



WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG

A film by
Burhan Qurbani

Starring
**Jonas Nay, Saskia Rosendahl, Devid Striesow, Joel Basman,
David Schütter, Le Hong Trang**

Produced by
UFA Fiction Ludwigsburg

in Co-Production with
**ZDF/ Das kleine Fernsehspiel in collaboration with ARTE/Mainz
cine plus
and UFA Cinema**

Supported by
**MDM Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg,
nordmedia – Film und Mediengesellschaft Niedersachsen/Bremen mbH,
BKM – Der Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien,
German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)
Supported by the Jerusalem International Film Lab**



CONTACT INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Beta Cinema, Dorothee Stoewahse

Mob: + 49 170 63 84 627, Office: + 49 89 67 34 69 15, Dorothee.Stoewahse@betafilm.com

CONTACT WORLD SALES

Beta Cinema, Dirk Schuerhoff / Thorsten Ritter / Tassilo Hallbauer

Office: + 49 89 67 34 69 828, beta@betacinema.com, www.betacinema.com

For further Information:

Beta Cinema Press, Dorothee Stoewahse, Tel: + 49 89 67 34 69 15, Mobile: + 49 170 63 84 627

dorothee.stoewahse@betafilm.com, www.betacinema.com.

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CAST

Stefan	Jonas Nay
Jennie	Saskia Rosendahl
Martin	Devid Striesow
Robbie	Joel Basman
Sandro	David Schütter
Lien	Trang Le Hong

CREW

Director:	Burhan Qurbani
Screenplay:	Martin Behnke, Burhan Qurbani
Producer:	Jochen Laube, Leif Alexis
Co-Producers cine plus:	Frank Evers, Helge Neubronner
Co-Producers:	Burhan Qurbani, Yoshi Heimrath
Commissioning Editors:	Burkhard Althoff (ZDF / Das kleine Fernsehspiel), Olaf Grunert (ZDF / arte)
Line Producer:	Michael Jungfleisch
Production Manager:	David Besecke
Director of Photography:	Yoshi Heimrath
Edited by:	Julia Karg
Music:	Matthias Sayer, Tim Ströble
Sound:	Stephan von Hase, Kai Lüde, Rainer Gerlach
Set Design:	Jill Schwarzer
Costume Design:	Juliane Maier
Special Effects:	Action Unit
Casting:	Nina Haun, Jacqueline Rietz, Thuy Trang Nguyen
Produced by:	UFA FICTION GmbH
Co-Produced by:	ZDF/ Das kleine Fernsehspiel in cooperation with Arte cine plus Filmproduktion and UFA Cinema
Supported by:	Jerusalem International Film Lab
German Distributor:	Zorro Film
World Sales Company:	Beta Cinema

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Nationality:	Germany
Year:	2013/2014
Runtime:	116 min.
Format:	ProRes 422HQ, DCP
Screen ratio:	1:2, 39
Frames / second:	25fps
Sound Format:	Surround-Sound 5.1
Shooting Format:	Arri Alexa 4k
Original Language:	German, Vietnamese

PRESS NOTES

It is impossible to forget the images from the 24th August 1992 when, in the eastern German city of Rostock, a rampaging mob, to the applause and cheering of more than 3,000 bystanders, besieged and set fire to a residential building containing, among others, more than 120 Vietnamese men, women and children on what has since become known as "The Night Of The Fire."

The riots became a symbol for xenophobia in the just recently reunited Germany. Apart from taking the country by surprise, they revealed a hitherto unknown, unsuspected even, underbelly. They were not some coincidental event in East/West German history but, rather, an explosion, an expression of a conflict which had been simmering, then coming to a boil, in all realms of society following 1989's reunification.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In August of 1992, three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, anti-immigrant riots are taking place in the East German city of Rostock. The target of the attacks is a refugee shelter on the outskirts of the city. After three days of riots, rampage and violence the events escalate and climax in the so called "Night of the Fire" when 3000 rioters, neo-Nazis and bystanders set ablaze the shelter with 150 Vietnamese refugees inside.

"WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG." recounts these true events. 24 hours: one day in the life of three very different characters. Lien is a Vietnamese woman settled in Germany, but at the end of the day she will be fighting for her life, wondering if the place she called home can ever be safe for her again. Stefan and his friends are part of the night's violent turmoil. Young and angry, bored during the daytime, they look forward to the night when the riots begin. Stefan's father, Martin, is an ambitious local politician, trapped in a dilemma: does he advance his career and keep silent over the riots or does he stand up for his ideals and take responsibility? The clock is ticking...

These three characters, linked by a dark fate that touches and influences their lives, represent different parts of a single society that, on this summer night, crashed into a wall – head on.

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LONG SYNOPSIS

“WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG.” plays out on one day, 24 August 1992, during the 24 hours from one early morning to the next. At the heart of the story is the "Sunflower House" in Rostock-Lichtenhagen, where xenophobic riots took place. This location and the events that occurred there connect the stories of our protagonists.

LIEN is a Vietnamese woman who had already been employed as a "contract worker" in Rostock's textile firms before reunification. After reunification and the bankruptcy of the textile factory, she – contrary to many other contract workers – quickly found a new job in a laundry. Lien shares a small apartment in the Sunflower House with her brother and pregnant sister-in-law, who, however, want to return to Vietnam; Lien wants to remain in Germany, which she feels has become her home. Lien's brother is not at all enthusiastic about his sister's wanting to stay in Germany, but she is determined to get all the necessary permits. Her idealistic view of her new home is profoundly shaken when, at the end of this day, she and the other residents of the Sunflower House have to fight for survival in the burning building, hounded by the right-wing mob.

MARTIN is an ambitious local politician. A widower, he lives alone with his 17-year-old son Stefan in Lichtenhagen. Martin's origins go back to the human rights movement of the GDR, which had been the motor of the peaceful uprising against the socialist regime of the GDR. After reunification, Martin entered local politics and made a successful career there. But the more he advances in his career at Rostock's "Red" City Hall, the less time he has to spend with his son Stefan. Moreover, he seems to have tossed away the ideals of the human rights movement like an old pair of shoes. The events in Lichtenhagen and their political consequences for the refugees and asylum seekers plunge Martin into a dilemma. As if paralyzed by the violence of the riots, he remains at home, unable to act, unable to prevent the events from further escalating.

Martin, who remains inactive in the face of the Lichtenhagen events, is also blind to the ideology favored by his son STEFAN. The teen and his friends are among the youths who led the riots in front of the Sunflower House during the nights preceding August 24th. Bored during the daytime and self-destructive in general, the group waits for the cover of night to riot against the police and the foreigners. Though they're simmering inside, they always stop just before the boiling point. Unemployed, they focus their cruelty on one another. Love is interchangeable, friendship and loyalty are only accessories of a superimposed ideology. On the evening before August 24th, Stefan's friend Philipp throws himself from his balcony. The youths' only reaction is a shrug of their shoulders. The fact that Stefan is deeply moved by his friend's death distances him from his friends.

The stories of these people are linked together with the events at the Sunflower House. Everyone is on a personal search: for love, a home, an alternative life, an old dream. Their small everyday conflicts and catastrophes form the mirror of a society that has crashed against a wall head-on during a mild summer night. Get ready to rumble!

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

"The old world lies shattered, the new world is not born yet – now is the time of monsters."

This quote by Italian writer and politician Antonio Gramsci was maybe the most important dramatic guideline for our work on "WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG." Gramsci wrote this words after the disaster of WW I already predicting the catastrophe of WW II.

In the ruins of an old system he saw the seed of new violence. Our film is set in such a time. In 1992 Germany was just reunited, socialist East Germany had collapsed and the vacuum in power and ideology gave space for destructive right-wing forces to flourish.

Also today we face a fundamental crises. In 2008 our economic system crashed and we realized how vulnerable our society is. And sadly the two ugly daughters of crises – intolerance and xenophobia – are on the rise all over Europe.

