

Extreme Zip Lining

380 000 Volts to Freedom

(74,837 words)

Cold War Era – The Most Legendary & Electrifying True Escape Story of the 80's

Czechoslovakia – 1985

Daniel Pohl, a 19 year old science minded railway tech graduate, was looking for answers to life outside the box. In the totalitarian regime where he lived and grew up, he dares to start Yoga sessions, religious discussions, and a raw food movement in his home town of Litomyšl. Within that political environment, such new concepts were viewed as undesirable and contradicting to the leaders of the contemporary forced fed dogma. In the eyes of the Communist establishment, Daniel became a dangerous and rebellious spiritual gangster.

In his home life, his parents had steered clear of political issues because Daniel's father had previously been in prison for punching out a Communist informant.

During 1985, in a local tavern, he met Mr. Stritecky, an older man, who was sort of a recluse who had formally been both a Catholic priest and a professor at Charles University in Prague. Mr. Stritecky, who in his 50's, was falsely accused of supplying arms to the opposition and for the next 20 years was "assigned" into the Uranium mines as a political prisoner.

Daniel befriends Stritecky and makes sure that the priest has a steady supply of beer. In secrecy, Professor Stritecky teaches Daniel scriptures, English, Latin and the politically incorrect version of political science.

The Law of Attraction works for Daniel because around that time in his favorite martial arts class, Daniel meets Marcus, a young, but eccentric "mad scientist" making his living as a lumberjack. At that time, Marcus is trying to crack the mystery of Free Energy with his gravity conversion experiments which were very similar to the water implosion experiments in Austria done by Viktor Schauberger before and during the second world war.

Daniel and Marcus become friends, agree on political issues, but mainly on sharing the same goals they each had for themselves and for their loved ones. The heart of their goals is TO BE FREE, even if it would mean breaking out of their beloved country.

The whole country and their very lives existed within a very strictly enforced militarized zone. They were indeed surrounded by an impenetrable Iron Curtain reinforced with barbed wire and in some places with land mines. These inhuman conditions, forced upon all the citizens, had already cost the lives of hundreds of those that were seeking freedom.

Live free or die! Some are ready to take the risk, but by the mid '80's, very few were willing to chance getting shot on the razor coiled barbed wire.

Daniel and Marcus decide to go about it in the least risky way possible, so they set off for Hungary. From there to somehow slip into Yugoslavia. From there the plan would be to sneak through the more lightly patrolled border areas into Austria. The two young men did not want to approach their escape to freedom recklessly. Both agree that they must plan a sensible strategy, understanding all the associated risks and bring about calculated precision and ultimate success.

As we all know, such are the dreams of both mice and men.

On their first attempt, they are betrayed and apprehended on the Slovak/Hungarian border. Now, in the hands of the authorities, they are grilled by the Secret Police for 48 hours and then sent back to their homes after their passports are confiscated.

Now what? No money, no passports and problems on the horizon because of the attention of their recent failure.

Should they join the Communist party to remove certain pressures as was suggested by friends and “play the game”, or actually stick to their grand goal of ultimate escape and freedom.

Of course, they agreed there would be no quitting. However to get out now, under the circumstance of Daniel's impending mandatory military duty, they must double their effort and planning and initiate a new level of creativity.

Through one of Daniel's mutual acquaintances, there was a chance to bribe a guard that was patrolling the Czech/West German border. Funds were needed to be raised by any means possible. Opportunities like that are zero to none so the next logical thing Daniel, and Marcus could think of was to raise the money by collecting and selling scrap metal.

East Europeans are not exactly known for half measures, that's why it was decided to try and locate a buried WW2 German Tiger tank that was said to have sunk into the marshlands in the nearby forest.

Their thoughts began to take odd and maybe even crazy detours:

1st Option: Scrap the tank in place and sell the available metal.

2nd Option: Dig it out and leave it in one piece, then fix it if possible. Then crank it up and drive it home and then drive it back to Germany. This massive piece of hardware could penetrate the border no matter what stands in the way was their belief. Who knows, a stunt like this might even earn them a warm welcome from the old timers. The plan was to do it during Oktoberfest.

The repeated searches for the tank fail (thank God), so they resort to alternative solutions.

