



TRANSILVANIA FILM

ALEX CALANGIU

CĂTĂLIN HERLO

IULIAN POSTELNICU

IONUȚ CARAS

LIBERTATE

DIRECTED BY
TUDOR GIURGIU

PRODUCED BY LIBRA FILMS IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH MYTHBERG FILMS WITH THE SUPPORT OF ROMANIAN NATIONAL CENTER OF CINEMATOGRAPHY & NATIONAL FILM INSTITUTE HUNGARY WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF ROMANIAN NATIONAL TELEVISION WITH ALEX CALANGIU CĂTĂLIN HERLO IONUȚ CARAS IULIAN POSTELNICU ALEXANDRU PAPADOPOL LEONID DOZI ANDI VASLUIANU GIZIN TOMA MIRELA OPRÎȘOR ȘTEFAN IANCU COSTEL GÂSCĂVAL COSTUME DESIGNER VIORELA PETROVICI PRODUCTION DESIGNER VALI IGHIGHEANU SOUND TAMÁS SZÉKELY ANDRE RIGAUT MAKE-UP PETYA SIMEDINOVA HAIR STYLIST DOMNICA BOSDAN CASTING DOMNICA CĂRCIUNARU VIORELA GÂPOEȘTEA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX STERIAN RSC EDITOR RÉKA LEMHÉNYI WRITTEN BY GECILIA ȘTEFĂNESCU TUDOR GIURGIU AFTER AN IDEA BY NAP TOADER PRODUCED BY OANA BUJBOI GIURGIU TUDOR GIURGIU CO-PRODUCED BY JÓZSEF BERGER DIRECTED BY TUDOR GIURGIU

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Libertate

Drama | Romania – Hungary | 2023
Romanian – 109 min – DCP 4k – color

DIRECTED BY

Tudor Giurgiu

SCREENPLAY BY

Cecilia Ștefănescu
Tudor Giurgiu

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Alex Sterian

EDITING

Réka Lemhényi

PRODUCTION DESIGN

Vali Ighigheanu

COSTUME DESIGN

Viorica Petrovici

SOUND

Andre Rigaut
Tamás Székely

PRODUCERS

Oana Bujgoi Giurgiu
Tudor Giurgiu

CO-PRODUCER

József Berger

MAIN CAST

Alex Calangiu
Cătălin Herlo
Ionuț Caras
Iulian Postelnicu
Alexandru Papadopol
Leonid Doni
Andi Vasluianu
Cuzin Toma
Mirela Oprișor

Synopsis

In the chaotic days of the December 1989 revolution that overthrew the Communist regime, the Transylvanian city of Sibiu becomes the scene of a violent assault on a Police unit that quickly escalates into a bloody confrontation between soldiers, policemen, civilian protesters and representatives of the secret police. In a desperate attempt to escape the siege, Police captain Viorel is captured by the army and thrown into an empty swimming pool along with hundreds of prisoners accused of being terrorists.





Director's statement

The so-called "1989 Revolution" is, most likely, the biggest incompletely consumed event that our society has been through in recent history.

This is one of the reasons for wanting to accurately depict the chaos and total confusion of ordinary people during those days. The truth was willingly disguised, whitewashing was cultivated to become state of the art.

My generation (I was 18, in 1989) grew up with this "psychosis" of the terrorists; supposedly they were Arabs, then Russian spies, then *Securitate* officers and so on. The public radio and TV convinced the population, by gross manipulation, that these "terrorists" really existed and had become the absolute enemy, right after Ceaușescu's defection. I wished to see them captured and punished, as I was certain that they were guilty of the many innocent and senseless deaths of those days.

We know now, 30 years later, that these “terrorists” were fictitious, nothing but a concept fabricated inside the disinformation labs that worked flawlessly in the informational chaos of those times. The army shot at innocent civilians and served as principal force of repression against the demonstrators. “Terrorists” had to be invented, they were needed to explain the lack of coordination of the army and the decisions taken against the interest of the people.

That’s why I wanted to have ordinary people as central figures of my film; Viorel, an officer who wasn’t involved in any capacity in the violent repression of the street demonstrations, even though he was working for the *Militia*, he is carried away by the vortex and his life radically changes. He kills (or at least he is worried for doing so), acting in self-defense. He experiences major moral dilemmas, he sees the duplicitous acts of the commanders of the Army and finally understands that he is becoming a pawn (a “terrorist”) in an absurd game.

It will be essential to capture the raw reality of those day, when all actors involved were confused and acting in chaos. That’s why I’m not imagining other aesthetics / artistic direction than one which would remind us of a documentary footage from the époque. Camera handheld, close to the characters and their journey. Fluid movements and long takes, especially in the beginning of the film, where militia officers are being attacked by the Army forces. A close visual reference would be Paul Greengrass’ *Bloody Sunday*.



The Romanian Revolution

The Romanian Revolution was a period of violent civil unrest in Romania during December 1989 as a part of the Revolutions of 1989 that occurred in several countries around the world, including the countries in Eastern Europe, before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Romanian Revolution ultimately culminated in the drumhead trial and execution of longtime Romanian Communist Party (PCR) General Secretary Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife Elena, and the end of 42 years of Communist rule in Romania.





