

## **Censorship, Scripts, Suppression, and Selection:**

### **Twentieth Century Fox and the Story of the Berlin Airlift in *The Big Lift* and *Es begann mit einem Kuß* (It Started with a Kiss), 1950-53**

**Abstract.** This article analyzes various political, economic, creative, and cultural levels of censorship in Twentieth Century Fox' semi-documentary feature film *The Big Lift* (1950) and its German-language release version *Es begann mit einem Kuß* (It Started with a Kiss, 1953). Alongside the political context of the early Cold War, it locates the two versions within major socio-economic changes that film studios faced at the time. In this, the study also offers the first comprehensive comparison of *The Big Lift* with its West German release version, examining the nature and impact of cuts and dubbing on the plot of *Es begann mit einem Kuß*.

**Keywords.** *The Big Lift*; *Es begann mit einem Kuß* (It Started with a Kiss); Hollywood; Cold War; censorship; dubbing; Twentieth Century Fox; George Seaton; Montgomery Clift; Cornell Borchers; Bruni Löbel

Producer-director, playwright, and screenwriter George Seaton is perhaps best remembered for his films *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947) and *The Country Girl* (1954) starring Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly, and William Holden. Yet, his career was much more versatile. At the pinnacle of his creative development in Hollywood, Seaton was also responsible for one of the earliest feature films about Operation Vittles, the massive airlift maneuver that the United States and British governments put in place in response to the Soviet blockade of the Western sectors of Berlin between June 1948 and May 1949. Produced by Twentieth Century Fox, *The Big Lift* premiered on April 26, 1950. With its current affairs focus on the division of Germany in the

early Cold War, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association nominated Seaton's film for a Golden Globe for "Promoting International Understanding" the following year.<sup>1</sup>

While this selection might ostensibly suggest a strong reconciliatory tone toward the United States' new West German allies in the emerging struggle against the Soviet Union, the semi-documentary *The Big Lift* did in fact little to advance intercultural awareness and understanding. Instead, as this article argues, Seaton's picture provides insight into different levels of (self-)censorship and content control that Hollywood studios applied to their productions for various interrelated political, economic, and creative reasons. These ranged from broader political factors such as Twentieth Century Fox' collaboration with United States government agencies in the making of *The Big Lift* to individual influences, especially the editing of the film script by its lead actors. In the case of *The Big Lift*'s significantly re-edited West German release version, these motivations even combined with considerations of cultural affinity and taste. Although cinemas in West Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) had screened the original English-language version of *The Big Lift* under the German title *Die viergeteilte Stadt* (The Quartered City) in 1950, Twentieth Century Fox subsequently decided to produce a separate West German version.<sup>2</sup> Dubbed into German and released in 1953 under the romantic title *Es begann mit einem Kuß* (It Started with a Kiss), it was considerably shorter than the original, with far-reaching semantic consequences: what was essentially a political drama in the original film became a romantic adventure with a happy ending in *Es begann mit einem Kuß*.

This article seeks to untangle the complex set of motivations behind the different forms of censorship of the film's two versions.<sup>3</sup> Through its careful consideration of *Es begann mit einem Kuß*, this study simultaneously offers "a partial corrective to scenarios alleging the uncontested 'Americanization' of the culture and consciousness of postwar Germans," as Heide Fehrenbach postulates elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> As a result, it presents the first comprehensive,

comparative analysis of the two release versions.<sup>5</sup> In this, our study goes beyond the common threads in the historiography of Seaton's film that have commonly analyzed the picture either as a form of American Cold War propaganda and foreign policy or focused on its aesthetics or on gender and political re-education.<sup>6</sup>

Since the release of *The Big Lift* occurred at a time when many Hollywood studios had to adapt to both the new political climate of the Cold War and major economic changes, this study places the picture within the multifaceted and ambivalent situation that the American film industry faced in the late 1940s and early 1950s between economic and cultural considerations, artistic expression, and Cold War politics. Consequently, it offers a more balanced assessment than Michael Ray FitzGerald's one-dimensional classification of Twentieth Century Fox and other Hollywood studios as "adjuncts to Government."<sup>7</sup> On one level, the Cold War context, especially its cultural, political, and economic histories, partly explains the censorship of *The Big Lift*.<sup>8</sup> After all, the film's time of production coincided with the infamous anti-Communist persecutions by the House on Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC).<sup>9</sup> And, what is more, *The Big Lift* marked one of the early examples of close collaboration between the United States military and the American film industry in the Cold War.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, legal and economic developments also had a noticeable impact on the Twentieth Century Fox production; for the film concurred with substantial changes for Hollywood studios. Apart from the 1948 Supreme Court ruling against Hollywood's monopolistic structure of vertical integration, changes in film viewing habits, as a result of several interconnected factors including the rise of suburbia, increasing affluence, and new leisure-time activities, as well as the advent of television, put American film studios under significant pressure.<sup>11</sup> To compensate for this loss, overseas markets, in particular in Western Europe, gained considerable significance as a source of revenue for Twentieth Century Fox and other film studios in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

This study progresses in two steps. The first part explores *The Big Lift* within the wider political and economic contexts relevant to its censorship. Besides published sources, it relies on different versions of the film script annotated by one of the lead actors, Montgomery Clift, to study the evolution of the plot during the pre-production and production stages.<sup>13</sup> The second section then compares and contrasts *The Big Lift* with *Es begann mit einem Kuß*, focusing specifically on relevant sequences cut from the West German release version and placing them within the broader context of Hollywood's attempts to regain influence on the West German and European film markets after the end of the Second World War.

### **Selling Operation Vittles on the Home Front: *The Big Lift***

*The Big Lift* was released less than a year after the Berlin airlift had ended. During Operation Vittles, American and British cargo aircraft supplied the besieged Western sectors of Berlin with food, coal, oil, and other vital provisions between June 26, 1948 and September 30, 1949.<sup>14</sup> Alluding to both the nature and size of the operation, *Life* magazine dubbed it “The Big Lift” as early as August 1948.<sup>15</sup> Written and directed by George Seaton and produced by William Perlberg for Twentieth Century Fox, *The Big Lift* was set on location in Berlin.

The film tells the story of the airlift operation through the experiences of two American airmen – Danny MacCullough (Montgomery Clift) and Henry “Hank” Kowalski (Paul Douglas) – and their German love interests Frederica Burkhardt (Cornell Borchers) and Gerda (Bruni Löbel), whom they meet shortly after their deployment to West Berlin. Danny immediately falls in love with Frederica and naively starts to plan their future as a married couple in the United States, ignoring Hank's concerns over her intentions. It is not until the two are about to get married toward the end of the film that Danny learns the full extent of Frederica's ulterior motives: if she earlier confessed to having lied about her family's involvement with the National Socialist dictatorship, Frederica is now forced to admit that she intended to use the marriage purely as a gateway to the United States to reunite with her

long-time husband, a former SS member, who now lives there under a false identity. *The Big Lift* counterbalances this deception and naivety with Hank's and Gerda's story of a successful West German-American rapprochement. As a consequence of the abuse suffered in a German prisoner of war camp during the Second World War, Hank generally distrusts Germans and initially also mistreats Gerda. Since Gerda's intentions, unlike Frederica's, are genuine, embracing and internalizing liberal democratic values, she soon starts to challenge Hank's dismissive and patronizing attitude toward her. Thus, she helps facilitate a change in Hank's attitude toward her and Germans in general.

