



# DARK

A NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES

concept by  
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And when you gaze long enough into an abyss  
the abyss also gazes into you.

*Friedrich Nietzsche*





## CONCEPT

Dark is a show about a small, rural German town entangled in the mystery of children gone missing.

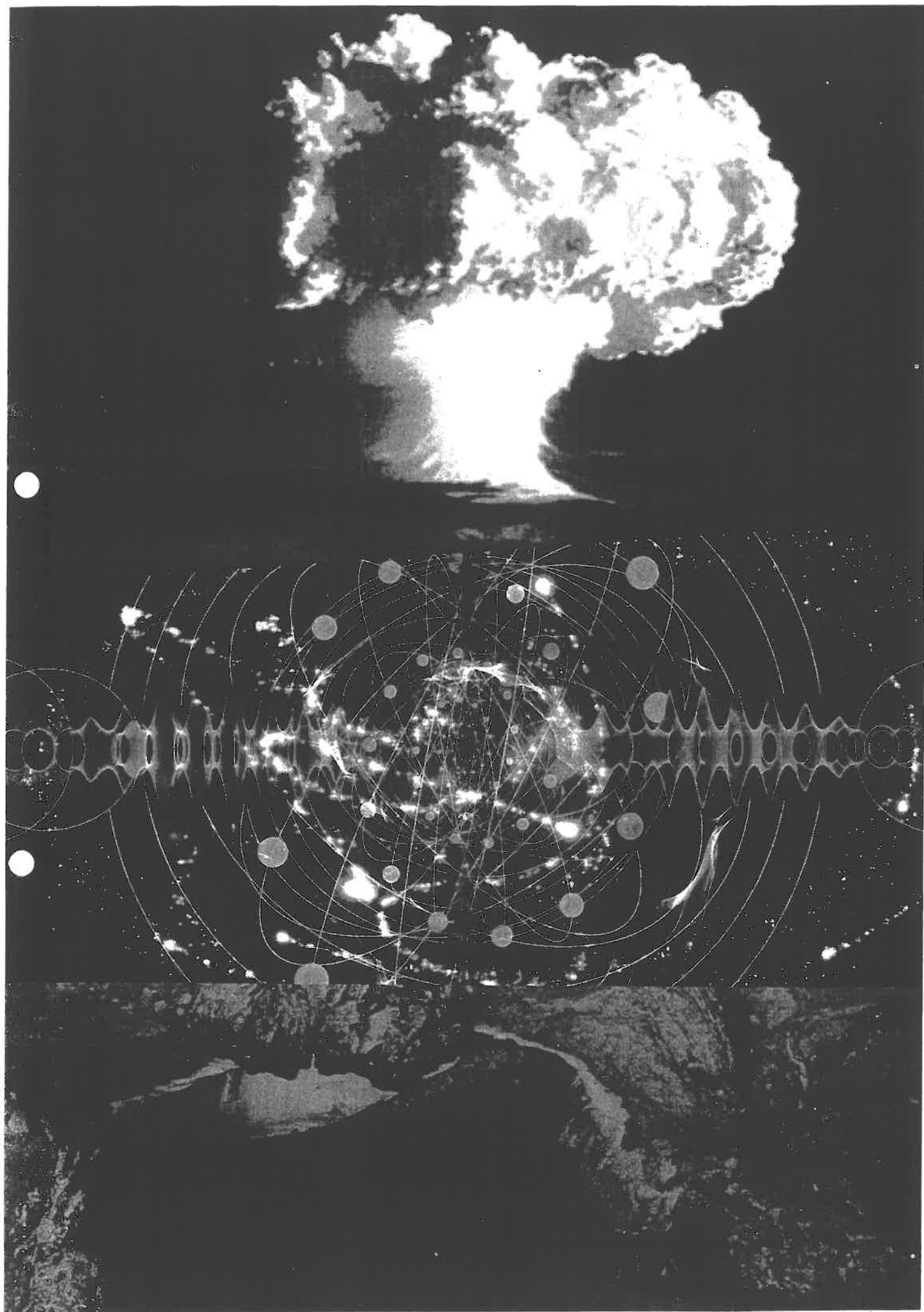
In its center are four families. The grandparents, parents and their teenage kids. Their lives falling apart after the youngest child of one of the families goes missing. Through the investigation we get a glimpse behind the curtains of small town life. The secrets hidden from plain sight, the double lives behind the pretty house facades and the darkness that lurks behind every door.

