

IN ALASKA – EPK /PRODUCTION NOTES



IN ALASKA is the gripping drama, an original story inspired by a true story, co-written and co-directed by acclaimed Dutch director, **Jaap van Heusden** (*Win/Win* - Prix Europe Best Screenplay, Winner Best Actor Brooklyn IFF, *In Blue* - Winner Austin FF, Winner of 3 Dutch Academy Awards, *The New World* - Intl. Emmy Award Winner Best Actress, *The Man from Rome* - Tallinn Black Nights IFF Nominee) and Canadian filmmaker/theatre director/actor, **Vinnie Karetak** (tv-series *Qanurli?* - writer/co-producer/actor, *Acting Good* - actor, *North of North* – actor), starring Swedish star NOOMI RAPACE, who broke through internationally with her stunning performance as Lisbeth Salander in the original *Millennium Trilogy* and *Mother* (Venice Film festival 2025) in which she plays Mother Teresa, and newcomer LEO MATTHEU TEMELA, a young rapper from the tiny arctic community of Kimmirut in Nunavut making his debut on the screen in the main role of “Woody”. Rounding out the cast are Canadian actors ZORGA QAUNAQ (Netflix series *North of North*), YIN WANG (*3 Body Problem*), and MIALI BUSCEMI (*Pour toi Flora*) and JOANASSIE AUPALUK.

Cinematography by **Martijn van Broekhuizen** (*Narcosis* - Dutch Academy Award Best Cinematography, *I’m not a Robot* - Academy Award Oscar Winner Best Short 2025 - SKY/AMC series *Gangs of London* – Prime Time Emmy Nominee, *The Hallow* - Scremfest- & Empire Awards Winner), production design by Tiana P. Gordon (*Riceboy Sleeps*, *It’s a Wonderful Knife*), costume design by Carmen Thompson (*Meadowlarks*, *Bones of Crows*, *Bones of Crows: The Series*), and editing by **Xander Nijsten** (*The Garden of Earthly Delights* – Winner Torino FF, Dutch Academy Award Best Editing, Steve McQueen’s *Occupied City* – Toronto Film Critics Nominee, Cannes Golden Eye Nominee, Dutch Academy Award Best Editing and *Moloch* – BIFFF Best European Film).

The film is produced by **Marc Bary** for the internationally acclaimed Dutch production company IJSWATER FILMS (*The Polish Bride* - Cannes Critics Choice, Golden Globe Nominee, *Contact* - Berlinale Golden Bear Best Short, *In Blue* - Winner Austin FF, 3 Dutch Academy Awards, *The New World* - Intl. Emmy Award, *Last Days of Spring* - New Directors Award San Sebastian FF, Cannes ACID Nominee, *Spotless* - Berlinale Crystal Bear Best Short, *Kabam!* - Intl. Emmy Award Best Kids Live Action, *The Man from Rome* - Tallinn Black Nights IFF Nominee) and **Tyler Hagan** (*The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* - 3 Canadian Screen Awards, Toronto Film Critics Award, *Never Steady Never Still* - 3 Vancouver FF Awards, TIFF & Busan FF Nominee, *Seagrass* - FIPRESCI Prize, *Meadowlarks* - TIFF Nominee 2025) for EXPERIMENTAL FOREST FILMS, based in Vancouver. Co-producer is **Vinnie Karetak** for Nunavut based UUKTUMIAQ STUDIO'S. Executive produced by Toronto-based RHOMBUS MEDIA (*BlackBerry* - Berlinale Nominee, VFCC Award, Canadian Screen Award, *Enemy* - 3 DGC Awards, Rogers Award, Canadian Screen Award, *The Red Violin* - Oscar Winner Best Music, Golden Globe Nominee). The project participated in the Cannes L'Atelier Co-Pro Market, International Financing Forum TIFF and Venice Gap Financing Market during its development.

The film is supported by The Netherlands Film Fund, Telefilm Canada, Eurimages, Creative Europe MEDIA, Public Broadcaster EO, CoBO Fund, Creative BC, Nunavut Film Development Corp, Uvavut TV & Crave.

WTFilms is handling international sales outside of Benelux and Canada. Elevation Pictures is releasing the film in Canada, and Gusto Entertainment is distributing in Benelux (Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg).

SYNOPSIS

In a tiny village in Alaska, depressed 17-year-old Inuit, Woody, is desperate to die, but instead of killing himself, he accidentally shoots the oil pipeline and becomes a most-wanted terrorist, hunted by seasoned FBI agent Susan Tarheel. Suddenly, Woody is running for his life. By four-wheeler, hitchhiking, and on foot. Lost in the wild, without a plan, he is no easy prey. The cat-and-mouse game forces Tarheel to rely on the old intuitions that earned her a name as a detective. When Woody escapes across the Canadian border to the Inuit community where his mother grew up, he is forced to work, to fish and hunt, and to face his darkness in full force. As Tarheel gets closer, a strange maternal bond seems to grow between two damaged souls, and Woody begins, at last, to learn what it means to be alive.

A Disclaimer on Suicide Rates in the Arctic:

Suicide rates among Inuit youth in Alaska, Nunavut, and Greenland are among the highest in the world, nearly 16 times higher than the national American average and reported at roughly 6 to 11 times the national Canadian average, particularly among males aged 15–24. The risk of suicide is elevated among northern Inuit communities because of intergenerational trauma from colonization, marginalization and the loss of the traditional Inuit lifestyle. This trauma has created social and economic inequities. Mental distress, including problematic substance use, mental health disorders and self-harm, are important risk factors for suicide among Inuit. These risk factors are often downstream symptoms of social, cultural and economic disruption. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/> and https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2021-10/CCSA-Risk-Protective-Factors-Suicide-Mental-Health-among-Inuit-Report-2021-en_0.pdf



PRODUCTION NOTES

In Alaska began as a story that writer/director Jaap van Heusden heard while travelling many years ago: “I met someone from Alaska who talked about life there: boredom, loneliness and darkness and a “stupid guy” in his village who shot the oil pipeline and overnight became a most wanted fugitive, hunted by the FBI. In the end they did not find him as he probably fled to Canada. It was a crazy story told in just a few sentences. But it stuck.”

The incident bloomed in van Heusden’s mind as a screenplay, now with the protagonist, Woody, the son of an Inuit mother and an absentee white father, whose despair led him to a suicide attempt. Needing more information about the FBI, van Heusden dug into it, reaching out to them, discovering that the pipeline had been shot at on many occasions by different people.

