

DEUTSCHLAND 83

EPISODE 1

STUDY PACK



OCR A-Level Media Studies Preparation

DEUTSCHLAND 83 EPISODE 1 SUMMARY 'QUANTUM JUMP'

Background

Between 1945 and 1989, Germany was two countries. East & West Germany.



GDR= German Democratic Republic. **East Germany**. Communist. Pro-Russian. Basically under Russian control. Part of the Soviet Union, the block of East European countries loyal to Russia (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Ukraine, etc). East Germany was a bit like N Korea but not quite as bad. Dominated by loyalty to Russia and the Communist Party. The people often had close family ties to the West Germans but were very restricted in terms of travel to the west, access to free media and what they could buy.

FRG = Federal Republic of Germany. **West Germany**. Free market, capitalist. Pro-American. In the 80s, there were still US troops stationed in W Germany with military bases and missile sites targeted at E Germany and Russia. For many years after the war, West Germany was divided into French, British and American sectors with troops stationed in various cities. At various times of increased tension between West and East, West Germany became a sort of 'front line' for the US in Europe.

Berlin was a divided city between 1945 and 1989, a miniature version of the situation in Germany as a whole. It was rather like an island in the middle of East Germany, divided into zones with East Berlin under Russian control and West Berlin which was split into British, French and American sectors. In 1961, East Berlin (the Russian sector) separated itself totally from the West by building a heavily fortified wall to prevent locals from escaping. **The Berlin Wall** became an iconic symbol of East Germany's hard line communist pro-Russian and anti-capitalist position. Pressure for more freedoms eventually led to the symbolic fall of the wall and **German Re-unification in 1989**. In 1991 Berlin took over from Bonn as the capital.

EPISODE SUMMARY

'Cold War' political background established from the start.

This is still the pre-title sequence; 'cold opening'

Notice the interplay between the personal and the political.

importance of 80s music in creating a memorable nostalgic soundtrack.

Already we have a broad portrait of life in the East - shortages and poor quality of everyday items, mistrust, corruption; importance of ideology & loyalty to the communist party.

Cold War iconography.

1) TV shows Ronald Reagan, President of the US, giving his famous 'evil empire' speech - attacking the Russia led Soviet Union. This was still the 'cold war' era when Europe and the US were worried about Russia and its Eastern Bloc allies. The TV is being watched by Lenora in Bonn, the capital of West Germany at the time. Lenora is an East German agent and member of the diplomatic staff who had the unusual privilege of being able to travel between East and West.

Since the end of WW2 in 1945, Germany was divided into West and East. East Germany was a repressive, communist, pro-Russian state where everything was controlled by the state, contact with the West was illegal and the ideology was based on Marxist principles of state-run collective ownership.

2) We are in **East Germany**. Two students have been arrested for possessing illegal Western literature. They are interrogated by two border guards. One of these is the main protagonist Martin Rauch who, although young, seems to be a strict, loyal official. After giving them a stern reprimand, he releases them, warning them about being disloyal to the East German '**Fatherland**'. When they have gone, the two soldiers laugh, giving the impression that they have been putting on an act.

3) East Germany is worried about US plans to station **Pershing nuclear missiles** in neighbouring West Germany. An East German agent Lenora persuades her colleague that they should use Martin as an undercover agent, sending him to West Germany as a spy to work alongside senior German and American generals. She admits a family connection to Martin. In the next scene we discover that she is his aunt.

4) Martin is home for the weekend. It is his mother Ingrid's birthday party. He gives her the Shakespeare book confiscated from the two students. Lenora appears. She is his mother's sister. Martin goes into the house to find his girlfriend Annett. The music playing (illegally as it's West German) is **Nena's 99 Red Balloons**.

5) Ingrid tells her sister Lenora that she needs a kidney transplant. This is hard in the East as resources are scarce. Normally only government officials and senior members of the Communist party elite would have access to these privileges. Lenora gives her some **Nescafé and Western cigarettes** - 'luxury' items in East Germany. It is clear that Lenora has connections with the West.

6) **Title sequence – fragmented images of East and East Germany. Military, cold war images and iconography. It includes a TV footage montage showing W German president Helmut Kohl accepting US missiles on W German soil and E German president Erich Honecker praising peace. The sequence ends with footage of the atomic bomb.**

7) The next day, Lenora appears with two government agents. One of them is Lenora's close colleague Walter Schweppenstette. They want to speak to Martin. Ingrid is scared. The officers sit down with Martin who looks uncomfortable. They praise his exemplary record as a soldier, a border guard, and a loyal citizen. There is a chessboard between them and they start to play. As the interview continues in the other room, Lenora promises her sister Ingrid that she can have a kidney transplant if she lets Martin work for them.

Martin's loyalty – concern for his mother and girlfriend.

8) We cut back to the interview in the living room. Martin impresses the officers with his knowledge of **East German ideology and West German football**. Without knowing what they want him to do, he says that he is prepared to serve his country and sacrifice everything for the (communist) **Party**. The agents then inform him that they are **recruiting him to work for the East German secret service, the HVA, in the West**. Martin is reluctant, worried about leaving his girlfriend and his sick mother. The ruthless Schweppenstette breaks his finger. (This is to give him a later excuse for not being able to play the piano, unlike the original officer whose place he will take). They serve him coffee. Shortly after that, he passes out. It is clear that the coffee was drugged.

