

## Document Citation

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## After the Truth

**Roland Suso Richter**

**GERMANY, 1999**

120 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Helkon Media Filmproduktion/Edward R. Pressman Film Corp.**

Producer: **Werner Koenig**

Screenplay: **Johannes W. Betz**, based on an original story by **Christopher and Kathleen Riley**

Cinematographer: **Martin Langer**

Editor: **Peter Adam**

Production Designer: **Werner Koenig**

Sound: **Michael Etz**

Music: **Harold Kloser**

Principal Cast: **Götz George, Kai Wiesinger, Karoline Eichhorn**

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E [export-union@german-cinema.de](mailto:export-union@german-cinema.de)

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Toronto IFF 1999

The Nazi past is the subject of this engrossing and well-constructed film. *After the Truth* uses the storytelling possibilities of the cinema to tease us with one of the great "what-ifs" of history. Peter Rohm is a young, brilliant and ambitious lawyer. His principles are impeccable. He believes firmly in the rule of law and in the strength of a legal system that enforces these laws. He is an idealist. He is also researching a book on the infamous Josef Mengele, the "Angel of Death," a doctor responsible for some of the most appalling medical experiments in the history of civilization at the Auschwitz extermination camp.

One evening Rohm is lured from his house and wife, kidnapped and flown to Argentina, where he meets a man who claims to be Mengele. This old and frail man, going under the name Baumgarten, contends that he is the fugitive Nazi and offers Rohm the opportunity to question him or fly home. An outraged Rohm, confronted with one of the monsters of history, chooses to fly home but is arrested on his arrival. Mengele is also on the same flight and claims that Rohm is his lawyer. One of the great principles which Rohm himself firmly believes in is the right of every man to a fair trial and a defense. Defending Mengele repulses him on a personal level, but perhaps it affords him the chance to finally get at the truth and understand the question: why were these atrocities committed?

Moving at the pace of the best thrillers, using the conventions of the courtroom

drama to maximum effect, hypnotizing us with the possibilities afforded by putting a Nazi offender on trial, Richter recounts this story with uncommon skill. Supported by an extremely well-written script and an exceptional cast of actors – Götz is superb as Baumgarten/Mengele, and Wiesinger is a wonderful foil as the lawyer – *After the Truth* works as a powerful story with ethical and moral overtones.

### ■ Piers Handling

**Roland Suso Richter** was born in Marburg, Germany in 1961. He entered the audiovisual industry in 1980 after finishing school. He attended the Actors' Studio in New York and directed his feature debut in 1984. Selected filmography: *Kolp* (84), *Rien que les femmes, pas de vie* (85), *A Fortnight for Life* (96), *Sara Amerika* (98) and *After the Truth* (99).

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