

PICTURE TREE INTERNATIONAL
PRESENTS

PRESSKIT

WHAT IF **FAKE NEWS**
BECOMES YOUR REALITY

THE BIND PRESENTS
JUDGEMENT

FEDJA VAN HUËT

LIES VISSCHEDIJK

YORICK VAN WAGENINGEN



PICTURE TREE
INTERNATIONAL



SHORT SYNOPSIS

ORIGINAL TITLE
DIRECTOR
SCREENWRITERS

De Veroordeling
Sander Burger
Bert Bouma and Sander Burger

Based on the book by Bas Haan
'DE DEVENTER MOORDZAAK – HET COMLOT ONTRAFELD'

CAST
PRODUCER
CO-PRODUCERS
COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION
RUNNING TIME
GENRE
RELEASE DATE
LANGUAGE
PRODUCTION COMPANY
WORLD SALES

Fedja Van Huêt, Yorick Van Wageningen, Lies Visschedijk, Mark Kraan
BIND, Joram Willink
KRO-NCRV, Mascha van Erven
The Netherlands
130 minutes
Drama, Thriller, Biopic
2 September 2021
Dutch
BIND
Picture Tree International GmbH

Television journalist Bas Haan creates his own monster when, in his investigation into the Deventer murder case, he is increasingly drawn into the camp of those who accuse 'the handyman' of murder. A media-smear campaign is the result of his TV report which turns the life of 'the handyman' and his wife into a true nightmare. Disconcerted by this 'trial by media' Bas decides to fight the conspiracies with the facts, but to his frustration the image is stronger than reality.

HE GOES TO EXTREMES TO GET THE TRUTH OUT.



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DIRECTOR STATEMENT



After having been released earlier, tax consultant Ernest Louwes ended up being convicted of the murder of the widow Wittenberg on 9 February 2004 on the basis of unexpected, new DNA evidence. The footage of the court's judgement and Louwes' reaction to it were repeated endlessly on TV. And anyone seeing the images of him being restrained by the public prosecutor's office while he protests heart-rendingly, thinks, no, feels the same: this man is innocent. You just know it. No one is such a good actor.

However, anyone who reads the book about the case 'De Deventer Moordzaak – het complot ontrafeld' (The Deventer Murder Case – the plot unravelled), by investigative journalist Bas Haan (Netwerk, Nova, Nieuwsuur), gets painted a radically different picture. This film, which is based on that book, tells the story of Haan's search for the truth. And of how the facts are, as a result of the media campaign unleashed by pollster Maurice de Hond, to this day overshadowed by the idea that this was a miscarriage of justice. 'The umpteenth, in our

previously so decent Netherlands'. But on closer inspection, it was not a miscarriage of justice.

This is what makes this case very different from, for example, the Schiedammerpark murder or the harrowing story of Lucia de B., where indeed was a miscarriage of justice. The only similarity is that in all cases people were (publicly) convicted who afterwards turned out to be innocent. In the Deventer murder case, however, it is not the official suspect Ernest Louwes, but Michaël de Jong alias 'the handyman', who is publicly identified by Maurice de Hond as the murderer of the widow Wittenberg. The fact that Michaël de Jong has never been officially convicted – not even indicted – does not seem to matter: in the eyes of a large part of the Dutch population there is confusion: who actually did it? And many still think that 'the handyman' is the real culprit.

'How can it be, that an individual who has no official position whatsoever, who personally has nothing to do with the case, is able to

influence public opinion and even the course of justice to such an extent,' writes columnist Bas Heijne about Maurice de Hond in a column on the occasion of the publication of Haans's book, and concludes a little further on: 'The ironic thing is that De Hond, in his role of "concerned citizen", has devoted himself to a man who, according to the evidence, should be the murderer, while he has made the life of an innocent person unlivable through his smear campaign.

This true story, in which a pollster suddenly becomes an opinion maker and destroys the life of an innocent man and his girlfriend, is at the heart of The Judgement and makes the film extremely urgent. The film transcends a story about a murder case. For the general public, The Judgement not only sheds new light on one of the Netherlands' most notorious murder cases, but also paints a shocking picture of the current 'state of the nation' in which the facts matter little and 'the narrative' and influencing public perception prevail. In which the civilians' sense of justice – however sincere – is made more important than scientifically gathered evidence and journalistic handwork. In which DNA evidence is also just an opinion. In which fiction can apparently replace reality just like that. And what does that concept, reality, actually mean? Is there still something that is generally accepted as 'the truth'?

