Daniela Klette: Alleged Red Army Faction member held after 30 years

Officials say Daniela Klette was part of the RAF's so-called third generation, which was active in the 1980s and 1990s

**By Damien McGuinness**

BBC News, Berlin

**Alleged Red Army Faction (RAF) fugitive Daniela Klette has been arrested by German police after more than 30 years in hiding.**

The 65-year-old was tracked down on Monday evening in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg.

A second person, whose identity has not yet been confirmed, has also been arrested.

Ms Klette is renowned for allegedly being part of the far-left armed group which terrorised Germany for decades.

She is accused of attempted murder and a string of serious robberies.

The second person to be arrested, a man who appears to be in the same age range as Ms Klette's robbery accomplices, was carrying fake identification. Police have not yet determined his identity.

Ms Klette has been flown by helicopter to Bremen, in the region where she committed the alleged robberies, and is now in pre-trial detention in Verden.

Police confirmed her identity using fingerprints. She did not resist arrest. Police found her after a tip-off from the public in November 2023.

Officials say they do not yet know how she managed to stay underground for 30 years, whether she was in Germany and who helped her to remain undetected.

The apartment is now being searched. Police have found magazines and ammunition for a handgun in the apartment but have not found a weapon.

Officials describe this arrest as a milestone in the fight against "terrorism" and say that it shows that "terrorists" can never feel safe no matter how long ago their crimes.

## 'Third generation'

Tabloid headlines about "RAF Rentner" or in English - the "Red Army Faction pensioners" - make the robberies between 1999 and 2016 sound like a TV sitcom about an elderly grandma on the run.

But the now-disbanded RAF - sometimes referred to as the Baader-Meinhof Gang - was violent.

Thirty-four people were killed between 1971 and 1993. The group targeted political figures and business leaders and among its victims were an attorney general and a Deutsche Bank chairman.

More than 200 people were injured.

Officials allege Ms Klette was part of the RAF's so-called third generation, which was active in the 1980s and 1990s.

It allegedly killed the Deutsche Bank boss in a roadside bomb, and shot dead a centre-left politician, tasked with privatising business in former communist East Germany, in his home.

In 2016, German police released a simulated image of what Daniela Klette (right) would look like now, as well as two other wanted people - Burkhard Garweg and Ernst-Volker Staub

In 1991 the group launched a gun attack on the US embassy in the western city of Bonn. No-one was injured, but traces of Ms Klette's DNA was later found at the site.

Two years later, the group bombed and partly destroyed a new prison which had just been built.

## Hiding in the shadows

The Red Army Faction grew out of the 1960s radical student movement. It's aim was to undermine West German capitalism, and the group had links to Middle Eastern guerrillas.

Still today, the RAF is sometimes revered in certain radical-left wing circles. The gang's symbols occasionally crop up on clothing, regularly sparking anguished debates in Germany about whether left-wing extremism and violence is glamorised, rather than taken seriously.

* [**Who were Germany's Red Army Faction militants?**](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35354812)

The RAF officially disbanded in 1998 and some members, including Daniela Klette, went underground. Since then she and two other former RAF members allegedly survived financially by carrying out armed robberies of supermarkets and cash transporters. It is thought they raked in millions of euros in total.

Police wanted posters, saying "these people could be your neighbours", show grainy 1980s photos of the trio as shaggy-haired students.

More recent police photos of Ms Klette's two accomplices show grey-haired middle-aged men. But she appears to have avoided being spotted or photographed and police photos simply show a reconstructed image of what she might look like aged 65.

On 14 February, a state prosecutor called for information from the public on national TV during a true-crime documentary series, and hundreds of people called in with possible leads.

Somehow Daniela Klette managed to stay in the shadows and undetected for half her life as the search for her went nowhere for decades.

Until now.