

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

A MEMOIR

by

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of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

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ABSTRACT

On the evening of December 18, 1964 I had an accident that blinded my left eye. In July 2009 I woke up one morning not being able to see. My first thought was the same as I had in 1964--I might go totally blind. Luckily my sight in my good eye returned shortly, but in the interim, my thoughts focused on how the accident had changed my life.

My perspective of the world changed dramatically as a result of the accident in 1964. I became engrossed by the similarities of the camera and the human eye. I renewed an early interest in photography and mentally replaced my lost eye with a camera lens. I began a photographic diary. I changed careers and held positions in manufacturing, marketing and research. From 1972 through 1975 I lived in Europe and after return to the States, I continued to travel internationally until retirement. My camera went with me to places a tourist might never see. Travel sometimes involved unique and dangerous situations but expanded my understanding of the local history, culture and myself. First-hand exposure to foreign cultures encouraged me to learn more about them and in the process I learned more about my own.

My memoir is based on the period from 1972 to 1985 when Apartheid was practiced in South Africa, Germany remained split in half and the Soviet Union was still intact. Argentina and Great Britain waged a brief war over the Falkland Islands, the cocaine business in Colombia went unchecked and Brazilian business leaders were kidnapped. The political ramifications for a nosy American with a camera were rife. I could have been perceived as a representative of one of the world's superpowers or merely a harmless tourist. Either way, at the street level, I was treated with unexpected acts of decency and human kindness.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Photography has been a part of my life as long as I can remember. I grew up in Kodak country - Rochester, NY. On Christmas 1945, at age 8, I received a Baby Brownie camera, a supply of film and a developing kit. The next few months I practiced using the camera, taking rolls of the family dog, the family car and my sister. When I was ready to start developing pictures, the family bathroom was converted into a makeshift darkroom. With my mother's help, we made it light-tight by putting black material over the window and stuffing towels under the door. A "Keep Out" sign was tacked on the hallway side of the door. My mother read the directions on how to process film and said they were just "cookbook chemistry." They read:

"You will need three trays, a graduate measuring at least 16 oz., glass stirring rod and a thermometer. A darkroom clock, film clips, towel and cotton or sponge are also necessary. Good work depends on cleanliness and care. All lights are put out...don't touch film except by the edges. Attach one clip to one end of the roll. Unroll the protective paper until till the end of the film is reached, then tear off the "leader" which is attached and fasten it with a second clip...hold one clip in each hand and bend the film into a "U" shape without coiling, then lower into the developer...the film should go, emulsion side up... be sure the clock is set for the determined time. When developing time is up, take film out of the solution and pass it through the rinse water, see-sawing it back and forth...The short-stop bath is made from 15 drops of 28% acetic acid added to 16 ounces of water, the same temperature as the other two solutions. (next), Fix the film for three minutes in fresh hypo solution before turning on the light. The film must be moved for the entire fixation period, which is about ten minutes. After the fixing bath, wash film for 30 minutes in running water...Final step in the tray development of roll film is to dry the film ¹

Cookbook chemistry hardly described the process. Initial attempts to follow the instructions ended in disaster. In the dark everything was difficult. It was like the blind leading the blind. Attempts at separating the film and paper backing and then immerse the film in the

.Everybody's Photo Course, New York: U.S. Camera Publishing Corp., 1945.

proper tray without splashing solutions was a nightmare. We, my mother and I, were interrupted in the middle of the process; somebody always had to use the bathroom. After ruining several rolls of film and staining my fingers with developer, a negative was finally processed. We then had to wait for the negative to dry before we could make a print. When I saw the first print appear in the tray it was a magical moment and I decided then what I would do as an adult. I would take pictures like the ones I saw in Life magazine. My friends said they wanted to be policemen or firemen -- I would be a famous photographer. At eight years old, I began my lifetime fascination for photography.

I began to take my camera everywhere I went, even to school. Some teachers frowned and suggested I leave it home but a few ignored my obsession. My 9th grade homeroom teacher, who doubled as the chemistry and physics instructor realized that several of us were interested in photography, so he scheduled extra- curricular sessions on photography for us. These sessions were held in the band room which doubled as a makeshift photo lab. We developed pictures of class activities and assisted commercial photographers when they came to do yearbook photos. Luckily, I was one of those allowed to have access to the lab when it came time to work on our senior yearbook .

The senior class ahead of mine planned to visit Washington for their class trip but hotels refused to book them because of racial bias. In 1955 we had no Negroes (as we called African Americans or Blacks in those days), but as a sign of solidarity we decided to boycott Washington and our class went to New York City. On our visit to the Big Apple, we visited all the sights: the Empire State Building, the Staten Island Ferry and climbed the circular stairs to the crown of the Statue of Liberty. We also visited Grant's Tomb, Wall Street and Rockefeller Plaza. On the last day of our weeklong visit we were free to venture out on our own. I went to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), to see the exhibit "The Family of Man." I had read about Eduard Steichen's early work at Gallery 291, and now that he was the director of MoMA, I wanted to see his latest display. Surprisingly, Steichen's photographs were not presented. Instead, 503 photos from sixty-eight countries were displayed. The theme was the commonality; a

universal humanity that mankind shares throughout the world, regardless of social, economic or religious beliefs. Initially, I thought the images were staged, but since so many different photographers in different countries took them, I dismissed my original impression. Regardless of whether they were rich or poor, at work or play, happy or sad they all illustrated a singular message...mankind everywhere exhibits similar emotions and reactions to life. Realizing how common we are regardless where we live or what we believe changed my view of mankind and has had a strong influence on my photography.

During college years and those in the military, I never lost my fascination for photography, but it remained only a hobby. Nine years after the visit to MoMA I had an accident which changed my life. I became obsessed with images, made a career change, lived abroad and traveled internationally. I never went anywhere without a camera and I was constantly reminded of the images I saw at MoMA.

Chapter 2

THE ACCIDENT

On Friday night, December 18, 1964, while dismantling an antique cash register, I inadvertently plunged a screwdriver through my left eye. An ambulance took me from Nyack, NY to St. Joseph's Hospital, in Paterson, NJ, thirty miles away. St. Joseph's was as the closest hospital with an ophthalmologist on duty. Though the trip seemed like an eternity, it only took an hour. The hospital's elevator was out of service so I was carried on a stretcher up the narrow, dimly lighted stairways to the operating room on the fourth floor, where the attending ophthalmologist, Dr. Lukstead waited. He told me I would have to remain awake, without anesthesia so I could move my eye, allowing him to operate on it. He said I would have minimal pain. He was correct, but mentally I was in agony. After surgery, I taken to a post-op area and told to lay still, not even move a finger.

The next day I was transferred to a semi-private room. There was no TV, and even if there had been one, I could not have seen it, because my damaged eye was bandaged and a patch covered the other one. It was like being in a darkened tomb. Dr. Lukstead arrived mid-morning with bad news: there was a good chance I would become blind if my damaged eye were not removed. I reluctantly accepted his prognosis, so he scheduled the operation for the following Monday. The next two days I thought constantly about my plight. What if I did go blind? How could I cope? What kind of work could I do? I'd never see my three-month-old son grow up, I wouldn't be able to play ball with him, I'd never drive a car again. I couldn't think of anything but negatives.

My father came to my rescue on Sunday. He requested removal of the eye be postponed and asked for a second opinion -- a rare option in those days. That afternoon, Dr. Luckstead and another ophthalmologist agreed to monitor my condition for two weeks. During

that period, if my right eye showed signs of sympathetic reaction, the damaged eye would have to be removed immediately. However, if the right eye were not affected, I could go home.

I learned a lot about eyes during those two weeks. A representative of an optical prosthesis company explained how implants tracked natural eye movements and asked me to select pupil size, iris color, etc., all the characteristics I would want if I decided to have a prosthetic eye. As I learned about fake eyes, the more convinced I was to keep my own eye, if that were possible, no matter how ugly it might look. When the patch was removed from my right eye, I asked for two things: a mirror so I could take a peek at my left eye and books on eyes, so I could learn more about them. The books illustrated how cameras replicated eye functions and mentally I began to replace my lost eye with the lens of the camera.

Two weeks passed, the sympathetic reaction scare was over and I was released from the hospital. Coping on my own was confusing. Everything was two dimensional; I had no depth perception. I stumbled going up or down stairs and frequently ran into people who crossed in front of my blind eye. Driving a car was not only challenging but dangerous. The only clue I had if cars approached or went away was they got larger or smaller. The worst driving condition was at night, especially during a rainstorm. Reflections on shiny objects were nightmarish. The motor vehicle department told me to install an outside rearview mirror and made a notation on my license to that effect. Anyone reading this who is one-eyed knows what I went through.

When I looked in the mirror, I saw how ugly the eye looked, the iris was jagged, rendering it non-functional, the lens developed a traumatic cataract, therefore was opaque and unable to focus an image on the retina. Some doctors suggested replacing the lens, but the retinal damage more extensive than even the Wills Eye Clinic could repair. I wore a patch to cover the eye so people wouldn't look at it, but then they would ask, "What's wrong with your eye?" Initially, I tried to come up with an answer that would not be too gory and finally just told them I had an accident. Growing weary of questions, I stopped wearing the patch. Today, forty-seven years later, very few people know I am one-eyed. There is rarely a need to explain, unless I accidentally collide with someone because I did not see them.

The accident altered my life in positive ways. My interest in photography was not only renewed but became the focus of my life. At first I was absorbed with healing. But gradually I went from feeling sorry for myself, to sympathizing with others who endured similar losses. On release from the hospital I bought a Nikon F single lens reflex camera and seldom went anywhere without it. My childhood dreams of being a photographer were about to become a reality.

