

**THE  
BRANDENBURG  
QUEST  
A TRUE STORY**

**THE UNPRODUCED  
SCREENPLAY**

**IB MELCHIOR**



*The Brandenburg Quest: A True Story*

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THE  
BRANDENBURG  
QUEST  
A TRUE STORY

Based on the book

*QUEST*

by

Ib Melchior with Frank Brandenburg

Screenplay by Ib Melchior

The story of *QUEST* is true. The central figure, Frank Brandenburg, today lives in Hildesheim, Germany.

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## SIMON WIESENTHAL

Allow me to call your attention to a property which I strongly feel would make an outstanding motion picture. It is a book by Ib Melchior, the author and motion picture director, and my friend, Frank Brandenburg, whose exciting and amazing story is told in the book. I personally know Mr. Brandenburg and can vouch for the veracity of the events described in the book, even though they may seem almost unbelievable. Mr. Brandenburg sent several years infiltrating the still existing Nazi conspiracy and his exploits in many instances re-write history.

I know you are always looking for properties that are exciting, inspiring and if possible true. Mr. Brandenburg's "QUEST" is all of this and much more.

I would deem it a personal favor if you would consider reading it. Frank Brandenburg's story would become a high ranking and top class movie.

With my best personal regards, I am.

*Simon Wiesenthal*

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FADE IN

1 EXT. STOIZENDORE, AUSTRIA—MOUNTAIN ROAD—DAY

A CAR is driving up the road. The driver is FRANK BRANDENBURG, twenty, blue-eyed with a shock of blonde hair.

2 EXT. APPROACH TO FRANZ LECHNER'S FARM COMPOUND—DAY

The compound is surrounded by a fence. A heavy gate stands open. Frank turns into the farmyard. A farmhouse stands beyond the yard.

3 EXT. FRANZ LECHNER'S COMPOUND—DAY

Frank drives up and parks his car. As soon as he starts to step out, TWO BIG BLACK DOGS come charging out from behind a woodpile in SNARLING fury.

Heart-pounding, he jumps back in the car and slams the door, watching, breathless, as the dogs claw and scratch at the car door.

Over and over again, the frenzied beasts hurl themselves in rage at the car, the furious barking obliterating all other sounds.

Frank's shaking hand touches the gear shift...then slowly he removes it. He's come too far to go back now.

He leans on the horn. At the sound, the dogs double their efforts to get at him. He keeps honking the horn, watching the door to the house. Finally it opens and a man steps through into the yard. FRANZ LECHNER, unkempt dirty-blond hair, clad in dark, soiled trousers held up by grey suspenders, a light blue shirt, open at the neck, partly buttoned and so carelessly tucked in that a flash of pale skin shows above his fly. He walks up to the car.

LECHNER  
(to the dogs)

*Ruhe!*

At once the dogs fall silent.

LECHNER

*Zu fuss!*

The dogs immediately take up their positions flanking Lechner.

LECHNER

*Aufpassen!*

The dogs fix their eyes on Frank, snarling menacingly. Lechner turns to Frank.

---

LECHNER

What do you want?

FRANK

Are—are you Herr Franz Lechner?

Lechner glares at him.

LECHNER

Get out!

Fearful of the dogs, Frank complies.

LECHNER

Come!

He turns on his heels and followed by the ever watchful dogs—and Frank—he walks toward the heavy gate to his farmyard.

THE MAIN TITLES OVER THE FOLLOWING

Lechner slams the gate shut and bars it. Frank looks around, a prisoner now. The cobblestone yard is unkempt, in need of repair: broken farm equipment, debris and trash lie strewn in piles; a few scraggly HENS peck listlessly at the remains of a dungheap.

To the right, a farmhouse of square stone blocks is heavily festooned with row upon row of dried corncobs through which grimy, multi-paned windows look out. A broom lies unused on the ground next to the door.

Frank and Lechner—followed by the dogs—walk to the house. Lechner gestures at the door.

END OF MAIN TITLES

LECHNER

Inside.

4 INT. LECHNER'S HOUSE—DAY

Lechner gestures Frank across the room. He motions to a straight-backed chair at a large table.

LECHNER

Sit.

Lechner sits down opposite Frank. He opens a drawer. He pulls out a snub-nosed gun. Ceremoniously he places it on the table.

---

LECHNER

Now we shall find out who you are. What do you want?

He puts his hand on the gun. CAMERA ZOOMS in to a CLOSE SHOT of the gun.

5 EXT. YARD—DAY

6 CU of a Luger gun. It is held in the hand of a man. It fires.

7 WIDER ANGLE

We see a man—now dead, having been shot in the back of the head by a man in the Nazi SS uniform—tumble down into a deep hole heaped with other dead bodies. CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that the image is on a B&W TV set. We are in—

8 INT. FRANK BRANDENBURG'S ROOM—EVENING

We are watching a film—*THE HOLOCAUST*—on a thirteen-inch BLACK-AND-WHITE TV. The CAMERA continues to PULL BACK to reveal:

FRANK BRANDENBURG, just turned 16, sits cross-legged on a bed in his garret bedroom, eyes wide, glued to the screen.

