



killing

stella

KILLING STELLA

PRESS FOLDER

MATTHIAS BRANDT

MARTINA GEDECK

MALA EMDE

CAST

Anna Martina Gedeck
Richard Matthias Brandt
Stella Mala Emde

Wolfgang Julius Hagg
Anette Alana Bierleutgeb

KILLING STELLA

FOLLOWING **THE WALL**, THE NEW FILM BY **JULIAN ROMAN PÖLSLER**
BASED ON A NOVEL BY **MARLEN HAUSHOFER**

A 2017 | 98 min.

PRESS FOLDER

<http://www.picturetree-international.com/films/details/killing-stella.html>

WORLD SALES

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epo-film produktionsges.m.b.h.
and
JUWEL FILM Production GmbH

WORLD SALES

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CREW

Written & directed by Julian Pölsler
Produced by Dieter Pochlatko, Jakob Pochlatko,
Julian Roman Pölsler
Set design Enid Löser
Costume design Ingrid Leibezeder
Camera DoP JRP Artman
Light design Jakob Ballinger
Operator Gerhard Helf
Editing Bettina Mazzakarini
Make-up Monika Puymann, Marcus Zenaty
Assistant director Nadja Berke
Co-ordinator Claudia Jüpner Jonsdorff
Sound Walter Fiklocki, Andreas Biegler,
Nina Slatosch, Stefan Fauland,
Bernhard Maisch

Location manager Petra Maier
Production assistant Thomas Konrad
Team Unit Spring
DoP Walter Kinder aac
Operator Sebastian Thaler, Mario Minichmayr,
Simon Selikovsky
Make-up Katharina Erfmann,
Brigitte Detting
Location manager Niko Venturas
Property master / outdoor Peter Suchy

Produced by epo-film produktionsges.m.b.h. and JUWEL FILM Production GmbH

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PRESS NOTE

A family. An affair. A young woman dies. The wife, who is also responsible, callously chronicles the tragedy. In *KILLING STELLA* Julian Roman Pölsler (*THE WALL*) adapts another novel by the great Austrian author Marlen Haushofer for the big screen.

With Martina Gedeck – In cinemas from 29 September



STORY LINE

The young and inexperienced Stella unsuspectingly heads towards her own downfall. Richard seduces her, his wife Anna watches the affair with an icy, distant air. Stella becomes the victim of a dysfunctional, middle-class family, which is prepared to go to any lengths to keep up appearances. Anna's writing is like a confession of her own guilt, an oppressive record penned by a lonely heroine, wife and mother.

SYNOPSIS

"I am alone." This is the first sentence of Marlen Haushofer's novel "Wir töten Stella" and at the same time a description of Anna's life. Over the course of two days and two sleepless nights, Anna (Martina Gedeck) drafts the confession of her life. What happened? She agreed to put up the young student Stella (Mala Emde) for ten months in her family home. But the arrival of any outsider

threaten to rock the idyllic world of Anna, her husband Richard, a successful lawyer (Matthias Brandt), and their two children, Annette (Alana Bierleutgeb) and Wolfgang (Julius Haag), even though their fancy villa has ample space to welcome guests.

Within these luxurious four walls, they live the life that one is supposed to live

in a posh neighbourhood: Anna takes care of the household and the children's wellbeing. Richard plays the role of the alpha male, bringing home the money and secretly enjoying life to the full, without having to justify himself. They got married, because it seemed the right thing to do, maybe there was also some love involved, but definitely because Anna got pregnant. Now Anna is the

keeper of a well-ordered house, more like a domestic in cashmere clothes or a "house guest", as she puts it. And she adores her son Wolfgang. She isn't as close to her daughter Annette, because she is too much like her father. Stella, the aloof and shy young woman, upsets the perfectly balanced family structure,

Because order has been restored: "Stella was dead and I felt a great sense of relief." But Anna's story is far from over.

More than 50 years after it was written, Julian Roman Pölsler brought Marlen Haushofer's novel "Die Wand/The Wall", which was considered to be "unfilma-

Julian Roman Pölsler elegantly connects *KILLING STELLA* with *THE WALL*, creating a cross reference to the Salzkammergut, the region where the hut in *THE WALL* is located, and to the dog and the farmer's wife, and to that unfathomable, invisible distance felt by the main character. Martina Gedeck's performance in *KILLING*



turning everything upside down. Anna blames herself for everything: Is she guilty? She was the one who gave Stella new clothes and helped her discover her own womanly beauty. And this womanly beauty fell into Richard's lap – Richard, the ruffian, the bon vivant, the seemingly tamed beast, the kind killer. Richard in his frameless spectacles, who usually disappears behind his newspapers at home. He has been unfaithful to Anna before, but they developed a system that worked well and had their own rules, which 19-year-old Stella could not have known about. Suddenly, there were emotions involved, inner turmoil, hidden tears and an abortion.

