

PETER VAN DEN BEGIN

LUCIE DEBAY

TITUS DE VOOGDT

BRUNO GEORIS

KING OF THE BELGIANS



A FILM BY
PETER BROSENS & JESSICA WOODWORTH

KING OF THE BELGIANS is a road movie in which a dormant King gets lost in the Balkans and awakens to the real world. King Nicolas III is a lonely soul who has the distinct feeling he's living the wrong life. He embarks on a state visit to Istanbul with a British filmmaker, Duncan Lloyd, who has been commissioned by the Palace to shoot a documentary intended to polish the monarch's rather dull image.

The news breaks that Wallonia, Belgium's southern half, has declared its independence. The King, bursting with purpose, must return home at once to save his kingdom. And for once, he declares, he will write his own damn speech. As they rally to depart, a solar storm strikes the earth causing communications to collapse and airspace to shut down. No phones. No planes. To make matters worse, Turkish security coldly dismisses the King's suggestion they return home by road. But the King has no intention of waiting out this storm. Lloyd, sniffing an opportunity of historical proportions, hatches a dubious escape plan that involves flowery dresses and singing Bulgarians.

Thus begins their undercover odyssey across the Balkans, a journey that's loaded with wrong turns, startling encounters and moments of fleeting joy.

A man in a dark suit stands with his back to the camera, looking out over a vast, hazy mountain range. The scene is set on a grassy hillside with some yellow wildflowers in the foreground. The word "SYNOPSIS" is overlaid in large white letters across the middle of the image.

SYNOPSIS



DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

An Icelandic volcano erupted and an idea was born: let's drop a Belgian King in Istanbul, stir up a natural disaster, spark a political crisis and then launch him on a homeward overland journey, incognito, that features trip-ups, show-downs and moments of grace. Displacement as the essence of comedy, in other words.


The challenge was how to actually tell this tale... The Royal Palace hires Duncan Lloyd, a Brit, to upgrade the King's image. Nicolas III is a lonely soul who drifts through the motions of protocol and is largely kept silent. His unexpected odyssey through the Balkans causes him to question his worldview and to ponder his awkward place in the universe. He is but a man. But he is also a King. What could or should that mean in such fragile times? Lloyd's lens is the sole prism through which we experience these six extraordinary days in the life of a King.

And what about Belgium, a complicated little country that specializes in surrealism and compromise? The ongoing political turmoil in our peanut kingdom and Europe's ever-deepening identity crisis were a key source of inspiration. But the political tangent of the film remains secondary to the inner transformation of the King as he savors his anonymity and begins to discover his genuine yearnings.

To enhance authenticity and spontaneity we often invited the actors to improvise. And we filmed chronologically. The situations become increasingly outrageous but actually remain delightfully believable. The result is KING OF THE BELGIANS, a road movie about a wayward monarch profoundly lost in the Balkans.


JESSICA WOODWORTH & PETER BROSENS

both hail from documentary but are most widely acclaimed for their three feature films that they wrote, directed and co-produced together: *Khadak* (Winner of Venice's Lion of the Future 2006), *Altiplano* (Cannes Critics' Week 2009) and *The Fifth Season* (Venice Official Competition 2012). Their films appeared in hundreds of festivals and won dozens of distinguished awards. In 2006 Peter and Jessica received the prestigious Culture Award for Film of the Flemish Community of Belgium. *King of the Belgians* (Venice Official Selection 2016) is their fourth fiction feature. Their independent production company Bo Films is based in Ghent, Belgium.




Peter Van den Begin is **NICOLAS III, KING OF THE BELGIANS** a lonely man trapped in the mechanics of protocol. He is the symbolic head of a fragile country on the edge of implosion. Simmering inside him is the urge to be more than just a puppet. All he needs is a storm to unleash his true self.


CHARACTERS



Bruno Georis is **LUDOVIC MOREAU**, a serious man who lives and breathes protocol. He had a successful diplomatic career before being appointed Chief of Protocol of the Royal Palace. He takes great pride in preserving the dignity of the royals. He is ill-prepared, however, for their bumpy ride through the Balkans.



Lucie Debay is **LOUISE VANCRAEYENEST** who had just graduated from a posh law school when the Palace invited her to manage the public image of the King. She prides herself on her tidiness and tight-lipped efficiency. Her sophisticated air quickly evaporates as the men around her begin to behave foolishly.



