

The Odessa File

Written by Kenneth Ross and George Markstein
Based on the novel by Frederick Forsyth

Sequence 1

Israel, 23 September 1963.

An Israel general explains to a Mossad agent that the Egyptians are close to being able to launch missile strikes into Israel. “If it succeeds, it would be the end of Israel. All they are waiting for is the completion of a teleguidance system, without which they can’t target the rockets. Scientists are working on the teleguidance system somewhere in Germany, undercover of a legitimate factory.”

Intertitle: “This film is based on carefully documented research. There really was a secret society called Odessa, linking former members of Hitler’s murderous SS, among them Roschmann, the ‘butcher’ of Riga Concentration Camp.”

Sequence 2

Peter Miller, a freelance journalist, drives through Hamburg. The radio announces the death of President John Kennedy. He follows a police car and ambulance to an apartment, where the body of a suicide has been found. Miller’s friend Karl, a policeman, removes various documents from the apartment.

Sequence 3

Karl gives Miller the documents, which Miller reads. They are written by Salomon Tauber, and tell of his experiences in Riga Concentration Camp, under the control of murderous Eduard Roschmann. Tauber writes of an incident on 11 October 1944 when Roschmann shot dead a German officer.

Sequence 4

Miller fails to get a newspaper editor colleague to bankroll an investigation of Roschmann. Miller’s mother is similarly uninterested in the story.

Sequence 5

Miller goes back to Tauber’s apartment and tracks down Marx, one of Tauber’s friends and, like Tauber, a survivor of the camps. Marx tells Miller that Tauber saw Roschmann in Hamburg three weeks ago and reported it to the police, but they did nothing. “That’s why he killed himself. He had come up against the Odessa.” Marx says all he wants is to go to Israel.

Sequence 6

Karl warns Miller against investigating Odessa, and asks for Tauber's documents back. Miller goes to the official war crimes office and asks about Roschmann. An official, who writes down Miller's name, insists that all investigations are confidential. Miller tells the official that "in thirteen years your office has managed to bring to trial only three SS men, all of them privates."

Sequence 7

Undeterred, Miller attends a reunion of the Siegfried Division, which appears to be a group of former German soldiers. The official from the war crimes office is there. Miller takes a photograph of the crowd. He is beaten up and his camera smashed.

Sequence 8

Members of the Siegfried Division discuss Miller. "He is asking questions about Eduard, but he is not getting anywhere." They discuss the missile project. The teleguidance system must be completed very soon. "We have three months to keep our promise to Egypt."

Sequence 9

Miller and his girlfriend Sigi go shopping in town. Miller is pushed under a subway train, but survives.

Sequence 10

Miller goes to Vienna to find Simon Wiesenthal, who tells Miller about Odessa, a worldwide organisation created after the war to assist thousands of former SS escape justice. Wiesenthal warns Miller that several members of the Hamburg police department are former SS. He gives Miller a photograph of Roschmann.

Sequence 11

Miller is kidnapped and dragged into a car by Mossad. Miller is asked by Mossad to infiltrate Odessa. Back in Hamburg, an assassin is sent to kill Miller.

Sequence 12

Miller is given a new identity by Mossad, including makeup to age him, and is trained to pass as a former SS soldier. Sigi is attacked by the assassin, who is looking for Miller, and is given police protection.

Sequence 13

Miller infiltrates Odessa. He is sent to Bayreuth to obtain new documents from Wenzer. He calls Sigi before he gets on the train to Munich, which alerts Odessa to his whereabouts.

Sequence 14

Wenzer tells Miller that his new documents won't be ready until after the weekend because the photographer he uses is out of town. Wenzer shows Miller where to find a local hotel. A few hours later, Wenzer calls Miller and tells him he has located the photographer and that Miller should come to the office immediately. Miller is suspicious. The assassin waits in Wenzer's office for Miller. In a fight between the two, Miller kills the assassin. In a safe in the office, Miller finds a file listing all members of Odessa and which contains Roschmann's assumed name and address. He now runs an electrical factory in Heidelberg. Miller puts the file into a locker in Munich train station, then calls Sigi, who slips out of her apartment and escapes her police guard.

Sequence 15

Miller shows Mossad agents Roschmann's page from the Odessa file. They note the address of Roschmann's factory. Miller insists on confronting Roschmann himself and goes to Heidelberg. Sigi joins him there. Before Miller leaves their hotel room, he gives Sigi the key to the locker and tells her that if he isn't back by the following morning, she should take the file to Wiesenthal.

Sequence 16

Miller goes to a trade fair and sees Roschmann for the first time. He follows him home, breaks in, and confronts Roschmann. Miller explains that the German officer killed by Roschmann on 11 October 1944 was his father. "So you didn't come about the Jews at all," says Roschmann. Miller shoots Roschmann.

Sequence 17

In a voiceover, Miller explains that he was held in police custody for three weeks after the murder, then released. Sigi takes the file to Weisenthal. Roschmann's research laboratory is burned to the ground as Mossad agents watch. In Jerusalem, Miller watches as Marx says a prayer for Tauber.