

 66 Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Panorama

A DOCUMENTARY BY JOCHEN HICK

THE GDR COMPLEX



THE STORY OF MARIO RÖLLIG

WITH MARIO RÖLLIG EDITOR & MOTION DESIGN THOMAS KELLER RESEARCH & ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ANDREAS STROHFELDT PHOTOGRAPHY JOCHEN HICK & NICOLAI ZÖRN SOUND TIMO KAHLENBERG PRODUCTION MANAGERS HERMANN HICK & URSULA SCHEID RE-RECORDING MIXER MATHIAS LUDWIG SURROUND SOUND MIXER MICHAEL KACZMAREK CONSULTANT KARIN WALLENGZUS PRODUCTION MANAGER RBB RAINER BAUMERT COMMISSIONING EDITOR ROLF BERGMANN AUTHOR, DIRECTOR & PRODUCER JOCHEN HICK

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SUPPORTED BY FILMFÖRDERUNG HAMBURG SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN GMBH

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SEITE 1

THE GDR COMPLEX (Der Ost-Komplex)

Feature documentary by Jochen Hick, 90 mins., 16:9, color & b/w, 5.1 surround sound.

Germany 2016



Synopsis: THE GDR COMPLEX (D 2016)

Synopsis (short)

Being gay, young and conservative, Mario Roellig is one of the most in-demand witnesses to the atrocities committed by the GDR. He guides groups through today's memorial site in the former Stasi prison where he was once incarcerated.

Roellig confronts GDR aficionados and is also confronted by people who still believe in social utopias and who also talk about freedom (without ever mentioning the GDR).

The film unveils a strange atmosphere of misunderstandings and failures to communicate. Mario still awaits an apology from his tormentors while simultaneously being ridiculed by some hardliners.

The process of coming to terms with the past has just begun.

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Synopsis (long)

Today, more than 25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the fight for the prerogative of the historical interpretation and political relevance of the former GDR seems more intense than ever.

Mario Roellig, born 1967, was raised in a family loyal to the state and to the ruling SED party. Mario worked as a waiter at the restaurant in the transit zone of the Berlin Schoenefeld Airport in the GDR. In 1985, on a vacation in Budapest, Roellig began an affair with an older male politician from West Berlin. After meeting more-or-less secretly in East Berlin and in Budapest, Roellig decided to flee to the West, but got unlucky and, in 1987 was detained for several months in the Stasi detention centre in Berlin Hohenschoenhausen. Six months after his release, the West German government purchased his freedom and he received permission to leave the GDR. But his gay love story got an unhappy ending. On top of that in 1999 he ran into his former Stasi interrogator and suffered a nervous breakdown.

Being gay, resilient, young and conservative, Mario Roellig became one of the youngest and most in-demand witnesses to the atrocities of the GDR. He guides groups through today's memorial site in the former Stasi (GRD State Security Services) prison where he was once incarcerated. Roellig speaks to school classes all over Germany and has been invited to universities abroad, always pointing out the special queer moment in his life drama. He thinks he has told his story more than one thousand five hundred times.

Roellig is not an intellectual. Yet he claims that his personal history made him become a political person. He often talks about 'freedom' and the advantages of capitalism. Roellig takes part in picket lines where he confronts GDR aficionados – and is equally confronted by people who still believe in social utopias and communist and socialist models of society that go beyond the current German social market economy. These people also claim they are talking about freedom, yet somehow they seem to speak very little about the former GDR.

The film unveils a strange atmosphere of monologues, misunderstanding and failures to communicate – as seen from the perspective of Mario's very personal story, which unfolds throughout the film. He still awaits an apology from his tormentors and his former lover while simultaneously being ridiculed by some hardliners who accuse Mario of playing the 'victim card'.

The process of coming to terms with the past has just begun. And observing this process can be quite entertaining.

