



PRESENTS

TERRIBLY HAPPY



OPENS IN NEW YORK AND SELECT CITIES – **FEBRUARY, 2010**

Running Time: 102 minutes

Rating: Not Rated by the MPAA

World Premiere: Karlovy Vary Int'l Film Festival, 2008

Awards: 7 Robert Awards (Danish Oscars), including Best Picture, Director, Actor, Actress, Screenplay; Grand Prix– Karlovy Vary Int'l FF 2008; Best Director – Chicago Int'l FF 2008

OFFICIAL ACADEMY AWARD® SELECTION - DENMARK

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- SYNOPSIS

The official Danish selection for this year's Academy Awards and winner of 7 Robert Awards (Danish Oscars) including Best Picture, Director, Actor, Actress and Screenplay, TERRIBLY HAPPY spins a riveting yarn about Robert Hanson (Jakob Cedergrén), a Copenhagen police officer who, following a nervous breakdown, is transferred to a small provincial town to take on the mysteriously vacated marshal position and subsequently gets mixed up with a married femme fatale. Robert's big city temperament makes it impossible for him to fit in, or understand the uncivilized, bizarre behavior displayed by the townspeople.

Quickly spiraling into an intense fable, director Henrik Ruben Genz displays a unique and sometimes macabre vision of the darkest depths to which people will go to achieve a sense of security and belonging.

- DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT – HENRIK RUBEN GENZ

It sounded like a western, I thought...

Erling Jepsen and I drank coffee in a café in Amager, Copenhagen while Jepsen shared his thoughts on his next novel. A foreigner-comes-to-town-and-all-hell-breaks-loose story. Not that I'm particularly interested in the western as a genre, but here was an author who spoke my native language. The characters were strangely familiar and the landscape more immediate than anything I'd worked on before. Understandable, considering Jepsen is a childhood friend from the street I grew up on, in the small town of Gram in Southern Jutland, Denmark.

The story unfolds on the flat marshlands of Southern Jutland. I had always dreamt of filming in the Danish marshlands, as this is the landscape that has left the strongest impression on me. Here was a story, finally, where the setting was more than just a spectacular backdrop – it was a dramatic co-narrator.

The characters are reflected in this somber, almost hostile landscape, in the way they engage their surroundings. People in these small towns live by their own set of rules and moral values, which may seem absurd and introverted. Like the landscape, their behavior can be perceived as hostile by outsiders. And of course you don't really throw foreigners in the marshes in Southern Jutland. Cause when you do, they have to either adapt, or disappear...

- AUTHOR'S STATEMENT – ERLING JEPSEN

Ever since I was a child, I liked telling stories. And even then, I was privileged to have a good listener; my childhood friend, Henrik. We grew up in the same little town in southern Denmark, our parents' houses lay across the street from each other and we often played together. Our games were all about me trying to scare the living daylights out of him with frightening stories about death, destruction and the end of the world or what we in my family used to call "the facts of life." Henrik is three years younger than me and believed my every word back then. When he would start to cry in the middle of one of my stories, I knew I'd gone too far and I'd feel guilty. But I was also a little bit proud because that meant my story had been a success. And I knew he'd be back tomorrow for more.

At some point, I must have scared him absolutely because he never came back and we parted ways. We didn't see each other for 30 years. He became a director, I became a writer. And then Henrik looked me up. He accused me of traumatizing him as a child with my scary stories, but he hadn't contacted me to hold me accountable. He wanted to adapt one of my novels, "The Art of Crying," for the screen. Since it was already in production with a different director (Peter Schønau Fog), he wanted to know if I had any other stories. I told him about a novel I was working on called "Terribly Happy." He listened just as he had when we were kids and this time he didn't run home to his mother half way through. The story takes place in our home town and several of the characters are shared acquaintances from back then. As is often the case in my books, "Terribly Happy" is based on a true story. The little girl with the baby carriage is my niece. Her father was a binge drinker and when he got drunk, he would beat his wife. Everybody in town knew this, but nobody did anything about it. As my work with the novel progressed, I sent each chapter to Henrik. He sent me notes and simultaneously wrote a treatment for his adaptation.

When I finally saw the film, I almost left the theatre half way through. That's how scared I was. It was as if Henrik and I were back in childhood but the roles had been reversed. The distress I imagined I had caused him got thrown right back in my face! After the film, a couple audience members must have been able to see how I felt because they assured me that it was just a film. They almost convinced me.

- INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR - HENRIK RUBEN GENZ

Conducted by Zbynek Vlasak, Festival Daily

Is this really the way things go on Danish countryside?