But this is not your typical crime drama show. This is in fact something entirely different.

A family saga with a supernatural twist, as the clues to who took the children lead to a supernatural phenomena. A crack in time that lets you travel between three time zones. The present, 1986 and 1953.

But how do you catch a serial killer that travels through time?

Through the three time-zones, the present, 1986 and 1953, we will not only piece by piece unravel the secrets and sins of the towns inhabitants, teenagers, parents and grandparents alike, but we will also slowly reveal how everything is really connected and that the question is not who and where the killer is, but when.



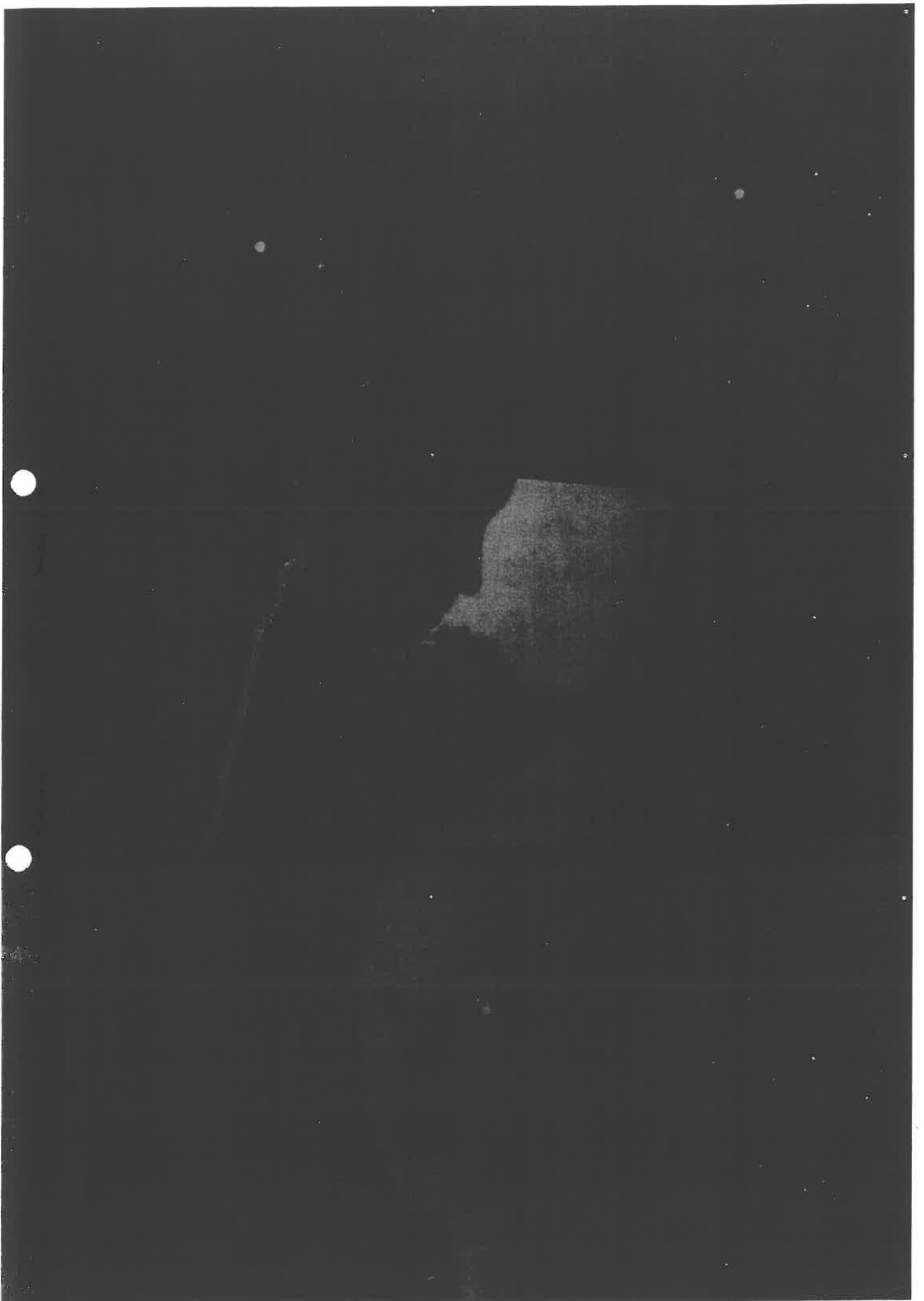


What if an atomic event could cause a concussion in the time-space continuum. Creating a temporal loop. Just like throwing a stone in the water, the hit would create waves in both directions. Changing the chain of cause and effect both in the past and the future.

What if the massive atomic catastrophe of Tchernobyl in 1986 had caused exactly that?

And furthermore, what if this breach was discovered by someone with dark intentions? A killer from the past traveling through time to commit a crime that could never be solved. How could this killer ever be caught?

And would time and space itself fight back to set things straight again?





# CHARACTERS

The story starts in 2017 and evolves around three generations of four families living in the fictitious small town of Winden, located somewhere in the east of Frankonia. A place that seems innocent on a first look, with an intact community, but behind closed doors we discover absolutely nothing is right here.

There are the **KAHNWALDS**:

**JONAS** (15) and his mother, who live alone after Jonas father **MICHAEL** (44) took his life over a year ago. Jonas is a handsome boy, but quiet. He doesn't like to reveal much about himself. Not that he is secretly in love with his best friend's girlfriend and even less that he spend his last summer in a psych ward.

**HANNAH** (46) is a strong and independent woman, who is disconnected to her own emotions. She works at a local bookstore. To others she comes across as aloof and cold. Her inability to feel herself leads her to not only have an affair with the local police officer but also desert to various forms of self hurt.

**INES** (73) mother of Michael and mentally ill. She has been living in a housing home in the city for over 5 years now and she doesn't seem to relate to reality anymore, living in her own self-made world. Constantly mumbling one phrase: *'Time has come.'*

There are the **TIEDEMANNs**:

