

# WOLF

FROM  
ROYAL  
VINEYARD  
STREET

FILM BY  
JAN NĚMEC

PRODUCED BY



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Karlovy Vary  
Mezinárodní filmový festival  
Přírodě s rozumem

THE WOLF FROM ROYAL VINEYARD STREET  
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JAN NĚMEC

WORLD PREMIERE JULY 2nd in the OFFICIAL SELECTION - COMPETITION  
of KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



**Karlovy Vary**  
**International Film Festival**  
Official Selection – Competition

CZECH DISTRIBUTION PREMIERE - SEPTEMBER 15th, 2016

“I greet you very much! You rightly ask me why is this opus called The Wolf of Royal Vineyard Street. Well, just because. You see, in a way I'm Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio in one person. I'm telling a similar story. It is about an evil-minded egomaniac lustful for fame, money and mainly power - a mighty aphrodisiac that attracts beautiful girls as if they were flies. And I have wished for beautiful girls my whole life and I still do... I wanted to conquer the world. There were two other guys like me - Miloš Forman and Jiří Menzel. You'll get to know something about them too. I will open myself up to you personally. Truth, nothing but truth.

So, why Wolf from the Royal Vineyard Street? I was born in Royal Vineyards, I lived there and I still come there for walks. Back in the school days, I was called the enfant terrible of Royal Vineyards. Today, nobody knows I exist anymore, that's

why I'm reminding you about myself. What my face looks like - apologies but that is none of your business, I'll be played by some actor anyway and you can bet it's not going to be Leonardo DiCaprio. That street of mine, the artery of life leading from the St. Wenceslas's horse to the crematories of Strašnice and from there even further to the universe, is a kind of a Sunset Boulevard. A Sunset Boulevard starting in dirty downtown LA, going through Hollywood and ending in Pacific Ocean with a beautiful sunset. But let's stay in Prague, down to earth."

Jan Němec

#### SYNOPSIS

This autobiographical film of legendary director Jan Němec is loosely based on Němec's book *Never shake hands with a waiter* which tells Němec's fateful adventures from the beginning of the 60's to present day. "There's a wolf in the movie's title, a wild, tricky and uncontrollable creature. A wolf in a lamb's skin and the other way round. You will get to see the crime scenes, authentic dialogues, author's commentary, archives both genuine and fake. All that you see in the movie really happened to John Jan. Even though, he sometimes blew his stories up a bit.

#### DIRECTOR'S NOTE - Jan Němec

The directorial approach is simple. No respect to the conventional and established film methods. I've made easeful and disciplined movies - *The Party and The Guests*, Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. There we have all those time-proven plots and stories. But now we're headed back to the front lines. Show must go on - that's the artistic approach. I'm going to show you the crime scenes, authentic dialogues, author's commentary, archives both genuine and fake. Bang!

We will not pursue some historical credibility or authenticity - using couple of important contemporary props, we intend to create not a copy, but the spirit, image and atmosphere of times long ago. I want to capture the genius loci of these places. Film is not a random collage, but a precisely prepared show.

## **Jan Němec (1936-2016 Praha) - director, scriptwriter**

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Czech director, film producer and teacher at FAMU. One of the leading authors of the Czechoslovak New Wave. He was partly banned from making films in 1966, definitively in 1968, when the Soviet army invaded Czechoslovakia. At the same time, the world was stunned by Němec's documentary about the Prague Spring and the invasion. In 1974, he was forced to exile. He lived and created mostly in Western Germany, USA, UK and Sweden. In December of 1989 he returned home and to filmmaking as well. He produced most of his films in company of his own, Jan Němec - Film, which he co-founded in 1993 together with his later wife, Iva Ruszeláková.

