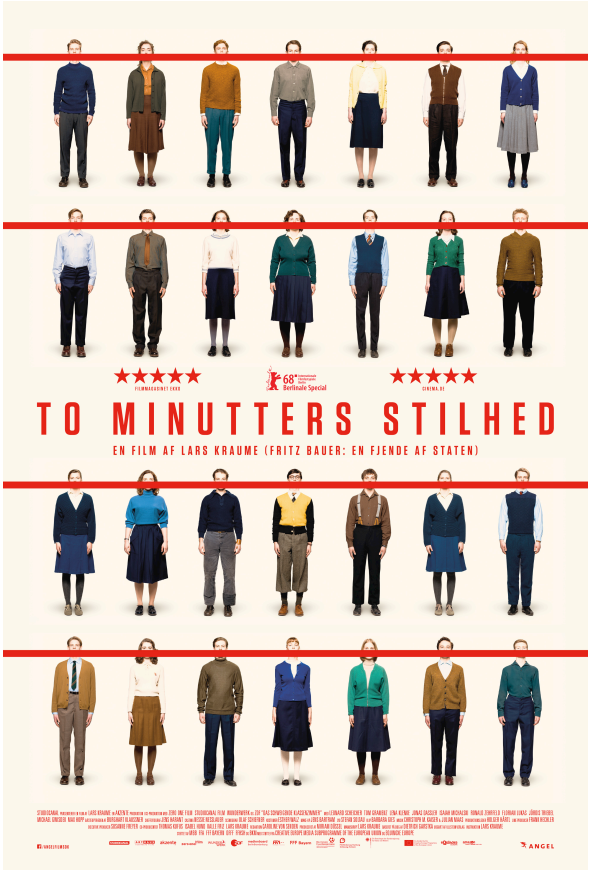
Angel Films præsenterer

TO MINUTTERS STILHED



Premiere: 8. november
Længde: 111 minutter
Censur: Tilladt for børn over 11 år
Instruktør: Lars Kraume

Premierebiografer:
Grand Teatret, Valby Kino, Vester Vov Vov, Øst for Paradis, Cafe Biografen Odense, Biffen Nordkraft Aalborg, Gentofte Kino, Apollon Struer, Værløse Bio, Klovborg Kino 1-2-3D, Kosmorama 6100, Kinorama Sønderborg, Nicolai Biograf & Café m.fl.

Synopsis:
Hvad der starter med en spontan solidarisk reaktion fra nogle elever i efterkrigstidens Østtyskland tiltrækker sig snart opmærksomhed fra toppen af den østtyske regering.

Året er 1956. I Østtyskland lever folk afsondret fra omverden, men jerntæppet er endnu ikke helt stærkt nok til at afholde de to drenge, Kurt og Theo, fra at lave små hemmelige ture til det forjættede Vesten. Men jerntæppet strammes, og da et oprør i Ungarn bliver slået hårdt ned, beslutter de to drenge, sammen med resten af deres gymnasieklasse i den østtyske by Stalinstadt, at holde to minutters stilhed i solidaritet med de faldne. Skoleledelsen og sågar den østtyske regering, reagerer voldsomt på elevernes opførsel. Systemkritik tolereres ikke og eleverne bliver bedt om enten at udpege bagmanden bag deres protest eller alle blive smidt ud af skolen.

Filmen er baseret på virkelige begivenheder.

Kontakt: Peter Sølvsten Thomsen, peter@angelfilms.dk

CAST

Theo Lemke	Leonard Scheicher
Kurt Wächter	Tom Gramenz
Lena	Lena Klenke
Erik Babinski	Jonas Dassler
Paul	Isaiah Michalski
Hermann Lemke	Ronald Zehrfeld
Ingrid Lemke	Carina Wiese
Headmaster Schwarz	Florian Lukas
Frau Kessler	Jördis Triebel
Free German Youth Secretary Ringel	Daniel Krauss
Edgar	Michael Gwisdek
People's Education Minister Lange	Burghart Klaußner
Hans Wächter	Max Hopp
Anna Wächter	Judith Engel
Father Melzer	Götz Schubert

