

zadigproductions

presents

Don't Breathe



A feature-length documentary film by Nino Kirtadze
(86 min, France, 2014)
Language: Georgian / English with English subtitles

Production
Zadig Productions
70, rue Amelot
75011 Paris, France
info@zadigproductions.com
+33 1 58 30 80 10

Sales Agent
Heino Deckert
Deckert Distribution
Marienplatz 1
04103 Leipzig, Germany
info@deckert-distribution.com
+49 341 215 66 38

THE FILM

Don't Breathe is a dark comedy set in Tbilisi, Georgia that follows the tribulations of a middle-aged man, Levan, who is suddenly led to question his existence because of a routine medical examination. It sends him into a downward spiral of paranoia and doubt as he fumbles his way through the theatre of the absurd that we call life.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In Georgia a man in his 40s, Levan, is waiting in a clinic for an MRI examination. He needs to find out what's causing the pain in his shoulder. He's nervous. By the time he leaves the hospital he's not the same man. His anxiety quickly spreads to his wife and well-meaning friends. The family courtyard becomes the scene of an informal advisory council, where everybody suggests magical cures and must-see specialists. Soon Levan's savings are gone. He's scared of losing his job, his health and his wife, who has started to come home later and later.

But suddenly, out of nowhere – a serendipitous event occurs...

Using humour and a playful tone, the film examines the fragility of human nature, when our bearings get lost and our imagination takes over, highlighting our common fears, doubts, hopes and resilience.

LONG SYNOPSIS

A middle-aged man sits impatiently in a hospital waiting room. Levan needs an MRI scan to find out what's causing the pain in his shoulder. The nurses put him in a long white tube and leave him alone. Levan is nervous. He's plunged into the alien world of modern medicine and shocked by his transformation from human being into scientific object.

The doctors give him a series of instructions. To Levan they're incomprehensible. "Bursitis subacromialis... subchondral sclerosis... ..an operation". His heart sinks; he has just joined a new firm and doesn't want to make a bad impression. Who would want to keep a sick employee?

Levan's partner Irma, is terrified by the thought of an operation. Their future together seems to depend on a cloudy little spot in the middle of an MRI scan. Friends, family and neighbours are called over for an improvised meeting in the courtyard. A heated discussion erupts as everyone starts to analyze the scan. They argue over the right treatment and all have their own ideas about the best specialists.

Levan becomes increasingly anxious. His MRI scan journeys from one specialist to another like a musical score, whose interpretation seems open to infinite change.

Every doctor seems to have a different opinion and they're all as expensive as they're persuasive.

Levan is lost in dark thoughts. His well-meaning family and friends are starting to suffocate him. And his boss is growing angry at his absences from work.

His life becomes a permanent roller coaster ride between hope and deception, which ultimately sends him into a downward spiral of doubt and paranoia. Little by little, the situation becomes unbearable - his relationship deteriorates and he could lose his job.

Levan can no longer sleep. Confronted by his mortality, he's tormented by regrets.. Then suddenly one day, a serendipitous event occurs...

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The idea for this film came to me when, like the character in my film, I was dragged from doctor to doctor in order to identify the cause of a mysterious pain in my back. It made me realise how fragile and vulnerable we can suddenly become, how small things can seem enormous when suspicion and doubt arise, and how the state of uncertainty can affect all aspects of our lives. There is something extraordinary and very moving about a man facing his own fragilities and doubts, which tells us a lot about the complexity of human nature.

I would say that "Don't breathe" is a film about us, about how frail, precarious, fragile and also magnificent and fabulous life is.

I was lucky to meet Levan and Irma, but the main challenge remained - how to film his doubts and anxiety, how to make the viewer feel what was going on in his head.

Starting from purely observational documentary filmmaking I had to invent new tools in order to squeeze the essential out of ordinary situations and catalyse events. My camera was set in the intimacy of Levan's life, but it was extremely important not just to be close to the main character, but also to be attentive to the secondary characters, who were able to bring out something new in Levan. They would either help him or lead him astray, accentuating dramatic tensions and shaping the narrative.

As I worked on the film, it dawned on me that Levan's character was a rather revealing metaphor of the current state of Georgia, a country at the crossroads of ancient civilisations, which today faces uncertainty about its future and is caught between the pull of tradition and the lure of modernity and Europe.

I understood that my camera couldn't stay passive and wait - it was active, provocative and attentive to any detail that could help us make the transition from Levan's physical pain to his psychological trauma, from the exterior world to his inner being. And life would often take over and take us by surprise, turning the real into the surreal, as so often happens in documentary.

Charlie Chaplin said, "The life of a man is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot." For this film I needed both.

DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER BIOS

Nino Kirtadze (director) was born and raised in Tbilisi, Georgia, and currently lives in Paris, France. She holds a degree in Literature. She is also a scriptwriter and actress (Oscar nominated "Chef in love", "Rainbowmaker", "Sartre- age des passions"). In troubled years in the Caucasus she was working as war journalist for AFP and Associated Press.

In 1999, she directed her first documentary, *The Three Lives of Edward Shevardnadze*, shown at the Cannes Film Festival, the World Film Festival Montreal and the FIPA in France. Her second documentary *Chechen Lullaby* won Germany's top documentary award, the Adolf Grimme Golden Prize, Oneworld festival Rudolf Vrba award in Check Republic, was selected for the Europa Prize and INPUT . In 2003, *Tell my Friends that I am Dead* was awarded the Golden FIPA Award for Best

Creative Documentary at the International Festival of Biarritz, followed by the Louis Marcorelles Award at Cinéma du Réel. In 2004, she received the European Film Academy Best Documentary Award for *The Pipeline Next Door*, the Grand Jury Prize and Templeton award at Visions du Réel, Nyon, Switzerland.