The research provided vivid details on how agents work on cases in remote areas, encouraging him to believe that the FBI manhunt part of the story could be as original and rewarding as Woody's journey. What was required was a deeper understanding of Woody's background. Coming from the Netherlands, van Heusden knew he could not deepen this part of the storyline alone. In order to add meaningful context and motivation, he first travelled to Nunavut to meet with Inuit actor, Ipeelie Ootoova. There he began to appreciate the Inuit community, its history and unwritten rules. He then flew to Edmonton and Yellowknife. Yet he realized that, "Being a white filmmaker from the Netherlands with a crazy story about a young man who shot at the pipeline, I am not in the position to tell the story of Woody and his journey. I was challenged to make sure I was not any different from the white men who came before me, taking their fur and copper and oil, now taking their stories."

It was through Ootoova that van Heusden was introduced to Inuit filmmaker/theatre director/actor, Vinnie Karetak in 2020. With the script in its early stages, Karetak's involvement began with a dramaturgical read-through to see if there were any notes he could offer: "Jaap was always someone who was very careful not to tell a story that should be told by someone of Inuit descent. I felt that these were shells of people that he had, and that I had to be the one to give them life, to give them space, to give them breath and energy so that it wasn't a European guy trying to come up with a false or romanticized version of what Inuit are, based on where he's from. Throughout the process, I've felt respected. I've felt like I was really given time and space to develop this. I didn't feel like I was coming in at the end of a project and either rubber-stamping it or just accepting it because there's no way to change it because production had already started."

Initially, van Heusden expected Karetak to clean up the script while helping him understand the deeper context of the story: "But that didn't happen. The script didn't get cleaner. In a sense it got messier because Vinnie insisted on adding more reality. Or as he put it: 'If we want to tell this story, we have to *tell the story*.' I remember we were talking to some people in south Canada who were having a hard time with some of the darker themes and scenes in the script."

"They were quite hesitant," recalled Karetak. "I said: 'For us, that's a regular Tuesday.' One of the biggest things I wanted to portray in the script is that we don't shy away from the history of what the Inuit went through. To not say that and to not write it in a way that seemed like a small part of how our life was in the last 50, 70, 100 years. But it's embedded deep in us, this longing of wanting to be one group of people, but who are living in another world. We are trying to make connections as a people who are transplanted within our own land to a different world. And I wanted to make the script and the film in a way that, yes these are some of the things that we are still dealing with, but not to make it a historic reenactment or a lecture. We bring it to light, here's the issue, and here's what this person is going through. It's not the same for everyone, but it's

how people live and/or learn to live in spite of being turned upside down and still trying to live a life in our own country.”

Producer Marc Bary of IJswater Films has been working with Jaap van Heusden for two decades. “I saw his graduation film at the Dutch Film Academy, which later was shortlisted for the Student Academy Awards, and I immediately was struck by his talent at that time. Our collaboration began then, and I have produced almost all of his films since. When he came up with the idea of *In Alaska* 10 years ago, I thought it was so original, plus it was our chance to make an English-speaking film. Canada and the Netherlands have a co-production treaty, but we knew there were going to be challenges: the distance of shooting in Canada and working in another culture.”

In Canada, Karetak then connected with producers Niv Fichman and Fraser Ash of Rhombus Media and sent along the script. Once fully familiar with the story, they were then linked up with Marc Bary in 2021. Together they collaborated on casting, sales, and financing. Fichman and Ash felt it was imperative to have an Indigenous producer leading the show rather than non-Native producers from Ontario and the Netherlands. So, they reached out to multi-award-winning Michif producer, Tyler Hagan of Experimental Forest Films in B.C. “Tyler was the ideal person to be the lead producer in Canada,” said Fichman. “We turned this over with the offer to lend support wherever needed.” By this point, Karetak was also on as a co-director with van Heusden, the project was well aligned and off to the races.

“This story is so unique and compelling,” said producer Tyler Hagan. “When I first looked at the script in 2022, I was sensitive to the portrayal of Woody’s suicide attempts and his inner mental state, as this subject matter needs to be treated very delicately and with proper attention. The team was already engaged in discussions about that and were super receptive about making sure that aspect of the film would be handled with extreme care. Vinnie was instrumental in guiding our process. He intimately knows the reality of what’s going on in the North. Instances of suicide in the North are disproportionately high in comparison to the rest of the country. And that is a direct reflection of the material conditions in which people are living and the continued oppression by the Canadian government on Indigenous peoples, and in this case, specifically Inuit. Vinnie’s approach was very refreshing and inspiring to me because he wasn’t afraid of addressing it. This wasn’t going to be swept under the rug.”

A Netherlands-Canada Co-Pro.. But Set in the US?

The story is loosely inspired by true events that originally happened in Alaska. But the backstory of Woody’s mother, Ann, is what made sense and feeds the plot. “As a child, Ann was removed from her home community in Nunavut and placed in a residential school in the Northwest

Territories,” explained Hagan. “After that, she was broken and didn't feel she could return to her home, ending up elsewhere with a guy who left her and their son. I don't think it's uncommon for something like Ann's story to take place. The lack of community underscores Ann's displacement and by extension, Woody's alienation at the beginning of the film.”

The Collaboration

“For me, as an actor,” Karetak observed, “what I like about Jaap’s way of working as a director is that the script is never finished. Actors and everybody involved should be able to invest themselves into the story. And it’s only naturel that that should have an effect on the script.”

Their work together on the script produced another decision: to have Karetak come on as a co-director. In the landscape of filmmaking, it is a significant decision because in productions with Indigenous cast, having Indigenous creative heads can keep a project on course with respect. “Plus,” van Heusden added, “Vinnie is a great storyteller, and he has a way of bringing people together. By bringing warmth and humor and by always pointing back to the heart of the story, he has been able to motivate people and make them feel safe.”



The Story

The film opens in Alaska on Woody, a young man who feels lost and disconnected from life and admits he hates seeing his own face in the mirror. Raised by a single mother, Ann, a residential school survivor who is a shell of a woman, his father who was white, left early, and he has no one his own age around him. “Woody feels the despair and the depression, the loneliness of being that one lone young guy who wasn't white enough for the white kids, or dark enough for the dark kids. He decides to try again to end his misery by shooting himself,” explained co-writer/co-director Vinnie Karetak.

