

**1943,
HITLER ORDERS:**

**FREE
MUSSOLINI!**

By

FABIO TONCELLI

Historical consultation by
MARCO PATRICELLI



Produced by
sd cinematografica



The plane ready to take off with on board Mussolini and Skorzeny

We are at an altitude of more than 2,000 meters, in the heart of the mountains of Central Italy, in the Abruzzo region, not far from the snow-covered peak of the Gran Sasso.

A large building in stone with simple severe lines is covered in fog and clouds. It inspires respect, almost fear. The period in which we find ourselves is difficult to establish. In fact, everything has remained just the way it was when the building was constructed in 1937 to welcome the future tourists of the highest ski resort in Europe, as desired by fascism. We enter room 202: the furniture, the same as in 1943, was recently found in a high school in the valley. There is the same bed, the same desk, and the same chair. Only now can we see what the room where the Duce was kept prisoner looked like. Only now are we able to reconstruct the 23 hours that passed from the moment when Major Harald Moors of the paratroopers was ordered in absolute secrecy by General Student to free Mussolini, an order that Student had received directly from Hitler, until the first German glider full of special troops tried to land in a dangerously small plot of land and rocks in front of the hotel that was guarded by three hundred fully-armed Italian military guards.

Testimonies, memories, filmed material, unpublished photographs, and documents carefully hidden in the Italian archives demolish piece by piece the official Nazi version and make it possible for the first time to recount the incredible chain of events that had a strong effect on public opinion throughout the world during World War II and still conceals many obscure aspects.

From July 25, 1943, the day on which the Duce was deposed by a conspiracy within the regime and arrested, there began a ruthless struggle between the Italian, German and Anglo-American secret services to hide or discover where the Duce really was. Now we are finally able to reconstruct them: a Carabinieri barracks in Rome, the island of Ponza, the island of the Maddalena in Sardinia, a farm house in Abruzzo and finally a hotel in Campo

Imperatore at an altitude of more than 2,000 feet. In the first three places, the Germans arrived just after the prisoner had been taken away. But the race continued. Everyone was aware of the importance for the outcome of the war of possessing Mussolini.

September 12, 1943: the fascist regime in Italy had fallen a month ago. Mussolini was a secret prisoner in an impregnable building in the heart of the mountains of Central Italy, most likely waiting to be consigned to the Anglo-American forces. The post-fascist government of Field Marshal Badoglio thought the hotel in Campo Imperatore was the most secure prison in the world. And it had good reason to think that. Nonetheless, after an attack of just 14 minutes, he was freed. It was 14 minutes of pure military boldness, which we will relive minute by minute, with German repertory films, re-enactments and graphic reconstructions, in order to discover the incredible truth.

How did the Germans discover the prison of the Duce?

Did the ferocious battle in the field, with enormous losses, as described by the reckless SS Captain Otto Skorzeny really take place?

Or is it true that not one shot was fired?

Why did the guards not kill Mussolini rather than hand him over to the Germans, as they were instructed?

Did the Italian government, which had just passed over to the allies, really want to hand the prisoner over to the Americans?

Who was the real hero in the liberation of the Duce?

What did Hitler and Mussolini say as they shook hands only a few hours after the blitz?

Why did Himmler and the Nazi propaganda machine sustain a version of the liberation that has now been shown to be completely false?

Who is still alive who can confirm how things really went?

The answer to these questions is more adventurous, compelling and surprising than a novel. But it is the only true answer.

For the first time, unpublished documents and photos reveal the secret of the most daring exploit of all time carried out by special forces: Operation Oak, the liberation of the Duce, Benito Mussolini.

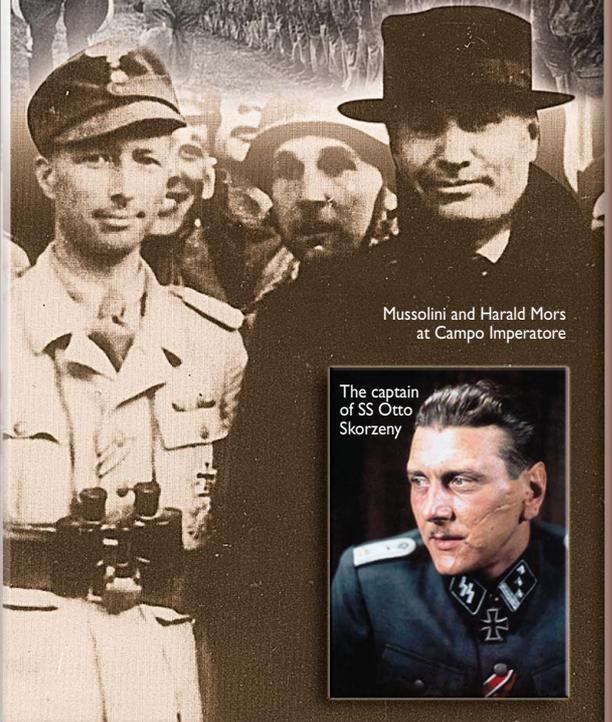
The version of the blitz told by its hero, the SS Captain Otto Skorzeny, has continued to fascinate the general public in books and documentaries up to the present day. But it has one defect: it is completely false.

Why do some people still defend it? What is behind it?

And most of all: who really freed the Duce?



General Kurt Student and the soldiers of the Operation Oak



Mussolini and Harald Mors at Campo Imperatore



The captain of SS Otto Skorzeny

RUNNING TIME _____ **52 minuti**
FORMAT _____ **HD CAM**



Produced by
sd cinematografica

SD Cinematografica
Lungotevere delle Navi, 19 - 00196 Roma
Tel. +39-063215114 - Fax +39-06 64520220

www.sdcinematografica.it