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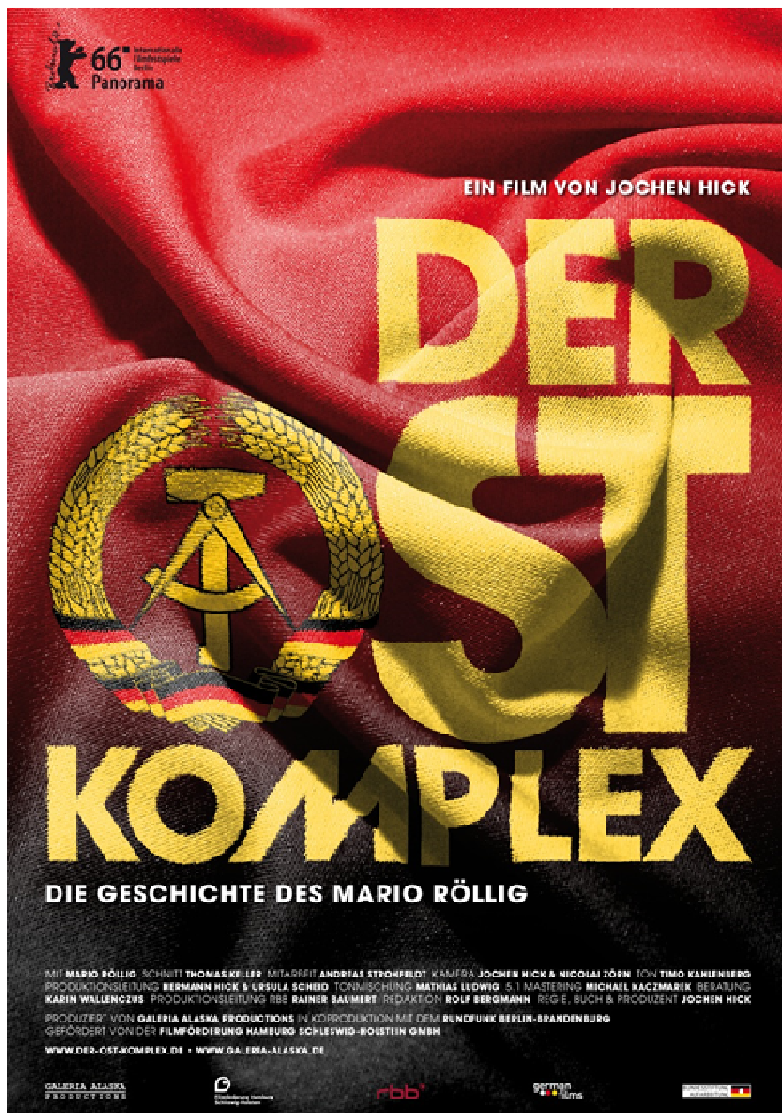
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Synopsis (mini)

Being gay, young and conservative, Mario Roellig is one of the most in-demand witnesses to the atrocities committed by the GDR. A love affair with a politician from West-Berlin made him try to flee to the West, but he got unlucky and was detained at the famous Stasi prison Berlin Hohenschoenhausen. Today Roellig confronts GDR aficionados and is also confronted by people who still believe in social utopias. And he tries to overcome his hurt feelings: Arriving in the West, he had to realize that his lover conducted a straight family life with wife and kids. Roellig expects apologies, but no one comes up to him. The film unveils a strange atmosphere of misunderstandings and failures to communicate. The process of coming to terms with the past has just begun.



German film poster

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Credits:

With **Mario Röllig**

Editor & Motion Design: **Thomas Keller** Research & Assistant Director: **Andreas Strohfeldt**
Photography: **Jochen Hick & Nicolai Zörn** Additional Photography: **Thomas Schrader** Sound: **Timo Kahlenberg** Re-Recording Mixer: **Mathias Ludwig** Surround Sound Mixer: **Michael Kaczmarek**
Consultant **Karin Wallenczus** Production Managers: **Hermann Hick & Ursula Scheid** Production Manager rbb: **Rainer Baumert** Commissioning Editor: **Rolf Bergmann** Author, Director & Producer: **Jochen Hick**

Produced by **Galeria Alaska Productions** Coproduced by **Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg** Supported by **Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein GmbH**

Filming locations (that appeared in film): Berlin, Beeskow, Cottbus, Meiningen, Zella-Mehlis, Suhl, Oebisfelde, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Mosbach, Dortmund, Recklinghausen, Budapest (Ungarn), Mohacs (Ungarn), Homorud (Ungarn), Charlotte (USA, NC), Davidson (USA, NC) – but the filming took place in many more locations, including New York, Washington D.C. etc..

Filming period: 2012-2015

Weblinks zu Mario Röllig und Gedenkstätte Hohenschönhausen

http://www.stiftung-hsh.de/page.php?cat_id=CAT_224&con_id=CON_713&page_id=394&subcat_id=CAT..

Die Tageszeitung – taz <http://www.taz.de/!5165657/>

Die Zeit <http://www.zeit.de/2009/31/Spitze-31>

Der Spiegel <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/painful-memories-of-an-east-german-gulag-i-thought-i-was-in-a-nazi-movie-a-623008.html> in English!

Die Welt http://www.welt.de/wams_print/article2473160/DDR-Haeftling-328.html

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Biografie Jochen Hick

Geboren in Darmstadt. 1981-87 Filmstudium an der Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg und in Bologna. Freier Autor, Journalist, Regisseur und Produzent für Kino und Fernsehen. 2007-2010 Chefredakteur und stlv. Programmdirektor beim TV-Sender TIMM. Nebenberuflich Dozent an der dffb Berlin.