In 1969, he was named one of the best five directors of the world by British magazine Film and Filming. In 1989, he was nominated for an EMMY award for his film Milosz: The Poet Remembers (1988). In 2002, Němec was awarded a Medal of Merit for his work in culture (by president Václav Havel). In 2005 he received the Czech Lion award for his lifetime achievement, and his outstanding contribution to the world cinema was awarded with a Crystal Globe at KVIFF 2006 and later, in 2011, also with the Prize of The Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

### **FILMOGRAPHY - feature films:**

Diamonds of the Night (1964)

Crooks (1965) - short story in feature film Pearls of the Deep

The Party and the Guests (1965)

Martyrs of Love (1966)

In the Light of th King's Love (1990)

Code Name: Ruby (1996)

Late Talks with my Mother (2001)

Landscape of my Heart (2004)

Toyen (2005)

The Ferrari Dino Girl (2009)

Heart Beat 3D (2010)

The Wolf from The Royal Vineyard Street (2016)

AUTHORS & ACTORS:

Director: Jan Němec

Writer: Jan Němec

Second director: Tomáš Klein

DOP: Jiří Maxa

Music by: Dominik Dolejší, Eric Clapton, J.S. Bach

Editor: Josef Krajbich

Costume artist: Tereza Kučerová

Art director: Aneta Grňáková

Author of the festival poster: Tereza Kučerová

Creative producer / script editor: Jakub Felcman

Producer: Tomáš Michálek

Other producers: Jakub Mahler, Dagmar Sedláčková

Executive producer: Jakub Pinkava

Production: MasterFilm

Co-production: Czech Television, UPP, Media Film, Bocalupo Films

Supported by: State Cinematography Fund (CZ), Slovak Audiovisual Fund

Distribution: Film Distribution Artcam

Cast: Jiří Mádl, Karel Roden, Martin Pechlát, Tomáš Klein, Táňa Pauhofová, Gabriela

Míčová, Jiří Menzel, Jiří Bartoška, Markéta Janoušková, Robin Kvapil, Ted Otis,

Miloš Stehlík

AUTHORS:

**Jiří Maxa - director of photography**

Czech photographer and director of photography, started his career as a cameraman in 1970's Czechoslovak State Television, but through decades he evolved into rather artistic cinematographer, who is known for pleasure he finds in experimentating. He had worked with legendary Ivan Špaleta for more than 30 years, but he is known mostly for his work with legendary director Jan Němec. Together they made movies such as Toyen (2005), The Landscape of my Heart (2004) or The Ferrari Dino Girl (2009).

**Tomáš Klein - second director**

Student of directing at FAMU in Prague. His student shorts - *Mr. Rousek* and *The Obsession* succeeded at multiple international film festivals. Together with Tomáš Merta he makes his movies within their production company GURU FILM. Their short *Retriever* was selected to Cinéfondation competition of the Cannes Film Festival in 2015. Nowadays, they have been working on their feature debut - adaptation of a book by Zdeněk Perský, *Where is my home?* He was the second director of *The Wolf of Royal Vineyard Street*, a movie he later finished as a director on Jan Němec's request.

**Josef Krajbich – editor**

Czech editor, scriptwriter and cinematographer who has worked on many award-winning pictures, he is a graduate of the Department of Editing of FAMU. Krajbich won the prize for the best documentary at Jihlava Documentary Film Festival for *Women SHR* (dir. Martin Dušek and Ondřej Provazník). He took part in editing Robert Sedláček's TV series *The Czech Century* and worked on an acclaimed TV documentary *Into the Clouds We Gaze* (2014).

**Tereza Kučerová – costume artist**

Painter, art director, actress and also an author of animated films. As an art director, she worked on Jan Němec's *Toyen* (2005). She created costumes for movies like *We Are Never Alone* (2015), *Way Out* (2014), *Private Traps* (2008), *Pleasant Moments* (2001), *Parallel Worlds* (2001), *The Expulsion from Paradise* (2001), *Razor Blades* (1994), *Return to the Grave* (1990), *The Jester and the Queen* (1987). Or together with Ester Krumbachová *The Very Late Afternoon of a Faun* (1983). She is also the author of the festival poster of *The Wolf from Royal Vineyard Street*.

**Tomáš Michálek - producer**

Born in 1988 in Prague. He graduated at Production department of FAMU under the leadership of Jaromír Kallista, producer of Jan Švankmajer's films. In 2011, he co-founded Prague based production company MasterFilm, where he produces his own projects. He recently produced an independent feature debut of Tomáš Pavlíček *Totally Talking* (2013), which had its world release at Karlovy Vary IFF and

documentaries *The Dangerous World of Rajko Doleček* and *The Czech Way*, both successful at film festivals. Nowadays he's been focusing on a large film project about Czech cinematographer Jaroslav Kučera that includes an experimental film by Petr Václav and a documentary directed by Tomáš Michálek and Jakub Felcman. At the same time he has three more feature projects in development: an adaptation of a Czech best seller book *Fish Blood* and the new project by Tomáš Pavlíček *The Cottage Party*. The third project is a feature debut by Tomáš Klein *Where is my home?*, the director's previous film *Retriever* was selected to Cinéfondation 2015.