Ruthlessness of the E. German authorities

Clever narrative shift – ellipsis (omission); we don't see all the details of his transfer to the West.

9) Martin comes round in a luxurious bedroom. His hand is in plaster. A West German magazine (Spiegel) is in the room. Bewildered, he looks out of the window.

10) Lenora and a colleague who introduces himself as Professor Tischbier are in the sitting room. They inform Martin that he is in **Bonn** – at that time the capital of West Germany. They tell him the plan: he is to work undercover as a West German officer and personal assistant ('aide de camp') to senior US and German generals. He is to work with General Edel who is in charge of working with the US on their Pershing nuclear missile programme. Edel himself works closely with US Nato general Arnold Jackson. Lenora promises him a flat and a car once he returns home after the mission. She gives him Western clothes - a **Puma T-Shirt, jeans and trainers**.

The supermarket is Moritz's first glimpse of the abundance of life in the West. Choice of music is significant. Ironic?

11) Martin appears in his new clothes. He runs away, into the street, a shopping centre and a supermarket where he is amazed by the choice of products. The music playing in the supermarket is **80s hit 'Sweet Dreams Are Made of This' by the Eurythmics**.

12) Professor Tobias Tischbier finds him and persuades him to co-operate, appealing to his loyalty and love of his country. He points out the dangers of the political situation and the US missile threats to his home. **'The cold war is getting hotter'**.

Fast-food & social comments on life in the West.

13) Martin is eating a burger. Professor T comments that the **West German government keeps its citizens happy by keeping them fat, lazy and complacent**. He says they call this indifference 'freedom'. We learn that Prof T loves East Germany, he comes from there but has not been back since the sixties. Sensing Martin's reluctance, Tobias says **"We all want to go home but**

Clever narrative montage – shows how editing can be used to shrink time. (ellipsis)

someone has to make sure that there's an East Germany to go home to".

14) A **montage sequence** with the professor's voice-over showing Martin's training as an agent and a Western citizen. He learns the art of covert photography, lock-picking, surveillance, document passing. He is given German army handbooks and dictionaries to study. He is given a new ID: First Lieutenant Moritz Stamm. In flashback, we are briefly shown how the original Moritz Stamm, a young officer, was killed by a female agent on a train.

15) Moritz, as he is now called, arrives on the base and meets another undercover agent Karl Kramer who is also posing as a West German first lieutenant.

16) Moritz meets his boss General Edel. Tells him he broke his finger playing football and won't be able to play the piano.

Alex is an insecure, restless critic of West Germany. We are unsure whether he's there to trap him.

17) Moritz meets another soldier, Alex Edel, the son of General Edel. He is much more cynical and critical than his father of West Germany and its military position. Alex is a left-wing critic of the establishment. He is reading a book by Petra Kelly, the founder of the Green Party. We are not sure whether his views are genuine or whether they are designed to trap Moritz into expressing similar views. Moritz plays along and talks about those 'commie a... holes in the East'. Alex says: 'You sound like my dad'.

Humour – Moritz struggles with the phones. + the disapprovingly stern receptionist Frau Netz.

18) Overhead shot of Moritz at his desk next door to General's office. He is struggling to answer a phone. The stony-faced receptionist Frau Netz looks at him disapprovingly. Moritz's job is to gather intelligence reports about East Germany and the Soviet Union ready for a meeting between General Edel and General Jackson. Edel sends Moritz into town to buy cigarettes for Jackson.

19) Back in the East, at a school in Moritz's home town, girlfriend Annett approaches Martin's mother who is a PE teacher. She is worried that Martin has just disappeared. His mother dismisses her concerns.

20) Moritz/Martin is in the military barracks – a dormitory in bed secretly practising his lock-picking skills in the dark. A TV news montage shows **growing tensions between the US and Russia**.

21) General Jackson arrives and the two generals talk about the possibility of missile strikes from Germany on the Soviet Union. Edel feels that Jackson does not appreciate the vulnerability of Germany's position. (There is the possibility of Russian retaliation and the danger of radioactive fallout from a nuclear attack). The generals go for lunch, leaving Jackson's briefcase in the locked office. Edel reassures Jackson that his office is probably the most secure in Germany.

Real tension as Moritz struggles

22) Moritz also has lunch in the barracks with other officers who joke about Jackson's missile 'toys'. Moritz rushes back to pick the lock of Edel's office and access the documents in Jackson's briefcase. There are some tense moments as

with the locks and the Generals are about to return from lunch.

There is a clever symmetry in the episode's use of two parties.

Moritz is shown to be clumsy.

another 'sister' parallel- Renate is the sister of the Gen Edel's wife.

Tension builds during the singing. We think Renate may tell the general about Moritz's phone-call.

80s music soundtrack.

notice that the increased tension all based on a misunderstanding

Several narrative strands or 'arcs' are set up, ready for episode 2. Big questions hang over the fate of Moritz – will he be discovered? Will he try to give up his undercover role and go back home? Will Renate remember what she overheard? Is Alex a genuine opponent of US/West German policy or is he there to trap Moritz?

