ZDFE.drama Selection
Spring/Summer 2021

STEAL THE DEAL

THE WINDOW
BEFORE WE DIE

The English remake of the Swedish series “Innan vi dör”

COMING SOON
The Window is a character-based thriller set in the world of elite professional football — without any actual football. Told through an ensemble cast, the series eschews the on-field action and instead explores the rich, dark circus surrounding the sport world loves and loathes. It lifts the lid not only on the mindsets of players but also the complex psychologies and motivations of agents, governing bodies, broadcasters and journalists in the cut-throat ecosystem.

The series begins at the end of the English Super League (ESL) season. The champions have been crowned; the relegated teams drop down a division. And of course, the transfer window opens.

Across ten episodes The Window charts one summer in the life of Jordan Burdett, a humble 17-year-old Wunderkind with a golden touch who has gate-crashed Liverpool-based Merseyside Athletic’s first team. Twelve goals in eight games have put him in a position where the world is at his feet.

Wrestling for control of Jordan’s destiny is Kieran Burdett, his street-smart big brother, and Romulus Daglis, a waning big-time agent with a dark heart, working for the Sceptre Sports Agency.

What starts out as a tug of war over a young lad’s first professional contract becomes entwined with a bigger, darker story that threatens the soul of the beautiful game itself.

Journalist Esther Birch, honest to a fault, starts out following the saga of Jordan’s signature but ends up embroiled in a criminal conspiracy with a body count. The shifting sands of loyalty in the football game are eternally unsteady. It seems the only good guy Esther can rely on is the new chief of The English Football Association (EFA), Harriet Sarratova. She is a woman in a man’s world who wants to bring the game back to the people. But with multi-billion-pound broadcasting rights up for auction, the money men of the ESL are set on a collision course with the EFA.

The Window is a thrilling and wry human drama that does for the world of elite football what House of Cards did for politics. Moral right and wrong blurs along the lines of individual ambition and willingness to do whatever it takes to “steal the deal.”

Produced by: Boogie Entertainment in co-production with Fuji Television Network and ZDF Enterprises
Cast: Tommy Bastow, Mel Raido, Teo Yoo, Samuel Jordan a.o.
ANA. all in.

Series / Crime + Suspense

6 x 48’

Ana Tramel is a brilliant criminal lawyer who has hit the lowest point in her life. Her behavior is self-destructive and instead of saving lives and delivering justice, she appeals traffic violations and other fines at her best friend Concha’s firm. But a call from her long-lost brother launches her back into action: Alejandro has been arrested, accused of murdering the manager of the Gran Castilla Casino. He needs her to defend him.

Ana meets Lieutenant Moncada, who is leading the investigation, while visiting her brother in jail. There is definite chemistry between them. During their interview, she learns that Alejandro has a family. He has married Helena, a young Russian stripper, with whom he has a two-year-old son, Martin.

When she launches her own investigation with her team, Ana learns unsettling news about her brother: He is addicted to gambling and drowning in debt. She decides to take on his case and don her robe again, after a five year absence from the courts. Surrounded by a small but trusted team, Ana takes on the corrupt gambling corporation.

Ana has a magnetic personality and an unalterable capacity to recover from adversity. In her struggle to change the corrupt system, friends and colleagues are a support system. She has a strong bond with her best friend Concha who is like a sister to her. She forms an unlikely relationship with her sister-in-law Helena. And the younger lawyers show her loyalty.

Roberto Santiago is the creator of this David and Goliath story, the writer behind the hugely successful Los Futbolísimos series which has sold over 2 million copies. His writer/director film credits also include: The Longest Penalty Shot in the World (nominated for Best Script for the Goya Award), El Club de los Suicidas, Road to Santiago.

The gambling information, events, characters and locations featured in ANA. all in. are based on real life events. In the words of Ana Tramel, you could make things up about gaming, but the truth is much more shocking.

Produced by: RTVE in coproduction with TORNASOL, DeAPLANETA and ZDF Enterprises. Supported by GOBIERNO DE NAVARRA.
Cast: Maribel Verdu, Natalia Verbeke, Israel Elejalde, Luis Bermejo, Unax Ugalade, Maria Zabala a.o.
Set in a macabre world of gruesome crimes and harrowing rituals, *The Crimson Rivers* is a thriller series based on the best-selling novel of the same name. Author Jean-Christophe Grangé, who also penned the successful feature film adaptations, is the creative force behind the chilling drama.

*The Crimson Rivers* follows detective Pierre Niémans and his partner Camille Delauney as they investigate a series of grisly murders in remote regions of France. The two detectives are assigned to a task force charged with violent crimes that are far beyond the capacity of local police departments.

Pierre Niémans is an old-school pragmatist — no politics, no intrigues — he is focused on getting results. Camille Delauney is a former student of his, who graduated at the top of her class. She’s a street kid with a reputation. Both of them are ruthless and relentless in their jobs. The sharp duo will stop at nothing to hunt down the killer. While Delauney concentrates on the facts, Niémans gravitates toward more esoteric theories.

