

HISTORY
ARTS
CULTURE

DOCUMENTARY
30 MIN.



VERSIONS

English, Spanish

RIGHTS

Worldwide, VOD, Mobile

ORDER NUMBER

56 4713 | 01-08

The Promise of the West

The Berlin Wall was one of the most infamous symbols of the Cold War and the division of Germany. For some people living behind the Iron Curtain, the pull of the West was so strong that they were willing to risk their lives to cross the heavily guarded border between East and West Berlin. Hundreds were killed trying to flee, but many others managed to make it to the West by using ingenious and spectacular methods of escape.

01 Just Get Over There! –

Kicking for the Class Enemy

Falko Götz – star on the football pitch for many years and former coach to German Bundesliga club Hertha BSC. Few people know that Götz took the decision of a lifetime at the age of 21. He left his family, his home, and his country, the German Democratic Republic. Falko Götz tells the whole story of his flight and its consequences. Did he find the freedom he was looking for?

02 Flight to Freedom

Three brothers, three escapes, three incredible stories. Ingo, Holger and Egbert Bethke fled East Germany one by one in dramatic style. In this film the brothers meet for the first time in eighteen years to talk in detail about their escapes, about what happened, and what might have happened.

03 Sailing to Freedom

The Russian combat helicopter dived towards the little boat at top speed. When it was almost on top of the craft, the pilot pulled the nose up and turned away. The three men in the boat thought they had made it and continued heading north-west towards Denmark. What reads like a scene from an action novel was a daring escape bid that took place in 1986.

04 Veiled Plans

As the daughter of a diplomat, Kerstin Beck saw more of the world than most East Germans. She lived in Iraq and Vietnam, and went to Soviet-occupied Afghanistan as an exchange student when she was 23 after hatching a plan to cross the Hindu Kush and enter Pakistan. From there, she was able to fly on to West Germany.

05 Risking Everything

When Berit Geißler was 21, she and her family escaped the GDR by hiding in the back of a caravan belonging to a holidaying Swiss couple. They then crossed from what was then Yugoslavia to the West, with Berit locked into a water tank and her husband and baby sewn into a mattress.

06 Escape Through the Sewers

Dieter Wohlfahrt was fifteen when he left the GDR and moved to West Berlin. Years later, he took advantage of the fact that his Austrian nationality allowed him to cross between West and East Berlin to help East Germans escape through the sewerage system. During a rescue attempt in 1961 he was shot and killed by GDR border guards. Karl-Heinz Albert was with him at the time. He's never come to terms with his friend's death.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, it marked the end of an era. How did people adjust to their new lives?

07+08 The Harvest – The Aftermath of East Germany's Fortified Border

The fall of communism in 1989 turned life in a small East German village upside down. Twenty years on, most of the inhabitants are still there, but their lives have been transformed. This epic report from deep in the heart of the former GDR provides fascinating insight and is compelling as a study of personal hopes and fears, joy and suffering.