



“BUY THE WIFE - GET THE PASSPORT FREE”



PRESS KIT

Synopsis

Marko and Atanas are two dudes whose lives would be sweet as strudel but for an annoying little problem with their papers. They need a European passport and they are prepared to do almost anything to get one, including buying a wife. With nothing but their brass necks and 7,000 euros, they set out to find the woman of their dreams — one who will walk them down aisle and then hang around long enough for the divorce. An odyssey through Vienna's immigrant netherworld, this real-life Green Card is an hilarious and touching insight into what it takes to jump the barriers of Fortress Europe.

Marko und Atanas sind zwei Freunde, deren Leben so süß wie Apfelstrudel sein könnte - wäre da nicht ein kleines Problem mit ihren Papieren. Sie wollen einen EU-Pass und dafür sind sie bereit fast alles zu tun, sogar eine Braut zu kaufen. Mit nichts als ein bisschen Optimismus und 7.000 Euro in der Tasche machen sie sich auf den Weg, die Frau ihrer Träume zu finden. Eine, die bereit ist, für Geld vor den Altar zu treten und bis zur möglichen Scheidung mit ihnen rumzuhängen. Eine reale Green Card-Story und witzige Odyssee durch die Unterwelt des Wiener Migrantenmilleus. CASH & MARRY zeigt, was es braucht, um über die Barrikaden europäischer Grenzen zu springen.



The Film

Cash & Marry tells the story of young immigrants--'Yugos'--doing anything they can to pursue their dream in the European Union. The media and analysts convince us that young people "flee" to Western European countries in search of better life, more money and opportunities. *Cash & Marry* explores this notion without seeking to prove or disprove it. Instead, the film, presents the immigrants, shows their background, asking the questions about their own motivation and ideas while at the same time presenting the procedure and life-changes they go through. It is not a sociological study as much as it is a film about people in a difficult, unordinary and often absurd situation. Through their examples *Cash & Marry* sheds light on the issue of immigration but with a fresh perspective.

Our protagonists feel they deserve better. Their education and lifestyle isn't much different from those of their peers in the West. Their views on the world are almost identical to views young people in the EU have. These immigrants want a job, a car, a place to live. They want to be able to travel. The people *Cash & Marry* deals with are not struck by poverty; hunger did not drive them from their homes in search of food or elementary living conditions. They had that at home. They still have it if they return. But they want more and nothing will come between their desires and them; not even borders, Schengen regimes, bureaucracy, immigration laws, language, culture.

The author, Atanas Georgiev, is one of the main characters in the movie, who reflects the Balkan man closed behind bars, looking for a way to break down the wall between self and the world, between the Balkans and Europe, the Balkans and the world. The answer how to get to his freedom lies in the European passport. And the passport comes with the European wife. With a harlequin wittiness, lambency and astuteness, the path to his wife is opened by his friend Marko from Sarajevo, who knows very well Vienna and all places where a wife can be found, a wife who can bring Atanas his freedom, and who knows - maybe even love.

the 'Yugos' pay the fee in monthly installments. These girls, the brides, they don't become rich over night. They will receive their money monthly over three years. That's less than € 200 per month. Hardly a sum that will make your head spin. So why is it that they do it? Why is it that bulletin boards in dormitories in Vienna have numerous post-it ads offering cash for marriage? Our research shows that the friends of those girls that had already done it think it is a "cool" thing. It becomes a trend.

The same research had so far revealed that most of these brides are from immigrant backgrounds. They are Austrian nationals but their parents may have arrived in Vienna a few decades ago. Maybe they do it because they can understand how the 'Yugos' feel. We can only assume that they have a better knowledge of what it means to be a minority culture, a foreigner, an immigrant. So the real question for them is: why do you want to help these immigrants?

Question: What?

Their stories are personal and our documentary explores them. Each is a separate, unique story but what is universal is their method: get married. We are going to tell their stories about how they got there and what drove them out of their countries as well as what happens once they arrive in Vienna. The documentary answers questions about how they make their living, how you find a girl to marry you, what happens during the three-year process?

First our immigrant has to arrive in Vienna. Then he has to find a place to live. Then he has to look for a wife. He has to somehow raise the money for a wife--a difficult task for all of them. Anything and everything from getting the visa to finally receiving the citizenship is explored in *Cash & Marry*. The film focuses on the process of finding a wife and marrying her, but it also covers all of the other aspects and segments of the whole adventure.

Question: Where?

The quest begins in Macedonia where our protagonist prepares to leave for Austria. He knows what he is doing and he knows how to do it. We see the reasons for his decision to embark on this journey and we see the reaction of his friends and family to what he plans.

The next location is Vienna--our hero arrives. Where will he live? With Marko they share a shabby apartment and make their plans.

They visit shady taverns and inns where the usual ex-Yugoslav immigration milieu resides. Loud "turbo folk" music blares inside these dirty rooms. Cigarette smoke makes your eyes sting. Serbs, Bosnians, Croats--they are all here, knights of the grey-market, barons of the bauschtel (Building Sites). These are smugglers doing favors to small-time crooks who work for big-time crime-lords. Our protagonist and Marko are looking for help in finding a wife. If you have the cash you can get the goods in these places. But are you brave enough to deal with these people? Because, don't forget, the young immigrants we portray are not criminals. They don't belong in these taverns anymore then an Vienna-born guy their age belongs there.

So they move on to fancy clubs, discotheques, parties and places where the Vienna youth hangs out. Marko and our protagonist meet Austrian girls and ask them if they would be willing to marry for cash? It's a different world here. Flashing lights make your eyes sting. Electronic music blares inside these stroboscopic halls. Young people come here to party.

Various apartments where immigrants live. These vary from run-down rooms for rent to basements. Our protagonists come here to meet the immigrants who already are in fake-marriages. We see how they live and visit their fake-brides and see how they live too. What are the differences between an immigrant's dwelling and the residence of his bride?



Question: Who?

Cash & Marry is a film about immigrants made by immigrants.

One of the co-producers is a Macedonian filmmaker currently living between Canada and Macedonia. The writer left Macedonia, married a Croatian girl and now lives and works in Croatia. The director has lived in Macedonia, Vienna, Prague and London during the last six years. He is always on the move, always scoring jobs here or there which is why he has access to the characters and life-stories presented in this documentary.



Atanas Georgiev – Director



Born 1977 in Mazedonien.

Studied at the Arts Academy in Skopje, Film und TV Editing.

Works as director and editor and lives in Prague.

Filmography:

- “YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY” - documentary, TV
- “BALKAN BLUE” - Series of 4 TV documentaries
- “DJOLOMARS” - documentary, TV
- “SACRIFICING IN THE VILLAGE OF POKRAJCEVO” - documentary, TV
- “WHO IS THE BEAST ?” - documentary, TV

Credits

A/HR/MK 2009, DVCAM, Stereo

Director
Atanas Georgiev

Script
Marjan Alcevski

DOP
Dimitar Popov

Editor
Vladimir Gojun

Music
FOLTIN

Producers
Ralph Wieser, Sinisha Juricic, Atanas Georgiev

Production
Mischief Films, Nukleus (HR), Tris Film (MK)

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ITVS (USA), ORF

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