

STARE ME IN THE EYE

Yes, from my grandma. But they also call me Nadiya, it means hope.

3:26 pm

are you still in Kiev?

3:26 pm ✓

I am in Livn now, trying desperately to get out of Ukraine.

3:27 pm

Message

credits
director/producer/editor
cinematographer
Athina Chatzigiannaki

main cast: Ian Reininger

sound background: Konrad Siemon

voices over: Steven Kolostyak, Yu Liu, Tamaya Ziah

associate producer: Yu Liu

production assistant
Ian Reininger



Produced for the Master of Moving Image degree at
Sydney College of the Arts



TITLE

STARE ME IN THE EYE



Logline

TWO PEOPLE CROSS THE PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES OF DISTANCE, BUT ALSO BREAKTHROUGH THE MEANINGLESS ONLINE CHAT, TO ENGAGE IN AN ADVENTURE THAT SAVES BOTH.

my number 00472563902887
Heading for Berlin trapped in van
Past border, call German police Town Gor
Can't text again, they are on guard.

3:32 pm



Short synopsis

TWO YOUNGSTERS HAVE A STRONG IMPACT ON EACH OTHER, THE ONE THROUGH QUESTIONING HER VERY CORE BELIEFS AND THE OTHER CHALLENGING HIS TIMELY ENGAGEMENT. IS THIS A STORY? YES, BUT IT IS CERTAINLY AWAY FROM CLICHÉ IDENTIFICATIONS AND CLOSER TO THE ONE HUMAN SOUL OF TODAY.

Message



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~ Z X C V B N M

English (AU)

Long synopsis

TWO YOUNG PEOPLE CHAT RANDOMLY ONLINE, THE GIRL CONFINES THAT SHE IS THINKING OF GIVING IN TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN EXCHANGE OF GETTING OUT OF UKRAINE, WHERE WAR IS HAPPENING WITH RUSSIA.

THE BOY IS LIVING PEACEFULLY IN AUSTRALIA BUT WORKS HARD TO KEEP HIMSELF FREE FROM UNHEALTHY BONDAGES. WHEN SHE GETS KIDNAPPED BY THE TRAFFICKERS, SHE DECIDES TO REACH OUT TO HIM FOR HELP. HE SUCCEEDS TO SAVE HER BY LETTING THE POLICE KNOW HER PHONE NUMBER, SO THEY ARE ABLE TO TRACK HER DOWN AND CATCH THE KIDNAPPERS ON THEIR WAY TO BERLIN



Director's statement

THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF TEXTING IN THIS FILM:

IT MUST BE EMPHASISED THAT THE TEXT IN THE CONCEPT WHICH RUNS BEHIND THIS FILM, IS AN AESTHETIC VALUE, IT BECOMES THE MOVING IMAGE AND TURNS ALIVE. THEN THE VIEWS OF PEOPLE AND LANDSCAPES ARE TREATED MORE AS STILLS OR CAN BE SEEN BEHIND THE TEXTS. THAT IDEA FORMS THE STYLE OF THE MOVIE. THE REASON BEHIND THIS CHOICE IS THE URGENCY AND REALITY OF THE SITUATION OF UKRAINE NOW AROUND WHICH THE STORY IS EVOLVING, PLUS THE RESPONSE FROM THE BOY IN AUSTRALIA WHO, IN A SIMILAR MANNER, THROUGH TEXTING AND CALLING, MANAGES TO BRIDGE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN COUNTRIES BUT ALSO CIRCUMSTANCES.

ISSUE OF APPROPRIATION AND PERMISSION: THERE IS A BACKGROUND SOUND IN THE FILM. IT IS THE SOUND OF AN INDIGENOUS INSTRUMENT CALLED YIDAKI (DIDGERIDU)

HAVING THE MAIN CHARACTER REPRESENTING THE NON INDIGENOUS MULTIPLE ETHNICITIES IN TODAY'S AUSTRALIA ENVELOPED IN THE INDIGENOUS SOUND FELT LIKE A STRONG WISH FOR UNITY AMONG ALL AUSTRALIANS SENDING A MESSAGE OUTSIDE THIS COUNTRY AS A WHOLE TO UKRAINE NOW, AND TO ALL COUNTRIES LIVING THROUGH UNJUSTIFIABLE CRISIS.

