in his own trial." Sivan has further amplified this position, claiming that the trial "was supposed to become a remembrance monument; the defendant's position, responsibility and the revealing of truth were absolutely secondary." In their book, Brauman and Sivan also suggest that a show trial of this nature was necessary for the Zionist Ashkenazi elite of Israel to convey the message to the Jews of Middle Eastern origin who had been brought to Israel as a poor substitute for those lost in the Holocaust that their oppression by the Ashkenazim was insignificant compared to what their oppressors had suffered. They make a point of stating that Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Authority, was constructed above the ruins of a Palestinian village destroyed in the war of 1948 and Sivan has also said that the "memory of the genocide authorizes the negation of Palestinian suffering." As regards the State of Israel, Sivan has described the 1947 UN partition vote that granted its foundation international recognition as "an historic mistake" and in 2003 completed a film, "Route 181," about the partition line, together with Palestinian director Michel Khleifi. He has spoken of the Palestinian right of return as a non-negotiable legal right and has been one of the more vocal French supporters of recent calls to boycott Israeli products, research and cultural links with Israel and all Israeli art institutions and artists. He has denied that those in today's France who physically attack synagogues and Jewish community centers are, in fact, antisemitic. While not disputing that those who commit such crimes must be punished, his real criticism is levelled at the victims, who, by continuing to support Israel even under Ariel Sharon, have confused those who are justly anti-Zionist.

I wish to reiterate unequivocally that I am not, by any means, attacking Sivan for his politics. He is entitled to think as he chooses. Whether or not I agree with his view of history is utterly immaterial to this paper, which is concerned only with the way he has doctored the video record of an historical event, and I have introduced his political views into the discussion solely inasmuch as they may help one to understand why he has done what he has done.

Having shown what he has done and, I believe, why, I would like to look at some peripheral issues. Sivan claims that, prior to his production, access to the trial tapes in Israel was limited to a seventy-two-hour selection, extracted according to "a non-understandable logic," which "was presented, officially, not as copies, but as the original; the rest of the footage was officially declared inaccessible or non-existent." None of this is true. No selection, other than the

omission of what appeared to be overlaps with the material held by the State Archive, was exercised in creating the U-Matic copies in use during those years, they were not presented as the originals (to do so would have been ludicrous, as the U-Matic format was not even developed till several years after the trial) and none of them were ever declared inaccessible or non-existent.

Hannah Arendt's book is the credited inspiration for the film. Could it be that some of the omissions/fabrications described above that are the most difficult to explain innocently (e.g. Musmanno, Meyer and Freudiger) are the result of a slavish adherence to the literary source? The answer is no. All three witnesses are mentioned by Arendt and in all three cases she provides the information the omission of which from "The Specialist" is so misleading. While, in these cases, Sivan has strayed from the example set by his acknowledged source, in the case of Musmanno, in particular, his method is almost identical to that used by David Irving. The following quote from the Findings for Justification in the recent David Irving-Deborah Lipstadt libel trial is hereby included because of its uncanny similarity to the case under discussion.

"Ribbentrop's testimony from his cell at Nuremberg (paragraphs 5.240-244 above)

13.49 I accept that historians are bound by the constraints of space to edit quotations. But there is an obligation on them not to give the reader a distorted impression by selective quotation. In my view Irving fails to observe this duty when in the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War* he quotes Ribbentrop's belief that Hitler did not order the destruction of the Jews but fails to quote his immediately following comment that he at least knew about it."

The above legal opinion refers to historians. But who today would argue against the contention that those using the medium of film are able to reach and influence a far greater audience than that of the print historian?

Eyal Sivan's statements about his techniques in making his film must be deemed relevant. In them, he leans heavily and, in my opinion, cynically, upon those trends in post-modern philosophy that deny the existence of objective truth and reality. These ideas have been promulgated in recent decades by no small number of lionized academics. In a few cases they may emanate from genuine concern over the fact that reality is limited by our perceptions of it, but in all too many instances they have been exploited as a justification for spouting what is, frankly, nonsense, dressed up in jargon fancy enough to intimidate all but a small minority from pointing out the total absence of new clothing covering the emperor's person. In some academic circles, newcomers swiftly learn that they will not get ahead unless they imitate the currently fashionable style, whether it is comprehensible or not, thus ignorantly perpetuating a virtual outlawing of clarity and lucidity. And then there are those who knowingly utilize, to the very maximum, the benefits inherent in the broad acceptance of philosophies that defend one from the existence of any objective truths or realities from which one may not depart with impunity.

Did Sivan aim to bring the truth to light? "No. Only God knows the truth. I am a filmmaker. I bring a point of view... We had the archive material, which is a kind of reality that someone had created. The Eichmann trial was created by the Israeli government... ["The Specialist"] is not the original material, but the way in which I see reality." Elsewhere, he does seem to claim that revealing the truth was one of his goals. The statement can be seen as simultaneously validating "The Specialist" while invalidating the unedited trial videos and comes closer than any pronouncement by Sivan that I've seen to admitting what he has actually done. "Truth through image can be only an accumulation of points of view, out of the same corpus of material, a free manipulation of the archives, the reconstruction-deconstruction and reconstruction again of a new narrative, even opposing to the original aim of this material." To use the term popular in

post-modern "discourse," Sivan "privileges" his version of events above the least tampered-with source material for them that exists, even while mentioning that Eichmann's counsel, Robert Servatius, objected to the trial video being produced, because of "the risk of distortion of the proceedings." Servatius, Sivan notes, requested that the court make its consent conditional upon "an objective presentation of the proceedings." On occasion, Sivan has described his complex task in more mundane terms: "We rearranged the scenes, we used special effects techniques to improve the illumination of scenes, we added reflections to the glass booth... We took out the boring parts... witnesses who didn't really have anything to say."

