

## **BETRAYAL (IZMENA/TRADIMENTO)**

A man and the woman, two casual acquaintances, learn that their respective spouses are having an affair with each other.

This discovery drives them to do things they didn't dare to do before.

What will prevail - the feeling of jealousy or the passion? What to choose - revenge or forgiveness? The protagonists are looking for something to build a new life upon, but it is not easy: every one of their actions is influenced by the fact of infidelity, and this infidelity has its own logic.

-----

He doesn't know anything about her. She knows everything, or, at least, the most relevant thing, about him: his wife is having an affair with her husband. There are no outward signs of infidelity, of betrayal, yet she, looking impassive, shows him the evidence: the park bench on which the lovers sit, their table at a hotel cafe, their hotel room... and the lovers themselves.

The betrayal of beloved visibly drains out the victims of infidelity: we see two people with an emptiness where the heart should be. This gaping abyss can't be filled by anything - she eats soil in her suicidal despair, he clings at her desperately, imagining himself as her partner in crime, or maybe just her partner. None of these efforts helps them to heal.

What are they hoping to get in substitution of their dead love besides chilling coldness and mutual embarrassment? The protagonists don't know the answer to this riddle, yet a common loss binds them tighter than a passion would. Again and again, after many years and in spite of the circumstances of their lives they are trying to bring their painfully endless story to some end, any end.

But the author is ruthless with his characters: the crazy quilt of their relationship unravels, their mutual attraction can't develop into a copy of their unfaithful spouses' affair. In this story of mutual loneliness even the death becomes just a comma and not a full stop.

## **CAST**

She	FRANZISKA PETRI
He	DEJAN LILIC
First Wife	ALBINA DZHANABAEVA
First Husband	ANDREI SHCHETININ
Second Husband	ARTURS SKRASTINS
Investigator	GUNA ZARINA
Son	YAKOV LEVDA
Second Wife	SVETLANA MAMRESHEVA
Inquiry Officer	ARTUR BESCHASTNY
Girl	ALEKSANDRA NESTEROVA
Forensics Analyst	LERA GORIN
Girl's Mother	OLGA ALBANOVA
Estate Agent	LYDIA BAYRASHEVSKAYA
Woman at the Funeral	VALENTINA IVANOVA
Military Officer at the Funeral	DENIS VARENOV
Motel Administrator	ALEXEI TORGUNAKOV
Hotel Manager	ELENA KUDRYAVTSEVA
Hotel Administrator	NIKITA SHAPOVALOV
His Son	MIGEL MISHIEV
Barmaid	ALEXEI DANILOV
Maid	ULYANA KOPTYAEVA

## **CREW**

Director	KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV
Scriptwriter	NATALIA NAZAROVA, KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV
Director of Photography	OLEG LUKICHEV
Production Design	IRINA GRAZHDANKINA
Costume Designer	ULYANA POLYANSKAYA
Hair/Make-Up	ELENA ARSHINOVA, ANDREI DANZING
Casting	ELIZAVETA SHMAKOVA
Sound	BORIS VOIT
Editing	SERGEI IVANOV
Producer	SABINA EREMEEVA

Production “Studio SLON”, film company SOL’ with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation

## **KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV**

Director, co-scriptwriter

Russian theatre and cinema director.

Born on September 7th, 1969, in Rostov-on-Don (Russia, Soviet Union back then). Studied physics in the Rostov State University.

In 1991, while being a student, he started to work for TV. In the same period his works as a theatre director first become noticed and acclaimed.

Winner of the national television award "TEFI", winner of competitions at Rome International Film Festivals and "Kinotavr" in Sochi. Prizewinner of the festivals in Karlovy Vary and Locarno.

He lives in Moscow now.

### **Selected Filmography**

#### **2012 – Betrayal**

Venice International Film Festival, "Competition"

#### **2009 – Crush (novella "The prawn's kiss")**

Venice International Film Festival, "Orizzonti"

#### **2008 – Yuri's Day**

Open Russian Film Festival "Kinotavr" in Sochi ("Best Actress" Award)

Locarno International Film Festival (First Prize of the Youth Jury)

#### **2006 – Playing the Victim**

Open Russian Film Festival "Kinotavr" in Sochi (Grand Prix and "White Elephant" Award of Russian Film Critics' Guild)

Rome International Film Festival (Grand Prix)

Tel Aviv International Film Festival (Grand Prix)

"Festival of Festivals" International Film Festival (Audience Award)

### **Director's statement**

I made a "disaster movie" about man-woman relationships. The conjugal infidelity serves as the driving force of my story. It is a movie about hidden emotions and thoughts. About things that possibly have even no names in human language. We excluded many things

from our movie: the city the protagonists live in, their friends, their enemies. There is only the air full of infidelity, the space of infidelity, the flesh embodying infidelity. Every detail emphasizes the same theme - the ardent desire of the protagonists not to stay lonely and their instinctive yearning to love somebody.