Even in her downfall, her negligent suicide, Stella is restrained and considerate. And after she is dead and Anna has identified her body, there is no scandal.

ble", to the screen in 2012. The result was a dystopic Heimatfilm, in which the main character's internal state of mind becomes an external threat, captivating both national and international audiences. *KILLING STELLA* is a prequel to this successful film adaptation, forming the second part of a Haushofer trilogy.

The personal is political. This argument has rarely been as manifest as it is in Haushofer's oeuvre. The well-known author from Upper Austria lays bare life's inner conflicts in her works. She is a trenchant observer and in a calm and yet merciless voice, she recounts the deadly impertinence of her heroine, and chronicles depression and submission. Haushofer is as brutal as a sledge hammer.

STELLA is once again a tour de force. Pölsler stays very close to the text and portrays her as a prisoner in a gilded cage, giving her the same wonderful range of blue shades that appears in the novel. Anna steps out in a royal blue dress, and sits in a convertible wearing her light blue head scarf like a film icon. And by strategically failing to step in, she becomes the angel of death for a young woman who doesn't know what a red dress stands for. Mala Emde (*MEINE TOCHTER ANNE FRANK*) gives a subtle, yet sophisticated and profound performance as Stella, the coy young woman. Matthias Brandt, the male counterpart to two women, is jovial and forbidding at the same time. The spoken word does not take centre stage here: rarely has silence been played such a vocal role in a film as in *KILLING STELLA*. Haushofer's story was set in post-war Austria in



1958 and Pölsler smoothly detaches it from the past, without forcefully modernising it. KILLING STELLA takes place in an undefined period, somewhere between the era of typewriters and video clips filmed with mobile phones. Although he is utterly faithful to the text, Pölsler does much more than merely create images to convey the 60-page novel. He bestows his Marlen-Haushofer heroine with a completely new voice to

express the daily horrors of her life. KILLING STELLA is about a power system where the suppressed are also complicit in preserving the status quo. No one sees this more clearly than Anna, the chronicler of the downfall. Jean-Paul Sartre was wrong: hell is not just other people, hell is also ourselves. Seeing this film triggers an urge to set something on fire.

“And while Stella’s flesh is falling off her bones and dissolving into the boards of her coffin, the face of her murderer is reflected in the blue of the innocent eyes of a child.”



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR, JULIAN ROMAN PÖLSLER

Throughout all the years I spent working on THE WALL, I also had Haushofer’s two other novels in mind, namely “Wir töten Stella” and “Die Manserade”. These three novels are very similar in subject matter and style. All three stories are told by a female first-person narrator. As in THE WALL, in KILLING STELLA I also used the original text from the book

of mind, shedding light on her inner conflicts and her “walls”. The walls against which this woman – who is telling the story – collides. Anna, played by Martina Gedeck, desperately tries to break out and always comes up against these insurmountable walls. The wall represents a great deal of things in my mind. But the most important thing to

wall” is already present as a subject and metaphor. The novel “Wir töten Stella” was written five years before “Die Wand/The Wall” and has been overshadowed by the latter to this day. It is like a pilot to “Die Wand/The Wall” and I hope that my film helps win recognition for this literary work as the great German-language novel that it is.



As a filmmaker I endeavoured to depict the inner conflicts of my protagonist. Her inner discord and strife, and also her search for truth. Anna has her suspicions that her husband is being unfaithful and she is desperate to find out for sure. This is what makes the film so relevant. We are living in an era dominated by relationship problems. Our main concerns are no longer provision of food or mere survival, but rather the question of how to maintain a healthy relationship. This problem is not just typical of the 1960s when Haushofer wrote the novel. The tale is more relevant today than it ever was.

for the voice-over narration and merely condense it in places for the sake of dramaturgical effect. Remaining faithful to the author is very important to me. As a filmmaker you’re able to see a bigger picture than an author, but that’s only because you’re like a dwarf sitting on the shoulders of a giant.

Adapting “Wir töten Stella” for film was a challenging undertaking because a lot of the plot happens inside the main character’s head. In my interpretation, the focus is not so much on external events as on the character’s state

me when making a film is to encourage the individual viewer to find their own interpretation of this wall, instead of providing them with my own, ready-made interpretation. We can all sense the walls around us, but we have got used to and accepted them. Walls can also protect us, but each person has to find out for themselves which walls offer protection and which create limitations.

