



Film Selected for the 64<sup>th</sup> Venice Film Festival – World Premiere

# CARGO



## PRESS KIT

A SHORT FILM BY LEO WOODHEAD

I N T E R N A T I O N A L   S A L E S

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**NEW ZEALAND FILM**

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

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Director/Writer: Leo Woodhead  
Producer: Vanessa Alexander and Leo Woodhead  
Production Company: Collective Vision  
Executive Producers: Jakub Drocar and Vanessa Alexander  
Screening Format: 35mm  
Screen Ratio: 1:1.85  
Length: 12mins  
Year of Completion: 2007  
Country of Production: New Zealand/ Czech Republic  
Language: Czech  
Subtitles: English  
Responsible for Sales: Juliette Veber, New Zealand Film Commission, [juliette@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:juliette@nzfilm.co.nz)

## **LOGLINE**

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While trafficking people across a border, the driver makes an unlikely friend and ally.

## **SYNOPSIS**

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*Cargo* is a realistic and powerful film that portrays a young boy's descent into the world of human trafficking. Believing he is about to cross a border to a new life, the young runaway instead discovers he is to be sold as a human slave. Through a remarkable moment of pity, he is spared - but the reprieve comes at a huge personal cost.

## **FESTIVAL SCREENINGS**

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2007 64<sup>th</sup> Venice International Film Festival, Italy  
2007 51<sup>st</sup> BFI London Film Festival, UK  
2007 FAMU Film Festival, Czech Republic  
2007 Prague Short Film Festival, Czech Republic  
2007 PLUS CAMERIMAGE Film Festival, Poland  
2008 San Sebastian Human Rights Film Festival, Spain  
2008 7<sup>th</sup> Tribeca Film Festival, USA  
2008 16<sup>th</sup> IFF Artfilm Trenčianske Teplice /Trenčín, Slovakia  
2008 CFC Worldwide Short Film Festival, Canada  
2008 New Zealand International Film Festival  
2008 Paris Cinema International Film Festival, France  
2008 Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia  
2008 Molise Cinema, Casacalenda  
2008 Palm Springs International Short Film Festival, USA  
2008 57th Melbourne International Film Festival, Australia  
2008 35<sup>th</sup> Telluride Film Festival, USA

2008 Ourense International Film Festival, Spain  
2008 Curto Circuito Film Festival, Spain  
2008 St Tropez Antipodes Film Festival, France  
2008 Asiana International Short Film Festival, Korea  
2009 Magma Short Film Festival, NZ

## **DIRECTOR/WRITER - Leo Woodhead**

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Leo Woodhead is recent a graduate of the Master of Creative and Performing Arts program at Auckland University. His time spent at University encompassed a study of classic narrative, philosophy and moving image. Leo has written and directed several short dramas under the tutelage of Vanessa Alexander, sparking an enveloping passion for film.

In 2005, Leo collaborated with Czech cinematographer Martin Priess on the film *Sunday* during his year long visit to New Zealand. It was the beginning of a great friendship and working relationship, prompting Leo go on an “student exchange” organised between Auckland University and FAMU in Prague to shoot his graduating film project.

The result was *Cargo*.

Leo is now back living in New Zealand focussed on developing his first feature film script.

## **DIRECTORS NOTES**

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I remember the moment the idea for *Cargo* popped into my head. A friend of mine was writing a script about restorative justice, and we got to talking about amnesty international and current topics in Europe. It was around the time of the Football World Cup in Germany, and there were a lot of reports about ‘legal’ brothels being set up to accommodate the whims of travelling fans. I got in touch with Amnesty and also La Strada, an organization that helps women and children without rights in countries like the Czech Republic, and they gave me some stories and facts to look over.

In the early drafts, I wanted to make the film from the trafficker’s point of view, but the more I tried to make him a sympathetic, rounded character, I realised the real heart of the story was about the effect he has on the people he takes. I thought a boy in the transition from child to man would be a good character, because he’s easily influenced by father figures, and his personality can be malleable. I’ve always had an interest in the parts of human nature that are cyclical. My first film *Sunday* deals with a son who ends up inheriting negative qualities from his father, and at a basic level, the trafficker and the boy mirror a father corrupting his son because he knows no other way to behave. The cyclical nature of violent behaviour towards others is a universal problem, and I think this is one of the reasons that the film strikes a chord with many people.

