

MOONMAKERS
in co-production with VFS Films & Faites Un Voeu
in association with Naked Edge Films

Present



PRESS NOTES

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Stills can be downloaded here: <https://noisefilmpr.com/projects/jump>

FESTIVALS

Warsaw International Film Festival

Documentary Competition

9 - 18 October 2020

WORLD PREMIERE

Rome Film Festival

Official Selection

15 - 25 October 2020

Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival

Testimonies / Competition section

27 October - 1 November 2020



SHORT SYNOPSIS

In 1970, just off the coast of Martha's Vineyard, Lithuanian sailor and would-be defector Simas Kudirka jumped off his Soviet vessel aboard a US coast guard cutter, asking for asylum. His leap for freedom set off a chaotic series of events, leading to one of the biggest political muddles during the Cold War.

LONG SYNOPSIS

It's Thanksgiving Day, 1970. The US coast guard sets out to meet a Soviet vessel anchored just off the shore of Martha's Vineyard. A one-day conference between the two nations has been set to discuss fishing rights in the Atlantic Ocean. While the talks are in full swing, Lithuanian sailor Simas Kudirka jumps across the icy water onto the American boat in a frantic bid for freedom. To his horror, and to the outcry of the world media, the Americans return him to the Soviets and he is tried for treason. The event sets off a series of protests throughout the US begging for his freedom and all hope seems lost, until new information about Simas' citizenship surfaces.

Through eye-witness reports, rare archival footage and a dramatic first-person re-enactment by now 90-year-old would-be defector Simas Kudirka, director Giedrė Žickytė takes us on a stranger-than-fiction journey that became an inspiration for people, pictures and politics, reaching all the way up to the White House.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

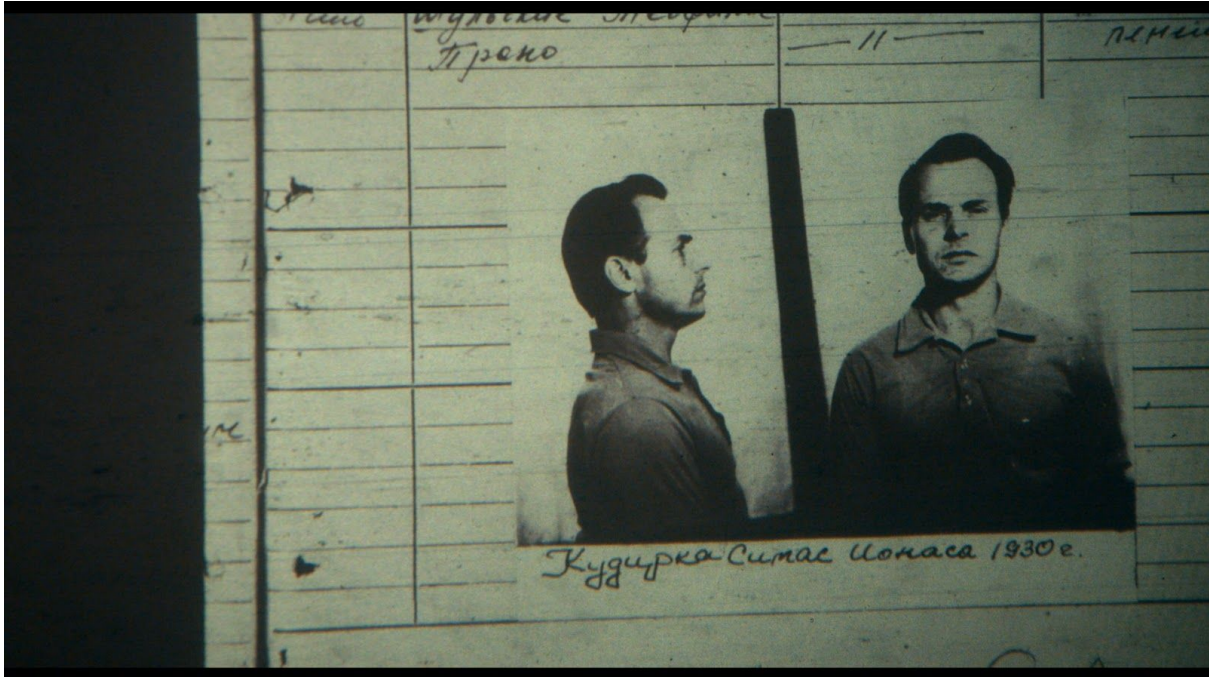


I was born in the totalitarian Soviet regime and was ten years old when my homeland of Lithuania regained its independence. I will never forget that feeling - it was like first love, so full of dreams and hopes. Therefore, I am attracted to stories about people searching for freedom and the drama that unfolds in the various choices they must have to make.