In 2010, initiator and creative producer Joram Willink stumbled upon the NRC column by Bas Heijne entitled 'Bange Journalistiek' (attached), which planted the seed for this project. In the preceding years, he had become fascinated by the rise of 'the angry citizen' and the pressure of the market on journalism, which compels to produce scoops, high audience ratings and larger print runs. Joram had already worked with scriptwriter Bert Bouma on several occasions, including a comic mockumentary (a 'romcomentary') about a journalist's search for the 'underbelly of society' (Sekjoeritie, directed by Nicole van Kilsdonk). And pretty soon director Sander Burger joined in, who is known for his socially engaged films, including his feature Hunting & Zn (IFFR 2010).

The three of us spent the next few years intensively studying the case and developed the project into a screenplay that brings out the es-

sence of this trial-by-media case. Always with Bas Haan's excellently researched book as a basis, but also with all the information that we collected around it, we always pursued extreme care. There are many unsubstantiated theories and half-truths going around, and we definitely did not want to run with the facts: after all, it would be contradictory, to say the least, if we made a critical film about ignoring and manipulating the facts, only to do it ourselves.

That is why we can now say that the film is based on facts. We have only summarised complex or long-running events (e.g. months of statements on TV and headlines stating that The Handyman is the culprit, have been bundled into the front page of a newspaper). And we have sometimes applied dramatisation 'behind the front door' – dramatic interpretation of how a certain decision came about. That said, much of this too is based on experiences of those directly involved, which we recorded. Bas Haan, Michaël de Jong and his girlfriend Meike Wittermans, but also friends and former Network colleagues of Bas were all interviewed during the script development.

With The Judgement, we wanted to make a relevant but also exciting film and therefore partly used the genre rules of a 'whodunnit'. However, with the important twist that it is not a whodunnit but rather a who-not-dunnit. It is not Ernst Louwes's guilt that is at the heart of the story, but Michaël de Jong's innocence, which is the subject of a passionate journalist who will not rest until the truth is out.

The Judgement is a 'journalistic investigation' film about taking responsibility for your actions. And not only as a journalist – Bas Haan also takes a closer look at his own actions – but we hope, with hindsight, also as a viewer. Because didn't we all, just like Maurice de Hond, let ourselves be taken in by that one powerful image of Louwes being restrained by the public prosecutor?

For us, the film has succeeded when the audience leaves the cinema indignant, but also slightly ashamed. Indignant about the fact that 'something like this can happen', ashamed because 'it did happen' and we know, deep down, that we ourselves, even if only slightly, went along with the public condemnation.

DIRECTOR BIO

Director Sander Burger (1975) started his career as a director of documentaries. In 2004 he made the short fiction film KOEN! for which he was nominated for the NPS KORT! Prize. This was followed by three feature films, “Olivier etc.”, “Hunting & Sons” and “Pan-man, rhythm of the palm”, shot on St. Maarten, which won many awards, including ‘best film’ at the Hollywood Black Film Festival. With the much lauded “I am Alice” (nomination ‘Prix Europa’ and winner of the ‘Eureka prize’), Sander returned to documentaries. This was followed by the documentaries “Stand up and Walk” and “Scenarios for a Normal Life”. But he also continued to make fiction. He wrote and directed, among others, a trio of Devil’s Dilemmas “A Second Chance”, “Touched” and “My son is a jihadist”, the NTR Short! “Don’t Go to Sea” (after a short story by Tommy Wieringa, producer BIND) and the Telefilm “Off Track”. Sander is now in production with the 3-part docudrama series “De Droeveige Kampioen” (The Sad Champion) after the book by Jan Brokken, a production of BIND & VPRO.

