

Kattelle Oral History, Tape 8

August 26, 2003

Andrea McCarty: This is Tape 8 of an oral history with Alan Kattelle in his home. Today is Tuesday, August 26, 2003 and we're talking about regular 8mm film. Alan, I wanted you to talk about the mechanics of 8mm film. How it was delivered to the consumer, and how it was returned to the consumer after processing.

Alan Kattelle: 8mm was introduced in 1932, and it was furnished to the customer as double. In other words, the film was actually 16mm wide. That meant that you filmed half of the film, and when it was all wound down on one spool, then you had to open the camera, put that spool up on top again, rethread it, and shoot the other half.

AM: Did you have to do that in the dark?

AK: No. I don't recall them telling you to do that in the dark. If you had carefully made sure that it was all wound on to one spool-- You know, I could see now that you could expose a few frames certainly. That's an interesting question, because I

don't recall seeing instructions on how to do it. But there were various themes devised to avoid that and one of the most interesting ones is the [Sekonic Dualmatic-50]. It was a Japanese manufacturer, and they called this camera the Dualmatic. It still took the film in the 25 foot spool, but when you finished with this camera, when you finished the first run through, you could just flip the whole body over, and you were all ready to run the second half.

AM: That's pretty interesting. Was it sold in the United States?

AK: Oh, yes.

AM: And do you think it caught on? Is it a rare item, or—?

AK: Again, it's fairly rare. Apparently it didn't—I don't recall a date...

AM: That's fine. It's probably in your book, so that's okay.

AK: Yeah, it probably is. Of course the other way to avoid the rethreading and so forth, was to furnish the customer with pre-split film. To the best of my recollection, it was the Universal Camera Corporation from Chicago who did that in 1936, I believe.

AM: Don't be too concerned about dates.

AK: Okay. I'm sorry. It wasn't Chicago. Universal was in New York. This is their first camera and it was revolutionary, not only for using the pre-split 8mm, but also the for the price. They were determined to make a camera that was affordable to almost everybody and, believe it or not, this one sold for \$9.95, which

was really remarkable. Most cameras of that day were \$25 or \$30, except this camera. This is the Univex 8mm. Well-made.

AM: Did Kodak furnish the film for the Univex camera? Did they split it for them or—?

AK: Good question, and I'm sorry I don't know. [Chuckles]

AM: That's fine.

AK: I'm sure they didn't make it. Let's put it that way.

AM: Right. They have somebody splitting it for them, whether or not it was Kodak.

AK: Right. I couldn't tell you that.

AM: The pre-split 8mm seems very elegant to me. That camera is a little bit smaller than some of the other ones we've seen. Did it catch on?

AK: I think it did. I think it must have, because they went on to make a number of different models for several years, so I think it was quite popular. And of course the shining example of the single 8mm camera was—

AM: I'll get it for you. And what camera is this?

AK: This is the Bolsey 8mm. A product of that brilliant designer, Jacques Bolsey.

AM: Can you turn it down a little bit? That's perfect. Who was Jacques Bolsey?

AK: Well, he was born Yakob Bogopolsky, from a central European country. Came to this country as a young man, and went on to design the famous Bolex cameras.

AM: Which are very nice.

AK: Which are all high-grade, exactly. This little Bolsey 8mm took a single 8mm magazine, which was loaded by Bolsey.

AM: So Bolsey provided the magazine to the consumer?

AK: Yes.

AM: So, do we know who provided the magazine to Bolsey, or who provided the film?

AK: We may if we look--

AM: Oh, Kodachrome indoor. Okay. So it's Kodak film.

AK: Right. This is a perfect example of how much it is simplified. Think back when you had this double spool to put in and then thread, and here you just had this neat little magazine. Just slip it in there and you're ready to go.

AM: You said that there's—you have a little anecdote about this camera don't you?

AK: Well, coming in this case as it did, and with this elegant brushed chrome finish, it was a very handsome camera. And supposedly Jacqueline Kennedy owned one. It certainly would sort of, match her elegant aura.

