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Movie Maker Has Scenes of East Berlin

Traveler Recalls Adventures

BY ERWIN BACH



Wilson

Cameras were strictly "verboten" in East Berlin theaters and museums, but Arthur Wilson, Downers Grove movie maker, found a way. He smuggled his 16 mm. camera inside by hiding it in a brief case, such as those carried by all Berliners.

Recently returned from nine weeks of filming in West and East Berlin, Wilson ran into adventure on nearly every street. He was arrested and questioned by East German police on one heart-stopping occasion.

"Police in Tow"

"I was photographing long lines of people waiting to buy food in the East Berlin section called Kopenick," he recalled. "Several people quizzed me about what I was doing, and I answered in my self-developed German that I was preparing a documentary culture film."

"One man thought the idea was 'wunderbar,'" continued Wilson. "But one woman didn't like it too well, and when I moved on, I saw she followed me with the police in tow."

Wilson locked his car [he had to take his camera along] and followed the police into the local calaboose.

"I was ushered into a room, and from that time until my release 3½ hours later, I was never left alone, even to go to a rest room," he said. "In fact, the toilet was even ex-

amined to be sure I didn't toss any papers into it."

During a preliminary questioning, Wilson had to get by with his makeshift German although he was told a translator would arrive later.

Explains Self

"They kept asking me if I knew Allen Dulles [director of the central intelligence agency] and why I was photographing the people standing in line," he said.

"I told them I thought Dulles had something to do with our government security, but that I didn't know him personally [which was true] and that I photographed the people because I wanted human interest scenes of East Berlin and didn't know they were waiting for food [which was not true]," added Wilson.

After two hours, Wilson, who had not yet eaten, became hungry. He told his interrogators that he wanted a half liter of milk, a bratwurst sausage, and some bread. Much to his surprise, they rushed out and got just that.

They allowed him to finish his lunch before they started questioning again, this time by two intelligence men of the East Berlin government.

"They couldn't understand

that a private citizen could make travel films, rent a car, and spend all that money by himself without government support," explained Wilson.

Convinces Police

He was never touched or searched, and the car was not entered. Eventually, Wilson convinced them of his background as "camera fan—private citizen type" and was turned free, complete with his camera and all the film he had shot.

When Wilson asked why he was arrested, they told him it was because of a prison located up the street on which he had been filming. He dismissed this as an excuse, however.

Another close call for Wilson came the day he photographed the May day parade from a deserted building roof in East Berlin. He was busy shooting when two East German soldiers passed nearby and saw him.

"I smiled and waved at them," said Wilson. "And they smiled and waved back. Then, they left without disturbing me."

Wilson, together with his

partner, Fred Keiffer, also of Downers Grove, shot 14,000 feet of 16 mm. color film for their 85 minute movie to be called, "Berlin—The Island City," due for showing this fall in Chicago and thruout the country.

"West Berlin is beautiful beyond imagination and the people there have a spirit and way of life that is hard to equal," concluded Wilson. "When we went to Berlin, we hoped to keep politics out of our picture, but it was there staring you in the face and knocking you over the head. In fact, the difference between the two sectors has been known to drive some visitors into hysteria."