Its background setting around the so-called first battle of the Cold War gave *The Big Lift* a heightened sense of actuality.<sup>16</sup> And the immediate context of the early Cold War is crucial to any examination of the production process of Seaton's picture. If the Truman Administration decided to partition Germany and to incorporate West Germany in its European Economic Recovery Program ("Marshall Plan") by summer 1947, the Soviet blockade of the Western sectors of Berlin prompted the United States to commit itself also militarily more strongly to West Berlin and the FRG.<sup>17</sup> Segments of the news media in the United States had already disseminated a positive image of West Germans as allies in the conflict with the Soviet Union and its satellites in their coverage of the Berlin blockade and airlift.<sup>18</sup> "Morally and spiritually," glorified General Lucius D. Clay, the military governor of the American occupation zone, in 1950, the airlift as "the reply of Western civilization to the challenge of totalitarianism which was willing to destroy through starvation thousands of men, women, and children in the effort to control their souls and minds."<sup>19</sup> Clay's words reveal both the ideologically charged context of the Berlin airlift and a sense of moral "duty" on the part of the United States government to defend the "free world" against the Soviet Union.<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, the film's setting in the Cold War in general and Berlin in particular provided Twentieth Century Fox with an opportunity to link entertainment and commercial interests with a political message. Initially, four other Hollywood studios had also worked on film projects based on Operation Vittles.<sup>21</sup> During the entire production process of *The Big Lift*, Twentieth Century Fox collaborated with the Motion Picture Production Office (MPPO), the United States Air Force Public Affairs Office (USAFPAO), and General Clay's office. To expedite and control collaboration between the film industry and the armed forces, the Department of Defense's Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs established the MPPO in 1949.<sup>22</sup>

As early as the pre-production stage, the USAFPO recognized the tremendous propagandistic potential of Seaton's film and liaised with Clay to ensure his full cooperation in the project. The USAF assisted Twentieth Century Fox by flying film equipment from Los Angeles to West Germany, for example.<sup>23</sup> But such collaboration came at a price. The MPPO provided Hollywood studios with free access to military equipment, soldiers, or government films. In return, its director, Donald Baruch, reserved the right to censor scripts to ensure that they followed the official government line.<sup>24</sup> Besides this military control, there were other factors at work that prompted Hollywood studios to edit their productions. Early on, HUAC investigated film personnel in the prevalent anti-Communist climate.<sup>25</sup> Apart from such political concerns, studios confronted difficult economic considerations. By and large, these were the result of the climactic changes that the film industry faced in the aftermath of the 1948 Supreme Court ruling, providing them with more good reasons to collaborate with the MPPO and other government offices.<sup>26</sup>

One of the chief benefits of Twentieth Century Fox's close cooperation with the armed forces was access to military installations and hardware. In particular, George Seaton and his team were able to shoot some scenes at Tempelhof airport (Berlin) and the USAF

Rhein-Main base (Frankfurt). What might have further facilitated the filming just after the Berlin blockade in West Germany was the fact that Montgomery Clift, one of the film's two lead actors, was familiar with working in the American occupation zone because he had already starred as a United States Army officer in director Fred Zinnemann's *The Search* (1948).<sup>27</sup> At times, this work on location proved to be challenging though. This was particularly the case in West Berlin where approval from all four Allied powers was required to go ahead with the filming. While the Soviet side reluctantly agreed to the filming of Seaton's picture, it obstructed the production wherever possible. "Although making the picture was anything but easy," as George Seaton commented on the filming, "the Russian contribution to our difficulties was more baffling than troublesome." Here, Seaton referred to scenes that were shot near the Brandenburg Gate. Given the close proximity of the set to the Soviet sector, the film crew were subject to obstruction techniques by the Young Communist League such as whistling and screaming, often making sound recording impossible.<sup>28</sup>

In face of the overall speed of the pre-production and production stages, post-production and marketing of the film moved at a fast pace, from the time of filming re-takes in early December 1949 to its release on April 26, 1950.<sup>29</sup> Montgomery Clift's annotated copy of the 167-page screenplay, along with a number of revisions, is in itself testament to the tight production schedule.<sup>30</sup> Some parts then underwent revisions as often as three times on August 1, August 22, and again on September 2, 1949, shortly before filming the Berlin sequences. The final version served as the shooting script. It contained numerous changes in response to Clift's comments and suggestions, illustrating the leverage of lead actors during the pre-production phase. Since political considerations had influenced revisions of Seaton's original script, they were much less significant at this stage in the production process. Alongside the common practice of inserting instructions on the emphasis of particular words or phrases, Clift proposed pragmatic changes to some dialogues that were aimed at making

them sound less formal or enhancing their conversational flow. Moreover, he suggested cuts to scenes where the film relied too heavily on shot-reverse-shot dialogues or did not adequately induce the audience's sympathy for his character Danny MacCullough.<sup>31</sup> This was the case where sequences contained too much extraneous information such as the technical details of the approach by a C-54 cargo plane into West Berlin, for example.<sup>32</sup> Similar cuts concerned scenes in which MacCullough and his crew arrive at Tempelhof airport, West Berlin.<sup>33</sup> Further deletions were made during a lengthy sequence set in Frederica Burkhardt's apartment. First, Clift condensed a scene in which MacCullough learns that Herr Stieber (O.E. Hasse), one of Burkhardt's fellow lodgers, spies for the Soviets with the connivance of the Americans. Then, four scenes detailing MacCullough's changing into civilian clothes were cut to streamline the plot.<sup>34</sup>

These alterations to the script dovetailed with major changes in the production process and development of scripts. At the end of the so-called Golden Era in the late 1940s, scripts were no longer written by an in-house story department and tended to be less detailed. Dividing films in master scenes rather than discrete shots, they now gave actors and film crews more room for improvisation.<sup>35</sup> Seaton's different versions of the script for *The Big Lift* were located somewhere between a master-scene screenplay and a detailed shooting script. So, as to optimize production time where possible, they included some information on camera angles, movement, and transitions. But these scripts did not break up all scenes into individual shots. Consequently, they gave significant authorial agency and, ultimately, flexibility to the people filming on location in Berlin under rather unpredictable conditions. After all, this approach allowed Twentieth Century Fox to produce the picture within a relatively small time period on location in Germany. Here, *The Big Lift* eschewed, in part, the unpredictable European art-house modes employed by representatives of Italian Neo-Realism

or the French Nouvelle Vague who commonly produced pictures based on prose scenarios or other more unspecified synopses and treatments.<sup>36</sup>

The influences of European art-house cinema extended beyond the organization of the script to the aesthetics of *The Big Lift*. Therefore, the wedding of American and European modes of filmmaking characterized the entire production. Seaton's picture used a timely and original setting as well as the perceived authenticity of a documentary-style look to tell a story that largely followed a "classical" Hollywood dramaturgy, combined with elements from the postwar German *Trümmerfilm* (rubble film) and Italian neo-realism.<sup>37</sup> Thomas W. Maulucci Jr., thus, also categorizes Seaton's picture as "one of the last rubble films and also the first true Cold War Berlin film."<sup>38</sup> In any way, the result was a film that was somewhat exceptional without being iconoclastic.

### **Insert Figure 1 and 2 (Clift annotations)**

Relying on both feature film and documentary techniques, *The Big Lift* mixes elements of a combat film with romances between American GIs and German women to depict the development of West Germany from an enemy nation to both a victim of Soviet aggression and a key ally of the United States on the frontline in the Cold War.<sup>39</sup> Together with Billy Wilder's *A Foreign Affair* (1948) and Henry Koster's *Fräulein* (1958), Seaton's picture formed part of a set of films that presented American-West German relations through a gendered prism, often reducing these complex interactions to love affairs between United States military personnel and German women.<sup>40</sup> In general, reviews praised individual performances by the German and American cast.<sup>41</sup> However, the film's blend of drama, documentary techniques, and romance proved to be a matter of concern for some critics. *The Monthly Film Bulletin* thought that Seaton had certainly found promising material for a

feature film but that “he shies off it, indulges in too many contrivances, plays some sequences for rather heavy-handed comedy, resolves the situation with facile tricks and glib dialogue.”<sup>42</sup> Writing in the *New York Times*, Bosley Crowther called *The Big Lift* “a loosely running story of a tender and saddening romance between a young airlift sergeant and a handsome Berlin girl.” Crowther went on to criticize the plot as “an accumulation of comic and dramatic episodes, of travelogue illustrations and documentary details” which “tend to blur and emerge as a hodgepodge of impressions accompanying a poignant love affair.”<sup>43</sup>