Jonas best friend **BARTOSZ** (15), who runs a small drug business at school. Selling pills he steals from his mother's supply.

Bartosz's father **ALEKSANDER** (50), who is one of the richest man in town and owner of the paper factory, but holds the secret that he took over another man's identity when he came from Poland to Germany in the 80's.

Bartosz's mother **REGINA** (47), who is still trying to cope with the loss of a second child during labor a couple of years ago, holding on to a strange mixture of pills and religion.

**HELGE** (78), Regina's father, who used to be the mayor of Winden in the 80's and is now a retired intellectual and late environmental activist who lives in a completely green, self sufficient house outside the city perimeters.

There are the **NIELSENS**:

Bartosz is dating **MARTHA** (14), beautiful and mysterious but also a little on the strange side, believing she has certain supernatural abilities like communicating with electricity. In fact light bulbs do blow from time to time when she's around. But is this really supernatural or just coincidence?

Martha is also the daughter of the local police officer **ULRICH** (47) and sister of **MAGNUS** (17) and **MIKKEL** (10). Their mother **KATHARINA** (46), a teacher at the local school and devoted community worker. Martha knows that Jonas is interested in her and she happily gives fire to the sexual tension between them. But the sexual tension between the two families goes even a step further with Martha's father Ulrich having an affair with Jonas' mother Hannah.

**TRONTE** (80) and **JANA** (78) **NIELSEN**, Ulrich's parents who are devastated by the new events, as history seems to repeat itself with their youngest son, Ulrich's brother **MADS** went missing in 1986 as well and was never to be found again.

And there are the **DOPPLERS**:

The fourth family is the local pastor's family. **PETER** (50) and **ANNA** (45). Their elder daughter **FRANZISKA** (16), the good as gold high school student and her strange little sister **ELISABETH** (7), who has a hearing disability and is somewhat of a social outcast.

