



THE MAN WITHOUT GUILT



written and directed by IVAN GERGOLET

with VALENTINA CARNELUTTI, BRANKO ZAVRŠAN, ENRICO INSERRA, ROSSANA MORTARA, LIVIA ROSSI, ALESSANDRO BANDINI, GIUSI MERLI
and the participation of PAOLO ROSSI

director of photography DEBORA VRIZZI – production designer MARCO JURATOVEC –
costume designer GILDA VENTURINI – editor NATALIE CRISTIANI - music by LUCA CIUT –
sound designer JULIJ ZORNIK - producers MIHA ČERNEC, IGOR PRINČIČ, JOŽKO RUTAR, BORIS T.
MATIĆ – executive producer DAVID CEJ

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FONDO PER L'AUDIOVISIVO DEL FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

SYNOPSIS

Trieste, north-east of Italy, Adriatic Sea coast.

Angela is a 50 years old widow. Her husband died due to lung cancer caused by the asbestos dust he breathed when he was a worker. Angela works as a cleaner in the hospital, where she finds out that Francesco, the former employer of her husband, was hospitalized because of a brain stroke. There she meets Francesco's son, who is impressed by Angela's pleasant manners and, unaware of the link between the two, offers her to work as his father's caregiver once he's discharged. As Francesco avoided a conviction, Angela accepts the offer to punish him, but she realizes very soon that she's unable to hurt him. Angela doesn't give up. Swallowed by anger and obsession, she decides to payback Francesco with the same coin she got from him: being condemned to loneliness. She tries to separate father and son, putting at risk everything she has left: her best friend, her daughter, her dignity. Her plan seems working until Francesco's son discovers why she's really there, ruining the castle of cards she built. When everything seems lost, Angela decides to face her enemy for the last time, to say her truth, to reveal the son who his father really is. In the deep darkness Angela fell, she finds out an unexpected truth. If the guilty becomes a victim of himself, revenge can turn in forgiveness and a new beginning can be possible.



Angela, an asbestos widow, meets the man responsible for her husband's death. Deciding to become his caregiver in order to punish him, she falls into the emotional labyrinth that separates revenge from forgiveness and lies from truth.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I was born and brought up in an area of north-east Italy, right on the border with Slovenia, where asbestos is causing a huge massacre. In some cities and villages, almost all households have at least one family member who has been exposed to asbestos dust and risks getting sick. Even my own father, who worked at a major shipyard as a young man, has breathed the dust and is at risk, like all that generation of workers.

Asbestos has been widely used all over the world as a thermal insulator and as fireproof cladding in all kinds of buildings, trains and ships. Although asbestos danger has been known since the 30s, it has always been hidden or underestimated, largely for reasons of profit. The systematic use of it has created a broad grey area where the responsibilities of lobbies and individuals have become blurred, to the point that it seems almost impossible to prove their guilt in courts. Sentences get statue-barred (that's why I chose this title for the project), because of the huge amount of time that it's needed for the trials. This film takes place exactly inside this grey zone.

The film moves this social conflict into a family, personal and intimate one, where in a community that was poisoned by inside, the lack of justice drives the protagonist into an exploration of the conflict between guilt and impunity.

The research for this film started almost 15 years ago, after I shot a short film named *Dust*, which had a similar dramaturgic structure. That experience taught me the complexity of this theme and of the characters' journey. Both needed a deeper immersion in the dynamics of revenge/forgiveness, hiding/revealing, mourning/rebirth. Digging into these human fields for a long time gave me the chance to explore extreme and unconscious feelings, which are at the bottom of the characters' choices during their lives in the film. As a filmmaker that worked in documentaries, I was always aware of the power that realism and authenticity can have inside a fictional structure.