Moritz fails to pick the lock directly and has to gain access with keys from a desk. He manages to photograph the material and return everything to normal just as the generals return. Frau Netz, the receptionist, seems humourless, disapproving and mistrustful. Edel sends Moritz to get a sack of charcoal for his BBQ later that day in honour of General Jackson.

23) We are at Edel's BBQ. Edel introduces Moritz to his wife. She introduces him to her sister Renate Werner who seems rather forward. Edel's rebellious and insecure son Alex is also there along with a sister Yvonne who is a hippy-like singer. Moritz clumsily tries to pass his film roll to another guest, his undercover colleague (Karl Kramer). M makes another gaffe when he admits to a group of guests that he once danced salsa to a Cuban group. (Cuba, another communist state, had close ties with East Germany and Russia but did not allow its citizens to travel to the West.)

24) As Yvonne entertains the guests with a German folk song, M goes upstairs, finds a phone and rings Annett to tell her he's in the West. He is overheard by Renate. M tells his colleague what has happened as Renate tries to attract her sister's attention. Renate is told to be quiet as Yvonne is singing. Edel and his wife obviously disapprove of Renate who has a reputation for drinking too much. Karl gives Moritz a drug to put in Renate's drink. He eventually succeeds.

25) To the sound of **10CC's 'I'm not in Love'** playing at the party, the general is inspecting his fish tank. He confides in Moritz over a whisky. He seems lonely and unhappy, worried about the political situation where West Germany is being used a pawn by the US. His personal life also seems rather troubled.

26) Moritz and Karl go outside to find Renate asleep in her car. They carry her to another car and Moritz drives her home, reassured by Karl that, by the next day, she won't remember anything of the overheard conversation.

27) M leaves a training run to recover material from a hide ('drop') in a tree. His aunt Lenora suddenly appears and tells him she is pleased with the information he provided as it gave details about targets in East Germany for possible US missile attacks. (Actually these plans were for NATO 'war games' or military exercises.) She wants him to find out when the 'attacks' will take place. Moritz tells her he wants to go back home. Lenora blackmails him into continuing his undercover work by threatening to cancel his mother's operation. **"The lives of millions of East Germans are at stake, not just one"**. Moritz continues his training run as the credits roll.

See quiz on page 13



ACTIVITY A HOW ARE THE MAIN CHARACTERS REPRESENTED AND CONSTRUCTED?

Martin Rauch /Moritz Stamm played by Jonas Nay
Lenora
Professor Tobias Tischbier
Alex Edel
General Edel
General Jackson
Annett
Ingrid Rauch



ACTIVITY B DEUTSCHLAND 83 TRAILER ACTIVITY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eb0yFr2jVAU>

- 1) Why do we only here English in this trailer for a subtitled German film?
- 2) Discuss the camerawork and editing conventions
- 3) What codes of the trailer suggest an East West binary opposition?
- 4) What other binary opposites are present?
- 5) Discuss the use of the soundtrack 'Two Tribes' by Frankie Goes to Hollywood
- 6) Compare the trailer with the American one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4Wlfr00aig>

What are the differences? Why do you think there are two versions – a US and a UK one?



ACTIVITY C Representations of East and West Germany.

The action takes place in East and West Germany, which were at the time two different countries. What are the differences in the way the two locations are constructed?

These themes are also explored more fully in successful German films such as Goodbye Lenin (2003) and The Lives of Others (2007).

SOME GENERAL FACTS

- **The first German language TV series to be broadcast in the US**
- **Written by Anna Winger and produced by her husband Jörg Winger.**
- Made by German production company UFA for RTL
- Only 8 episodes (inspired more by Scandinavian model rather than US who have a tendency to make longer series)
- Unusual: first shown in the US- June 2015; not shown in Germany until November 2015. The first German series to be successful in the US.
- Critical acclaim – Germany is learning the art of writing successful TV series.
- It was the show that helped to revive the international reputation of German TV.
- Sold in 20 countries
- Writer Anna Winger is American, married to a German TV producer who translated it: she said her aim was not to write a piece of a history textbook but to tell a good story.
- Success in the US was partly because of its cold war theme, its criticisms of East Germany
- The series was used to launch Channel 4's 'Walter presents' service in Jan 2016, a selection of European TV dramas.

- In England it topped foreign language drama ratings with over 3m viewers.

- **The series fits into C4s core values – how? Do activity J below.**
- Less popular in Germany itself- disappointing ratings (3.2m at the start down to 1.6m). Possible reasons for lower ratings in Germany:
 - Lack of advertising and promotion of the series.
 - It failed to reach RTL's core female audience
 - Popular among younger viewers but not among a wider segment
 - Discomfort – perhaps a reminder of an uncomfortable period of German history
 - Later episodes (there were 8 in total) did not grip audiences as much as the first



ACTIVITY D GENERAL FACTS – present the production information on this page in a visually interesting way that will help you to learn and revise it. e.g. spider diagram, five finger diagram etc



ACTIVITY E GENRES

A Give examples from the narrative, mise en scene and cinematography of codes and conventions relating to the following genres. Nick Lacey talks about each genre having its own 'repertoire of elements'. List some of the elements for each genre form.