#### **Jakub Felcman – script editor, creative producer**

A graduate of the Department of Screenwriting at FAMU and Film Studies at Charles University. His feature film debut was the screenplay for the film *A Night Too Young*, which he co-wrote with Olmo Omerzu and Bruno Hájek (dir. Olmo Omerzu, 2012, premiered at Berlinale Forum), for television he wrote the screenplay for the film *Under the pavement is the beach* (r. Radim Spáček, 2013 Special Prize FITES - Trilobite). He won the FAMU award for the Best Screenplay (2007, *What's the most beautiful in the cafeteria*, together with Ondřej Provozník) and a Special Mention in the category of the best unrealized screenplay (2009, *To shave and brush your teeth once and for all*). However, his main profession is film curating and script editing. He is the director of Ostrava Kamera Oko, and used to be a program director at Fresh Film Fest and the head dramaturge for Čestmír Kopecký in the Czech Television. He occasionally publishes film essays and interviews.

#### **The Film Center of The Czech Television**

##### **Helena Uldrichová – head of the Film Center of ČT**

##### **Jaroslav Sedláček – main dramaturge of the Film Center of ČT**

The Film Center of The Czech Television is a crucial place for filmmakers, know-how wearers, and coordination point for assessing and processing co-productions with the Czech Television. The Film Center not only co-produces features of independent producers, it also makes effort to find new talents. When evaluating and developing scripts, the Film Center works closely with external experts; leading Czech writers, directors, theoreticians and script editors.

## ABOUT THE FILM WITH ITS AUTHORS

Producer Tomáš MICHÁLEK

### **What was the genesis of the *The Wolf from the Royal Vineyard Street*?**

The genesis was fun. I've always been a great admirer of Jan Němec's work and about two years ago I really wanted to see his film *Toyen*, but it was almost impossible to get to see that one. So I decided to arrange Němec's lecture at FAMU, where *Toyen* would be screened and the students could discuss the movie with Němec himself. And he really showed up and after the screening he talked about really wonderful and groundbreaking films he was about to make. Several months had passed before I got to know that Jan Němec was hoping to start shooting his long expected autobiographical film but the production circumstances were slightly complicated. So I had no other choice but to send him an email.. and we decided to give it a try together. And here we are.

### **Part of the shooting of *The Wolf from Royal Vineyard Street* took place at last year's Karlovy Vary IFF, now the movie symbolically returns here, straight to the main competition. What do you expect from introducing the film at this festival?**

Well, most symbolic is the return of the Wolf back here, to his own territory. Karlovy Vary IFF was greatly important for Jan Němec, it was no coincidence that part of the film takes place here. I'm eager to see how the Czech audience reacts. This movie tells a story of all of us, it is a Němec's cheerfully and communicatively narrated view of the second half of the 20th century. Cheerfully and communicatively. but not in an ingratiating way.

TOMÁŠ KLEIN – SECOND DIRECTOR /FINISHED THE FILM/

### **The first flap fell at last year's film festival in Cannes. How did the shooting go?**

After many years, Jan Němec returned to Cannes with great sense of perspective and I believe he truly enjoyed the filming which was done in a rather subversive way. Directly at the “crime scenes” of Němec's past, with no undue permits or hesitation. He knew perfectly how to use the atmosphere and the scenery of the festival to steal all what he needed for his story.

**Did Jan Němec know which actors he was going to choose when he was working on the script?**

He wanted Jiří Mádl for the leading role relatively early. I think this decision had more to do with how the Czech audience perceives Jiří than with some kind of similarity between the two. Němec primarily wanted the audience to identify with the character of John Jan, because at the end of the day it is a fiction, not a portrait of its author. The idea to engage Karel Roden as an alter ego of the director himself emerged relatively late, almost at the end of the shooting. Roden has already portrayed Němec's alter ego couple times before and in this film it just intensify the author's fiction. Beside Jiří Mádl, there's narrator Karel Roden as an alter ego of Jan Němec himself.