Chapter 3

CAREER CHANGE

Shortly after the accident I quit a shift supervisor's position in a candy factory and joined the Medical Division of DuPont's Photo Products Department. During interviews with DuPont, I envisioned a job in the Graphic Arts Division, but instead was offered a job with the Medical X-Ray Division. At first I was disappointed, but X-ray imaging is really a form of photography. During thirty years with DuPont, I held positions in manufacturing, marketing and research. After training in the physics of X-ray technology, I worked six months in a manufacturing plant and was then assigned a sales territory in St. Louis, MO. Six years later, DuPont transferred me to West Germany for three years. When I returned to the States, I continued to travel internationally until 1995. It seemed that DuPont discovered I could sleep on an airplane and therefore was a candidate to travel. During my years with DuPont I went through four passports. I traveled so much on one passport that accordion style pages had to be added for visas and immigration records.



Fig. 3.1. Additional pages were inserted in my passport

Working in the X-ray field domestically and abroad, I came in contact with many facets of medicine, manufacturing and marketing. I met with administrators, purchasing agents, technicians, patients and factory workers. It was virtually a total immersion in different cultures. Traveling and interacting with other societies presented a constant learning experience. Sometimes my international travel could be potentially dangerous so I was warned by many colleagues to avoid discussing subjects which might result in disfavor or detention.

As a transferee to West Germany in 1972, I had a keen interest to learn more how the division of pre-war Germany influenced thinking and behavior. The 1945 Yalta Conference divided Germany by a boundary Churchill later dubbed "The Iron Curtain." It was a wide swath of property bordered on both sides with barbed wire fences; often with land mines buried in between. Berlin, capital of pre-war Germany, was inside the Russian controlled territory and was also divided into sections: U.S., Great Britain, France and Russian. Berlin would become a major sore point between Russia and the Western allies during the "Cold War." In 1948 the Russians blockaded the city preventing the allies from entering it through East Germany. For nearly a year supplies for the western sectors of Berlin were flown in preventing Russian attempts to control the entire city. Thirteen years later in 1961 the infamous Berlin Wall was constructed which separated the Russian controlled sector from allied sectors. Ground access to Berlin was via a single road from West Germany through East Germany. West Germans I worked with called this division a "Politicum" -- merely a political divide -- which would not last forever, because Germans were still Germans no matter where they lived. They cautioned me to be careful when I discussed the impact of Germany's split, since many families had been painfully separated. But I wanted to understand the social impact and kept probing until I was politely told to keep quiet.

Also during the post-war generation Apartheid became the rule in South Africa and travel throughout the Near East and Africa could be difficult. For Americans who traveled both to Africa and the Near East, separate passports for specific countries were issued. This avoided the chance of Americans being detained because they visited countries that did not have similar human rights, such as I experienced in travels to Nigeria and South Africa. When I arranged a

trip to Lagos, my contact asked if I had been to South Africa. Puzzled, I asked why that was important, and was told that if I had been to South Africa, I might not be welcome in Nigeria. When I went to South Africa I found Apartheid appalling, it was a virtual police state with iron-fisted restrictions.

Travel to the Philippines during enforcement of martial law under Marco's rule made me understand a little better how dictatorial rule was exercised. I was spirited out of a restaurant and back to my hotel, if I didn't obey the curfew I could be arrested and held in prison. Even in South America, travel posed difficulties. I was in Argentina a few days before the outbreak of Falkland Islands War, in Columbia when the country was being held hostage by cocaine merchants and in Brazil when business leaders were being kidnapped for ransom. I was lucky, in every situation, because I was either warned or shielded by locals to avoid involvement.

Had I been a casual tourist, I would not have traveled to the places my job took me. Visiting clinics, hospitals and industrial areas provided vastly different views than a tourist would see. Carrying a camera on some excursions could have been potentially dangerous, but those exposures provided me even greater awareness and understanding of how others lived and what they thought about Americans. My behavior could influence what others thought of Americans, so I became careful when taking photos. I learned quickly when and when not to take pictures. The political ramifications for a nosy American armed with a camera were rife. I could be perceived as a covert representative of one of the world's superpowers or merely a harmless tourist. As I traveled around the globe I frequently thought of images I saw at the MoMA exhibit. What I didn't realize at first was how interacting face to face would not only change my photography but also my view of humanity. With or without the camera, I was met with unsolicited gregariousness and acts of kindness. As my camera replaced my lost eye my awareness of others intensified.

Chapter 4

AN EXPATRIATE IN WEST GERMANY

DuPont, like many international firms, purchased companies in Europe to have a marketing presence during recovery from the Second World War. DuPont selected Adox, a photographic company headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany. Adox, a pioneer in the photographic business supplied Dr. Roentgen with glass plates used to make the first x-ray images in 1895. In efforts to assimilate Adox into DuPont, U.S employees with marketing and language skills were transferred to manage the transition. I was fortunate to be one of those selected for such an assignment.

In the spring of 1972, armed with my first passport, a pocket German dictionary and a pre-war Leica camera, I flew to Frankfurt, West Germany. Between searches for family housing, I applied for a non-resident work permit and reluctantly became a member of the German Labor Union. My new co-workers invited me to their homes for dinner and on weekends took me sightseeing. Thus my introduction to Germany was very friendly and I felt comfortable enough to begin asking questions about what happened during the Second World War. Though many of my new friends were old enough to have been enrolled in Hitler youth programs or subjected to other indoctrination beyond mandatory military service, I did not consider my questions might open old wounds and bad memories. My behavior could have been best described as a bull in a china shop. The responses I got were varied, sometimes just a shrugged shoulder or that they could not remember. Most said they were glad those years were history and they wanted to forget them.

When I sensed I was too inquisitive, I backed off a bit. But a dichotomy existed. During the day my German friends reluctantly discussed the war years, but at night German TV was dominated with non-stop film clips of the Third Reich and the horrors of war. The scenes were shockingly graphic: film clips of a mass executions juxtaposed with jubilant soldiers

celebrating their accomplishments. I wondered what went through the minds of those who photographed these scenes. When I asked my friends at work why so much TV programming focused on the war, they said this was the government's current propaganda program designed to ensure there would never be a return to National Socialism.

Most Wehrmacht (German military) veterans said they served on the Eastern Front, absolving them from admitting they fought against the allies. I didn't believe them, but gradually got the message...they just did not want to discuss the war. It wasn't easy for them. Civilians were torn as well, they were either forced into accepting National Socialism or ashamed if they supported it. As soldiers, they had a patriotic duty to fight for their country. Undaunted, I rephrased my questions and focused on what they remembered about National Socialism. Almost all said they paid lip service to the regime, since it was easier to profess allegiance than to "fight" the system and suffer the consequences. I was reminded of what my mother told me as a teenager, "Don't discuss politics, religion and unionism!" I stayed away from religion and unionism but continued to question matters politic. I probed for answers until they stopped me by asking why racial issues still existed in the United States. In retrospect, their focus was on the future rather than the past, which they could not change.

So rather than continuing my questions about the Nazi era, I turned my attention to photographing the German landscape. But my Putzfrau (cleaning lady), Frau Wohlraub, knew I wanted answers and was openly candid about her wartime experience. Her husband fought on the Eastern Front and returned home in 1948. He was a prisoner of war for three years after the war ended. Frau Wohlraub had to fend for herself and her children by herself for nine years. By her account, sixty percent of Frankfurt had been destroyed by allied bombs. She described in vivid detail watching the sky light up night after night as Frankfurt was bombed. She said the planes flew over her town on their way back home and jettisoned the bombs that had not been dropped on the city. She said her home was nearly destroyed by one of those bombs. To prove her story, she took me to her home, which she had personally rebuilt. She showed me pictures of

the house as it was before the war and after reconstruction. I believed her story. Her photos convinced me and her hands - those of a workman, added credibility to her account.

However, Frau Wohlraub's recollection about the devastation of Frankfurt was still hard to believe. Remarkably, most of Frankfurt had been rebuilt by experts, either from scratch or patched up so well that without close examination it was difficult to tell that a bomb had ever fallen. The Bayer company's headquarters was only a few blocks from my office. It was rumored this complex was spared so it could be used after the wars as the American Military Headquarters. I was told most everything around it had been destroyed. Between the Bayer complex and my office, a whole city block was still cordoned off. This was 1972, twenty seven years after the war. Inside the barricade trees had taken root amid huge piles of graying granite. I passed by this site three times a day, on the way to work, at lunch, and on my way back to the train station. Every time I walked past it I saw workmen in grey coveralls, who looked at stone fragments, scratched their heads, walked around and stared at another chunk of stone. The next time I passed by the stone that had been on the ground was missing. They had either created a replacement or reinserted it into the building they were restoring. These were expert stone masons invited to come from Greece to put this building back together again like a three dimensional jigsaw puzzle. The building they were reconstructing across the street from my office was called Opernplatz, or the Frankfurt Opera house.



Fig. 4.1 Frankfurt Opera House, after reconstruction

Frankfurt's climate is relatively mild, it never seems to get too hot or too cold. Compared to Western New York, where I grew up, the winters in Frankfurt are warmer and shorter and the summer resembles an extended spring of non-stop drizzle with a few sunny days in the middle. Such weather encourages rapid aging. Except for the modern buildings, most looked like they had been there for centuries. As a Boy Scout in Western New York I was told that moss generally appeared on the north side of a tree. This was not the case in Frankfurt, where moss grew around the entire tree. I guess that resulted from the rainy climate. Anyway everything in Frankfurt seemed to age prematurely. This phenomenon and the desire to renew the pre-war architectural beauty helped erase the visible ravages of war. Even a new-laid cobblestone street looked old after a few months.

