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For Greater Glory: Foreign Correspondent

Airs Tuesday August 16 at 9.30pm on ABC & iview

With the Rio Games beset by doping controversy, Sarah Dingle reveals the tragic human cost of one of the biggest drug scandals of them all – East Germany's state-sponsored doping program.

Sarah Dingle will be available for interviews.

They were doped and they were duped. Thousands of young East German men, women and children were talent-spotted, scooped into intensive state-run training regimes and administered an array of "vitamins" or "supporting means".

"We were willing, useful idiots. Parents gave their children to the state, like presents."
– Ines Geipel, former sprinter

As for what the mysterious pills and injections actually were, no one asked, no one told. The doping racket was compulsory by law yet shrouded in secrecy.

"It was done like an animal experiment." – Werner Franke, microbiologist

Global prestige was the pay-off. The former East Germany, a relative minnow of 17 million people, amassed hundreds of world records and Olympic medals from the 1960s to the 1980s.

But as Sarah Dingle reports, the cost to many athletes' health has been immeasurable.

"There is a time bomb ticking away in every one of us because of doping - and whether that goes off at 30 or 70, it doesn't matter." – former cyclist Uwe Troemer.

Troemer's body is ruined – a legacy, he tells reporter Sarah Dingle, of seven years of doping from age 16. The invalid pensioner has suffered a stroke, kidney failure, high blood pressure and damaged joints. He won a small sum of compensation in official recognition of what was done to him.

Troemer is one of hundreds of former East German athletes whose health has suffered irreparably. Some had liver tumours. Some took on characteristics of the opposite gender – men with breasts, females with deep voices, body hair and clitoral enlargement. And some died.

"In think I am now one of the older ones." – Ines Geipel, 56

Geipel tells a horror story of how she was mutilated by the State, apparently as a punishment. These days she is a powerful voice for former doped athletes. After proof of systemic doping emerged from once-secret Stasi files, she has publicly disowned her place in the record books.

And that doesn't sit well with some past East German champions, including some names familiar to Australians.

"I was an athlete. Everything was clean and proper as far as I was concerned." – Renate Stecher, who won gold in the 100 and 200 metres at the 1972 Munich Olympics, relegating Australia's Raelene Boyle to the silver.

Did Stecher dope? Was Boyle robbed of Olympic gold? Four decades on the historic rivalry continues, as both women open up to Foreign Correspondent's Sarah Dingle.

"For Greater Glory" – Sarah Dingle reports on *Foreign Correspondent* 9.30pm Tuesday August 16 and 10.30am Thursday August 18 on ABC and iview and 6.30pm AEST Saturday August 20 on ABC News 24. Also on iview.

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