Their cases invariably involve a shocking brutality that uncovers an aspect of French history or beliefs grounded in local culture. Each case has a mystical touch, based on regional myths or forgotten customs.

In the third season, detectives Niémans and Delauney are confronted with complex cases of atrocious brutality. They discover a horrific double murder in the church of a small Belgian village which takes them to the sinister world of neo-pagan rituals and leather tannery. The duo tracks down a serial killer who chooses his next victim based on the order of the zodiac calendar. They must stop a psychopath threatening to infest all of Paris with a deadly plague. And when an inmate is severely injured and Niémans ends up on the other side of the prison wall, Delauney must risk everything to rescue her mentor.

Produced by: STORIA TELEVISION in co-production with MAZE PICTURES for France Télévisions and ZDF in cooperation with ZDF Enterprises  
Cast: Olivier Marchal, Erika Sainte a.o.
Voltaire in Love

How did Voltaire become who he was? One of the world’s greatest thinkers, known for his wit. An advocate of freedom of speech and religion, whose writings shaped the course of the French Revolution. Voltaire in Love is a four-part drama series that explores Voltaire’s early life and evolution. It reveals aspects of the gifted philosopher’s life that have received less attention: Voltaire the adventurer, lover, man of justice who had an ambiguous relationship with royalty.

The story: A commoner by birth, Voltaire wants everything. Immediately. Glory, women and money! His father encourages him to become a lawyer, but writing is his vocation. An extremely versatile and prolific writer, Voltaire defies strict censorship laws and risks penalties as he questions the status quo and shakes up the social and religious conventions of his time. In this permanent battle, he finds accomplices, loving women and friends, some of whom will not always be faithful. He is dealt many blows in his ongoing contentious relationship with the courts of law, imprisoned twice and exiled to England. And the money? By exploiting a flaw in the French lottery and investing his earnings, Voltaire is a millionaire at 40.

The secret of being boring is telling everything, Voltaire warns us. Voltaire in Love neither aims to be exhaustive nor linear in its storytelling. It recounts significant episodes of a complex and endearing hero’s life. The ambitious historical series is helmed by veteran director Alain Tasma (Lisa et Simon, Mata Hari: La vraie histoire, Les bleus). Talented actor/comedian Thomas Soliveres (Intouchables, Cyrano, My Love) stars as young Voltaire. The cast also includes Thibault de Montalembert (Netflix’s The King and Call My Agent) and Victor Meutelet (Netflix/Tf1 The Bonfire of Destiny).

The work of Voltaire has been rediscovered by a new generation. He spoke of the dangers of religious fanaticism and the arbitrary misuse of justice and politics. Voltaire in Love is a modern and timely series that depicts an outspoken advocate of civil liberties, a visionary, an influencer of his time. And still relevant today.

Produced by: Sitcile Productions in co-production with France Télévision
Newly-trained police officer Katarina Huss is drawn into a tangled web of corruption and betrayal in the city of Gothenburg.

Katarina Huss has just graduated from Sweden’s police academy. She’s an ambitious young officer who now needs to learn faster than ever as she starts work on the streets of Gothenburg. But solving crimes is just the beginning. As she gets to know her colleagues and local community, she soon realizes that the police squad in which she serves harbors a secret. There is also an underlying discontent with the leadership which begins to affect Katarina, whose mother, Irene Huss, is the deputy chief of police.

Katarina has a complex relationship with Irene, who doesn’t want her to follow a similar career path. She must also struggle to be accepted among her colleagues. When Katarina is temporarily promoted, the rift grows. What is it that they are trying to hide from her? And how far must one go to become a part of the team?

Huss is inspired by the bestselling novels by Helene Tursten. It is a loosely based sequel to the series featuring iconic police detective Irene Huss. In Huss, daughter Katarina takes center stage. Huss brings together Sweden’s creative talents, producer Daniel Gylling (the BBC’s Wallander) and director Jörgen Bergmark (Grey Zone, Beck).

Katarina Huss is played by European shooting star Karin Franz Körlof (The Wife, The Restaurant) who is actually from Gothenburg and brings a personal touch to the role of this gritty and relevant series.

**Produced by:** Yellow Bird in co-production with Viaplay, Discovery, ZDF German Television Network and ZDF Enterprises

**Cast:** Karin Franz Körlof, Anders Berg, Filip Berg, Kajsa Ernst, Kardo Razzazi a.o.
Selection Spring/Summer 2021

KU’DAMM
THE FAMILY SAGA CONTINUES

63

3 x 90'
Post-War ZDF Highlights

This House is Mine

| Mini Series / Family | 2 x 90’ or 4 x 45’ | Available |

The screen adaptation of Dörte Hansen’s international bestseller *This House is Mine* is a heartwarming, unconventional story about the Germany of our mothers and grandmothers, people searching for a home, and the allure and absurdity of country life.

As a young girl, Vera arrives in the picturesque Altes Land region (the marshlands of Lower Saxony and Hamburg) with her mother. They are war refugees from East Prussia. Surprisingly, Vera not only finds a place to put down roots, she also finds a family connection in her stepfather Karl. The farm becomes her whole life. Headstrong, she defends it against everyone she perceives as an intruder.