Where reviewers often focused on weaknesses in the storyline, in particular in relation to romantic elements in the plot, *The Big Lift* marked in fact a political response to the intensifying geopolitical climate of the Cold War. After all, Seaton’s picture advocated a strong commitment of the United States government to West Germany and Western Europe by stressing the high symbolic significance of a strong American resolve in West Berlin.<sup>44</sup> Although *The Big Lift* presented Operation Vittles primarily as an American military feat, overlooking the significant contributions by the British military, it refrained from a jingoistic celebration of the Western Allies’ “triumph” over the Soviet Union in the Berlin blockade. For example, “heroes” of the airlift such as Lieutenant Gail S. Halvorsen, the famed “candy bomber,” were absent from the picture.<sup>45</sup>

In a similar fashion, Seaton’s film avoided the pitfall of classing the airlift as a “Cold War battle” because such a simplistic categorization would have rendered Operation Vittles, as Paul Steege argues elsewhere, “radically distinct from the German past that immediately preceded it.” Ultimately, such an oversimplification would have failed to take into account the ambivalent continuities between the recent National Socialist past and the early postwar period.<sup>46</sup> Instead, *The Big Lift* addressed questions surrounding the legacies of National Socialism in West Germany in some depth.<sup>47</sup> Alongside the two female German characters Frederica and Gerda, Tempelhof airport, one of the picture’s main settings, embodies this

ambiguous historical relationship particularly well. Used as an arms production plant by the National Socialist regime, Tempelhof subsequently became a “Symbol of Freedom” through its function as a major hub for the Berlin airlift.<sup>48</sup> In many ways, Tempelhof’s semantic reconfiguration was representative of the new meaning that West Berlin and West Germany assumed for the United States in the Cold War – from enemy to ally.<sup>49</sup>

In this respect, alterations to different versions of the end of *The Big Lift* and scenes depicting the relationships between the two male protagonists and their two German lovers exemplify the evolution of the picture’s portrayal of West Germany, including the Berlin question. Kowalski’s extradiegetic commentary over stock footage of the eventual lifting of the blockade at the end of *The Big Lift* underwent some amendments. In the original script, the monologue reads:

“They’ll lift the Blockade with a lot of fireworks and the trucks’ll start pouring in, but they’ll find some excuse to stop ‘em. And every once in a while some of the trains’ll get piled up because of ‘technical difficulties’ and the canals won’t work. So we’ll be around. And I’ll keep talking ‘em in through this oatmeal they call weather over here, and the fly boys’ll keep on trying to stay away from those chimneys... Yeah, Mac. I’m afraid we’ll stay for a while just in case...

FADE OUT.”<sup>50</sup>

Subsequently, this was amended to:

“But it won’t be long. They’ll be calling this thing off soon. I see by the papers they’re talking it over. What I don’t figure is how the Ruskies figure. We’re in Germany cause we got a right to be here, and we’re going to stay cause we got a righto [*sic*] stay – so what do they gain by making us bring stuff in the hard way? When they lift the blockade I hope they take it all the way and not just for headlines – and when trucks start pouring in they won’t find excuses to step in –

and the trains don't get piled up again because of 'technical difficulties.' And the canals don't need 'repairing' all the time. Cause if this happens guys like us'll have to hang around. I'll have to keep talking 'em in through this oatmeal they call weather over here and the fly boys'll have to keep dodging those chimneys. I hope it don't happen but I guess we'll have to hang around just in case...

FADE OUT<sup>51</sup>

In this sequence, the most significant modification refers to the duration of the United States military from "staying a while" toward keeping a permanent presence in West Germany. The ending featured inscriptions of changed views by members of the armed forces on the commitment of the United States to the newly formed FRG and West Berlin, from an occupying to a defense force.<sup>52</sup>

Despite these changes to the script, the final version was even re-shot on December 9, 1949. However, this new ending contained neither the voice-over solution of the original script nor its revised version. Instead, Danny MacCullough and Hank Kowalski discuss their fundamentally different German experiences. In the end, they agree that, whilst MacCullough has been too easy on the Germans and Kowalski too harsh ("acting like a storm trooper"), the right approach lies somewhere in the middle. *The Big Lift* then seeks to confirm this reconciliatory message through a sequence in which German workers inform the two of the end of the Soviet blockade and, as an expression of gratitude, wish to shake their hands. And this scene suggested to viewers a wide-spread appreciation of Operation Vittles on the part of "ordinary" West Berliners. At the same time, Seaton's picture focused on a stronger dedication of the United States government to West Berlin and the FRG. This comes clear, when MacCullough subsequently asks Kowalski whether he believes that the airlift is over now, the latter states: "If they [our crews and cargo planes] can take off when the birds won't even fly, then I guess a blockade isn't much of a weapon." Arguably, the production team

dropped the strong political connotations and the more comprehensive argument of earlier versions from the script in favor of a simplified, clear display of a firm American determination to deter a perceived Soviet aggression.

Over all, West Germans received a relatively favorable portrayal in *The Big Lift*. Seaton himself later stated that he had intended to present West Germans in a way that addressed the issues surrounding the National Socialist past but that offered simultaneously the possibility of their rehabilitation through democratic re-education.<sup>53</sup> Here, the picture illustrated a shift in perceptions of West Germans from enemies to allies, especially a reversal of official non-fraternization policy previously in place. Just a few years earlier, American wartime propaganda such as Frank Capra's instructional film *Your Job in Germany* (1945) had warned against any form of fraternization between GIs and German civilians.<sup>54</sup> Cautioning GIs that it would take a lot of effort to enable Germans to return "back into the civilized world," *Your Job in Germany* advised American service personnel against clasping "the hand of the German" because it was the very hand that "held the whip over Polish, Yugoslav, French, and Norwegian slaves[,] [...] murdered, massacred Greeks, Czechs, Jews" and "killed and crippled American soldiers, sailors, marines." Yet, within only five years, fraternization was central to the plot of *The Big Lift*. With anti-fraternization policies proving impossible to police and the Soviets taking a demonstratively friendly attitude toward East Germans, the United States military authorities eventually abandoned these regulations. In fact, the American military government actively promoted socializing with West Germans by 1947. In this new climate, American soldiers now came to represent envoys of United States foreign policy, culture, and democratic values – something the character of Kowalski clearly does not succeed in doing.<sup>55</sup>

*The Big Lift* picked up on the theme of fraternization through the love affairs between its two male American and two female German protagonists, with German actresses even

portraying Frederica Burkhardt and Gerda. The choice of the largely unknown Cornell Borchers, who also Americanized her name under the alias Cornella Burch, as Frederica Burkhardt added a supposedly “realist” feel to *The Big Lift*. Originally, Seaton and Perlberg had chosen German film star Hildegard Knef for the part of Frederica Burkhardt. But they dropped Knef from the project shortly before filming was to commence because of recent revelations about her former relationship with film functionary Ewald von Demandowsky, a close ally of Joseph Goebbels.<sup>56</sup>

If Knef’s exit from the project demonstrated the persistent shadow that the National Socialist past cast over the production context of *The Big Lift*, the picture also addressed this spectre of recent German history in its plot, particularly through the two German lead characters: Burkhardt represents the legacies of and continuities with the National socialist past as well as a high level of uneasiness on the part of many West Germans over coming to terms with this problematic episode in their country’s history. This comes particularly clear in the two instances where she blatantly lies to MacCullough: first, Burkhardt tries to cover up her family’s involvement with the National Socialist dictatorship by inventing a story about her father being a dissident. When MacCullough finds out about her false claim and confronts her in a symbolic scene in which she clears rubble as a *Trümmerfrau* (rubble woman), Burkhardt atones for her lying by pointing to the poor living conditions in West Berlin and, thus, denies any responsibility for war guilt.<sup>57</sup>

While MacCullough forgives her on this occasion after strolling the streets of the bombed-out former German capital and seeing the plight of many West Berliners, *The Big Lift* gradually reveals more and more of her bad intentions and thereby makes viewers suspicious of her true intentions. For example, Burkhardt’s overreaction to a joke about German war heroes and her glances indicate some ambivalence. These revelations then come to a head when MacCullough learns from Stieber that Burkhardt only intends to marry him as

a means of getting to the United States in order to reunite with her actual husband. Not only does this breach of confidence prompt MacCullough to leave her, but film audiences might have ultimately interpreted Burkhardt's reckless and selfish behaviour as West German unreliability.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, *The Big Lift* displayed some ambiguity by placing her dishonesty over her motivations to marry MacCullough above her entanglement with the "Third Reich." In part, the high significance of religious beliefs in American society and politics, including their influence on moral values and perceptions of gender roles, help explain this strong moral condemnation of Burkhardt's lying about her relationship status.<sup>59</sup> Ultimately, this second storyline lends the approach taken in *The Big Lift* toward West Germany more depth: while Americans should not place blind faith in Germans, the latter should be given a chance to prove their ability to change.

