

A man with a beard and a purple shirt is looking to the left. In the background, a pheasant with a red face and white collar stands in a grassy field under a blue sky with clouds.

A FILM BY DENIZ EREL

STOWAWAY

HAVE YOU EVER DUG A GRAVE BEFORE?

SYNOPSIS

In a field in southern England's sunny countryside, Yusuf, a refugee from Syria, leaps out of the lorry, runs into forest, meets Frank and Garrat, two tramps with a makeshift camp. Recognising their common humanity after a short hesitation, the two men welcome Yusuf into their world, before officer Dunham, a policewoman arrives and discovers Dimmy, their late buddy, who appears to have died in the night from alcohol poisoning.

Director - storywriter Erel's graduation film from Arts University Bournemouth Film School bears a cinematic entertainment with its sunny British landscape, a unique location with a WW2 Pillbox, a pheasant, and two tramps on mushrooms.

Erel's is also the producer of Stowaway that included two set builds and was shot in five locations across Dorset with the involvement of over thirty students.





DIRECTOR - PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY

DENIZ EREL

Erel finished his business studies at Ludwigshafen University (GER) and Leeds Business School (UK). He has a master's degree in Directing from Bournemouth Film School of Arts University (UK). Before Film School he worked as financial auditor at Ernst & Young between 2011 and 2013.

The shorts he directed during high school were screened in the local film festivals.

In the film school he produced and production managed over twenty graduation shorts, five with higher budgets. He has collected market experience during EFM '14 and '15 as sales and personal assistant to Marina Fuentes Arredonda (Wanda / Arcadia). He also was market research staff at Danny Stack and Tim Clague's 2016 feature film 'Who Killed Nelson Nutmeg?'. In 2009 he was assistant curator at German-Jewish film seminars of Heidelberg University.

He recently graduated from the Film school with two short films to be released: 'Electricity' and 'Stowaway'. He directed the 2014 short 'Question 5' that was screened in the New York City Independent FF. He is currently developing his first feature film project 'Ceyda'.



CAST - YUSUF

PIETRO PACE

Stowaway Yusuf is played by Pietro Pace.

Pietro Pace is an Italian actor, whose feature film work includes Marco Risi's "Cha cha cha", Francesca Garcea's "Il Volo Di Dio" and TV-Series "Squadra Antimafia". On stage he worked on "The Dubliners" with Giancarlo Sepe, on "Miss Julie" with Marsel Lesko and many others.

PIETRO won the BEST ACTOR award at "Nove giorni di grandi interpretazioni" in 2011.

CAST - FRANK

MAX GOLD

Frank is played by Max Gold. Max Gold is a British actor who is known for EastEnders and recently for Sky Atlantic TV-Show The Tunnel.

His work includes Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1994), Twice Upon a Yesterday (1998) and The Commissioner (1998).

On stage he worked on multiple Royal Shakespeare Company productions throughout the years.





CAST - GARRAT

BEN CRAZE

Garrat is played by Ben Craze. Ben Craze is a British actor who is known for Arthur & Merlin (2015), Jonathan Creek(1997), My Hero (2000) and TV -Show Wild West.

On stage among others he worked with Lucy Bailey on Royal National Theatre production 'Baby Doll' of Tennessee Williams.

CAST - DUNHAM

HELEN KENNEDY

Police officer Dunham is played by Helen Kennedy. Helen Kennedy is a British actress, whose work includes British feature film HI-LO JOE with Game Of Thrones' Gethin Anthony, HBO's critically-acclaimed TV spy drama HUNTED alongside Stephen Dillane, Julian Fellowes' award-winning children's fantasy adventure film FROM TIME TO TIME with Dominic West and powerful short films GHOSTED, THE CAR WASHER, GOING UNDER (London Film Festival Official Selection), and the international, award-winning short film SAFARI for which Helen won BEST ACTRESS this year at Festival De Cine De L'Alfas Del Pi.