Needless to say, she is not thrilled when her great-niece Anne arrives at her door with her 4-year-old son in tow. But the two women have more in common than Vera thinks.

**Produced by:** UFA Fiction  
**Cast:** Iris Berben, Nina Kunzendorf, Svenja Liesau, Milan Peschel, Peter Kurth, Manja Ehrich, Matthias Matschke a. o.

The Wall

| Mini Series / Drama | 3 x 90’ or 6 x 45’ | Available |

Germany in the turbulent era between 1987 and 1990. Two sisters and their grown-up children find themselves on different sides of the political fence in a rapidly disintegrating East Germany.

Margot is the oldest and a major in the State Security Service (Stasi). She’s a party hardliner involved in illicit commercial dealings to procure foreign funds for the economically-stricken GDR. Lotte is a single mother of a teenage son who works in a bookshop and begins to question the system. She joins the opposition, a young environmental movement, while her son becomes radicalized under the influence of neo-Nazis.

The two women fight passionately for their respective ideals. And then there’s Silvia, the youngest sister, believed drowned years earlier. She turns up in the West with a new identity and a secret to tell.

**Produced by:** A Gabriela Sperl production for Wiedemann & Berg Television  
**Cast:** Nadja Uhl, Barbara Auer, Nicolette Krebitz, Oliver Masucci, Godehard Giese a. o.
Bella Germania

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*Bella Germania* is a German-Italian family epic spanning three generations, from the German ‘Wirtschaftswunder’ to the present. It follows the first Italian guest workers on their journey from being foreign guests to becoming familiar neighbors in today’s Germany; and their search for identity, love and a home.

Young fashion designer Julia is intrigued when an older gentleman shows up unexpectedly and introduces himself as her grandfather. He also claims her father Vincenzo is still alive. Has her mother been lying to her all these years? A family history she knew nothing about begins to unfold.

Julia learns about her grandparents’ deep love for each other, the family pressures and circumstances that kept them apart, and the tragedy that struck when their relationship was rekindled. She also discovers the truth about her father.

*Produced by:* Bavaria Fiction for ZDF/ZDF Enterprises  
*Cast:* Natalia Belitski, Christoph Letkowski, Joachim Bissmeir, Stefan Kurt, Kostja Ullmann, Andrea Sawatzki, Marleen Lohse, Silvia Busuioc, Denis Moschitto, Alessandro Bressanello a.o.

The Witness House

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*The Witness House* is a fictional story based on shockingly real events that took place in the fall of 1945 at the start of the Nuremberg trials. The Americans set up a villa on the outskirts of town as a guest house for former NS officials who were awaiting their hearings. The twist: concentration camp survivors and opponents of the regime were housed here waiting to give their testimony. While the world outside is passing judgement on Germany, the perpetrators, victims and followers are living under one roof.

Hired by the U.S. military as a house manager, Countess Belavar does her best to maintain a cultivated atmosphere among her guests. At first, everyone tries to adjust to the others and to the new times. But with the first testimonies in the courtroom, the past returns to haunt one and all with unspoken, unspeakable things...

*Produced by:* MOOVIE GmbH  
*Cast:* Iris Berben, Matthias Brandt, Gisela Schneeberger, Tobias Moretti, Rosalie Thomass, Udo Samel a.o.
Family Berger Law Practice

Series / Family 12 x 45’
New

When Attorney Berger suffers a heart attack and asks his daughters to take over his current case together, conflict between the sibling rivals is inevitable.

Sisters Caro and Niki couldn’t be any more different. Caro is active in the community, honest to a fault with high moral standards. She’s been with the family-run law practice based in her small Bavarian hometown for many years. Niki, on the other hand, is tough, can be unscrupulously business-minded and has been working for a top law firm in Munich until she recently lost her license (which she’d like to keep to herself). Despite their mother’s best efforts to keep the peace, Caro and Niki now regularly clash in their private and work lives.

Yet the thing is, they’re a pretty perfect team and in the end, they can always count on each other. That’s family.

Produced by: Constantin Television GmbH
Cast: Eva-Maria Reichert, Nele Kiper, Robert Giggenbach, Sissi Perlunger, Nik Felice, Martin Gruber a.o.

Fritzie’s Bucket List

Mini Series / Drama 6 x 45’
New

When Fritzie is diagnosed with advanced stage breast cancer, she just can’t believe it. How can this be happening to her, she has such a good life: happily married, proud of her teenage son who is turning out to be a great kid, dedicated to her vocation as a teacher and grateful for close friends. But now confronted with her own mortality, Fritzie re-examines her life’s daily routines and realizes that the best listener in the world needs to start listening to herself.

It’s time to stop avoiding conflicts at all cost and be less worried about doing everything right. Fritzie discovers her inner rebel and hidden strength as she begins a journey into uncertainty.

Fritzie’s Bucket List is a modern drama series that tackles the heavy, but important subject of cancer with relatable warmth and vitality.

