

AUGUST
DIEHL


LENA
LAUZEMIS

ALEXANDER
FEHLING

SOMETHING HAS GOT TO CHANGE...

A FILM BY ANDRES VEIEL

IF NOT US, WHO

 **61st** Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Competition





IN THE EARLY 60s, Bernward Vesper and fellow university student Gudrun Ensslin begin a passionate love in the stifling atmosphere of provincial West Germany. Sensitive to the increasing restlessness of the times, the fiery couple lash out at the denial regarding their fathers' roles in Hitler's Third Reich. Dedicated to the power of the written word, Bernward and Gudrun found a publishing house for controversial political works and become part of the spreading global uprising: „If not us, who; If not now, when?“ But discontentment with the world takes its toll on their tumultuous relationship. By the late 60s, Gudrun has joined rebellious Andreas Baader's pro-violence cause and Bernward risks his sanity by using psychedelic drugs in his struggles to finally write the novel committed to changing the world... Based on the emotional true story of an explosive era.



SYNOPSIS



WEST GERMANY, 1961. University student Bernward Vesper has devoted himself to the written word, aspiring one day that his own writing will change the world. The son of an infamous Nazi author, Bernward defends his father's writing ability, even if he is haunted by his father's suspi-

cious past. The war ended barely 15 years ago, and the mood is stifling and conservative, all the more so in Bernward's provincial surroundings.

Bernward discovers much in common with fellow student Gudrun Ensslin. Gudrun has a fascination for literature,

and she, too, questions her father's role during Hitler's Third Reich. With the help of her knowledge and dedication, Bernward founds a publishing house whose first publication is, paradoxically to Gudrun and many others, a controversial past work of Bernward's ostracized father.

Sharing both work and bed, Bernward

and Gudrun live out a passionate love doubted by their families. Sensitive to the increasing restlessness of the times, the fiery couple begins to lash out at the conformism and denial around them. Theirs is an existence of breaking rules and pushing limits. But their tumultuous



relationship nearly comes to an end because of Bernward's infidelities.

Bernward and Gudrun start anew with a move to West Berlin in 1964. Joining forces with leftist writers and political activists, they become part of the spreading global uprising: „If not us, who; If not now, when?“ It seems that history's wheels are turning in the direction that Bernward and Gudrun have longed for: students protest against the Vietnam War, movements rise for independence in Third World countries, the Black Panthers gain recognition in the USA...

When Gudrun gives birth to their son Felix, the couple seems to be closer than ever. Although they are successfully publishing political literature, words are no longer enough for Gudrun. When rebellious Andreas Baader enters their lives, Gudrun is attracted to his much more radical approach.

By 1968, Gudrun has flung herself into Baader's pro-violence cause. As chances of having a happy family life evaporate, Bernward risks his sanity by using psychedelic drugs in his struggles to finally write the novel committed to changing the world...



AUGUST DIEHL AS BERNWARD VESPER

August Diehl began his cinema career with an award-winning performance in Hans-Christian Schmid's thriller *23*. Diehl won the 1999 German Film Prize for his role as the computer hacker and conspiracy theorist Karl Koch who eventually goes insane. Diehl worked again with Hans-Christian Schmid as part of the ensemble cast of 2002's *DISTANT LIGHTS*, which recounts the fates of several people at the German-Polish border. Born in Berlin in 1976, Diehl atten-



ded the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts. He has performed extensively in theatre, including Peter Zadek's production of Sarah Kane's *CLEANSED* at the Hamburger Kammerspiele and Luc Bondy's *THE SEAGULL* at the Vienna Burgtheater. Diehl has had a wide range of cinema roles - from genre films like Stefan Ruzowitzky's *ANATOMY 2* and Robert Schwentke's *TATTOO* to literary films, such as Rainer Kaufmann's *COLD IS THE BREATH OF EVENING*. Diehl was recently seen as an SS colonel in Quentin Tarantino's *INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS*.

