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Michael Giltz

Freelance writer

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Movies: NYFF #2 -- *Dreileben* This Year's *Red Riding* Trilogy (Almost)

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DREILEBEN TRILOGY ** 1/2 out of ****

Part One: Beats Being Dead ***

Part Two: Don't Follow Me Around ***

Part Three: One Minute Of Darkness **

NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL

The New York Film Festival kicks into high gear on Day Two with the German trilogy *Dreileben*. It contains three films -- each about 90 minutes in length -- all linked in some way to the story of an alleged killer on the loose. You immediately think of the UK *Red Riding* trilogy, which looked into the corruption and decay of the Yorkshire police. It was based on a quartet of books by

David Peace. These films are originals, each one directed by a different rising talent from Germany. Another key difference is that the *Red Riding* films were first and foremost crime stories, whereas in *Dreileben* the man on the loose is merely a haunting presence until the final film.

Part One is called "Beats Being Dead" and it's the best of the bunch. In it, a young man studying to be a doctor is in the somewhat isolated region of Dreileben. He's a favorite of the top man but on the outs with the man's pretty daughter, who our hero had been dating. That leads him unexpectedly into the arms of a young local woman, who is from a different class and indeed from a different world. She's friends with a biker gang of sorts and their tense, uneasy but immediately sexual relationship has a nice see-saw quality as each one gains the upper hand depending on where they are and what they're doing. Wandering the streets or anytime the gang is near, she's in charge. In his world of privilege, our hero seems to have the upper hand. In a very brief time they flirt and have sex and she is soon fantasizing

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about going with him to Los Angeles when he begins the next phase of his training. Class, gender, education, physical strength -- it all comes into play here in an interesting way, with the killer on the loose a shadowy bogeyman. An abrupt, intriguing ending makes this the most satisfying film of the bunch and it can easily be enjoyed on its own. Here's a scene from the film.

(Note: That's Linda Ronstadt singing on "Cry Me A River." She's blossomed into an excellent big band singer; I hope she does more.)

Part Two is called "Don't Follow Me Around." It revolves around a female detective who is part of a team that's come to town to help with the manhunt. However, it soon turns out the team is also there to crack down on corruption, something the local cops are none too pleased about. Our heroine stays with an old friend and the woman's best-selling author of a husband. Complicated entanglements ensue because both women were once in love with another man and our heroine encourages (or just doesn't deter?) her friend from leaving the husband to pursue that lost love. But for what reason? It's a little twisty and unexpected and the ending is again satisfying. As with all three films, there is some modest cross-over of characters.

Part Three is called "One Minute Of Darkness." It's easily the weakest because the focus is on the alleged killer on the loose. He's not necessarily mentally challenged but he's rather simple to say the least, a sheltered mamma's boy who may or may not have lashed out in violence without quite being fully responsible for his actions. Or so we imagine after following him for a while. Even an evil man can be empathized with as he's hunted down and this fellow seems so odd and harmless, you easily root for him (at least a little) as he clammers through the forest, hides in storm drains and the like. However, he's also rather dull and the wrap-up is a cheat on several levels and very unsatisfying.

Overall, *Dreileben* is an interesting stunt filled with some solid performances, though it might be draining as a festival event and better enjoyed on DVD.

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called *Popsurfing* and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

Note: Michael Giltz has access to free screenings of all the movies at the festival.

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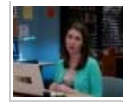
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