

police allowed to talk to Karl turns out to be the caller and not Karl's brother as they had believed. Karl's desperation increases as his son's life is threatened due to loss of blood. How can this multilayered, confusing, and explosive mix be resolved? Will the police sharpshooters have the last word, or is the *Sprengstoffexpertin* Pia Zach able to help Karl and save his children? Will the situation escalate right here in the middle of this most famous square, or will the scene yet again move to another part of the city for a final showdown?

The tension engendered by this double dynamic is angst-inducing in the extreme, and the deft camera work keeps you on the edge of your seat. One sees the pins of the bomb under the driver's and passenger's seats moving dangerously up and down, coming ever closer to setting off the explosive device. The film also espouses an ethical/moral dimension through its unflinching exposé of the corrupt practices of the *Baufirmen*. The socioeconomic effects of these practices have provoked a genuine crisis in a significant sector of the public.

This exposé climaxes in the final scenes of the movie, literally taking place in the midst of a demonstration against the housing and *Baupläne* of the city. This puts a new twist on the title of the movie. "*Steig. Nicht. Aus*" could be easily and appropriately be rendered as "*Reiss. Nicht. Ab.*" or "*Zieh. Nicht. Aus*".

When the protesters chant the questions, "*Wem gehört die Stadt? Wem gehört das Land? Wem gehört die Spree?*", their answer, "*Die Stadt gehört uns*", echoes the 30-year-old chant, "*Wir sind das Volk*", which was the battle cry of the historic peaceful revolution in East Germany. Maybe it's time for another peaceful revolution, this time in the building sector - a revolution that would eliminate corruption and create more affordable *Wohnraum* for all, thus preventing the kind of tragic events that this movie so dramatically portrays.

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA *Friday Film Fest Series*



Steig. Nicht. Aus!

Directed by Christian Alvart

May 21, 2021

● 6:30 PM ●

Film, Food & Discussion

The German Society of Pennsylvania
611 Spring Garden St.
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Steig. Nicht. Aus! (2018)

Director: Christian Alvart
Production: Christian Alvart, Siegfried Kamml, Timm Oberwelland
Screenplay: Christian Alvart, Alberto Marini
Music: Christoph Schauer
Length: 105 minutes
Language: German with German Subtitles
Cast: **Wotan Wilke Möhring** as Karl Brendt
Emily Kusche as Josefine Brendt
Christiane Paul as Simone Brendt
Hannah Herzsprung as Pia Zach
Carlo Thoma as Marius Bendt
Commentary: Karl Moehlmann



Anrufer unbekannt – Motiv nicht

This movie is a remake of the Spanish movie "El desconocido", in which a banker fears for his life amidst the economic crisis that gripped the country in 2009. Nine years later in Germany, in 2018, corruption is endemic in the governmental control of granting building licenses to the *Bauwirtschaft* and the concomitant ruthless eviction practices of *Entmietungsfirmen*. This situation enrages the disgruntled *unbekannte Anrufer*, who places a bomb into the car of Karl Brendt (Wotan Wilke Möhring), the project manager and "fixer" of a construction company in Berlin.

What seems at first an attempt by the caller to extort money by terroristic means gradually reveals itself to be a matter of personal revenge. The caller's wife had committed suicide following a heartless and harsh eviction in which Karl's company was involved. This plot twist highlights the severity and omnipresence of these practices and adds a critical social component to this thrilling action movie. (The questionable practices of *Entmietung* was also the central theme of the 2018 movie "Atlas" by David Nawrath, starring Rainer Bock as carrier/packer Walter Scholl.)

Komplikationen

Intending to drop off his two children at school on his way to work, Karl gets slightly suspicious when he discovers that the driver's door was unlocked. Shortly after he starts his car, he receives a call from an anonymous caller stating that there is a bomb under the seat that will explode if he or the children try to get out. The caller demands that Karl take all the money out of his own and his wife's checking and savings accounts, total-

ing 67 547 Euro, and also transfer 450 000 Euros to an offshore account by contacting the shareholders of his company.

When Karl witnesses the car of his colleague blow up in exactly the same way, killing him and his wife and injuring his own son in the back seat, he realizes how serious the situation is. Complicating the situation is the fact that, alerted by the lover of Karl's wife, the police suspect that Karl is actually the culprit who is trying to kidnap his own children and extort money. The police begin to pursue Karl, forcing him to embark on an unintended tour of Berlin. Terrorized by the caller and the bomb, falsely accused and chased by the police, Karl tries desperately to save his children and himself.

Gendarmenmarkt

On his tour through the city, Karl passes many iconic sites with the Fernsehturm am Alexanderplatz and the Berliner Dom predominantly visible in several panoramic shots. He stops his car across from the well known Holocaust Memorial while negotiating the terms of the money transfer. The chase comes to a preliminary halt at the most famous square in Berlin, the Gendarmenmarkt, in the center of the city. Flanked by the Französische Dom at the northern end and the Deutsche Dom at the southern end, Karl's car is surrounded in front of the Schauspielhaus/Konzerthaus Berlin with the Schiller-Statue and fountain in front of this beautiful building. Police sharpshooters are in place and ready to act, since the police believe Karl is the actual perpetrator who is motivated by his wife's infidelity. The explosives expert Pia Zach (Hannah Herzsprung) is the first one to realize that Karl is not a lunatic. Karl can show her the cell phone screen with the anonymous caller while she is examining the car and the explosive setup. Confusion multiplies when the person the