*The Big Lift* contrasted its ambiguous portrayal of Burkhardt with a more nuanced picture of political accountability through the evolution of the second German female main character, Gerda, into a gendered ideal-type of a re-educated West German citizen.<sup>60</sup> After all, it is Gerda who soon appears to have an almost more advanced understanding of the American democratic system than her "teacher" Hank Kowalski. In this, her conversations with Kowalski about liberal democratic values and ideals embody the rapprochement between the former enemies.<sup>61</sup> At one point, Gerda even expresses her determination to remain in West Germany to help build a new, democratic country, saying: "I stay here. I wanna see one day the right kind of Germany. Maybe I can't help much but I wanna see it." And Gerda's determination to re-build her country as a liberal democracy marks the polar opposite of Frederica Burkhardt's sinister plot.

### **Germanizing the Story of the Berlin Airlift: *Es begann mit einem Kuß***

Notwithstanding the fact that *The Big Lift* featured in part a German cast and propagated a relatively sympathetic image of West Germans as allies in the Cold War, its 1953 West

German release version still received a particular treatment. Apart from the film's dubbing into German, the cutting of some 30 minutes from *The Big Lift* marked the biggest difference between the two release versions. When Twentieth Century Fox submitted the German-language version to the newly established self-regulatory body of the West German film industry (Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft, FSK) on October 27, 1952, *The Big Lift* had been cut down to a total length of 2,588 meters (approximately 90 minutes) from the 3,273 meters (approximately 120 minutes) of its original American version.<sup>62</sup> These cuts formed part of a rigorous re-editing process that involved toning down or cutting out sensitive political issues altogether and re-focusing the plot more closely on the romance between the two American male and two German female main characters. As a result, *Es begann mit einem Kuß* was not only much shorter than *The Big Lift* but carried a different message.<sup>63</sup> And a comparison of these two release versions reveals both the extent and nature of the alterations made in *Es begann mit einem Kuß*.

Shortly after its release in the United States in April 1950 (and some three years ahead of the release of its German-language version), West Germany's leading news magazine *Der Spiegel* had already run a mixed review of *The Big Lift* that was indicative of the film's ambivalent reception in the FRG. With production files still closed to researchers today, the review offers a glimpse into some West German misgivings about Seaton's picture and, thus, might help explain some of the motivations behind the decision by Twentieth Century Fox to produce a substantially altered version for release in the FRG. On the one hand, *Der Spiegel* featured a photograph of Cornell Borchers on its cover and praised some of the film's accomplishments: in light of the casting of Borchers and Bruni Löbel, the review acknowledged that Seaton's picture represented "at least in a limited capacity the first German-American postwar film." On the other hand, *Der Spiegel's* dismissal of the gender stereotypes personified through Borchers' and Löbel's characters, especially the magazine's

polemic references to clichéd American notions of “Schatzi” and “Fräulein,” offer a contemporary West German commentary on the gender politics of the United States armed forces in the FRG beyond *The Big Lift*. While the review identified Frederica Burkhardt as “Idealer Typ des deutschen Fräuleins” (“ideal type of the German *Fräulein*”), it labeled Löbel as “an embodiment of the kinder, more patient type of the German ‘Schatzi’, as the film-Yanks call their girls.” Plus, *Der Spiegel* specifically picked up on Burkhardt’s deceptive, dishonest, and egoistic traits.<sup>64</sup>

Attempts by Hollywood studios to gain access to the West German film market after the end of the Second World War provided the immediate economic context for Twentieth Century Fox’ decision to produce a German-language version of *The Big Lift*. The collapse of the “Third Reich” and its viable film industry, which had developed into a fierce rival to Hollywood during the war, had eliminated a major competitor and now provided American film studios, at least initially, with quasi unhindered access to Europe’s most important film market.<sup>65</sup> To break into this market, Hollywood studios worked closely with the United States government. By early 1944, the State Department, in close consultation with the Motion Picture Producers’ and Distributors’ Association, had already drawn up a circular letter to this effect to all American diplomatic posts. The missive instructed American diplomats to be aware of the motion picture industry’s great economic significance and promoted the goal of achieving “‘the unrestricted distribution of American motion pictures abroad, especially in the post-war period’.”<sup>66</sup> Later in the same year, the Office of War Information, which coordinated official wartime propaganda, started to give thought to the depiction of the image of the United States abroad.<sup>67</sup> On the film industry’s side, Hollywood’s eight biggest film studios, including Twentieth Century Fox, set up the Motion Picture Export Association (MPEA) the following year. As a subsidiary of the umbrella organization of film studios in the United States, the Motion Picture Association of America

(MPAA), the MPEA oversaw the distribution of films for the German and European markets.<sup>68</sup>

*The Big Lift* formed part of a second wave of Hollywood exports to Europe and West Germany. Initially, American film studios sought to release those pictures in occupied Germany that they had produced during the war but that the Hitler regime had banned from distribution in any territory under its control after the German declaration of war against the United States.<sup>69</sup> There were two main economic reasons for this: first, Hollywood studios simply tried to reduce the vast backlog of pictures that had not yet been screened in Germany. Second, American production companies initially restricted the release of films for the German market to those that were at least twelve months old. The fact the Information Control Division (ICD) of the Office of Military Government, United States oversaw all distribution of American films in occupied Germany in the immediate aftermath of the German unconditional surrender drove this self-imposed policy. Once the ICD's regime had ended, Hollywood studios intended to maximize their profits by selling the more recent productions by dictating their own conditions and prices.<sup>70</sup>

Hollywood wartime pictures screened in postwar Germany did not always meet audience expectations though. One general issue concerned cinema audiences' preference of German productions over American imports for the simple reason of cultural affinity.<sup>71</sup> In some cases, the ICD also deemed film plots too controversial for West German release. In the case of *Action in the North Atlantic* (1943), for example, the ICD withdrew that film from distribution after a scene depicting a German submarine commander deliberately running his vessel over a lifeboat with Allied sailors on board had prompted disturbances in some cinemas in Bavaria and Bremen. On another occasion, *Gone with the Wind* (1939) was not even selected for distribution in Germany because of its problematic depiction of African Americans, which would have contravened American re-education and democratization

efforts.<sup>72</sup> If the German market seemed to offer seemingly endless opportunities for Hollywood studios shortly after the end of the war, American film companies also faced growing competition from a re-emerging West German film industry.<sup>73</sup> Domestic productions increased from about nine films in 1947 to 23 the following year and 62 in 1949. By the time *Es begann mit einem Kuß* screened in the FRG in 1953, West German studios produced some 103 films annually.<sup>74</sup>

When West German cinemas finally showed *Es begann mit einem Kuß* on April 24, 1953, viewers not only watched a considerably shorter version of *The Big Lift* but one that comprised an altered plot. *Es begann mit einem Kuß*, observed *Der Spiegel*, “has been defused and re-focused for German consumption.”<sup>75</sup> This was, by no means, unique and represented, in fact, a common practice amongst Hollywood studios in their attempts to cater for overseas audiences. Less concerned about artistic expression than creating profitable commodities, they repeatedly modified their marketing techniques to fit the specific cultural requirements of the respective target audience. In particular, their increasing dependency on foreign sales (about 40 per cent of Hollywood’s revenues resulted from overseas sales during the late 1940s and early 1950s) forced American production companies to meet foreign audience tastes and expectations.<sup>76</sup> Around the time when *Es begann mit einem Kuß* hit West German cinemas, Hollywood productions constituted 50 per cent or more of screening time in Western European nations, making that region its major source of overseas revenue.<sup>77</sup>