AM: It would. It definitely has that look to it.

AK: Right. Now it's interesting; this shows that, evidently, Bolsey had film laboratories.

AM: Hmm. In Cambridge [Ma.] even? Interesting. So they were doing some of the processing themselves? Where was Bolsey based out of?

AK: Where was the home base? New York wasn't it?

AM: It's funny. Not knowing anything about Bolsey, but having seen the design of their cameras, before I knew anything, I immediately assumed they were European.

AK: Well, I've got quite a bit more in the book about Bolsey and what he did.

AM: Let me ask you another question about the pre-split 8mm. After Universal, or Univex, came out with the first pre-split 8mm, and clearly Bolsey adopted it, were there other companies that adopted the pre-split 8mm?

AK: Yes. One that I can think of right off-hand is Agfa. I believe that's the only other example that I have in my collection.

AM: Did Kodak ever make a pre-split 8mm camera, or did they always stick with the dual 8mm?

AK: I don't recall if they made a single 8mm.

AM: I think Bell & Howell did though.

AK: Yes. I believe they did also.

AM: The [Model]127, maybe. I'm not sure. The camera [model] 127. Let's talk about—we have an 8mm to talk about, so let's grab that.

[Tape paused]

AM: So Alan, we've been talking a lot about pre-split 8mm versus dual 8mm, and some of the cameras that you—

AK: This is the Universal.

AM: The Univex.

AK: The Univex, yes. And one interesting point about this is if you hope to show the movies taken with this camera, you had to have a Universal projector.

AM: Why was that?

AK: Because, notice the size of the spindle hole.

AM: It's very tiny.

AK: Very small, exactly. So you absolutely had to have the right projector.

AM: Could you not wind it onto another spindle though?

AK: Sure. That's true, you could. This is an example of how you got the film processed from Universal. They provided these little envelopes and boxes, and you mailed it back to them.

AM: Can I see the front of that?

AK: Yeah. You were looking at the front. [Chuckles]

AM: Oh. Then the back, sorry. Okay. So the back doesn't really—they don't seem to have a good logo anywhere. I was hoping to find one. They were pretty plain.

AK: There's the Univex word on the edge. This is the camera, remember, that sold for \$9.95. Which was revolutionary in its day.

AM: And the first one to use pre-split 8mm?

AK: Yes. 1939. They also made a still camera that sold for thirty-five cents.

AM: Wow. That's [amazing]. I want to take it back to my office. So what else do you have on the table there?

AK: We have the Moviematic, which was advertised as being three-in-one, with which you could make still pictures or movies or what they call flip books.

AM: What did they mean by flip books?

AK: Well, you simply printed each frame of the exposed film onto a single piece of paper, and then pasted them together at the ends--

AM: Oh, right. So the traditional kind of flip book.

AK: Yeah, like a miniature...

AM: I was just thinking that it's not like—you still have to do the work to make the flip book. It's a little bit of a stretch. [Laughs]

AK: Yes. [Laughs] It is, definitely.

AM: And you have a cartridge there that fits the Moviematic, don't you? So the Moviematic was also using the pre-split 8mm?

AK: Yes, that's pre-split 8mm.

AM: Can I see the cartridge?

AK: Yes. This cartridge, you notice has a—you don't have to pull a loop of film out. There's a slot where the pull-down lever in the camera would work into the perforations in the film, and then would be exposed right there.

AM: Okay. I see. Do you know what I think would be useful if we're showing the Moviematic? I think they have a great box. So I'm going to hand it to you, and we're just going to film for a minute. And that kind of demonstrates the whole flip-book

thing better, I think. But the back—

AK: Here's the cover of the box. And on the back it shows the three—

AM: The three-in-one. We've got movies, movie books and [stills], on one film. Okay, great. And you've got three Moviematics in different colors, don't you?

AK: Yes, that was the interesting thing about it. They made it very colorful. This one is all silver, and one of my favorites is the one that's copper colored. [Putting camera away. Retrieving another camera.]

AM: Okay. So, you've got another camera on the table.