**Part of the shooting took place in the US but Jan Němec was unable to travel anymore. What was your approach towards directing this part of the film?**

From the very beginning Jan Němec knew he was not going to be able to travel to the States. He also knew he might not be in his physical power to finish this film himself. I think he surrounded himself with people of similar nature and spirit. At the very beginning of all this we also made an agreement that I would finish the film based on his instructions if need be. And that's what happened, together with editor Josef Krajbich and dramaturge Jakub Felcman we have finished what Němec could not. Jan Němec was a great and distinctive director who had a strong and clearly understandable story. So we had good guidelines and I believe we have finished the movie in a way Jan Němec would approve. He might be mad about some details, but he'd be content with the film as whole. And anyways, among other things, this movie is about how you can always find a way to tell your story, if it's good enough and you really feel like telling it. As long as you have the courage to look for that way. The story of John Jan illustrates the fate of our country very well, with all its ups and downs and it can serve as a great manual for life. If you stick to what you are good at and you keep doing the right things even when the difficult times come, you can leave with your head up and a strong message behind you.

JAKUB FELCMAN - DRAMATURGE AND CREATIVE PRODUCER

You were present to the birth of the script of *The Wolf from the Royal Vineyard Street*. What was your impetus for realization of a script based on a Jan Němec's book *Never Shake Hands With a Waiter*?

Back then I worked for creative department of Čestmír Kopecký in the Czech Television. I asked Kopecký if he would let me fight for a project I knew about and he replied that it would depend on what film it was. So I told him I had *The Wolf from the Royal Vineyard Street* on my mind, a film by Jan Němec. He tried his utmost to warn me, not sure if I had any idea what I was rushing in. But I already had my experience and I knew working with Jan Němec would be a never-ending terror - yet an unforgettable terror of a great value and benefit. And he said that if it was so, then... with pleasure. So when I met Jan Němec afterwards, I told him: "Mr. Němec, I chose this film of yours because if I only had one film I could finish in this job, it would be this one." Then he came to meet us one more time and said: "Lets do this!". And from that single sentence you could tell how important and difficult it was to make that decision. He later added: "When I decide to make a film, then I got to do it. Regardless of money and circumstances. Even if there wasn't a single crown, I have to make it happen. And you promised to give up anything for this film, so now you have to go all the way with me, until it's done."

#### **Who stands behind the birth of this film?**

First of all, there was Tomáš Michálek. He later brought his colleagues from MasterFilm production company, Jakub Mahler and Dagmar Sedláčková, but we can only be grateful to Tomáš Michálek that the production actually started, because he took the risk and started shooting before there was any real financing guaranteed. And it wasn't cheap since the very first shooting days took place at the 68th International Film Festival in Cannes. At the same time, the Film Center of the Czech Television deserves a lot of credit for offering its patronage and co-production even before there were money from the State Cinematography Fund. Which we also have to thank for its participation. The Cinematography Fund has decided to support this film when we were already filming in Cannes.

### **How did you work on the script as its dramaturge?**

Jan Němec knew the script by rote. Naturally - he lived through all of it. He just picked parts he wanted to tell, transformed them into short stories and then to a script. When it came to filming, he put all printed versions of the script aside - the technical screenplay was brought into the world piece by piece, written in hand it contained all imaginable hints and instructions, lists of props, scenic requirements and even indications of time schedules. Line producer Jakub Pinkava then compiled all of the data from this document and created a shooting plan.

I definitely wasn't the only one who worked on the script dramaturgically or the only one consulting the script with Jan Němec. At that moment, Tomáš Klein worked the same way and also everyone else who got carried away enough to express his opinion about any particular sequence - he would have to defend his idea in every possible detail but then Jan Němec would really take it into his consideration. Jan Němec had always had a clear vision of the exact scenes and of the order in which the story would be told, that was out of the discussion, but on set he was willing to accept and weight up ideas from the crew and used to choose from them. When the shooting was done, he used to propose his idea of sequencing and asked editor Josef Krajbich, the second director Tomáš Klein and me to debate about it.

### **What excited you the most about working with Jan Němec?**

Shooting of this film was the best lecture on film I've ever experienced. Jan Němec was a fantastic teacher. I wanted to be a part of this shooting also because I simply wanted to see how he works. I selfishly sent this upon myself as a lecture on film-making, drawing first Čestmír Kopecký, then Tomáš Michálek, then also the Czech Television and State Cinematography Fund and most importantly Jan Němec himself into the process with me.