I don't think this story is particular to Denmark. I think most countries have a similar spilt between urban and rural cultures. I have first hand experience with this culture clash, as I grew up in Southern Jutland myself and now live in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. The obscurities in the movie are not to be taken literally but have been manipulated for dramatic effect. One might say that on a symbolic level, the story is true to the way outsiders are treated in Southern Jutland: There are subtle ways of isolating people and the silent treatment can be a powerful weapon in this area as well.

The book that your movie is based on is inspired by a true story. How deeply? Have you met people who really lives in that village?

Our story is inspired by true events so of course we have re-worked the story for dramatic purposes.

The real story takes place in Erling Jepsen's close family. The names have not been changed. Dorthe, Jørgen, and Ingelise really exist. However, Robert, our main character was invented for dramatic effect and as a symbol of the isolation outsiders can experience in this area of Denmark.

The real life Dorthe, who is a grown woman today, visited us on the set. She pointed out that the baby carriage she had as a child and which plays an important role in the film, was blue and not beige as it is in the film. She also thought her father was better looking than Kim Bodnia, the actor chosen to play him.

Here in the Czech Republic we had an opportunity to see Art of Crying, another movie based on Jepsen's book. Are his works easy to shoot or so inspiring or is there is another reason why Danish filmmakers so often choose to adapt them?

My motivation for making this film is not based on a general fascination between Danish filmmakers and the work of Erling Jepsen. Jepsen and I grew up not only in the same town in southern Jutland (population 1200) but on the same street. We have been friends since childhood. Since we are both storytellers in each our own media, it has always been in the cards, that we would work together at some point.

Jepsen wrote for theater for 25 years before writing novels, and his writing reflects a keen understanding of drama. As such, his work is an obvious candidate for the screen. However, my personal relationship to him and his work is, as mentioned, that of an old friend.

Is he as popular between Danish readers as between Danish filmmakers?

Jepsen is a bestselling author in Denmark so yes, he is a popular author. He has written 3 novels and is often referred to as an expert when journalists need someone to comment on literature dealing with children and the rural areas of Denmark. He is also a common guest on TV debate programs and the like.

When you were reading the book, did you say yourself: “Yes, this is the story I want to turn to a movie?”

Jepsen mentioned the idea he had for the book even before he wrote it. I liked the idea and we decided that he would send me a chapter at a time, which I would then comment on. So I was a part of the process from the very beginning. But the film is still very different from the book.

The main theme of the book is the relationship between a mother and her son. This relationship was not as deeply intertwined with the landscape, so I decided to focus on another aspect of the story – that of the outsider and his or her relationship to social cohesion in this area of Denmark.

You already were in Karlovy Vary with a movie called CHINAMAN three years ago. Do you see something similar between CHINAMAN and TERRIBLY HAPPY?

There are some connections between the two films which both deal with loneliness. Both films also ask similar questions. To what extent is one willing to compromise ones understanding of social, moral and cultural norms? How far is one willing to go in order to achieve ones goals? The main characters in both CHINAMAN and TERRIBLY HAPPY share a common goal - to rid themselves of loneliness and to be accepted socially. In the process, both characters distance themselves from their past.

An easy question to understand for people who already saw the film, otherwise not, but how do you arrange clothes on a clothes-line?

In all areas except laundry, I’m a walking disaster area. My car looks like a mobile dumpster and the surface of my desk has not seen daylight for years. But my clothes hang on the line in the most perfect order. This could reflect my upbringing in the marshlands of Southern Jutland, so maybe there is some truth to my depiction of this specific area of Denmark in the film after all.

What does it say about you?

Everybody chooses their own battles.

- CAST BIOS

JAKOB CEDERGREN - ROBERT

Graduated from The Danish National School of Theater in 1997 and had his debut with the lead in Ole Christian Madsen's Danish TV-series The Spider (2000). Has since acted in several other TV-series such as Nikolaj & Julie (2002), The Eagle (2004), The Killing (2007) and Summer (2008). His film debut was in 2003 in The Green Butchers and he has since played in among others, Stealing Rembrandt (nominated for a Danish Bodil award for best leading actor, 2003), Clash of Egos (2006), Arn: The Night Templar (2007), Remix (2008) and most recently, The Gift (2008)

LENE MARIA CHRISTENSEN - INGELISE

Graduated from The Danish National School of Theater in 1999. She has performed in several plays, including Lige for Lige (2005) and Olsen Banden og den russiske juvel (2008) as well as several TV-series including At the Faber (2000), Defense (2004) and Deroute (2008). Her film appearances include Halalabad Blues (2002), Old, New, Borrowed and Blue (2003), Brothers (2004), Big Plans (2004), Nynne (2005), Offscreen (2006), Fidibus (2006) and The Golden Horns (2007).