Produced by: Polyphon
Cast: Tanja Wedhorn, Neda Rahmanian, Tobias Licht, Kirsten Block, Florian Panzner, Nick Julius Schuck, Gisa Flaake a.o.
Doctor Ballouz

Mini Series / Family
6 x 45'
Coming Soon

Doctor Ballouz is based on topics from the non-fiction book “Deutschland draußen” (literally translated Germany outside). The Lebanese-born Balloux fled his war-torn country, studied medicine in the GDR, and, after years in London and Paris, returned to Germany where he settled in the Ueckermark. The journalist Jasper Fabian Wenzel accompanied the doctor in his daily life for six months.

Armin Ballouz is the kind of country doctor we all wish for, but has become such a rarity. The series Doctor Ballouz pays homage to this medical care hero.

At the center of the medical series Doctor Ballouz is an extraordinary doctor at a small clinic in Brandenburg who fights for his patients as he grapples with his past. Together with his team, Dr Ballouz provides the residents of the Ueckermark district with exceptional care and attention, and not just in the medical sense. He is always willing to listen to his patients’ problems. They trust him with their stories of love, life, loneliness and hope, and Dr Ballouz becomes a part of their lives.

The clinic is located in the idyllic Ueckermark region which is also economically underdeveloped. After Ballouz fled his homeland as a young man, he found a new home where he wanted to settle down — because of his love for his wife, Mara, and the people and place that took him in. The odd doctor with a big heart, who wears his signature trench coat and drives a Trabi, is passionate about his work and doesn’t shy away from trying unconventional methods — whatever is necessary to help his patients. They are his family.

The sudden loss of his wife, the love of his life, hits Ballouz hard. The community he has always supported, now slowly helps him back on his feet. He and his team of doctors are busy with patient cases that are dramatic and emotional. There is also the rebellious outsider Vincent who is completing his community service at the hospital. He brings new challenges to the doctor’s every day responsibilities.

Next to Armin Ballouz’s private struggles, the modern medical drama series mirrors current social and regional themes.

Produced by: X Filme Creative Pool
Cast: Merab Ninidze, Clelia Sarto, Julia Richter, Daniel Fritz, Nadja Bobyleva, Vincent Krüger a.o.
**Selection Spring/Summer 2021**

**ZDF Love + Romance**

**Tonio & Julia**

*Series / Love + Romance*  
10 x 90’

New Episodes

A shared history, a challenging present. After a rough breakup, Julia returns to Bavaria to work as a family therapist in a church organization. To her surprise, she recognizes her new colleague, Pastor Tonio, from her childhood; for a brief time, they were more than friends. Now, as they work together helping people in the community, they are also redefining their relationship. Julia quickly warms up to her old friend, while Tonio senses her return may put his commitment to God to the test.

**Produced by:** Studia.TV.Film  
**Cast:** Oona Devi Liebich, Maximilian Grill, Dietrich Adam, Lara Mandoki a. o.

**Lena Lorenz**

*Collections / Love + Romance*  
21 x 90’

New Episodes

Lena is a midwife with heart and soul, based on the family farm in the Alpine foothills. Besides all the surprises, tragedies and the pure joy the job brings to her and her patients – Lena has to deal with a private life of its own kind: Her mother still tries to cope with her father’s tragic death, her grandfather turns everything upside down and on top of all that, Lena tries to keep a stable relationship with Quirin, the love of her life...

**Produced by:** Zieglerfilm  
**Cast:** Judith Hoersch, Patricia Aulitzky, Eva Mattes, Fred Stilkrath a. o.

**Fairy Tale Cinema**

*Collections / Love + Romance*  
4 x 90’

New Episodes

The *Fairy Tale Cinema* series gives beloved fairy tales a modern-day twist. In an imaginative projection forward to the present day, the films in the *Fairy Tale Cinema* series celebrate the fairy tale as folklore that spans the generations and puts magical stories center stage. This is storytelling devoid of hocus-pocus, highlighting traditional tales, strong emotions, and genuine heroes and heroines. Wonderful fictional entertainment for fairy tale lovers – and everyone else besides.

**Produced by:** Sabotage Films GmbH  
**Cast:** Maria Ehrich, Andrea Sawatzki, Jürgen Tarrach, Max Bretschneider, Hanna Pfaff, Jochen Schropp, Lucas Reiber, Timu Uelker a. o.

**Ella Schön**

*Series / Love + Romance*  
6 x 90’  
+ 2 x 90’ in production

New Episodes

Ella Schön is a woman with Asperger’s Syndrome who finds it difficult to express emotion. She’s straight to the point and tells it like it is. When her husband dies, Ella plans to sell their second house near the Baltic Sea. To her surprise, it’s occupied by her husband’s mistress, Christina, who is pregnant with his child. As if things weren’t already complicated enough – Christina refuses to move out. Linked by fate, the two very different women share the house and everyday life together.