And he rewarded us all very generously. Once the shooting had started he accepted all of us as members of the wolf pack. He was willing to share everything with us, like a magician who shares his magic tricks with others. And when he died, just days before the last shooting day. Jan Němec left the unfinished work, just when his opus started getting its final shape, in a very creative moment and with enthusiasm. And at full strength - the mental one, he never lost one bit of that one and he was incredible and always surprising in a new way. His motto was "On the

road again”, always straight to the fire, back to the front lines... and this just seems to be another stage. The hardest test your teacher can give you is when he leaves his work, which has already clear contours, for his students to finish. And that was the lesson he gave us - so after many years I finally feel like I've graduated from FAMU.

THE FILM CENTER OF THE CZECH TELEVISION

HELENA ULDRICHOVÁ, HEAD OF THE FILM CENTER

**Why did you decide to support *The Wolf from the Royal Vineyard Street*?**

When you're taking any kind of a project to the Program Council of the Czech Television, it always gets your adrenaline going, because you never know if it's going to be approved or not. Surprisingly, it is not a great joy when you succeed (because you are aware of how many troubles are still ahead). What you feel is relief, a plain relief. Last spring we decided to take *The Wolf from the Royal Vineyard Street* to the Program Council and something special happened. After the usual nervous waiting the good news and relief finally came. We sat in our office and Mr. Němec was literally shocked - he had been highly supported by the Czech television and for the first time it was really smooth and in a friendly atmosphere. He opened up, kept telling stories and talked about his plans and went on and on and time went by and it was already getting dark outside and the cleaning lady stepped in wondering what was wrong, why hadn't we left already. But none of us felt like going anywhere. It was such a rare moment of a pure happiness. Beautiful, simple, shared happiness that we will remember for the rest of our lives.

And so we hope the audience will remember films of Jan Němec, a greatly creative man, who never stopped searching for new ways and pushing the borders of film-making. He never took film as a hostage, instead he always served it faithfully. Hopefully, this obsession of his has its mark on *The Wolf from the Royal Vineyard Street*.

## ACTORS

### **Karel Roden - narrator / alter ego**

Born in Ceske Budejovice to a family of actors. Even his younger brother Marián became an actor. Roden is probably the most respected Czech actor of today. After graduating from DAMU he played in various well-known theatres and can still be seen in some of them to this day - such as Studio DVA in Prague.

Karel Roden is an internationally known actor. His work can be seen in such films as Paul Greengrass' wildly successful *The Bourne Supremacy*, the second film in the franchise starring Matt Damon; Guillermo del Toro's comics-based action thrillers *Hellboy* and *Blade II*; and *15 Minutes*, starring Robert De Niro and Edward Burns.

He was awarded a Czech Lion Prize for the best actor for his performance in a leading role of a psychological thriller *Guard No. 47*.

### **Jiří Mádl - John Jan**

At 16, the young Czech actor Jiri Mádl was poised to become a professional ice hockey player, but an elbow injury prevented him from pursuing this dream. Faced with a serious change in his plans and armed only with his experience in high school plays and drama classes, he auditioned for - and ultimately won the leading role - in Karel Janák's comedy *Snowboarders*. Awarded with the Czech Lion for the most successful film of 2004, Mádl was simultaneously the youngest person ever named to the Personalities of the Czech Republic list by the Czech MF DNES Magazine. His role in *Night Owls* (2008) is taken for his best performance, for which he received the Best Actor Award at the 2008 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. In 2014 he wrote and directed his first feature film *To see the sea*, he won the Price RWE of the Czech Film Critics.

## ABOUT CREATING FILMS IN GENERAL

### **Jan Němec, director**

#### **Where does an initial idea, a film theme, come from?**

*"It is not a general question, that's the key. The first must be the impetus - "this should be a film!" That is always the first and the most important reason, at least for my work and the work of my colleagues. To realize that this is the best and the most important idea. No matter what the idea is.*

*You have to be able to say: I want this to be a film, a book, an idea, a dialogue, a political situation, a drama ... anything. Well, and then - I want to do it in a way no one else would ever do it. This is such a shabby statement: I only make films that I want to see in the theatres and I know that nobody else is going to make them, so I do it myself. "*

Jan Němec workshop at FAMU, April 2015

OFFICIAL WEBSITE

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/vlk>

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