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A short film by Deniz Erel

2016 | United Kingdom | 15 min. | 2K DCP | colour | 2.35:1 | Stereo | in English

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THE ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH PRESENTS PIETRO PACE MAX GOLD BEN CRAZE AND HELEN KENNEDY "STOWAWAY"

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY KAGAN YILDIZ PRODUCTION DESIGNER MICHAELIA WU ART DIRECTOR MOHAMMED AMIN SWALEH MAKE UP ARTIST RHIANNON PHILLIPS OLIVIA RUSSELL

COSTUME DESIGNER NIKOLETT KONKOLY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MARCO PANICHELLA STEVE MCCARTEN

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY CAMILO MEJIA EDITED BY HUGO MELO COLOUR DESIGNER JANO FEKETE

PRODUCED BY DENIZ EREL STORY BY DENIZ EREL WRITTEN BY CRISS FLETCHER DIRECTED BY DENIZ EREL

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A Directorial Intent

A storyteller can get inspired by different inputs in different times of his life: by memories, news articles, a picture, a person, by another movie, story and many other elements of life.

For *Stowaway*'s story there were three inputs that have come together. 1 - A homeless person who's been sitting in front of a supermarket in my neighbourhood for the last two years. 2 – A news article with a picture showing a stowaway jumping from the back of the lorry in Kent. 3 –And a feeling I wanted to discover more. I was experiencing this particular feeling while watching some particular successful (and powerful) films. A feeling that I could hardly verbalize however somehow easily visualize as a "Cheap plastic ball swimming on the sea surface". It's silly but a good description of the feeling that I get when I watch for example Forman's 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest'. If the story is the ball, it touches and gets involved with the dramatic situation -not comprehensively, however in a serious way, but it is mostly wandering in the world of comedy.

Director's Statement

Then I've found a comedic situation: Two types of outcasts, a refugee and a homeless, catching each other red-handed. Having found a comedic situation, I was able to play with these two heavy substances 'homelessness' and 'refugee crisis' lightly and aim for the ball on the sea surface.

The story of the film evolves around conflicts between simple but good people (including the police officer) however does not have a specific theme. Friendship? Luck? Freedom? Maybe the latter one.

An often raised general advice is to avoid more than one protagonist (or more than one person's POV) in short films because they're too short to build empathy & sympathy. Who's film was Stowaway then? Thanks to the film's vague theme, simple character motivations I was able to drag the question of 'who's film' until the end of the movie without irritating the audience. It's was eventually good people's film.

To visualise the story the DOP Camilo Mejia and I decided to use a wide range of camera operations and did not limit ourselves; hand held, static, on sticks, on easy-rig, dolly. We made the decisions according to the story: A style that at the end managed not to get in front of the story.

Thanks to the great collaboration with the scriptwriter Criss Fletcher, remarkably good cast of actors and a talented, dedicated crew, I believe we managed to achieve a thoughtful, heart-felt, funny, unique movie. I honestly could not be happier with the final result despite the big obstacles during the five days production.



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What attracted you to take refugee crisis and homelessness as the basis for a film?

I always feel the heavy responsibility to entertain people, while I search for a story idea. I mostly start developing a story with characters and locations. However when I do that I always keep the idea of using zeitgeist topics as basis of the story in the back of my mind, just as my directing tutor encourages me to do. If they fit to the characters you want to talk about, they can make a good story a great story.

I already had created characters based on two homeless people I was keep seeing in my neighbourhood. Then I added a refugee as third outcast to the story.

Who is your tutor?

British director, our senior lecturer Malcolm Mowbray. I've owe him so much. He taught me a lot. He was the one at the beginning who wanted me to write about on-going refugee crisis. He saw parallels in my own German-Turkish background. Or maybe because I had mentioned him that my family lives in a Turkish town across a Greek island, nowadays a hotspot for the crossing.

Did you not see any parallels?

Yes, but not maybe in a way he might have thought. I got inspired because I was preoccupied with both of the topics emotionally and wanted to explore the characters. Cate Blanchett recently said in a press conference, she does not necessarily pick scripts with characters close to hers, acting is exploring. Same here, I like finding characters and exploring them, like an actor.

And of course now looking at the finished film, I can clearly see parallels between all four characters and myself. Incredible but I already felt that after reading the first draft of the script. Not usual, if you haven't written the script yourself. Thanks to the great writer Criss Fletcher.