AK: We've done that one.

AM: We haven't done the [Agfa] yet.

AK: Okay. Introduced in 1957 by a well-known German film firm, Agfa. That's their logo on the front there.

AM: Agfa. Was this their first 8mm?

AK: Yes. [Opening camera.] It has a very slim magazine, but in this case, you had to pull a loop out of the magazine to thread it.

AM: Right, because it had to go around that little piece in front and then into the gate. Can you hold this sideways, and maybe I can get the arrows a little bit better. If you hold it this way. Now we can focus on the arrows that show you where you need to guide the film. You pull out the loop and guide the film into the gate.

AK: Yes. That's interesting because that harks back to the 1917 Movette, where you had to do the same thing. Kodak provided the cartridge, but you had to pull a loop out and thread it in.

AM: So this was Agfa's first regular 8mm camera? And they were late getting into it, most likely because of the war.

AK: Yes, they were late. Almost twenty years after the first single 8mm.

AM: Because at this point, Kodak had almost already moved on completely, had they not? To Super 8?

AK: No. Super 8 in 1965.

AM: Okay. But they were probably working on it?

AK: I imagine, yeah.

AM: Did 8mm ever really catch on in Europe?

AK: I can't answer that. As opposed to 9.5mm, I don't think so.

AM: Because I was just thinking, if 9.5mm already had a large group of users and Agfa didn't come out with a regular 8mm until the 50's, then that really gave 9.5mm a good long time to...

AK: Get established, yeah. And the 9.5mm image size was bigger than regular 8mm, substantially.

AM: Were there any other European companies making regular 8mm at this point, that you can think of off the top of your head?

AK: Not that I can think of, no. And incidentally, not that you asked, but George Eastman and the company were very, very—they

played their cards very close to the vest. They almost never released sales figures. They were very particular about that. It was difficult to tell. Overall sales, yes. But on the particular products, they never gave that away.

AM: Or a particular region? It's not like you could go to Eastman and say, "So, how are you doing in Europe?"

AK: Absolutely not. That's correct.

[Tape paused]

AM: Okay Alan, what do we have now?

AK: We have a Keystone, the Model K8. I believe that this was their first 8mm. I find these cameras difficult, extremely difficult to open. [Trying to open camera].

AM: That's okay. Why don't I get a shot of the outside?

AK: It looks like a quite well-designed camera.

AM: Oh, and that's that famous sports finder, that red thing on the side. What exactly was that viewer for? That little red viewer? Did they call that a sports finder?

AK: [Chuckles] That's possible. It was obviously designed if you wanted a wider view of whatever you were taking. I mean, for distant shots.

AM: It looks a little bit like the Bell & Howell Filmo. That really nice "watch thin" one with the oval shape. And I see that it's clearly [marked] top and bottom. Can you show me the writing on the top of the camera where it says top? And it says the same thing on the bottom, right?

AK: The curious thing about that Keystone is that—

AM: I'm so close to getting this open. But I'm not there.

AK: [Chuckles] We want to show both of these side-by-side, right?

AM: Right. So what's the other camera that you have?

AK: This is the Stewart-Warner.

AM: Which looks exactly the same.

AK: Yes. I'll put them side by side.

AM: And I'd like to get the front. That way I can get the front panels of both cameras. They do look exactly the same.

AK: And I would suspect that Keystone may have made the camera for Stewart-Warner. Stewart-Warner was their primary business [client] for automobile accessories. I happen to know because I had a Stewart-Warner car heater installed in my car after we moved to Chicago.

AM: The Stewart-Warner one also says top on top as well. They're really the exact same, the exact same thing. They're strikingly similar.

AK: Here's the back.

AM: Yes. So did you remember that you had one of their radiators, or at the time, did you know they were making cameras?

AK: See, we moved to Chicago in 1950, and not all cars came with a heater. And you know what Chicago winters are like. I think I might have gone through one Chicago winter and decided I

had to have a heater. And Stewart-Warner made one—it burned gasoline right out of your tank. You had to run a fuel line. But boy that would sure heat the car up. It was beautiful.