The dubbing of Seaton’s film into German formed part of a strategy that Hollywood studios commonly applied in order to reach out to non-English-speaking audiences and to make their products appeal to particular cultural tastes and sensitivities. “This form of *eindeutschen* (literally, Germanising),” as Sabine Hake argues, “not only made the foreign more familiar, and hence more palatable, but also allowed for subtle forms of censorship, as evidenced by the changed dialogue lines in *Casablanca*, *Notorious* and other foreign films

with presumably anti-German subject matter.”<sup>78</sup> Alongside Michael Curtiz’ *Casablanca* (1942, re-released in West Germany in 1952) and Alfred Hitchcock’s *Notorious* (1946, re-released in West Germany in 1951), Edward Ludwig’s *Big Jim McLain* (1952, re-released in West Germany in 1953) represented one of the most drastic examples of “*eindeutschen*.” This Germanizing comprised radical changes to film plots. Edited into a severely shortened German-language version, *Casablanca* contained neither references to National Socialism nor to European resistance groups.<sup>79</sup> In a similar fashion, *Notorious*, whose original 1946 version revolved around a Nazi atomic espionage ring, and *Big Jim McLain*, an anti-Communist film, were stripped off their political messages and now dealt with drug trafficking in their German-language versions, entitled *Weißes Gift* (White Poison) and *Marihuana* (Marijuana) respectively.

In their attempts to sell their products, Hollywood studios followed a two-way strategy. On one level, in its lobbying of the United States government through the MPAA, the film industry stressed the supposedly positive cultural influence of its products at home and abroad. Yet, on another level, the MPAA – along with the MPEAA – was also prepared for members to make concessions and change the plots of *The Big Lift* and other films.<sup>80</sup> Often economic reasons provided much stronger incentives for film studios to alter their scripts, effectively self-censoring their productions, than political pressure or direct orders from government agencies, as the botched attempt to censor Twentieth Century Fox’s *The Desert Fox* demonstrated. Plus, producers like Samuel Goldwyn were well aware that foreign audiences preferred entertainment over blatantly political messages.<sup>81</sup>

In this context, the radical re-editing of *The Big Lift*’s West German release version revealed the extent to which “the ‘nasty German’ character was systematically eliminated from films until the end of the 1950s”, as Joseph Garncarz has generally observed.<sup>82</sup> One of the most radical omissions in *Es begann mit einem Kuß* concerned Frederica Burkhardt’s

morally corrupt motives behind her intention to marry Danny MacCullough. In *The Big Lift*, her calculated behavior has consequences, and MacCullough leaves her (mins. 1:47:07-1:47:40 and 1:50:23 to the end of the original American release version). By contrast, cinemagoers in the FRG witnessed her and MacCullough's romantic relationship unfold: *Es begann mit einem Kuß* contained a happy ending for Burkhardt through the substitution of the original finale with another scene that was cut and pasted from earlier on in the plot of *The Big Lift* (1:47:11-1:47:38). Furthermore, MacCullough's newly inserted comment that he "returned back home to America with his German wife" emphasized this fundamental change to the original storyline.

**Insert figure 3 (graph of changes)**

In an attempt to tone down anti-German sentiment, Twentieth Century Fox deleted further scenes. Above all, these included a sequence that showed the Polish American Kowalski beating up a man (Franz Nicklisch) who resembled a former guard at a prison camp where Kowalski had been held during the war and had suffered physical abuse. *The Big Lift* leaves it open whether the man whom Kowalski calls Felix but who vehemently insists his name is Günther and offers to produce identification is, in fact, who Kowalski believes him to be. In the West German version, Kowalski still confronts the man verbally but does not physically assault him as in *The Big Lift* (1:05:00-1:07:30).<sup>83</sup> In all likelihood, this cut was also aimed at avoiding any suggestion that members of the American military engaged in vigilante justice or arbitrarily enforced law and order in West Germany – something commonly associated with the Red Army in the Soviet occupation zone.<sup>84</sup> In addition, violence amongst GIs was quite common in the FRG.<sup>85</sup> A similar (deleted) scene showed Kowalski pushing away one of the German workers who unload the cargo and instructing

him “to stay away” (16:51-17:24). Although they are less noticeable, a number of further cuts are, in fact, quite significant for altering the meaning of the film, especially the portrayal of West Germans. At the beginning of the picture, a scene was deleted in which an American soldier sarcastically comments on the deployment of his comrades from their base in Hawaii to West Germany (4:55-5:44). In another instance, a similar sequence depicting American servicemen who complain about their dispatch to the European theatre of the Cold War while en route to Rhein-Main airbase in Frankfurt was cut (6:31-6:51).

Other smaller, yet in sum quite substantial cuts concerned information that appeared to be extraneous to either the plot or West German audiences or both. Above all, these deletions involved sequences depicting the United States military. Besides scenes showing a lengthy military parade (22:00-22:38, 22:05-22:43, 22:51-22:57), a sequence featuring an African American GI driving a truck at Rhein-Main airbase (10:21-11:38) was deleted. Furthermore, scenes that appeared to serve as mere illustrations of information that had already been provided in the off-commentary were cut. This was particularly the case for several scenes featuring casual radio conversations between pilots and the control tower at Rhein-Main air base about the various points of origin of incoming aircraft simply appeared to repeat the information given by the voice-over before (9:05-9:22 and 9:27-9:47. See also: 13:06-13:36, 14:13-14:50, 15:55-16:15, 16:19-16:29, 18:53-20:34, 31:17-32:14, and 32:45-35:20). If these cuts seem insignificant, both their frequency and nature make them, in effect, quite substantial. Considered jointly, these alterations shift the emphasis in the storyline away from the two American protagonists and the United States military, focusing instead more attention on the two German main characters: their feelings, desires, sorrows, and thoughts.

Deleting or substituting single shots, scenes or entire sequences represented the most drastic measures taken to alter the film. Other – and arguably less consequential – changes included its dubbing that was often employed to shift emphasis. Whereas the dubbing of

dialogue in *Es begann mit einem Kuss* was largely correct, it repeatedly shifted the tone of conversations. As a result, the West German release version lost some of the nuances of *The Big Lift*. For example, 57 minutes into the original version Kowalski insinuates the collective guilt of all Germans for the rise of National Socialism, prompting Burkhardt to make up a story about her father as an opponent of the Hitler regime. Embarrassed about this unexpected reply, Kowalski then admits that he got an rude answer to his insulting assumption. The slight sarcasm in his voice, however, did not make into the German-language version.<sup>86</sup>

Alongside dubbing, the insertion of subtitles provided the production team with another method for changing meaning. In particular, the opening sequence of *Es begann mit einem Kuß* that was not dubbed into German demonstrates this impressively (mins. 2:30 to 4:55). The use of subtitles to translate the information conveyed in this part supposedly introduced the West German audience to the “American” perspective on the airlift. And, what is more, the exposure to American English helped create a sense of “authenticity” in cinemagoers.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, the off-commentary by MacCullough’s voice actor served a similar function, providing an overall context for specific scenes from a personal perspective. For example, the off-commentary explains political developments and American standpoints at the start and the end of *Es begann mit einem Kuß*. Yet, the film avoided a patronizing tone. In part, it owed this to the fact that MacCullough spoke as an “ordinary,” lower-ranking serviceman and not as a senior officer or political decision-maker. If the voice-over commentary played a key role in setting the tone and providing context for West German viewers, it also overlay undesired dialogue. In one scene showing aerial footage of bombed-out Berlin, the German commentary superimposed Kowalski’s bitter comment that the atomic bomb should have been dropped on Germany, for example.