He has also played an SS officer in Volker Schlöndorff's *THE NINTH DAY*, the grandson of an SS officer in *THE BIRCH-TREE MEADOW*, and in *THE COUNTERFEITERS* he was a communist imprisoned in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Selected Filmography

- 2011** *IF NOT US, WHO* (Andres Veiel)
- 2010** *SALT* (Phillip Noyce)
- 2010** *THE COMING DAYS* (Lars Kraume)
- 2009** *INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS* (Quentin Tarantino)
- 2008** *DR. ALEMAN* (Tom Schreiber)
- 2008** *BUDDENBROOKS* (Heinrich Breloer)
- 2007** *NOTHING BUT GHOSTS* (Martin Gypkens)
- SLUMMING* (Michael Glawogger)
- 2006** *THE COUNTERFEITERS* (Stefan Ruzowitzky)
- 2004** *THE NINTH DAY* (Volker Schlöndorff)
- 2003** *LOVE IN THOUGHTS* (Achim von Borries)
- THE BIRCH-TREE MEADOW* (Marceline Loridan-Ivens)
- 2002** *TATTOO* (Robert Schwentke)
- DISTANT LIGHTS* (Hans-Christian Schmid)
- 2000** *COLD IS THE BREATH OF EVENING* (Rainer Kaufmann)
- 1998** *23* (Hans-Christian Schmid)

LENA LAUZEMIS AS GUDRUN ENSSLIN

Lena Lauzemis was born in 1983 in Berlin. She first appeared on stage at age 13 as part of the Wild Bunch, a Berlin youth theater group. At age 16, she played Lavinia in Heiner Müller's *ANATOMIE: TITUS FALL OF ROME*, directed by Thomas Heise in a factory hall in the Berlin suburb of Marzahn. Miss Lauzemis studied at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts. Since 2006, she has been a member of the Munich Kammerspiele theatre ensemble. After small film appearances in films like Anne Høegh Krohn's *UNKNOWN FRIEND*, Miss Lauzemis landed her first leading role in the 1999 television film

DAS ALIBI. Her film roles include Sue de Beer's *HANS UND GRETE* from Sue de Beer and Jutta Brückner's *HITLER-KANTATE*, in which she plays a music lover who falls for Hitler.

Selected Filmography

- 2011** *IF NOT US, WHO* (Andres Veiel)
- 2005** *HITLERKANTATE* (Jutta Brückner)

- 2003** *YUGOTRIP (TV)* (Nadya Derado)
- 2002** *DIE MUTTER (TV)* (Matti Geschonneck)
- 2001** *HANS UND GRETE* (Sue de Beer)
- 2001** *TATORT – GEWALTFIEBER (TV)* (Martin Eigler)
- 2000** *HERZRASEN (TV)* (Hanno Brühl)
- 1999** *DAS ALIBI (TV)* (Christine Wiegand)





ALEXANDER FEHLING AS ANDREAS BAADER

Alexander Fehling was recently seen in the title role of Philipp Stölzl's *GOETHE!*, playing the duke of poets as a jaunty bon vivant. Fehling made his film debut in Robert

Thalheim's *AND ALONG COME THE TOURISTS*, which made its world premiere in the Cannes Film Festival's "Un Certain Regard" section. Fehling won the German Film Prize for his performance as a young man caring for a holocaust survivor at the Auschwitz Memorial. He played Staff Sgt. Wil-

helm in Quentin Tarantino's *INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS*. His other film credits include Heinrich Breloer's *BUDDENBROOKS: THE DECLINE OF A FAMILY*, Frieder Wittich's comedy *13 SEMESTER* and Hans-Christian Schmid's award-winning political thriller *STORM*. Born in 1981 in Berlin, Fehling studied at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts.

Selected Filmography

- 2011 **WER WENN NICHT WIR** (Andres Veiel)
- 2010 **GOETHE!** (Philipp Stölzl)
- 2009 **STURM** (Hans-Christian Schmid)
- INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS**
(Quentin Tarantino)
- 13 SEMESTER** (Frieder Wittich)
- 2008 **BUDDENBROOKS** (Heinrich Breloer)
- 2007 **AM ENDE KOMMEN TOURISTEN**
(Robert Thalheim)