AM: I bet. And the cameras, were they good cameras?

AK: There's nothing wrong with the camera. I never saw another camera by Stewart-Warner except this one. This is not uncommon. I think you'll find other examples up there of two different makes of a camera that are identical. And you know that one of them must have been—they were both probably made in the same factory, they just put a different nameplate on it.

AM: So it wasn't then a case of one company ripping off the other. It was usually a case of somebody making it for somebody else. Keystone was out of Boston? And where was Stewart-Warner out of?

AK: Right. Chicago.

AM: Okay. I was just thinking about 8mm film, and a lot of the 8mm that I've seen. What is the cause of the light leaks that you see? Is it just a matter—could that be happening when the person was changing the spool? You know sometimes you see the light that leaks in on the side. Each side of the frame is overexposed, and then you have a perfectly good image in the middle?

AK: See, you've probably examined more films than I have. I can't honestly say that I have noticed that.

AM: And I'm trying to think out loud, and I can't remember, but I don't know if I've see it as often on Super 8 film.

AK: Well let me ask you this, noting the difficulty that we both have of getting the back off, it may have been also that they didn't get the back on all the way. Is that possible?

AM: I think that's totally possible. Because it would be one side of the film that just has this slight, very slight overexposure around the edge. Okay. We have more cameras [down there]. [Retrieving camera.] Okay, we are talking some more about cameras that look alike.

AK: Right. There is an interesting example of the Paragon [Model 33 16mm] and the Cinklox [Model 3-S 16mm]. There's the front.

AM: Okay. I'm going to zoom in a little bit more. Up at the top, the two charts look very similar.

AK: Okay. Want to see the other side?

AM: Yes. Oh wow, that's almost exactly—just a different color. Same shape of the lens mount.

AK: Right. And here is the—[adjusting camera]

AM: Oh, there's the back. Very similar again.

AK: Now my guess is that Cincinnati Clock and Instrument Company—

AM: Cinklox.

AK: Cinklox—that they probably manufactured the Paragon. And the reason I say that is that Cinklox lists their patent numbers. But there are no patent numbers listed on the Paragon.

AM: And where is Paragon based out of? Wisconsin?

AK: Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin, and Cinklox was Cincinnati. And of course, my hope is that patent numbers will become available on the Internet. They may be now for all I know. I have, as you know, a file of maybe three or four hundred patent numbers. And if I can go on the Internet and check these patent numbers, I can pretty much tell, is this the company, or is that the company?

AM: That's interesting. I'm going to take those two, and if you want to reach down next to you and get the green camera, we can keep going. Tell me about this camera.

AK: Well, this is called the Dralowid Reporter.

AM: That's a pretty one. Now I'm going to zoom in on that. I'm going to zoom in a little bit here so that people can see the exposure chart.

AK: Now, zoom in on this.

AM: Right. I see it. And what significance does that have?

AK: That loop is attached to a piece of tough fiber that if you pull, and I'm not going to do it, but that is how you wound up this

camera. The only one in the world I've ever seen that had that mechanism.

AM: And as the film advances it draws the loop back inside.

AK: You just wound it up and it would spring back.

AM: Wow, that's interesting. Do you know who made the Dralowid Reporter?

AK: I believe that was Austrian. They have—did you get the exposure guide? It's quite a nice one.

AM: I did.

AK: It gives you time of day.

AM: With months even. That's great.

AK: I don't pull on the tape because other collectors have told me that this is the first thing that breaks on the camera, this little tape, so—

AM: I wouldn't ask you to. Okay, what do you got there?

AK: I have the Briskin 8mm.

AM: It's a nice looking camera.

AK: It's lovely looking. Fake alligator skin. Nice design.

AM: Can I see the front one more time?

AK: Do you want to take that tag off, or no?

AM: No. It's okay. I really like their logo. Very nice. So tell me a little about this camera. Besides being nice-looking, is there anything--?

AK: Interesting story, I think, behind it.

AM: Oh, what was that on the bottom? Can I take a look at that?