But Woody cannot do it. In frustration, he fires his rifle into the bush, inadvertently hitting the oil pipeline. This young man who wanted to end his life, now fears for his life and runs. Knowing he cannot return home, he makes his way through the wilderness, heading south to find a place to hide.

The oil leak, which has the markings of a terrorist act, attracts the attention of FBI special agents Susan Tarheel and Andrew Roomfield. Roomfield, an ambitious young fellow, sees an opportunity to make his bones by capturing a high-profile criminal. Tarheel, whose sensitivity gives her an edge over other agents, is an expert in both crime scene investigation and criminal behavioral psychology. Being a female agent has not been easy, constantly requiring a tough, take-one-for-the-team exterior which has made her less alert to the lurking first signs of depression.

The pipeline shooting case creates a conflict for Tarheel: it awakens the alpha hunting instinct that won't let her stop until a case is solved and at the same time the mother that she has always said she can't be, discovers somebody she wants to care for in Woody. Her darkness and Woody's black hole seem to be strangely interwoven. So, the closer she gets to arresting Woody, the more she thinks that she should save him.

Woody's first stop is a fish plant where he finds work and begins to learn life skills, team skills, and how to talk to people. His new friend at the plant, being of color, urges him to head to Canada, “You should leave. To stay alive. Living is winning.”

An FBI reward for information produces a tip, leading the agents to the fish plant just as Woody narrowly slips away, heading for Canada: specifically, the Inuit village in Nunavut where his mother lived before she was taken away to residential school. Frozen tundra surrounded by frozen ocean. Woody meets Manu, who runs the cargo agency and has an extra room where he can stay. Housing being a major issue in the Arctic, intergenerational households with kids and elders and every age in between is the norm.

There, in the calm and quiet and cold, he begins to realize that communal living is the way to really function as an Inuk. The feeling of being integral in that community gives him a sense of purpose that he was missing.

As Woody moves forward to find himself, Tarheel is working to understand his motivations. By the time they finally meet, she has come to a deeper understanding of how their worlds intersect.

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In Alaska combines the raw talent of absolute newcomer, **Leo Matthew Temela**, as the 17-year-old Woody, a young man spiralling out of control, and the critically acclaimed and multi-award-winning actor, **Noomi Rapace**, as Susan Tarheel, the veteran FBI agent struggling with her own darkness.

Woody

For **Temela**, “***In Alaska*** is about finding fulfillment and filling that black hole. It's about trying to live and not just survive. Woody is a young dude with no friends and parenthood issues. Everything is going wrong. But then again, this story could be about two people, Woody and Tarheel, having the same feelings but in two completely different worlds, resonating in their darkness, their hardships, and then someone brings answers to you in the most unexpected way.”

Woody is both baffled yet intrigued by his feelings about Tarheel pursuing him. ““You're not supposed to catch me, but in a way, I want to talk to you,” is what he is thinking,” explained Temela. “He had never had a relationship with anyone who ‘wanted’ him. His mother, Ann, was distant because she didn’t want to pass along the pain of her residential school past. So the feeling of being chased was thrilling.”

“Tarheel had almost no respect for anyone” added Karetak, “but during the course of the chase of Woody, she regained her self-respect because of her past life. Woody, on the other hand, had no respect for himself. Over the course of the chase, he feared for his life, but when he got 'home,' he found respect not only for himself but also in the people around him. In short, I think they both found reasons to love again.”

Temela could see himself clearly in this character. “I was also a lost kid with parenthood issues, money issues, food issues, and substance issues. I was living in a small community of 500 people. Everyone knew me, knew all my secrets, but I felt alone all the time. I had always wanted to get in front of the camera, but there was no role model I looked up to that was in movies and TV. I, with much grace, found the opportunity to audition for this role.

When I first read the script, I was thinking, ‘Why is my life being written down here?’ I related to 60% of what the script goes through, wanting to hurt myself after being hurt for so long. It all was basically what I personally lived through, even if not fully the same. Then I got the part. After much work, to be honest, for most of the time, I truly was just being myself. The relatability between me and Woody kept getting stronger. And fortunately, Vinnie and Jaap just got to capture it.”

“No matter how big the community up north, there is no escape route,” he continued. “We have no Tim Horton’s, no movie theatres, no pools, no cultural centres, we have nothing and when you have nothing, the human body and mind go to some bad places. Young men are not being listened to. All this plays a factor in why we can’t tell our stories. They’re trying to get their voices up. They’re trying to say, ‘I’m here, just like Woody.’ So, if no one else is going to do it, I’ll have to. I’ll be a beacon of light.”



Not only is *In Alaska* Temela’s first acting role, but he also has the lead, no mean feat for even a seasoned actor. The pressure to manage screen time endurance, carry the emotional weight, and cope with stunt work in extreme weather conditions is daunting, but the results are a testament to his newfound devotion to the craft. “I was expecting to put in the hard work and the 15-20 hour days,” he said with delighted conviction. “I’ve prepared myself for this since I was 8-years-old. I did music, performing at the local gym, performing as a sports athlete kid. Not to say I was born for it, but it’s a joy and a blessing to play this character. All through 2025, I did Zoom acting coaching sessions, writing in my journal, delivering lines in my head, and physically, I’d do push-ups to get my heart rate up for a scene with an anxiety attack, and for the drowning scene I’d practice underwater holding my breath and keeping my face still.”

"I was a sponge when it came to working with Jaap and Vinnie," Temela added. "I learned so many new techniques. Their two personalities were so interesting. They trusted me and I trusted them."

Tarheel

Rapace, known for her fearless dedication to emotionally demanding roles and immersing herself in a character's vulnerabilities, was driven to take on Susan Tarheel specifically because of the story: "When I read the script, I was deeply moved. My team and everyone around me felt this was a necessary film. It's not easy being human. It doesn't matter if you have a lot or very little, we are all struggling somehow, some people more than others and this story shines a light on it. I felt I had to be a part of this, and I feel very grateful that I was asked."

Susan Tarheel, unlike her partner Andrew Roomfield, is not a stereotypical FBI agent.

"I wouldn't say she is on the spectrum," Rapace said, "but she works more from her heart and her intuition. She's quite primal and that intrigued me. She's hypersensitive, and as a result, has built up this very hard shell around her. It's isolating. She's quite lonely as a consequence and has lost a lot of people in her life because she's not good at communication."