² <http://whitey.net/en/germany.photos-2.htm>

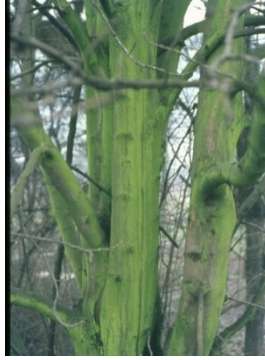


Fig. 4.2. Moss often encircled trees in Frankfurt

I learned more about the reconstruction of Frankfurt and a first-hand recollection of the post war period from a co-worker, Klaus, who lived Fischbach, the same town I did. Whether by car or train, we traveled together to and from the office. This arrangement was a total language immersion; better than a Berlitz course. Two hours a day, five days a week we had time to sharpen our skills in each other's language. It was inevitable that I would ask him about the Nazi era. Klaus was too young to be in the Hitler youth program, but old enough to remember the final days of the war. His first recollections were of the reconstruction. One morning as we walked from the train station to the office, he took me through a small park. Deep in the park, surrounded by a grove of trees stood a huge statue. As we stopped in front of it, Klaus asked me to describe it for him. I said I saw a robust man holding hands with a young very attractive woman. Slightly behind them, apparently straining to keep up, were an older woman and two children. These were a man, his wife, and a nanny with the children. Klaus smiled, so I asked him to explain. He said this was Nazi art. Most examples like this had been defaced or destroyed after the war, however this one survived. He explained the background of this statue would help me understand how virile young men in the 1930s and 1940s could be seduced into accepting and supporting National Socialism.

He went on to explain that the man was the father of the two children and the woman behind him was his wife. The young woman accompanying him was his sexual partner. Under Nazi rule, young men could be married and yet have an attractive mistress. Sons he fathered with the mistress would grow up to be blond, blue-eyed, two meter tall Aryan paragons of

masculinity. They would be the Third Reich's next generation supermen -- soldiers of the future. What virile young man could resist such an arrangement?

As we resumed our way to the office Klaus suggested before I asked too many questions about the war years, I might reflect on the statue. What he didn't say but I gleaned from his explanation was I might be questioning the wrong people. Many whom I had questioned could have been the children represented in the statute, who bore no responsibility for what happened before or during the war. Klaus' explanation how many had been drawn into support for the Nazi regime was something I did not expect. It took some time to realize it wasn't easy for proud Germans to recall their painful past. In retrospect, Klaus spared many from having to deny complicity and me much embarrassment for probing too deeply into the past.

Klaus and other co-workers did not find it unusual that I always carried a camera. Adox, the company DuPont bought had been a major producer of films and cameras so many of them were also avid photographers. Conversation at many lunches focused on their most recent photographic excursions. They raised their eyebrows when I showed them photographs I had taken of war-damaged buildings or an occasional swastika that had not been defaced. In typical German humor they chided me about my interest in photography and called me the Photo King. When I asked why, they related a German parable which they thought described me: "Bei den Blinden, der Einauge ist Konig." translated: "Among the blind, the one-eyed man is king." By making a witticism, they were careful not to show their discomfort at my choice of images. In retrospect, they were more careful of not hurting my feelings than I was of theirs.

Chapter 5

DO YOU WANT TO BE A SPY?

In June 1974, I remained in Frankfurt while my wife and three sons returned to the States for vacation. By remaining abroad, I could qualify for ex-patriot tax status sooner. The requirement was to be abroad 510 contiguous days during a two year period. Aside from the tax benefit, I took the opportunity to explore West-Germany with my camera. As an expatriate I had to give up American holidays, but I gained four more holidays than I would have enjoyed in the States. One of those holidays was "Tag der Freiheit", translated: "Day of Freedom." The term was first used by Leni Riefenstahl in the 1935 Nuremberg rally to celebrate rebirth of the German Army after World War I. But in 1973 this was the day West-Germany celebrated their democratic freedom as opposed to East-Germany's Communist rule. It was marked by parades along the eastern border which separated the two political divisions.

Fulda, a divided city like Berlin, was the nearest city where I could witness the festivities. It was close to Frankfurt, so on June 14, 1973, (coincidentally U.S. Flag Day), I drove to Fulda. I took a camera made in Dresden at the Ihagee factory. Dresden was one of the cities which had been fire-bombed by the Allies close to the end of the war. It never occurred to me that photographing a West German parade with a camera made in East Germany could have raised some eyebrows, but I was wrong.

I arrived in Fulda just before noon. Finding the parade was easy, all I had to do to follow the *Oompah* brass horn music. This being the first time I was in Fulda, I was lucky to find a restaurant with a veranda overlooking the street where the parade had already begun. This was a perfect spot to view the "no-man's land" between the two Germanys. I ordered lunch and looked for opportunities to photograph the scene below me. On the Eastern side of the space between the two Germanys, which was about fifty meters at most, uniformed guards paced back and forth on elevated walkways overlooking the "no-man's land." Some guards were armed with

machine guns. I put a telephoto lens on my camera and thought about taking a picture of one of the guards, but on second thought, decided against it. I didn't want to provoke an incident. Back in my office I was told that the only time the guards were tempted to use their weapons was when somebody tried to cross over, but that nobody would attempt that during this holiday. Certainly nobody would attempt to go from West to East!

This was the first time I saw buildings on the Eastern side that were in poor repair. Apparently, the East Germans under Communist control didn't bother to reconstruct war-torn buildings. I wondered if this was the same throughout the Eastern Bloc. The light was perfect for photography, bright but a cloud cover evenly lighted everything with no harsh shadows. My table was right at the railing. I would only have to stand up to photograph the parade and surroundings. My lunch arrived and I made room for it by moving my camera. I planned to eat first and then take a few pictures, but was interrupted when a well dressed man approached and asked, "Ist dieser Platz noch frei?" - translated - "Is this place unoccupied?." or "May I join you?." Since I was at a table which could accommodate several people, it was common practice for someone to ask if they could share it. Many other tables were vacant, but mine offered a bird's eye view of the parade. I motioned "okay" by waving my hand and shrugging my shoulders and the stranger sat down.

I could not see him clearly, a wide brimmed hat silhouetted his face. He ordered a drink and when it arrived he pushed my camera out of the way so he could rest his arms on the table. Next, speaking German, he asked where I was from. Replying in German, I said I was from Fischbach, just north of Frankfurt. He nodded and smiled. I realized immediately that he knew I was not German. He asked in English how long I had been here. Rather than tell him how long I had been in Germany, I said I was in Fulda just to see the parade. Changing the topic, he pointed at my camera and asked why I had equipment made in East Germany. I wondered how he knew where the camera came from; one had to look closely to find the country of origin marks.

I was uneasy. He appeared more interested in asking me questions than he was in the parade or lunch. Also, he interrupted my plans. I did not come to Fulda to be interrogated by a stranger. Trying not to be rude or show irritation, I told him I was an amateur photographer and the camera came from Photo Porst, a chain store in Frankfurt. He merely nodded. Maybe the questions were over. He sipped his drink, smiled and then asked if I wanted to take pictures for him. "Why?" I asked. Didn't he have a camera? He said some of "his people" wanted pictures. My mind raced. Why would a total stranger ask another to take pictures for "his people"? Who were these "people"? I was not a photographer for hire but if I agreed, what might the consequences be? I knew nothing about him, and he already knew a fair amount about me. I felt like I was going to break out in a cold sweat. I had seen too many espionage movies! Who was he? He could have been an agent of the East, I had no way knowing. On the other hand, maybe he didn't have a camera and wanted some pictures. Either way, I did not want to continue our conversation.

After quickly eating my sandwich, I signaled the waiter, asked for my bill and used the opportunity to tell the stranger I had to go. We sat in silence until the waiter returned. I paid the bill and made a hasty retreat to my car. I left Fulda without taking picture a single picture. I had none of the parade, the East German guards, the stranger...nothing. The only images I have of that trip are those in my memory.

On the drive back to Frankfurt, I reviewed what happened. Cold War politics and the intrigue involved crossed my mind many times. I tried to imagine what might have happened to me if had I accepted the stranger's offer. I wondered what motivated people to engage themselves in clandestine activities. Was it a thrill or was it for the money? What I knew, or thought I knew about espionage was based on what I had seen in James Bond movies. I also wondered what kind of photographs could I have taken that could have been worth selling? Anybody could take pictures of the parade and the soldiers on the Eastern side. I was in no position to have access to anything of espionage value. I thought that if had agreed to take pictures for him, they would have to be developed, which would take some time and would have required further contact

with this guy. I concluded my thinking about that encounter believing I did the right thing by refusing his offer.

A few days later back in the office, I related my Fulda experience to my colleagues. They laughed and said if the fellow were an East German, he might have been attempting to suborn me. On the other hand, if he were a West German, he could merely be checking out a stranger with a camera. Either way, if I had agreed, I might have been put in a delicate position. They chided me, suggesting the way I dressed was a dead-giveaway. They said wearing a short sleeve blue button-down collar shirt and khaki trousers identified me as an American soldier. They also suggested I buy some "German" shoes and try not to look too much like a tourist. Their final assessment was that the guy was just "toying" with me to see how I would react. They said this was a subtle for of German humor. Maybe my colleagues were just adding to my uncertainty, but their comments about my attire seemed valid and I learned more about German humor.



Fig. 5.1 The camera I did not use in Fulda on "Tag der Freiheit"

I still have this camera. It has never been used for espionage or for that matter never for any serious photography.

Chapter 6

TRAVEL IN THE EASTERN BLOC

I have always been a soccer fan so the opportunity to live in Germany in 1974 was dream come true. West Germany hosted the World Cup that year and I attended two of the games played in Frankfurt. This was the first time I saw Gerd Müller, striker of the German National Team who seemed to break records every time he played. West Germany lost to East Germany in the first match, but advanced to play the final game against Holland for the World Cup. Müller scored the winning goal which defeated the Dutch. I bought a beer stein to celebrate the event and for years it has been one of my favorite pencil holders.

At one of the matches in Frankfurt, I met a family from East Germany. I was led to believe that East Germans were not allowed to travel to the West and wondered how they got to Frankfurt. They told me they were allowed a short visit to see the match between the two Germanys and had crossed from East to West through a Czechoslovakian border crossing named Waidring.