AK: I don't know if you can—in very quite small print at the bottom, it tells where they're located.

AM: Santa Minay something—

AK: Santa Monica!

AM: Santa Monica, California. Okay, so what's the story?

AK: Okay. The story is that Briskin is the family name. The patriarch was Sam Briskin who founded the Revere Camera Company. Sam was a great individual. He came to this country as a poor Russian-Jewish immigrant. I think he was only twelve years old. He got various jobs. He got a job in a scrap metal yard, and from that—oh, this is in the book.

AM: Well still tell me.

AK: From the scrap metal yard he went into the business of repairing radiators. And the story goes that he needed copper, and copper was tough to get at that time. You had to be on a regular list of the copper producers. But the Revere Copper Company provided him with what he needed, and in gratitude, [chuckles] he named this camera, and called his camera company, The Revere Camera Company.

AM: After the Revere Copper Company?

AK: After the Revere Copper Company. Now, he was based in Chicago—

AM: And you have quite a few Revere cameras in your collection.

AK: Quite a few, yes.

AM: I know that you have a lot of Revere 8mms. Did they make 16mm as well?

AK: Yes they did.

AM: And how did their cameras fall? Top of the line? Middle of the line? Well-made? Not so good?

AK: Well, there's a little story, again it's in the book— but there was an article I believe in *Fortune Magazine* talking about amateur camera sales, and it said “dignified patrician Bell & Howell may have to look to its laurels because this upstart Revere Camera Company may be eating its lunch.” *Fortune* didn't use that terminology, but—

AM: But they were a threat?

AK: They were a threat. Sam Briskin supposedly went to a friend's wedding, and there was somebody taking movies of the wedding. And he asked about it and how much the camera cost, and when he was told, he was stunned at the price that the camera cost. And he thought, “I could build a camera for a lot less than that,” and he promptly did so. But, that's not the story of this camera. Sam had three sons. I can't, unfortunately, remember the first name of this particular son, Briskin, but his dad gave him a part interest in the Revere Camera—gave all the boys a part interest in the Revere Camera Company. And this Briskin took his money, moved to Santa Monica, married a movie star and started up the Briskin Camera Company.

AM: In Santa Monica.

AK: In Santa Monica. And, sad to relate, within a few years both the marriage and the camera company were defunct.

[Chuckles]

AM: So he was, in effect—was he competing with his father's company?

AK: Not really.

AM: Was this because the company never really established itself?

AK: That's right. This Briskin, he didn't have the business smarts that his dad did.

AM: Well he made a nice-looking camera.

AK: But a handsome little camera anyway. And they made it in a couple of different colors. That's about all I can tell you on this one.

AM: Alright. So you want to reach down for—oh, well there's another Revere.

AK: This one doesn't have any technological significance, but it has a peculiar—[adjusting camera]

AM: Model 55. It's nicely presented.

AK: [Stands up. Demonstrating camera.] This is obviously designed to go around your neck, and you kept the camera in its case while you filmed. It's a nice Bakelite case. Quite an unusual idea, and the only one I've ever seen.

AM: Good. Let me get a shot of the Revere on the front. Alan, that reminds me of a camera you showed me once, that is disguised as a purse. When you open up the purse, it unsnaps and there's the camera.

AK: [Chuckles] You sure it wasn't that one?

AM: No, the one I'm thinking of is a ladies purse. Very cute. Just a little clutch purse. I'm wondering when we turn the camera off

if we can take a look for it. I have a feeling it might be a Super 8, but I can't remember. We'll take a look in the database. It's very cute. [Chuckles]

AK: Was it a leather case, did you say?

AM: No. I think it might have been a plastic, patent—maybe a patent leather purse.

AK: Oh boy, Andrea, I wonder if that's buried somewhere.

AM: That's okay. Why don't we talk about what you've got in front of you, which is a nice regular 8mm camera, isn't it?

[Tape turned off]

AM: Okay, what do we have?

AK: We have a German 8mm Nizo.