CREW

Directed by, screenplay by	Lars Kraume
Director of Photography	Jens Harant
Production Design	Olaf Schiefner
Costume Design	Esther Walz
Makeup	Jens Bartram and Judith Müller
Sound	Stefan Soltau
Edited by	Barbara Gies
Casting	Nessi Nesslauer
Producer	Miriam Düssel, Akzente Film & Fernsehproduktion
Executive Producer	Susanne Freyer, Akzente Film & Fernsehproduktion
Co-producers	ZDF (Caroline von Senden), Zero One Film (Thomas Kufus), STUDIOCANAL Film (Kalle Friz & Isabel Hund)

TECHNICAL DATA

Running time: 111 min
Format: Cinemascope
Sound: 5.1

ONE-LINE SYNOPSIS

A gripping and true story about the extraordinary courage of individuals in a time of political oppression.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

The year is 1956. During a visit to the cinema in West Berlin, high school pupils Theo (Leonard Scheicher) and Kurt (Tom Gramenz) see dramatic pictures of the Hungarian uprising in Budapest on the newsreel. Back at school in Stalinstadt, they spontaneously decide to hold a minute's silence in solidarity with the victims of the uprising during a lesson. But the gesture causes much bigger ripples than expected: while their headmaster (Florian Lukas) initially tries to put the whole thing down to the whim of youth, the schoolchildren become objects of the political machinations of the fledgling East Germany. The People's Education Minister (Burghart Klaußner) condemns the action as a clearly counterrevolutionary act and demands that the ringleader be named within a week. But the schoolchildren stick together, thus facing with a decision that will change their lives for ever...

PRESS RELEASE

THE SILENT REVOLUTION tells a deeply moving chapter from the diary of the Cold War, based on the personal experiences and the eponymous book by Dietrich Garstka – one of the 19 schoolchildren who turned an entire state apparatus against them with a simple humane gesture.
Award-winning director and screenwriter Lars Kraume (German Film Award in 2016 for the political thriller *The People vs. Fritz Bauer*) has succeeded in putting together a cast consisting of extremely promising newcomers and outstanding established German film actors in his latest film: Leonard Scheicher, who is familiar to cinemagoers from productions such as *Es war einmal Indianerland*, *Finsterworld* and *Sources of Life*, stars. Alongside him we see newcomer Tom Gramenz ("*Arman's Secret*"). Further classmate roles are played by Lena Klenke (*Rock my Heart*, *Suck me Shakespeer*), Isaiah Michalski (*The Physician*, *Anonymus*) and Jonas Dassler (*Werk ohne Autor*, *Lomo – The Language of Many Others*). A first-class ensemble was also found for the other "adult" parts, including Ronald Zehrfeld (*The People vs. Fritz Bauer*), Florian Lukas ("*The Weissensee Saga*"), Jördis Triebel (*One Breath*), Michael Gwisdek (*Old Agent Men*) and Burghart Klaußner (*The People vs. Fritz Bauer*).

THE SILENT REVOLUTION was rated "highly recommended" by Deutsche Film- und Medienbewertung FBW.

THE SILENT REVOLUTION is produced by Miriam Düssel of Akzente Film & Fernsehproduktion in co-production with ZDF (Caroline von Senden), Zero One Film (Thomas Kufus) and STUDIOCANAL Film (Kalle Friz, Isabel Hund). The film was sponsored by Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, FFF Bayern, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, FFA and DFFF.

OPENING REMARKS FROM DIETRICH GARSTKA

"That's all over! Just let history be history!" – There have always been voices that have said this or something similar.

And there are always people who have seen what really happened: young people who resisted a state apparatus without ever having planned this resistance. Who just slid into resistance, you might say, but then grew on it - and on themselves. Young people who made a mark because they got angry - with that anger that was and still is peculiar to youth - about what they saw as unfreedom.

Miriam Düssel, the producer, has seen it. I remember our very first meeting at Ullstein Verlag. She saw the power in this story.
Lars Kraume has seen it. He succeeds in capturing the politicisation of their behaviour for all the lightness of youth and portrays a development that shows how the class grow together under the increasing pressure of the state apparatus. The functionaries of the time did not understand that. But this development in particular is presented very well.

