

Uncle Tony, Three Fools and the Secret Service

Documentary, 86 minutes

By Mina Mileva and Vesela Kazakova

Produced by **activist38** in co-production with the Bulgarian National Television and NovaFilm

In November 2013, activist38 released theatrically in Sofia the controversial documentary “**Uncle Tony, Three Fools, and the Secret Service**”. In May, at present date the film still runs in the cinemas in Sofia, which marks an unprecedented longevity for a homegrown documentary film.

It touches a raw nerve by observing the political hierarchy amongst artists and filmmakers in a totalitarian society as well as the destiny of animator and filmmaker Antony Trayanov/Uncle Tony.

Coproduced by the Bulgarian National Television but not supported by the Bulgarian National Film Centre as the subject was found to be a sensitive one, this film unsurprisingly caused lengthy and intense political scandal covered by the main media of the country.

The authors received continual verbal abuse, threats and intimidation triggered by two main reasons:

Firstly, the title was found to be extremely inappropriate with the presence of the “Secret Service” in it. The physiological pressure towards the authors was immense weeks before the premiere. As a result the film had four official release titles before they gathered bravery to preserve the original “**Uncle Tony, Three Fools, and the Secret Service**”. This outrage is rooted in the fact that Bulgaria hasn’t had a proper lustration process and the notorious Secret Service dossiers are still closed allowing many former agents and informers to take high political positions.



Secondly, passionate guardians of the national glory found that the prestige and fame of **Donio Donev** - one of the most renowned Bulgarian directors, whom Uncle Tony worked with, is being jeopardized. Donev is widely known as extremely talented man who also happened to be an informer for the Secret Services. His dossier was made public in 2003 when he applied to be a member of the Parliament. However this fact couldn’t dent his prestige as much as the revelation that another artist, Uncle Tony, took fundamental part in his achievements.

Donev's relatives, also influential members of Bulgarian film guild, took the matter very seriously and personally and started a hostile tabloid campaign targeting the authors.

Official letters were submitted to the main institutions with the demand the film to be banned. The Ministry of Culture, Film Author, CEM (the Council for electronic media), the National Television and the Union of Bulgarian Filmmakers each responded with their own position and some of them contacted the production company activist 38 for relevant inspections.

Amidst this institutional confusion a group of intellectuals and writers created a webpage in support of the film entitled: *Please sign in support of freedom of speech, expression and thinking in Bulgaria*. It is a film that supports a strong cause and it creates history for the country.

The film expects its international premiere.

Creative Crew

Directed by: Mina Mileva and Vesela Kazakova; **Photography:** Plamen Gelinov, Vasilena Goranova; **Editing:** Donka Ivanova; **Music:** Emilian Gatsov; **Sound:** Alexander Simeonov; **Animation:** Antony Trayanov, Mina Mileva



Mina Mileva studied Theatre and Stage Design in college - Plovdiv, Bulgaria and specialised in Dresden, Germany. She then graduated animated film directing in the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts (NATFA), Sofia, and in the Academy for visual Arts (La Cambre), Brussels.

Her short films *Contrasts'92*, *Animation Season'94*, *Monday again'96*, and *Un verre ou deux'98*, were officially selected at many festivals and received prestigious awards.

In 1996 she settled in London where she worked as animator, animation director and line producer. Her work features wide variety amongst which films such as "Christmas Carol the movie 2001", "Bob the Builder", Disney's "Tiger Movie" and "Jungle Book", adverts, music videos, shorts and BBC and Chanel 4 BAFTA nominated children's series.

In 2008 Mina co-founded the production company "Activist 38" with the actress Vesela Kazakova after their collaboration on the documentary "Because of Her".



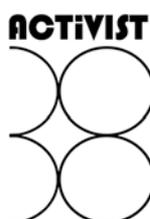
Vesela Kazakova graduated both acting and producing respectively in the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts and University of Economics in Sofia.

Her first roles in the cinema have snapped up prestigious prizes for best female actress in Bulgaria and abroad, Silver George Award in Moscow Film Festival in 2005, and Berlinale Shooting Stars Award in 2006 amongst them.

Vesela started producing theatre performances in 2005 while also working as an actor, play co-writer and composer. She then gradually turned to film producing

starting with the documentary "Because of Her". This activity led to setting up a production company Activist38 with Mina Mileva in 2008.

Vesela Kazakova is EAVE 2013 graduate.



Activist 38 was established in 2008 after Vesela Kazakova and Mina Mileva produced the independent film "**Because of her**". Mina graduated animated film directing in "LA CAMBRE" Brussels and Sofia's Film Academy, NATFA and had worked in London since 1996. Vesela Kazakova is a multiple award-winning actress and has produced theatre plays and short films.

The company is attracted to projects with strong political and social engagement as well as a hybrid form and mix between the genres.

Activist38 is strongly present at international festival markets such as Sunny Side of the Doc at La Rochelle, East European Forum in Jihlava, Zagreb Dox, Dok Leipzig, One world festival in Prague, Baltic Sea Forum, Share Your Slate at Berlinale, Producers network in Cannes and Sofia Meetings amongst others.

Most of their projects and completed films are coproduced by Bulgarian National Television. The animated "Because of Mum", directed by Antoaneta Chetrafilova and premiered in Stuttgart Animation Festival in 2013 was bought by ARTE to be broadcast in France, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium. At present, the documentary "Uncle Tony, Three Fools and the Secret Service" that was developed at Rough Cut Boutique 2012 shows at art house cinemas in Sofia for fourth month running. Mina and Vesela produce the animated documentary "RIVER TALES" which participated at BDC Discoveries 2013.

LINKS:

IMDB:

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3492882/?ref_=fn_tt_tt_1

EAVE Newsletter:

<http://eave.org/news/uncle-tony-three-fools-and-the-secret-service-unprecedented-box-office/>

AWN - Animation World Network:

<http://www.awn.com/blog/uncle-tony-three-fools-and-secret-service>

Facebook Support Page:

https://www.facebook.com/supportfreedomofexpression?notif_t=fbpage_fan_invite

The Following links are only in Bulgarian language:

Bulgarian National TV – morning block:

<http://bnt.bg/part-of-show/hh-festival-zlaten-riton-2013>

Capital Light:

http://www.capital.bg/light/tema/2014/01/31/2230530_leka_nosht_ds/

Bulgarian National TV – a debate:

<http://bnt.bg/predavanyia/denyat-zapochva-s-kultura/denyat-zapochva-s-kultura-3-fevruari-2014>

Bulgarian National Television – morning block:

http://bnt.bg/bg/productions/121/edition/36392/26_11_2013_chicho_toni_trimata_glupaci_i_ds

Bulgarian Newspaper “Labour”

<http://www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=2488882>

Darik Radio, Sofia:

<http://radio.dariknews.bg/?page=audio&id=227808>

Darik Radio, Plovdiv:

<http://radio.dariknews.bg/?page=audio&id=229922>

SofiaLive:

<http://www.sofialive.bg/izkustvo/filmi/2809-chicho-toni-trimata-glupaci-i-ds.html>

Today BG:

<http://www.dnes.bg/kino/2013/12/19/imat-li-trimata-glupaci-drug-bashta-osven-donio-donev.210033>

168 hours, BG:

www.activist38.com/files/public/168article.pdf

Culture Portal:

<http://kultura.bg/web/%D1%84%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%BC%D1%8A%D1%82-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%8F%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2-%D0%B5-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%83%D0%B7%D0%B0/>

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