TESTIMONY: THE PARTICULAR INSTRUMENT THAT OUR MUSICIAN PLAYED THE SOUNDS WITH WAS GIVEN TO HIM AS A GIFT FROM THE TRIBAL ELDERS AT MURU MITTIGAR IN PENRITH LAKES , IN 2006. THEY TAUGHT HIM HOW TO PLAY AND GAVE HIM PERMISSION TO USE THE SOUND WHEN HE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE. HE HEARD AND APPROVED THE EDITING OF THE MUSIC IN THE FILM.

*THIS PROJECT STARTED AS A STUDENT FILM AND THEN IT WAS SCREENED WITHOUT THE INSTRUMENT BACKGROUND, BUT NOW IT RUNS AS ORIGINALLY CREATED, ONLY WITHOUT THE UNI LOGO, AS AGREED.



More about the film

THE IDEA FOR THIS FILM CAME TO ME WHEN HEARING THE NEWS OF ANOTHER WAR BREAKING AND NOW JUST NEXT TO THE HEART OF EUROPE. AS DETAILS KEPT MAKING THE ROUND OF THE WORLD, THE FILM BECAME A NECESSITY. ME, BEING ALREADY SENSITIVE AFTER YEARS OF DRAMATIC CONTACT WITH THE REFUGEES FROM SYRIA, IN THE ISLANDS OF GREECE, I FELT THE URGENCY OF A IMMEDIATE REACTION. AS MAKING THE FIRST STEPS IN FILMMAKING, TRYING TO CONQUER THE CHALLENGES OF TECHNOLOGY BUT ALSO OVERCOME OUR OWN SELVES, ME AND EVERYONE INVOLVED, WE GAVE IT OUR BEST TO SEE THIS FILM HAPPENING. ANYTHING FELT BETTER THAN STAYING INACTIVE IN THE FACE OF ONE MORE TRAGEDY CREATED BY HUMAN CONDUCT.





BEHIND THE SCENES

THE MOST INTERESTING THING THAT HAPPENED TO ME THROUGH MAKING THIS FILM WAS, SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND WHY AND HOW I COULD GIVE AWAY AND SHARE RESPONSIBILITY WITH OTHERS, EITHER CAST OR CREW. EVEN IN THE SECOND SHOOTING DAY, WHEN YU CAME ALONG TO HELP, I WAS FULLY ORGANIZED HAVING A SHOT LIST READY WHICH I HAD ALREADY REHEARSED WITH MY MOBILE, AND I HAD EVEN GONE TO THE USYD LOAN STORE TO GET THE UNIVERSITY DOLLY (HEAVY), BECAUSE I HAD THE FEELING WE WOULD NEED IT, ALTHOUGH YU WAS REASSURING ME THAT HE HAD A DOLLY OF HIS OWN.

WELL ONE THING I LEARNED ALL THIS TIME IN MY STUDIES WAS THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH PREPARATION, IT IS NEVER TOO MUCH.

INDEED, WE FOUND OURSELVES SHOOTING THE SAME SHOT OVER AND OVER EACH OF US WITH OUR OWN CAMERAS BUT USING THE SAME UNI DOLLY. THAT GAVE ME SOME EXTRA BREATH, BECAUSE I HAD MORE VERSIONS TO CHOOSE FROM, WHICH WORKED WELL IN THE EDIT.

THEN, SURPRISINGLY, OUR MAIN CAST CHARACTER, OUR PROTAGONIST, JUMPED ALSO BEHIND THE CAMERA AND BEING QUITE KNOWLEDGABLE, MADE ME THINK THAT PERHAPS IN THE NEXT MOVIE I COULD SHIFT HIM TO A DIFFERENT ROLE. SINCE HE IS ONLY 21, MAYBE IF HE LEARNED THE SKILLS HE COULD SEEK WORK IN THE INDUSTRY, WHO KNOWS...





FAQ

Q. IN WHAT GENRE DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR FILM BELONGS?

SOME SAID IT IS A SCREEN FILM (IS THERE SUCH A GENRE?) WITH SHADES OF DRAMA, HOWEVER, I KNOW THAT IT STANDS BETWEEN VISUAL FINE ARTS AND FILMMAKING, AND I HAVE A HARD TIME SEEING IT MORE THAN A PAINTING ON THE MOVE.

Q. THE FILM IS BASED ON TEXT MESSAGING IN ITS MOST SIMPLE FORM, WAS THIS ATTRACTION/AVOIDANCE ATTITUDE TOWARD TECHNOLOGY INTENTIONAL?

YES, BY SHOWING THE TEXT WE ALL KNOW AND MOST OF US HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH A MESSAGE BLINKING IN FRONT OF OUR EYES, I WANTED TO TRANSMIT ON THE LARGE SCREEN THE INTIMATE SPACE OF THE MOBILE WE ALL LIVE IN.