Tarheel starts to put the pieces together about Woody and goes to speak with his mother, Ann. There, she goes into his room. "She's lying on his bed. Her tentacles are out and she feels him around her, and he starts to come into her system. It's almost like the two of them are the same, that they come from the same planet, they're outsiders, they're good people, but they're also weirdos, and they don't really know how to handle this reality. She develops empathy for him. I don't think this is common. I think it's the first time in her career that she's protecting someone like this and actually decides to *not* do her job."



Ann

Miali Buscemi plays Woody's mother, Ann. "This is a woman who very much wants to do her best, but is bound by trauma," Buscemi stated. "So even though she really wants to show care - because she does care - she was never given the tools for motherhood. What she did learn at the residential school was that shutting down is one of the ways you cope. She doesn't want to hurt anybody, so she contains herself."

When the FBI arrive at her door to ask about Woody, the mood is combative, but "Ann gets the sense that Susan Tarheel carries something inside her. She doesn't know what, because she doesn't know Susan, but it's the energy that she carries that kind of allows Ann to open up. Sometimes it's lived experience, sometimes you have a feeling that maybe they're going to understand you."

From Noomi Rapace's standpoint, Tarheel's strategy with Ann was play on a person's tendency to seek balance in conversation. Rapace viewed Tarheel as "a scorpion and an octopus. With Ann she scooped her up in soft arms, building a bond because there was genuine empathy. She feels Ann's pain and she doesn't judge, but at the same time, Tarheel has a sharp tail. Her mission is to find Woody and protect him and she's ready to sacrifice Ann to get answers."

In Alaska was not the first time Buscemi had worked with Vinnie Karetak. "I've worked with Vinnie on a number of productions, and over the years you get to know somebody. Even though this film is in English, not my first language, to have somebody guide and direct me in Inuktitut is very grounding for me as an Inuk," she pointed out. "It's a way of thinking that doesn't always translate well into English, but when you know that you're understood, it helped me be able to perform in a way that is different."

Equally important was having Tyler Hagan as a producer to Buscemi: "As an Indigenous performer, when there is Indigenous content, an Indigenous story, it makes a world of difference because even if there's not a lot of interaction, you have somebody who you can relate to, someone who feels like a safe individual that you can go to with questions."

Tanaraq

In Nunavut, Woody meets a fierce 19-year-old girl named Tanaraq, played by **Zorga Qaunaq**. Tanaraq is a woman outfitter who can hunt, trap and fish. She knows her way around the land, and she knows how to use a gun. "I think Tanaraq's a little amused by the fact that Woody doesn't know anything about the culture, things he should have learned when he was younger and that now, she has to show him everything. Maybe she's even a little annoyed by this but being tough on the outside and soft on the inside, plus realizing his struggle and his lack of community connection, she develops a tender spot for him, and takes him under her wing. Perhaps she's even hoping her future could look different than she thought it would."

This is a new and very perplexing world for Woody. “He’s in a relationship and he’s also on the Most Wanted list”. He’s feeling fulfilled like never before. Tanaraq helps me flee from the cops and it feels a little like Bonnie and Clyde,” said Temela.

In a quiet scene between Woody and Tanaraq, Woody speaks of his torment about his half Inuk/half white identity. He feels untethered to any community. In the script, Tanaraq responds:

TANARAQ

*To us, even if only your great-great-great-grandmother is Inuk,
you’re Inuk. 100%.*

But Qaunaq added a line which was a complete ad lib. It wasn’t in the script, and it didn’t come from the writers. She said: “*Don’t half yourself.*”

“I have a lot of personal struggles with my own identity because my mother’s white and my father’s Inuk, which means I have privilege,” acknowledged Qaunaq. “I never thought of myself as white before. I thought of myself as Inuk, and I didn’t want to think about my white side, but during COVID and Black Lives Matter, I felt I had to pick one. I have a Cree friend in a similar situation, and his mom told him not to fragment himself. You’re both. That resonated with me. People who are mixed often feel like they have to pick one or the other identity, but just because one parent doesn’t mean that you’re only half. You are a whole person.”

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Anigungniaqmijuq

Vinnie Karetak offered a closing thought about the story: “Woody had to mess up in order to figure out that he too can get out of that imaginary border in his life. He had to get out and see for himself that he comes from a long line of people who had to survive in a group setting and be relied upon. So hopefully it shows people that some of us can get up and get out. It may be painful. It may be disorienting. It may be confusing. It can be scary, but one my most favorite terms in Inuktitut is *Anigungniaqmijuq*, which means what you’re feeling or what you’re going through or whatever issues you have, *Anigungniaqmijuq*, you’ll get through it. If you translate it word by word: ‘Anigung’ means to get through or get past. ‘Niaq’ means a future tense. ‘Mijuq’ means to do. Passage will come for you. Passage of this event will happen for you. It says it’s not always going to be like this.”

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JAAP VAN HEUSDEN (Writer/Director) Born in Utrecht, the Netherlands, Jaap van Heusden (1979) writes and directs films that resonate the great themes of our time (immigration,

mental health and the implosion of the great institutions) by telling deeply personal stories that are delivered by exceptional actors. His films have been in competition at Tribeca, Cannes, AFI Fest, Rome, IDFA, SXSW, Tallinn, Melbourne, Teheran, Thessaloniki, Rotterdam, the Student Academy Awards and many other festivals worldwide, picking up prizes along the way.

Before going to film school, he lived and worked in Ouagadougou, West Africa, where he shot a series of most enlightening traffic safety instruction videos and co-founded a platform for young filmmakers that grew into the biggest human rights film festival on the continent, but only after he left. After moving back to the Netherlands, he studied at the Netherlands Film Academy where he focused on fiction. After graduation, his first film, *A complicated story, simply told* (2005), was shortlisted for the Student Academy Awards, and screened in competition at the Cannes film festival's Cinefondation. He went on to direct WIN / WIN (Prix Europe Best Screenplay 2010, Best Actor Brooklyn IFF), THE NEW WORLD (Signis Award, Emmy Award Best Actress 2014), IN BLUE (Dutch Academy Awards Best Director / Screenplay / Actress 2018, Winner Austin FF) and THE MAN FROM ROME (Tallinn Black Nights IFF Nominee, 4 Dutch Academy Awards nominations, winner Best Music 2024).

