

# JUST THE WIND

a film by BENCE FLIEGAUF



Berlinale  
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Berlin  
Competition

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Mari lives with her invalid father and two children in a shack in the woods outside the city. Their living conditions are modest, like their other Romani neighbors. For centuries, their “kind” has been commonly referred to as gypsies. Recently, more than ever, they must exist stealthily: five entire families in the area have already been murdered, gunned down in their own homes.

The Romani community struggles to continue their simple daily routine amid the anxiety of the suspected racially-motivated crimes. Mari juggles her two jobs. Teenager Anna tries to concentrate on her schoolwork and sketches. But young Rio is preoccupied with other things. He is getting ready...

Inspired by real events.





## DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

### A SERIES OF VIOLENCE

Between 2008 and 2009 in Hungary, a group of offenders committed acts of violence against Romanies. 16 homes were attacked with Molotov cocktails and 63 shots were fired with shotguns and rifles. The crimes total a number of 55 victims. Five people were injured to various degrees. Six died in the attacks. The suspects are currently the subject of criminal proceedings. Though instigated by these criminal acts, this film is not a documentation of the publicly released information on the actual events.

### BEING HUNTED

Killers are simple, everyday people: they listen to commercial radio stations, go to malls, window-shop, have some mortgage payments and maybe even kids. Murder is generally just an episode in their lives which destroys them and those in their environment. They are losers. At least that's the conclusion I came to after I conducted a few in-depth interviews with convicted murderers. For me, while filming *Just the Wind*, it was more important to stay with the potential victims. It is a great challenge to get the audience to feel even a little bit of what the victims experience while they are being hunted. The heroes of my film are simple Romanies: a middle-aged mother raising her kids, an eleven year-old boy and a just-blooming teenage girl. The woman cares for her invalid father and in the meantime works as a cleaning lady, while the girl goes to school and the boy roams around the area near his home. Their paths diverge during the day and the question is: will they ever see each other again?



### **WHEN A ROMANI IS ALONE**

I tried not to portray Romanies drumming on jugs, playing violins, or dancing. That's so boring. From this perspective, with regards to *Just the Wind*, I was very curious to find out what happens when a Romani person is alone. This was a very exciting question, because the portrayed image of the Romanies as creatures of instinct, weeping whilst singing, goes hand in hand with the fact that they are almost exclusively shown in large, chaotic groups. Like all stereotypes, this too originates from reality, but is very distorted if this is all we see. What happens if a Romani goes off to collect wood alone? If he is at home by himself? If she works in solitude? What happens when a Romani doesn't want to live up to the stereotype expected of them by those who visit one of their settlements?

### **SINISTER MOTIVE = IDIOCY**

When I was writing the film, the motive was still a mystery; what made them do this? They shot so-called "hard-working" Romanies, not "parasites," and racist logic couldn't make sense of it. After all, racists especially love to emphasize that it's not all Romanies and Jews who cause problems, just those who steal, lie, kill, don't work, etc. Only they have to be alienated, rounded up in ghettos, and exterminated, not the others. I think the double twist in this case is that it seems that the perpetrators murdered "honest Gypsies" on purpose. They thought that the only reaction the others could have was bloody revenge, and

then finally civil war would break out. Great plan. The law calls this a sinister motive, and I call it idiocy. Racism is nothing more than a fatal series of mistakes in reasoning: a.k.a. inanity.

### **HOW KIDS FERMENT**

I must say that I can't resist teenagers. They are so extreme, innocent, and irritating. Teenagers themselves are such tragic characters, because it is the last clean stage before the long murkiness which we call adulthood begins. Especially interesting in this film was how kids ferment in racism and destitution. The little boy played by Lajos Sárkány is a kind of Huckleberry Finn character, for whom an atmosphere of constant threat is as present in his life as the desire for adventure is. He lives in the latter and is probably not yet conscious of the horrible situation which the story elaborates on. He tries to solve difficult situations by his own means, which often come off as heart-wrenchingly awkward. He is less involved in the real events as the adult mother, played by Katalin Toldi. And of course that is just fine, since the essence of the boy's character derives from this ignorance, or rather, from the fact that he can't even grasp what is going on around him. When we began filming with the kids, the majority of the crew was worried about them, but it quickly turned out that at most, their lines had to be re-written; we had the least problems with them. In sum, I could say that it was great to be with them, or to work with them anyway, because they kept you alert.