AM: Let me zoom in on the side of it. The Nizo Heliomatic. It's got some impressive lenses.

AK: Right. That was introduced in 1951. I think you can see that it's really a quality camera. It has a choice of exchangeable lenses and nice operating controls.

AM: It is a nice-looking camera.

AK: It certainly is.

AM: I have a question. That's a German camera from 1951, and it is a regular 8mm. So was Nizo was making regular 8mm cameras before [Agfa]?

AK: Before [Agfa], probably. Yes.

AM: Because we were just talking about an [Agfa] camera that we thought was their first regular 8mm from 1956 or 7 or so.

AK: Yeah. My records show that Nizo's first 8mm film camera was in 1933.

AM: Nizo's first. Wow. So there were regular 8mm cameras introduced in Europe from the '30s on. It's just that [Agfa] didn't get into the game until later.

AK: Exactly.

AM: Can I take a look at the inside of the camera? What were you going to tell me about the Nizo?

AK: I think the fact that it's a quality product is evident. This is somewhat reinforced by the records. These are pages from that priceless *Ariel Register*. A man named Pete Ariel embarked on the project of cataloging every movie camera in the world, and here are his pages on the Nizo.

AM: So the real name was Nizo and Kramer GmbH. And I'm going to go down the list. [Agfa], Nizo—I see a lot of cameras here.

AK: Yeah. And it tells the gauge. Where you see a figure eight, that's all 8mm.

AM: Right. So, they made a lot of cameras?

AK: Yes. And they were in business from—actually, their first amateur camera was a 16mm in 1925, which makes sense. And the next cameras were 9.5mm.

AM: I'm going to zoom in on that.

AK: I can't tell whether I'm holding it right.

AM: You are. I can see it. So they made 16mm and 9.5mm.

[End of Tape 8, Side 1]

AM: So they made 16mm, and they made 9.5mm.

AK: Yes. And they evidently concentrated on 8mm, as you can see from this list. That was their strong—apparently their strong suit.

AM: I see. It doesn't really look like ever made a Super 8. So how often do you come across Nizo cameras?

AK: Very rarely.

AM: Do you think it's because they're a higher end product?

AK: Yes. I do. I don't think they could compete really, with the American manufacturers. They were high quality and obviously, that was what they stuck with.

AM: When I look at the Nizo, I see that as regular 8mm evolved, it could do a lot of the things that you probably could do with the 16mm. You had interchangeable lenses. You had zoom. You had the electric eye. Were the serious amateur photographers adopting 8mm?

AK: The best way to answer that question, and I would hesitate to do it off the top of my head, but what I would suggest as an interesting study, and I might have started it—would be to take a look at the ten best each year of the Amateur Cinema League and see just what the distribution was. How many of the prize-winning films were regular 8mm, Super 8, 16mm, and when did they change, you know? I have those numbers somewhere but not in my head.

AM: I think I read in your book that in 1940 a significant number, almost half, were regular 8mms. I'm not entirely sure about that figure though. We'll have to check. I see there's a cute little camera beside you that I wanted you to talk about.

AK: Oh yeah. Alright. What have we here? My lady's purse perhaps.

AM: [Chuckles] Nice little clutch purse. And inside is the camera. It's a DeJur Electra.

AK: Should I take it out? [Removes camera] Oh, there's the DeJur logo.

AM: So it's just a basic 8mm, right? And that's a conventional dual 8mm. I just like that one.

[Tape turned off]

AM: Don't feel like you need to hold that up, because it's very heavy.

AK: In 1957, a very unusual camera appeared on the market.

AM: The Wittnauer Ciné-Twin.

AK: Wittnauer was part of the name of the Longines-Wittnauer Company. And something just broke off. Oh, that's one of the feet. I'll have to glue it back on.

AM: They made watches didn't they?