"Some images, mainly victim images, help to create the icons of memory... the monuments of memory." Sivan claims to redress a balance by focusing on a perpetrator and implies the truth of his view of Eichmann by saying that "perpetrators are not subjects of memory, they are subjects of fiction."

If it seems difficult to get a clear picture of what Sivan is saying, matters may not be improved by the following: "I don't think about history. The film is not about history, nor about Israel. That's all just there in the background... Above all, it's a film about our time, about the modern manager, the specialist..." Such a remark is, at the very least, disingenuous. It could account for the way Eichmann is presented in "The Specialist," but it cannot account for what Sivan did to Lindwasser when he placed his silence after a question he was never asked. That brief moment is exceptionally telling, because in it Sivan did not merely alter an existing event, he fabricated an entirely new one. I suggest he would not have done so without a reason and that the reason is implicit in what those few seconds convey. One may try to find varying interpretations of this fact, but it is a fact that it was important to Eyal Sivan to show a Holocaust survivor unable or unwilling to answer the question of why he and others (Hausner's question was asked in the Hebrew second person plural) did not resist what was being done to them. In the absence of such a moment, he created one. It can provide no information about "the modern manager." It is perhaps the most glaring clue to the conclusion that Sivan wanted not just a fair hearing for Eichmann, but an unfair one for the witnesses.

Sivan played two tricks in making and promoting his film. The first was the editing itself, of which the examples above seem, in this merely cursory study, to be but the tip of an iceberg. The second is the mask of transparency he has worn in describing what he did. It appears that he has spotlighted one type of effect, in precise imitation of the traditional conjurer's stock-in-trade, to draw attention away from another. For, although the film contains many digital tricks and manipulations, almost all the disturbing examples that materially altered the substance of what was shown were accomplished through simple "old-fashioned" editing. If Sivan's public relations effort has given prominence to the digital effects and not mentioned the other type that includes blatant substitutions of reactions, surely it is because he wanted the former noticed and not the latter. Sivan has said that he respects his audiences as intelligent people who understand that what they are seeing is not reality, for he has given them indications to that effect. I believe he is referring to the moments that are obvious, such as when several pairs of guards dissolve from one to another in the background to indicate the passage of time while Eichmann remains in his booth. I have not systematically surveyed all reviews of "The Specialist," but have read all I could find, a considerable amount. By and large, discussion of the digital effects figures prominently in the reviews. Some reviewers felt the digitization of reflections onto the glass booth violated the integrity of the material, but none seem to have been aware that far more serious violations were afoot. Only one review, of the dozens that I read, expressed unease at the possibility that reaction shots could have come from elsewhere in the trial video. It is obvious that the real deceptions have gone unnoticed and while Sivan has waxed almost lyrical about his use of digital technology to enhance image quality, I have yet to see, hear or read of him

making the kind of statement that honesty would mandate, given what he has done, something along the lines of "... and when the reaction to a question didn't suit my needs, I simply replaced it with one that did."

Had he said that, neither he nor his film would have had credibility. No reputable film or television company would have agreed to be associated with it or him. Sivan, Brauman and editor Audrey Maurion must have known the truth about "The Specialist." One can only hope that the associate producers (Amit Breuer, Martine Barbe, Erich Lackner and Elke Peters), as well as the others responsible for the co-production (with Israel's Amythos and Noga, Germany's Bremer Institut Film/Fernsehen and WDR, Belgium's Image Creation and RTBF, Austria's Lotus Film and France's France 2 Cinema) did not.

"The Specialist," despite acceptance that has extended to a prime-time broadcast on one of Israel's main television channels on Holocaust Memorial Day, has not had universal acclaim. Gabriel Bach, for one, said "there is nothing wrong with making a documentary film that gives expression to Eichmann's claim, but the film does not show that the court succeeded in disproving his claims that he was only 'a cog in the wheel,' and even proved that Eichmann reached an extremism that exceeded that of his superiors." Bach felt that it was one-sided, but did he notice details like the fabrication of his exchange with Freudiger?

"The Specialist" is not worthless. I believe it has value, inasmuch as it can tell us a great deal about the man who made it, his political views and his attitude to the truth. Unfortunately, due to the circumstances described above, for any other purpose it is no more use than "The Specialist," starring Sharon Stone, or even "The Golf Specialist," starring W.C. Fields as J. Effingham Bellweather.

I may be alone in seeing "The Specialist" as a grave case of media abuse and public gullibility, one that must not recur and which must be retroactively corrected where possible. And maybe its maker can rebut all my points so as to make his deeds seem right and my complaints a mere storm in a teacup. However, I do believe that, even if I subscribed to his views on the Eichmann trial, Zionism and the Palestinian question, I would still consider it a very sad irony that Franz Meyer and Pinchas Freudiger, who in 1961 testified that in their personal experience Adolf Eichmann was not a mild-mannered pen-pushing bureaucrat, but a cruel and arrogant man who took personal pleasure in carrying out his part of the Final Solution to the Jewish Problem, should today be seen, wherever "The Specialist" is shown, testifying only to his civility and subservience to his superiors, thanks entirely to the editing skill of a man who, had he been living in France sixty years ago, is unlikely to have been shown mercy by Eichmann. In their names, and in the names of all those appearing in "The Specialist" whose words and actions, for reasons known best to the filmmaker, have been distorted, truncated and otherwise manipulated to create an impression contrary to that which they wished to make when they were videotaped, I feel the most appropriate question that can be asked of Eyal Sivan is that which was memorably put to Senator Joseph R. McCarthy by Joseph N. Welch in 1954: Have you left no sense of decency?