A few weeks later when my family returned from the States we decided to see what life was like behind the Iron Curtain, so I applied for visas for my entire family to travel inside the Eastern bloc. Visas were issued country by country and chose to visit Czechoslovakia. We planned to go through the Waidring checkpoint that my East German soccer fans talked about. I was astounded; visas to visit Czechoslovakia were granted in a week. It was easier to get permission to travel behind the Iron Curtain than it was to get a West German driver's license.

Obtaining a license to drive in West Germany seemed straightforward, but I was mistaken. Foreigners living in West Germany had to live there a year before they could apply for a driver's license. My Delaware license was due to expire shortly after I was transferred so before leaving the states, I got an international license from the American Automobile

Association, which was good for a year. When the AAA license was due to expire and I was in Germany a year, I went to the German Motor Vehicle bureau to get a German license.

I may well have been the first one-eyed American to apply for a license in Frankfurt. Trouble began when I was asked to read the eye chart. When I said I could not see with my left eye, the examiner left the room, when he came back he announced I needed an physician's or optometrist's statement that I was partially blind. "Why." I asked, I was not trying to hide anything. I was told then not only a optometrist's statement of partial blindness was required, but also I had to obtain a psychiatrist's statement that I was competent to drive. At that point, I lost my cool. I had driven accident free in Germany for a year, and needed a license, why would I have to go to a psychiatrist? But my examiner told me that I had "Angst" and if I wanted a license, I would have to abide by their rules.

So I did what I was told. Not knowing any doctors, especially psychiatrists, I called the managing director of DuPont Deutschland and asked for his help. He immediately arranged visits for me. Before noon, I saw both an optometrist and a psychiatrist. Both asked the same questions, how long had I had been one-eyed and could I read German road signs. Since I had driven for a year problem free, they agreed to provide statements to satisfy the license bureau. The psychiatrist added that the reason I was forced into this run-around was that bureaucrats were not expected to think but just follow rules. With the required statements in hand, I returned to the motor vehicle bureau and within minutes I walked out with my license. After all this run-around once issued, a Führerschein (Driver's License) is good until revoked. I still have it and if I were to return to Germany now, thirty-six years later, it would still be valid!



Fig. 6.1. My visa for Czechoslovakia and German Driver's License

With my new German license and visas in hand, our family packed up and left to go sightseeing behind the Iron Curtain. We crossed into Czechoslovakia at Waidring, like my East German soccer fans had done a few weeks earlier.

The closer we got to the border crossing we had the road to ourselves. Beginning about 5 miles (8 kilometers) on both sides of the road, as far as we could see, we drove past rows and rows of World War II vintage tanks with their muzzles pointed eastward. It was like driving through a gauntlet. This was 1974, a generation after the conflict and the vestigial machinery of war quietly sat dormant along the border! I thought of the defenses Germany and France constructed following World War I to protect their respective borders. Earlier on a trip to Belgium, I had photographed the concrete pyramids of the Siegfried Line but decided against wasting film on the rusting tanks on our way to Waidring.



Fig.6.2. Siegfried Line defenses on the German/Belgium border

We arrived at the checkpoint to find it crammed with cars. Since we had been the only car on the road, we wondered how long those in the checkpoint had been there. It would take a long time to go through the border. The car directly in front of us had a "YU" country identification sticker on their rear window indicating it was from Yugoslavia. It had to have been traveling in the West! I wondered how different their trip might have been in West Germany than ours would be in Czechoslovakia. All the cars in front of us had their trunks agape and their engines off. Obviously, there would be a thorough inspection of our car.

As in Fulda, there was a "no man's" land separating West Germany and Czechoslovakia. Unlike Fulda, however, this space was much wider, probably as much as a kilometer. On the eastern side the observation tower above the barbed wire fence was equipped with machine guns. It was hot that morning and the cars ahead of us were devoid of people, so we too got out to stretch. A guard with a machine gun slung under his arm told us to get back in the car until we were told to get out. We did, but my camera was on the dash, so I snapped a picture of the cars in front of ours after the guard walked out of sight.



Fig. 6.3. Waidring checkpoint was crammed with cars

It took close to two hours to go through the checkpoint. We arrived about ten o'clock and were there well past noon. This delay allowed sufficient time for the guards to search each car and plenty of time for us to buy lunch from their kitchen. The contents of each car including all personal belongings were thoroughly examined by hand. Nobody was allowed to remain with their car while it was searched. I was handed a large plastic card with a number on it. A similar card was placed on the dashboard. We were escorted to the administration building. Once inside, our family was separated. I was escorted to what appeared to be an office and my wife and children were given a group card and directed to a makeshift lunchroom where hot food was available for purchase. My kids told me later that they did not want to eat what looked like day-old stew gurgling in large aluminum kettles.

Inside the office or interrogation room, I submitted our passports for examination. A uniformed clerk asked about our destination and why we were crossing into Czechoslovakia. I satisfied half of their question by producing reservations for the hotel in Prague and youth hostels in the countryside. As to why we were going, I said we just wanted to see their country. They seemed to accept that answer. Even though our visas guaranteed entry into Czechoslovakia, it seemed the border guards exercised their own form of time consuming

bureaucracy to justify their existence. I recalled the bureaucratic rigmarole I went through to get my German driver's license.

Next there was the matter of currency exchange. Czech currency was not accepted in the West and they told me that Deutsch Marks were not legal tender inside Czechoslovakia so I had to exchange the currency I had at the border. US Dollars or D-Marks could be exchanged for Czech Krone but credit cards were not accepted. I had to exchange a fixed amount of D-Marks or dollars based on the number of passports and days we planned to be in their country. This would provide us sufficient local money to pay for hotels and meals. The exchange rate at the border crossing was four Krone per D-Mark. Later in an alley in Prague, the rate in the black market was seven Krone for a D-Mark!

After the interrogation and currency exchange, I joined my family in the lunchroom. Passing through the checkpoint was exhausting and not knowing what to expect made it unpleasant. But once through that ordeal, we were basically on our own again. My kids announced that the guards took their transistor radios. I thought this might happen and tried to explain that Communist countries did not want people living there to listen to Radio Free Europe. That answer prompted their next question: "What is Radio Free Europe and could the guards listen to it." I explained as best I could that Radio Free Europe (RFE) was a way non-communist countries communicated over the airwaves with people behind the Iron Curtain. To prevent one from listening to the broadcasts Communists jammed the airwaves. That satisfied the children because they assumed the guards couldn't listen to RFE on their stolen transistor radios either. But then they asked why the guards didn't take the radio out of the car. So we tried to dial RFE on the car radio, but couldn't find it. The jamming system seemed to work and the kids merely said the guards just "stole" their radios for no good reason.

The hotel we reserved in Prague was not rated by the European "star" system, so we had no way of knowing what to expect. The rooms were obviously pre-war style. They had unusually high ceilings with ornate plaster soffit moldings and the woodwork around the windows and doors had been magnificently carved a long time ago. We had two adjoining

rooms on the first floor and both had entrances from the hallway. Actually the rooms were one flight up but Czechs, as all Europeans, call the ground level floor the ground floor, so one flight up was the first floor. Our window looked out over a side street where we had seen a street cleaner on our way to the hotel. Both rooms had wash basins, but no toilets. Toilets and a bathtub facilities were in a common bathroom down the hall. There was a radio in each room, but no TV, so we spent evenings planning what we would do the following day.

At check-in the clerk examined our passports. He looked at us carefully, matching faces and passport pictures, then put our passports in the cubbyhole from which he removed the room keys. I bristled at the thought of losing our passports and asked why he put them there. He explained that this was a simple security system all hotels used. Customers exchanged their passports for room keys and when they went out of the hotel, they exchanged the keys and got their passports back. That way, the hotel never lost any keys and nobody had access to the room unless they surrendered their passports. He said this had nothing to do with the current regime, the system had been used for generations. Regardless of the explanation, I felt uneasy and the first night, I went to the lobby a couple times to make sure our passports were safely tucked into the cubbyhole. My fears were unfounded.

The next day we went to the square in the center of Prague where a student uprising took place four years earlier in the summer of 1968. The most prominent building in the square is an ancient church which overlooks the area where the Warsaw Pact tanks converged to quell the uprising.



Fig. 6.4 Prague Cathedral and view from the belfry

My sons and I climbed up a narrow stone stairway leading to the church belfry. The view was fantastic. Just below the belfry we looked out on the street below. Iron bars were imbedded in the opening and deep grooves in the stone gave evidence that something had abraded it. When we descended, I asked a waiter about the grooves. He explained the belfry had been used to punish prisoners by subjecting them to the deafening sound of the bells, but such punishment had long since ended. I wondered when such punishment took place and how long someone would have to have been there to wear away the stone. I remembered the pillories I had seen in Williamsburg as a youngster and wondered if my boys would recall this visit when they were older.

I asked a waiter what happened in the rebellion in 1968 known as the "Prague Spring." He said thousands of troops and brigades of tanks from Warsaw Pact countries converged in this square in Prague only to meet little or no opposition. He said soldiers were stymied and embarrassed when they met no opposition and had no reason to shoot. Their passivity proved the power of non-violence.

It may well have been a peaceful revolution, but photographs of that time I saw in a bookstore showed just the opposite. Considerable damage had been inflicted to storefronts indicating the rebellion had not been so peaceful. When we were there the country was still under Communist rule but it did not appear to be rigidly controlled. The only military types we saw were some men dressed in half a uniform. We were told to avoid these men; they were part of the government!