To be honest, it did not surprise me that the material would be made into a film. Since the book was published, the public media have always shown great interest in the story. Of course I was a little concerned about it at first because it may be difficult to accept that the film has a different dramaturgy. But I am very happy that this film has now arrived. Every picture I saw I thought: aha! Yes, that's how it was. That's how it happened. It's all spot on. The memories returned and the feelings were exactly the same as those sixty years ago. Rejection ranging to contempt for the idealising of people. Contempt for the fact that even with schoolchildren it was all about whether they were for the regime or against it. "Are you for or against peace?" always meant whether you were for or against the German Democratic Republic. That was a wretched restriction of what the world is. And when watching the scenes, I felt that fear returned, the fear that you may now be betrayed by a minister who has the power to destroy an entire class. I felt this sense of thereat very strongly because the film tells of the events using powerful language and images. Without twisting things, very clear in its line, very objectively, also in the determination of a regime to call to account the one who should be called to account as the ringleader.

Yes, that is how they are, that is how they were, dictators who also turn against the young and take them seriously as threats to their power, excuse their protests under no circumstances because they were set in their ways, because they would tolerate no change. The whole atmosphere was right. The joie de vivre on the one hand and the atmosphere on the other. Intense.

DIRECTOR LARS KRAUME ON HIS FILM

How did you become aware of this theme?

A producer, friend of mine, gave me Dietrich Garstka's book ten years ago. After five years I had an idea of how it might be adapted, but the rights were taken - of course. They then belonged to Miriam Düssel and Akzente Film. But fortunately they had no screenwriter and so I was able to shape the presentation of the story together with them.

Why did you want to tell this chapter of East German history?

At the same time, I was really beginning to get interested in Garstka's book, I was already working on *The People vs Fritz Bauer*. I was on another path towards the question of how life must have felt in Germany after the Third Reich. Basically, both films are treating the question of how things would carry on in this deeply disturbed country, how Germany was trying to find a path from this terrible history to a new future. East Germany as a state and society was one path, West Germany the other. Both attempts were difficult. That is what I am trying to portray in the two films.

How long was the research phase for the film? Where and how did you do your research?

Research and writing always run in parallel for me. I read and write and then I can't do anymore so I start reading again... The most important source of research for THE SILENT REVOLUTION was Dietrich Garstka, on whose personal memories the film is mainly based. Such a drastic experience is told differently and also very individually by each person. But if you have too many perspectives flowing into the story it can be difficult to develop a viable plot. This is why I spoke exclusively to Dietrich, about his book and his memory of the time. Furthermore, I have also watched many DEFA films from that time, in particular *Berlin, Ecke Schönhauser*, which was shot in the same year our film is set in. But the film *Karla*, which was banned during the East German era, was also important for me.

How would you describe the social climate against whose background THE SILENT REVOLUTION tells its story?

You always have to remember that the film is set in Stalinstadt in 1956. That means that the Wall had not yet been built and the belief and hope that socialism was the superior form of society to capitalism was very justified. We definitely wanted the film not to show the typical grey picture of East Germany. Therefore, we decided to move the location of the plot from Storkow to Stalinstadt, which is now Eisenhüttenstadt. This model city was very modern in 1956, generously laid out as a workers' city surrounding the steel works and offering its inhabitants amenities that could only be dreamed of by those living in the Ruhr in West Germany. But what was the same in East and West was the silence about the war and the entanglements of people's parents during the Nazi period. The inability to deal with their own history also shapes the people the film tells us about, of course.

What role does, in your opinion, the Hungary uprising in 1956 play in East Germany and what part in West Germany?

The Hungary uprising was able to take place because Khrushchev changed the political direction after Stalin's regime of terror. First in Poland, then in Hungary, people felt encouraged to demand more independence and rights. But the Russians' willingness to loosen the reins did not go quite that far after all. The West used the Hungary uprising for its own propaganda purposes; the East tried to limit the damage with its own propaganda. But all in all this uprising was definitely more important to people living in the Eastern Bloc than to the observers in the West. In the same year they had the Suez crisis to deal with - other political events on the world stage that they were presumably more concerned about.

There was also a great deal of sharpshooting on both sides in the media. How do you see the reporting from RIAS and Neues Deutschland from that time in consideration of fake news and opinion-forming?

Fake news is propaganda. The mechanism is exactly the same; truths are distorted and then propagated, then everyone talks at the same time and believes what they hear. Whether you call it propaganda or fake news, it is up to each individual to use their own head too. If all you do is regurgitate the opinions of others, you have a problem. Of course it was much more difficult to find different sources of information on one given theme during the Cold War. This applied to East and West alike. Today, it is very easy to form your opinion and question news; it is just a little more time-consuming than simply believing every tweet.