Bert Bouma made his screenplay debut in 1993 with a script for 12 Cities, 13 Accidents and has since written for many series, including “Hotnews.nl” (nomination Nickelodeon Kid’s Choice Award 2005, winner Cinekid Kinderkast Television Prize Audience Choice Fiction 2005 and Golden Image Best Youth Programme) and “Flikken Maastricht” (winner Golden Televizier-Ring 2014). He also developed the English psychological thriller “Cold” (as part of North by Northwest, a MEDIA programme for feature film development). Together with Jan Bernard Bussemaker, he wrote the single play “Bruno & Violet” (directed by Nicole van Kilsdonk) and the telefilm “Bloedbroeders” (Avro, directed by Arno Dierickx), inspired by the infamous Baarn murder case from 1960. “Bloedbroeders” was also shown in cinemas in early 2008, received five Golden Calf nominations, was nominated for the Silver Curly Tail (prize from the Dutch screenwriters’ network) and was selected for the San Sebastian Film Festival. His telefilm “Sekjoeritie” (directed by Nicole van Kilsdonk, producer BIND) was selected for the international public broadcasting congress INPUT in 2011 due to its surprising form and contemporary theme. Telefilm “Oom Henk – a black crime comedy” (directed by Elbert van Strien, producer BIND) won the prize for Best Foreign Feature and the Special Jury Award at the World Fest Houston International Film Festival in 2013. The telefilm “Fake”, written with Jan Harm Dekker for AvroTros (directed by Thomas Acda, producer All Yours Film/Rolf Koot), had its premiere in 2016. In 2017 he completed the script of feature film “The Judgement”, together with director Sander Burger, and the series “Bible of Noir”, a drama series about a Dick Bos-inspired private detective in the interwar period, co-written by Elbert van Strien and Paul Feld (producer BosBros and Eyeworks Belgium). Bert recently put the finishing touches to the English relationship comedy “Revenge of the Nice Guy” (feature film) and is currently working on several series and the adaptation of Marjolijn van Heemstra’s novel ‘En we noemen hem’ into a feature film (for BIND).

THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK THE FILM IS BASED ON:

Quote of Journalist Bas Haan
“I think it’s fantastic that this story is being filmed. Especially now, when an increasingly wider audience realizes how disastrous manipulation through mass media can be. This story shows how, long before Trump, public opinion here in the Netherlands could be captured by lies and how journalism struggles with that. An insight that is important now more than ever”

WRITER BIO

PRODUCER STATEMENT

“Ten years ago, we started this ambitious film plan. Back then, the concept of fake news was not yet known. If you look at the history of the Deventer murder case with modern eyes, you fall from one surprise into the next. The Judgement is about twisting the facts, trial by media and how fake news can suddenly be considered the truth. The actual events, with all their “plot twists”, are so dramatic and bizarre that we hardly needed to add any dramatic elements to the script. The story is, looking back with some distance, truly unique...”



PRODUCER BIO

Joram Willink is an award-winning producer who is focusing with his company BIND on socially engaged films. As creative producer he is initiating and closely working with writers/directors to create stories that inspire social change. His productions are awarded with International Emmy Award, Golden Calf Best Film, Silver Bear, TIFF Kids awards, Prix Jeunesse, Grand Award New York ICFF, and honorable nominations like IFFR Tiger Award and SXSW Grand Jury award. His latest feature film “My Extraordinary Summer with Tess” by Steven Wouterlood was awarded the Special Mention at Berlinale Generation 2019 and won more than 22 international awards. The film will be theatrical released in 12 countries, amongst France, Germany, Japan, South-Korea, Canada, Taiwan, Norway. In 2021 BIND will release in Dutch theatres the journalistic investigation thriller “The Judgement”. In production are the features “Mascot” by Remy van Heugten and “El Houb” by Shariff Nasr and TV docudrama series “The Sad Champignon” by Sander Burger.

KEY CAST

FEDJA VAN HUËT - PLAYING BAS HAAN

Fedja van Huët is one of the most distinguished film and theatre actors in the Netherlands. Shortly after graduating from the theater academy in Maastricht, he starred in the Oscar award-winning film "Character", directed by Mike van Diem. He went on to win the Dutch Golden Calf for his roles in "Amnesia", "Nachtrit" and "J. Kessels". Television audiences know him from his leading roles in the series "Adultry", "Penoza", "Divorce" and "Nieuwe Buren". Recently Fedja took on the role of Dutch airplane pioneer Anthony Fokker in historical drama series "Turbulent Skies". Besides his work for film and tv "Fedja" was part of the ensemble of Johan Simons' legendary theater group Hollandia (1996-2005) and of the renowned International Theatre Amsterdam (2005-2013,) led by director Ivo van Hove.