**CLAUDIA** (79), Peter's mother, a sadistic, bitter woman, who carries a secret that reaches into the year 1953 and is the final missing piece to solve the mystery to the disappearance of the children.

Once we venture out to the other time lines of 1986 and 1953 we will have the pleasure to meet the parents in the 80s as teenagers as well as the grandparents in the 50s as teenagers. Opening up whole new lines of conflict and entanglement between the families.

And even more intriguing we can have the teenagers meet their parents as teenagers in the past. The teenagers from the past meet themselves as grandparents in the future.



## SEASON PERSPECTIVES

2017. In the first season, we will establish the small town atmosphere, which on the outside looks so clean and morally intact, but once you look behind the curtains, it is rotten to its core.

The pilot starts with the first day of school after summer vacation. We shortly set-up all our characters.

Opening at the Kahnwald's house with Hannah and Ulrich having rushed sex on the morning of the first day of school. Ulrich climbing out of Hannah's window and disappearing into the forest, while Jonas is getting ready for school downstairs.

At the Doppler's house: Peter in church adjusting a crucifix on the wall. Elisabeth sitting in front of the TV, making strange guttural sounds while watching a cartoon. Franziska looking at herself in the mirror, adjusting her boobs, before buttoning up her blouse.

At the Tiedemann's: Bartosz getting in the back of a black limousine, watching a spider crawl up the window. Alexander getting inside the car, turning on the engine. No words spoken between father and son. Regina locked into the bathroom, opening the pill cabinet.

And finally at the Nielsens, where Ulrich returns from his 'morning jog', carrying freshly baked rolls in a bag. He kisses his kids good-bye, who have already mounted their bikes and tell Ulrich, that their mother is already at school. Katharina in her class-room looking out onto the schoolyard and the first children arriving.

We quickly get the feeling, that on the contrary to its picturesque beauty, nothing is right in this town. To this feeling adds the fact, that the city is plastered with fair-weathered pictures of a boy (ERIC 12), who went missing almost two month ago before summer vacation.

As we follow Jonas on his bike riding through the woods, we suddenly spot someone between the trees and so does Jonas. But when Jonas stops the bike and turns around the figure is gone. At the same time Ulrich comes out of the shower and gets dressed in his police uniform.

The teenagers meet in school and the first day starts with an assembly at the gym and the headmistress talking about new security guidelines and the tragedy of Eric's disappearance. But none of this seems to have any impact on the kids. To them Eric's disappearance is more of a thankful break from otherwise dull school life.

Magnus, who is somewhat leader of the pack suggests that they should go on a night hike dare the same night. He wants to hike to the old cave-system to look for Eric, as he's sure the little creep just ran away from home and is hiding in the caves.

The sun sets over Winden. The camera travels towards the caves. It moves into one of the entrances until it's swallowed in complete darkness.

As night has fallen the parents are at Aleksander's 50's birthday party running their little affair schemes, while the kids venture out into the woods. Taking young Mikkel along with them, as Magnus and Martha are supposed to babysit and he begs them to take him along.

At the same time we see a pair of old, worn down running shoes from the 80's stepping through leaves and branches. The shoes step onto the dark concrete of a street that winds through the woods. For a moment they just stand still.

The parents meanwhile try to take the edge of their midlife crises with vast amounts of alcohol and embarrassing flirt moves.

At the same time, the kids get to the caves already spurred on by Magnus' horror tales, when suddenly they think they hear someone in the dark. Branches cracking. A figure behind a tree? And when the light of the only torchlight they brought mysteriously goes out, they panic. Each one of them runs off into a different direction. Chaos. Darkness. Silence.

When they meet back on the street down in the woods, Mikkel is missing.

The kids call out for Mikkel, but he's not answering. They panic. Search the forest. Nothing. Driven by guilt they rush to Bartosz's house where the party is at full swing to tell the adults what happened.

Quickly a search party is formed and everyone in the small town is out in the woods looking for Mikkel. The kids in their beds unable to sleep. The night and their shared guilt will bind them forever.

At the end of the pilot, just as the sun comes up, the search party will find the corpse of a young boy. But this is not Mikkell, and it's not Erik either. It's a young boy no one has ever seen before. His body badly mutilated. He's wearing nothing else but an original Ghostbusters t-shirt.