How was adapting true events for the big screen once again after The People vs Fritz Bauer?

They are two very closely related films. They both stem from my interest for the development of our country after the war. Both films are political dramas. I would find it brilliant if a few cinemas offered double features.

As a screenwriter adapting true stories, the problem is constantly having to maintain the balance between historical precision and dramatic intensity. No-one likes to come out of the cinema and say: it was all true but it was a bit boring. And no-one wants to hear after seeing a film that the truth was very different. It takes a lot of effort but it's wonderful when it works. I definitely prefer watching films based on true events to watching those with invented superhero stories. Nothing is more inspirational than hearing about the extraordinary deeds of real people in a film.

Although you have made a historical film, many of the scenes (such as the scene in the thermal power station or the raising of the flag) have a timeless appearance and could just as easily be set in the present. Was this idea of the universality of history deliberate on your part, and how do you see the connection to current political situations around the world?

I think historical films always need to connect with a statement that is important today. In this case it is that everyone has to become a political person at some stage in their youth. There's no way around this, not then, not now. If you don't have an opinion and stick by it, you have nothing.

How much fiction is there in THE SILENT REVOLUTION?

It was my job to find the general in the writing of history that Garstka set out in detail with his book. It is basically pretty similar to the truth of what happened but the characters, their families and the location have been changed.

How do you experience dealing with historical facts as a director?

As a director it is a joy to make a historical film because you can shape the whole world. If you make a film with a contemporary setting, you always have to deal with the ugly present. You'll always have to have an orange wheelie bin, or an ugly city bus, or people with colourful raincoats. Filming is great, writing, as I have said, hell.

How much fiction can a historical film take before it becomes artificial?

There's no way to answer that generally. If you're making Robin Hood, the fiction is the best thing about it. But if you're going to film the Wannsee Conference, then please don't use too much fiction. However, you must be allowed to dramatise events, because otherwise you won't get a suspenseful film. The same applies to a novel. It also has a different task from that of a non-fiction historical book.

How did you hit upon Eisenhüttenstadt as the shooting location - what was it about Eisenhüttenstadt that convinced you to go there?

Eisenhüttenstadt was a great stroke of luck for this film. The old model town part from the 50s is the biggest memorial area in Germany and we were able to shoot a historical film in an entire town, which is normally only possible with Hollywood budgets. We only needed enough extras and this is where the nice, open-minded people of Eisenhüttenstädt came into play; they spent their time as extras, waiting patiently in historical costumes in the cold winter wind. The steel works also allowed us to shoot in the historical furnace. Shortly after this it was shut down, even though it had been fired up since '51. We came just in time; in this way the scenes in the film became a historical document in their own right. And the most important find in this town was the school building, which is actually the Documentation Centre and Museum of Everyday Life in East Germany, directly next to which a kindergarten had just been closed, which meant that we could rebuild and shoot there.

Overall, Eisenhüttenstadt is not only attractive as a motif, but is also interesting in terms of content, because it so clearly symbolises the optimism and hopes of the young East Germany.

How many of the adult actors such as Jördis Triebel, Ronald Zehrfeld, Florian Lukas, and, of course, Burghart Klaußner have you worked with on previous projects; and if so, how was working with them again on this one?

Superb as always. That is why I also try to work with these actors as often as possible. Florian Lukas was the first professional actor I worked with. That's 20 years ago now, during my time as a film student. I was terribly nervous and uncertain, and he said that what I was doing was okay. It all became easier after that.

Burghart Klaußner has a small but extremely important part. As People's Education Minister Lange he decides on the pupils' fate. What was most important to you when developing this character?

It was important for me that this character's actions should also be understood. There is one moment that explains why this man proceeds so harshly against this class. It explains everything. Burghart is just such an intelligent actor and I was really happy that he played this part.

Did you already have some actors in mind for the parts when you were writing the screenplay?

Ronald Zehrfeld. Nobody could play a steelworker better. But I have to say that the casting was not done by me alone: Nessie Nesslauer, who has done the casting for all my films and most of the TV movies since 1999, was heavily involved. We talk with each other a lot, she reads through all the versions of the screenplay and by the time it comes to casting we know very quickly who to ask or who we would like to cast.