### Insert figure 4 and 5 (German-language promotional material)

Naturally, the promotional material that accompanied the film's release in the FRG followed these alterations. The publicity information compiled for the leading trade journal *Illustrierte Film-Bühne*, for instance, offers a detailed plot summary that briefly mentions initial misunderstandings between members of the United States armed forces and German "Fräuleins." In line with the fundamental semantic changes to the plot, the leaflet focused primarily on the romance between MacCullough and Burkhardt as an example of reconciliation between former enemies. "The mistrust among the people of the world can never disappear – only if individuals make a start to understand the other," stated the *Illustrierte Film-Bühne* leaflet and stressed the happy ending of *Es begann mit einem Kuß*: "Frederica joyfully accepts Danny's proposal of marriage. [...] And on his return flight [to the United States] he can hug his happy wife. Witnesses to their marriage are Gerda and Hank, who overcame their differences and became good friends."<sup>88</sup> Compared to *The Big Lift* with its ambiguous portrayal of West German-American relations, *Es begann mit einem Kuß* rather uncritically promoted international understanding between former foes.

Despite these efforts, *Es begann mit einem Kuß* did not become a hit at the West German box-office, let alone make the annual top ten in the FRG. Even the fact that the Twentieth Century Fox production dealt with a theme from German history and featured German-speaking cast members – two factors that commonly helped secure success in the FRG – appeared to have no impact. After all, West German and Austrian productions dominated the top ten. And among the 20 most popular films were no more than four non-German-language productions and only two American films, *The Greatest Show on Earth* (released as *Die größte Schau der Welt* as the tenth most popular film in 1952-53) and *From*

*Here to Eternity* (released as *Verdammt in alle Ewigkeit* in 1953 as the second most popular film in 1953-54).<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusions

The cases of *The Big Lift* and *Es begann mit einem Kuß* reveal the complex set of factors that influenced the censorship of Hollywood feature films for both domestic and foreign consumption. Alongside the Cold War context, with its strong anti-Communist climate of the late 1940s and early 1950s, and the close collaboration of Twentieth Century Fox with the United States military, several layers of political and economic (self-)censorship affected the two film versions. These included legal challenges to Hollywood's established distribution system, especially through the 1948 Supreme Court ruling, changes in film viewing habits, particularly through the emergence of television as a mass medium. In addition, new approaches to script writing and the creative editing of the script by one of its lead actors, Montgomery Clift, shaped the content and form of *The Big Lift*.

If these various levels of censorship led to significant changes to the film's script during the pre-production and production stages, Seaton's picture underwent a further process of re-editing for its West German release version. Placing *Es begann mit einem Kuß* within the wider context of Western Europe, especially West Germany, as a key market for Hollywood studios post 1945, this article has offered the first comprehensive comparison of *The Big Lift* and *Es begann mit einem Kuß*. Through its dubbing into German, cuts, and – to a limited extent also the use of subtitles –, Twentieth Century Fox altered the original plot substantially for the West German release version. And it was not just the fundamentally different title that reflected these major semantic changes: the deletion of scenes that were either too explicit in questioning the reliability of West Germans as new allies in the Cold War or that deflected attention away from the protagonists, particularly the two German lead characters, further proved this point. Moreover, the dubbing empowered the production team

to defuse or substitute potentially problematic dialogue. Ultimately, this study of *The Big Lift* and *Es begann mit einem Kuß* then demonstrates the various levels of censorship at work between scripts, suppression, and selection.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Hollywood Foreign Press Association, “Golden Globe Awards Winners and Nominees: *The Big Lift*,” available at < <https://www.goldenglobes.com/film/big-lift> > [accessed November 12, 2018].

<sup>2</sup> “Eisgekühlte Bezirke,” *Der Spiegel*, May 11, 1950, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Helke Rausch, ed., *Transatlantischer Kulturtransfer im ‘Kalten Krieg’: Perspektiven für eine historisch vergleichende Transferforschung*, spec. issue of *Comparativ* 16, no. 4 (2006); Nicholas Barnett, “Blurring Boundaries in the Cold War World,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 3 (2017): 764-75.

<sup>4</sup> Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 6.

<sup>5</sup> To date, the most detailed analysis is the brief chapter by Rainer Rother, “An Airlift for a Wedding – ‘The Big Lift’ vs. ‘Es begann mit einem Kuß’,” in *It Started with a Kiss: German-Allied Relations after 1945*, ed. Florian Weiß (Berlin: Jaron and Allied Museum, 2005), 75-80. Other film scholars have mentioned differences between the two release versions as part of broader studies. See Joseph Garncarz, *Filmfassungen: Eine Theorie signifikanter Filmvariationen* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 58-65; Michael Ray FitzGerald, “‘Adjuncts of Government’: Darryl F. Zanuck and 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Fox in Service of the Executive Branch, 1935-1971,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 36, no. 3 (2016): 380.

<sup>6</sup> Ronnie D. Lipschutz, *Cold War Fantasies: Film, Fiction, and Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 15-23; Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-49* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 192-95; Tony Shaw, *Hollywood’s Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 201-202; Thomas W. Maulucci Jr., “Cold War Berlin in the Movies: From The Big Lift to The Promise,” in *Why We Fought: America’s War in Film and History*, ed. Peter C. Rollins and John E. O’Connor (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2008), 317-48; Ralph Stern, “*The Big Lift* (1950): Image and Identity in Blockaded Berlin,” *Cinema Journal* 46, no. 2 (2007): 66-90; Georg Schmundt-Thomas, “Hollywood’s Romance of Foreign Policy: American G.I.s and the Conquest of the German Fräulein,” *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 19, no. 4 (1992): 187-197; Ulrike Weckel, “Teaching Democracy on the Big Screen: Gender and the Reeducation of Postwar Germans in *A Foreign Affair* and *The Big Lift*,” in *Gender and the Long Postwar: The United States and the Two Germanys, 1945-1989*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Sonya Michel (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 95-116.

<sup>7</sup> FitzGerald, “‘Adjuncts of Government’,” 382.

<sup>8</sup> Patrick Major and Rana Mitter, “East Is East and West Is West? Towards a Comparative Socio-Cultural History of the Cold War,” *Cold War History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 1-22; Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); David Cate, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cold War Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Bernd Greiner, “Wirtschaft im Kalten

Krieg: Bilanz und Ausblick,” in *Ökonomie im Kalten Krieg*, ed. Bernd Greiner, Christian Th. Müller, and Claudia Weber (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2008), 7-28; Charles S. Maier, “The World Economy and the Cold War in the Middle of the Twentieth Century,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), vol. 1: Origins, 44-66.

<sup>9</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 160-91; Michael Freedland, *Hollywood on Trial: McCarthyism's War against the Movies* (London: Robson, 2007); Mark Wheeler, *Hollywood Politics and Society* (London: BFI, 2006), 106-114; Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 127-51.

<sup>10</sup> Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War*, 201-202; Lawrence H. Suid, *Guts & Glory: The Making of the American Military Image in Film*, rev. and exp. ed. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 161-62. See also Paul Swann, “The Little State Department: Washington and Hollywood's Rhetoric of the Postwar Audience,” in *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony*, ed. David W. Elwood and Rob Kroes (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), pp. 176-95; David Eldridge, “‘Dear Own:’ The CIA, Luigi Luraschi, and Hollywood, 1953,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 20, no. 2 (2000): 149-96.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas H. Guback, “Hollywood's International Market,” in *The American Film Industry*, ed. by Tino Balio, rev. ed. (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 475-77; Ernest Borneman, “United States versus Hollywood: The Case of an Antitrust Suite,” in *The American Film Industry*, ed. Balio, 449-62.