They try to build a hot air and Helium balloon. They fail!

They try to build a homemade mini submarine and get to Austria through the Danube River. They fail!

They try to acquire illegal hand gliders. They fail again and again, and the time is ticking away.

Where others spirits would have been hopelessly crushed, these two believed that a way out is possible and refuse to give up! Why? The possibility of Freedom.

Their martial arts instructor Jiri Kurz manages to escape to Austria by sneaking out through the mountains. Hopes are up again, however and unfortunately, thanks to Jiri's escape, the Karate Club is monitored closely by Government.

In the midst of all this, Daniel also lives a life of a beers and parties, a total "train wreck". This is often the case in a restrictive totalitarian society. Escape your life, even if only for a few hours down at the local pub.

During this time Daniel finds himself in a relationship with pretty girl named Claire. Claire is the daughter of a female protestant minister in the same town. Why should anything in life be uncomplicated!

Instead of lying low, Daniel does his first act of open rebellion against the establishment. He draws more attention to himself by taking Claire to the U.S. Embassy in Prague. He wanted her to see a commemorative exhibit for the 35th anniversary of the U.S. Army liberating the Southern & Western Part of Czechoslovakia.

The U.S. Embassy was, of course, monitored by the Secret Police, and a Czech citizen setting foot on American soil means only inviting problems. Now, Daniel is labeled as being a U.S. Sympathizer and the Communists are convinced that there is no hope for Daniel and that it's time to pull the plug on him.

During March 1986, after returning from a fruitless visit with a psychic and then drinking the whole night, Marcus gets a revelation that will soon be the talk of Communists and Freedom Seekers alike.

Power lines!!! There has to be one going out of the country. This was absolutely the most insane escape idea that they had thus far conceived. At first they rejected this idea, but as the days rolled on and the beers embolden their thought processes, they massaged the idea into a viable exit strategy.

A new series of planning, testing and trials began. Each step that they would take is met with some kind of obstacle or dangerous challenge. Just locating the right power line alone was a nightmare. There were no guide lines, no procedures and no blueprints to follow for the structures, specifications nor any functional information that could help them with a plan.

How could two people infiltrate the militarized zone without getting shot? How would one build the line pulleys properly? How to avoid getting electrocuted by the high voltage current? There were dozens of similar related questions and no one to ask. The only help that they had were each other. They could only make assumptions and try to figure out the best possible procedures for their needs.

Building the first 2 pulleys took them approximately a month. All the work was done in secrecy in Marcus's basement; however from the idea to the execution of escape, it took a full 6 months. During that time, they rebuild the pulleys twice to modify them properly for the ride. By the way, the escape pulleys and sleds are on display at the Escape Museum at Checkpoint Charlie in present day Germany.

In this particular escape scenario, Daniel and Marcus engaged in 3 failed attempts, miraculously without the loss of life, injuries or capture.

Their years of rigorous exercise, Communist Boy Scout survival training and rough Karate school paid off. They would re-group and try again. Re-group and go at it again. The only power line that is going out of the country is the biggest, a 50 meter high, 380 000 Volt monster coming out of a nuclear power plant.

Several major setbacks occur prior to and during the last attempt. Near exposure of their plans in Litomysl, being followed by the police, face to face with border patrol guards, chased by the military, almost getting shot, food and water shortages and then came the scariest challenge of all:

Zip lining right above the border guard's heads, traveling hand over hand on their home made pulleys just inches under the 380,000 volt carrier wire during the worst lightning storm in recent memory.

July 19. 1986 Daniel and Marcus made history. At around 5 am, they set their feet on Austrian soil, and their escape became legendary.

Their amazing story stole the headlines of the major European media and they became instant sensations with legions of fans. Daniel remained for a time in Austria as a refugee and 2 years later he received the permit to enter The United States of America as a political refugee.

Since 1987, Daniel's zip lining pulley is hanging in the museum and can be seen today in Berlin, Germany.

Please follow the links below to purchase the rest of the story for only \$8.00. This will be immediately available to download on your computer. Read the story and be ahead of the movie! The whole story includes 29 action packed, personal and inspirational Chapters.

Website: www.extremezipliner.com