VINNIE KARETAK (Co-Director/Writer) is an Inuit filmmaker, actor, and producer whose work centers Inuit culture and storytelling. Based in Iqaluit, he is known across Nunavut and the rest of Canada for the Inuktitut-language comedy series Qanurli? (producer, writer) and for his roles in The Grizzlies, Two Lovers and a Bear and North of North (Netflix). He's directed for stage and developed film projects through his company Uuktumiaq Studios. In Alaska marks his debut as co-director.

MARC BARY (Producer) is the founder and head of the quality Dutch production house IJswater Films ('Icewater Films'), who has been dedicated for 30 years producing high-quality films, documentaries, and high-end tv-drama by both new and established (inter)national talent, for an adult audience as well as for the youth. Committed to supporting innovative and artistic projects that have a lasting impact within the Dutch- and international film industry, IJswater Films has built a rich history under the leadership of producer Marc Bary. During this time, a diverse portfolio of award-winning and acclaimed productions that have received recognition both nationally and internationally. Titles that Marc produced contains o.a. Cannes Critics Choice THE POLISH BRIDE (Golden Globe Nominee), Berlinale Golden Bear Best Short Winner CONTACT, Prix Genève Europe Script Award Winner WIN/WIN (IFFR selection), Emmy Award Winner THE NEW WORLD, Austin FF Award Winner *In Blue* (Winner Dutch Academy Awards Best Director, Best Script, Best Actress) and all 3 directed by Jaap van Heusden. Also he produced the short L'ÉTE ET TOUT LE RESTE (Venice Orizzonti, TIFF 2018), short doc FATHER (Locarno 2019) and the Dutch-Spanish copro LÁ ÚLTIMA PRIMAVERA (Winner New Directors Award San Sebastian IFF 2020,

Cannes ACID nominee, Winner Best Actors prize Les Arcs IFF). Also the children's series KABAM! (Winner Intl. Emmy Award Kids: Live Action 2022), short SPOTLESS (Winner Berlinale Crystal Bear 2022), Dutch-German co-pro THE MAN FROM ROME (Tallin Black Nights IFF Main Competition 2023) and PARIAH (Fantaspoa Fantastic IFF 2024). Selected for the 2026 TIFF Special Presentation: Canadian copro with EFF: *In Alaska* by Jaap van Heusden & Vinnie Karetak. In post-production: LOST SON by Edson da Conceicao, co-pro Belgian Caviar (selection Tallinn IFF goes to Cannes WiP program 2026) and S2 KABAM! - Official Opening Cinekid IFF 2026. In development/financing: Historical biopic Dutch-Surinam copro ANTON DE KOM – I SHALL BE HEARD and children's films CHARLIE THE TREE GIRL (Dutch-German-Belgian copro) and JUST NICK (Dutch-Belgian-UK copro). In addition to his work for IJswater Films, Marc has been an advisor for and board member of organizations in the Dutch cultural and film industry and is a guest tutor at the Netherlands Film Academy. Marc is working at IJswater Films together with producer Nicky Onstenk, junior producer Zoë Niezen and project coordinator Bregje de Boer.

TYLER HAGAN (Producer) is a Michif and Canadian filmmaker based on unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) nations in Vancouver, B.C. His producing credits include the feature debut from Kathleen Hepburn NEVER STEADY, NEVER STILL (2017), THE BODY REMEMBERS WHEN THE WORLD BROKE OPEN (2019) by Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers and Kathleen Hepburn; UNTIL BRANCHES BEND (2022) by Sophie Jarvis; and SEAGRASS by Meredith Hama-Brown (2023). In 2022, Tyler was awarded the Kevin Tierney Emerging Producers Award by the Canadian Media Producers Association. THE BODY REMEMBERS WHEN THE WORLD BROKE OPEN premiered at the Berlinale 2019 and all his films have played at the Toronto International Film Festival, followed by four selections by TIFF for Canada's Top Ten. THE BODY REMEMBERS was picked up for distribution by Ava Duvernay's ARRAY, who released the film on Netflix and in Theatres in the US. The film received the prestigious Toronto Film Critics' Association Best Canadian Film Award, as well as 3 Canadian Screen Awards for Best Direction, Best Original Screenplay and Best Cinematography; and 3 Vancouver Film Critics' Circle Awards including Best Canadian Film. NEVER STEADY, NEVER STILL was nominated for 8 CSA Awards, again including Best Motion Picture, and won 3 awards from the Vancouver Film Critics' Circle, including Best Canadian and Best BC Film. UNTIL BRANCHES BEND premiered in 2022 at TIFF and took home the Best BC Film from the Vancouver International Film Festival. SEAGRASS premiered at TIFF where it was awarded the FIPRESCI Prize. MEADOWLARKS premiered in 2025 at TIFF as a Special Presentation. AKASHI (2025) premiered at VIFF. His latest two films is Justin Ducharme's inaugural feature film, SEVENTEEN (2026).

OLIVIA MARIE GOLOSKY (Associate Producer) is a Two-Spirit Michif Producer, Writer and Director from nistawâyâw (Fort McMurray, AB), based on the unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) nations.

Their producing credits include; Justin Ducharme's debut feature *SEVENTEEN* (Post-Production) as a Producer and Mayumi Yoshida's *AKASHI* (Vancouver International Film Festival, Reel Asian) as an Associate Producer. Their animated short film, *pîkîwî* (imagineNATIVE, Vancouver Queer Film Festival, GEMSfest) as a Producer, and Amar Chebib's short film *The Runner* (The New Yorker) as a Line Producer. Olivia also has worked as an Executive Producer's Assistant on the first seasons of Showtime's *Yellowjackets* and Apple TV's *Monarch: Legacy of Monsters*. As a Production Coordinator they have worked on Mayumi Yoshida's feature *AKASHI* (VIFF), Jules Koostachin's feature, *Angela's Shadow* (VIFF) and on Marie Clement's *Bones of Crows* (CBC) as the 2nd Assistant Production Coordinator. They are alumni of the Cannes Film Festival's impACT Lab, National Screen Institute's IndigiDocs Program, GEM's Tricksters & Writers' Program and Audible's Indigenous Writers' Circle program. Currently, they are in post-production with their erotic short film, *binding*, and in development for their first feature film, *Rhinestone Cowboy*.