1. Political thriller
2. Spy story
3. Romance
4. Drama
5. Historical drama
6. War
7. Zeitgeist story

B Which is the dominant genre? Describe some of the iconography that we would instantly associate with this genre.

C Do you think Deutschland 83 is a hybrid genre text or is it more unified than other long form TV dramas you have seen?

D To what extent is Steve Neale's view of genre relevant to Stranger Things? ('Repetition and difference', 'repetition and variation').



ACTIVITY F THEORY LINKS use Theory Zone (www.themediastop.co.uk)

Discuss the relevance of the following theories. Which do you think are the most important ones that apply to D83?

1) **Todorov's three part narrative structure.** List the three stages.

Does the action in Episode 1 follow Todorov's theory?

What about cliffhangers, **action and enigma codes (Roland Barthes)**?

See <https://www.slideshare.net/WillowCatlin/action-and-enigma-codes-roland-barthes>

List the questions raised by E1.

e.g. will Moritz remain loyal to East Germany

Will Moritz be able to keep up his cover as a spy or will he be uncovered?

2) Do **Propp's 8 character** types seem to apply here?

Are the archetypes obvious? villain, hero, false hero, donor, dispatcher, princess, father, helper

Which ones are clearer than others? Why is hard to match certain characters?

3) Discuss the **gratifications** of the production. Link to **Dyer's Utopian Solutions Model** - the escapist power of media. (An offshoot of UGT).

4) Think about **Marshall McLuhan's** statement in the 1960s (a pre-internet, pre-digital age) that, thanks to travel and technology such as satellite communications, the world was shrinking and becoming a '**global village**'. How does this apply to the appeal of foreign language products to English-speaking audiences? *There is no doubt that D83, along with many successful Scandinavian crime series such as Borgen, The Bridge and The Killing, have helped English-speaking audiences to overcome their dislike for subtitled productions.* Can you think of other examples of successful non-English imports e.g. from Japanese, Korean and Chinese cinema?

5) Does D83 appeal to different audiences? Which groups? Can you link to **Fiske's** audience theory?

6) Does the film have any modern **feminist** themes?

What is the role of the women? Are the women generally submissive or dominant?

Does it pass the **Bechdel Test**?

Think about the ideas of **John Berger and Laura Mulvey** – objectification and the **Male Gaze**.

Butler and Van Zoonen talk about gender as a performance. Discuss the gender roles in D83. Stereotypes or countertypes?

7) Find examples of visual signifiers pointing to an **East/West binary opposition**. (Levi-Strauss). What other binary opposites can you find in Episode One?

8) Think about **Neale's idea that modern genre is based on repetition and difference**. Is this relevant here? You may like to consider **Lacey's** view of genre as consisting of a '**repertoire of elements**'. Do we make quick assumptions about the genre? Does the text **obey or subvert** our expectations?

9) See the Postmodernism activity G in the next section.

Is the production **postmodern** in any sense? Does it recycle, reinvent and adapt older genre forms? Is there a hybridity and blurring of genre? What about the distortion of binary opposites? Form over content? Comment on how well D83 illustrates **Jameson's** views on Postmodernism and historical blindness.

10) How effectively does the series use **visual signifiers** to show differences between East and West Germany? Use the term '**connotation**'. e.g. X has connotations of A challenge: Can you define some of these signifiers in terms of iconic, indexical or symbolic? (Use [theory zone section on semiotics](#) to help you). What other techniques are used to achieve quick recognition between scenes? (**Roland Barthes** pointed out how meaning is constructed through a collaboration between readers and writers, audiences and producers. This collaboration is a process of encoding and decoding.)

11) Is there a connection with **Gerbner's Mean World Syndrome**? This is a production that deals with a moment of heightened tension between East and West, USA and Russia in the early 1980s. Does this perhaps reflect the **zeitgeist ('spirit of the times')**, a contemporary context of insecurity and paranoia in years around 2014 when the series was written (think about the state of the world post 9/11, a decline of the old certainties, confidence and US feelings of supremacy).

12) **Gauntlet, identity and the spy genre:**

What is the connection between identity and the spy genre? Do you think the spy genre is a good channel for David Gauntlett's view of multiple and fluid identities? If possible, explore some of these ideas more fully.

13) **Henry Jenkins – Fandom**. Check out Twitter feeds on @Deutschland83 and #Deutschland83. Find evidence that social media has contributed to the success of the series.

14) **Clay Shirky** – the online life of a media products. Is there a connection between Henry Jenkins views about fandom and Clay Shirky's idea that media audiences are no longer passive receivers of media content? Do you think the success of D83 proves or disproves Shirky's arguments? You should consider: **a) 'One to many' vs 'many to many' broadcast model. b) The importance of digital conversations c) amateurs vs professionals and the decline of gatekeeping.**

15) You may prefer the '**auteur' theory** view that professionals still know best how to make effective media. What do you think? How does this link to **David Hesmondhalgh's** theories about cultural production and consumption? How mainstream is D83 – is it niche or mass-market?