<sup>12</sup> Ian Jarvie, “The Postwar Economic Foreign Policy of the American Film Industry: Europe 1945-1950,” in *Hollywood in Europe*, ed. Elwood and Kroes, 155-75; Anne Jäckel, *European Film Industries* (London: BFI, 2003), p. 17 note 4. Italy marked another important European film market. See Gian Piero Brunetta, “The Long March of American Cinema in Italy: From Fascism to the Cold War,” in *Hollywood in Europe*, ed. Elwood and Kroes, 139-54; Daniela Treveri Gennari and John Sedgwick, “Memories in Context: The Social and Economic function of Cinema in 1950s Rome,” *Film History* 27, no. 2 (2015): 76-104.

<sup>13</sup> The various version's George Seaton's script of *The Big Lift*, along with Montgomery Clift's annotations, can be found in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Montgomery Clift Papers, T-MSS 1967-006 (hereafter Clift Papers), box 6, folders 1-4. The Deutsche Kinemathek film archive in Berlin, Germany, holds a copy of *Es begann mit einem Kuß*.

<sup>14</sup> The Soviet blockade of West Berlin lasted from June 24, 1948 until May 12, 1949. For the “official history,” see Roger G. Miller, *To Save a City: The Berlin Airlift, 1948-1949* ([Washington, DC]: Airforce History and Museums Program; Washington, DC: USGPO, 1998). For critical assessments, see Carolyn Eisenberg, “The Myth of the Berlin Blockade and the Early Cold War,” in *Cold War Triumphalism: The Misuse of History after the Fall of Communism*, ed. Ellen Schrecker (New York: New Press, 2004), pp. 174-200; Elke Scherstjanoi, “Die Berlin Blockade 1948/49 im sowjetischen Kalkül,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 46, no. 6 (1998): 495-503; Avi Shlaim, *The United States and the Berlin Blockade, 1948-1949: A Study in Crisis Decision-Making* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); William Stivers, “The Incomplete Blockade: Soviet Zone Supply of West Berlin, 1948-49,” *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 4 (1997): 569-602.

<sup>15</sup> There is no evidence though that suggests that the *Life* article influenced Seaton's choice of title. “The Big Lift: Our Airmen Deserve a Hand for a Magnificent Performance,” *Life* 25, no. 8 (August 23, 1948): 35.

<sup>16</sup> The view of the Berlin blockade as the “first battle of the Cold War” was advanced by studies like Thomas Parrish, *Berlin in the Balance: The Blockade, the Airlift, the First Major Battle of the Cold War* (New York: DaCapo, 1968). For a critical assessment of this triumphalist narrative: Eisenberg, “The Myth of the Berlin Blockade and the Early Cold War,” 174-200.

<sup>17</sup> Carolyn Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany, 1944-49* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 10; Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 166-98; Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Scott H. Krause, "Neue Westpolitik: The Clandestine Campaign to Westernize the SPD in Cold War Berlin, 1948-1958," *Central European History* 48, no. 1 (2015): 79-99; Charles S. Maier and Günter Bischof, ed., *The Marshall Plan and Germany: West German Development within the Framework of the European Recovery Program* (New York: Berg, 1991); Deborah Welch Larson, "The Origins of Commitments: Truman and West Berlin," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13, no. 1 (2011): 180-212.

<sup>18</sup> K.R.M. Short, "'The March of Time', Time Inc. and the Berlin Blockade, 1948-1949: Selling Americans on the 'New' Democratic Germany," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 13, no. 4 (1993): 451-68. See also Brian C. Etheridge, *Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Lucius D. Clay, *Decision in Germany* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1950), 386.

<sup>20</sup> See also Wolfgang Krieger, *General Lucius D. Clay und die amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987).

<sup>21</sup> Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 192.

<sup>22</sup> Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War*, 201-202.

<sup>23</sup> Suid, *Guts and Glory*, 161-62.

<sup>24</sup> Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War*, 201-202.

<sup>25</sup> John J. Gladchuk, *Hollywood and Anticommunism: HUAC and the Evolution of the Red Menace, 1935-1950* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Borneman, "United States versus Hollywood," 449-62; Guback, "Hollywood's International Market," 463-86.

<sup>27</sup> Judith M. Kass, *The Films of Montgomery Clift* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1979), 99-103, 120; Amy Lawrence, *The Passion of Montgomery Clift* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 62.

<sup>28</sup> George Seaton, "Of Small Headaches: Film-Maker Reviews Soviet 'Cooperation' While Shooting 'Big Lift' in Berlin," *New York Times*, April 16, 1950, X 5.

<sup>29</sup> Script of *The Big Lift*: "Retakes – 'Two Corridors East' – 12/9/1949," December 9, 1949, pp. 1-3, Clift Papers, box 6, folder 4.

<sup>30</sup> George Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*, n.d., pp. 1-58, Clift Papers, box 6, folder 1; Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*, n.d., pp. 59-115, Clift Papers, box 6, folder 2; Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*, n.d., pp. 116-67, Clift Papers, box 6, folder 3; Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*: "Revised 8-22-49," August 22, 1949, pp. 23, 23A, 69, 70, 71, 73; Script of *The Big Lift*: "Retakes – 'Two Corridors East' – 12/9/1949," December 9, 1949, pp. 1-3; Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*: Revisions, pp. 162, 163, 165, 164, 116, 117, 119, 122, all in Clift Papers, box 6, folder 4. The production took place from mid-July to late October 1949 in Berlin, additional scenes were shot in December 1949. See "The Big Lift," *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States: Feature Films, 1941-1950*, ed. Patricia King Hanson and Amy Dunkleberger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 205.

<sup>31</sup> These can be found in Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*, pp. 127-132 [revised August 1, 1949], 167 [revised September 2, 1949], Clift Papers, box 6, folder 3; Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*: "Revised 8-22-49," pp. 23, 23A, 69-71, 73, Clift Papers, box 6, folder 4.

<sup>32</sup> Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*: "Revised 8-22-49," pp. 23 and 23a (scenes 57-59), Clift Papers, box 6, folder 4.

<sup>33</sup> Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*, pp. 127-133 (scenes 303-314), Clift Papers, box 6, folder 3.

<sup>34</sup> Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*: "Revised 8-22-49," pp. 69-73 (scenes 197-203), Clift Papers, box 6, folder 4.

- <sup>35</sup> On the wide-ranging changes of screenplays, see Stephen Price, *A History of the Screenplay* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- <sup>36</sup> Price, 183.
- <sup>37</sup> Stern, "The Big Lift (1950)," 67. On Trümmerfilme, see Robert R. Shandley, *Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001).
- <sup>38</sup> Maulucci Jr., "Cold War Berlin in the Movies," 319.
- <sup>39</sup> Philip J. Landon, "The Cold War", in *The Columbia Companion to American History on Film: How the Movies Have Portrayed the American Past*, ed. Peter C. Rollins (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 73.
- <sup>40</sup> Schmundt-Thomas, "Hollywood's Romance of Foreign Policy," 187; Ralph Willett, "Billy Wilder's 'A Foreign Affair' (1945-1948): 'the trials and tribulations of Berlin,'" *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 7, no. 1 (1987): 3-14; David Culbert, "Hollywood in Berlin, 1945: A Note on Billy Wilder and the Origins of 'A Foreign Affair'," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 8, no. 3 (1988): 311-16.
- <sup>41</sup> See, for example, Bosley Crowther, "The Screen in Review," *New York Times*, April 27, 1950, 47; 'The Big Lift', *Variety Film Reviews*, vol. 8: 1949-1953 (New York and London: Garland, 1983), the review was originally published by *Variety* on April, 21, 1950.
- <sup>42</sup> 'The Big Lift'. *The Monthly Film Bulletin* 17, no.196 (April-May 1950), 59.
- <sup>43</sup> Crowther, "The Screen in Review," 47.
- <sup>44</sup> Schmundt-Thomas, "Hollywood's Romance of Foreign Policy," 188-94.
- <sup>45</sup> British reviewers picked up on the omission of any contributions by the British armed forces to the airlift: Reginald Whitley, "3 Film Earn You Your Money Back," *Daily Mirror*, April 28, 1950, 4; "New Films in London," *Times*, May 1, 1950, 2. On the British part in the airlift: Air Ministry and Central Office of Information, *Berlin Airlift: An Account of the British Contribution* (London: HMSO, 1949); *Berlin Airlift* (1949); Victor Mauer, *Brückenbauer: Großbritannien, die deutsche Frage und die Blockade Berlins 1948-49* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2018). On the idolization of American military personnel: Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 180-82.
- <sup>46</sup> Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9.
- <sup>47</sup> On these multifaceted and ambivalent legacies: Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
- <sup>48</sup> Clare Copley, "Curating Tempelhof: Negotiating the Multiple Histories of Berlin's 'Symbol of Freedom'," *Urban History* 44, no. 4 (2017): 698-717.
- <sup>49</sup> On Berlin: Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). On Germany more widely: Maja Zehfuss, *Wounds of Memory: The Politics of War in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Bill Niven and Chloe Paver, ed., *Memorialization in Germany since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- <sup>50</sup> Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*, p. 167 (scene 431) [revised September 2, 1949], Clift Papers, box 6, folder 3.
- <sup>51</sup> Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*, p. 167 (scene 431) [revised on September 2, 1949], Clift Papers, box 6, folder 3.
- <sup>52</sup> Larson, "The Origins of Commitments," 180-212.
- <sup>53</sup> Suid, *Guts and Glory*, 161.