## **Commentary of the director**

### **About the story**

The plot was inspired, on the one hand, by my personal experience, and on the other hand, by a real event that happened in the USA, I think, in the 1990s. I read about it in a newspaper once. Two people living in a small town killed their unfaithful spouses and managed to conceal the murder for a long time. So me and the co-author of our project, Natalia Nazarova, sat down together and just gave free reign to our imagination - what kind of man he might be, what might be the woman's personality.

The screenplay was significantly revised during the shooting: suddenly I wanted my characters to have as few specific traits, as few social identification marks as it was possible. I wanted the story to happen mostly in an inner space, in the space of betrayal per se. Every event happening in the film, maybe with some exceptions, - the road accidents, the hurricanes, - are happening according to the order of inner life.

«Betrayal» is more a metaphysical story than a love story. You see, love is stuff for melodramas, and a melodrama was the last thing I wanted to make. We, Franziska and me, working together, tried to discover the irrational nature of female behavior. We were discussing this topic endlessly, and Franziska moved fearlessly in this direction, towards the dark side.

### **About the actors**

I tried to figure out what Russian actors I'd like to see on the screen for two hours making the things I envisioned... And I got baffled, I just couldn't find anybody suitable. Maybe I have some private bias, because there are many worthy professionals around me, and yet I couldn't imagine any of them in my film! Foreign actors' appeal lies in the fact that I know nothing about them. For us they are fresh faces, and they also are professionals of the highest degree, able to immerse the audience in our story on an unusual level.

Franziska Petri. She is strong. She is a private person yet generous and fearless. This actress left all her other projects, and during all this time, during the preliminary period and during the shooting, our film was her complete life. The same thing happened with Dejan Lilic. You must know he is the head of the national theater troupe in his country. Yet he said: "Dear colleagues, I'm off to the shooting site, the theater is temporally closed". He handed his reins of government to somebody and went to Russia for the shooting of our film.

### **About the music**

This film is the first case in my working experience when the material rejected music, any music that I chose. The producer interrogated me, again and again: "Who is your composer? What music will we have?". I gave her some excuses for a long time, then I said: "We will have no music at all". For a while I defended my position, and everybody seemed to agree with me finally, we decided to go without music. Yet I tried to work with several very good

composers at once, they were composing some draft versions, they tried many methods, they worked looking at the visual images, at the screen, or listening as I told the story... but all their efforts were hitting a brick wall. When the film was more or less formed I realized that absence of music was, of course, a powerful artistic device, sort of radical: no musical sounds at all, only noises... But at the same time it is important to avoid "drying up" the film, one must help the audience to tune in emotionally. So I started to seek some "music of betrayal", I needed to imagine how such tension might sound. And the only thing I have found was the "Isle of the Dead" by Rachmaninov, it is a piece in Wagner style, something yearning for a solution, a coda, yet unable to get it.

## **FRANZISKA PETRI**

German actress. Born in Leipzig. From 1992 to 1995 studied at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Art. While still a student she acted in TV series "Operation Medusa", "Murder of Red Rita" and "The Curse of Anna". She made her cinema debut in "The Big Mambo", which opened the 48th Berlin International Film Festival. Petri is active in cinema and TV often favoring unexpected projects.

### **Selected Filmography**

2012 – Betrayal  
2009 – Für Miriam  
2008 – Der Tag, an dem ich meinen toten Mann  
2006 – Das Herz ist ein dunkler Wald  
2005 – Porno! Melo! Drama!  
2000 – Vergiss Amerika

### **Commentary**

It is commonly assumed that love is always a happy experience. But love can be dark, greedy, selfish, when one wants simply to possess one's beloved. Not to give anything, only to get hold of more and more. In this case a relationship turns into a real tragedy.

For my character in the movie the infidelity becomes the only solution, a breath of freedom, an attempt to escape from this oppressive love and find different, joyous love. My character yearns for love, and this desire submits her will. I guess many other events could take part in the framework of this story. I'd like the audience to keep thinking about the story, to figure out what will happen to this woman later. The final of our film contains some details which stimulate the viewers' imagination.

## **DEJAN LILIC**

Macedonian actor. Born in Skopje. In 1997 graduated from the Department of Drama Arts at the University of St. Cyril and Methodius. Since 1998 he is employed as an actor at the Drama Theatre in Skopje. His stage works include

Shakespeare's Hamlet, Mr Blond in "Reservoir Dogs" scripted by Tarantino, Alexander the Great in "Odyssey 2001" by Ivan Popovski.