**Produced by:** Dreamtool Entertainment  
**Cast:** Annette Frier, Julia Richter, Josef Heynert, Esther Esche, Erner Lustig a. o.
Love. Now! looks at the challenges of love in times of corona. It’s hard enough under normal circumstances but how do you meet new love or maybe end an affair in the current situation? The stories are told with warmth and humor and offer a light reprieve from life’s heavy challenges. They inspire courage and illustrate how powerful a little solidarity, caring and kindness can be.

ZDF reacted to the corona lockdown and its restricted production conditions with speed and creative sass, producing six entertaining episodes of Love. Now! The settings mirror the real world everyone is living in, where contact with other people is mostly via cell phone or computer screens.

Each love story is distinct. Some couples live apart, others together, but involuntarily. Some would rather split up, but the current crisis is making it impossible. The cast includes well-known German and international actors. The fact that the romantic partners in front of the camera are together in real life adds another layer to the series’ appeal.

In the first episode, we meet Thorsten and Jana. During the early stage of their relationship, Jana unexpectedly becomes pregnant and moves in with Thorsten. Now they have to face their very different personalities on a daily basis. An online therapy session proves enlightening.

Another Love. Now! episode describes the counterpart scenario: Tom and Bella are splitting up. The boxes are packed, but there’s no way out: the moving company cancels because of corona. Tom and Bella are forced to spend more time with each other and experience how bittersweet it is to remember what brought you together in the first place.

The lively series Love. Now! was positively received and a second season was quickly born: The Love. Now! Christmas Edition. The holiday itself plays a minor role, but it gives the stories a true to life backdrop. The total lockdown has been lifted, so there are varying locations and fewer screens. Three of the six episodes tell entirely new love stories, while the other three are a continuation of sorts. For example, we now follow Thorsten and Jana’s therapist into her own relationship.

Produced by: studio zentral for ZDFneo
Cast: Jürgen Vogel, Natalia Belitski, Dela Dabulamanzi, Leonard Scheicher, Maryam Zaree, Dennis Didinger, Kirsten Block, Timo Jacobs, Daniel Zilimann, David Brizzi, Christina Große a.o.
BREAKING EVEN 6x45’

From the creatives behind Bad Banks (Writer Jana Burbach) and Hindafing (Showrunner Boris Kunz), Breaking Even is a modern gritty drama that revolves around a shady automotive entrepreneurial family.
Heavily pregnant Chief Inspector Alex Enders goes on maternity leave. She is admittedly anxious about how a child will change her life and her relationship with her partner, Leif. Sometimes she even wishes everything was just like it was before.

But then, in an unimaginably cruel way, these secret thoughts come true. Alex is kidnapped. She wakes up a week later, is bloodied, her baby is gone, and she has no memory of the birth. When her colleagues make no headway in investigating the kidnapping, Alex takes over. In her solo efforts, she defies all regulations and boundaries and loses support from her colleagues and even her boss. Her relationship with Leif also becomes increasingly strained.

Alex gets entangled in a web of suspicions and lies and risks everything to get her child back: her job, her relationship, her own life.

 Produced by: Network Movie for ZDFneo
 Cast: Aylin Tezel, Sebastian Zimmler, Özgür Karadeniz, Sascha Nathan, Karl Schaper, André Jung, David Owe, Leslie Malton a.o.

Four talented detectives form the quartet, a team of consummate professionals who work together as equals, regardless of rank. As a team, they’re at their best. The K14 squad uses its united strength and the latest technology to solve Leipzig’s most exciting cases.

Maike Riem stands out as a successful, self-confident investigator with a tireless commitment to her work. Christoph Hoherr is a family man. He has no need or time for hobbies. When he’s not with his wife and son, he’s fighting crimes with his colleagues, his second family. Pia Walther is tough, relentless and fundamentally mistrusts people. She’s known for a lack of self-control and her ability to elicit a confession. Last but not least, Linus Roth is the tech ace. Using the most advanced forensic technology, he proves that no crime is perfect.

 Produced by: Akzente Film- und Fernsehproduktion
Very unlike police detectives Maria Bächle and Konrad Diener investigate foul play in the mountainous Black Forest region in this mystical crime series that links past and present in fascinating ways. Characters that seem to have fallen out of time leave ample room for the imagination. The Black Forest is a landscape steeped in legend, fairy-tale and myth; home to nymphs, witches and wild creatures. The drama plots are based on customs and peculiarities of the region, blurring the lines between myth and reality. Beauty and horror are closely bound.

Detective Maria Bächle’s memories are triggered during her investigations as she has her own complex connection to the forest. As an eight-year-old child she was found there, abandoned, alone and neglected.

Produced by: all in production
Cast: Jessica Schwarz, Max von Thun, Nadja Bobyleva, David Zimmerschied, Rüdiger Vogler, Rike Schmid, Jeanette Hain, Arved Friese a. o.

Fredo Schulz, former detective chief superintendent in Berlin, is a good cop but a bit rough around the edges; a widower and ex-alcoholic with extensive insider knowledge and excellent contacts.

His last case, one that involved the disappearance of two little girls, ended in failure. Suspended for trying to forcibly extract a confession from a suspect, he fled to the North Sea and into a constant state of drunkenness. Nonetheless, he is repeatedly drawn into volatile and troubling cases.