The Revolution in Sibiu

Sibiu, December 17th 1989. The situation seemed to be under control. The communist leader announced that he had ordered the arming of troops with "war ammunition", the establishment of a "state of necessity" and the placing of all military units in a "state of alarm". His son, Nicu Ceaușescu, first secretary of the party committee in Sibiu, called for the military units to be put in a state of combat, saying that they would fire "without warning".

On December 21st, anti-communist demonstrators took to the streets. Nicu Ceaușescu asks the local militia to intervene and disperse the protesters from the Republic Square. The presence of the militiamen, however, irritates the spirits and radicalizes the demonstrators. A detachment of student-soldiers is also sent to clear the Square. The demonstrators become violent, pushing the soldiers, and throwing bottles, pieces of wood and stones. As a result, the soldiers fired warning shots. This is when the first casualties occur in Sibiu, two civilians are shot.



On the evening of December 21st, some of the protestors head to the *Militia* headquarters, where they overturn and set fire to several cars, forcing their way into the headquarters. *Militiamen* tried to defend themselves. Tear gas and warning shots were used and five people were injured.

On the morning of the 22nd, the protestors returned in large numbers and continuously pressed the student-soldiers. At noon, fire was opened. In panic, the crowd retreated to the Military School. Some of the *Militia* and *Securitate* personnel left the premises and tried to enter the Military School by scaling the fence, but were shot by the young soldiers. They were convinced that the unit was under attack by terrorists.

The survivors were detained in the Military Officers' School swimming pool in poor conditions, without food for the first few days, and deprived of minimal medical care, some of them injured or beaten brutally.

The numbers of the Sibiu Revolution are grim.

2.000.000 bullets, 500 cannon shots, and 650 helicopter missiles were fired.

99 people died, another 272 were injured.

522 people were illegally detained in the local pool. The last of them were released on February 1, 1990.



Tudor Giurgiu

Member of the European Film Academy, Tudor is the founder and President of the **Transilvania International Film Festival** (TIFF), the most prestigious film-related event in Romania.

His directorial debut feature **Love Sick** was selected in Panorama section of 2006 Berlinale and awarded in several int'l festivals). His short **Superman, Spiderman or Batman** (2011) won Best European Short at the 2012 edition of European Film Academy Awards. Tudor's 2nd feature, **Of Snails and Men**, was awarded in Warsaw IFF and Valladolid IFF. **Why Me?**, an unsettling legal thriller based on a real case of corruption in present-day Romania, premiered in 2015 Berlinale Panorama. His most recent film is **Libertate**, a story inspired by real events that happened in December 1989; he is also in post production with **Nasty**, a documentary about the career of iconic tennis player Ilie Nastase.

Tudor produced or co-produced many feature films such as **Servants** by Ivan Ostrochovsky (Berlinale 2020), **Katalin Varga** by Peter Strickland (Silver Bear in 2009 Berlinale), **Mission of the Human Resources Manager** by Eran Riklis (Audience Award in Locarno 2010).





Alex Calangiu

Alex is a well-known stage actor from Romania. He graduated from the University of Craiova, Theater Department, and has a Master in Acting. Since 2015 he is one of the most beloved and popular actors of the "Marin Sorescu" National Theatre in Craiova, where he was cast in more than 20 shows. He created complex characters under the coordination of international directors like Declan Donnellan and is a favourite of Radu Afrim, one of the country's most forward thinking and innovative directors. **Freedom** is his first leading role in film.



Cătălin Herlo

Since 2004, Cătălin Herlo is part of the Cluj-Napoca National Theatre's ensemble, where he created over 40 memorable roles and received numerous awards for his work. He collaborated with famed Romanian directors like Silviu Purcărete, Alexandru Dabija or Gábor Tompa. On screen, he was cast in comedies like *Mirciulică* (2022) and is also known from the TV hit *Las Fierbinți*. In 2023, he is one of the leads in Tudor Giurgiu's **Freedom**.



Ionuț Caras

Ionuț Caras has acted in over 40 shows in the 10 years he has been an actor of the Cluj National Theatre and has already collaborated with the greatest directors in Romania: Andrei Șerban, Silviu Purcărete, Alexandru Dabija, Mihai Măniuțiu, Gábor Tompa and Radu Afrim. On screen, he was cast in **Portrait of the fighter as a young man** (dir. Constantin Popescu 2010,) and **Why me?** (dir. Tudor Giurgiu, 2015).



Iulian Postelnicu

Iulian Postelnicu is one of Romania's most beloved and awarded actors, well known for his performances in **One Floor Below** (dir. Radu Muntean, 2015), **Arrest** (r. Andrei Cohn, 2019) and most recently for his leading role in **Man of Deeds** (dir. Paul Negoescu, 2022), which won him several awards, including the Gopo Award for Best Actor. He is also a screenwriter, co-writing scripts for films like **Unidentified** (dir. Bogdan George Apetri, 2022).



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