Even if there are a lot of documentaries and reportages that denounce this situation, I wanted to approach this theme from another point of view, focusing on the survivors and their inner feelings. In an environment where human justice is not able to sentence or to establish the truth, what does it happen if the victim and the culpable meet face to face, in the same room? What feelings will drive their actions? How far can one go to fulfill his/her need for justice and peace? How many lies must be told trying to hide one's actions? Can a victim become a judge? Is it possible to transform revenge in forgiveness? Is there a way out of pain? These are some of the questions that this film wants to answer.

Ivan Gergolet



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

FILMOGRAPHY

In The Cave – short interactive VR film – premiered at Venice Film Festival VR section in 2018 – supported by Biennale College Cinema VR

Three Uses Of The Compass – short fiction 16min – 2018

Fixed Point – dance short film 3min – 2016

Dancing With Maria – documentary 75min – 2014

Making Archeo Films – documentary 28min - 2011

Overture – short fiction – 2009

Medea's Collection – short fiction – 2009

Dust – short fiction – 2009

When Fire Burns Out – short fiction 2008

Migranti – short documentary –2009



Born in 1977, he lives and works in Trieste, Italy. He started shooting short documentaries and short films during his film studies at the DAMS – University of Bologna. He was one of the media activists who in 2002 created OrfeoTV, the first street television in Italy.

Since 2015 he's a member of the European Film Academy. His first feature documentary **Dancing with Maria** was the first documentary ever selected in the International Film Critics Week at the Venice IFF in 2014, where it was awarded with the Civitas Vitae Prize and then nominated as Best European Documentary at the European Film Awards 2015. It was distributed theatrically in Italy, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Russia, Poland and many other countries. It was screened in more than 50 international festivals and it won 5 international awards.

After teaching filmmaking in schools, universities, jails and other institutions he founded with other filmmakers and professionals the Cross-Border Film School in Gorizia (on the border with Italy and Slovenia) which is focused on training, research, production and experimentation of new languages in cinema.

The Man Without Guilt is his first feature fiction film.

TECHNICAL SPECS

length: 113 '

aspect ratio 2.39:1 - scope

sound 5.1

shooting format 4k

color



Original title: L'uomo senza colpa

Countries: Slovenia, Italy, Croatia

O.V. Italian, Slovenian

Shooting location: Monfalcone, Gorizia, Trieste (Italy)

Approximately 100.000 people die from asbestos-related diseases globally each year. Currently about 125 million people in the world are exposed to asbestos in the workplace.

Its systematic use created a broad grey area where the responsibilities of lobbies and individuals became blurred.

This film is dedicated to all the workers and their families, who are suffering its consequences and are searching for justice.

MORE INFO ABOUT ASBESTOS

[From the website of the European Commission – Communication of 28/98/2022 – Towards an asbestos-free future](#)

Although all forms of asbestos are banned in the EU since 2005, asbestos remains present in older buildings. It poses a health threat when materials containing asbestos are disturbed and fibres are released and inhaled, for instance during renovations.

As much as 78% of occupational cancers recognised in the Member States are related to asbestos. When inhaled, airborne asbestos fibres can lead, for example, to mesothelioma and lung cancer, with an average lag of 30 years between exposure and the first signs of disease.

Therefore, addressing the health risks of exposure to asbestos is essential to protect people's health and the environment, while ensuring decent living and working conditions.

Effectively reducing exposure to carcinogenic substances such as asbestos is part of the Commission's [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#) and [Zero-Pollution Action Plan](#). In its [2022 Work Programme](#) and in the [EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027](#), the Commission announced a proposal to lower the existing occupational exposure limit to asbestos.

In 2019 alone, more than 70,000 people in the EU died from past exposure to asbestos at work. 220 million building units were built before the (asbestos) ban, it is likely that many still contain asbestos and pose a health threat.

Useful links:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_22_5678

Questions and Answers: Towards an asbestos-free future – European Commission

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/environmental-burden-of-cancer/asbestos>

European Environmental Agency

CONTACTS

International Sales
Slingshot Films
Manuela Buono
manuela@slingshotfilms.it

SLINGSHOT FILMS

Press Agent
Gloria Zerbinati
gloria.zerbinati@gmail.com