

theBlacklisted

• • • a documentary thriller

1h 13min
Serbia



During visit of Chinese PM to Serbia, human rights activists are trying to make peaceful protest, with unforeseen complications, including kidnapping by police

...

We were struck by the passionate ways in which you made connections between the Falun Gong persecution in China and spiritual and political freedom in not only Belgrade, but also the world. The experiences that the subjects conveyed were chilling reminders of the realities of political persecution.

(True/False Film Festival)



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Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the **truth**.

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the **Blacklisted**

Synopsis

Dejan is just an ordinary guy, living in a post-communist country. However, each time a Chinese official visits his country, he's treated as public enemy No. 1: the state security taps his phones and tails both him and his family members, while the public security pays special attention to him by visiting his workplace and his home. The reason? Because he practices Falun Gong. So, what is Falun Gong? Why is it banned and persecuted in China and what is the connection with Serbia?

By following the events on the margins of the Chinese Summit held in Belgrade in 2014, when the police unlawfully detained 11 Falun Gong activists from EU countries, we discover the story. The activists were held in order to avoid spreading the truth about the persecution of Falun Gong in China. Through their testimony in this documentary, in addition to Dejan's, the truth is brought to the light of the day. The truth is shocking and hard to believe. The bitter truth about China and the whole world we live in.

About the film - by the Producer

While filming "Apocalypse now" F. F. Coppola stated: "I made the most vulgar, entertaining, exciting, action-full, sensoramic, give me new thrill every five minutes... because I want people to come and see it."

"Apocalypse now!" dealt with the Vietnam war, and what The Blacklisted deals with is what may turn out to be even more horrifying, only less spectacular – the persecution of Falun Gong in China. Most people in the Western world don't know much about it, however, we didn't want to throw the painful truth in front of their faces and attack with numbers and testimonies, in a way investigative documentary might. We wanted them "to come and see it". This is why we made a documentary thriller, which is both visually and musically appealing.

Given the circumstances, that was the only natural approach. As a participant in the events around the Chinese Summit in Serbia in 2014, when the Serbian government in a way suspended democracy as a favour to their Chinese guests, I presented verbally the story many times to various people and they were always short of breath. With that state of mind, I didn't even need to explain what is going on in China as

Bio (about the directors)



Sara Marković is a Serbian director, born in Belgrade in 1991 and *The Blacklisted* is her first feature film.

Nikola Dragović is the editing director, born in Paris, 1968. He is an actor, writer, producer and editor with 18 credits, most of them as Editor.



Excerpts from director's statement

Most people are aware how politics work in world of today: economic interests are a priority. Even if we are not the direct victims of the system, we are well acquainted with the ways how governments can do wrong to individuals, anywhere in the world. We live in the information age, but people still stay silent watching injustice around them. News come and go, while we return to our daily lives, turned towards ourselves, focused on our own wellbeing, not believing our own effort may be worthwhile against forces so strong.

Visual expression

The footage of *The Blacklisted* consists of: interviews with protagonists, archive footage, re-enactments and live action camera footage.

The overall atmosphere of the film is suspenseful, mystic (mysterious?) and thrilling. How do we achieve this?

Re-enactments of the events during the Summit, along with interviews, are the main part of the narrative. Being partly blurred, re-enactments visually stand out from standard footage. With very small focus inside the frame, after „random“ movement of hand held camera is applied, we create dream-like and mystical sequences, with enigmatic details, aiming to create atmosphere. Colors should be saturated with green and yellow, in strong counter light. This way we produce a dance of shadows, of lightness and darkness, and the effect we get is almost „comic-like“.

Interviews are filmed in a studio. Backdrops vary in relation to different protagonists, but the main principle is the same – dark background with blurred details in



chiaroscuro style. The picture itself is clear. For different protagonists, we choose different camera angles.

Live action footage is what makes this film stand out. Footage of public security and secret service made through spy glasses, mobile phone and camera, during interactions with the main protagonist are shown throughout the film. No special intervention on the picture is done.

Archive footage is taken from Serbian and Chinese TV networks.

- **Visualisations** from the
- life of protagonists, such
- as practise in a park, as
- well as any other
- representation of
- present time have a
- lighter atmosphere. The
- light is natural and
- evenly distributed so
- that we have a feeling of
- “going out of the mouse
- hole”.

Stills from The Blacklisted

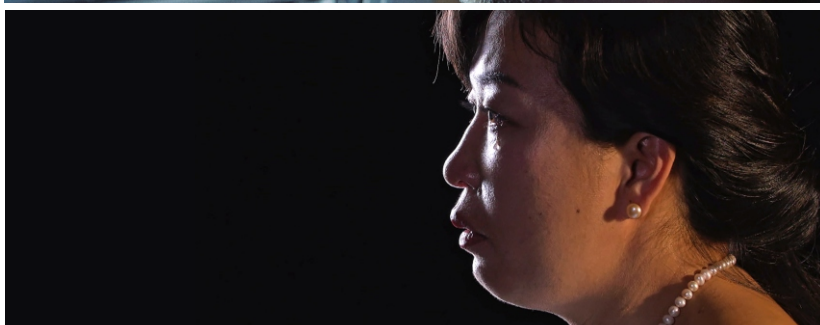


Credits

Directors ... **Sara Marković, Nikola Dragović**
Producer ... **Dejan Marković Skile**
Screenplay ... **Dejan Marković Skile**
Original Music ... **Jug Konstantin Marković**
Director of Photography ... **Matija Munjiza Petrović**
Editors ... **Nikola Dragović, Milan Jakonić**
Sound ... **Dobrica Višnjić**
Line Producer ... **Minja Jovanović**
Production Designer ... **Mihailo Mošesku**
Costume Designer ... **Jana Zaharijević**
Production Manager ... **Vladimir Janjić**
Assistant Director ... **Vladimir Karan**
Camera Operator ... **Matija Munjiza Petrović**
Sountrack ... **Nenad Vještica Khan**
Graphic Designer ... **Neven Popović**

The Blacklisted

Dejan Marković
Lan Lihua
Martin Angelov
Lilia Kostova
Chen Xiaoyang
Yael Levin
Gisela Olson
Georgy Pleshkov
Milena Atanasova
Kristijan Palaček
Marijana Holjevac
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