It was an unbelievably stressful experience making the film in a foreign country where I only had a small understanding of the language. I think the main reason we were able to get the film off the ground was my friendship with Director of Photography, Martin Preiss – who I met when he was studying here in New Zealand. He invested time and effort far beyond his exquisite shooting of the film

- - he was with me at the auditions, meetings, location scouts – translating and creatively influencing throughout the entire process.

However, being an outsider did have certain advantages. Parts of the country just jumped out during location scouts, and I began to understand how it would feel for the boy in my film to be alone in a world with everything to lose. Plus, a lot of the crew were excited to be working with someone who had come so far. I think they saw that if I was this dedicated, then they were willing to give their time and hard work as well.

The decision to use a small crew worked for two reasons. It gave the film a documentary realism that Martin and I were looking for, and it also made us tighter as a group. A larger crew might have been perplexed by standing in a field in zero degree temperatures, waiting for a foreigner to set up a scene, but all of our crew gave so much time and energy, often doing two jobs at once.

## **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY - Martin Preiss**

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Martin Preiss met Leo while on exchange to Auckland University from Prague in 2005. The friendship was instant and led to Leo traveling to Prague to make “Cargo” in and around the 2km radius of Martin’s family cottage in Southern Bohemia. Shot on Kodak Vision 500T using an Aaton Minima and a Aaton XTR, the film’s camera movement is largely handheld.

Born and raised in the Czech Republic, before being accepted to the famous Prague’s Film & Television Faculty Of Performing Arts (FAMU), Martin was already shooting features by his third year. His first DP position on a feature film was on the award-winning “Choking Hazard”, and he has since gone on to shoot many shorter and longer works both in Europe and New Zealand.

Thanks to his unrelentingly creative eye - he was accepted in 2007 to Berlinale Talent Campus and now works with even more foreign collaborators as well as on the Czech feature film "Grapes". He has also worked alongside Tuva Novotny, Sean Connery, Natalie Portman and Chavier Bardem.

## **PRODUCER - Vanessa Alexander (Collective Vision)**

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Vanessa Alexander has produced, directed and written for numerous award winning projects. Winner of the 2000 NZ New Filmmaker of the Year, she has

since gone on to win a Jury Prize (Oporto Festival), a Gold and Silver World Medal at the New York Festival, Best Series and Best Children's Series at the NZTV Awards, a Telly Award, and the Prix Grande at the Danube Television Festival. Her work on *Outrageous Fortune* garnered her a Best Director nomination at the 2005 Qantas TV awards, her second nomination in that category in four years. She has also executive produced a number of award-winning short films for the New Zealand Film Commission, including the Oscar-

nominated *Two Cars One Night*. Her feature debut *Magik and Rose* screened at numerous international festivals and was selected to screen at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival Forum for super low-budget films. Following that - *Being Eve* - the teen series she produced and directed - sold to more than 40 territories and went on to be nominated for an International Emmy.

A Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of Auckland, Vanessa supervised the development and pre-production of "Cargo" as part of Leo's thesis project, picked up the project formally in post-production.

Vanessa Alexander is an Honorary Member of Women in Film and Television, the current Chair of Script to Screen (the New Zealand Writer's Foundation), and a Board Member of the New Zealand Film Commission. She has studied script development at ARISTA, Working Title UK, Steven Bochco Productions, the Royal Shakespeare Company and eQuinox and somewhat surprisingly occasionally directs episodes of "Power Rangers" for Disney Studios.

### **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER - Jakub Drocar (Punk Film)**

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Starting out as a child actor, Jakub leaned towards the film industry from an early age. A miraculous child became a nearly worthwhile man, totally meeting all the requirements for making business negotiations, project preparation and everything else any production could want.