Produced by: Network Movie
Cast: Armin Rohde, Michael Maertens, Edin Hasanovic, Nele Kiper, Axel Prahl, Johann von Bülow, Lo Rivera a. o.
Joachim Vernau Collection

Berlin lawyer Joachim Vernau is a charismatic and charming workaholic with grand ambitions, whose career is only hampered by one thing: his inability to say no. And so, with both eyes open, he repeatedly stumbles into seemingly hopeless cases that could literally be the end of him. But Vernau’s instinct for self-preservation, though slightly hindered by his family baggage, is at least as big as his heart. His path to the top is paved with these doomed cases, which he solves using his sharp intellect and risking his life more than once.

The Joachim Vernau Collection is based on the novels by best-selling author Elisabeth Herrmann. The latest film of the series, *The Receipt*, plays in today’s Berlin with all its problems: housing shortage, corruption, greed and bribery in the highest circles. But it’s also about old friends.

Produced by: Network Movie
Cast: Jan Josef Liefers, Stefanie Stappenbeck, Elisabeth Schwarz, Carmen-Maja Antoni, August Zirner, Carina Wiese a.o.
Rating: Reached the outstanding rating of over 9 million viewers

The Snow Whisperer

Based on the eponymous best-selling novel by Elisabeth Herrmann, the crime story screenplay was also penned by Herrmann with director Josef Rusnak (*The 13th Floor*).

Little Dario has been missing for two years — then a discovery in the woods brings certainty: The boy was murdered. Berlin commissioner Lutz Gehring takes on the investigation. Unofficially, young police officer Salena Beara is soon brought on board in hopes that her Croatian background will be useful. The parents of the young boy, both from Croatia and both domestic workers for the Reinartz family at the time, get caught up in contradictions.

When the pool of suspects expands to include the former employer, Salena seizes the opportunity to infiltrate the family and pose as a housekeeper. An abyss of wounded feelings, disappointments and selfish actions opens up.

Produced by: Network Movie
Cast: Nadja Bobyleva, Max Riemelt, Stipe Erceg, Edita Malovcic, Bernhard Schir, Emil Belton a.o.
Rating: Reached the outstanding rating of over 9 million viewers
A young student goes undercover to find the truth about her father’s death in the gripping family drama *The Valley of the Murderers*.

On her death bed, Alma tells her daughter Eva, a young law student, that her father was murdered, and she knows who did it: Anton Gasser. Alma was once in a relationship with Anton, but chose and married his friend Lino, Eva’s father, instead. Lino’s death was officially reported as an accident, but Eva’s mother is convinced Anton was behind it. When Anton’s wife dies, Alma is certain Anton is once again responsible.

Eva makes her way to Alma’s native home, a small Austrian mountain village, to fulfill her mother’s dying wish that Anton be brought to justice. Under a false name, she starts working as a housekeeper for the Gasser family, where Anton now lives with his two sons. She hopes to find evidence to support her mother’s claims.

In order to find out the truth, Eva must gain Anton’s trust — and gradually gets closer to him than she would have liked. The stonemason is charismatic but power-hungry, and she discovers a charming side as well.

Anton doesn’t make it easy for Eva. He senses something special in Eva and opens his heart to her. He can’t escape the young woman’s mysterious aura. Yet he mistrusts her. While Eva searches through his papers, he looks in her closet. The situation becomes increasingly intense. The emotional tension and suspense between Eva and Anton are palpable.

Meanwhile, Eva is also becoming more than a housekeeper for his sons, Jakob and Florian. While Florian is greatly suffering from the loss of his mother, Jakob blames his father for her death. He thinks he drove her to suicide. Eva learns from Jakob that his parents had an argument shortly before his mother’s death.

Eva fights her ambivalent feelings for Anton and his sons, swaying between affection, fear and fascination. Against her will, she is drawn deeper into the family’s power struggles and problems. Anton Gasser is a charming monster, but does he really have two murders on his conscience?

**Produced by:** Neue Bioskop Television GmbH  
**Cast:** Fritz Karl, Anna Unterberger, Franz Dinda, Gerrit Klein, Franz Buchrieser, Gertrud Roll a.o.
Chief Inspector Bruno Schumann is *The Criminalist*. Together with his colleagues at the State Bureau of Investigation (LKA), he investigates unsolved crimes committed in the colorful district of Berlin.

Schumann takes a unique mystical-methodological approach to his work. Bruno Schumann is single and a workaholic. His job comes above all else; there is little time for any kind of private life. He is persistent, contemplative and has a charming sense of humor. His greatest strength is his ability to empathize.

As a student of victimology, Schumann believes that the path that leads to a killer comes from understanding the victim. He digs deep into the psyche of the victim by putting himself in their "aura." With extraordinary skills of observation, he registers details that remain hidden to others. For Schumann, there is nothing that doesn’t exist: Everything is open and in constant motion. Each situation requires its own perspective.