YORICK VAN WAGENINGEN - PLAYING MICHAËL DE JONG

Yorick van Wageningen is a Dutch actor, director and writer. He starred in "The Chronicles of Riddick, Beyond Borders" opposite Clive Owen and Angelina Jolie, and appeared opposite Martin Sheen in "The Way". Yorick also played the dark character of 'Bjurman' in David Fincher's award winning "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo", and starred as Warden Barrot in the remake of the 1973 film "Papillon" opposite Charlie Hunnam & Rami Malek. Yorick also frequently works in European cinema. He is a longtime collaborator of Peter Greenaway's and starred in Martin Koolhoven's "Winter in Wartime", Guido van Driel's "Resurrection of the Bastard", and Leonardo Guerra Seragnoli's "Last Summer". He recently starred in Netflix Original "Letter for the King" and in two Dutch films, "De Belifte Van Pisa" and "De Veroordeling". Currently, Yorick is living in the Netherlands writing a novel.

LIES VISSCHEDIJK - PLAYING MEIKE WITTERMANS

Lies Visschedijk played one of the leading roles in the popular TV series "Gooische Vrouwen", but is best known among the general public for her title role in the romantic comedies "Soof". After the unprecedented success of feature films "Soof I" and "Soof II", two seasons of the series followed "Soof: A New Beginning". For her role in the feature film "Heaven on Earth" Lies won a Golden Calf for Best Female Supporting Role. She played with theatre companies such as Toneelgroep Oostpool, Het Noord Nederlands Toneel, Artemis and Het Toneel Speelt. Lies started her own theatre group Bloody Mary together with Marije Gubbels and Ilse Warringa. Together with Marcel Musters, she also played and directed the play "Fiftyfifty" and more recently the performances "Buik" and "Margreet Heeft De Groep Verlaten". In 2021, Lies will appear in feature films "The Judgement", "Alles Op Tafel" and she will take on the role of the beloved Soof once more for the closing piece: "Soof III".

MARK KRAAN - PLAYING ERNEST LOUWES

Mark Kraan (1979) is a versatile and talented actor who graduated from the prestigious acting course of the Theatre Academy of Maastricht in 2006. He subsequently played leading roles and supporting roles at several large theatre companies. And he has worked with renowned Dutch directors. For 4 years he was also connected to the Zuidelijk Toneel (Southern Theatre), one of the larger and leading theatre companies of the Netherlands.

He played major roles, such as Piet Mondriaan in the successful "Victorie Boogie Boogie" and Shakespeare's "Macbeth", amongst others. With the award winning "Cinema" by Annie Baker, he earned one of the most important theatre awards; the Arlecchino. Next to his impressive work in the theatre, Mark has played in several successful tv series such as "Penoza" (Black Widow), "Flikken Maastricht", "Judas" and "Mocro Maffia". As well as in feature films such as "Mi Vida", "Onder het Hart" and "The Judgement". He currently shines as father Ed Boone in "The curious incident of the dog in the nighttime", the award winning book by Mark Harmon. Later this year he'll be playing one of the leads in the musical "Hij gelooft in mij".

DIRECTOR
SCREENPLAY

AN IDEA FROM
BASED ON THE BOOK

PRODUCERS

COPRODUCER KRO-NCRV
CREATIVE PRODUCER
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
CINEMATOGRAPHER
EDITOR
PRODUCTION DESIGN
COSTUME DESIGNER
HAIR & MAKEUP
SOUND RECORDING
MUSIC

DESIGN & MIX

SANDER BURGER
BERT BOUMA
SANDER BURGER
JORAM WILLINK
DE DEVENTER MOORDZAAK, HET COMLOT
ONTRAFELD VAN BAS HAAN
JORAM WILLINK
PIET-HARM STERK
MASCHA VAN ERVEN
JORAM WILLINK
MARIJE HONDELINK
SAL KROONENBERG
MANUEL ROMBLEY
JORIEN SONT
MANON BLOM
FRANÇOISE MOL
JOS TEN KLOOSTER
JORRIT KLEIJNEN
ALEXANDER REUMERS
JACOB MEIJER
JAN SCHERMER

COMPLETE CREW LIST



Picture Tree International (PTI) is an energetic and fast-growing world sales company with its headquarters in Berlin. The core business is worldwide licensing across all platforms, with the company maintaining a presence at all the major film and television markets. Alongside licensing, PTI is also able to act as your German co-producer and local distributor via a fully integrated business model that offers producers individual sales and financing strategies in a results-driven and transparent partnership, something essential in today's ever changing audio-visual industry landscape. PTI's line-up of up to 15 films a year is designed to ensure the right mix of arthouse and crossover productions to fully maximize the revenue potential of each film. Picture Tree International was founded in December 2012 by Andreas Rothbauer and has been run jointly by his partner and Co-Managing Director Yuan Rothbauer since 2017.



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