Over 20 years after the actual events, this is the first movie about the attempted genocide in Rostock. "WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG." tells the story of the monsters, their victims and the people who choose to ignore them. But the movie approaches the frightening and incomprehensible event, through the personal and emotional stories of individuals. We want to give the monster a human face, look him in the eyes and see.

To understand, to remember, to never forget, to never let it happen again.

* * *

It is said, that if you want to move people, you have to touch them. As such "WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG." is a film that wants to provoke its audience. The choice of characters and of camera style, of pacing and of Mise-en-scène often goes contrary to what we expect from the film's subject matter. There are no shining heroes and no evil villains. Every character carries his or her personal package. That being said I want to make clear that "WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG." is not about accusation or denunciation. It is a story about a very human and universal common denominator: the sin of looking the other way.

"WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG." is my second feature length film and took over 4 years in the making. It was a long journey starting with the first idea followed by an extensive research; the development and writing in Germany and in the Jerusalem International Film Lab in Israel; the exhausting shooting in the city of Halle and the intense editing process in Berlin during the hottest summer for years.

As the director of "WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG." I want to put a strong emphasis on the "we" in this production. This movie was created in collaboration with the most talented and most passionate young filmmakers that I know. I pity the lonely genius who has to create art all by himself, for I was blessed with a team of such raging talent and creativity. Making a low budget movie, a political period piece, was only possible because every member of our team – from the heads of department to every last intern and extra – was deeply devoted to this project. "WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG." is a film made by family and I am extremely grateful for that and after all this time we couldn't be more proud to present to you the result of our work.

- Burhan Qurbani

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PRODUCERS' STATEMENT

"WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG" is the second feature film from German-Afghan filmmaker Burhan Qurbani and is also, after his first feature film, "SHAHADA", which premiered in the competition of the Berlinale 2010, our second work together.

Burhan's work is as well in form as in content very distinguished: Consistently driven by political issues and problems of social relevance. His films often deal with immigrants and marginal groups in the society. His significant visual language, his sensitivity in guiding the actors and his playful dealing with different narrative forms makes Burhan's artistic approach as a filmmaker unique.

4 years ago, when Burhan introduced to us his idea to make a film about the riots in Rostock-Lichtenhagen, the project immediately fascinated us. But it was also clear to us that we were dealing with a politically very sensitive topic. So before the actual work on the script started, a long research-phase one year took place. We tried to make ourselves a picture as clearly as possible of what actually took place in Rostock in August 1992 and interviewed the involved persons of all different sides from the time of the events. The complete development of the script is based on these encounters. The script-development was dramaturgically supported by our commissioning editor from "ZDF-Das kleine Fernsehspiel" Burkhard Althoff, and was also partly developed in the Jerusalem International Film Lab in Israel.

For the shoot itself, we managed to gather an amazing cast of some of the most talented German actors. A very ambitious vision of the film stood opposed a rather limited budget. But our team, which partly knows each other already from Film school, really pulled together and literally girded themselves for the battle of making this film possible.

Leif Alexis, Jochen Laube

THE CAST

Jonas Nay – Stefan

Born 1990 in Lübeck, Northern Germany, Jonas Nay celebrated his first successes with the acclaimed TV movie "HOMEVIDEO" (2011), in which he played the main character. Next to acting, he was one of the founders of the band "CONCERTED".

2014 FLIGHTS OF FANCY - Bavarian Film Awards (2014) ~ Best Young Actor

2014 SOMMERSONNENWENDE

2013 KING OF GERMANY

2012 DIE FRAU VON FRÜHER

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2011 DEAR COURTNEY

2011 HOMEVIDEO

- Adolf Grimme Award (2012)
- New Faces Awards (2012)
- Günter Strack TV Awards (2012) ~ Best Young Actor
- German Television Awards (2011)

Saskia Rosendahl – Jennie

Saskia Rosendahl had her break through playing the main part in Cate Shortlands "LORE". The Film was the official Australian nomination for the Academy Awards 2013. Amongst others she is also known for "THE DARK ROOM" (2012), "DER TEUFEL MIT DEN DREI GOLDENEN HAAREN" (2013) and "THE TASTE OF APPLE SEEDS" (2013). She studied and worked until 2011 at the Kinderballett der Oper Halle (Children's Ballet of the Halle Opera) and appeared in various theater performances.