ANDRES VEIEL WRITER AND DIRECTOR

IF NOT US, WHO is Andres Veiel's first fiction feature. He has directed numerous award-winning documentaries, such as *BLACK BOX BRD* and *ADDICTED TO ACTING*. *BLACK BOX BRD*, winner of Best Documentary at the European Film Awards, is the portrait of RAF terrorist Wolfgang Grams and big banker Alfred Herrhausen, who was murdered by the RAF. Veiel's *ADDICTED TO ACTING* won the Panorama Audience Award at the Berlin Film Festival and also received a European Film Awards nomination for Best Documentary. *ADDICTED TO ACTING* is a long-term observation of four theater students at Berlin's Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts. Veiel made his debut with 1991's *WINTERNACHTSTRAUM* and followed with the award-winning *BALAGAN*,



featuring the Judeo-Palestinian theater group Akko. In his very personal film *THE SURVIVORS*, Veiel explored the stories of three former classmates who ended up committing suicide. Veiel was born in Stuttgart in 1959. Parallel to his studies in psychology in the 1980s, he completed an extracurricular program in film and theater direction at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien under the tutelage of Polish director Krzysztof Kiewlowski. Veiel also directed the filming of his

play *THE KICK*, about a brutal torture-murder in the Brandenburg village of Potzlow, performed at Berlin's Maxim Gorki Theater and at the Theater Basel.

Selected Filmography

- 2011 **IF NOT US, WHO**
- 2006 **THE KICK** (documentary)
- 2004 **ADDICTED TO ACTING** (documentary)
- 2001 **BLACK BOX BRD** (documentary)
- 1995 **THE SURVIVORS** (documentary)
- 1993 **BALAGAN** (documentary)
- 1991 **WINTERNACHTSTRAUM** (documentary)





INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR ANDRES VEIEL

IF NOT US, WHO recounts the love story of Bernward Vesper and Gudrun Ensslin. What drew you to this story?

When I was first offered the material, I turned it down. I thought, it's all been told. But then I read Gerd Koenen's book, "Vesper, Ensslin, Baader – Urszenen des deutschen Terrorismus (Prehistory of German Terrorism)" and I realized after the first few pages that what seemed so "already told" was new and fresh here. All the material

Bernard Vesper even republished a few of his father's controversial books with his own private press...

Along with Gudrun Ensslin. As publishing director, she didn't just go along with him, but even wrote positive critiques of Will Vesper's works. This was a guy who gave the main speech during the 1933 book burning in Dresden. One might ask, "Did she do it out of unconditional love for Bernward? Was it a money question? Did

to sacrifice her child for a higher moral purpose. Not out of vengeance but rather like, "I'm responsible for the situation in this world and if I bring children into this world, I had better make sure that the world is a worthy place for them to grow up in." And that was her justification for leaving the child behind. But if you read Gudrun Ensslin's letters from prison – which are now public – you can see how much she fought with that decision.



Suddenly a whole new person comes through. One could go so far as to say this is the demystification of an icon – Gudrun Ensslin is a person with human ties and not a Jeanne d'Arc figure, who only fights for her cause. I weighted the meaning in the opposite way: because the sacrifice was so great, the cause for which she fought had to be that

– the letters, the documents – made something clear. For instance about Bernward Vesper, what we all know from his book "The Journey," that he fought so hard to come to terms with his National Socialist father, the folk poet Will Vesper - ostracized for being a „Nazi writer“. But from early letters the love for his father was apparent despite his oppressive childrearing. He believed in his son's potential. Will Vesper offered Bernward the "sugary genius" as Gerd Koenen puts it.

she have to take this path in order to finance what she really wanted? That was something that I really didn't connect with Gudrun Ensslin and also not with Bernward Vesper.

IT HAD TO BE ABOUT WORLDWIDE REVOLUTION

And this new and surprising thought drove you to direct IF NOT US, WHO?

Yes, added to that was my image of Gudrun Ensslin. A lot like Ulrike Meinhof, she was a kind of Medea, willing

much greater and more important. Then it couldn't be reduced to the situation with the renters in the Märki-schen neighborhood in Berlin. It had to be about worldwide revolution.

How did you come to choose IF NOT US, WHO as the title of the film?

The breaking news in January 1968 was: the giant is faltering. The US army's casualties increased dramatically. They seemed to be defeated by the Viet Cong. There was an enthusiastic energy among young people not



only in Berlin. You could feel it in Berkeley, Tokyo, Buenos Aires and Paris: we have the strong tail wind of history. We can end this cruel war, we can change the world right now, Thousands of young people took to the streets: „If not us, who; if not now, when?“ became a sort of slogan of the times. Gudrun and Andreas, and also Bernward, were part of this revolutionary dream. Of course with different conclusions. For Gudrun and Andreas it was the starting point of their trip into violent action, Bernward used it as a source for his literary revenge.