Filmografie Jochen Hick (Auswahl) an als Regisseur, Autor und (außer VIA APPIA) auch als

Produzent:

- 1985 MOND ÜBER PITTSBURGH – MOON OVER PITTSBURGH (short)
- 1987 GERD HANSEN, 55 (short)
- 1988-90 VIA APPIA (feature)
- 1991 TEUFEL IM PARADIES (docufeature)
- 1992 WILLKOMMEN IM DOM – WELCOME TO THE DOME (short documentary) *
- 1995 MENMANIACS - The Legacy of Leather (documentary) *
- 1998 SEX/LIFE IN L.A. (feature documentary) *
- 2000 NO ONE SLEEPS (feature) *
- 2003 ICH KENN KEINEN - TALK STRAIGHT (feature documentary) *
- 2005 CYCLES OF PORN (feature documentary) *
- 2005 AM ENDE DES REGENBOGENS/RAINBOW'S END (feature documentary)
- 2006 HALLELUJAH! (short)
- 2006 DEUTSCHLAND – EIN HERBSTMÄRCHEN (short)
- 2008 EAST/WEST – SEX & POLITICS (feature documentary) *
- 2009 THE GOOD AMERICAN (feature documentary) *
- 2013 OUT IN OST-BERLIN - OUT IN EAST-BERLIN (feature documentary) * (mit Andreas Strohfeldt)

* = **Berlinale Teilnahmen / Berlinale participation**

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Links:

Production company website

<http://www.galeria-alaska.de>

Access to film stills

http://www.berlinale.de/en/presse/filmstills/filmstills_information/index.html

Contact (press & press materials / festivals / distribution)

Andreas Strohfeldt as@galeria-alaska.de Mobile +49 177 8398699

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Jochen Hick can be reached by email mail@galeria-alaska.de

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Press quotes **THE GDR COMPLEX** – EN (not complete yet / 1.4.16)

Claus Loeser – **Berliner Zeitung** (17.2.16)

Hick has pulled off quite an unusual feat

In his documentary, Jochen Hick has pulled off quite an unusual feat: he manages to portray his hero in a non-heroic manner, but makes him more understandable to audiences because of it.

Twenty-five years after the fall of the Wall and the end of East Germany, this film references the presence of the past nowadays and shows there is still a lot to talk about beyond apparently irreconcilable positions.

Among the Berlinale favourites of **Spiegel Online** critics

Spiegel Online critics chose their favourite Berlinale films, *The GDR Complex* is one of them.

**** (4 star)

DayByDay

**** (4 star)

Among the 26 Berlinale best picks of **Kultura Extra**

Reiner Veit – **inforadio** (18.2.16)

In The GDR Complex Jochen Hick depicts a multi-layered portrait of witness Mario Röllig: a complex film about a complex person, says Reiner Veit, and he can only recommend seeing *The GDR Complex*.

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Claudia Schwartz – **Neue Züricher Zeitung** (23.2.16)

Who forgets what was evil in an illegitimate state

Has everything already been said about East Germany? Jochen Hick thinks not: his film *The GDR Complex* portrays a contemporary witness of East Germany who still has a surprisingly large amount of educational work to do when dealing with the communist dictatorship. (...) Films like *The GDR Complex* are sorely needed.

Grit Lemke - **Junge Welt** (19.2.16)

The GDR Complex bravely takes to the battlefield that we would call recollection or history.

Jochen Hick pulls off the feat of differentiated observation in *The GDR Complex*, the many layers of which he skilfully reveals by degrees.

<http://www.jungewelt.de/2016/02-19/048.php>

Harald Mühlbeyer – **kino-zeit.de** (18.2.16)

The GDR Complex affords deep insights into the soul of a wounded person. The political barbarism that Röllig was subjected to as a warning to others continues to have an effect.

Annika Möller – **Der Tagesspiegel** (12.2.16)

There are many films about the illegitimate regime of East Germany. Director Jochen Hick, however, has managed to take up an issue that has rarely been examined to date.

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Dr. Wof Siegert – **DayByDay** (13.2.16)

Jochen Hick has clearly recognized that the joy of providing information and the charisma of his sensitive and intelligent protagonist carries a long documentary. Furthermore, through Röllig – the traumatized, openly gay and anti-socialist agitator – viewers experience an insightful slalom through the very different political and social milieus that exist in Germany.

Lichtenberger Rathausnachrichten (6.2.16)

Along with Mario Röllig's very personal view of the past, Jochen Hick allows space for differing opinions on the topic of East Germany's past. He probes where it becomes uncomfortable. [...] Was East Germany an illegitimate state or not? The film initiates renewed discussion about it.

Berliner-Filmfestivals.com (9.2.16)

With quiet, but palpably critical undertones, the documentary film *The GDR Complex* observes and accompanies its ambivalent protagonist and, in doing so, asks the provocative question about a manically conducted summation of the past, echoed in the ambiguity of the film's title.