To me, KILLING STELLA is the story of the woman from THE WALL before she goes into the forest and finds herself behind the impassable wall. Here, “the

The author and psychiatrist Paulus Hochgatterer once told me that he saw “Die Wand” as a perfect description of a depression. In “Wir töten Stella”, too, we find a very similar mental condition. But how does Anna get into this state? What does her apathy, her inability to act mean? Her attempts to break out always end in dreams, nightmares or horror visions, which also symbolise her inability to change anything. I was keen to show this aspect in my film and I think it was also the focal point of Haushofer’s novel.

Anna’s condition is of course rooted in the upper-class milieu in which she lives, but this is not the only factor. In this upper-class world she fights her

battles in a particularly ritual and cold-blooded manner. How does she tackle the problems in her relationship? How much does she repress? How much does she abstract or sublimate? Today, women have far more opportunities to break out or to break through the wall of ignorance and lack of understanding that often surrounds them. But there have been relatively few changes to

their financial circumstances. Women still earn less than men and a separation often has more serious consequences for them. Of course, the situation is sometimes the other way around, but mostly it is women who suffer financially or lose their social status, which is an even worse fate in my eyes. The women's movement and emancipation have changed a lot, but the basic set-up

and the central problems remain the same.

Martina Gedeck starred in *THE WALL* and I was very lucky that she also accepted the lead role in *KILLING STELLA*. It was very important to me, because she is a link between the two films. She creates an immediate visual connection and highlights the continuation of the plot.

CAST

MARTINA GEDECK – ANNA

Martina Gedeck studied acting at the University of the Arts (Max-Reinhardt-School) in Berlin. Before her graduation, she had already made her debut at Frankfurt Theater am Turm. She was then cast in productions in Hamburg, Basel and Berlin. At the same time, she also embarked on a career as a movie and TV actress.

She received the Bavarian TV award for her powerful performance in *HÖLLEI-SENGRETL* (1995), which was her very first leading role. She went on to win almost all significant German movie and TV awards, including the German Film Award for best supporting actress in Helmut Dietl's *ROSSINI ODER DIE MÖRDERISCHE FRAGE, WER MIT WEM SCHLIEF/ROSSINI* (1997) and in Wolfgang Becker's *DAS LEBEN IST EINE BAUSTELLE/LIFE IS ALL YOU GET*. She won another Lola (German Film



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Award) for best main actress in Sandra Nettelbeck's *BELLA MARTHA/MOSTLY MARTHA* (2002). Her exceptional performances have also earned her great popularity at international level, above all in two films about Germany's recent past: as a GDR actress whose life falls apart under the pressure of the Stasi in Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's

DAS LEBEN DER ANDEREN/THE LIVES OF OTHERS, which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2007. And as Ulrike Meinhof in Uli Edel's *DIE BAADER MEINHOF KOMPLEX/THE BAADER MEINHOF COMPLEX*, which was also nominated for an Oscar in 2009.

In 2006 she starred in *THE GOOD SHEPHERD* (directed by Robert De Niro), in 2012 alongside Jeremy Irons in *NIGHT TRAIN TO LISBON* (directed by Bille August), and in 2013 alongside Isabelle Huppert in the new adaptation of *LA RELIGIEUSE/THE NUN* (directed by Guillaume Nicloux). She also acted alongside Helen Mirren in István Szabó's *THE DOOR*. In 2007 Martina Gedeck was awarded the Bavarian Order of Merit. She is a member of the European Film Academy, the German Film Academy and the German Academy of Performing Arts. In 2012 she featured in Julian Pölsler's adaptation of Marlen Haushofer's novel "Die Wand".

FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

2016 Gleißendes Glück / Original Bliss
2016 Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank
2015 The Girl King
2015 Ich bin dann mal weg / I'm off then

2013 Anni Felici – Barfuß durchs Leben / Those happy years
2013 Die Nonne / The Nun
2013 Nachtzug durch Lissabon / Night train to Lisbon

2012 Hinter der Tür / The Door
2012 Die Wand / The Wall
2011 Bastard
2010 Jud Süß – Film ohne Gewissen / Jew Suss: Rise and Fall

2008 Der Baader Meinhof Komplex / The Baader Meinhof Complex
2008 Geliebte Clara / Clara
2007 Meine schöne Bescherung / Messy Christmas
2006 The Good Shepherd
2006 Elementarteilchen / The Elementary Particles

2006 Das Leben der Anderen / The Lives of Others
2001 Bella Martha / Mostly Martha
1999 Grüne Wüste / The Green Desert
1998 Frau Rettich, die Czerni und ich / Mrs. Rettich, Czerni and I
1997 Das Leben ist eine Baustelle / Life is all you get

