



Jaquinot: A Forgotten Hero (USA)

Director: Krzysztof Zanussi

Company: TOR Productions

Producer: Jerry W. Carlson

Company: Storia Films

Screenplay: Marcia Ristaino

Genre: Historical Drama

Shooting Material: 35mm

Duration: 120min

Stage of Script: Draft

Production Budget: 10,000,000 USD

Finance in Place: 1,000,000 USD

Partner Involved by Now: TOR Productions (Warsaw Poland)

Seeking: Co-producer, Territory Buyer, Advertising Sponsor

Synopsis:

While Shanghai is brutally attacked by Japan in 1937, the aristocratic French Jesuit, Father Robert Jacquinot de Besange, sets up an International Safe Zone, the “Jacquinot Zone,” which rescued 300,000 Chinese, a first in recorded history. Endowed with gifts of character and an optimistic nature, he also knows how to bend the rules to meet most situations.

When the Japanese invade China in 1937, decimating everything in their path, one of their first targets is the city of Shanghai. After a brutal aerial and naval attack in August, Jacquinot takes on the task of negotiating (almost single handedly) with the warring Japanese military and the Chinese authorities to establish a Safe Zone that might protect the thousands of non-combatant Chinese unable to flee the city.

An operator and a charmer, Fr. Jacquinot knows how to circumvent the rules. He presents plans shrewdly tailored to the perceived self-interest of the Japanese while protecting Chinese civilians. Ironically, he has to fight a second-front with his Jesuit superiors, who now view him as too political and a possible liability.

Sent to fundraise in the U.S. and Canada, he meets with Japanese Prime Minister, Hirota Koki, and then with President Roosevelt, who authorizes \$700,000, in those depressed times, for the Safe Zone. In an unprecedented move, Japanese General Matsui, as he carries out the horrendous Nanjing Massacre, provides 10,000 yen in support of Jaquinot’s Safe Zone. Back in Shanghai, Fr. Jacquinot returns to the Zone, which is located in what is now the very midst of Shanghai’s ongoing urban warfare. Compared with other world rescue activity, this is without precedent. The Zone’s operation is explained: 80,000 children to feed, clothing and housing to provide,

medical care, etc. Yet the Zone concept is copied elsewhere, leading to the rescue of half a million refugees.

The script will be adapted from THE JACQUINOT SAFE ZONE by Marcia Ristaino.

Creation statement:

There are basically two kinds of historical films: those that view the past as an instructive museum (GANDHI is a fine example of this style) and those that create a living, dynamic past where decision making is difficult because it is made in the heat of the present not in the cool of repose (THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS is the canonical example here). JACQUINOT will follow the latter path. It will portray the heroism of Father Jacquinot by immersing the audience in the chaos of Shanghai in wartime as he moves steadily to rescue others and create a model of enduring importance of how to protect civilians. Other recent films UNITED 93 about 9/11 and BOYCOTT about Martin Luther King show how successful this approach can be.

Director's Biography:

Born in 1939 Krzysztof Zanussi has directed feature films since 1967. One of Poland's most distinguished filmmakers he has won awards at Cannes, Tokyo, Montreal & many other festivals. In addition, he is a deeply experienced producer and studio head. He produced the internationally acclaimed *Decalogue* for his colleague Krzysztof Kieslowski. Mr. Zanussi's own award winning films include *Constant Factor*, *Year of the Quiet Sun*, and *At Full Gallop*, among many others. He speaks seven languages.

Producer's Biography:

Jerry W. Carlson has over twenty years experience as a producer of television and film. He has created over 500 episodes of television including sequences shot in France, Germany, Colombia, and Taiwan, among many other places. As for his feature film experience, he has co-produced two award winning dramas *Dirt* directed by Nancy Savoca and *Looking for Palladin* directed by Andrzej Krakowski.

Storia Films is a new company formed with industry veterans Rich Guay and Joshua Harrison for the development of international film projects. The company will soon complete its first feature length film, a documentary directed by Nancy Savoca about the legendary jazz saxophonist Gato Barbieri filmed in the USA, Japan, & Argentina.

Contact:

Storia Films

TEL: 1-917-5703628

Email: jwc3467@aol.com