NICKY ONSTENK (Associate Producer) has been working as a producer at IJswater Films in Amsterdam since 2019. She graduated from the Netherlands Film Academy (a.o. with PORFOTTO, Finalist Student Academy Award) and has since produced award-winning short films and documentaries, including SPOTLESS (winner of the Berlinale Crystal Bear, 2022), MAGMA (nominee Berlinale Generation, 2023) and the documentaries DUNYA (2021) and LUC (2022). After THE MAN FROM ROME (Tallin Black Nights IFF Main Competition 2023), the feature length tv-movie PARIAH premiered internationally at the Fantaspoa International Fantastic Film Festival, and the preschool series LITTLE GOAT SQUAD premiered at Cinekid 2025 and is broadcasted on Dutch national television. Several film projects are currently in (post-)production and development. Nicky is also advisor/ coach for the Dutch regional Film Fund Cinesud and was selected for the Cannes impACT Lab 2024.

REMY MULDER (Executive Producer) is an Executive Producer and Controller, working on all financial and business aspects of film production. He has worked on a wide array of projects, ranging from auteur-driven films to high-end series, and has collaborated on productions with partners across Europe, Asia, and North America. His expertise includes developing financing strategies, structuring recoupment schedules, negotiating license deals, and overseeing financial closings. Remy combines a creative foundation from the Netherlands Film Academy with experience as Finance Manager. In 2023, Remy founded his company 'Remy Mulder Film Finance', to offer tailored support to producers, focusing on all financial aspects of their projects.

FRASER ASH (Executive Producer) is a producer of feature films, television series, and documentaries. Recent feature film credits include STILL SINGLE (2025), directed by Jamal Burger and Jukan Tateisi; THE MOTHER AND THE BEAR (2024), directed by Johnny Ma; BLACKBERRY (2023), directed by Matt Johnson; SEVEN VEILS (2023), directed by Atom Egoyan; POSSESSOR

(2020), directed by Brandon Cronenberg; DISAPPEARANCE AT CLIFTON HILL (2019), directed by Albert Shin; INTO THE FOREST (2015) directed by Patricia Rozema; and ENEMY (2013), directed by Denis Villeneuve. Fraser was supervising producer for the documentary feature films THE DEVIL'S HORN (2016) and OUR MAN IN TEHRAN (2013), both directed by Larry Weinstein. In television, Fraser is co-executive producer of the HBO series THE SYMPATHIZER, starring Robert Downey Jr. and Sandra Oh. The series is directed by Park Chan-wook, Fernando Meirelles and Marc Munden. Fraser was co-executive producer of the BBC/CBC dramatic series THE NORTH WATER (2021), directed by Andrew Haigh; co-producer of the CBC comedy series MICHAEL: EVERY DAY (2017); and co-producer of the series SENSITIVE SKIN (2014-2016).

NIV FICHMAN (Executive Producer) is a veteran independent film and television producer and founder of Rhombus Media, one of Canada's preeminent production companies specializing in theatrical feature films and high-end television drama. Over the past 45 years, Niv has worked with such renowned directors as Matt Johnson, Park Chan-wook, Brandon Cronenberg, Denis Villeneuve, Olivier Assayas, Fernando Meirelles, Atom Egoyan, François Girard, Guy Maddin, Patricia Rozema, and Don McKellar. Rhombus films and television projects have screened all over the world, received much critical acclaim and numerous awards, including over 100 Canadian Screen Awards, a number of Primetime and International Emmys and an Academy Award.

MARTIJN VAN BROEKHUIZEN (Director of Photography) NSC is a Dutch Director of Photography whose work spans feature films, documentaries, television, commercials, and music videos. Throughout his career, he has collaborated with acclaimed filmmakers including Anton Corbijn, Hagai Levi, Corin Hardy, and Jiska Rickels. His cinematography has been showcased at leading international festivals including the Toronto International Film Festival, Venice International Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, IDFA, and IFFR. His credits include *In Alaska* (TIFF 2026), *Etty* (Venice 2025), *The Hallow* (Sundance 2015), *Gangs of London*, and the Academy Award-winning short film *I'm Not a Robot* (2025). A member of the Netherlands Society of Cinematographers (NSC), Martijn is known for his evocative visual storytelling and his ability to create intimate, emotionally resonant cinematic worlds.

TIANA GORDON (Production Designer-BC): from the time she was six years old, Tiana has constantly been involved in the artistic community - starting with their involvement in dance, moving into theatrical productions, earning her Bachelors of Interior Design, and finally blending their passions to begin work in the film industry. Using her skill-set as an interior designer, Tiana is now working as a Production Designer based in Vancouver, BC.

CHERYL MARION (Production Designer-Iqaluit): Storytelling through design is at the heart of Cheryl Marion's approach to production design. An award-winning Production Designer with more than 20 years of experience in film and television, Cheryl creates immersive

environments that enrich character, support narrative, and bring each story to life. Beginning her career in interior design, Cheryl draws on a deep understanding of architecture, style, colour, and spatial design to craft authentic, visually compelling worlds. Her portfolio spans independent feature films and large-scale television productions, demonstrating both creative versatility and a keen eye for detail. A proud member of the Manitoba Métis Federation, Cheryl is a passionate advocate for Métis culture and community. She actively contributes through her involvement on boards and committees, championing Indigenous representation and cultural awareness within the industry and beyond.

XANDER NIJSTEN (Editor) is an Amsterdam-based film editor whose work spans feature films and documentaries. A three-time nominee for Best Editing at the Dutch Film Awards (Golden Calf), he won the award for Steve McQueen's *Occupied City* and Morgan Knibbe's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. *In Alaska* marks a new collaboration with director Jaap van Heusden, with whom he previously worked on the documentary *A•SY•LUM*.

CARMEN THOMPSON (Costume Designer) is a Ditidaht, Kiyuk, and Coast Salish interdisciplinary artist, Indigenous filmmaker, and multi-award-winning costume designer whose work spans film, television, installation, visual art, and cultural storytelling. With more than 25 years in the screen industry, she is recognized for weaving Indigenous knowledge, authenticity, and visual storytelling into every project she undertakes. Her costume design credits include *Smudge the Blades*, *Bones of Crows*, and Marvel's *Echo*, where she received the first IMDb credit for Indigenous Costume Consultant. Beyond costume design, Thompson works across graphic design, fabrication, illustration, and large-scale public art, creating visual narratives that bridge Indigenous knowledge systems with contemporary media. She teaches Indigenous Costuming for Film and Television at Capilano University and is currently writing and developing original Indigenous film and television projects. The daughter of master artist Arthur Ivan Thompson, her work is deeply influenced by intergenerational teachings, cultural integrity, and a lifelong commitment to carrying Indigenous stories forward through visual language, craftsmanship, and meaningful collaboration.