With Zadig Productions, she directed *Durakovo, Village of Fools (For God, Tsar and the Fatherland)*, for the *Why Democracy?* collection. It won the World Cinema Documentary Directing award at Sundance 2008, was broadcast worldwide and selected in many major international festivals. Her most recent film “Something about Georgia”, also produced by Zadig, was supported by the Sundance Documentary Fund, several international broadcasters and won the SRG SSR award at the Nyon Visions du Réel festival in 2010. Her work often plays with blurring the line between fact and fiction and shows her talent as a dramaturgist able to turn simple stories into inspired human tragicomedies.

Heidi Fleisher (producer) is a freelance American producer who has been living in France since 1997. After many years holding various roles in documentary film production and as a consultant helping French producers to navigate the international market, she has recently started to produce her own films. Productions include short films by Marc Isaacs and Nino Kirtadzé, *Amuse-Bouche*, *anatomy of a lunch*, a short film she co-directed for ITVS, and the interactive media project *94 Elements* created by Mike Paterson / Pfilm that she is co-producing. Heidi also participates as a tutor and panelist for documentary film markets and festivals worldwide. *Don't Breathe* is her first feature-length film for which she has joined forces with Zadig Productions to produce.

Céline Nusse (producer)

After receiving a master's degree in history, Céline Nusse spent 10 years learning the ropes of film production at Roche Productions, where she had the opportunity to work with many renowned documentary filmmakers such as Nino Kirtadze, Pavel Lounguine, William Karel and Patrick Jeudy. In 2007 she joined Zadig Productions first as a production manager and then as a producer. Céline works closely with

Paul Rozenberg, as a duo. And they have produced twenty documentaries together, privileging an author's vision on geopolitical, historical and cultural issues.

Paul Rozenberg (executive producer) has over 20 years experience as a producer of both documentary and narrative films, including the last two films by Nino Kirtadzé. He founded Zadig in 2001, privileging films that reflect independence of mind, freedom of tone and creativity. Today Zadig Productions has close to 100 productions and co-productions to its credit - from social issue, geopolitical and historical documentaries for TV and theatrical to narrative feature films. Highlights include award-winning films such as *On the Bridge* by Olivier Morel, *Something about Georgia* by Nino Kirtadzé, *A History of Israeli Cinema* by Raphaël Nadjari, *Be Like Others (Transsexual in Iran)* by Tanaz Eshaghian (Co-production Forties B. LLC / Necessary Illusions Prods. / Zadig / Novaprod Owl, ITVS Intl), *Durakovo, Village of Fools* by Nino Kirtadzé, *Louise Wimmer* by Cyril Mennegun and *The Invisibles* by Sebastien Lifshitz.

KEY CREDITS

Director: Nino Kirtadze

Producers: Heidi Fleisher, Céline Nusse, Paul Rozenberg

Executive Producer: Paul Rozenberg

Co-producer: Mouka Filmi - Sami Jahnukainen

Editors: Nino Kirtadze, Christel Aubert, Josianne Zardoya,

Cinematographers: Andro Sanovich, Tornike Shengelia, Jacek Petrycki, Octavio Santo.

Sound Engineers: Tengo Asitashvili, Benjamin Bober, Stephan Bauer

Sound Design: Yves Servagent

Sound Mix: Philippe Grivel

Color correction: Mathilde Delacroix

Production Manager: Florence Guinaudeau

Production Assistant: Clémentine Cassard

In co-production with Commune Image

In collaboration with Yle, Iikka Vehkalahti

Funding & Support:

Arte France, Society and Culture Department - Martine Saada, Bernard Comment

Centre National de la Cinématographie et de l'Image Animée (CNC)

MEDIA
Procirep / Angoa
Brouillon d'un rêve de la SCAM

PARTICIPANTS

Levan Murtazashvili, Irma Inaridze
Sandro murtazashvili
Ina Inaridze, Nana Inaridze

Their friends
Malkhaz Gvilava, Lela Shengelia, Temo Jaliashvili, Megi Kipchidze
Akaki Gvilava, Natali Jaliashvili, Ina Jaliashvili, Gia Gogatishvili
Natalia Gnatovskaya

teacher
James C. Rinto

shoemaker neighbor
Iossif Mkhoian

man in cafe
Giga Galdava

artist
Eteri Chkadua

masseur
Misha Kalaiev

Aversi clinic doctors:
radiology
Magda Tsirekidze, Dina Tvaradze., Maka Kutateladze, Natia Gokhadze,
Maia Afriamashvili, Maka Levanidze.

neurology
Maka Mania, Lia Giorgadze

cardiology
Teona Abramishvili

Doctors
Mike McCarthy , Malkhaz Pirpilashvili, Phiso Djikidze

Nestor Tabunidze, Badri Sharikadze Dato Davarashvili

psychologist
Salome Losaberidze

Work colleagues

General director Radoslav Dudolenski
Zurab Sikharulidze, Nugzar Kalmakhelidze, Aleksandre Nemsadze,
Gocha Tsikelashvili, Irakli Chokhonelidze, Zura Pulariani

security guards
Dato Asatiani, Zurab Zarandia, Gia Peradze , Bachana Ramishvili

Opium beauty salon
Natia Kvaratskhelia

TRAILER on the WEBSITE
www.zadigproductions.fr