When Bernward Vesper and Gudrun Ensslin meet in the sixties in Tübingen, the world seems completely open to them. They manage to get past their strict moral preconceptions. They even manage to have a ménage à trois. Is that the beginning of the uprising later? In contemporary films like “Jules and Jim” things like ménage à trois were brought to the big screen. The writer Hans Henny Jahnn broached the issue of lifting away the clearly defined roles for the sexes, violence and sexuality. And it was thus clear that there was

a desire to adopt the literary and filmic models into their own lives, and in doing so blot out all the stuffy morals that were preached at home. While the Vesper’s household was in the grip of a fossilized sense of morals, Gudrun came to realize that her own father was an artist and bon vivant despite his role as a clergyman. From him, she learned how to fly under the radar and go undetected. That is why – I believe – she was the force driving them to cross the line. That’s what it was about. Hans Henny Jahnn crossed the line. Ingmar Bergman’s scandalous film “The Silence” showed the sexual act for the first time in a public cinema. That all happened in the early sixties. It didn’t all start in ‘68.

I WANT TO LOVE YOU SO MUCH THAT YOU DON'T NEED OTHER WOMEN

How things develop between Bernward and Gudrun is also kept open in the film for quite a while. How would you describe the relationship between the two of them?

The relationship was driven by great expectations. Gudrun once said, and we used it in the film, “I want to love you so much that you don’t need other women.” The argument behind that is “if you go to another woman, it’s my fault.” That’s a superhuman demand that asks too much of anyone, extraordinary, nearing saintliness. Gudrun develops her formidable strength from that trait. The disappointment that this ideal can’t be achieved is then directed against herself. She not only tolerates an affair, she goes so far as to invite him to bring another woman into the mix. She takes over responsibility and directs Bernward’s own infidelity. In this way she maintains control. I believe that Bernward was flattered by all this, but he was also afraid at the same time. Someone who doubts himself will ask, “What has it got to do with me that I’m so immature, so unsure? I don’t deserve this love.” That’s a set up that can only lead to drama. For a film, of course, these conditions are excellent. It’s about an absolute kind of love and not just another relationship.



Gudrun says “I want to love you so much that you don’t need other women” after nearly killing herself...

It’s self-destructive, but I wouldn’t go so far as to say it was suicidal. When I drink after an act of self-destruction, go outside and lay myself out somewhere, it’s not the same as throwing myself off a cliff. Rather, it’s up to chance what happens afterward. I leave it up to fate, whether or not I die. This scene plays out in a grey zone. So in creating it I held back. I decided to do the same in my documentary film “The Survivors.” It was about three old classmates of mine who committed suicide. The place where a person is at when he or she makes the decision to kill oneself is isolated. No one else can approach it. Even in a feature film, it’s forbidden ground. The way leading up to it may be shown, the result can be shown but at the same time, it cannot.

The unusual thing about Bernward’s story is that he spent a long time toying with rightwing nationalism through the 50’s and the early 60’s – even after he started to get involved with groups far removed from all that. These worlds,

from the right and the left, overlap for Bernward. Was that also new for you?

Yeah, the thing that I really found interesting was that he was involved in both at the same time. Obviously not for the entire ten-year period in which this film takes place but at least till 1964/1965, Bernward was identified with his father’s life. And then the distance became ever greater, as shown in the film. But up to this point, he simultaneously holds two opposite positions to be true. For instance, he and Gudrun protest the arrest of Spiegel magazine editor Rudolf Augstein during the “Spiegel Affair” in the fall of ’62. Both of them said to themselves, “We have to stand up against this, it’s an attack on democracy.” In the same period, Bernward is tied to the ideas his father left behind, but he doesn’t experience this as any form or paradox. It was difficult for him to think in those simple categories right/left, progressive/conservative.

READ A BIT OUT OF MARTIN LUTHER KING’S BOOK, I WANT TO HEAR WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE WHEN YOU SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF THE OCCUPIERS

Nevertheless, taking a bold look at it: Are there positions from Bernward’s nationalistic German viewpoint that can be seen in the left milieu?

One has to be very, very careful there and very precise so as not to approach this with old thought patterns. Bernward, and Gudrun too, lived in a vehement anti-Americanism fueled by the Vietnam War. Bernward’s father, like many other from the right in postwar Germany, cultivated hatred towards the “occupiers.” The film touches upon this when Bernward lays a book by Martin Luther King on the table and says to Gudrun, “Read a bit out of Martin Luther King’s book, I want to hear what it sounds like when you speak the language of the occupiers.” At the same time, Bernward and Gudrun identify themselves with the Black Panther movement in the USA. Gudrun revered John F. Kennedy. One could even say that she was disappointed



and suffered a disillusioned loss of love for the USA after Kennedy's assassination.