Q. YOU SHOW THE PROTAGONIST WALKING THROUGH A GREEN FIELD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FILM, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

THE FILM IS BUILDING ON THE INTIMATE SPACE THAT BELONGS TO THE MAIN CHARACTER SO HE RETURNS ON AND ON TO HIS 'SPOT', AFTER HE DELIVERS IN THE ANONYMOUS CITY.

Q. DOES YOUR FILM TOUCH UPON THE IDEA OF A LOVE AFFAIR BETWEEN THE TWO CHARACTERS INVOLVED IN THE STORY?

I COULD SAY YES IN THE SENSE THAT PERHAPS IT PLAYS WITH A TRANSFORMATION STATUS (THROUGH THE ONLINE COMMUNICATION PHYSICAL DISTANCE, DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES), THAT PROJECTS HOWEVER INTO FEELINGS OF CARE AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE OTHER. IF BEHIND ALL EXISTS A LOVE ATTRACTION? THAT IS HARD TO TELL (MORE IN 'INFLUENCES' SECTION).

Q. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE WAR BETWEEN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA?

I THOUGHT WARS ONLY BELONGED TO THE TIME MY PARENTS LIVED, OR I WANTED TO BELIEVE THAT, SO I CAN LIVE IN SERENITY. AFTER I SAW THE SYRIAN AND OTHER REFUGEES FLOODING MY COUNTRY, INDUCING INTO OUR SOCIETY THE REALITY OF INBETWEENESS, THAT WAS MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH WHAT CAN BE THE RESULT WHEN HUMAN LOGIC GOES OUT OF PROPORTION. THE SAME FEELING AND WORSE IS PENETRATING ME NOW WITH THIS WAR, THE RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE BEING DISRUPTED.

Q. WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE DIRECTOR? DID YOU USE ANY TECHNIQUES OR METHODS OR VISIONS FROM THESE MASTERS IN THIS FILM?

MY FAVOURITE DIRECTOR IN GENERAL IS EISENSTEIN.

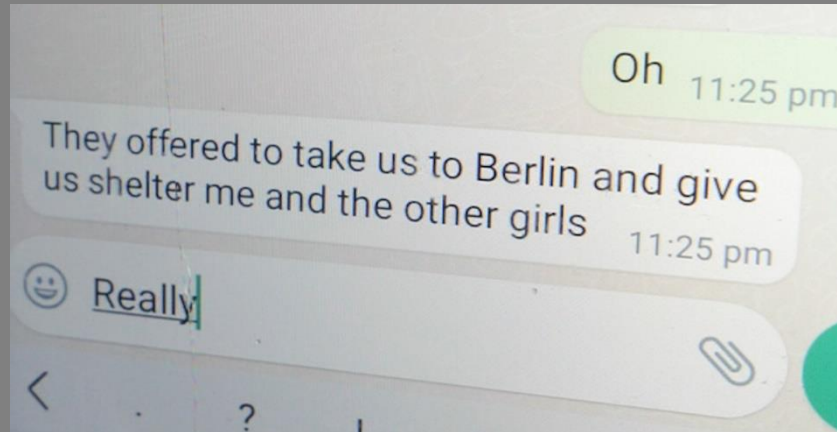
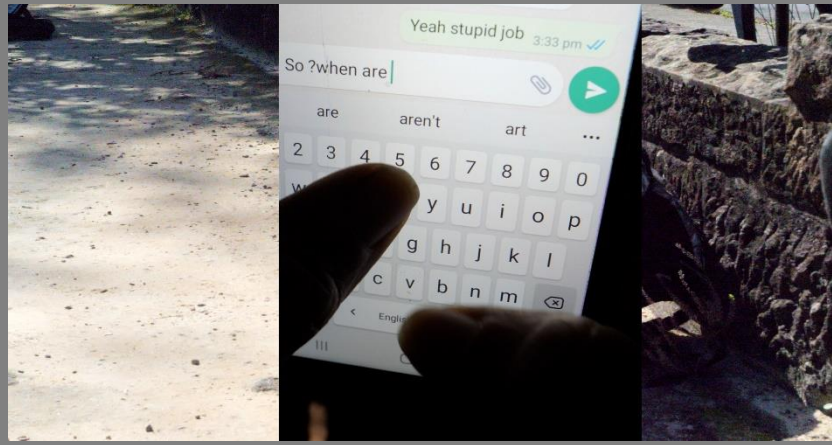
FOR WHICH FILMMAKERS I CONNECTED WITH THROUGH THIS FILM SEE 'INFLUENCES' SECTION.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR NEXT FILM'S AMBITION?