Many of the adult actors were born and grew up in the former East Germany. Was that a factor for you in casting the characters?

It was Nessie's idea that all the actors who do not play pupils, i.e. parents and teachers, should have grown up in the East. Burghart Klaußner is the exception. But Jördis Triebel and Max Hopp play characters that they bring to life with evocative observations from their own childhood.

How did you find the brilliant young cast? In particular Leonard Scheicher, Tom Gramenz, Lena Klenke, Isaiah Michalski and Jonas Dassler?

That's Nessie Nesslauer's speciality. She also cast Franka Potente and August Diehl in their first roles. She can recognise the potential of young actors before they have had a chance to prove it in a dozen films. We did, however, do a few castings before we made a final decision on the cast.

How did the actors, especially the young ones, of course, prepare for the roles and the era in which they are playing them?

For instance, they had boogie lessons, read Dietrich Garstka's book and watched East German films. The most important film, as it was for me when I was preparing, was *Berlin, Ecke Schönhauser*, because that came out in the year our film was set in and it is about young rebels. The actors had a lot to look at there. And the next important film was *Karla*, a film that was banned in East Germany in 1965/66 and which was about a teacher and her final-year class. Also a great journey through time. Jonas Dassler also went to the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen because that played a part in the history of his family.

You have already worked with many of the crew members on previous projects. Can you tell us something about this "family behind the camera"?

The most important woman behind the camera is Miriam Düssel, the producer. She spent years doggedly immersed in this material without ever seeming stressed. She is a superb producer because she had the necessary sensitivity and at the same time the necessary obsession for this film.

The rest of the crew really are a kind of family: Jens Harant (cinematography), Barbara Gies (montage), Esther Walz (costume design), Olaf Schiefner (production design), Christoph M. Kaiser and Julian Maas (music), Stefan Soltau (sound) but also the people behind these heads of department, camera assistants, lighting technicians, directing assistant Tine Rogoll – I have worked on many films with all these people. At the end-of-film party in a karaoke bar Miriam Düssel and I sang them a song: "Simply The Best" by Tina Turner. It didn't sound all that good but it came from the heart.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Hungarian Uprising of 1956

On 22 October 1956, students at the Technical University of Budapest wrote a letter in which they demanded freedom of the press, freedom of speech, national independence, free elections and the withdrawal of the Russians. At initially non-violent protests on 23 October 1956, government forces fired on the peaceful protesters, which led to outrage and the protest spreading across the country. On 1 November 1956, after a long series of protests, the reform-orientated Prime Minister of Hungary, Imre Nagy, declared Hungary's neutrality and its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. The declaration of independence was ruthlessly put down by Soviet troops from November 4 onwards. 2,500 Hungarians died, another 200,000 were exiled. The insurgents who could not be or chose not to be exiled were arrested; there were numerous show trials and executions. The people's uprising was condemned as "counterrevolutionary" in all the countries under Soviet influence; it was reported in the West as a "struggle for freedom".

The class

In the mid-50s, the final-year pupils at the Kurt Steffelbauer High School in Storkow (Brandenburg) were allowed to take their school leaving certificate in order to have hopes of getting one of the hand-selected university places in East Germany. After hearing from the West German radio station RIAS on 24 October 1956, which the pupils listened to in secret despite a ban, that their football idol, Hungarian national player Ferenc Puskás, had reportedly been killed at the protests in Budapest, they spontaneously decided to hold a minute's silence during their history lesson on 29 October to commemorate their hero. The teacher was irritated and reported the incident to the headmaster. He wanted to play down the incident as a daft young boys' stunt, but Party members soon became aware of the affair via the staff. When the East German People's Education Minister Fritz Lange got involved and threatened to expel the children unless they named the ringleaders, the children stood firm. Since they still refused to betray anyone even after several interrogations and attempts at blackmail, they were all expelled from school on 21 December and banned from taking their school leaving certificate anywhere in East Germany. The class then fled the republic, an act which was already illegal in 1956 but at least still possible.