Similar to protest behavior in the 68er milieu, protests in national conservative circles were driven by acts of disdain of the democratic society...

And the artificialness of the masses. That's another point where America is implicated: vulgarization, chewing gum instead of gourmet, no proper culinary culture. It links up to Adorno's and Horkheimer's "Dialectic of Enlightenment," in which the mass consumption of culture from the culture-industry leads to trivialization and numbing. Here too, father and son share the same critique, even if they have different reasons: The noble spirit of the German people being numbed by doubting Thomases and street poets. On the other side instead of street poets, American goods for mass consumption that numbed the senses, so that people are contented with their lamentable situations and no longer fight to change the world.

Are the stories of Bernward Vesper and Gudrun Ensslin typical of the 1960's? If you want to understand the political uprising of those times, then these characters are actually typical because they both let loose incredible political forces to reach change without compromise. Bernward delves into art and recreates himself. "By changing myself," he said, "I am changing the world." On the other hand, Gudrun said, "That is backsliding into bourgeois categories. One must change the societal principles and then individuals will change." Both had radical approaches and each stands for a kind of political uprising of this period.

Even Andreas Baader reinvented himself by offering differing stories for his own background. Is this self-dramaturgy the key to his character?

Yes, and in the vein of Rimbaud, "I is another." He is someone who tries out other roles. Doing this helps him to overcome and break down barriers. "I am man, I am woman, I am many. And if ever you start to think you've got me pinned down, I'm someone else again." By the time he arrives in our film narra-

tive he has decided upon a role, which he doesn't change out of – that of a political guerrilla, the resistance fighter, the terrorist, depending upon your point of view. But he didn't start out that way. Before that, he probably started out as a petty criminal. Import-export or something like that.

In the film Baader appears as a singer in a nightclub. This appearance seems very gay. That's no coincidence, is it? He had a gay uncle who got him into the early transvestite revue and gay club scene in Munich, which was hidden behind very bourgeois and plush musical numbers. This made quite an impression on Andreas Baader.

I WRITE AS A MAN PUNCHING SOCIETY SQUARE IN THE FACE

There's an interesting parallel between Andreas and Bernward the first time each met Gudrun. Bernward says to her, "I write as a man punching society square in the face." And during a political discussion Andreas says, "I just got out of jail, where you don't



drivel on about rebellion, you go ahead and throw a punch.”

I believe that she was the type of person that could see through things on an intellectual level but suffered from enormous self-doubt, wherever it came from. She needed someone to counteract that doubt by being unconditional. This combination of scrupulousness and intellectual wit was the incendiary mixture for the mutual radicalization of Gudrun and Andreas. The catalyst was not there for either of them alone. Before that it was the unconditional importance of the publishing venture with Bernward. Gudrun had what it

takes to lead intellectually and organizationally, but at the deciding moment she checks to see if what she is doing is in fact legitimate. At that point, you need someone to push things further.

HE HAD REVOLUTION ON HIS LIPS AND THE BOURGEOIS UNDER HIS ASS

Gudrun Ensslin’s language gets tougher and more determined as the film progresses. Where does this toughness come from?

From narratives and descriptions I knew how clearly she recognized and then referred to everything. Her toughness towards Bernward borders on mistreatment. Someone who writes is laughable for her. He had revolution on his lips and the bourgeois under his ass. This contempt is, however, contempt for her own weakness that she sees in others. It doesn’t come without ambivalence, fear, and especially when she leaves her child behind – and all that has to be fought in others. Only with this toughness can she bury her own self-destructive anguish. Nothing is more threatening than if the doubt



and scruples broke through. They would have jeopardized her grand project by corroding her momentum.