KIM BODNIA - JØRGEN

Graduated from The Danish National School of Theater in 1991 and had is breakthrough with the lead in Ole Bornedal's Nightwatch (1994), a role that earned him a Robert, Krummeprisen and a Bodil nomination. He later received a Bodil nomination for his lead role as Frank in Nicolas Winding Refn's Pusher and in Leo Refn's sequel, Bleeder (1999). Bodnia's filmography counts numerous films where he has participated as actor, writer or director: The Last Viking (1997), In China They Eat Dogs (1999), Escape (2001), Dragonfly (2001), Jolly Roger (2001), Old Men in New Cars (2002), Falling Sky (2002), The Good Cop (2004), Echo (2007) and in august 2008, The Candidate. Bodnia has also acted in a long list of foreign films, most recently The Old Cemetery (2008) and The Van Zandt Shakedown (2009). Bodnia is also a regular on the theater scene and in Danish TV-films/series – most recently The Killing (2007).

LARS BRYGMANN - DOCTOR ZERLANG

Had his feature film debut in Belle August's Frøken Smillas fornemmelse for sne (1997) and has since performed in Credo (1997), The Celebration (1998), Albert (1998), The Cable Club (1999), Max (2002), The Bench (2000) and Inheritance (2003), Young Andersen (2005), Flies on the Wall (2005), Triple Dare, Clash of Egos and Below the Belt (all in 2006), With Your Permission og White Night (both in 2007). In 2009, he can be seen in Kristian Levnring's Fear Me Not. On TV, he is best known from the TV-series Unit One (2000-2001) where he played the tracker La Cour, The Christmas special Juletestamentet (1995), Charlot and Charlotte (1996), Island Cop (1997-98), Taxa (1997-1999) and The Spider (2000) and Defense (2003-2004). Brygmann has also acted in several plays on the side.

- FILMMAKER BIOS

DIRECTOR: HENRIK RUBEN GENZ

Born 1959, Denmark. Graduate of The National Film School of Denmark, 1995. Received Best Film and Script Award for his graduation film *Cross Roads* at the Film school Festival in Munich. His short fiction film *Teis & Nico* (1998), a festival hit worldwide, received the Crystal Bear in Berlin and an Academy Award® nomination. Has directed a number of TV series, including the Emmy nominee *The Killing* (2007). Genz' feature film debut, *Someone Like Hodder* (2003), also popular at festivals, was awarded in Buenos Aires, Chicago, London and Zlin, among others. *Chinaman* (2005) was a winner at Karlovy Vary and received the Grand Prix and Silver Arrow for Best Actor (Bjarne Henriksen). *Terribly Happy* is Genz' third feature film.

PRODUCER: THOMAS GAMMELTOFT

One of the most creative, attentive and hard working producers in Danish Film. Via a bachelor in Film and Media studies at Copenhagen U and a long list of assistant jobs in the film industry, Thomas became a co-owner of the production company Film & Lyd in 1986. Throughout the 1990's the company produced some of the most important documentaries of that era, including *Johannesburg Revisited* and *The Devils Railroad*. On TV, Gammeltoft produced the popular series *Åndernes Magt* (2000-2002) and the documentary *Tintin and Me*, directed by Anders Østergaard. In the feature film arena, Gammeltoft is the executive producer and co-owner of Fine & Mellow which has produced blockbusters such as *Shake It All About* (Nominated for a Robert as best film, 2001), *Stealing Rembrandt* (Nominated for a Robert as best film, 2003), *Oh Happy Day* (2004), *Chinaman* and *Murk* (both 2005) as well as *Pure Hearts* and *Fidibus* (both 2006), and the TV-series *Album* (2008).

- PRODUCTION CREDITS

THE CAST

Robert	Jakob Cedergren
Ingelise Buhl	Lene Maria Christensen
Jørgen Buhl	Kim Bodnia
Dr. Zerlang	Lars Brygmann
Købmand Moos	Anders Hove
Politimester	Jens Jørn Spottag
Præst	Henrik Lykkegaard
Helmuth	Peter Hesse Overgaard
Hansi	Niels Skousen
Nissum	Lars Lunøe
Øko -Tage	Sune Geertsen
Bartender	Bodil Jørgensen
Dorthe	Mathilde Maack

THE CREW

Director	Henrik Ruben Genz
Producers	Thomas Gammeltoft & Tina Dalhoff
Screenwriters	Gry Dunja Jensen & Henrik Ruben Genz
Cinematographer	Jørgen Johansson, DFF
Sound engineer	Roar Skau Olsen
Editor	Kasper Leick
Production manager	Sanne Arnt Torp
Post-production	Charlotte Buch