MARCO VERMAAS (Sound Designer) is an award winning sound designer and re-recording mixer. He lives in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. After getting his bachelor degree in Fine Arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, he started working on films. He worked as DOP, Editor, Animator and Visual Effects artist, until he discovered sound. He founded Sound Design Studio Vermaas in 1995 in the center of Amsterdam. With his talented crew he has worked on the sound of numerous films and television series. Winner of the Dutch Academy Award for *Bumperkleef* and 3 times Dutch Academy Award Best Editing for Jaap van Heusden's *The Man from Rome*, *In Blue* and *Win/Win*. Danish Film Award Best Sound Nominee for *Speak no Evil* (Seattle IFF Nominee, Thessaloniki IFF Nominee, Chicago Critics FF Nominee). As of January 2025 Studio Vermaas joined forces with

Amsterdam based studio Posta. Together they form the biggest audio post production facility in the Netherlands: Posta Vermaas.

MINCO EGGERSMAN (Composer) likes working with international artists like Wovenhand, Blaudzun, Aaron Parks and Mathias Eick. On UNIFONY, his latest studio-project, he worked with Nils Petter Molvaer and Moya Brennan (Clannad). The albums are designed by James Marsh (Talk Talk, Jamiroquai) and mastered by (13) Grammy Award-winning mastering engineer Bob Ludwig and received excellent reviews worldwide. Minco is a film composer over the last twenty years and has created the soundtracks for many films and documentaries. Several were directed by Jaap van Heusden and won prizes like the Emmy Award. In 2023 Minco won the Dutch Academy Award Best Soundtrack for Van Heusden's *The man from Rome*. Over the last three years Minco has been creating more soundtracks to international films and documentaries. A few years ago he created the music for the Indian/Norwegian/French drama film *Once Upon A Time In Calcutta* (Nominee 78th Venice Film Festival) by Aditya Vikram Sengupta followed by Zaza Khalvashi's last film *Loto*, that won the Golden Prometheus at the Tbilisi FF, Georgia. He worked on documentaries that premiered at IDFA, like *Behind the Blood* by Loretta van der Horst. Recently he composed *The Circle* by Romanian director/actor Valeriu Andriuta (Nominee Transylvania International Film Festival 2026). For *In Alaska*, he worked together with the Canadian duo PIQSIQ. In post-production is Czech film *Panna Sofia*, a biopic about Jan Amos Comenius.

PIQSIQ (Featured Vocals): With a style perpetually galvanized by darkness and haunting northern beauty, sisters Tiffany Ayalik and Inuksuk Mackay come together to create Inuit style throat singing duo, PIQSIQ. Performing ancient traditional songs and eerie new compositions, they leave their listeners enthralled with their ability to weave complex emotional landscapes that transcend language. In Inuktitut, a "piqsiq" is a storm where winds blow in a very specific way, making it seem as if the snow is falling back up towards the sky. This otherworldly, natural phenomenon has become a source of inspiration for the duo, reminding them that things are not always as they seem. The sisters have performed many traditional style sets over the last two decades, and in more recent years have taken the dive into blending their style with new technology. Their live performances, in alignment with katajjaq's original form, take inspiration from the world around them combined with their own thoughts and feelings and an invitation to the audience to help steer the journey songs will take. Creating performances this way allows the audience to experience spontaneous compositions that are unique to each individual show. As PIQSIQ, they perform improvisational looping live and incorporate the winter darkness and ethereal feel into their recordings. The pair have released five albums to date; *Altering The Timeline*, *Quviasugvik*; *In Search of Harmony*, *Taaqtuq Ubluriaq*; *Dark Star*, *PIQSIQ: Live from Christ Church Cathedral*, and *Spectral Harmonies*. The sisters continue to blend magic with sound to further develop their entrancing style for both national and international audiences.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Casting Director JUDY JK LEE

Hair & Make up SAMANTHA DEMPSEY, MARLY VAN DE WARDT

Sound Mixer COBY DEGROOT, SIMONE GALAVAZI

Line Producers NACH DUDSDEEMAYTHA, BEN BOUWMEESTER, MENDY POST

VFX Supervisor RANDY VAN DER WEIDE

Post-Production Supervisor NEELTJE VAN DER HEIJDEN, MARENA DIX

Image Post-Production STORM POST PRODUCTION

Sound Post-Production POSTA VERMAAS

ABOUT THE CAST

LEO MATTHEW TEMELA (Woody) ‘Papu’ as they called him growing up in the 2010’s in Canada, was always full of energy when it mainly came to sports & music. With a keen soul for creativeness in all sorts of fields of arts and physical/mental wellness. The journey really begun once the horrid pandemic ended. In the last 3 years, Leo has taken many steps towards polishing his musical and acting achievements. With many local community music performances around Canada, along with numerous of funded workshops for mental health, gaming, music, voice acting, and much more. With a debut actor role in the Fall of 2025. Landing a roll named, ‘Woody’ in a feature film titled: ***In Alaska***, Leo’s main purpose in his career is keep working on his artistic crafts as he always had since he was a kid, and to become a ‘beacon of light’ sharing hope and positivity across many communities around Canada.