One topic of this film is the three-way relationship. However, when Gudrun meets Andreas, Bernward has to go. The driving force is Andreas, “Do you want to go back to your petit bourgeois family?” he screams at Gudrun and boxes her ear. Giving up the bourgeois family is part of becoming radical – Andreas leaves his small child behind as well. But there’s something else going on with him, the attachment problem. A great trauma of his is to be aban-

doned. By digging around in his biography, we learn that his father was lost in the war. He grew up with his mother in Munich. She hands the three-year-old off to his grandmother in Thüringen, leaves, comes back, and leaves again to work cleaning up the rubble in war-torn Munich and live in a bleak, tiny room. After three more years, she brings both grandmother and child back to Munich. Thus at a very impressionable age, Andreas’ only experience of his mother is her coming, showering him with love and then leaving again. Nothing is more traumatic for him than a person with a world separate from

his own. For Gudrun this other world is her family. Andreas only senses an archaic, self-destructive fear in this situation. Any love that amounts merely to a consoling promise of: “I’m leaving, but I will come back,” is seen as a mockery and a lie. Again, there is only the absolute. Going back and forth equates to a consolation. Thus he isn’t trying to teach her a lesson with his blow, even if he expresses it that way. It’s the action of a person in distress.

WITHOUT THE FÜHRER, YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE EXISTED

An unbelievable scene takes place on the occasion of Bernward's mother's birthday. She confesses to him, "Without the Führer, you never would have existed. Your father didn't want children. Hitler wished for his people to procreate. One could not shirk that duty." Was that true?

Yes, I wouldn't dare to invent such a moment. This comes from the material that I got either from discussions with his sister, family members and acquaintances from that time period or from other sources. I put together a volume of three or four hundred pages before I even started to work on the script. The basis was Gerd Koenen's book, research and interviews that I did, and about 30 other books and archive materials. I often ran into con-

always having to make decisions as to which source I would accept. Often that could only happen with further research.

As a feature film director who works with documentary material, do you have to liberate yourself from the many different narratives in order to find your own?

Those that don't follow dramaturgical necessity. I go into this underbrush of origins and try to comply with as much complexity as possible, nevertheless, maintaining an inner authenticity and consistency so that the narrative doesn't get lost in the thicket. This kind of compiling is a bit of a tightrope walk.

Where did you put your focus?

I wanted to learn something different about the political charge of this uprising, move away from the string of

these drives from my own personal history. For instance in 2008 during the finance crisis, I thought all that's going on is insanity. There has to be a tool kit for not only analyzing the gears of capitalism, but also at a point saying, "This can't go on!" It's a way of thinking that was valid then and is valid now. Simply saying, "yesterday was like today and today is like yesterday," isn't enough.

What is the difference in the protest movements of yesterday as opposed to today?

There are definitely differences in the political context: the uprising of '68 was solidified into worldwide movement. Today protests pop up in the Stuttgart basin about the new train station, around the new sound-polluting flight routes entering Berlin and on the train rails headed to nuclear waste dump in Gorleben.



So they are local protest movements...

Connecting up the different hotspots could reveal a general mistrust of development or decision-making and power structures. I think there are clear parallels. At the beginning of 1967, there was a study undertaken about the situation and attitude of students. That study claimed that students

flicting accounts. In one documentary I heard one voice, in the next another that put the first into question. But as director of a feature film that had to create a cohesive narrative, I was

images and closer to the personal, political and historical, biographical and sociological drivers. What motivates a person to be so discontented with this world? I am familiar with

are apolitical and only interested in their own advancement, with no social concerns. Three months later hundreds of thousands of students were in the streets. These kinds of processes



often happen when we least expect it. No one could have predicted that the building of a new train station in Stuttgart would provoke protests which were held by a section of the population that normally do not protest.

IMAGES LEAVE BURN MARKS, THE REST LANDS IN THE ASHBIN OF HISTORY

There are always run-ups to such events. What interests me is this process: which images give that catalyzing effect? That is why I worked with archive materials for *IF NOT US, WHO*. Images leave burn marks, the rest lands in the ashbin of history. Vietnam, the children running, torched by napalm, screaming, this image remains but the context, the conditions in which it was taken are not important to anyone anymore.

Among the archive images that you use in IF NOT US, WHO, there is footage of the bombing of a Vietnamese village. The fighter-bomber pilot is commenting his act practically with glee. How did you find these scenes?

By accident, as is so often the case. One night at some point, I stumbled upon a film from Chris Marker, who – for me – has been the master of film essays since making “Sans Soleil.” It was a film about communism, the political battle of the 20th Century, massively complex. This footage was in it. I immediately said, “This footage, this is it!” I don’t want the famous images, I want the beginnings, the innocence of these actions, the pleasure of these actions. Chris Marker had the pilots intercut with images of burnt bodies and it got rather propagandistic. It’s much more interesting to see it in its untouched form.

