

And Devil Makes Three



"I'm no
angel :
I've been
mixed up
in these
things
before !
I'm
ashamed!"



GENE KELLY
PIER ANGELI

**THE DEVIL
MAKES THREE**

I love it when people bring in family treasures that they've inherited or found but have no idea what memories may be contained within them. It is a mystery that I can help to solve. Today, a woman brought in boxes from her home that contained reels of film, carousels of slides and envelopes of photographs. And tucked away in the bottom of one of the boxes were two 45rpm records containing recorded messages along with a written letter that came from a soldier stationed in Germany in the early 1950s.

I've yet to transfer the audio but I glanced at the letters from 1952 that the soldier wrote home describing life in post war Germany. He was excited because Gene Kelly was in the area making a film and some of the Americans stationed there were going to be tapped to be extras in his movie.

Upon investigating, it would appear that the film in question was "The Devil Makes Three" which was made in 1952 on location in Germany and starred Gene Kelly and Italian actress Pier Angeli. The film was about a man who returns to Germany after the war to track down the German family who protected him when his plane was shot down. While there he uncovers a neo-Nazi group still operating in the shadows.

I don't know if the writer of the letter ever appeared in the film. All I know is that he was excited that he might be among those chosen. I did find out why Gene Kelly was appearing in a film shot on location in post-war Germany. It turns out that in 1951 the US Congress passed a law that allowed a significant tax break to any Americans who lived abroad for 18 months or longer. During that time those ex-pats would not have to report any earnings they received while out of the country.

Kelly was one of the first Hollywood stars to take advantage of this new law. The Devil Makes Three was the first of three films Kelly made overseas during this time. While some believed Kelly's move was purely financially based, others

thought that Kelly moved to get away from the McCarthyism running amok in the US at the time because his wife, Betsy Blair, was known to outwardly support several left-wing Communist causes and he felt he could protect his family better outside of the country.

While his film was not received warmly upon its release it has endured largely because it provides a real time perspective of post war Germany. Its final scenes were even shot in Hitler's retreat at Berchtesgaden before it was demolished in 1953.

Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio specialize in the preservation of family memories through the digitalization of film, videotapes, audio recordings, photos, negatives, and slides. For more information, call 352-735-8550 or visit our [website](#).