Titus De Voogdt is **CARLOS DE VOS**, a former military cadet who is the down-to-earth valet to the King. The King, who appreciates Carlos' straightforward manner, regularly asks him for advice, which irritates everyone. Carlos doesn't believe in the monarchy. Nor does he have much faith in the future of Belgium.

Pieter van der Houwen is **DUNCAN LLOYD**, a former war correspondent-turned-paparazzo. His film 'Sharpshooter' about the Serbian sniper 'Dragan the Hawk' during the siege of Sarajevo was never released. For years Duncan struggled with booze and ghosts then finally got back on his feet by covering royals. With King Nicolas III he finds himself in the right place at the right time.



Nina Nikolina is **ANA**, a Bulgarian folk singer from a small village where she and her mother run a humble shop and kebab diner. She's the lead singer of The Black Sea Sirens, a traditional folklore troupe, whose members enjoy bickering as much as they do singing.



Valentin Ganev is **KERIM BULUT**, Deputy Head of Turkish Security, who has performed loyal service for thirty years. He is a proud and diligent man who was awaiting his final promotion when the King of the Belgians entered his life.



Goran Radaković is **DRAGAN**, a former Yugoslavian Olympic athlete who ended up a sniper in the Balkan wars of the nineties. During the siege of Sarajevo he befriended a British journalist embedded with the Serbs, Duncan Lloyd, who made a film about him. He has struggled ever since to live with the pain of his past.



CAST

KING NICOLAS III
LUDOVIC MOREAU
LOUISE VANCRAEYENEST
CARLOS DE VOS
DUNCAN LLOYD
DRAGAN
ANA
KERIM BULUT

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
PRODUCTION DESIGNER
COSTUMES

MAKE-UP & HAIR
SOUND

FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

EDITOR

DIRECTOR OF SOUND

COLOURIST

POST-PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR

GRAPHIC DESIGN

LINE PRODUCERS

CO-PRODUCED BY

PRODUCED BY

PETER VAN DEN BEGIN
BRUNO GEORIS
LUCIE DEBAY
TITUS DE VOOGDT
PIETER VAN DER HOUWEN
GORAN RADAKOVIĆ
NINA NIKOLINA
VALENTIN GANEV

PETER BROSENS &
JESSICA WOODWORTH
TON PETERS NSC
SABINA CHRISTOVA
EKA BICHINASHVILI
& CLAUDINE TYCHON
PETYA SIMEONOVA
PEPIJN ABEN
ARNOUT ANDRE DE LA PORTE

DAVID VERDURME
MICHEL SCHÖPPING
PETER BERNAERS
FABIAN HANNAERT
AMIRA DAOUDI
NADEJDA KOSEVA &
SVETLA TSOTSORKOVA
OLIVIER ABRASSART &
SEBASTIAN SCHELENZ
FRANÇOIS TOUWAIDE

(Entre Chien et Loup)
ARNOLD HESLENFELD
FRANS VAN GESTEL
& LAURETTE SCHILLINGS

(Topkapi Films)
MIRA STALEVA
& STEFAN KITANOV
(Art Fest)

PETER BROSENS &
JESSICA WOODWORTH
(Bo Films)

& CREW



FLANDERS AUDIOVISUAL FUND (VAF)
FLANDERS IMAGE

NETHERLANDS FILM FUND
NETHERLANDS FILM PRODUCTION INCENTIVE

EURIMAGES

BULGARIAN NATIONAL FILM CENTER

CENTRE DU CINEMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL
DE LA FEDERATION WALLONIE-BRUXELLES

SCREEN FLANDERS

BELGIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TAX SHELTER
CASA KAFKA PICTURES
CASA KAFKA PICTURES MOVIE TAX SHELTER
EMPOWERED BY BELFIUS

MEDIA PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



S U P P O R T E D B Y



TECHNICAL INFO

SHOOTING FORMAT: **SONY RAW 4K**

SCREENING FORMAT: **DCP**

IMAGE RATIO: **1:1.85**

DURATION: **94 MIN**

COLOUR: **COLOUR**

LANGUAGES: **ENGLISH, FLEMISH, FRENCH, BULGARIAN**

SOUND: **5.1 SURROUND**

CO-PRODUCTION: **BELGIUM-THE NETHERLANDS-BULGARIA**



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#kingofthebe

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