Alongside this unknown footage, you also use well-known images from June 2, 1967: Iranian Secret Service beating students who are demonstrating. The soundtrack plays the Lovin’ Spoonful hit “Summer in the City.” Why?

For a long time, I toyed with garnishing this film with this classic. I took a very clear decision in choosing “Summer in the City” after listening to a hundred other titles. And I chose this choreo-

graphic decomposition because it distances the audience, thereby avoiding the ritual of feeling directly effected – something we’ve so often seen – and going for something else. It becomes material that no longer fulfills an informative, documentary function but overcomes that by being transformed.

Will there be another feature film from documentary filmmaker Andreas Veiel? I am the kind of person that delves into research and then decides about the form. It gets harder and harder to touch those social pressure points with documentary. But I would prefer to continue telling stories in documentary form, definitely. However, under certain conditions I will choose other forms, as with *THE KICK* and now *IF NOT US, WHO*. Documentary work allows me to tell a story with more complexity. In purely fictional works my hands are tied by dramaturgical needs and emotional undertones. That can be stretched, but if it were about the complexity of a finance system, bringing a love story into the mix would be absurd. Structures are in one playing field; love stories are in another.

MAIN CAST

Bernward Vesper	AUGUST DIEHL
Gudrun Ensslin	LENA LAUZEMIS
Andreas Baader	ALEXANDER FEHLING
Will Vesper (Bernward's Father)	THOMAS THIEME
Rose Vesper (Bernward's Mother)	IMOGEN KOGGE
Helmut Ensslin (Gudrun's Father)	MICHAEL WITTENBORN
Ilse Ensslin (Gudrun's Mother)	SUSANNE LOTHAR
Ruth Ensslin (Gudrun's Sister)	MARIA-VICTORIA DRAGUS
Walter Jens (Professor)	BENJAMIN SADLER
Klaus Roehler	SEBASTIAN BLOMBERG
Stokely Carmichael	EDDIE JORDAN
Lady Prison Warden	SUSANNE-MARIE WRAGE
Dörte (Gudrun's Friend/Roommate)	VICKY KRIEPS
Kunzelmann	MARTIN BUTZKE
Publisher	PETER BENEDICT
Bernward Vesper (child)	JONAS HÄMMERLE

MAIN CREW

Director	ANDRES VEIEL
Screenplay	ANDRES VEIEL
Director of Photography	JUDITH KAUFMANN
Sound Mixer	PAUL OBERLE
Production Design	CHRISTIAN M. GOLDBECK
Costume Design	BETTINA MARX
Editor	HANSJÖRG WEISSBRICH
Music	ANNETTE FOCKS
Line Producer	ANNE LEPPIN
Producer	THOMAS KUFUS (zero one film, Germany)
Co-Producers	ANATOL NITSCHKE (deutschfilm, Germany)
	HELGE SASSE (Senator Film Produktion, Germany)
	SWR / WDR / DEGETO

IF NOT US, WHO

**2011 - GERMANY - 124 MINUTES - 35MM - COLOR -
CINEMASCOPE - DOLBY DIGITAL - IN GERMAN**



a film by
ANDRES VEIEL

a production of
ZERO ONE FILM (GERMANY)

in co-production with
**SWR (GERMANY), DEGETO (GERMANY), WDR (GERMANY),
DEUTSCHFILM (GERMANY), SENATOR FILM PRODUKTION (GERMANY)**

with the support of
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GEWÄHRLEISTEN, DASS JEDER DER
EINE AUSBILDUNG ERHÄLT,
DIE MORALISCH, GEISTIG
UND KÖRPERLICH ENTWICKELT UND
IN EINEM GEBILDETER WEIKTÄTIGER MIT
SOZIALISTISCHEM
WISSTEN...

A FILM BY ANDRES VEIEL
**IF NOT US,
WHO**

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THE MATCH FACTORY PRESENTS IF NOT US, WHO A ZERO ONE FILM PRODUCTION IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH SWR, DEGETO, WDR, DEUTSCHEFILM AND SENATOR FILM PRODUKTION A FILM BY ANDRES VEIEL
WITH AUGUST DIEHL, LENA LAUZEMIS, ALEXANDER FEHLING, THOMAS THIEME, IMOGEN KOGGE, MICHAEL WITTENBORN, SUSANNE LOTHAR, SEBASTIAN BLOMBERG, CASTING SIMONE BÄR, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JUDITH KAUFMANN
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zeroone|film

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