The Czechs I met did not seem to be bothered much by the form of government they endured. The mood on the street, person to person, was much different than I sensed at the border checkpoint. Everywhere we went, a small crowd gathered around our car. This seemed odd and I wondered what it was that attracted their attention. It wasn't the bright yellow color of the car, but the car itself. Only one car was made and sold in Czechoslovakia, the Skoda. Car dealerships did not exist, automobiles were manufactured and sold by the government. People purchased cars from a government agency and waited as long as three years for delivery. Skodas

came in three colors: red, black and blue, so my yellow Audi stood out. One fellow who admired my car suggested in English that I remove the windshield wipers when I parked, else the wipers might disappear. Windshield wiper thieves! Why? He said Czechoslovakian rubber was poor quality. It aged prematurely, got hard and cracked, rendering it useless as wipers. Even the hotel desk clerk confirmed the wiper story and suggested I take the wipers off when I parked it overnight. An unsolicited tip like this impressed me. Their concern for a seemingly trivial matter was an act of compassion for a stranger.

While taking pictures I noticed that one of the half-uniformed men appeared to keep an eye on me, but made no effort to interfere. After my experience in Fulda, I was suspicious. A couple days later when I picked up some slides I left to be developed, a clerk remarked that I had some very interesting shots. He asked why I took a picture of a street cleaner. His comment seemed odd, but then I may have been a bit paranoid. In retrospect, maybe he was just making conversation.



Fig. 6.5 Street cleaner in Prague

After several days in Prague we drove south to Vienna. In the countryside we stayed in youth hostels. We did not take our wipers to bed with us and nobody removed them as we slept. When we approached the Austrian border, we noticed a similar desolation to that we saw when approaching the Czech border. The closer we got to Austria, the more the villages resembled ghost towns. The last town we went through was Trencianske Teplice. We might

have refueled, if we could have found a gas station open before we got to the border, but they were all closed. The last one we passed had pumps that looked like they had not been operational for years. The hoses were brittle and the paint on the pumps was dull and crinkled like it had been baked.

There was no long line at the checkpoint leaving Czechoslovakia. The atmosphere was vastly different than what we experienced two weeks earlier on the way into the country. My family stayed in the car while I went into an administration building. Our papers were examined quickly and I was asked several questions regarding what I thought of their country. Their manner was not at all interrogative. They listened carefully when I answered their questions. I sensed they were genuinely glad we had visited.

Then the issue of money came up. They asked me if I had any Czech currency leftover. I said yes, we had eaten well, and stayed in modest inns and hostels so we still had some Czech money, both coins and paper. Since Czech money was not allowed to leave the country, I could either forfeit it or spend it in their gift shop! I opted for the gift shop alternative. The gift shop had nothing but tools in it, no trinkets, just tools. Czechs were known for high quality steel and I could always use a few more tools, so I selected several to add to my toolbox. I still have them.

But that was not all. Next, I was escorted to an office where a young man was seated. They told me that I was to take him across the border into Austria! How could I? I had reservations and a lot of questions. Our car was already filled, with two adults in the front and three kids in the back. Where was I going to put him? Who was he, where did he come from? What kind of luggage did he have? What would happen when I got to the Austrian side? The Austrian authorities would probably ask questions I couldn't answer! The Czechs, who had seemed so friendly, merely smiled and said, "You will take him!."

After squeezing my three sons together, we made room for the assigned passenger. He sat directly behind me as directed by the officers. Off we went across the border. Unlike Waidring, there was no barbed wire and no observation towers. As we drove the short distance

separating Czechoslovakia and Austria we passed a border guard , who ignored us as he walked down the side of the road with his rifle slung over his shoulder. I wondered what he thought as we passed by. Could he have been envious of us in a West German car or was he just going through the motions like one of George Orwell's dystopian soldiers?



Fig. 6.6 Czech border guard on patrol

As we approached the Austrian checkpoint we drove past two soldiers sitting on wooden folding chairs playing cards on what looked like a TV table. One of them stood up and waved us past. There was no formality, no search of the vehicle, no presentation of papers, nothing. I drove a short distance, just far enough away from the guards, stopped the car and told the young man to get out. I did not know who he was, why he had been in Czechoslovakia, and why we were selected to sneak him across the border. We did not talk to him, therefore I didn't know his country of origin. I mulled about this episode for some time. Did I do the right thing? Did I do him a favor or just the opposite? I thought of how pleasant the border guards at the exit checkpoint and how disinterested the Austrian guards seemed. I wondered how much easier it might be if such boundaries did not exist.

We stayed outside Vienna one night and then drove on to Salzburg; rented a room above a stable and hiked in the hills. One of the mornings we were there, the owner of the pension brought us a newspaper that headlined the resignation of President Nixon. The news was several days old; we had been crossing the border out of Czechoslovakia when President Nixon

quit. I wonder if they knew that at the border? Could that have been why they were so nice? In retrospect, I was reminded that one on one, when there is no overt confrontation, people regardless of their differences seem to be capable of exhibiting human kindnesses.

Advice on how to keep our windshield wipers from being stolen, pleasantries during the exit from Czechoslovakia and pension owner's concern about President Nixon's resignation were all unsolicited. While we didn't expect them, these concerns conveyed a humanness that transcended national and political boundaries.

Chapter 7

A MISUNDERSTANDING AND RESOLUTION

After the assignment in Frankfurt, I returned to the States and was appointed the technical and training manager for Latin America, Asia Pacific and Africa, an area DuPont labeled as OTE, Other Than Europe. My time was spent sixty percent at home and forty percent traveling. My charge was to introduce new products, conduct on-site training sessions and maintain good will. Distributors and customers who needed specific training came to the United States. Though distributors and hospital workers in X-ray departments had different needs, in essence, they were both my customers and my job to keep them both happy made for a juggling act. Management wanted to minimize travel time and maximize assistance, which often caused some concern by those I visited.

Visits to hospitals and distributors often seemed like whistle stops. Distributors and X-ray personnel almost always wanted us to spend more time with them. Those needing assistance wanted more in-depth help. It seemed inevitable that these brief in and out visits could result in dissatisfaction or at least a misunderstanding. In the 1970s international air travelers were told to "confirm" future reservations seventy-two hours in advance. If they did not, the airline could and would assign the seat to another passenger. Since many of my visits often involved only a day or two in a given location, I had virtually no time to reconfirm to secure my seat on my next flight. So, the first thing I did on arrival was to ask my host to make confirmation calls for me. This seemed the best way to keep to my travel schedule, however it was not always understood by some distributors and hospital staff and therefore resulted in resentment.

On one junket through South East Asia, I visited a hospital in Cheng Mai, Thailand to renew a friendship with an administrator I met several years before in Frankfurt. As usual, the first thing I did when I arrived was ask the his secretary to confirm my travel plans. At dinner he

suggested I reconfirm my reservations at the airport rather than request his secretary to do it for me. He wasn't offended; he had traveled frequently and was aware of the confirmation process. However, he knew from his secretary that she was irritated by my request. When I asked why, he said that his secretary assumed I didn't want to be in Thailand because the first thing I did when I walked in the door was to make arrangements to leave. He explained I might have been giving the same impression to many other contacts. Such misinterpretation could kill rapport. It is common, he said, in the Far East to begin meetings with tea and pleasantries before getting down to business. He said Americans in particular were viewed as too abrupt when they bypassed the "get to know each other time" and plunged into business and then left town. His advice was well taken, thereafter, before leaving an airport, I made my own confirmations. I sensed my visits went more smoothly as a result of this unsolicited advice.

Chapter 8

BRAZILIAN STREET CHEF

My travels as a technical sleuth did not always hinge only on solving problems. Some travel was based on maintaining business or continuing a friendship. Dr. Wilson Sesana, President of Brazil's Radiographic Society, asked me to attend the Brazilian Radiology Society Meeting in September 1975 in Salvador, Brazil. Dr. Sesana and I became friends when he was a neuro-radiology resident at Mallinckrodt Institute in St. Louis, Missouri and I was a technical representative. At that time he asked me to take slides of angiographic procedures so he could use them to teach residents when he returned to Brazil. His request for me to attend the Brazilian meeting was a way of recognizing my assistance and provide someone from DuPont the opportunity to meet key Brazilian decision makers.

Since the meeting was scheduled to begin on Monday, I decided to travel on Saturday which would give me time on Sunday to get acclimated and hopefully be fresh Monday morning. Traveling from Philadelphia to Salvador involved several flights and a variety of aircraft. The first was a turbo-prop commuter from Philadelphia to JFK, then a jet to Miami where I went through customs. The flight from Miami to Rio de Janeiro on Varig (Brazil's national airlines) took seven hours. On arrival in Rio, I went through Brazilian Customs and then took a commuter to Sao Paulo. The final leg was on a single engine aircraft to Salvador. Sixteen hours of stop and go traveling left me exhausted. I left home at 7:00 AM and arrived in Salvador at 11:00 PM my time.

When I woke on Sunday morning I decided to take my camera and go sightseeing. Salvador had been the first capital city under Portuguese rule and the brochures said the old section was particularly rich with 17th C buildings, especially Roman Catholic churches in old world style. When I lived in Europe I had never been to Portugal but knew the 1755 earthquake

destroyed most of Lisbon's 17th C buildings, but in Salvador, I could see examples of architecture which no longer existed in the old world.

Salvador has 365 Catholic churches, each with a different saint's name. Far too many to see in one day, but I managed to photograph a few. They all seemed to be cathedral size. Even the relatively new ones -- those only two or three hundred years old. Almost all had gold leaf ceilings and gilded statuary, much of which had been scraped off by thieves. Shops selling coffins were right next to the churches. These shops were deep and narrow, in European style, with no show windows. The coffins were piled on top of one another on the street or leaned up against the shop exterior. I thought of the phrase, "from the cradle to the grave." as I snapped a few pictures of them. It seemed a bit bizarre to me to have the undertakers surround the churches. Worshippers had to pass by the empty coffins on their way to Mass and I wondered what they thought of the "after life."