Matthias Dell – **Der Freitag** (16.2.16)

Jochen Hick's documentary *The GDR Complex* (Panorama) demonstrates that conflicting accounts invigorate the artistic process. It namely resists the temptation to film the contemporary history of a victim of the Stasi, a story with which Mario Röllig explains East Germany in schools and at CDU events nowadays. Despite the familiarity with his protagonist, Hick repeatedly compares antagonistic conceptions of the past to one another [...] to also present the occasionally humorous proximity the two apparently remote recollecting fractions have with one another, and both of which depend upon East Germany for reasons of legitimacy to this day.

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Caroline M. Buck – **Neues Deutschland** (19.2.16)

Jochen Hick remains very close, asks clarifying question from off-screen, even occasionally makes a joke from behind the camera. The contradictions, the substantive inconsistencies, the tragedy of a life that became a highly political one out of very private reasons is something he never loses sight of. A complex film, as stated in the title.

LINKS: Presse / TV / Radio – Der Ost-Komplex

Einzelkritiken & Kurzkritiken

Berliner Zeitung (Claus Löser): Hick gelingt ein seltenes Kunststück

<http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/film/berlinale-2016-wie-der--der-ost-komplex--den-finger-in-die-sed-wunde-legt,10809184,33808796.html>

Junge Welt: „...gelingt Jochen Hick in »Der Ost-Komplex« das Kunststück einer differenzierten Betrachtung...“

<http://www.jungewelt.de/m/2016/02-19/048.php>

rbb Abendschau (TV)

https://www.rbb-online.de/abendschau/archiv/20160213_1930/berlinale-rbb-film-ost-komplex-premiere.html

(Radio) Reiner Veit auf **Inforadio:** „Jochen Hick zeichnet in "Ost-Komplex" ein vielschichtiges Porträt des Zeitzeugen Mario Röllig: Ein komplexer Film über einen komplexen Menschen, resümiert Reiner Veit, und kann "Ost-Komplex" nur empfehlen.“

<http://www.inforadio.de/programm/schema/sendungen/kultur/201602/230949.html>

Flux.fm (Radio) Interview von Nadine Kreutzer mit Jochen Hick

<https://www.fluxfm.de/improgramm/stadtlandflux/>

SPIEGEL ONLINE: Unsere Lieblings-Berlinale-Filme

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<http://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/berlinale-die-highlights-in-der-kurzkritik-fotostrecke-134574-15.html>

KINO ZEIT

<http://www.kino-zeit.de/blog/berlinale-2016/der-ost-komplex-von-jochen-hick>

Der Tagesspiegel

http://m.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/ddr-geschichte-auf-der-berlinale-verbotene-liebe-zwischen-ost-und-west/12958242.html?utm_referrer

Kultura Extra (Kurzkritik 4**)**

http://www.kultura-extra.de/film/feuilleton/BERLINALE2016_panorama_kurzkritiken.php

Lichtenberger Rathausnachrichten

http://rn.abendblatt-berlin.de/fileadmin/pdf_archiv_rn/2016/RN_Li_02.2016.pdf

Berliner Filmfestivals 26 Berlinale-Highlights und Insidertipps

<http://berliner-filmfestivals.de/2016/02/66-internationale-filmfestspiele-berlin-kinotipps-fuer-2016/4>

Der Freitag (Matthias Dell)

<https://www.freitag.de/autoren/mdell/neben-dem-schirm>

Kaltblut Magazine (engl.)

<http://www.kaltblut-magazine.com/berlinale-2016-day-5/>

Neues Deutschland

<http://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/1002250.die-verschenkten-bluehenden-landschaften.html>

Teddy Award Interview (Video) (engl.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qgGBruCnfc>

Erwähnungen

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Männer

<http://m-maenner.de/2016/02/berlinale-tag-4-huebsche-kerle-edition/>

Siegessäule

http://www.siegessaule.de/no_cache/newscomments/article/2585-die-queeren-filme-der-berlinale-2016.html?PHPSESSID=7353b69c6d1c0b44d4a51f8b040b6b8b

Teddy Award Blog

<http://blog.teddyaward.tv/blog/2016/02/15/tag-5-nehm-ne-pose-ein/>

Hamburger Abendblatt

<http://www.abendblatt.de/kultur-live/article207033731/So-viel-Hamburg-steckt-in-dieser-Berlinale.html>

rbb online

<http://www.rbb-online.de/kultur/thema/2016/Berlinale/beitraege/rbb-Koproduktionen-auf-der-Berlinale.html>

MMeansMovie

<http://www.mmeansmovie.de/berlinale.html>

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Facebook: The GDR Complex

<https://www.facebook.com/Der-Ost-Komplex-The-GDR-Complex-445921998941889/>

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