Blue eyes in an impish face look out from a lock of hair that falls, untamed, across his brow; he has the slight, gangly look of a typical teen.

A small Dachshund, GRITTI, lies curled up in his lap.

(NOTE: At the director's discretion, Gritti may be present in the scenes where Frank is at home)

SUPER: HILDESHEIM, WEST GERMANY (1979)

An angry and stunned FRANK watches the IMAGES OF THE HOLOCAUST in the FILM, as he strokes Gritti.

9 CLOSE SHOT—TV SCREEN

A particularly horrifying scene unfolds on the screen.

10 WIDER ANGLE

Suddenly Frank gets up. With a yelp Gritti tumbles from his lap. Angrily Frank strides to the TV set and abruptly turns it off. For a moment he stands staring at the dead set, obviously grievously disturbed.

FRANK

How dare they? How DARE they!!?

---

11 EXT. BRANDENBURG NURSERY—NEXT DAY

Frank makes his way through rows of SAPLINGS. In the distance, marking the boundary of the family nursery and its seven greenhouses, the GRAVESTONES of a well tended cemetery stand in sharp contrast to the cheerful green surroundings of the family's large, two-story white house.

Frank's father, KARL-PETER, potting a sapling, reproaches his son without looking up.

KARL-PETER

Up late again, Frank? We're going to have to take it take away. You have homework...and where have you been? You were supposed to have helped your mother at the flower stand. Do you think you can act like an American now, because you have your own TV?

FRANK

Papa, I saw this American movie last night. It was called—the—the Holocaust. It was awful.

KARL-PETER

I have heard they made such a film.

FRANK

But, Papa, it—it was full of terrible lies. About the German people. It—it couldn't be true, could it? Was it, Papa?

KARL-PETER

I was young, Frank. Just a child. Your mother was three years old when the war ended. We were too young to remember much.

FRANK

But Opa, and Oma. What do they know?

KARL-PETER

Your grandfather doesn't like to talk about it.

12 EXT. HILDESHEIM OPEN MARKET—FLOWER STAND—SAME DAY

Frank and his mother, ILSE, a strikingly pretty woman, stand behind banks of flowers. Frank wraps a bouquet of anemones with red ribbon and hands it to an OLDER WOMAN.

OLDER WOMAN

*Dankeschön.*

---

She leaves. Frank glances quickly at his mother, arranging flowers with more attention than usual.

FRANK

But why not here?

ILSE

Hush, we have customers. Here—  
(hands him the flowers)  
—use blue ribbon on this one.

FRANK

But did it happen, Mama? Like it says in the movie?

ILSE

Movies are movies, *bübschen*. It was a long time ago.  
(beat)  
And don't ask grandpa or grandma. It will only upset them.

13 INT. NURSERY OFFICE

Frank stands before his father's SECRETARY, 62, certain he's found someone old enough to remember. His arms are crossed and he leans back, triumphant, waiting. Instead, she throws her hands up in dismay.

SECRETARY

*Junge! Junge!* You are treading on forbidden ground. It could be a dangerous thing to pursue. No one today wants to talk about all that. Let it be.

14 EXT. CHURCH—DAY

LONG SHOT

15 INT. CHURCH—DAY

TWO SHOT, FRANK and PASTOR

The Pastor pats Frank's shoulder patronizingly.

PASTOR

Let it be, Frank. It was a long time ago. Why rake up old times? Let it be.

FRANK looks disappointed, concerned.

---

16 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL—DAY

INT. CLASS ROOM—DAY

17 TWO SHOT FRANK AND TEACHER

TEACHER

It was a long time ago, Frank. Yes—we did have some—some trouble with the Jews. But it is over now. It is nothing you should concern yourself about. Why wake a sleeping dog? You have your studies to do, *that* is important...

FRANK looks disappointed but stubborn.

18 INT. HILDESHEIM—BOOKSTORE—DAY

Frank searches the book shelves, running his hands over the spines. He pulls one out, sets it aside, then continues.

Curious, the BOOKSELLER comes over and picks up one of the books.

BOOKSELLER

Interesting...

(sizes him up)

Not exactly what you'd find at your standard gymnasium library, *ja*?

(beat)

Is there anything I can help you with?

Frank shakes his head, mystified.

FRANK

I'm looking for *Mein Kampf*. It isn't anywhere.

The Bookseller stiffens, then glances around nervously to make certain no one is there to overhear.

BOOKSELLER

(low)

It isn't sold in Germany.

(off Frank's quizzical look)

It's not allowed.

Frank scowls.

---

BOOKSELLER  
(motions him forward)

Come with me.

Frank follows him—

INTO A BACK ROOM—THROUGH A DOOR—DOWN A NARROW STAIRWAY

19 INT. BASEMENT—CONTINUOUS

The Bookseller turns on a bare overhead bulb. The dust is thick everywhere. He crosses to shelves and pulls down a book, blows the dust off, then hands it to Frank.