16) **Post-colonialism (Gilroy & post-colonial 'melancholia' or 'longing')**. Ask a historian or someone with an interest in post-war Germany about the following (you'll need to formulate it as a set of questions).e.g. *Does D83 reflect a longing for the simple days of us vs them? East vs West? Does it show a feeling of 'Ostalgie' – an East German longing for how things were in the old East Germany GDR.*

D83 could be seen as an exploration of post-war Germany and its relationship with the allies who liberated the country from Nazi domination. There is an ambiguity in the Germans' attitude to their liberators. East Germany was much closer to Russia than West Germany was to the US, France and Britain. However, there is no doubt that even West Germans as a whole felt ambivalent about the presence of foreign powers on their territory for so long. This presence could be seen as a shameful reminder of the evils of the Hitler years. There were undoubted pressures for Germans to assert their independence by wanting to break free from these foreign influences. It could be claimed that Germany only became a mature, independent and grown up nation after 1989 and the re-unification of East and West Germany. Even today, the Eastern part of Germany is poorer, with more unemployment and racism. Germany's keenness to play a major role in the EU can also be seen as evidence that it wants to be considered a free independent and successful country free of the tarnished image of the past.



ACTIVITY G DEUTSCHLAND 83 AND POSTMODERNISM

There are some useful activities and reading materials here. Make your own notes and then design a quiz for your teacher or classmate.

<http://mediamacguffin12.blogspot.com/2018/03/tv-postmodernism-and-deutschland-83.html>



ACTIVITY H Using this A-Level theoretical framework: Forms, Audiences, Industry and Representations, write 100 words on each showing how each key area can be linked to Deutschland 83



ACTIVITY i QUIZ ON EPISODE 1

1) Which US President made the famous 'evil empire' speech?	
2) Why were the two students arrested?	
3) What is the music we hear at his mother's birthday?	
4) What is Martin's mother, Ingrid Rauch's job	
5) What two Western luxuries does Lenora give her sister?	
6) What is the last shot of the title sequence?	
7) What symbolic game is played during the visit of the two agents who have come to recruit Martin as a spy?	
8) 3 letter name of the East German secret service	
9) What is the title of the magazine in Moritz's hotel room when he comes round in the West?	
10) Apart from dictionaries, what other books does Moritz have to study during his training as a spy?	
11) What is the name of the other undercover agent on the base?	
12) Who is Alex and why is he 'different'?	
13) What does Edel ask Moritz to buy for the US general Jackson?	
14) Which word best describes Gen Edel's attitude to W Germany's partnership with the US: enthusiastic/ worried / excited	
15) What do we call the tense hostile stand-off between Russia and the US that characterized many of the decades after WW2	
16) What is the name of Edel's mistrustful, humourless receptionist?	
17) Moritz makes a mistake at the party, saying he once danced salsa to a band from which communist country?	
18) Name the track playing in the supermarket? And at Edel's BBQ?	
19) What is the name of Edel's sister in law with the alcohol problem?	
20) How does Lenora persuade Moritz to stay and continue as an undercover agent?	



Activity J

Read about Channel 4's core values and vision statement below and then write at least 300 words answering the following question:



To what extent does Deutschland 83 reflect Channel 4's core values

Channel 4's CORE VALUES

2002 motto (Mark Thompson): **"do it first, make trouble, inspire change"**.

C4 has a statutory public service remit. It is regulated by OFCOM, and commercially funded

- Be innovative and distinctive
 - Challenge the status quo
 - Stimulate public debate on contemporary issues
 - Reflect cultural diversity of the UK
 - Champion alternative points of view
 - Inspire change in people's lives
 - Nurture new and existing talent
-

Our aim is to "foster the new and experimental in television. It will encourage pluralism, provide a favoured place for the untried and encourage innovation

Our aim is to maintain the relevance of Channel 4's remit and values in the new media landscape of the digital age.

Our ambition is to remain true to our unique role in UK broadcasting. We are a commercial broadcaster, with a funding structure and public service remit to provide diverse and innovative programming and services.

We are there to offer a benchmark of quality and innovation, providing competition to commercial and public sector broadcasters alike.

We will use our reputation for risk and non-conformism to engage a younger generation in the values of public service broadcasting.

Our public service remit extends beyond the value we offer to the viewing public to our contribution to the strength and diversity of the British creative economy. We will reflect a range of voices which are in danger of being crowded out by an increasingly commodified television environment.

We will seek out each year a wider range of production companies than any other broadcaster. They will be drawn from across the UK. We will encourage new production and new media companies. We aim to be the point of connection for UK independent talent across different creative industries.

We will reflect the diversity of Britain; culturally and geographically. We will reflect the energy of our multicultural society, by representing the voices of a new generation of programme makers from the ethnic minorities. We will reflect the complexity of Britain back to itself, in the range of programmes and production companies commissioned from cities across the whole of the UK.

USEFUL ARTICLES Read and then answer the questions on starting on page 21

ARTICLE 1

Deutschland 83 recap, episode one – Quantum Jump The Guardian, Sarah Hughes 3 Jan 2016¹

This fast-paced cold war espionage drama set in Germany in 1983 opens with a young East German getting drafted into the world of spooks by his scheming aunt. A fantastic start to **Channel 4's** new **Walter Presents on demand service**.

