

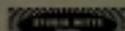
White Lobster

PRESS INFORMATION

a DAVID LALÉ film

with CAPTN ED TIGER RANDY CAMPBELL and BITTERWOOD cinematographer RASMUS SIEVERS sounddesign PAUL RISCHER editing DAVID WENNDT music CHRIS WHITE
title design CHRISTOPH DUNST local fixer nicaragua RICHARD ARGHIRIS sound mixing JÖRG HÖHNE & PAUL RISCHER editing ass. KATHLEEN DÖBBEL
production ass. ANNE PIPPERT grading THOMAS DAVID producer VOLKER ZOBELT THOMAS JESCHNER RENÉ FROTSCHER a SUNDAY FILMPRODUCTION
in cooperation with STUDIO MITTE supported by MAFILM BÜRO DUNST MEDIAS REISESERVICE
one of the finalists of the BERLIN TODAY AWARD 2012 supported by the MEDIENBOARD BERLIN-BRANDENBURG

MEDIAS Büro Dunst



medienboard

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SUNDAY

A film by **David Lalé**, a **Sunday** filmproduction, one of the finalists for the **Berlin Today Award 2012** with the support of the **Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg**.

TEAM

creative producer	RENÉ FROTSCHER
producer	VOLKER ZOBELT, THOMAS JESCHNER
cinematographer	RASMUS SIEVERS
sounddesign	PAUL RISCHER
editing	DAVID WNENDT
music	CHRIS WHITE
local fixer (nicaragua)	RICHARD ARGHIRIS
title design	CHRISTOPH DUNST
editing assistant	KATHLEEN DÖBBEL
production assistant	ANNE PIPPERT
sound mixing	JÖRG HÖHNE & PAUL RISCHER
grading	THOMAS DAVID

PROTAGONISTS

randy	RANDY CAMPBEL
tiger	ANTHONY NARCISSUS COOPER
captain ed	EDWARD SMALL

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

country	GERMANY
genre	SHORT DOCUMENTARY
length	11:07
format	HD CAM, COLOUR, 16:9
language	ENGL.(MISKITO) AV. GER SUBTITLES
fsk	0

SYNOPSIS

On the remote Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, everyone's out on the beach searching for the "White Lobster". White Lobster is a gift from God. It's a blessing and it's a curse. It makes fortunes, it ruins lives. White Lobster is poison. And if you find it, all you'll want is **more**.

CONTACT

www.davidlale.com
www.sundayfilm.de

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This documentary explores the strange phenomenon of the White Lobster through the stories of Captain Ed, an American fisherman washed up in the outlaw town of El Bluff; Randy, who helps troubled youths and is struggling with demons of his own; and Tiger, an out-of-work seaman who once found and lost 128 kilos - and who now dreams of coming across the White Lobster again one day.



PROTAGONISTS

„All those people that say White Lobster is good for the town, they don't know the hell they're bringing.“ **Randy**



©Rasmus Sievers

Randy is an original Bluefields kid. He lost his childhood in the consumption of crack. Before he became a social worker in Bluefields he had to go through the hell of drug detoxification. He hates the White Lobster and takes care of the kids in Bluefields so they don't make the same mistake.

„Really, the drug smuggling helps the people here. Because everyone gets a piece of it.“ **Captn Ed**



© René Frostcher

Captn Ed is willingly stranded in Bluefields. The former Navy SEAL was a fisherman for 30 years all over the world, and of all the places he's been this is where he feels most free. He's married to an Miskito woman with whom he has a son. The Capt'n believes The White Lobster is a blessing for the poor Nicaraguan Coast „The people here should be glad that the people in the United States consume so much cocaine.“

„What am I supposed to do? I can't pass the money. I've got to pick the money up and go with it. That's the way it has to work.“ **Tiger**



©Rasmus Sievers

Tiger is a seaman, a fisherman. He was 30 years out on the sea. He found the White Lobster once. A lot of it, almost 60ks. But he was caught and put in jail. After the police sold the cocaine, Tiger's case was closed for lack of evidence and he walked free. „We've been lucky fellows“. Today the coast has been badly overfished and Tiger has found he can no longer make a living on the ocean – so, like many people in Bluefields, he's waiting for the White Lobster to come his way again.



©René Frostcher

Bitterwood is a street musician who sings about the history of cocaine smuggling along the Nicaraguan coast.

■ DIRECTORS NOTE

Ever since I first heard about this strange story I was captivated by the image of a foreign object washing in on the waves along the Caribbean Coast. The phenomenon of the White Lobster seemed to say a lot about today's interconnected world, and for me it seemed a blackly funny metaphor for the feeling that the course of our lives is not ultimately under our control. Whether at the mercy of the tides, or distant governments, in the hands of God, or the Devil – it's this sense

of fickle human fortune that the White Lobster promised to expose, and that I set out to capture in this film.

But this is documentary, and reality always proves to be more slippery, complex and interesting. What I found in El Bluff was that White Lobster is more than just a lottery ticket to easy money - for many it is the last hope in a landscape of lost opportunities.

■ ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

David Lalé trained as a documentary director at the UK's National Film & Television School and his films have screened on television and at festivals all over the world. His documentary about an illegal immigrant teenager, *ON THE RUN WITH ABDUL*, won many prizes including the International Press Prize at Clermont-Ferrand 2010. For recent projects he has produced a series of shorts with young people from the Nairobi slums, and finished his first feature-length comic documentary, *VOTE FOR ME, I'M LOONY* about 'Outsider' politicians trying to cause havoc in the UK general election. He shot his latest film in Liberia for the Al Jazeera International network. David is also a writer – his first novel was published in 2008 and he's now working on his third book, a 'true story' about a feckless conman who turned into a woman.

■ FILMOGRAPHY

White Lobster (documentary) 2012
Alfred's Free Press (documentary) 2011
Vote for me, I'm Loony (documentary) 2010
On the run with Abdul (documentary) 2009
The End for Beginners (documentary) 2008

■ PRIZES

"On the Run with Abdul"
International Press Prize, Clermont-Ferrand Int Film Festival 2010
Main Prize, Paris Signes de Nuit Int Film Festival 2010

■ CONTACT

www.davidlale.com



INTERVIEW WITH DAVE LALÈ

Why do you make documentaries?

I make films for selfish reasons, basically - because I enjoy it. Making documentaries has taken me to some strange and fascinating places and led me to get involved in the lives of extraordinary people who I would never otherwise have met.

Why did you want to make a film about drugs in Nicaragua?

Mainly because this is a bizarre and intriguing story in itself. The attraction was also that this small story had something bigger to say, reflecting the absurdity of the US-led 'War on Drugs'.

Was it dangerous to make a film about drugs in Nicaragua?

We were lucky and didn't encounter any problems during the shoot, but there are always serious risks to take into account when making films about drug trafficking, especially where big criminal organisations are involved. What's more, there's little police presence on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua so if you do happen to get into difficulties, you're pretty much on your own...

What was the biggest surprise on your tour?

The biggest surprise was just how much sweat my body can produce.

What kind of questions would you like to hear from the audience?

That's up to them. All questions are welcome!

What is your goal in showing this film at festivals around the world?

The Caribbean Coast is a very fascinating and exciting place, really rich in stories and colourful characters – so I hope the exposure of this short film might attract some funding to go back and make a feature documentary.

How was the experience of working with the Berlin Talent Campus?

The Campus gave me the opportunity to make a film that I had been trying to find funding for for years (without much luck), so I am very grateful to them. The process of making the film was a real pleasure, too. The main challenge was working within the 10 minutes of screen time we were allowed under the scheme - I was worried that I couldn't do justice to this story in such a short time. In the end the limitation turned out to be liberating, and I can see that the short form documentary can be a powerful medium.

You lived in Berlin for several months during the postproduction - did you like it or did you miss London a lot?

I fell a little bit in love with Berlin – in fact it made me wonder why anyone bothers living in London.

What will be the next documentary we will see of you?

The next documentary I'm doing is about a troupe of amateur actors from the new nation of South Sudan who are bringing a Shakespeare play to London.



TOPIC BACKGROUNDS

Cocaine is king on Nicaragua's Caribbean coast

BLUEFIELDS, Nicaragua (Reuters) - From the drug runners' point of view, the working environment along Nicaragua's Caribbean coast is as good as it gets.

Deep poverty, high unemployment and widespread resentment over decades of government neglect has made it easy for cocaine traffickers to set up support networks in the towns along the Miskito coast and the islands off it. The area is so remote and so different from the rest of Nicaragua, it could be another country.

Named after a 17th century Dutch pirate, Bluefields is the largest town in the area. The coast is populated largely by Miskito Indians and descendants of African slaves. English and Miskito are the dominant languages, corrugated iron and wood the dominant building materials.

To hear authorities tell it, many of the locals work for cocaine trafficking organizations as lookouts, intelligence agents, and suppliers of gasoline for speedboats refueling on the run from Colombia's northern coast to Mexico -- the penultimate stop on the long cocaine trail to the United States.

"On the islands, entire communities provide logistics support for the narcos," said Captain Manuel Mora, chief of Nicaragua's Atlantic Naval Command. "Everybody is involved, one way or the other. Everybody."

That gives an edge to the traffickers, according to authorities, and so does the fact that the smugglers are better equipped than those trying to intercept them. "They have night vision equipment," said Mora. "We don't. They have satellite communications. We don't. They have vast resources. We don't."

The Atlantic Naval Command has four patrol boats, all bought second-hand, more than 30 years old and in need of refurbishment. For three of the vessels, bought from Israel, spare parts are virtually impossible to get. The United States is providing funds to replace their engines with American-made motors.

In the past four years, Mora said, his force had seized 11 tons (tonnes) of cocaine and 40 northbound speedboats. There are no estimates of how many managed to complete the trip but as a rule of thumb, narcotics experts say that for every vessel intercepted, at least four get through.

CRAFT OF CHOICE

According to the U.S. government's latest International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, most of the cocaine that ends up in the United States is shipped by speedboats, each capable of carrying 1.5 to 2 tons of cocaine, through the Western Caribbean, a route described as a "natural conduit for illicit drug trafficking organizations."