2014 WILD

2013 DER TEUFEL MIT DEN DREI GOLDENEN HAAREN

2013 THE TASTE OF APPLE SEEDS

2013 A PACT

2013 THE MISSIONARY

2012 THE DARK ROOM

- Australian Film Institute (2013) ~ Best Young Actor
- Berlin International Film Festival (2013) ~ Shooting Star
- Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards (2013)
- Stockholm Film Festival (2012) ~ Best Actress

2012 FÜR ELISE

- Int. Film Festival Locarno (2012) ~ Audience Awards

2012 LORE

- Stockholm Film Festival (2012) ~ Best Actress, Best Film, Best Music, Best Camera

Devid Striesow – Martin

Devid Striesow, one of the most renowned German actors to date, was born 1973 in Bergen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and graduated at the acting school Ernst Busch in 1999. He appeared as one of the lead actors in the Academy Award winning "THE COUNTERFEITERS" (2007), multiple awarded "YELLA" (2007) and Academy Award nominated "DOWNFALL" (2004).

2014 TILL EULENSPIEGEL

2014 DER BAU

2014 GÖTTLICHE FUNKEN

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2014	DER PREDIGER	
2013	DREAMLAND	
2012	DIE FRAU VON FRÜHER	
2012	TRANSPAPA	- Schwerin Art of Film Festival (2012) ~ Best Dramatic Performance
2011	A GOOD SUMMER	- Adolf Grimme Awards (2012) - Hessian TV Award (2011)
2011	BLAUBEERBLAU	- Adolf Grimme Awards (2011)
2010	THREE	- German Film Critics Association Awards (2010) ~ Best Actor
2007	YELLA	
2007	THE COUNTERFEITERS	- German Film Awards (2007) ~ Best supporting Actor
2004	DOWNFALL	
2003	BUNGALOW	- German Film Critics Association Awards (2004) ~ Best Actor

THE CREW

Burhan Qurbani (Director)

Burhan Qurbani was born 1980 in Germany after his parents moved there in 1979 as political refugees from Afghanistan. His father was a civilian employee in the U.S. Army and so Burhan grew up in different cities all over Germany. In 2002, he started studying film directing at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. For his short films he received the Short Film Prize of German Film Critics, the German Camera Prize for best short and the "Black Pearl" for the best upcoming filmmaker at the Middle East International Film Festival in 2008. "SHAHADA", Burhan's first full length feature film, premiered as part of the official competition of the 60th Berlinale in 2010. The film had theatrical releases in Germany, France, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Greece. "SHAHADA" also received, amongst many other awards, the Golden Hugo at the Chicago International Film Festival and was screened at the Doha/Tribeca Film Festival in Qatar.

2010	KRIEGER OHNE FEIND	- German Grimme Prize (2011)
2009	SHAHADA	- Prize of German Arthouse/ Best Film in the Competition - Chicago International Filmfestival (2010) ~ Golden Hugo, New Directors Competition - Hessen Film Prize (2010) ~ Best Film of the year

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- Festival des deutschen Films (2010) ~ Most Unique Form, Most Unique Idea
- International Student Festival Sehsüchte (2010) ~ Best Production
- Newcomer Prize (2010) ~ Best upcoming Screenwriter, Best upcoming Producer
- First Steps Awards ~ Special Prize/ Best Camera
- Monterrey Filmfestival (2010) ~ Best Actress (Maryam Zaree)
- Ghent International Film Festival (2010) ~ Best Actress
- Saint Jean de Luz Film Festival (2010) ~ Grand Prix/ Best Film
- Cinessonne Film Festival (2010) ~ Grand Prix/ Best Film