As the season develops we will slowly unravel the mystery of the missing boys. What looks like a normal crime investigation will turn into something else entirely. What this is, we'll start to understand, when at the end of episode 3 we're suddenly back with missing Mikkell.

We watch him wake up in the darkness of the caves. He stumbles out of them and runs through the woods and to his house. He rings the bell and a teenage boy, we haven't seen before opens up. Michael wants to see his father, but the teenage boy doesn't understand. Mikkell asks to see Ulrich Nielsen. The teenage boy looks at Mikkell puzzled: 'I am Ulrich Nielsen.' Michael turns pale, backs off, starts running, all the way down from the road in the woods and into Winden. But this is not the Winden we know. This is the Winden from 1986.

As the teenagers start to quickly realize that something is truly off and that the cause of the missing boys might have to do with something supernatural, the parents are far away to go down this road. With the rising panic in Winden, everyone soon suspects everyone, which leads to fear taking over the small town's lives.

Only Ulrich in his desperation to find Mikkell is willing to look beyond what is only looking like a typical murder investigation on first sight. And when he discovers that the corpse they found looks astonishingly similar to a young boy who went missing in 1986, he will start to listen to the kids theories.

In the last episodes of the season, we will realize that 33 years ago at the same spot, boys had gone missing over the course of a summer as well and we will pick up a second line of narration, which takes place in 1986, where we will get to know the young selves of our present parents.

And we will start to reveal the mystery behind the caves. The thing that causes everything: A crack in time that binds the three time lines, 1953, 1986 and now.

While we follow the investigation of the kids and grown ups we will also discover all the little sins and secrets of our protagonists, some revealed in the now and some in the past.

We'll see...

Jonas and Martha starting an affair, cheating on Bartosz.

Magnus and Franziska having sex. Revealing that Franziska is not the good girl she claims to be. But actually sells nude pics of her on the internet and takes interest in strange sexual practices.

Bartosz selling drugs at school, taking them from his mom and stealing money from his father to buy dope for resale.

Ulrich and Hannah's affair turning bad, after Mikkel goes missing.

Katharina almost committing suicide.

Regina almost committing murder.

We'll discover...

What Jonas did in his summer vacation, spending it in a psychological rehabilitation center.

Why Jonas father really took his life. And how his story is entangled with the temporal loop.

That Anna is having an affair with the English teacher.

That Aleksander is not the man he claims to be.

That Peter is actually homo-sexual.

In the last episode of season one we will yet come with another surprise and that is, that the breach in the time-space continuum does not only connect the present with 1986 but also with 1953. Which opens up another line of narration in the 50's, the grandparents now teenagers and the town of Winden shaken by the discovery of several dead bodies of young boys whose identities are unknown.

In the last frames of season one we'll close in on one of the dead bodies. We'll recognize his face. It's the boy from the search pictures on the lamp posts in present Winden: Eric.

Through the seasons we will come closer to unravelling the mystery behind everything. How the three timezones are connected. What caused the breach. And what happens when you mess with time. Leading to discoveries that tragically link the lives of all our protagonists.

And we'll get step for step closer to who is the killer. In the 50s still a young boy that is sexually harassed by his father. Growing into a troubled adult in the 80s, who discovers the crack in time inside the caves by accident and uses it to kidnap boys in the future and dump their bodies in the past. An old man in the present time-line who now relives the consequences of what he has done in the past as the boys disappear in front of his eyes, taken by his young self.



1986



# 1986

1986 marks the year that caused everything. The crack in time that builds a bridge between, 1953, 1986 and now. Through a gap in the caves the killer gets his victims in the future and gets rid of the bodies in the past.

But the use of three time zones is also a way to look at German society in the changing.

1986 being a year that all grown ups in Europe still remember. As the atomic catastrophe of Tchernobyl marked the time where careless, placid every day life was suddenly disrupted by a new form of threat. It was the period of time where we as children and teenagers were locked up inside because of our parents fear of the radioactive aftermath.