The report estimated that several hundred "go-fast vessels"

leave the northern Colombian coast each year and added: "A go-fast boat is by far the hardest target to find and collectively they represent our greatest maritime threat."

The smugglers' craft of choice is a fiberglass vessel powered by three 250 horsepower motors for a top speed of 70 miles per hour (110 kmh) -- faster than the obsolescent patrol boats of Nicaragua's Atlantic Command.

What the U.S. sees as a threat, many of the impoverished inhabitants of the area see as an opportunity. Apart from steady incomes for those providing logistics support, many harbor hopes of winning the cocaine equivalent of the lottery -- finding 25-kilogram (55-pound) waterproof parcels of cocaine floating in the sea after being dumped by smugglers pursued by the navy or spilled in accidents.

One parcel would be worth around \$75,000 here, a huge sum in the poorest region of the second-poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (after Haiti). Half of Nicaragua's 5.5 million people live on less than a dollar a day.

Rags-to-riches tales involving seaborne cocaine have become part of the local lore on the coast, and the islet of Sandy Bay is spoken of frequently. A Miskito-speaking community of a few hundred people, it has changed from wooden shacks and transistor radios to solid homes built of stone and sprouting satellite dishes "Somebody who fishes out a cocaine parcel would see it as a blessing from God, not a reason to alert the authorities," said Capt. Jose Echeverria, head of the port authority in Bluefields. "Take poverty and joblessness, add easy money and you get a bad mix."

The mix gets even worse, Bluefielders say, when cocaine replaces cash as payment for services rendered, a trend that has accelerated over the past few years. As a result, drug addiction has become a growing problem in Nicaragua, particularly on the Atlantic Coast.

Crack is sold openly in several neighborhoods of Bluefields, where groups of young men waiting for customers stand in front of ramshackle houses. Prices have gone up, the local people say, because of a series of offshore cocaine busts last year. But at around \$1.50 a "rock," it still finds clients. There are at least 65 known crack houses in the town.

"It's a sad thing to say," remarked Luis, a retired fishing boat captain who did not want his last name used. "But it is hard to find a Bluefields family which has not been affected by drugs." That includes his own family. "I have 11 children and one of my sons has gone to work for the narcos. I told him that was a bad idea.

He didn't listen.

by Bernd Debusmann, Special Correspondent

■ THE PRODUCTION

Sunday Filmproduction combines the producing activities of René Frotscher, Volker Zobelt and Thomas Jeschner. They want to develop and produce fiction and documentary films for cinema release. Their goal is to join the film projects in an early stage of developing, therefore working closer together with the filmmakers on drawing their projects and being able

to plan and finance the production in a substantial way. Currently, they are developing three fiction films and two documentaries. They want to produce their first full-length film as a debut feature.

www.sundayfilm.de

■ THE BERLINALE TALENT CAMPUS

The Berlinale Talent Campus has, over the years, welcomed a diverse array of internationally acclaimed experts and film professionals willing to share their knowledge and give insight into their life and work. The Campus experts meet the Talents either through on-stage interviews and panel sessions, or by giving small-scale workshop sessions and by providing mentorship for the hands-on training programmes.

Former experts of the Berlinale Talent Campus have included Harry Belafonte, Sandrine Bonnaire, Park Chan-wook,

Stephen Daldry, Julie Delpy, Frances McDormand, Stephen Frears, Gael García Bernal, Michel Gondry, David Hare, Kate Henshaw-Nuttall, Dennis Hopper, Jia Zhangke, Janusz Kamiński, Mike Leigh, Claudia Llosa, Walter Murch, Raoul Peck, Rafi Pitts, Charlotte Rampling, Shah Rukh Khan, Isabella Rossellini...

www.berlinale-talent-campus.de

■ THE BERLINALE TODAY AWARD

The Procedure.

Five finalists have been selected for the ninth round of the Berlinale Talent Campus' short film competition. 15 directors were invited from about 170 applications to present their short film ideas to selected producers at the Campus. After the Berlinale, five short film projects were chosen to be produced in collaboration with Berlin-based production companies and with support from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg.

These films will be shot during summer/autumn of 2011. Postproduction will take place in Berlin and Brandenburg. The world premiere of the five films will be held during the Opening of the Berlinale Talent Campus 2012. The winner will be chosen by a jury consisting of prominent filmmakers and will receive the Berlin Today Award 2012 during a gala ceremony.



The filmmaker and the producers would like to thank the following for the opportunity to make this film.

Kirsten Niehuus, Elmar Giglinger, Dieter Kosslick, Christine Tröstrum,
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this film is one of the five finalists for the



the Berlinale Talent Campus is an initiative of the Berlin International Film Festival
a business division of the Kulturveranstaltungen des Bundes in Berlin GmbH

this film is supported by the

The logo for Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH features the word 'medienboard' in a large, bold, red sans-serif font, with 'Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH' in a smaller, black sans-serif font below it. The logo is set against a white rectangular background.

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Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH

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