### **Selected Filmography**

2012 – Betrayal  
2011 – Scopje Remixed  
2007 – Boli li? Prvata balkanska dogma  
2003 – Sedum prikazni za ljubovta I svrsuvanjeta  
1998 – Naste

### **Commentary**

People invented for themselves a downright crazy tempo of life. They have no time for pausing and looking around, for trying to figure out their own feelings. Their life is reduced to fulfilling their necessities. Love, betrayal, jealousy - the words sound familiar to them, but the meaning is totally unknown to them. Only when the habitual tempo of life is broken, people find time for thinking about the sense of their existence.

And then the appalling reality is revealed to them. My character wasn't ready for what happened to him, he was sure he had organized his life nicely. But his wife's infidelity makes him do things he hadn't dared to do previously. He can't fully realize how he has changed, he is acting as if on somebody else's orders, he surrenders his will to the thread of Fate.

### **ALBINA DZHANABAYEVA**

Russian singer and actress. Born in Volgograd. Graduated from the Gnesin State College of Music, department of musical theatre acting. Worked in Korea performing in the musical "Snow-white and the Seven Dwarfs". Since 2004 is a member of the "VIA Gra" group.

"Infidelity" is Albina's debut in cinema.

### **Commentary**

I tried to figure out her way of life, how she interacts with her husband, how she brings up her child. I must say: from my own point of view I have absolved her totally, I have found justifications for everything she did. She is an actual, living and breathing woman... I can't judge her. We all are human, every one of us can one day get infatuated, become passionate about somebody. Especially after many years of living together and doing everyday tasks as a family. In this case we always need an outburst, a surge which will restore us to life, restore our emotions. Naturally the family is too big a responsibility, it is a counterweight to passion. Yet a stable relationship often becomes a routine, and one yearns to escape from it. That's why I don't castigate my character. On the contrary, I support her in everything and absolve her totally.

## **ANDREI SCHETININ**

A non-professional actor. Debuted as an actor in Alexandr Sokurov's "Father and Son" which won the FIPRESCI prize at the 56<sup>th</sup> Cannes International Film Festival. Winner of the "Festival of Festivals" for the best debut.

### **Commentary**

We have lost the ability of forgiving each other. We got accustomed to give tit for tat: to pay back a lie with a lie, an infidelity with a betrayal. We choose revenge though many tragedies in the world can be averted if we make peace with our opponents, forgive them, or just talk to them. Yet we succumb to fleeting passions and fears. The unwillingness to forgive is a problem affecting not only for the protagonists of our film but the human race as a whole.

## **ARTŪRS SKRASTIŅŠ**

Latvian actor. Born in Jelgava. In 1966 graduated from the Latvian Academy of Culture as theatre and cinema actor and joined the Dailes theatre. On stage he played Antonio Salieri in "Amadeus", Molière in "The Cabal of Hypocrites", Lebedev in "The Idiot", Trigorin in "The Seagull", Shakespearian Hamlet.

### **Selected Filmography**

2012 – Betrayal  
2010 – Rudolfa mantojums  
2009 – Mazie laupītāji  
2007 – Rigas sargi  
2003 – Baiga vasara

### **Commentary**

Infidelity is a familiar concept to everybody. It can be an physical act, or just a desire, a vague thought about starting an affair. But all these forms of infidelity don't differ much, the distinction is quite subtle. In every case be unfaithful means to tell lies. So the relevant thing is to be honest with oneself, no matter what are your circumstances. If you are a mature, responsible person, then, as soon as you discern that your heart is unfaithful, you must confess it and not delay all till the point when the physical infidelity happens. These are my own rules, my own ideas. My character feels about it differently: he dreads learning about his wife's betrayal. He feels love slip away but he can't prevent it.

## **GUNA ZARIŅA**

Latvian actress. From 1992 to 1996 studied at the St. Petersburg Academy of Theatrical Arts. Works at the New Riga Theatre which frequently tours Russia with Alvis Hermanis's plays.

### **Selected Filmography**

2012 – Betrayal  
2010 – Serzanta Lapina atgriesanas  
2009 – Medibas  
2002 – Pa celam aizejot

### **Commentary**

She is a person from outside, a creature from the beyond: she isn't an ordinary, normal, common person. The director wanted my character to bring into the film something... well, not mystical, but infernal... to be a diabolic figure who directs all these people guiding them from above. She embodies doom in the direct sense of the word. Due to some unknown circumstances or maybe due to her inner problems my character chooses to treat these people quite cruelly, in my view: she doesn't give them a chance to atone for their crime in a normal way, as humans do. She offers them another road, and it turns to be much more horrible than trivial justice.

## **NATALIA NAZAROVA**

Script

In 1995 she graduated from Russian Academy of Theatre Arts (RATI-GITIS, workshop of V. Levertov)

She worked at Moscow Young Generation Theater (MTYuZ).