But it was is also the year of the challenger explosion, of Glasnost and Perestroika and the poisoning of the river Rhein which lead to the dying of fish in unimaginable numbers. It was the year where the top music charts were reserved for Austrian and German singers like Falco, Modern Talking and Münchner Freiheit. The year of the soccer world championship in Mexico, in which Germany lost to Argentina in the finals. The time of Atari, the Rubix Cube and listening to music on your Walkmen. The young generation of the 80s being the first to live without any guilt or connection to Germany's dark history.



1953

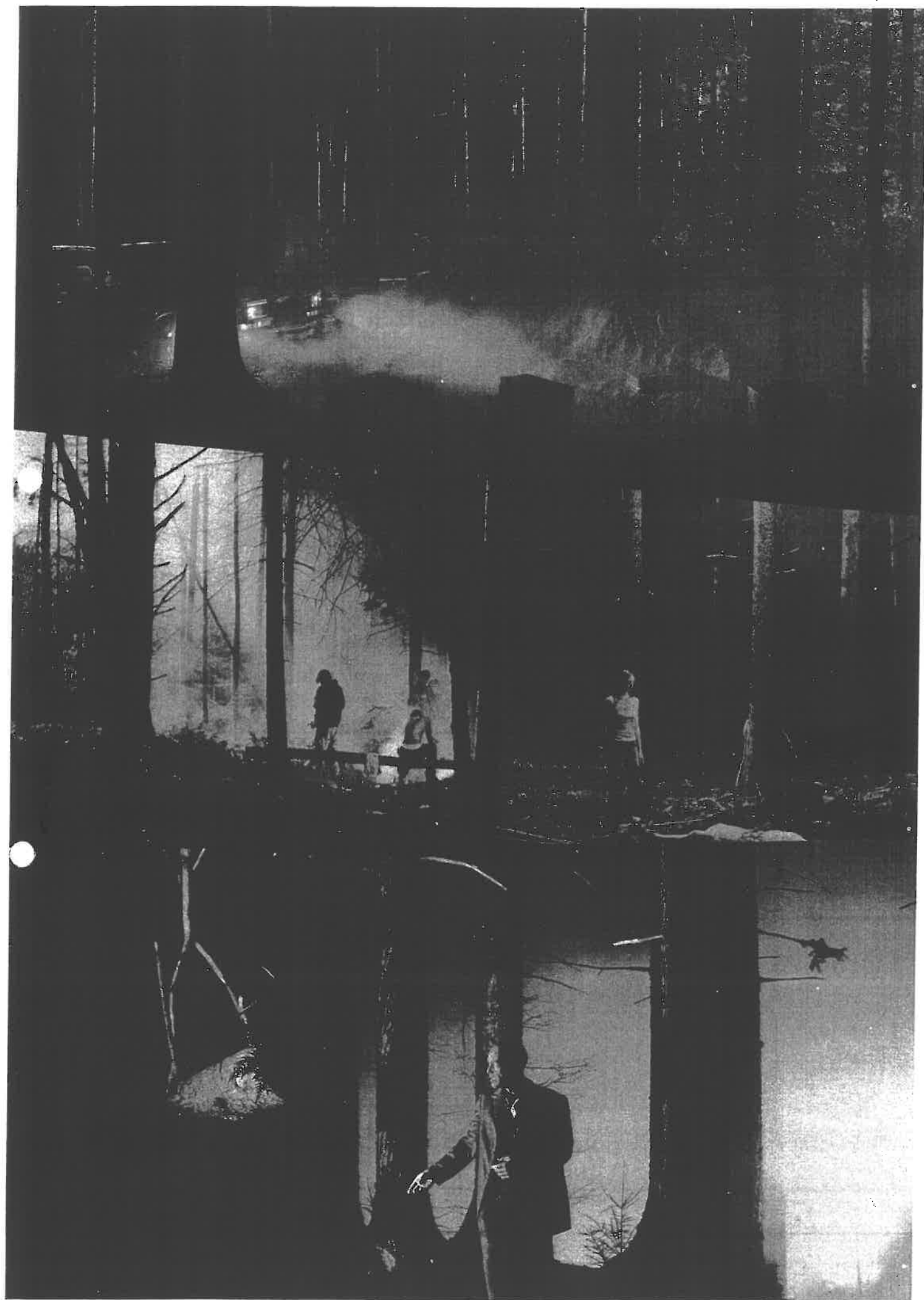


# 1953

1953 is the year where we will come to discover what caused our perpetrator to become what he is in 1986. It's a look into the dark soul of what looks like a monster on the outside but is in fact a human being like all of us.