Welcome to what promises to be an entertaining eight weeks. *Deutschland 83*, created by husband and wife team Anna and Jörg Winger, is the cornerstone of Channel 4's new Walter Presents on demand service, which offers up the best of European drama. It's a fast-paced tale of espionage set in Germany in 1983, a time when the cold war was getting notably hotter as the United States and the Soviet Union squared off with the continued existence of the Berlin Wall a convenient sticking point and the threat of imminent nuclear meltdown increasingly possible. *D83* makes that terror clear from the start, kicking off the series with Ronald Reagan's infamous "Evil Empire" speech.

The interesting thing about this show, however, is its tone. **D83 is as much coming of age story as spy thriller**. Thus, in the opening episode at least, our hero Moritz Stamm aka Martin Rauch (a nice performance from Jonas Nay) is as much concerned about the threat his double existence poses to his love life as he is about the traumas of suddenly becoming a spy.

There's a lovely light-handed feel to some of the scenes and that works surprisingly well, reminding us that while momentous (and often terrible) things are happening, people are also going about their daily lives and dealing with small worries and woes. Not everything works – the dialogue is occasionally a little heavy-handedand there is occasionally the sense that we're skating on the surface of history rather than mining its depths. But these are very minor quibbles in a well-paced and interesting first episode, which did a great job of introducing a large number of characters and potential storylines in an economical 47 minutes.

In the east we meet Martin, a wide-eyed but not-so-innocent twenty-something who serves in the East German army on the border of the Berlin Wall. He's got a sick mother, Ingrid, who raised him single-handedly, a lovely girlfriend named Annett and a nice line in terrorising innocent acting troupes in order to claim their copies of Shakespeare for his mum.

Unfortunately for Martin, he also has a scheming Aunty Lenora (who is a high-ranking East German government official who is therefore able to travel to the West). Lenora has big ideas regarding her young nephew and isn't above using a bit of emotional (and literal) blackmail to get them. Luckily for her, Ingrid desperately needs a kidney transplant but can't get on the waiting list. So it is that young Martin finds himself rechristened Moritz and heading to Bonn to serve as aide-de-camp to General Edel, a senior West German army officer whose dealings are mainly with the Americans.

We meet Professor Tobias Tischbier, an East German who has been deep undercover in the West since 1961. We also meet General Edel and his family, including would-be singer Yvonne, who has an interesting line in conversation ("Do you like black music?") and her conflicted

¹ Adapted from: <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/tvandradioblog/2016/jan/03/deutschland-83-recap-episode-one-quantum-jump>

brother Alex, who doesn't seem as enamoured of nuclear weapons as a means of deterrent as the rest of the military.

The Edels are also in possession of a dodgy aunty (what is it with aunts on this show?), only in their case poor Renate just likes to drink a bit, which means that no one believes her when she overhears Martin blowing his cover by phoning home to Annett. That, unfortunately, turns out to be the only bit of good luck that young Martin/Moritz gets this episode as after managing to secretly photograph General Jackson's plans he then finds that it's not quite as straightforward as 'mission accomplished and get me out of here'. Instead, Aunt Lenora points out that what he's photographed is a list of American bomb targets, all of which are in East Germany. "The lives of millions of East Germans are at stake, not just one" she acerbically points out. Oh dear.

One of the most enjoyable things about this show is that Martin/Moritz isn't a very good spy – which is about right given that he's only had three weeks training and doesn't want to do the job anyway. Yet there are intriguing hints that he might be better at double-crossing than you'd think. The scene with the drama students at the border showed that he's good at pretending to be something he's not.

I also enjoyed the small things that Martin is just totally confused by – the phones, the different names for the products. It brought home just how difficult leading a double life would actually be.

The poor original Moritz Stamm was shot dead in a railway carriage with no one left in his family to mourn him. His death served as a stark reminder that the stakes are genuinely high.

One thing this show does brilliantly is the soundtrack, which this week included New Order's Blue Monday and Eurhythmics' Sweet Dreams, in addition to Nena's 99 Luftballons ("That song is everywhere," remarked Alex).

Anna Winger has said that the title sequence comes from actual Nato military exercises from that year.

So what did you think? Will you be tuning in next week? Does Martin have potential as a spy or has Lenora taken a huge risk? Will Annett find out the truth? And how long do you give it before Martin as Moritz becomes tempted by Yvonne?

ARTICLE 2 Channel 4 Press Release 12 January 2016

Deutschland 83 becomes UK's highest rated foreign-language drama

The release of fully consolidated ratings for the launch episode of *Deutschland 83* has shown that the German spy drama is now the highest rated foreign-language drama in UK TV history.

After launching with 1.49 million viewers, the first episode has now consolidated with 2.5 million viewers, overtaking the launch of *The Returned* (9th June 2013) on Channel 4 which previously held the record with 2.2 million. The series forms part of *Walter Presents*, a brand new on-demand service showcasing the world's best foreign-language drama.

Set against the real events, culture wars and political realities of Germany in the 1980s, *Deutschland 83* is a stylish coming of age story, framed within a suspenseful thriller. Season 1 culminates with the true story of a nuclear stand-off in late 1983, caused by a NATO war game and botched intelligence on the East German side.

Created by husband and wife team Anna and Jörg Winger, *Deutschland 83* is the first German-speaking drama to play on a mainstream US cable network.