The department revolves around Schumann. He takes the flood of information, puts it in the right order and sequence and connects the dots. Then he takes it even further, delegates tasks and lets his team verify his intuitions and hunches.

Bruno Schumann is played by Christian Berkel, one of Germany’s best known actors and internationally known for *Downfall*, *Inglourious Basterds*, *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* and *Valkyrie*.

Finish on a high note: *The Criminalist* has just finished its last season, a 15-year successful run in Germany and abroad.

**Produced by:** Monaco Film Hamburg
**Cast:** Christian Berkel, Anna Schudt, Stefanie Japp, Maya Bothe, Janek Rieke a. a.
ZDF Crime + Suspense

Heldt — A Date with Justice

Series / Crime + Suspense

108 x 45’

New Episodes

He’s roguish and conceited, a cop who’s often hard to work with, but who’s got a big streak of empathy: Nikolas Heldt.

This detective series thrives on the witty banter between Heldt and Prosecutor Ellen Bannenberg, as well as on the situation-comedy atmosphere that lightens up their cases, whether they’re in the world of kickboxers, scholars or carrier-pigeon breeders.

Even though Ellen often has to keep him from doing something he’ll regret, she knows that he’s an ace on the job. But what he’s like with women – that remains to be seen!

Produced by: Sony Pictures Cologne
Cast: Kai Schumann, Janine Kunze, Timo Dierkes a.o.

Disappeared — The M.P.U.

Series / Crime + Suspense

100 x 45’

New Episodes

The key players in the missing persons squad are chief detective inspector Oliver Radek and his colleagues Mina Amiri, Sandra Reiss and Daniel Prinz. Radek and his team research their subjects’ lives in minute detail in order to reveal the truth surrounding the missing people.

As archaeologists of human biographies, they pore over endless fragments to create pictures riddled with countless contradictions. Questions can be answered only by becoming intimately familiar with the person they are looking for. Most of their investigations have a happy ending, but even in other cases, the facts they bring to light enable the victims’ loved ones to break free from their suffering.

Produced by: Novafilm Fernsehproduktion GmbH
Cast: Hans Werner Meyer, Jasmin Tabatabai, Florian Panzner, Susanne Bormann a.o.
A Case of Murder is a smart crime series with a strong and complex female lead: Vera Lanz.

Vera Lanz is played by the accomplished actress Katharina Böhm, who achieved international acclaim with her role of Livia Burlando in the Italian TV series Il commissario Montalbano.

Vera Lanz is Chief Inspector of Munich’s homicide department to which she is dedicated with heart and soul. She has great respect for her profession and the letter of the law. She treats everyone around her with decency and compassion, even those suspected of the most monstrous crimes. Someone who can keep her cool in any situation, Vera is composed — with an edge. And not shy about her own desires.

Vera Lanz also has a past with a deeply hidden secret. She lives with it, deals with it, doesn’t talk about it. She is determined to uncover the truth about the circumstances surrounding the death of her husband, also a police officer, who was killed on duty. She secretly takes investigations regarding the case into her own hands: a mission which often spills over into her work.

On her police team is Paul Böhmer. He knows the streets ... and the streets know him. The contacts he has are often invaluable for their investigations. His assessments do not always comply with the code of law. Paul Böhmer’s long-term relationship with a prostitute almost cost him his career.

Maximilian Murnau is the newest member of the team and still has to prove himself. He comes from a family of lawyers, but feels he can do better work in the field than at a desk. And despite having lawyer blood in his veins, he doesn’t always do the politically correct thing or abide by regulations and protocol. Nothing can stop him from solving a case.

The episodes of A Case of Murder don’t follow an established, repetitive pattern. Each exciting case with its respective theme follows its own rules and principles. Every episode, for example, has its own specific introduction into the story, its own tempo, mood and supporting cast of characters. A Case of Murder is a multifaceted crime series.

Produced by: Network Movie
Cast: Katharina Böhm, Stefan Rudolf, Jürgen Tonkel a. o.
Hamburg Dockland

*Series / Crime + Suspense* 376 x 45'

_Hamburg Dockland_ follows police officers and medical doctors on their daily action-packed missions in the port of Hamburg. The 21st precinct is a tough area to patrol: from a busy harbor and the red-light district to neighborhoods with luxury villas.

Each day is filled with new challenges. The police work hand in hand with the medical doctors of the local hospital because crime often leads to casualties. They must often make split second decisions and quickly adapt to every situation. It is always a priority to save lives, those of the victims and the criminals. But this inevitably leads to conflicts between the saviors in white and the helpers in green.

This successful series that combines police procedural with emotional medical drama is in its 15th season.

**Produced by:** Studio Hamburg  
**Cast:** Matthias Schloo, Sanna Englund, Frank Vockroth, Rhea Harder, Fabian Harloff a. o.