In terms of German society 1953 was a time still close to the ending of WWII. Shortly before the east started to build the wall and already with the tension between east and west in place. One of the big historic events was the uprising of the people of East Germany against the Soviet system that was violently suppressed by tanks of the Soviet Forces. But it was also the year in which Queen Elisabeth the 2. was crowned, and her crowning a nationwide TV sensation. As well as the year where one of the biggest storm flood disasters hit Europe and killed hundreds of people, creating flood disaster nightmares for a whole generation of children.

It was the time where Tony Bennett and Dean Martin ran the music charts. And it was also the beginning of the 'Wirtschaftswunder' in Germany. The VW Beetle an icon of West German car construction sold world-wide. The German people either suppressing or confronting their own guilt and involvement in WWII.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I really enjoyed watching the first episodes of True Detective. And that was - apart from it being a really great show - because I thought (at least up until the end) that they had done something very unique. To tell a real crime plot which will eventually lead to a supernatural source. I was so hyped out about this, that the real ending felt unsatisfying and stale. But it also gave way to a new series idea - crime meets supernatural.

With the backdrop of a small, rural German town and children going missing, we get a glimpse of German society and the darkness that lurks behind every door. In a way this is similar to my movie THE SILENCE, but it will come with a high-concept twist. The lives of three generations entangled through three time zones. A chain of endless dark cause and effect.

Since I've read 'Crime & Punishment', by a far too young age, I was always driven and fascinated by the question of what turns us evil, what makes us dark? We can be kind and we can do good. But we can also do terrible, terrible things to each other. But why?

This show offers in its complexity a road map to the creation of what we consider a monster. We'll build up the simple black and white, good vs. evil scale in the present time, with the boys going missing and the discovery of a mutilated child. Clearly the work of a monster. But when we go deeper into the story and back in time we'll understand how the monster was created and that in fact he is just a human being. 1953 being the time of the cause. 1986 the time of effect and action. And the present time, the time of living with the consequences and the possibility for change.

Dark is not about showing explicit and crucial crimes. Not about shocking images. The world dark relates to is the dark spots within ourselves. It's the descent to the dark corners of the human soul. It asks the question who and what we are and what horrible things we are capable of.

Thematically, DARK aims to tap into this notion of the darkness in all of us. The secrets we keep. The lies we tell each other. And the terrifying truth of how little we really know those closest to us: our friends, our neighbors, and even our families. All this heightened to the time-travel premise.

But this is also about the conflict between generations. Teenagers growing up, thinking they know it all. Parents growing old, thinking they know it all. Their little secrets, their lies, their temptations and the truth, that in fact they don't know anything and they are by no means ready to grasp what's coming at them.

This is a multi-angle series, told from the perspectives of the teenagers, as well as the perspective of the parents and grandparents. All in a very realistic tone. We don't sense supernatural from the beginning. It is rather a disturbing atmosphere creeping in, raising questions until we finally get the first hints that cannot be explained rationally.

And once we open up to the other time lines we not only get a picture of German society in change, but also how human beings change through time for better and worse. And we have the possibility to have these snapshots of a person's personality meet each other. A woman grown bitter might revisit her young and careless self, or the other way around.

The theme line to the show evolves around the question of CAUSE AND EFFECT. How does what I do on a larger scale effect the people around me in the now, the future and even the past. And the big question behind every time-travel story: How much of what we experience is actually pre determination and how far can free will go in a temporal loop that has created a closed cause and effect cycle? Will they find the killer? Will they stop the boys from disappearing? Will they be able to close the breach?

Will they change time?

I think DARK has the potential to be one of the mind-blowing, epic television shows of all times. A time and game-changer itself.

Baran bo Odar

October 2015



Hell is empty and all the devils are here.

*William Shakespeare*