A talent for seeking young and promising artists and an uncanny sense for choosing the right projects to produce are both trapped in his red head. In between obtaining two degrees, Jakub worked alongside many of the Czech Republic's top producers and financiers doing anything and everything. This training proved indispensable when he co-founded a small company called Punk Film in his early twenties. Since then, he has produced many commercials including projects for MTV Europe, Hyundai and Toyota, as well as co-producing several Bollywood feature films shot in Prague.

The ability to bridge geographical divides in what drives him, and being an integral part of that process is what rewards him most.

### **QUOTES**

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I couldn't try and confront a topic as large as child trafficking in a short film, so it simply became about one child's experience, and his desire for survival. I'm interested in what human beings do in order to survive, and how they can lose the essence of who they are in the process. When escape seems impossible, the boy is given an opportunity to live, but only at a huge personal cost. In a way, he's dying inside at the end of the film, because he has begun to lose the emotions and understanding that give him humanity.

- Leo Woodhead (Writer/Director)

Weirdly - one of the main advantages of being a New Zealand film maker overseas was the association to The Lord of the Rings. I could barely speak the language – but the moment I told people where I was from, their eyes would light up. One man who was letting us use his land to film on told me New Zealand was his dream place to live, and asked me why I chose to come to the Czech Republic to make a film. In my atrociously bad Czech, I told him it couldn't be done anywhere else and be realistic.

- Leo Woodhead (Writer/Director)

Cooperation with Leo is always smooth from my point of view, and he's genius screenwriter and director. It was very stressful for him, he was the only English only speaking person on the set, all others were Czechs. The two main actors were not speaking English at all, so everything needed to be translated. It was great choice from Leo was to shoot it in Czech language but it must have been confusing for a director when you don't know if they said the right thing. I think he fought through it very well and made beautiful short film.

- Martin Preiss (Director of Photography)

"I'd worked with Leo on the project for a long time at Auckland University and was extremely pleased with the film that ended up being shot thanks to the DP Martin Preiss, Jakub Drocar, and of course the extremely talented Leo Woodhead. It's no small task to direct a film in a foreign country not speaking the language but Leo's clear vision really shines through. For me – the pleasure of this film is that it's actually about something – and yet it isn't preachy – it just takes you by the hand and ever so quietly moves you."

- Vanessa Alexander (Producer)

## **CREDIT LIST**

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### **CAST**

Boy	Jaroslav Horváth
Trafficker	Ivo Haman

Friendly girl  
Trafficked girls

Teresa Branna  
Natálie Rehorová  
Sára Friedlaenderová  
Vendula Kraslová

Cat

Oscar

## **CREW**

Director/Writer

Leo Woodhead

Producer

Vanessa Alexander  
Leo Woodhead

Executive Producer

Jakub Drocar (FAMU)  
Vanessa Alexander  
(AucklandUniversity)

Associate Producer

Martin Preiss

Director of Photography

Martin Preiss, A.C.K

Focus Puller

Václav Tlapák

Gaffers

Václav Filáček  
Zdenek Janecek

Production Manager

Petra Soukupova

First Assistant Director

Danilo Medenica

Make-up / Wardrobe

Honza Lobl

Art Director

Tomás Svoboda

Editor

Lenka Hojková

Composer

Ivan Horak

Sound Recording

Ivan Horak  
Leticia Krsáková

	Lenka Mikulová
Camera Equipment	Vantage Prague AFM Prague
Stock	KODAK Prague
Laboratory	Barrandov Studios (Czech Republic) Park Road Post (NZ)
Sound Post	Inside Track (NZ) Sound Square (Czech Republic)
Sound Designer	Ivan Horak
Sound Mixer	Chris Burt
Post Production	Park Road Post FAMU Studio Barrandov Studios
Thanks to	Auckland University and FAMU
Special Thanks to	Misha Kavka Ivo Trajkov Duncan Petrie Michael Bregant Jon Newell Fraser Brown Juliette Veber Shuchi Kothari Pavel Jech Jindrich Chipera, Vantage Prague Vanda Vacvalova Martin Hansen Darcie Murray Barrandov Studios Stribrec Hospoda The Preiss Family



Steven Edell

Jane Boocock

Ken and Karen Woodhead