



**“KZ” - A FILM BY REX BLOOMSTEIN**  
**A REX ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION**

When the story of the unspeakable has been told a thousand times,  
when the images of the unimaginable have been shown a thousand times,  
when the mind is numb - where do you go from there? You have to start anew.

That is where this film begins ...



*Running Time: 98 minutes*

**World Premiere: IDFA 2005**  
**North American Premiere: Sundance 2006**

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## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The oompah band played. Fried sausage and beer flowed. The men and women in lederhosen danced and sang. We'd broken for lunch and had stumbled across this typical pub party in rural Austria. Having eaten, we walked back some 400 hundred yards to the quarry in which we were filming – the main quarry where so many people from all over the world had been systematically worked to death only fifty years before. This was Mauthausen. It was 1995 and I had been making a film about the liberators of the Nazi concentration camps. The disjunction of those two scenes haunted me – the carefree laughter of the pub garden, and the silence and death of the quarry. This 'idyllic' town of Mauthausen, right next to the former camp – part of an Austria which has for so long been able to portray itself mainly as victim rather than as perpetrator; an Austria which has never quite owned up to its own involvement and culpability.

In 2004, having formed a partnership to establish Rex Entertainment, I decided that the flagship project of the company would be a film which explored a day in the life of a Concentration Camp today: tour guides leading groups of school children; Mauthauseners going about their lives; tourists trying to make sense of the horror, and so on.

Along with colleagues Katherine Crawley, Genny Mastermann and Joern Meyer I set out to make this film. Together we radicalised the initial idea. It was going to be a wholly contemporary film; a new departure - an attempt to look afresh at a well-worked subject. Second Unit Director Joern Meyer was sent out ahead to observe and film at the camp for two weeks, and then direct the crew for a week on their arrival. I then took over the bulk of directing. In this way about 150 hours of footage were captured over a five week period, including tours of visitors from around the world, sequences with survivors and interviews with people in the town.

Once in the edit, the process of radicalization continued. Over time, we jettisoned virtually all the current tools of documentary filmmaking: no commentary, no music, no reconstructions with actors, no archive footage, no stills, no testimony from survivors, no historians. It became even more important that the film further explore the disjunction between the reality of Mauthausen and our ability to absorb it and learn from it. After a painstaking six month process the final piece emerged. It had become a film for today, a film about us.



## SYNOPSIS

When the story of the unspeakable has been told a thousand times, when the images of the unimaginable have been shown a thousand times, when the mind is numb – where do you go from there? You have to start anew...

That is where this film begins.

On the banks of the river Danube, surrounded by the beautiful landscape of Upper Austria, lies the picturesque town of Mauthausen. Two kilometers from its town centre is a place that attracts bikers, busloads of tourists, parties of schoolchildren, people from all over the world. Tour guides come to work here every day, while nearby the locals go about their daily lives. This is a place where thousands upon thousands of people from over 30 nations were tortured and murdered. This site is the former KZ, German short for concentration camp. How does it feel to be a tourist at a former concentration camp?

How does it feel to work here as a guide, day in day out? How does it feel to live here as a local with the dark secrets of the past? And what of those who've chosen this town to be their new home?

This is a groundbreaking film about facing our ultimate demons. It is a contemporary yet timeless piece on the horrors that we have and always will be able to inflict on one another.

Stripped of the usual dramatic devices, survivor testimonies and archive footage this radical film shows nothing but says everything.

It will shake you to the core.



## BIOGRAPHY

Rex Bloomstein began his career as a documentary director with the BBC in the U.K. in 1970 with cinema verité 'All In A Day' studies of British life.

His early work centred on a string of documentaries for U.K. broadcast which exposed realities of prison life and addressed aspects of the British penal system previously closed to public scrutiny. These include films such as 'The Sentence', 'Release', 'Prisoners' Wives', 'Parole', 'Lifers' and 'Strangeways' which won two British Academy Awards: best documentary series and best single documentary. In 2001 BBC2's Timewatch commissioned 'Strangeways Re-Visited'.

Over the years, Rex Bloomstein has produced and directed a number of acclaimed historical studies for television: 'Traitors to Hitler', 'Martin Luther King – The Legacy', 'Auschwitz And The Allies', 'The Gathering' and 'Attack On The Liberty'. Many have been committed to exploring Holocaust orientated topics: 'The Longest Hatred', a trilogy charting the unique history of Anti-Semitism and its manifestation in modern society, broadcast in over twenty countries worldwide; 'Liberation' which featured the stories of Allied soldiers who were the first to enter the Nazi Concentration Camps, part of Channel 4's season of programmes marking the anniversary of the end of the Second World War. In 1997 the 12<sup>th</sup> London Jewish Film Festival paid homage to Rex Bloomstein's films in a day-long retrospective.