AK: Yes they did. And apparently one of their executives thought that they should get into the amateur camera business. They hired a very well-known, respected designer, John Oxberry of... Oxberry of—I'd have to check my literature. Anyway, what they came up with was a combined camera/projector. [Adjusting camera.] I'll get the camera off if I can remember

how to do it. There's the camera. Looks fairly conventional. It was battery-operated. Here's the battery compartment. Nice four-lens turret, with a very sophisticated telescopic sight, which you could set for the particular lens you were using. But, open the camera and you were in for a surprise.

AM: Why is that?

AK: Because there's a lot of stuff in there that you don't usually find on a camera. Well, not to kid around any longer. What happened was, they made a combined camera/projector. Here we have a camera, right? I took the handle off as the first step, and [clicking noise] hey! Lo and behold. Here are arms for film. And what you can't see, but what happens when I raised this arm, was that it opened a passage between a lamp and the film gate.

AM: Where's the lamp?

AK: The lamp is inside this—

AM: Inside that grate. I'm going to zoom in on that. Oh, and there we have a demonstration, or instructions on how to operate the projector. Does it matter which lens you project it with?

AK: Yeah. I think there was one lens that was just for projection. But you're going to say how do you drive the projector, and that's where this heavy base came in. [Adjusting projector.] You set it on there. I must not be doing something right. There we go. And lock it, put the film in, and turn it on to project, and there you have a projector.

AM: It seems nice, but seems very complicated. How did it do?

AK: It didn't do well at all. They must have sunk many, many dollars into this. But it was heavy, and I can't tell you why really, but it faded from view very quickly. When I went back to Longines-Wittnauer and asked them about how it—tried to find out how it sold and so forth, they totally stonewalled me and said that all the records had been destroyed. [Chuckles] Isn't that disgusting?

AM: It was so long ago, you'd think that they'd be over it by now. They're still making watches, right?

AK: I believe they are, yeah.

AM: Is Longines-Wittnauer an American company?

AK: I thought their origin was Swiss.

AM: Okay. I had no idea. You have another part of the Ciné-Twin that you wanted to talk about. It was right next to you.

AK: Yes. When Don Gorman, a Kodak engineer, was working with Pete Chiesa on existing light photography, he made the discovery that he needed a shutter that would expose the film longer than a conventional camera shutter.

AM: Because more light need to—

AK: Right. More light was needed on the film. But, if you think about shutter design, a shutter is designed to do two things. It's designed to shut off the film when it's advancing, and open when it's holding still in the aperture, of course. And it stands to reason that if you take the open sector and make that

larger, you're going to have to make the closed section shorter. And that indicated to Don that he needed a shutter, a camera mechanism with an extremely fast pull-down. Somehow he realized that kind of shutter was used in the Longines-Wittnauer camera. So he scoured the thrift shops in Rochester and found one, and this is one of the cameras that he used to design the existing light cameras for Kodak. And he very kindly gave me this camera.

AM: When did the existing light cameras come out? In the 1960s? If you don't know the date, that's totally fine.

AK: I don't recall it.

AM: That's okay. That's all in the book, right?

AK: Yes it is.

AM: Why do you think the Wittnauer camera had that shutter? Is it something [that was needed as] part of the projector?

AK: Yes. See, what they needed was a shutter that would work for both filming and projection. So that's why this—I don't know if I can demonstrate. It's in the book, but in one position of the shutter it's working up in here, and when you move it into the projection mode it's working on the inner portion.

AM: Okay. So the shutter actually moves and does different things.

AK: Yes. The axis of the shutter moves.

AM: Why was the existing light camera an advance? What was so great about it?

AK: What was so great about it was that you almost didn't need those horrible lights you used to have to use. And I have pictures of my own daughter coming into the room and going, "ayyyyyyyy." [Chuckles]

AM: So when you were shooting inside, you had to use those little movie gun lights. And the existing light cameras really allowed you to shoot indoors. Great.

AK: Yes. It was a great advance.

AM: Well, we're almost at the end of the tape, and we're almost at the end of our discussion of 8mm, or regular 8mm. Can you think of anything else to add about regular 8mm?

AK: No. It sure produced a lot of interesting cameras.

AM: Alright. Let's talk about Super 8.

[End of Tape 8, Side 2]