

Grand Prix: the Killer Years

BBC Four, 9.00pm

To mark the start of the Formula 1 season comes a sobering, shocking documentary that details the violent history of Grand Prix racing. With the input of former F1 world champions Jackie Stewart and Emerson Fittipaldi, among others, the programme revisits a 12-year period from 1961 when 57 drivers died, among them F1 champions such as Jim Clark, who was killed in 1968, and Jochen Rindt, who died in 1970. This was a time when speed over safety was the “accepted face of racing”, but it is also a tale of camaraderie, incredible bravery and maverick designers who pushed their cars to the limits. With Stewart recalling there was “only a one in three chance I was going to live”, drivers developed a “fighter pilot mentality” and it wasn’t until they threatened to strike that proper safety measures were introduced. An incident at the Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort in 1973 also “shamed the sport to its senses”. It was here that British driver Roger Williamson died, trapped beneath his burning car after he crashed. Watching the archive footage, it’s staggering to see how the race was left to continue as a fellow driver tried in vain to help him. **SH , Daily Telegraph**