<sup>54</sup> David Culbert, "American Film Policy in the Re-Education of Germany After 1945," in *The Political Re-Education of Germany and Her Allies after World War II*, ed. Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 180.

<sup>55</sup> Oliver J. Frederiksen, *The American Military Occupation of Germany, 1945-1953* (Karlsruhe: Historical Division, Headquarters, United States Army, Europe, 1953), 129-31; Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 42-79; Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 59-60.

<sup>56</sup> Hildegard Knef later claimed that creative differences with the production team over her part had prompted her to abandon the role. "Eisgekühlte Bezirke," 37; Ulrich Bach, "The Woman Between: Hildegard Knef's Movies in Cold War Berlin," in *Berlin: Divided City, 1945-1989*, ed. Philip Broadbent and Sabine Hake (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 120.

<sup>57</sup> On the myth of German "Trümmerfrauen." Leonie Treber, *Mythos Trümmerfrauen: Von der Trümmerbeseitigung in der Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit und der Entstehung eines deutschen Erinnerungsortes* (Essen: Klartext, 2014).

<sup>58</sup> Maulucci Jr., "Cold War Berlin in the Movies," 320-21.

<sup>59</sup> Dianne Kirby, "Religion and the Cold War – An Introduction," in *Religion and the Cold War*, ed. Dianne Kirby (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1.

<sup>60</sup> "Eisgekühlte Bezirke," 37; Weckel, "Teaching Democracy on the Big Screen," 107-110.

<sup>61</sup> Schmundt-Thomas, "Hollywood's Romance of Foreign Policy," 193.

<sup>62</sup> FSK file on *The Big Lift*. The information was provided by Marlies Splittdorf on behalf of the FSK in an email to the authors on December 29, 2009.

<sup>63</sup> Rainer Rother has even referred to *Es begann mit einem Kuß* as "a significantly altered film" in: Rother, "An Airlift for a Wedding," 75.

<sup>64</sup> "Eisgekühlte Bezirke," 37; Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 6; Susanne zur Nieden, "Geschichten vom 'Fräulein'," *Feministische Studien* 13, no. 2 (1995): 25-33.

<sup>65</sup> On the success of "Third Reich" cinema: Roel Vande Winkel and David Welch, ed., *Cinema and the Swastika: The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema*, 2nd rev. edn. (Hampshire, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>66</sup> Cited in Ian Jarvie, "Free Trade as Cultural Threat: American Film and TV Exports in the Post-War Period," in *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture, National Identity, 1945-95*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Steven Ricci (London: BFI, 1998), 36-38.

<sup>67</sup> Theodore A. Wilson, "Selling America via the Silver Screen? Efforts to Manage the Projection of American Culture Abroad, 1942-1947", in "*Here, There and Everywhere:*" *The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture*, ed. Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), 83; Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 39, 57; Gerald D. Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (1985; Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 182-83; Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 82-112; Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

<sup>68</sup> Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *In a Cold Crater: Cultural and Intellectual Life in Berlin, 1945-1948*, transl. by Kelly Barry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 137.

<sup>69</sup> Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 96.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Joseph, "Our Film Program in Germany: I. How Far Was It a Success?," *Hollywood Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1947): 124. On the American film program in postwar Germany, see also Gladwin Hill, "Our Film Program in Germany: II. How Far Was It a Failure?," *Hollywood Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1947): 131-37.

- <sup>71</sup> Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt, 'Political Perspectives in Occupied Germany', in *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949*, ed. Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 14-15.
- <sup>72</sup> Joseph, "Our Film Program in Germany: I," 125-26.
- <sup>73</sup> Egon Larsen, "The Emergence of a New Film Industry," *Hollywood Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (1948): 387-94.
- <sup>74</sup> Stuart Schulenberg, "The German Film: Comeback or Setback?," *Quarterly Of Film, Radio and Television* 8, no. 4 (1954): 400.
- <sup>75</sup> "Film: Neu in Deutschland," *Der Spiegel*, June 3, 1953, 33.
- <sup>76</sup> Paul Swann, "The Little State Department," 182.
- <sup>77</sup> Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction*, 3rd edn. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 325.
- <sup>78</sup> Hake, *German National Cinema*, 113.
- <sup>79</sup> Garncarz, *Filmfassungen*, 58-65. See also Guido Marc Pruys, *Die Rhetorik der Filmsynchronisation: Wie ausländische Filme in Deutschland zensiert, verändert und gesehen werden* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1997).
- <sup>80</sup> See, for example, Pablo León Aguinaga, "State-Corporate Relations, Film Trade and the Cold War: The Failure of MPEAA's Strategy in Spain, 1945-1960," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 29, no. 4 (2009): 483-504.
- <sup>81</sup> Swann, "The Little State Department," 183, 191.
- <sup>82</sup> Joseph Garncarz, "Hollywood in Germany: The Role of American Films in Germany, 1925-1990," in *Hollywood in Europe*, ed. Elwood and Kroes, 107. On the ways in which West German cinema addressed the fallout from the Second World War, see Robert G. Moeller, "Winning the Peace at the Movies: Suffering, Loss, and Redemption in Postwar German Cinema," in *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe*, ed. Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 139-55.
- <sup>83</sup> The script is ambivalent on this, too; Seaton, Script of *The Big Lift*, n.d., pp. 98-104, Clift Papers, box 6, folder 2. Cf. Maulucci Jr., "Cold War Berlin in the Movies," 320.
- <sup>84</sup> Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 69-140.
- <sup>85</sup> Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins*, 103-119.
- <sup>86</sup> On dubbing, semantic changes, and censorship: Lu Danjun, "Loss of Meaning in Dubbing," in *Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context*, ed. Gilbert C.F. Fong and Kenneth K.L. Lau (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2009), 161-65; Jorge Díaz-Cintas, "Film Censorship in Franco's Spain: The Transforming Power of Dubbing," *Perspectives* 27, no. 2 (2019): 182-200.
- <sup>87</sup> On subtitling and semantic changes: Gilbert C.F. Fong, "The Two Worlds of Subtitling: The Case of Vulgarisms and Sexually-oriented Language," in *Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context*, ed. Fong and Lau, 39-61; Jorge Díaz-Cintas, "Dubbing or Subtitling: The Eternal Dilemma," *Perspectives* 7, no. 1 (1998): 31-40; Elisa Perego, Fabio Del Missier, and Marta Stragà, "Dubbing vs. Subtitling: Complexity Matters," *Target* 30, no. 1 (1999): 31-40.
- <sup>88</sup> *Es begann mit einem Kuß* (The Big Lift), *Illustrierte Film-Bühne*, no. 1886. Author's own collection.
- <sup>89</sup> Garncarz, *Populäres Kino*, 381; Peter Krämer, "Hollywood in Germany/Germany in Hollywood," in *The German Cinema Book*, ed. Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter, and Deniz Göktürk (London: BFI, 2002), 231-32.