Walter Presents will eventually host more than 600 hours of drama that will be available for box-set viewing on All 4, including the option to download episodes to watch on the go.

Praise for Deutschland 83

"It's only January but let's call it already: coolest show of the year." (Grazia)

"This is the next subtitled sensation.....unmissable TV." (TV Times)

"This pacy saga could be your new subtitled obsession." (The Guardian)

"A stylish curtain-raiser for Walter Presents." (The Times)

"Great fun, and powered by an irresistible 1983 vintage soundtrack." (The Daily Telegraph)

"Evocative and gripping." (The Daily Mail)

ARTICLE 3 GERMAN 'ROLLING STONE' MAGAZINE November 2015

- It is important to be able to talk about a new series – the buzz, word of mouth help to create success.
- At last German TV has come of age and established itself on the International stage.
- Gripping narrative; title sequence reminiscent of HBO's Homeland. Documents need copying, mics need hiding, US missile placements and plans uncovered.
- Strong female leads.
- Nay praised for his great acting; strong characterization – clumsy at first but capable of being ruthless.
- Praise for music sound track. There is plenty of audience gratification in recognizing hits of the 1980s
- News footage – e.g. Ronald Reagan also makes people look back but compare as well with the present time.
- Political situation characterized by paranoia and insecurity;
- The best German TV series for ages; excellent mise en scene and attention to detail, acting quality and music.
- At last, a German series of international quality.

Deutschland 83 is the eight-part flagship of [Channel 4's new Walter Presents](#) streaming service. That service got off to a flying start with this East German version of [Homeland](#) - the story of an undercover Stasi spy who infiltrates the West German army in 1983.

The plot of the first episode was pretty simple. Martin Rauch (Jonas Nay) is a square-jawed, 24-year-old East German soldier, recruited by the East German secret police. His mission is to go undercover as an aid to a senior West German officer, and get hold of American plans for attacking East Germany.

The first episode depended on fairly basic exercises in tension creation. When Rauch threatened to give up his mission and return home, he was told his dying mother would then be taken off a kidney transplant list. To break into the West German officer's room to photograph classified documents, he deployed his not very glamorous training in lock-breaking. It was hardly a patch on Q's sessions with [James Bond](#), even in the early Bond films.

So far, so unremarkable, then. The pleasure came from the little details of life on the other side of the Iron Curtain. 1983 isn't so long ago, but Communist East Germany now looks like another planet: the orange curtains, the cheap clothes, the pathetic excitement of teenagers at listening to illicit western pop music, particularly Nena's original German version of 99 Red Balloons.

All this was extremely well done. Much of the series was filmed in the [old Stasi headquarters](#), now the Stasi Museum, in East Berlin. As well as being a monument to a corrupt state based on mass informing on each other, the Stasi HQ was a lesson in early Eighties bad taste.

The subtle differences between East and West Germany were also teased out. Agent Rauch clearly didn't have to learn a new language to move from East to West, but he does have to learn the tiny differences in vocabulary that had developed over the four decades since the war. While West Germans shopped at Supermarkts, East Germans went to the Kaufhalle.

When Rauch ended up in a Bonn Supermarkt, he was astonished by the range of food on offer. You got a subtle feeling that he was already beginning to doubt the superiority of the East, merely at the sight of grocery shelves, fully stacked with apples and oranges.

² <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/tv-and-radio-reviews/12075877/Deutschland-83-review-gripping.html>

The period feel was heightened with snatches of news footage of Erich Honecker, the East German leader. Most gripping of all was a televised excerpt from Ronald Reagan's "["Evil Empire" speech](#)" in 1983.

That everyday nature of evil was cleverly captured in Deutschland 83. The Stasi baddies spoke the same language as the goodies in West Germany; they wore less fashionable versions of the same kind of clothes. And the charm of the protagonist, Martin Rauch, was such that you rather wanted him to pull off his clunking espionage stunts against the West - ie us.

This is a period drama that sometimes lacks drama but makes up for it with a deep sense of period.

See also:

The Guardian: popular and global success. German discomfort

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/17/deutschland-83-wowed-world-germans-dont-like-it>

New Statesman article

<https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/tv-radio/2016/01/deutschland-83-has-us-rooting-bad-guys-again-what-it-about-east-germany>

Hollywood Reporter

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/deutschland-83-uk-ratings-record-854864>

There's a useful series of activities and notes on the program here:

<http://mediamacguffin12.blogspot.com/2018/03/tv-deutschland-83-case-study.html>



Activity K YouTube

Producer and writer Jörg and Anna Winger talk about the background

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OowZUsLGFxQ>

YouTube search: Anna and Joerg Winger + Interview + Deutschland 83

1. What do they say about fiction vs reality? Which bits are 'real'?
2. Who were the producers and distributors? What do they reveal about the importance of personal connections in the TV industry?
3. What does the interview reveal about globalization?



ACTIVITY L Questions about the Articles

Article 1 p15

- 1) What is 'Walter Presents' and what year did it start? (see date of article)
- 2) D83 will have how many episodes?
- 3) Given the main character's real and undercover names (first and last).
- 4) Who plays the main protagonist?
- 5) What is meant by a 'coming of age' story?
- 6) What two criticisms does the writer make of the episode?
- 7) Give three positives that she mentions.
- 8) Explain why there were close links between the German and American generals.
- 9) Why is the opening scene (where Martin is a border guard) so important?
- 10) What things surprise him about life in the West?