How was your collaboration with Criss Fletcher?

Magical. I told him the story once; he told me that he knows the characters that I'm describing. First draft came right after couple of hours. Obviously we wanted to make the same film. He is a great writer and he progressed the story extraordinary. This wasn't our first collaboration. I knew Criss was working in a homeless organisation after his BA in creative writing at Liverpool John Moores University.

What films, music or otherwise did inspire you?

Cul-De-Sac (Polanski 1966), Down by Law (Jarmusch 1986), Dead Man (Jarmusch 1995), Fargo (Coen Brothers 1996) and The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (Huston 1948).

And there is a Dave Holland double bass interpretation of a Charles Mingus jazz standard "Goodbye Porkpie Hat".



What was the biggest challenge during the production?

The cardinal challenge in every step of production was telling a simple straight story with reasonably flat/light characters and motivations without being too expository.

It is a challenge because if the intention is not understood well by cast & crew, the results can easily be cheap and tasteless.

For the DOP Camilo Mejia it was probably shooting in a forest with natural light: direct sunlight and leaves create strong patterns. Apart from constantly changing f-stop it arouses another challenge: finding the right depth of field, which means deciding between crowded picture and the right mood / emotion.

The film was shot on five locations across Dorset. What was the reason?

We couldn't build the camping site next to the pillbox. And the interior of the pillbox was also not suitable to film, so we built a set. The imaginary map helped cast and crew to understand the camping site and its geographical relationship to the field and the pillbox. A shot through a gobo in shape of a pillbox window helped to resolve spatial separation.





How many set builds did you have?

Two. One for the interior of the HGV and the other one for the interior of the pillbox. A great work done by our production designer Michaelia Wu.



What was your best and/or worst experience while making Stowaway?

Best thing that happened to us was that it did not rain consecutively for five days. It was the end of September and the weather had already changed. And all forecasts were in favour of rain. But there was no rain.

Frustrating was that we couldn't find any pheasants to film wondering around. A second unit searched for them for five days. A gamekeeper would have helped us big. After the film the weather changed. So we had to buy footage. But I think we've found the perfect footage with the cutest pheasant.

How did the original score come to life?

I had the chance to get in touch with a renowned jazz musician Kagan Yildiz in Istanbul. We had only 3 hours on one day, 3 hours the next day to compose and record.

It was a new experience for me and for him. He is an extremely kind and talented musician who has an international career. So I had to be precise. Even if I'm a jazz fan, no references would have helped me. We wanted to find something original. I used adjectives, he played something, I had to say no, which were probably the hardest 'no's that came out of my mouth in my entire life. Until we got into the mood. Then he played that song. That was it.

Have you learnt a lot about yourself whilst making this film?

Being the producer and the director at the same time makes me an unpleasant person to work with. That will change. And I also understood again how much I love the seconds I can spend with the actors, as soon as I can get into director's shoes. I'm happy that I had the chance to work with great actors like Max Gold, Helen Kennedy, Ben Craze and Pietro Pace. Pietro has flown out from Rome to shoot this movie.

Festival audiences often have to make hard decisions about what to see, and the catalogue descriptions sometimes run together. In your own words, why should people see your film?

Stowaway is a genuine attempt to entertain the audience with a simple but well knitted story. It's story, characters, theme all are global. Worth to spend your fifteen minutes. Better than many student films, with all its mistakes.

What are your hopes for this film?

We had a private screening in London two weeks ago. Some people laughed at one point and most of them were smiling. Hey that's a big success for me who always finds himself too serious. I enjoyed that feeling. I could have some more screenings to experience that feeling.

I hope this film opens new doors to each cast and graduating crewmember and gives them the opportunity to work with big visionary industry professionals.

What's next?

I just moved from Bournemouth to London to work on films. Meanwhile I'm taking the feature film treatment I had written for the uni from treatment stage to script stage. Another short film I directed at the Uni, 'Electricity' is in postproduction stage. A 1920's short about a master electrician, his apprentice and their visit to wealthy mansion at a night of a blackout.

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