1997 Rossini, oder die mörderische Frage, wer mit wem schlief / Rossini
1995 Stadtgespräch / Talk of the Town
1994 Der bewegte Mann / The Most Desired Man
1993 Krücke
1989 Tiger, Löwe, Panther

MATTHIAS BRANDT – RICHARD

Matthias Brandt was born in 1961 in Berlin. He is the youngest son of the former German chancellor Willy Brandt and his wife Rut. Brandt studied acting at Hannover University for Music, Drama and Media. After his first engagement at Oldenburg Stadttheater in 1985, he was an ensemble member at the following theatres: Staatstheater Wiesbaden, Nationaltheater Mannheim, Schauspiel Bonn, Bayerisches Staatsschauspiel, Renaissance-Theater Berlin, Schauspielhaus Zürich, Schauspielhaus Bochum and Schauspiel Frankfurt.

Since 2000 Brandt has also regularly featured in TV films, including a role as Günter Guillaume in *IM SCHATTEN DER MACHT* (2003), a TV movie about the last



few days before Willy Brandt's resignation as chancellor. He has received numerous awards for his performances: he is a four-time Grimme Award winner, he has also won the German TV Award and the Deutscher Schauspielpreis.

He also narrates audio books and features as an off-screen narrator in the German version of the award-winning documentary *OCEANS*. He has received the Deutscher Hörbuchpreis (German Audiobook Awards) on numerous occasions. In 2010 Brandt made his first appearance as the new Munich police inspector Hanns von Meuffels in the crime series *POLIZEIRUF 110* (directed by Dominik Graf). His performance as the inspector won him the Bambi Award in 2011, the Bavarian TV Award for best male actor in 2012 and the German TV Award in 2013.

In September 2016 he published his first book "Raumpatrouille", a collection of stories about his childhood in the Bonn Republic.

FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

2011-2017 Polizeiruf 110 (TV series)
2016 Vor der Morgenröte / Stefan Zweig: Farewell to Europe
2015 Ein großer Aufbruch (TV movie)
2014 Das Zeugenhaus (TV movie)
2014 Männertreu (TV movie)
2013 Eine verhängnisvolle Nacht (TV movie)
2013 Eine mörderische Entscheidung
2013 Verratene Freunde (TV movie)

2013 Vier sind einer zuviel (TV movie)
2012 Ruhm / Glory: A Tale of Mistaken Identities
2012 Das Ende einer Nacht (TV movie)
2012 Glück / Bliss
2011 Das Blaue vom Himmel
2011 In den besten Jahren
2010 Des Kaisers neue Kleider (TV movie)
2010 Schutzlos (TV movie)

2010 Ken Folletts Eisfieber (TV movie)
2009 Entführt (TV movie)
2008 Nachtschicht – Ich habe Angst (TV series)
2007 Gegenüber/Counterparts
2006 Der Tote am Strand (TV movie)
2005 Die Leibwächterin / The Bodyguard (TV movie)
2002 Voll korrekte Jungs (TV movie)

MALA EMDE – STELLA

Mala Emde was born in 1996 in Frankfurt am Main. From 2009 to 2012 she



attended Studio Tanz, Theater & Musik. It was there that she made her debut as Cinderella in “Cinders” by Janusz Glowacki and also played Tartalia in “Turandot”, based on Friedrich Schiller’s version of the play. She first appeared on camera at the young age of 11. In the years that followed she featured in various films including three episodes of TATORT and various TV movies, such as DER GROßE TOM/THE GREAT TOM and KATHARINA LUTHER. Her latest appearance on the big screen was in OFFLINE. She also starred in Hans Weingartner’s

film 303, which will be premiered soon. Her first lead role was in the docudrama MEINE TOCHTER ANNE FRANK/MY DAUGHTER, ANNE FRANK which was released in 2015. Her performance in this film won her the Bavarian TV award for best newcomer. In 2016 she joined the acting programme at the Hochschule für Schauspielkunst Ernst Busch in Berlin. Emde just finished shooting the TV mini-series BRECHT – EINE VORSTELLUNG (directed by Heinrich Breloer) in the role of Paula Banholzer.

FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

- 2017** Brecht – Eine Vorstellung (TV mini-series)
- 2017** 303
- 2017** Katharina Luther (TV movie)

- 2016** Neben der Spur – Todeswunsch (TV movie)
- 2016** Tatort – Borowski und das verlorene Mädchen (TV series)
- 2016** Offline – Das Leben ist kein Bonuslevel / Offline

- 2015** Meine Tochter Anne Frank / My daughter, Anne Frank (TV movie)
- 2013** Das Paradies in uns (TV movie)
- 2013** Sommer in Rom (TV movie)
- 2011-2013** Krimi.de (TV series)
- 2008** Der größte Tom / The Great Tom (TV movie)

BEHIND THE CAMERA

JULIAN ROMAN PÖLSLER

SCREENWRITER, DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

Julian Roman Pölsler was born on Kreuzberg mountain above the village of Sankt Lorenzen im Paltental in Styria, Austria. He graduated in directing and production from the University of Music



and Performing Arts in Vienna. He also studied directing and dramaturgy at Max Reinhardt Seminar. He then worked as assistant director under Axel Corti. He has been making films and directing operas since 1990. He also teaches in the Faculty of Informatics at the Vienna University of Technology. He lives and works in Vienna and the Salzkammergut region in Styria.

FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

- 2015** Alt aber Polt (TV movie)
- 2014** The Beauty and the Beast and the Truth (TV docu-fiction)
- 2013** Bella Block – Angeklagt (TV movie)
- 2013** Polt Punkt (TV movie)
- 2012** Die Wand / The Wall
- 2009** Geliebter Johann, geliebte Anna / Anna and the Prince (TV movie)

- 2008** Bella Block (TV series)
- 2006** Daniel Käfer und die Schattenuhr (TV movie)
- 2005** Daniel Käfer und die Villen der Frau Hürsch (TV movie)
- 2003** Polterabend (TV movie)
- 2002** Himmel Polt und Hölle (TV movie)
- 2001** Blumen für Polt (TV movie)
- 2000** Polt muss weinen (TV movie)

- 1998** Der Schandfleck (TV movie)
- 1997** München ruft (TV movie)
- 1995** Die Fernsehsga oder Eine steirische Fernsehgeschichte / A Styrian Television Story (TV movie)
- 1991** Die Hausmeisterin (TV series)
- 1990** Sehnsüchte oder Alles ist unheimlich leicht (TV movie)

THE NOVEL

The original German version of „Wir töten Stella” has been published together with another novella by Marlene Haushofer
ISBN 978-3-548-60331-5
8,99 € (D) / 9,30 € (A)
List Taschenbuch



MARLEN HAUSHOFER

Marlen Haushofer was born in 1920 in Frauenstein, Upper Austria. She studied German philology in Vienna and Graz. She then lived in Steyr with her husband and their two children. “Wir töten Stella” was first published in 1958, “Die Wand/The

Wall” was published in 1963, and her last novel “Die Mansarde/The Loft” in 1969. Marlen Haushofer’s achievements were recognised with various awards, including the Grand Austrian State Prize for Literature. She died in 1970 in Vienna.

WORKS

Novellas	Himmel, der nirgendwo endet	1966	Audio plays		
Das fünfte Jahr	1952	Die Mansarde / The Loft	1969	Das Kreuzworträtsel	1954
Die Vergissmeinnichtquelle	1956			Die Überlebenden	1958
Wir töten Stella	1958	Children’s books		Das Mitternachtsspiel	1984
Lebenslänglich	1966	Bartls Abenteuer –			
Schreckliche Treue	1968	ein Katzenbuch	1964		
		Brav sein ist schwer	1965		
Novels		Müssen Tiere draußen bleiben?	1967		
Eine Handvoll Leben	1955	Wohin mit dem Dackel?	1968		
Die Tapentür	1957	Schlimm sein ist auch			
Die Wand / The Wall	1963	kein Vergnügen	1970		

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WITH MARTINA GEDECK, MATTHIAS BRANDT, MALA EMDE, JULIUS HAGG, ALANA BIERLEUTGER, PRODUCTION DESIGNER EMID LÖSER, COSTUME DESIGNER INGRID LEIBEZEDER, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JRP ARTMAN, LIGHT DESIGN JAKOB BALLINGER,
OPERATOR GERALD HELF, EDITOR BETTINA MAZZAKARINI, KEY MAKE-UP ARTIST MONIKA PUYMANN, MARCUS ZENATY, 1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MADJA BERKE, 2ND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR CLAUDIA JÜPTNER JONSDORFF,
SOUND WALTER FIKLOCKI, ANDREAS BIEGLER, NINA SLATOSCH, STEFAN FAULAND, BERNHARD MAISCH, UNIT MANAGER PETRA MAIER, PRODUCTION MANAGER THOMAS KONRAD, WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JULIAN ROMAN PÖLSLER,
PRODUCER DIETER POCHLATKO, JAKOB POCHLATKO, JULIAN PÖLSLER
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