

Salyburg, Austria
December 23, 1977

Dearest,

Instead of writing in my notebook I decided to write to you so as to bring you up to date since leaving Vienna. Please keep this letter, as you usually do, as a record.

Tony Shitzmann, my driver/interpreter and I left Vienna at 8:30 AM on Wednesday, December 21. I sure was happy to have everything settled there. Vienna certainly is no place to film in winter. It is very grey and depressing. He drove out of the city to the autobahn (equivalent of our interstate highways) which we took as far as St. Pölten from there we went north to the highway. Then follows the Danube river. There are several places of interest along here and should make a fantastic trip in Spring or Summer. Also I think a boat trip on the Danube would be great. I'm continually making notes on what we should do when you are here. There are numerous wine vineyards in this area. At the little town of Durnstein is the ruins of a fortress where Richard The Lionhearted was imprisoned by the Duke of Austria around 1192. In 1193 it was here where the minstrel, Blondel played and sang Richard's favorite songs until they attracted him enabling Blondel to locate his King.

It's left the Danube taking highway 234 south toward Amstetten, and got back on the autobahn north of Amstetten and continued west on it to the city of Enns where we changed to highway 115 south which took us to Steyer. Naturally I was all eyes on the entire trip since this was my first venture into the Austrian countryside. I think we would get into higher elevations the trees would be covered with frost which was beautiful. Unfortunately the sky was not blue, so decent pictures weren't possible.

Steyer has a beautiful old style downtown area which we should visit when you come.

Just a very short distance out of Steyer is the village of Christkindl, our first destination. There was a little snow on the trees and ground here, so with the right choice of camera positions I could make it look like Christmas. Unfortunately it was still dark and cloudy. It's here I photographed the post office they set up each year to handle over 50,000 letters prior to Christmas. By now I hope Glenn got those I sent to him. This is a very big thing for the children because it is here where they send their Christmas list. The Austrian children do not get gifts from Santa. They believe they come from the

Christ-child. So this is where they send their Christmas list. Then a little letter is returned to them by the post office. Also when possible the list is returned to the parents. They now get letters from all over the world. The people working here were very friendly and helpful. One man in particular was great. He just couldn't do enough for us. He asked me for Glenn's address so he could send him a letter. Hope he does it! Also he gave me two book marks done in needlepoint (I think) which are a picture of this year's Austrian Christmas stamps. I mentioned that Dad retired from the post office and that they would be coming to Austria next year, so he gave me his name and address. He wants me to bring him to the Steyer post office to show him around.

The church here is quaint, with little rooms inside for people. The altar was most unusual. I have a picture of it. Also there was a large hand carved crib scene with more than 100 animated figures carved by a man in his seventies in the early 1900s.

We left Steyer on our way to Saint Wolfgang where we planned to spend the night. Ended up taking the wrong road, and found ourselves on a country backroad

Instead of taking Route 122 west we found ourselves heading south toward Grunberg. Ike intended to go west until we again met the autoban near Sattelb. and take it to the lake region where St. Wolfgang is located. This road is on the plain. The road we were on took us over the higher elevations. Tony decided that we would just keep going this way and spend the night in Siegen. Ike continued south until we reached highway 138 that would take us into Siegen. It was dark by the time we found we were lost, and it turned out to be a beautiful driving night. The moon was out and more than half so we could always see the outline of the mountains and the snow. Being clear made it colder so we did have icy spots on the road, but it wasn't bad. Tony felt this was better than driving on the plain as originally planned since it was very foggy there.

Ike arrived in Siegen around 8:30 PM, got gas, and looked for a place to stay. Gas is very expensive here. Ike inquired at the station about a place to stay, and several suggestions were made. Their stations aren't much different than ours, except for the price.

Tommy drove us around to look at the
various suggestions