TO KEEP TUNING IN MY FILMMAKING TOOLS WITH WHAT IT IS I WANT TO SAY IN THIS NEXT FILM.

Q. TELL US ABOUT YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE WHEN YOU MADE THIS FILM AND HOW DID YOU SOLVE IT.

SEE 'BEHIND THE SCENES' SECTION.





ATHINA CHATZIGIANNAKI, HAVING LIVED MOSTLY IN GREECE WHERE SHE WORKED AS A MULTIMEDIA ARTIST AND ACTRESS /PERFORMER, IS NOW BEHIND THE CAMERA. BEING TAUGHT THE ART OF MAKING MOVIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, SHE IS OPENING HERSELF TO A NEW CAREER, AND A NEW WAY OF TELLING THE STORIES THAT SHE DRAWS FROM HER OWN SELF AND EXPERIENCE, AS WELL AS FROM THE WORLD AROUND HER.

CREDITS

DIRECTOR /PRODUCER/EDITOR

CINEMATOGRAPHER

ATHINA CHATZIGIANNAKI

MAIN CAST: IAN REININGER

SOUND BACKGROUND: KONRAD SIEMON

VOICES OVER: STEVEN KOLOSTYAK, YU LIU, TAMAYA ZIAH

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: YU LIU

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT: IAN REININGER

INFLUENCES

13TH, BY AVA, DUVERNEY

ALTHOUGH MY FILM IS NOT A DOCUMENTARY IT MEETS THIS FILM BECAUSE AS DUVERNEY IS TOUCHING UPON A TOUGH TO DEAL WITH REAL ISSUE (THE FACT THAT THE US PRISONS ARE FILLED WITH AFRICAN AMERICANS), I AM ALSO BRINGING INTO ATTENTION THE ISSUE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND THE STANCE OF CHOICE RELATED TO THE SUBJECT.

WHAT I LIKED MOST WAS THE CLEAR CUT SCENES THAT PRESENT THE STORIES AND FACTS IN THEIR REALITY AND WHICH IN MY FILM IT IS THE TEXTS THAT TRY TO DO THE SAME.

THE INTENTION IS TO LEAD THE SPECTATOR FROM ONE REALITY TO THE NEXT AS FACTS AND NOT CINEMATIC VISUAL EVENTS.

IN THE END I CREATED A BALANCE BETWEEN THE CINEMATIC, SINCE I AM STILL CREATING A MOVIE AND THE FACTUAL INTENSITY CREATED BY THE TEXT BOMBARDING.

DEADPOOL, BY TIM MILLER

I LIKED THE WAY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO CHARACTERS WAS BUILT, COMING FROM TWO IMPOSSIBLE ENDS (HIM BEING A DISFIGURED CANCER PATIENT WITH AN AMBIGUOUS SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND HER A PROFESSIONAL STRIPER/HOOKER).

BEING INFLUENCED BY THAT, I BUILT A MOMENTUM BETWEEN MY TWO PROTAGONISTS. THE ONE LIVING IN A PEACEFUL COUNTRY TRYING TO MAINTAIN A FREE OF CHOICE LIFE AND HER LIVING ON THE EDGE BECAUSE OF SHAKEN CIRCUMSTANCES, AS WAR CAN BE, THAT CHALLENGE HER CORE BELIEF SYSTEM.

THE HEADHUNTER'S DAUGHTER BY DON JOSEPHUS RAPHAEL EBLAHAN

WHEN I FIRST CAME TO SYDNEY TWO YEARS AGO, I SAW THIS GREEN VALLEY THAT APPEARS IN THE MIDDLE OF MY FILM, THE ROLE OF WHICH I EXPLAIN IN THE FAQ SECTION. IT WAS DEEPENING IN FRONT OF MY EYES AS I WALKED ALONG THE CITY PAVEMENT. AT NIGHTS A HUGE LIGHT DOWN THERE MADE IT GLOW SURROUNDED BY THE DARK TREES. WHEN I SAW IN THE TRAILER OF THE ABOVE FILM A VERY SIMILAR SHOT, I WAS ENCOURAGED AND CHALLENGED TO TRY SHOOTING 'MY SECRET VALLEY'. INDEED, I GOT THE CHANCE IN MY MOVIE, NOT AT NIGHT, BUT IN A VERY SUNNY DAY.