Fig. 8.1 Brazilian sidewalk chef and 17th C style Roman Catholic Church

Down the street from one of the cathedrals a woman and several children blocked the narrow sidewalk. I was forced to walk on the cobblestone street to pass by her. She sat on a cut-off stool cooking several foods in different kettles on cast-iron stoves. Some already cooked vegetables and meats were displayed on a collapsible butler's table. My first thought was the children either helped her or waited for handouts. It seemed obvious to me that she was waiting

to sell to the parishioners. She'd been there before, because underneath the iron cookers and trays there was a layer of grease, tell-tale residue of previous set-ups

A girl appeared to assisted her, while others, mostly boys, seemed to just hang out, but maybe I made too quick a judgment. An inviting aroma filled the still air. It was near lunchtime and the smells tempted me, but I wondered how old the food was or how well it had been cooked. In all my travels I had resisted buying food from street vendors. Added to the list of negatives, the greasy utensils and dishes bothered me how clean could they be? I lingered a bit and surreptitiously took her picture. She didn't look up, remained intently absorbed with her cooking, but one of the children whispered to her.

She looked up, smiled and in perfect English, asked me what I wanted. She sensed I was a tourist who spoke English and I just stood there. She repeated, did I want something, to which I shrugged my shoulders in an attempt to disguise my reluctance. I finally squeezed out a faint "no." In response, she said, "Brazilian delights, they're delicious"! She went on to say she had many tourists who came by to enjoy her food and offered me a sample from any dish. I was hesitant, but for some reason did not want to insult her, so I said, "okay." and pointed to something which resembled a well baked pastry. One of the kids dug a paper plate out of a plastic bag and she put it on the plate. I asked her how much it was and she told me, "One Cruzeiro."

At the airport currency exchange I converted US dollars into Cruzeiros and had a pocketful of them. The exchange rate at that time was 8 Cruzeiros / US dollar. Latin American monies, especially in Brazil and Argentina were not very stable in the mid-70s as inflation there was rampant. With a pocketful of money, a pastry for one Cruzeiro was thievery. That translated into twelve US cents. Back home I couldn't buy a doughnut for four times that. Rather than embarrass her or play the part of the "rich American." I gave her the Cruzeiro and took the pastry. As I walked away, I beckoned one of the boys to follow me down the street. I gave him the pastry and his eyes lit up.

I felt good about this brief encounter. The street cook made a sale, one of the kids had a treat and I had a picture of her cooking for churchgoers. Every time I look at that image I can almost smell the aroma of the food and am reminded how much more I learned about the Brazilian culture images like this than I could ever have by reading travel brochures.

Chapter 9

AN ASSASSINATION AT LUNCH

From 1975 to 1983, I traveled internationally, as the Training and Technical Manager for DuPont's Medical X-Ray Division. My job required first-hand visits to hospitals and dealers in Asia, Australia, Africa and South America. I spent untold hours in the air, long before airlines rewarded travelers with frequent flyer mileage benefits. In late 1983, our distributor in Bogota, Colombia requested help and I responded. The U. S. State Department provided a list of places travelers should avoid, so before making travel arrangements, I checked to see if Colombia was on the list. Three major Colombian cities were on the list: Cali, Medellin and Cartagena were classified unsafe. Bogota, the capital was okay. In the countryside, cocaine growers and dealers frequently took hostages for ransom and waged war against the paramilitary. The cities listed and the mountain roads connecting them posed the greatest risk. Since my travel was only to Bogota the risk seemed minimal. So off I went.

But troubles began almost the moment the plane landed. First, the airline could not find my luggage. I was advised it would be delivered to my hotel. When the taxi dropped me off at the hotel, I had to walk between machine gun nests to enter the lobby. It was like running the gauntlet. During check-in, the desk clerk handed me a typewritten note of how to remain safe during my stay in the hotel. I was to be escorted to and from my room and under no circumstances was I to take the stairs or the elevator alone. I had traveled many years without mishap, but these conditions were disarming. This was the first time I felt really uneasy about being in a hotel. I did not relish being in the line of fire even for a moment.

That night, I called the desk several times checking to see if my luggage had arrived. It had not. So other than the clothes I wore, my briefcase, wallet, passport and a small camera, I had nothing else. I needed a toothbrush and razor so I asked the concierge for help. These items were provided and they offered to launder my shirt, socks and underwear overnight.

Using room service, I ordered dinner and watched Spanish speaking television. I washed my socks and underwear in the sink with shampoo I found in the bathroom. I did not trust my shirt would be back the next day, so I did not accept their offer to have it laundered while I slept. Instead, I asked the desk clerk to call my host to announce my arrival.

I was in Bogota for nine days. By the third day, I had less apprehension about walking between the machine guns, but continued to have hotel security people accompany me to my room. By mid-week, I took both the guards and security measures for granted. I even took some free time to visit the Museo de Oro (Gold Museum) famous for its pre-Columbian artifacts. When my visit was winding down, I felt more at ease, my luggage had finally been delivered and I could change clothes.

I was scheduled to leave on a Sunday, so the previous Friday, my host suggested we have lunch on Saturday at a restaurant overlooking Bogota. I agreed. He would pick me up at the hotel around noon and we would drive about a half hour to the restaurant. I took a camera small enough to be pocketed. I had used it in the Museo de Oro, but refrained from exposing it in downtown Bogota because of the security situation. But on Saturday, with my host at a restaurant I didn't think it would be a problem.

We arrived at the restaurant just as it opened. We had the place to ourselves. My host and the owner knew each other so they chatted and he introduced me as a special visitor from the States. We ordered lunch and toasted a successful visit. I felt comfortable in this setting, we were out away from the city a bit and there were no other people in the restaurant. We had no more than begun to eat when the owner rushed over and suggested we move out to the patio. He explained he had just finished constructing the patio and we would be the first to enjoy it. Plus, we would have a bird's eye overview of Bogota. How could we resist? It was such a nice day we could enjoy the view and eat at the same time.

On the way to the patio, I caught a glimpse of several olive-drab cars in front of the restaurant. A man dressed in military uniform, with a lot of the service medals and ribbons on his chest, was just getting out of one of the cars. I watched for a moment and saw a young woman get out of another car and the two of them walked out of sight into the restaurant below us. I remarked to my host that I thought this looked like a romantic tryst to which he responded, "That's common. It was none of our business, we should pay no attention to it, and that was probably the reason we were whisked outside to the patio. He also told me to hide my camera.

We had almost finished lunch when the owner frantically returned and suggested we leave immediately. We left without paying, but were no more on the road when I heard the unmistakable rattle of machine gun fire. My host was stone-faced as he picked up speed to get further away. "What happened"? I asked. He said we probably avoided being witnesses to an assassination of a military officer who had not cooperated with the drug lords. With a shrug of his shoulders he told me that was the way things were done in Colombia.



Fig. 9.1 DuPont X-ray distributor in Bogota, Colombia

I did not get any pictures of the recently finished patio, the officer or his girlfriend, but I did take a portrait of my host. In retrospect, I was very glad we were whisked away before

the shooting started. The restaurant had to be cleared. My host said if we had stayed, we might not have left alive

There were times pictures were prohibited or were not able to be taken for safety's sake, this visit in Colombia made me consider the wisdom of when and where I took pictures. I wondered if the Colombian restaurateur was in cahoots with the assassins! His decision to have us leave could have been as much for his protection as for us. Or maybe he had a genuine concern for our safety. Either way he made sure we were not involved. I elected to think he was being considerate for our well-being.

Chapter 10

PRELUDE TO THE FALKLAND WAR



Fig..10.1 Argentina bought the USS Phoenix and renamed it "Belgrano"³

Ever since Argentina became a sovereign country it has disputed British ownership of the small group of islands in the South Atlantic, known as the Falklands. On April 2, 1982 Argentina attempted a military takeover of the islands. In response, Britain converted the Queen Elizabeth II into a troop ship and dispatched surface and submarine warships to regain the islands. On May 2, a British nuclear submarine torpedoed Argentina's flagship, the General Belgrano, as it patrolled the waters around the Falkland Islands. The British quickly regained control of the islands and the war ended in June 1982.

During most of the 20th C Argentina was governed by military juntas with the exception of the elections during the Peronist period (1946-1976). In 1976, a military junta deposed Isabel Peron, who succeeded her husband and took control of the country. Argentina's economy continued to be in trouble. Inflation remained unbelievably high. Word on the street was if you saw something you wanted in a shop, you'd better buy it then, because the next day it would cost twice as much. The years 1976 to 1983 were known as the "Dirty War" as those

³ <http://www.militaryfactory.com/ships/detail.asp?ship-id=USS-Phoenix-CL46>

opposed to the Junta frequently disappeared. Many were rumored to have been dropped from helicopters into the Atlantic Ocean. By a takeover of the Falkland Islands, the Junta thought they could rally popular support and divert attention from their human rights abuses and runaway inflation. Their plan failed. In little more than two months, the British regained control of the islands and the war was over.

The last week of March 1982, my father and I were in Buenos Aires. My 70 year-old father accompanied me throughout South America on a month-long business trip. Argentina was on the tail end of our visits. For a week, while I visited hospitals, my father explored Buenos Aires. Two nights before our departure, he told me we were invited to have breakfast the next day, Saturday, April 1st on an Argentine warship. I thought he was pulling an April Fools prank on me, but he was serious. He pulled the drapes back from our hotel window and pointed to military ship moored in the Rio Plata. It was the Belgrano! I had heard enough about human rights abuses by the military and had no interest in boarding a warship in Argentina, but my father insisted. While I worked, he had walked along the wharf where the ship was moored and talked sailors into letting him go aboard. He said he had met with Captain Bonzo, who was interested in talking with an American World War II veteran and extended the invitation for us to join him for breakfast the following morning. That night at dinner, Manny Alvarez, DuPont's manager in Argentina confirmed the written invitation my father had was legitimate.