Sometimes my son asks me, “Mum, tell me about those times when Lithuania wasn’t free yet”. He is now the same age as I was back then. His grandfather tells him about the exile, the partisans, and the austerity of the Soviet system. Whereas, in my stories, the Soviet drama takes the form of childhood memory. America, for instance, in the minds of the people of the Soviet Union, seemed like paradise, forever out of reach. I remember, when I was a small child, somebody brought us some American bubble gum. Oh my god, the taste of it, as well as the color, was really a dimension of Another World! And one could blow bubbles with it! To this day, I don’t know why the Soviets couldn’t produce chewing gum one could blow bubbles with.

I also remember the days when I would see an enormous queue next to the shop. It was clear that something extraordinary was happening - it was bananas! Those fragrant yellow boomerangs we only saw in photographs, those alluring unknown fruits of knowledge, that in the free world were available even for monkeys! I stood in that queue until the very evening, and with the very first bite of the forbidden fruit, I experienced a sensation I was sure no one would be able to take it away from me. For a contemporary person of the Western World, these stories may seem bizarre, similar to Simas’ dreams of seeing the palm trees or being able to buy a Grundig recorder. However, they are universal - after spending an entire life in captivity, the simplest desires to live better, and the drama of hope is encapsulated. Even though this wish is to travel where one wants, to see the palm

trees, to listen to the music one likes, these are part of a forbidden dream when one has lived behind the Iron curtain. In a society not distorted by these things, Simas' jump would be meaningless, or it probably wouldn't have happened at all.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Giedrė Žickytė is an award-winning Lithuanian documentary film director and producer and the co-founder of the production company, MOONMAKERS. She graduated with a Master's degree in Visual Arts from Vilnius Art Academy in 2007. Her films have been selected at numerous international film festivals including IDFA, Hot Docs, Visions du Réel (Sesterce d'or Fondation Goblet Award), Sheffield Doc/Fest (Short Doc Award), IFFR, Camerimage (Golden Frog), DocumentaMadrid (Audience Award), Krakow IFF (European Film Award), etc. Many of her films have been theatrically distributed and broadcast on television internationally. I'M NOT FROM HERE (co-directed with Maite Alberdi) was nominated at the European Film Academy Awards in 2016. MASTER AND TATYANA won 4 "Silver Cranes", the Lithuanian Film Academy Awards including the awards for Best Director and Best Documentary, and was selected as one of "Ten Documentary Film Talents of 2015" by international film critic Tue Steen Müller. In 2016, she was awarded a St. Christopher's statue by the Vilnius City Council for merits in cinema artwork. Giedrė produced THE EARTH IS BLUE AS AN ORANGE by Iryna Tsilyk which premiered in Sundance 2020 World Documentary Competition and received the Best Directing Award.

Giedrė is a member of the European Film Academy, Lithuanian Filmmakers Union, alumni of Berlinale Talent Campus, Sources2, CPH:DOX LAB, EURODOC and dok.incubator.

Filmography

The Jump (2020) - feature documentary - director, producer

Gentle Warriors - feature documentary - producer

The Earth is Blue as an Orange (2020) - feature documentary - producer

One Life (2019) - documentary short - producer

I'm Not From Here (2016) - documentary short - co-director (together with Maite Alberdi), co-producer

Master and Tatyana (2014) - feature documentary - director

How We Played the Revolution (2011) - feature documentary - director



CREDITS

THE JUMP

Lithuania / Latvia / France

2020, 85'

Writer and director	Giedrė Žickytė
Produced by	Giedrė Žickytė for MOONMAKERS (Lithuania) Uldis Cekulis for VFS Films (Latvia)
Co-producers	Catherine Simeon for Faites Un Voeu (France)
In Association With	Daniel J. Chalfen for Naked Edge Films (USA)
Executive producers	Vesna Cudic Andrius Korvel Jim Butterworth Maxime Owyszer
International sales	MetFilm Sales
Starring	Simas Kudirka Ralph W. Eustis Paul E. Pakos Vytautas Urbonas Daiva Kezys Grazina Paegle Paul S. Zumbakis Henry A. Kissinger Barbara Korman Ann Ingham Tracy Lopez Cindy White Glazewski Lila Aryan
Cinematographer	Rimvydas Leipus Lac
Editing	Thomas Ernst Danielius Kokanauskis
Composer	Kipras Mašanauskas
Sound Designer	Jonas Maksvytis
Story Consultant	Josh Alexander

The film has been developed at EURODOC

The project was presented at
BALTIC SEA FORUM 2015
IDFA FORUM 2016
SHEFFIELD DOC/FEST MEETMARKET 2016
IFP FILM WEEK 2017

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In co-production with
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WDR
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VIÀVOSGES

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