The Rosenheim Cops

*Series / Crime + Suspense* 477 x 45'

When you take an afternoon ride to Rosenheim, you see rolling meadows and wooden farmhouses, and beyond the Alps you can catch a glimpse of beautiful Lake Chiemsee. The Bavarian district is full of spectacular landscapes and views, but even here heinous crimes take place. The approach to investigating is a little different than in other places: less confrontational but a bit more quirky. The methods and personalities of small-town inspectors often clash with officers not from the area, not least because knowledge of Bavarian customs plays a key role in solving cases. And secretary Stockl and officer Mohr, who have a knack for intuition, also do their part.

Another fun feature of the popular, long-running series is a comedic side plot which notably has nothing to do with the actual murder investigation.

**Produced by:** Bavaria Fiction GmbH  
**Cast:** Marisa Burger, Joseph Hammenschläger, Alexander Duda, Sina Wilke, Max Müller a. o.
Teaching from Home

Just when elementary school teacher Tina thought the teaching-from-home torture was finally over, the State Secretary of the Ministry for Education brings her back to reality. He wants her to continue teaching from home and lead a model class for virtual learning. The school principal is no help. And it’s definitely not her forte. Chalk is like cocaine for Tina, and without it she feels like she’s going through withdrawal. But since she doesn’t have a choice, Tina takes on the challenge — now she’s all in for education and virtual success.

She grapples with annoying parents who pedantically interrupt classroom chats, is exasperated at her students’ progress and curses these disruptive corona times. It’s a good thing her former student Frederick and his girlfriend are there to keep her from going completely crazy.

Produced by: MADEFOR for ZDFneo
Cast: Christine Eixenberger, Felix Hellmann, Florian Burgkart, Stefanie von Poser, Thomas Huber a.o.

A Bad Word

High school student Max is bullied by his classmates because of his Jewish faith. When Max bites off someone’s earlobe and breaks another one’s nose, he is threatened with expulsion. Both boys he assaulted come from a Muslim background.

A school conference is organized — of all days on the eve of Hanukkah — to settle the matter. But instead, things come to a head between the overwhelmed parents, the classroom teacher, the principal and a representative of the education authority.

The adults’ attempt to solve the high school students’ conflict unexpectedly turns into a kind of clash of cultures between the parents and school authorities, between Muslims and Jews and German cultural identity, between bureaucracy and humanity.

Dramatically enhanced and with a bit of humor, A Bad Word is a fictional story inspired by actual events.

Produced by: MOOVIE GmbH
Cast: Iris Berben, Ursina Lardi, Thomas Sarbacher, Anna Brüggemann, Devid Striesow, Neda Rahmanian, Florian Martens a.o.
Matzo, Kebabs and Sauerkraut

Noah and Akim have been best friends since childhood. They made a pact with one another that nothing would ever come between them, especially not a woman. But they didn’t know about Charlotte back then.

Destiny takes its course when Noah abruptly steps out in front of Charlotte’s car, resulting in a blow to the head and love at first sight. Unfortunately, Charlotte is already taken. Then when Akim sees the young woman at her engagement party, he too falls for her, head over heels.

Produced by: CCC Cinema und Television
Cast: Franz Dinda, Omar El-Saeidi, Christine Eisenberger, Andrea Sawatzki, Francis Fulton-Smith, Adnan Maral a.o.

Kids and Other Works in Progress

Marlene and her husband Thorsten made a deal: They are going to rearrange their family life and start taking care of their young daughter Kiki together from now on. For this to happen, Thorsten has to cut back on work so Marlene can finally return to her career as a physiotherapist. The family even moved to the quiet town of Dachau to make it all possible.

Everything is perfectly organized and ready to go, but suddenly they get the news from Kiki’s future nursery school that it has to close immediately so that asbestos can be removed. Finding a spot for her somewhere else? Not a chance.

Produced by: Hager Moss Film
Cast: Julia Maria Köhler, Valerie Niehaus, Marlene Morreis, Yasemin Cetinkaya, Stephan Grossmann, Sebastian Ströbel a.o.
It’s almost Christmas, and the three half-sisters Regina, Katarina and Diana get the news that the father they share has died in an accident.

His quarrelsome daughters from three different mothers now meet at their father’s house to look into their inheritance. Who gets what? What will happen to their father’s industrial bakery? Who took Mother’s brooch? Where have all the valuable paintings gone?

**Produced by:** US Filmproduktion GmbH
**Cast:** Gesine Cukrowski, Elena Uhlig, Felicitas Woll, Tim Bergmann, Peter Lerchbaumer, Max von Pufendorf a. o.

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It’s almost Christmas, and the peace and quiet are a thing of the past in the Koslowski house when Maria is called on to take care of her brother Moritz with no warning.

Since his car accident and the resulting traumatic brain injury, Moritz continues to have uncontrollable emotional outbursts that are very hard on the family. He had spent years traveling the world’s conflict hotspots as a photographer, leading an exciting and unpredictable life. After the accident, however, his world changed drastically...

**Produced by:** Conradfilm and Bavaria Fiction
**Cast:** Anna Loos, Marcus Mittermeier, Simon Schwarz, Leo Bilicky, Jana Münster a. o.
LOVE. NOW!

CHRISTMAS EDITION

6x20’
A viaplay ORIGINAL

HUSS