Our breakfast on the Belgrano was lavish. Hot and cold sausages, croissant with cream cheese and jelly were topped off with freshly brewed Espresso style coffee. Served on specially designed Belgrano china, this breakfast was elegant, far nicer than we would have had at the Sheraton. I had heard ship captains ate in style, but the setting and spread in Captain Bonzo's quarters were beyond all expectations.

As the Captain and my father reminisced about their respective tours I listened. We could not speak Spanish, but that was not a problem because the Captain's English was excellent. He asked where we were from in the States, and when he heard I lived in Delaware, just south of Philadelphia, his eyes lit up. For close to an hour, he told us the background of the

Belgrano and how he had come to be the ship's commanding officer. He rattled off the history of the ship as if he were reading a press release: the Belgrano was laid down in the Philadelphia shipyard in 1935; finished in 1938 and named USS Phoenix (CL46). It miraculously escaped damage at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and went on to be a highly decorated ship in the Pacific as a Light Cruiser. In January 1951 Argentina bought it from the U.S. and named it the Belgrano after Manuel Belgrano, father of the Argentine navy.

After breakfast we went out on deck where I photographed my father and Captain Bonzo as they shook hands while standing front of the ship's bell. The Captain whispered that pictures were not allowed, but he made an exception so we could have a souvenir of our meeting.

As we went down the gangplank, I looked back at the side of the ship and didn't think it would ever make it back out to sea. The side of the ship showed more rust than paint. I snapped a picture of the ship's side it as we passed a group of sailors who were busy hoisting paint up to scaffolds so they could paint it navy gray. I mused the ship was just being spruced up for inspection and marveled at the seemingly instant rapport the Captain exhibited and wondered why he would take time out to entertain total strangers.



Fig. 10.2 The Belgrano in wharf April 1, 1982

That afternoon while my Father napped, I walked from the hotel through the English Park to the Buenos Aires main train station. Designed by the British in the 1920s, it was touted as a masterpiece of 20th C architecture and frequently referred to as the “English Station.” It's configuration resembled the station in Frankfurt that I knew best. In European style, trains dead-ended into terminals on arrival and reversed direction when they departed and this arrangement required engines at both ends. Massive iron abutments common in European terminals prevented runaway trains from crashing into waiting rooms, restaurants or even ticket counters. I wanted to see if similar abutments were in this station and if so I would photograph them. I was interested in noting if the British versions of this equipment differed from what I had seen in Germany.



Fig. 10.3 English piston buffer system to stop runaway trains

I took my time wandering though the terminal, snapping pictures of the trains and the equipment. I had just removed a roll of film and replaced it with a second, when two policemen approached me. They ushered me quietly me to a small office and asked for my identification. I left my passport in the hotel, but offered my Delaware driver's license which was in my wallet. I thought that would be sufficient identification. Instead, they took the wallet and made Xerox copies of everything in my wallet in it, including my DuPont business cards and all the receipts I had collected in the three weeks I had been traveling. They seemed mainly interested in what I was doing in Argentina and why I was taking pictures throughout the station. Realizing I could not speak Spanish, they interrogated me in English and spoke Spanish with

each other. I assumed the worst. They then fingerprinted me and took a mug shot with an ancient Polaroid. I stressed that had seen no signs prohibiting photography, so as a tourist interested on trains, I merely snapped a few shots. They opened the camera, extracted the film, and exposed it. After considerable discussion, they decided since I was an American and employed by an American company they would let me go. There was no apology for destroying my film and they suggested I take no more pictures. Luckily, they did not frisk me. I still had the first roll in my shirt pocket. They also did not know I had several rolls back in the hotel which had been taken throughout my trip, including those taken that morning of the Belgrano.

We left Argentina a couple days later to go to Brazil. In Rio de Janeiro, news of the Falkland War dominated the news on TV. We left just in time. Whether or not it was related to the war, the elevator at the Sheraton where we had stayed in Buenos Aires had been bombed. We could have been on that elevator if we had spent more time in Buenos Aires! The newspapers suggested terrorism. We wondered if the Belgrano and our friend Captain Bonzo would be involved in the war.

A few weeks later, back in the States, we read much more comprehensive information about the war. The Belgrano had been torpedoed and was at the bottom of the South Atlantic. We wondered about Captain Bonzo's fate. There was no news of individual casualties, so we didn't know if he survived or had gone down with his ship. Regardless, I felt like I had personally suffered a loss, even though we only had breakfast with him.

I reflected on my brief detention in the Buenos Aires train station. The police might have initially thought I was a spy and let me go when I showed them my American identification. Captain Bonzo's friendliness remained a puzzle. As a high ranking military officer, he had to have known the war was impending. Maybe he too thought we might be British spies. Once we were on board, he could have easily detained us, or we could have mysteriously disappeared like others who were at odds with the military junta. We told no one where we went that Saturday morning and our disappearance might never been explained. Another thought -- maybe the Captain had premonitions about going down with his ship and wanted us to have kind

words about him. My father kiddingly bragged to his cronies in Buffalo that he started the war and to prove he had been on the ship, he proudly showed the picture I took of him and the Captain in front of the ship's bell.

Though breakfast on the Belgrano was brief, it was the highlight of our trip for my father. He felt like he had served as an emissary for the United States and suggested Captain Bonzo might have felt the same. My father died February 2, 1986 never knowing that Captain Bonzo survived and lived until 2009⁴, revered as a Falkland War hero.

I think once the police realized I was an American and when Captain Bonzo knew my father was an American war veteran, they both treated us with more respect. If this were true, then merely being American might have been in our favor. The police avoided an embarrassing situation but Captain Bonzo's friendliness may just have been his nature. I believe the police were lenient and the captain was benevolent.

⁴ Captain of Falkland's War Cruiser General Belgrano-Dies in Argentina" [Marco Press, South Atlantic News Agency](http://en.mercopress.com) 24 April 2009 <<http://en.mercopress.com>> 9Oct 2011.

Chapter 11

APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

In January 1984, I traveled to South Africa. Protea, DuPont's X-Ray distributor requested an update on DuPont's newest products. I had been to other African countries but not to the one which practiced apartheid. I knew South Africa discriminated politically, economically and legally against non-whites but did not know the degree to which Blacks were literally under the gun. On my first day in Johannesburg, the Blacks I saw seemed to be going about their business just like everybody else. However, as evening approached, I saw them in long lines boarding buses. Not a single white person was in line. This puzzled me; were buses segregated too? When I asked why, I was told that the Blacks were headed home to Soweto. Since I questioned what was happening, I was warned to keep quiet and not to befriend any Black or make comments in public in their favor. My hosts said the police had a free hand to physically beat or arrest any Black, even for the slightest infraction. I got the picture Blacks in South Africa had no civil rights and there were no restrictions on brutality. No Blacks lived in Johannesburg; instead they lived in a Black ghetto, Soweto. Talk about a police state! I thought about racial segregation in our country. Even though our Blacks were "emancipated" in 1863, it took close to another hundred years to achieve many of the rights they had been promised, and even now in the states, there were many places where Blacks did not enjoy equal opportunities – socially, politically or economically. I thought of the reason my high school class went to New York City instead of Washington in 1955.



Fig. 11.1 Road approaching Soweto

As I watched those long lines of Blacks cue up to get on the buses, I was told about the curfew rule. If a black remained in Johannesburg after dusk, they faced arrest. I wondered what would happen if I wanted to go to Soweto and the next day asked my hosts how I could go there. They asked why I wanted to go and I told them I had heard the largest hospital complex in the world, Baragwaneth, was in Soweto. With such a huge hospital there had to be an X-Ray department and if they didn't use DuPont film, maybe we could do a demonstration for them or at least make our presence known. I admit, I didn't think of benefit for the Blacks, I thought only about the business opportunity. My hosts reluctantly agreed to visit Baragwaneth and scheduled a visit for the next day.

Soweto is not too far from Johannesburg. As we drove from the city to Soweto, I reminisced of driving through the Tonawanda Indian reservation near Buffalo, NY with my parents in 1949. Tonawanda had no sidewalks, no traffic lights and the streets had many potholes, however driving through Soweto seemed even worse with its ramshackle housing crammed together in no order with dirt paths separating them. I took a picture of a church which was surrounded by a chain link fence. A cross made out of iron pipes stuck out of a makeshift cupola steeple. A bell to beckon believers appeared too large to be in the steeple, so it was mounted in a tower with a metal roof to protect it from the elements.



Fig. 11.2 Christian Church in Soweto

As we drove past a shopping center Billboards advertized beer and Coca Cola, but there was nothing resembling a parking lot and the stores didn't even have doors on them. Trash lined the roadside. This was much worse than I imagined it would be.



Fig. 11.3 Strip mall in Soweto

By the time we reached Baragwaneth, I had already seen enough poverty and expected that the hospital would be different. I had envisioned the hospital as a large building, something like the Pentagon, but instead it was an enormous complex of one floor stand-alone wooden buildings interspersed with a few multi-story brick structures. The complex was a shantytown. It occupied three quarters of a mile in area and had over three thousand beds. It was built originally to house convalescing British and Commonwealth soldiers forty years ago and probably hadn't changed much in the interim.

On the way to Baragwaneth, I was told to put my camera away as it might cause a problem. We parked in a lot alongside a row of old trucks and cars which looked like they belonged in a junk yard. On our way from the parking lot we passed by several fifty-five gallon oil drums being used for trash. A human arm stuck out of one of the drums! In all my visits to hospitals in the US, Europe and the Far East, I never saw a dismembered body part. My stomach turned. Body parts needed to be carefully disposed of by cremation or burial, I knew why I was cautioned not to take pictures.