The escape

The first to flee was Dietrich Garstka on 19 December 1956, after the pressure on the pupils had become greater and greater. He took the early train from Storkow to Berlin-Königs Wusterhausen and then took the city train from East Berlin to West Berlin. At his reception centre in Zehlendorf he was granted the status of a political refugee who had fled East Germany because of political persecution. The rest of the class fled between December 25 and 31, apart from the four girls Gisela, Ursula, Gertraud and Waltraut, who wanted to stay in Storkow, or at least somewhere in East Germany, for various personal reasons. The pupils fled in small groups so that no-one would have to go alone and it would not be too conspicuous. They initially fled to the reception centre in West Berlin and then, on 7 January 1957, went on to Bergstraße in Bensheim, Hessen, where they were able to do their school leaving certificate in peace.

BEHIND THE CAMERA

Lars Kraume
Director and screenwriter

Lars Kraume is one of the German filmmakers whose directing work has proved to be extremely versatile. After leaving school, Kraume worked in an advertising agency and as a freelance photographer before he studied at the German Film and Television Academy (Deutsche Film- and Fernsehakademie, dffb) in Berlin from 1994-1998. The short film he produced there, "Life is Too Short to Dance with Ugly Women" (1996), won an award for Best Short Film at the International Film Festival in Turin. Lars Kraume's dffb graduate film "Dunckel" won a Grimme Award in the Best Director category in 1998.

Lars Kraume made his cinema debut in 2001 with *Viktor Vogel – Commercial Man*, a satirical comedy about the media industry starring Alexander Scheer and Götz George. A number of television performances followed, including the much-praised *Tatort* episode "Wo ist Max Gravert?" (2004). Kraume's film *Keine Lieder über Liebe* starring Florian Lukas, Jürgen Vogel and Heike Makatsch celebrated its premiere in the Panorama Lounge at the 2005 Berlin Film Festival. His following TV film "Good Morning, Mr Grothe" (2006) won the German Television Award in the Best Director category and a Grimme Award in the Fiction category, among others. Lars Kraume was involved both as a director and a screenwriter in several episodes of the award-winning crime series "KDD – Kriminaldauerdienst". In 2009 he then produced, along with August Diehl, Daniel Brühl, Johanna Wokalek and Bernadette Heerwagen, the oppressive movie drama *The Coming Days*.

In the following years, Lars Kraume made a name for himself primarily as *Tatort* director. For the episode "Eine bessere Welt" (2011), Justus von Dohnányi received the Hessen Film Award and a nomination for the 2011 German Television Award. "Der Tote im Nachtzug" (2011) was nominated for the 2012 Grimme Award. The other *Tatort* episodes also received a great deal of praise from critics and audiences alike.
Lars Kraume remained faithful to the crime genre with the adaptation of the Dengler novels by bestselling author Wolfgang Schorlau: after "Die letzte Flucht" (2014) came the episodes "Am zwölften Tag" (2016) and "Die schützende Hand" (2017).

Lars Kraume's movie *The People vs Fritz Bauer* premiered at the Locarno International Film Festival in the summer of 2015. The drama about attorney general Fritz Bauer, who pursued Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann at the end of the 50s against considerable resistance, thereby initiating the Auschwitz trials of the 1960s, received the Audience's Award at the festival. Numerous other awards followed, including the Hessen Film Award for Best Film and the Bavarian Film Award. The film won 6 Lolas at the 2016 German Film Awards, including two for Lars Kraume: Best Director and Best Original Screenplay.
Kraume's next movie *Familienfest* was released in 2015, with a strong cast starring Lars Eidinger, Hannelore Elsner and Jördis Triebel. Most recently, Lars Kraume adapted Ferdinand von Schirach's play "Terror" as a sensational live experiment and won the German Television Award in the Best Director category.
THE SILENT REVOLUTION is Lars Kraume's next literary adaptation venture.

Filmography (selection)

2017	"Der König von Berlin"	Director, screenplay
2016	"Terror – Ihr Urteil"	Director, screenplay
2015	*The People vs Fritz Bauer*	Director, screenplay
2015	*Familienfest*	Director
2014	*My Sisters*	Director, producer
2010	*The Coming Days*	Director, screenplay, producer
2007	"Good Morning, Mr Grothe"	Director
2005	*Keine Lieder über Liebe*	Director, screenplay, producer
2001	*Viktor Vogel – Commercial Man*	Director, screenplay