2007 ILLUSION

- Novi Sad Film Festival (Seribia) ~ Special Jury Prize
- Middle Eastern International Film Festival ~ Black Pearl Award, Best Upcoming Filmmaker
- Prize of German Critics Award ~ Best German Short
- International Shortfilm Festival Hamburg (2008) ~ Jury Award
- German Camera Award (2008) ~ Best Short

JOCHEN LAUBE (Producer)

Jochen Laube studied production at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg and graduated in 2005 with the feature film "URLAUB VOM LEBEN". In 2006 he founded the production company sommerhaus filmproduktionen with which he produced amongst others the films "NOVEMBER CHILD", "SONBOL", which was hailed with the Grimme Award, and "DIE HAUSHALTSHILFE", which won a Lola at the German Short Film Awards. Jochen Laube has been working as producer for UFA FICTION (former teamWorx) since 2008 and heads its Ludwigsburg office. This is the birthplace of many award-winning feature films and TV movies, including "THE DAY I WAS NOT BORN" (awarded a.o. the German Film Award 2011 in two categories and the Bavarian Film Award 2011), "CRACKS IN THE SHELL" (awarded a Lola at the German Film Awards in 2012 and two awards at the 46th International Karlovy Vary Festival), "TRANSPAPA", "MOVE", the mini-series "BARON ON THE CANNONBALL", which was nominated for the International Emmy Kids Awards 2014, and the docu-drama "GEORGE". In May 2013, "FIVE YEARS" was released in German cinemas. The feature film deals with the topic how Murat Kurnaz coped with his imprisonment. Jochen Laube was the German "Producer on the move" of the eponymous program at the Cannes Film Festival. Currently, Laube is working on the continuation of the successful transmedial TV series "DINA FOXX" and on the Canadian coproduction "COCONUT HERO", directed by Florian Cossen. His latest theatrical film "STATIONS OF THE CROSS", directed by Dietrich Brüggemann, was in competition at last year's Berlinale and won the Silver Bear for Best Script.

LEIF ALEXIS (Producer)

Leif Alexis studied production at Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. In 2006, he produced „WORLDSTAR“, which got decorated with several international prizes. In 2010, his first full-length feature film "SHAHADA" took part at the 60th Berlinale competition, followed by many international awards. For "SHAHADA" Leif was awarded as the „Best upcoming producer“ with the "Studio Hamburg Nachwuchspreis". Since 2010 he is working as a producer for UFA FICTION (former teamWorx). There

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he developed and produced amongst others the transmedia project "RESCUE DINA FOXX" being the most played alternate reality game in Germany ever. Further projects are "GEORGE" with Götz George playing his own father, "STATIONS OF THE CROSS", which was running in the competition of the Berlinale 2013, winning the silver Bear for the Best Script, and the second part of "RESCUE DINA FOXX". "WE ARE YOUNG. WE ARE STRONG." about the riots of Rostock-Lichtenhagen 1992, is his second work with the director Burhan Qurbani.

WORLD SALES - BETA CINEMA

Beta Cinema has established itself as a "boutique-operation" for independent feature films with strong theatrical potential. Beta Cinema's philosophy is to keep its selective acquisition policy of 10 to 12 titles per year in order to fully develop the theatrical potential of each title according to its individual character.

Beta Cinema's portfolio includes outstanding productions like the international box office hit "THE PHYSICIAN", Berlin 2014 Silver Bear-winning "STATIONS OF THE CROSS", Berlin 2013 Golden Bear-winning "CHILD'S POSE", Academy Award 2011-nominated "IN DARKNESS", Cannes 2008 Jury Prize-winning and Academy Award-nominated IL DIVO, Academy Award 2007-winning "THE COUNTERFEITERS", Academy Award 2007 nominated "MONGOL", Academy Award 2006-winning "THE LIVES OF OTHERS" and the Academy Award 2004-nominated "DOWNFALL".

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