The x-ray department had a layout design used in the 1920s. It consisted of a long corridors, with exposure rooms on either side and a darkroom at both ends. Designs like this had long been replaced elsewhere that had a more efficient workflow. We walked past rows of patients on gurneys clogging the corridors. Outside one of the darkrooms stood a large cardboard container with the word "Kodak" on the side. The condition of the carton indicated it had been there a long time. Nobody could tell how long since it had been there before they were employed. Whether purchased or donated to several years before, it had never been installed. It contained a Kodak M3 automatic x-ray film processor made in 1959!. And they still processed their x-ray film by hand! When they realized I was interested, their eyes lit up and asked "Could

I install it?” Uncomfortably I told them this was the responsibility of a distributor and deferred the question to my hosts.

We were about to leave the department when the chief x-ray technician told us that we were invited to stay for lunch. This came as a surprise, but we did not have another appointment scheduled, so we accepted the invitation.. The luncheon was pleasant with a lot of small talk and many questions about the United States. Before we left, we were told we were welcome to visit as frequently as we wanted. They told us that we were the only sales people that had been there for over a year. They purchased their supplies from a company in Johannesburg, but had to go there to pick them up and wondered if our distributor would deliver supplies. Obviously they had been ignored and were eager to have someone pay attention to them. I don't know if the processor we saw in the hallway was ever put into service, it may still be there, but they did purchase some of our products.

During that trip I also visited Cape Town, Durban and Bloemfontein and although I saw nothing like Soweto, there was still an obvious separation of Whites and Blacks. Cape Town, located at the tip of Africa where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet is ruggedly beautiful, but indicators that people of color were separated from whites were omnipresent. Bus stop shelters and even access to the sandy beaches were segregated.



Fig. 11.4 Restrictive beach sign near Cape Town, SA

Segregation was practiced throughout South Africa. In Bloemfontein, a former Dutch settlement, there were fewer Blacks but the restaurants where we dined had either segregated seating or allowed only whites. Durban on the Indian Ocean coast seemed to be the least segregated of the places I visited. There was no Soweto type community close by in Bloemfontein, Cape Town or Durban, yet Blacks disappeared when the sun went down. They had to go somewhere, but nobody I talked to seemed to know, or if they did, they wouldn't tell me.

In retrospect, I was taken aback at the vacillation South African Whites expressed when it came to any discussion about Blacks. One on one, my hosts said they were opposed to the oppression but when in a group, they joined in the animosity against Blacks. Nelson Mandela was in prison, the government had not yet decided to disband apartheid. Rhodesia to the north of South Africa had not yet become Zimbabwe and the Blacks would have to wait another decade before they would come to power. Equality for Blacks did not appear to be on the horizon.

What I saw was a beautiful country, rich in resources; a country older than the United States, but stubbornly resistant to melding of the races. I was glad to leave. The pictures I took are stark reminders of that visit. When I returned to the states, I questioned my own feelings about race and the problems we still had in the US. Almost thirty years later, I wonder if the conditions at Baragwaneth have improved. I surely hope so.

The eagerness to learn and hospitality afforded me by South African Blacks during this trip suggested they patiently endured their segregation but somehow knew would be short-lived. Maybe it was because I was from the States that they were so open and friendly, or maybe it was just that they too were of the Family of Man.

Chapter 12

PROTECTION FROM KIDNAPPERS

On a trip to Brazil, I remembered the advice from my German friends: when abroad try not to look too much like an American serviceman. Don't wear khaki trousers, blue button-down shirts and military looking shoes, particularly in countries where the US military has a bad reputation. Reason - foreigners often view American visitors with preconceived impressions even if they are invalid.

But other hazards could face travelers. Newspaper articles in the early 80s⁵ carried reported kidnappings were taking place in Brazil. I read these with great interest, because I made frequent visits to Sao Paulo, Brazil to visit Microservices, a company that bought jumbo rolls of DuPont X-ray film. During one of my visits, I received a telex that another company, Industria Brasileira de Filmes S.A. (IBF), which also imported jumbo rolls needed technical assistance. Since I was already in Brazil, I was asked to visit and solve their problem.

I flew from Sao Paulo to Rio's regional airport which was closer to the plant than the international airport. The only drawback was security. The plan was for me to meet an IBF driver who would take me to the customer's plant. I had never been to IBF and did not know anyone there. I obviously didn't know who the driver would be or how to identify him. One of the ways we had used in similar situations was to carry a box of DuPont X-ray film. The driver was told to look for the person with a box of film and make contact. Because of recent kidnappings, I suggested it might be better to have the my contact carry a box of IBF film so I could recognize him.

My plan did not work. No one entered the airport waiting room with a box of film under his arm. After watching several drivers come and go, I got worried. I did not have any

⁵ Simon Romero, "São Paulo Becomes the Kidnapping Capital of Brazil, " New York Times, 13 February 2002.

direct contact with the people at IBF. All I was told was to show up at the airport and I would be met by someone from IBF who would take me to the plant. I wondered, did the IBF driver come and leave without me? After an hour of watching potential drivers come and go, I saw one who went to a phone booth to make a call. I assumed he might be from IBF, so I got up, approached him and asked if he was there to pick up someone from DuPont. A lucky guess, he spoke English and said he was from IBF. I felt better, my fear of being kidnapped disappeared. However, when we went to the car, he instructed me to sit in the front seat -- there was already someone in the back seat with a sawed-off shotgun between his knees. I immediately felt anxious. It was not comfortable sitting in front of a man with a loaded gun. But I sat still and refrained from turning my head to see the guy behind me. Being one-eyed greatly reduces my peripheral vision and I thought it would be too obvious to turn all the way around to look at him.

We had driven about a half hour, the driver stopped, the armed man got out leaving his gun on the seat. We then drove a short distance where the road separated by a grassy median and picked up another man. When the driver and I were alone, I asked what was happening. He explained the President of IBF had been recently abducted and held captive about a month. The driver didn't know details of the president's release, or if ransom were paid, but after his release the president decided protect his employees and visitors.

I had a small camera in my pocket, and thought about taking the camera out and snapping a picture of the second guy who now had the shotgun between his knees. I wondered what he might do if I tried to take his picture. Despite the driver's explanation, I wondered about the loyalty of the guards and how they had been recruited. Was the second guard loyal to IBF, or could he be in league with kidnappers.

Since this was my first visit to IBF, I had no idea where we were or how long it would take to get there. I tried not to appear too uneasy but was sure that my behavior gave me away. By the time we reached the plant, I was a nervous wreck. The plant was not in an industrial park, as I had been told, but then a lot can be lost in translation from one language to another. A high barbed wire fence surrounded the grounds around the plant. A uniformed guard

in a small gatehouse checked the driver's credentials and wanted to know who I was. I reminisced about the border crossings in Europe.

The driver and the guy in the back seat got out and entered the gatehouse. The driver got back in, the gate swung open and we proceeded through. I wondered, were we actually safely inside the plant? There were no signs indicating IBF and I again had twinges of paranoia. We drove about a quarter mile and came upon an administration building. Once inside, I was greeted by the plant manager and production manager. They explained that the trip with the driver and guards were trusted employees and I had nothing to fear. The president of the company had negotiated his own release. He had advised his people not to pay any kidnappers. Somehow he had been released. He did not say how, but from that point on he decided to select long term employees to be drivers and guards providing safety for his employees and visitors. I was the first person to be escorted by armed personnel to the plant. I did not ask any more questions and was relieved to be in good hands.

Chapter 13

CONCLUSION

While traveling abroad, wearing western clothing, speaking English and carrying a camera definitely indicated I was an outsider, perhaps a tourist, maybe a paparazzi, or a spy or maybe a combination of those categories. I received many suggestions regarding how my appearance might result in apprehension so I was careful not to appear too "pushy" or portray the image of an ugly American. I did not try to create situations that resulted in kindnesses or friendly behavior, but nevertheless was frequently shown unsolicited acts of humanity. Reflecting on my travels, wherever I went, reaction to my presence may have differed when I had a camera around my neck. Initially, cameras I took were too bulky to be concealed, so I took smaller cameras that could be pocketed. Regardless of the size of the camera, whenever I put one up to my eye to snap a picture, reactions changed. The mere fact I had a camera aimed at them was enough reason for some to avoid me or to "smile." Very few people I photographed ever knew that I was one-eyed unless I told them.

To surreptitiously take a picture of someone might be considered as stealing a bit of their identity. When I asked for permission, I was surprised. The mere fact I asked often melted away reluctance. Not trying to "sneak" a photo seemed a more acceptable approach. Taking pictures of slums or amputated arms sticking out of garbage cans -- any images that could be used to denigrate them were frowned upon. Many were keenly aware how different our life styles were.

However, the more I traveled, the more I learned about the likes and dislikes and the similarities we all have of family and life in general regardless of our differences socially, economically or politically. I think a lot of this came about because I learned to be careful about taking pictures. Reactions with those I knew and those I didn't was surprisingly the same. Most offered advice or friendly hints on how to act in their country. They frequently warned me to be

respectful of their customs and/or restrictions so I would not offend anyone. Without being able to speak the local language in many countries through which I traveled, I had to rely on what I referred to as "finger Deutsch." pointing and smiling. For the most part, many smiled in return, some attempted to speak my language or offered to translate. This reinforced my belief that people around the world, regardless of race, religion or politics are likely, if not threatened, to express genuine kindnesses and human decency. Some even went out of their way to protect me. The photos I saw at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1955 seemed to be duplicated during my travels.

The MALS course I took on memoir writing revealed how my photography could help recall past events and be drawn together in a memoir. This combined with other MALS courses in literature, history and anthropology motivated me to review my photographs to see how my vision of the world was altered by the loss of my eye and how my focus on photography produced surprising results and a greater understanding of the human condition.

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Appendix

PERMISSION LETTER

Fig. 6.4 The photo the Prague Cathedral includes my three sons. From left to right, Michael, Jeffrey and James Williamson. The photo was taken by the author, in July, 1974.