

## FACEBOOK TRIBUTES

### Steven Spielberg's "Bridge of Spies"

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A few days ago I saw Steven Spielberg's "*Bridge of Spies*" and I haven't stopped thinking about it. The five opening minutes are worth the price of admission and show you what expert film making and film story telling are all about.

Tom Hanks and Mark Rylance are superb, of course, but it was the scenes of the wall being built between West and East Berlin to keep the East Berliners from fleeing to the West that moved me the most.

I HAD BEEN THERE (not when the wall was being built, but some years later, when it was still up) and I had crossed over, via Checkpoint Charlie, to see a production at the Brecht Berliner Theatre. I was on my first Rockefeller Grant making theatre contacts in Sweden, Denmark, Berlin and London. I took the elevated train that Hank's character takes when he returns to the West and sees the tragic shooting down of East Berliners trying to climb over the wall.

I saw no similar carnage, but what the film brought back was the following scene: my waiting to get by the guards at Checkpoint Charlie and one guard inspecting the gifts the West Berliners were bringing over to relatives in the West. One couple was bringing across what looked like soap powder. The guard had an ice pick that he kept stabbing into the soap powder box. Not the same as being shot, of course, but somehow that casual ice pick rape of that box of soap powder was as demeaning and degrading as anything I had seen—before stepping from then neon-lit West Berlin into the drab 19th Century world of East Berlin.

(Photos below: Hanks, Spielberg and Rylance)