## CASTING AND RESEARCH

I got into a car with someone and we went to schools, to Romani settlements and began our search. With only a few short breaks, this went on for a year. Casting is an enthralling process, the essence of which cannot be explained: what makes a situation work between two people? What was now important, also, was a feel for rhythm and the ability to concentrate. But in the end, the final aspect is to be able to enjoy each other's company, especially with the main characters. Shooting a film can be very, very lengthy, and life, it seems, is quite short... We looked for the actors and the locations in settlements over the course of extensive and long periods of work. Naturally, it was also important for me to get into the most authentic situations as possible, and to acquire real experiences.

## ADVENTURES WITH ROMANIES

I've had many adventures with Romanies, but mostly when I was a kid. A Romani boy was my best friend in elementary school. Later, I had a crush on a Romani girl. Once, I was whacked so hard by a guy that I almost went blind in one eye – he seemed Romani too. Then, a few years passed when I had no contact with the so-called Gypsy people. I was afraid of what might happen. During the past two years, I have made many Romani friends. When I told them what we were up to, some of them seemed to lose interest because we were not from a commercial TV station. They knew about the murders almost everywhere and felt threatened. It was depressing to see the futility of various attempts to break out of this hopeless situation. Racism is of course contagious among Romanies as well, but appears in a more alarming way: mostly in the form of self-hatred. In my opinion, the picture of Romani society is actually the tragicomic version of the country itself.









## **BENCE FLIEGAUF** WRITER-DIRECTOR

One of his country's most internationally-recognized young directors, Bence Fliegauf returned to his native Hungary for his fifth feature film, JUST THE WIND.

His previous film, WOMB, was English-language and starred Eva Green (CASINO ROYALE, THE DREAMERS) and Matt Smith (BBC's "Dr. Who"). WOMB was the disturbing story of a woman who cannot escape the complexities of her decision to replicate her dead lover and raise him as her own child. WOMB was called "one of the most spectacularly handsome films of the year" by Screen International, and premiered at the 2010 Locarno Film Festival.

Fliegauf's 2007 feature MILKY WAY won Locarno's Golden Leopard for Filmmakers of the Present and Barcelona (L'Alternativa) Independent Film Festival's Feature Film Prize. DEALER won the Berliner Zeitung Audience Award at the 2004 Berlin Film Festival, as well as several Best Director prizes (Mar Del Plata, Wiesbaden, Lecce).

His debut feature FOREST won the Wolfgang Staudte Prize and Gene Moskowitz Critics Prize at the 2003 Berlin Film Festival.

Bence Fliegauf was born in 1974 in Budapest. He never attended film school, instead working as an assistant director for television as he continued on the path toward directing, screenwriting, set design and sound engineering.

## **FEATURE FILMOGRAPHY**

JUST THE WIND (Csak a Szél) 2012

WOMB 2010

MILKY WAY (Tejút) 2007

DEALER 2004

FOREST (Rengeteg) 2003





## CAST & CREW

Mari  
Anna  
Rio  
Grandpa

KATALIN TOLDI  
GYÖNGYI LENDVAI  
LAJOS SÁRKÁNY  
GYÖRGY TOLDI

Ali  
Father  
policeman Géza  
trustee at school  
Rozsi Mama  
guy at pub  
gothic girl  
policeman Laci

GYULA HORVÁTH  
GERGŐ KASZÁS  
ATTILA EGYED  
ZSOLT VÉGH  
EMESE VASVÁRI  
MÁTÉ TÓTH  
FRANCISKA TÖRŐ CSIK  
LÁSZLÓ CZIFFER

written and directed by  
producers

BENCE FLIEGAUF  
MÓNIKA MÉCS, ANDRÁS MUHI,  
ERNŐ MESTERHÁZY

coproducers

REBEKKA GARRIDO, MICHAEL REUTER  
PIERRE-EMMANUEL FLEURANTIN,  
LAURENT BAUJARD, BENCE FLIEGAUF  
ANDRÁS JUHÁSZ, LINDA MESTER

line producers  
director of photography  
editor  
music  
sound master  
art director  
assistant to director  
1st AD  
casting director  
costume designer  
make-up artist  
post-production supervisor  
gaffer

ZOLTÁN LOVASI  
XAVIER BOX  
BENCE FLIEGAUF, TAMÁS BEKE  
TAMÁS BEKE  
BENCE FLIEGAUF  
SÁRA CZIRA  
ISTVÁN KOLOS  
BENCE FLIEGAUF  
SOSA JURISTOVSZKY  
NATASA KOVALIK  
REBEKKA GARRIDO  
ANDRÁS SZENDRŐ

## TECHNICAL DATA

length: ca. 87 min.  
shooting format: S-16mm  
aspect ratio: 1:1.85  
screening format: DCP  
sound: 5.1

booklet by Toby Cornish, Jutolaj

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