Another major concentration of Rex Bloomstein's work has been to highlight the abuse of human rights. This began with a two hour film in 1984, 'Human Rights', which explored the global struggle

against human rights violations. Then 'Roots Of Evil' was a major three-part series exploring why acts of terror and destruction seem endemic in the human condition. The film that followed, 'Torture', was an examination of how this tragic phenomenon continues in contemporary society.

To mark the 40th anniversary of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1988, Rex Bloomstein conceived and produced a new series for the BBC called 'Prisoners of Conscience'. This featured the stories of individual prisoners from around the world. The series ran for five years and featured more than sixty prisoners, of whom over forty are now free. Presenters included Sir Yehudi Menuhin, former Prime Ministers Lord Callaghan and Sir Edward Heath, Sting, Glenda Jackson, Tom Stoppard, Phil Collins and the former hostages John McCarthy and Brian Keenan. 'Human Rights, Human Wrongs', a week of 10-minute programmes on human rights themes then evolved, and were broadcast annually. These were presented by amongst others, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Salman Rushdie, Arthur Miller, Helen Mirren, Meryl Streep, Isabelle Allende, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Catherine Deneuve.

Rex Bloomstein is a film maker of power and passion who is still engaging broadcasters and distributors with his unique, hard hitting, unembellished explorations of life. 'Lifer – Living With Murder' was broadcast in 2003, and 'Kids Behind Bars' was broadcast on Channel 4 in August 2005.

KZ is his first theatrical feature film.



## FILMOGRAPHY

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**ROOTS OF EVIL / 1997**  
**UNDERSTANDING THE HOLOCAUST / 1997**  
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**THE LONGEST HATRED / 1993**  
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**PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE / 1988**  
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**ATTACK ON THE LIBERTY / 1987**  
**NEXT TIME DEAR GOD PLEASE CHOOSE SOMEONE ELSE / 1987**  
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**LIFER / 1982**  
**AUSCHWITZ & THE ALLIES / 1982**  
**THE GATHERING / 1982**  
**STRANGWAYS / 1980**  
**TOM KEATING – PORTRAIT OF A MASTER FORGER / 1980**  
**PLEASE GOD DON'T LET PEACE BREAK OUT / 1978**  
**PAROLE / 1977**  
**PRISONERS' WIVES / 1976**  
**RELEASE / 1975**  
**THE SENTENCE / 1974**  
**MUSCLEMEN / 1974**  
**THE ADVERTISING AGENT / 1973**  
**THE CITY / 1971**  
**THE CANDIDATE / 1971**  
**THE LAUNCH / 1970**  
**THE AUCTION / 1970**  
**THE PATIENT IS THE FAMILY / 1970**



IMAGES





## CREDITS

A Film by Rex Bloomstein

Executive Producer  
Tony Tabatznik

Second Unit Director  
Jörn Meyer

Film Editor  
Richard Rhys Davies

Director of Photography  
Alexander Boboschewski aac

Sound Recordist  
Gunther Tuppinger

Associate Producer  
Genny Masterman

Associate Producer  
Katherine Crawley

Associate Producers  
Matt Jones  
Jörn Meyer  
Richard Rhys Davies



## CAST LIST

### Guides

Harald Brachner

Florian Panhölzl  
Michael Gstöttenmayr  
Florian Lengwin  
Klemens Knopp

### Tour Guides

Sylvia Mayer-Pranzeneder  
Casimir Paltinger  
Birgit Lang  
Kurt Valtl

### Mauthauseners

Sabine Reiter  
Erich Dietel  
Andrea Dietel  
Martin Hagenmeyer  
Maria Raffetseder  
Rosa Falzberger  
Leopold Hablig

Claudia Aichinger  
Johann Thomayr  
Walter Zauner  
Josef Spindler  
Zäzilia Fürst  
Johann Fürst  
Klaus Reiter

### Visitors

Herta Feucht  
Gideon & Edna Madanes  
Lukas & Zdena Kasalick\_  
Eliot Sekuler  
Veronika Wittman  
Harry Garuba  
Paval P\_link\_s  
The Nushi Family  
The Piskin Family  
Caz Thomas  
Sam Muradzikwa



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Wire Image

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