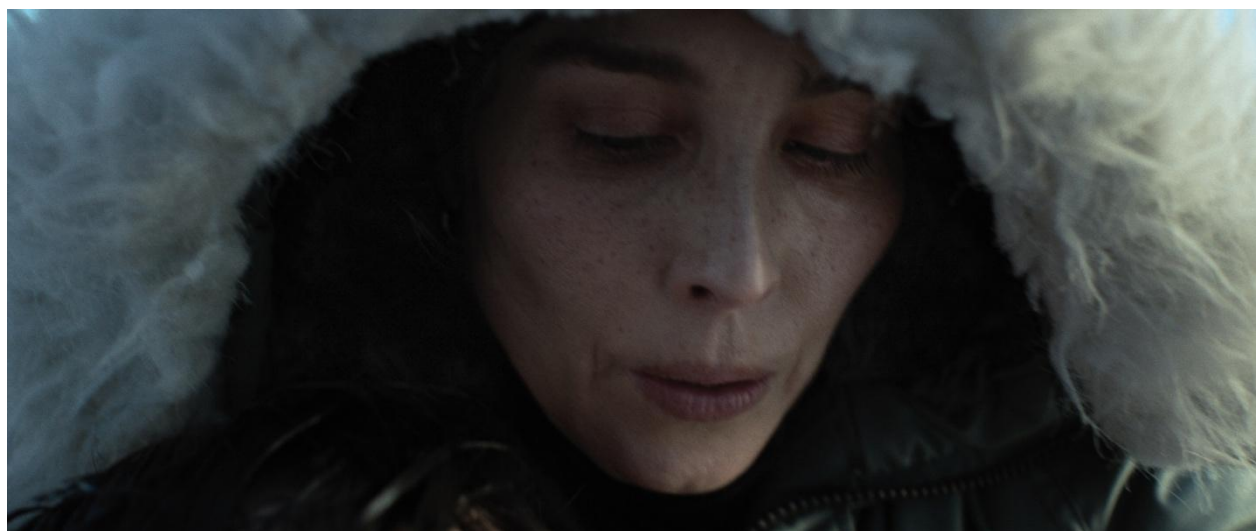


NOOMI RAPACE (Susan Tarheel) captured the eyes of the international entertainment community with her commanding, unnerving, and critically acclaimed portrayal of Lisbeth Salander in the film adaptations of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy: The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, The Girl Who Played with Fire, and The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*. She won the Best Actress Guldbagge Award (Sweden) and the Best Actress International Jupiter Award (Germany) for her breakthrough performance, and received nominations for a BAFTA for Lead Actress and a Best Actress European Film Award. In addition to her powerful presence on screen, Noomi is a gifted creative and multihyphenate - a producer with a discerning eye and strong instincts for translating bold storytelling for audiences. Through her production company BOOM Films, Noomi is currently developing a number of projects including *The Prince*, with revered filmmaker Sjón, in which she will play the title role of Hamlet.

This year, Noomi stars in *Hotspot*, a sci-fi thriller directed by Agnieszka Smoczyńska, premiering at Fantasia with a US release in August 2026. Set in a near-future society ruled by artificial intelligence, a private investigator is hired to solve a ritualistic murder in a refugee camp - her search for the truth leads her to a secret rebel group who may be able to defy the system controlling society. In 2024, Noomi starred alongside James D'Arcy and Jonathan Banks in Apple TV+'s *Constellation*. The sci-fi series follows Jo, who returns to earth after a disaster in space and discovers missing pieces in her life, setting out to expose the hidden secrets of space travel and recover what she has lost. 2022 saw Noomi star in *Black Crab*, a Netflix adaptation of Jerker Virdborg's thriller novel and her first Swedish film in many years. She also starred alongside Anamaria Marinca in Goran Stolevski's supernatural horror *You Won't Be Alone*, on which she also served as executive producer, premiering at Sundance 2022 to widespread critical acclaim. That same year she starred in *Django* for StudioCanal, opposite Matthias Schoenaerts, an English-language reimaging of Sergio Corbucci's classic 1966 Western. In 2021, Noomi starred in Valdimar Jóhannsson's supernatural drama *Lamb*, premiering at the 74th Cannes Film Festival where it won the Prize of Originality in Un Certain Regard and made the BAFTA and Oscar longlists. She also starred in Tommy Wirkola's Norwegian thriller *The Trip*. In 2020, Noomi executive produced and starred in Yuval Adler's *The Secrets We Keep*, opposite Joel Kinnaman and Chris Messina, and served as executive producer on Alexandre Aja's sci-fi survival thriller *Oxygen*.

Noomi began her acting career at the age of seven in Iceland's *In the Shadow of the Raven*, and has since appeared in over fifty films and television shows. In 2007 she made her mark with a breakthrough performance in the Danish film *Daisy Diamond*, earning the Bodil Award and the Robert Award for Best Actress. Additional credits include *Jack Ryan* (Amazon), *Angel of Mine*, *Stockholm, Close, Bright, Unlocked, What Happened to Monday?*, *Assassin Club*, *Rupture*, *Child*

44, *The Drop*, *Dead Man Down*, *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*, and *Passion*. In 2011, she starred in Pernilla August's *Beyond (Svinalägorna)*, which won the Venice Film Festival Critic's Week prize and the Nordic Council Film Prize, earning Noomi another Guldbagge Best Actress Award. That same year she received Best Actress at the Rome Film Festival for Pål Sletaune's *Babycall*. Noomi recently received international acclaim for her portrayal of Mother Teresa in *Mother*, the English-language debut of Macedonian director Teona Strugar Mitevska, which premiered at the 82nd Venice Film Festival. She starred in *The End of It* alongside Rebecca Hall, Gael García Bernal, and Beanie Feldstein - the directorial debut of Catalan-Spanish award-winner Maria Martínez Bayona - which premiered in Cannes Premières 2026. Next, Noomi will star in *Run, With No Tears*, the new feature from acclaimed Moroccan director Nabil Ayouch, whose work has premiered at Cannes, Berlin and Venice. At the 2026 Göteborg Film Festival, Noomi received the Nordic Honorary Dragon Award in recognition of her acclaimed career and contribution to Swedish film.



YIN WANG (Andrew Roomfield) is a British actor based in London. He has built a diverse body of work spanning drama, action and character-driven storytelling. His screen credits include *The Good Ship Murder* (Channel 4), *Three Body Problem* and *The Recruit S2*, both for Netflix and the upcoming feature *In Alaska*. Introduced to performance through theatre at a young age, Yin developed his passion for acting and studied in the UK, before continuing his training at Shanghai Vancouver Film School. Completely bilingual in English and Mandarin, Yin combines his dramatic work with an athletic background in kickboxing, weightlifting and martial arts, bringing authenticity to physically demanding roles. Having lived in London, Vancouver and China, he brings an international perspective to his work. Beyond acting, Yin writes and produces his own short films, exploring compelling character-driven stories while continuing to develop his craft both in front of and behind the camera.

TIFF – 51st Toronto International Film Festival

TIFF Screenings:

World Premiere: Friday September 11, 11:45 a.m. Lightbox 1

Press & Marketing: Saturday September 12, 11:30 a.m. Scotiabank 4

2nd Public: Sunday September 13, 21:30 p.m. Scotiabank 4

Available for interviews before and during the festival (Sept 10-14):

Co-Directors Jaap van Heusden and Vinnie Karetak

Cast Noomi Rapace and Leo Mathew Temela

- *Screening link of the film & Stills / set photo's available upon request*

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