

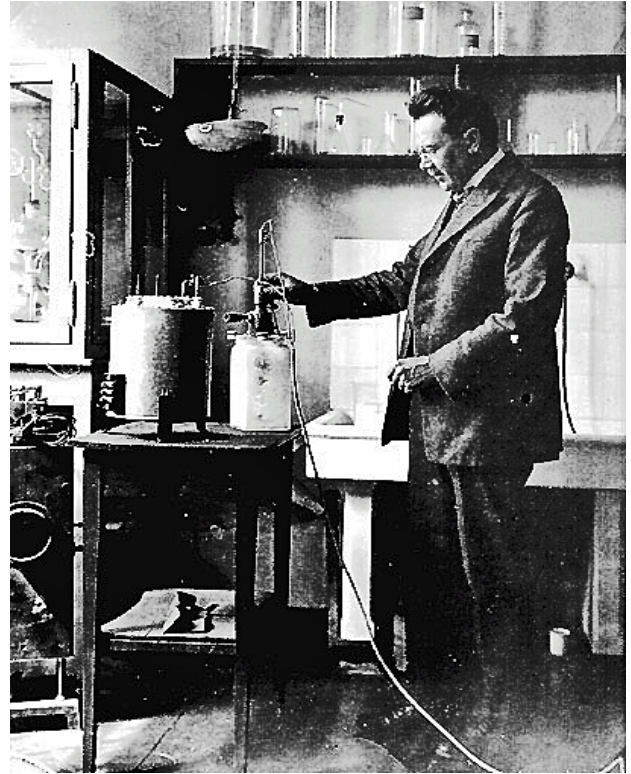
IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT LIGHT

THE BECK-SEARCHLIGHT LEGACY

„What does it feel like inside a human being who has invested his whole life in the realisation of an idea and who discovers that all his sacrifices were in vain?

And on the other side: Who can guess the feeling of happiness, when finally the longed for success arrives, being aware of having it made by himself?“

[Heinrich Beck, 1920s]



FORMAT: A dramatized feature TV documentary for broadcast in documentary/culture channels like PHOENIX, BBC 4, History Channel, arte, 3sat

SYNOPSIS: This documentary feature film will follow the main stages in the life of Heinrich Beck: He constructed a very simple and reliable arc light mechanism in 1906 that was marketed world wide. With the revenues of that invention he was able to set up his own institute in Meiningen, Thuringia, Germany. There he invented the world's strongest searchlight in 1912 that was used on all US Navy ships during the last year of the First World War. His contribution to the history of lighting technology is almost erased from history: General Electric to whom he had sold his invention in 1914 tries to portray this searchlight as a truly American invention in all their publications without ever mentioning Heinrich Beck. Elmer A. Sperry, who was offered the invention first, but didn't want to pay the amount the German inventor demanded, presented "his own" searchlight in 1917 that was in all major aspects a copy of the GE/Beck searchlight and led to a two year infringement litigation.

The well-known American historian of technology, Thomas P. Hughes, being commissioned by the Sperry family, wrote a biography of the inventor Elmer A. Sperry that clearly favoured Sperry's position and tried to denounce the claims of Heinrich Beck and GE as unfounded. This feature documentary film tries to correct that distorted picture and also reaches until the present by documenting how Heinrich Beck's legacy was kept up by his two sons, Heinz and Harald Beck and by his grand-son, Rasmus Beck, now inventing LED searchlights and constructing high efficiency devices for advanced LED street lighting systems [<http://www.becklaser.de/>]. Rasmus Beck will talk about this legacy in an interview that will be supported by movies, stills and sketches taken partly from the web documentary "Heinrich Beck – The Life Of An Inventor" [<http://www.becklaser.de/hbeng/>].

The wider meaning of this feature film documentary is to show the struggles of the independent inventor against adversary forces of various kinds from the first stages of inventing to securing the potential product legally by patents and to the possibility of being able to market it under the never ending threat of being "wiped out of history". As shown in the short film IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT LIGHT that is accessible on the website for that film project an inspiring legacy can live on for generations to follow that "stony road".

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