Article 2 C4 p17

- 1) How do you think D83 fits in with Channel 4's core values? [See page x]. How does the 'Walter Presents' service fit this model as well?
- 2) What do the viewing figures (ratings) show? What do you think is meant by 'consolidated' ratings?
- 3) Which two genres does the series mainly cover?
- 4) Why was the series a first in the US?
- 5) Comment on the possible oxymoron of the TV Times quotation
- 6) How might the Daily Telegraph's quotation attract wider audiences.

Article 3 p18 German Rolling Stone

How does this article seem to demonstrate a new pride in German creativity?

Article 4 Daily Telegraph p19

- 1) Look up: what was the Stasi?
- 2) Explain the comparison with James Bond films.
- 3) What is meant by the phrase 'iron curtain'?
- 4) What sort of things are different on the 'other side of the Iron Curtain'?
- 5) According to the author, what may cause Martin/Moritz to change his admiration for the east?
- 6) Why do you think the writer thinks the audience is behind Martin/Moritz?

Answers to Quiz p13

1) Which US President made the famous 'evil empire' speech?	Ronald Reagan
2) Why were the two students arrested?	possessing banned Western books
3) What is the music we hear at his mother's birthday?	99 Red Balloons
4) What is Martin's mother, Ingrid Rauch's job	Sports teacher
5) What two Western luxuries does Lenora give her sister?	Nescafé, cigarettes
6) What is the last shot of the title sequence?	The A Bomb explosion
7) What symbolic game is played during the visit of the two agents who have come to recruit Martin as a spy?	chess
8) 3 letter name of the East German secret service	HVA
9) What is the title of the magazine in Moritz's hotel room when he comes round in the West?	Spiegel
10) Apart from dictionaries, what other books does Moritz have to study during his training as a spy?	W German army manuals
11) What is the name of the other undercover agent on the base?	Karl Kramer
12) Who is Alex and why is he 'different'?	son of General Edel and a rebel (& gay)
13) What does Edel ask Moritz to buy for the US general Jackson?	cigarettes
14) Which word best describes Gen Edel's attitude to W Germany's partnership with the US: enthusiastic/ worried / excited	worried
15) What do we call the tense hostile stand-off between Russia and the US that characterized many of the decades after WW2	Cold War
16) What is the name of Edel's mistrustful, humourless receptionist?	Frau Netz
17) Moritz makes a mistake at the party, saying he once danced salsa to a band from which communist country?	Cuba
18) Name the track playing in the supermarket? And at Edel's BBQ?	Eurythmics 'Sweet Dreams' 10CC: I'm not in Love
19) What is the name of Edel's sister in law with the alcohol problem?	Renate
20) How does Lenora persuade Moritz to stay and continue as an undercover agent?	threatens to cancel his mother's kidney transplant operation



Sample Exam Questions – (Remember that in the exam you will need to refer to two long form TV dramas, *Stranger Things* plus a non-English language production)
For now, you can just limit your answers to 'Deutschland 83'

This is a synoptic question, (=bringing together all aspects covered throughout the course). You will be rewarded for drawing together knowledge and understanding from your full course of study, including different areas theoretical framework and media contexts.

A) Why do long form television dramas from different countries offer different representations? [20]

In your answer you must:

- consider the contexts in which long form television dramas are produced and consumed
- explain how media contexts may have influenced representations in the set episodes of the two long form television dramas you have studied
- make judgements and reach conclusions about the reasons for the differences in representation between the two episodes.

B) Evaluate the relevance of Todorov's theory of narratology to long form television drama. [20]

C) Discuss the extent to which the long form television dramas you have studied challenge the conventions of genre. (Your answer should make reference to **both** long form television dramas you have studied: one from List A and one from List B) [20]

D) Discuss the extent to which your chosen long form television dramas successfully target their audiences. (Your answer should make reference to **both** long form television dramas you have studied: one from List A and one from List B) [20]

E) Evaluate the usefulness of academic ideas and arguments in helping your understanding of how media language is used in **one** of the long form television dramas that you have studied. [10]



Extra questions and discussion points

- 1) How does the first episode draw the audience in?
- 2) How do long form TV dramas successfully target different audiences?
- 3) Discuss the representation of location in the dramas you have studied.
- 4) Compare and contrast the representations of certain groups in the dramas you have studied e.g. authority figures, police, children, women, villains, parents.
- 5) How does long form TV drama successfully cross national and cultural boundaries to gain foreign audiences.
- 6) Discuss the differences in style between the English language and the non English language TV drama you have studied.
- 7) Discuss the role of intertextuality and other postmodern conventions such as self-referencing, parody and pastiche in your chosen TV dramas.
- 8) How does the format of a long-form drama influence the structure of the narrative?
- 9) To what extent do the dramas you have studied reflect the cultural, social, economic and political context of the countries in which they were produced?
- 10) Which academic ideas, if any, could be useful in adding to an appreciation of the dramas you have studied?

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