### **Selected Filmography**

2012 – Betrayal (dir. K.Serebrennikov)  
2012 – My Boyfriend is an Angel (dir. V.Storozheva)  
2011 – Blind Happiness (mini-series) (dir. A.Kasatkin)  
2010 – Yaroslav. A Thousand Years Ago (dir. D.Korobkin)  
2010 – Compensation (dir. V.Storozheva)  
2008 – I'll Come Back (series) (dir. Ye.Nemykh)  
2008 – Ranetki (series)  
2007 – Listening to Silence (dir. A.Kasatkin)  
2007 – Gagarin's Grandson (dir. A.Panin, T.Vladimirtseva)  
2005 – Lola and Marquis (dir. V.Donskov)  
2005 – Blockhead (dir. M.Korostyshevsky)

## **Commentary**

What was the most difficult thing during work on this screenplay? To avoid stereotyped situations and to find the main line of the plot. Initially it was a story based on real events about a pair of lovers who join forces and kill their spouses. But in that form the story just didn't work. It smacked of two-dimensional moralization and didn't reveal anything new. Then we had an idea to turn the story inside out. When the cheated spouses learn about the betrayal, they unite forces to take revenge, basically they judge and execute the lovers. And later - according to the law of God's retribution - they succumb to the same sin. "Betrayal" is a story about a damaging change. Our protagonists were betrayed by their spouses, changed internally and turned into betrayers too. They betrayed their way of life, their principles, their love... you see, they had loved their spouses deeply.

## **OLEG LUKICHEV**

Director of Photography

Graduated from the department of cameramen at VGIKI.  
Winner of the "White Square" and "White Elephant" awards. Was nominated for the "Golden Eagle" and "Nika" awards as the best director of photography of the year. Oleg Lukichev's films participated in competition at the international film festivals in the Cannes, Berlin, Venice etc..

## **Selected Filmography**

2012 – Betrayal (dir. K.Serebrennikov)  
2010 – Truce (dir.S.Proskurina)  
2009 - Crush (novella "Kiss of the Shrimp", dir. K.Serebrennikov)  
2008 – Ocean (dir. M.Nesterov-Kosyrev)  
2008 – Yuri's Day  
2007 – Traveling with Pets (dir. V.Storozheva)  
2005 – Garpastum (dir. A.German Jr)  
2004 – Mars (dir A.Melikyan)  
2003 – Last Train (dir. A.German Jr)  
2001 – Just the Two of Us (dir. A.Veledinsky)

## **Commentary**

I like the spontaneous method of filming very much. And Kirill gave me the chance to use it, he trusted me totally. He rehearsed things with the actors, they were discussing constantly, trying out ideas, but I wasn't rehearsing anything with my camera, not till the moment of filming. So I really didn't know what and how would be filmed: often I took my camera only after hearing the command "Action!". And in the majority of cases these were the takes that the director later selected for the final version. It is something not easily explicable: when things are kind of spontaneous, when I don't know what will happen to

the actors in the scene, and the actors don't fully grasp how they must act in front of my camera, these are moments when something true emerges. If you as a cameraman feels the same energy that the actors do, if you get on the same wavelength with them, if you all have the same rate of respiration, a "real thing" is created.

## **SABINA EREMEEVA**

Producer

In 1998 graduated from the department of economics at VGIK. Since 2001 is general manager of the movie company "Studio SLON"

### **Selected Filmography**

2012 – Betrayal (dir. Kirill Serebrennikov)

2011 – Another's Mother (dir. Denis Rodimin)

2010 – Truce (dir. Svetlana Proskurina)

2009 - Crush (dir. Pyotr Buslov, Ivan Vyrpayev, Alexei German Jr., Kirill Serebrennikov, Boris Khlebnikov)

2007 – Travelling with Pets (dir. Vera Storozheva)

2005 – Manga (dir. Pyotr Khazizov)

2004 – Mars (dir. Anna Melikyan)

2003 – Frenchman (dir. Vera Storozheva)

2001 – Just the Two of Us (dir. Alexandr Veledinsky)

### **Commentary of the producer**

The genre of our movie is psychological drama with elements of thriller. The story is about infidelity of a loved one, about betrayal. We show the horrible and destructive power of passion. And yet sometimes a passion is the best thing that can happen to a person in the course of his or her life, and maybe some passions are worth the price of tearing up one's life for them.

In the Russian grammar, as well as in German, the nouns have gender: masculine, feminine or neuter. So the Russian word "izmena" (meaning "infidelity, betrayal") is feminine from the grammatical point of view. This detail is important, because in our film the women are those who create and change the world. Yet we don't castigate and don't absolve anybody. We just feel sympathy for the protagonists and muse on their problems together with them. Because every once-betrayed, every once-cheated spouse may find oneself in the role of betrayer later, just by happenstance.