BOOKSELLER  
Voila! You know “voila,” yes?  
(chuckles)

Frank opens to the title page, then looks up, wide-eyed. The Bookseller is already starting up the stairs.

BOOKSELLER  
Three marks.

He stops, turns back to Frank and gives him a conspiratorial nod.

BOOKSELLER  
You didn’t get it here.

20 INT. BRANDENBURG HOUSE—BEDROOM—NIGHT

Frank sits reading on his bed surrounded by books and with Gritti in his lap. The door opens and his grandfather comes into the room. Frank looks up but says nothing as the old man picks up a couple of the books and reads the titles aloud.

WILHELM  
“*The Auschwitz Lie.*” “*Inside the Third Reich.*”

FRANK  
It’s very confusing, Opa. Some say the Americans built the ovens to make it look like we did; they say the concentration camps were built as movie sets; they say it’s all...Hollywood. But some—

WILHELM  
(finishing his sentence)  
Some say it was real.  
(he sits down)

---

I was in the NSKK: Basically we were engaged in traffic control. Yes—we wore brown shirts with Swastikas; we had to, to keep our jobs, but we were not—Nazis. Back then—we thought we were building a new Germany, a beautiful future.

(he sighs)

We know some of what happened...and some we will never know.

FRANK

But if it happened, why don't they teach it in school? And if it didn't, why did Hollywood make it up?

(grabs a book)

And what about Bormann? The "Grey Eminence". The most powerful man in Germany—after Hitler. What about him?

(he gestures at his books)

They have a lot to say about him.

WILHELM

I am sure they do.

FRANK

Some say he was killed. In Berlin. Others say they saw him, *after* the war. Who's right? How can such a prominent man simply disappear? It smells, Opa. It smells.

(pause)

Did you know him?

WILHELM

I told you, I wasn't one of them. They were powerful men. Very powerful. We only followed their orders. We were afraid of them.

FRANK

(grabs another book)

It says *here* he's still alive.

WILHELM

Why do you care? Bormann is dead. And buried like the past should be.

(motions to TV)

What happened to your television? You've lost interest?

(shakes his head)

You young people today. You have to have something, then, as soon as you get it—

(breaks off and rises to go)

In my day...

---

(drops what he was going to say)  
It's late. Go to sleep. And let the past do the same. Good-night.

He leaves. FRANK picks up a book and starts reading.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 INT. BRANDENBURG HOUSE—BEDROOM—NIGHT

Frank's room is cluttered with books—books open on the bed and stacked about the room in three- and four-foot piles. A RED POSTER with a BLACK SWASTIKA is taped over his desk.

SUPER: HILDESHEIM, TWO YEARS LATER

Frank, now 18, is stuffing items into a duffel bag on the bed. Satisfied, he stops and checks himself in the mirror, slicks back his hair and studies a pimple forming on his face.

ILSE (O.S.)

Frank! Dinner!

22 INT. BRANDENBURG HOUSE—KITCHEN—NIGHT

Frank enters, duffel bag in hand, to find his family seated at the table waiting for him; Ilse, Karl-Peter, Wilhelm and his younger sister, ULRIKE. All eyes go to his duffel bag.

KARL-PETER

And where do you think you're going at this hour?

FRANK

I am taking the night train to Munich—for my research.

KARL-PETER

For God's sake, Frank, why?

ILSE

Sit and eat.

FRANK

They call it the "cradle of Nazism." I have to—

ILSE  
(over)

You can't—

---

FRANK  
(over)  
I'm eighteen now. I can do what I—

KARL-PETER  
(cutting him off)  
You can't just do what you want.

FRANK  
No, but I can do what I have to do. And I have to see it for  
myself.

(starts out)  
I'll call you from Munich.

Karl-Peter puts a restraining hand on Ilse's arm and signals  
for her to let him go. Ulrike jumps up and grabs him, giving  
him a good-bye hug.

ULRIKE  
Be careful, Frank.  
(smiles up at him)  
And I think you've very brave.

DISSOLVE TO:

23 CLOSE ON—*DER GLOCKENSPIEL*

The mechanical GOLDEN ROOSTER of the famous clock at the top of the New Town Hall,  
CROWS to announce the coming hour.

Trumpeters appear; then Standard-Bearers herald the noble Knights. The first appears,  
charges and misses; the second charges, unhorsing the RED KNIGHT. Red-Coated FOLK  
DANCERS emerge, dancing, followed by a QUEEN who comes out and gives her blessing.

At last the Golden Rooster returns, one last time, to signal the end, then disappears into the  
mechanical world of make-believe time and its intricate pageantry.

Forty-three BELLS ring out in majesty.

The CAMERA PANS DOWN.

24 EXT. MUNICH—MARIENPLAZ—DAY

Frank—like any tourist—stands among a GROUP OF TOURISTS staring up at the clock.

The crowd disperses and he takes out a note pad, checks an address, checks his own watch,  
and heads out.