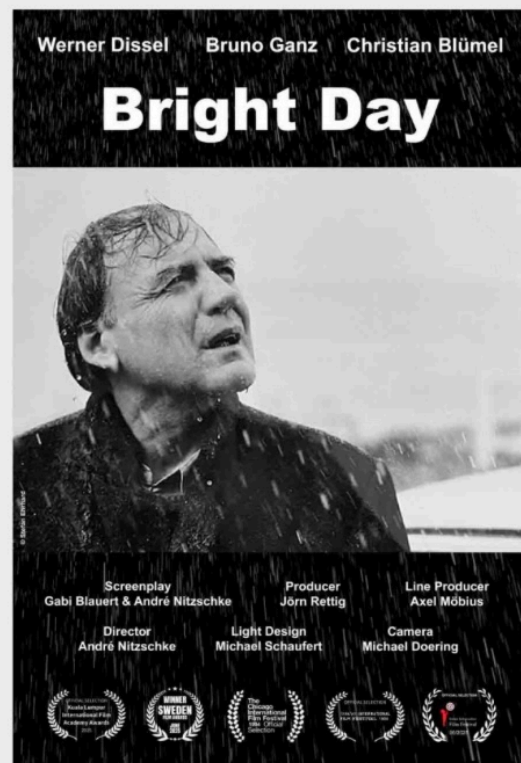


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A Special VIP Interview: André Nitzschke
(Germany).

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A Special VIP Interview: André Nitzschke (Germany)

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1. Hello André, we appreciate you providing us with an exclusive interview regarding your project, “Heller Tag” Viewing your project has made us very happy. Since this project was completed in 1994, could you please share your experience working on it?

“Bright Day” was created as the graduation film of my film directing studies at the Konrad Wolf University of Film and Television. We came together as a young team: production student Jörn Rettig, co-writer Gabi Blauert and cinematographers Michael Döring and Michael Schaufert. A year earlier, we had made a 20-minute short film titled “Farewell,” a scene from the planned later film “Bright Day.” We wanted to test how the film’s intended aesthetic would work on the big screen. Upon its completion, this film was nominated for a Student Academy Award in Los Angeles. A year later, I presented the screenplay “Bright Day,” written by writer Gabi Blauert and myself, to European film star Bruno Ganz, known from films such as “Paris Texas” and Wim Wenders’ “The American

Friend.“ At the time, nobody believed that Bruno Ganz would agree to take on the lead role. After a walk with me through East Berlin, he agreed. The astonishment of the German film industry was great. The film’s story is told in the form of a metaphor, a parable, in the tradition of the aesthetics of the famous directors Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman. So it’s certainly not easy viewing for the audience. The film’s budget of 800,000 euros was financed through various state film grants. That was unusual at the time, as we were still students. I have a very dedicated team to thank for making this film possible. Be it Gabi Blauert, the co-writer, Jörn Rettig, Axel Möbius, who produced the film with me, the cameramen Michael Döring and Michael Schaufert and many other members of the film crew, the lighting technicians, all the assistants, the production managers and many others. We had shot the film, had finished the final edit, when we ran out of money. I presented the final edit of the film to renowned director Wim Wenders. He was impressed by the film and arranged a meeting with the deputy head of television feature films at WDR Television. He saw the film, was also very impressed and bought the German television rights. Due to the very tense cultural and political upheaval in the German film business, we only showed this film at

large festivals such as the Tokyo International Film Festival, Young Cinema Competition section, and the International Chicago Film Festival Competition, as well as at renowned European film festivals. The film received an excellent review

from important North American critics in the Chicago Tribune; they wrote that “Bright Day” is one of the most important German films of recent years. That was a great honor for us students and for the film. Despite this, we did not distribute the film on DVD or give it to a film distributor. Over the years, there have been many inquiries about the film. It

was only this year, 2025, that I decided to make this film available to international festivals and thus to the global public again. Your festival is one of them for me. It’s off to a good start; at the Sweden Film Awards 2025, June edition, the film won the award for Best Actor. We’ll see how it goes.

2. Why did you decide on this specific content?

I was seriously ill at the time. I didn’t know if I would survive. The idea for this film came about during this time, and we shot it in 26 days.

3. Give us more information about yourself and your career path

I grew up in the GDR, East Germany. I had seven siblings. I was the

youngest child. I passed the film directing exams at the Konrad Wolf University of Film and Television in 1996. In the GDR, you weren't allowed to make films without a degree. And only six students were allowed to study every two years. There were more than 100 applicants per year. However, I wasn't allowed to start my studies because I made three amateur films that the politicians in charge didn't like because of the critical content in the films. And I didn't want to become a member of the SED, the state party. I was only allowed to study shortly after the reunification of the two German states. I have been working as a freelance author, director and producer

since 1994. In addition to my work as an artist, I managed a humanitarian aid project in Sri Lanka for decades, from 1999 to 2021. An orphanage project, a school and much more in a Buddhist temple in Sri Lanka. In

addition, I worked for a time as a senior coordinator in international medical humanitarian crisis intervention, e.g. in Sri Lanka. I'm currently taking a break from that to focus on my new film projects. I've taught at various film schools and prepared students for their professional lives. I've worked with them as a mentor and producer on films for a small Berlin TV station. Some of them have since become highly successful nationally and internationally.



4. Would you mind giving us a sneak peek at some of your next projects in this field

At this point in the interview, I'd like to mention that even back then, I decided to develop and realize just a few film projects of my own. In 1994, I settled on about three major feature film projects. These were the thriller "Two Up" (The Book), the arthouse movie "The Sheen of Night," the second part of "Bright Day," and the thriller "Broken Desert." In 1995, immediately after "Bright Day," we received project development funding from European Script London and producer funding from ACE Paris for the thriller "Two Up." An international honor for Gabi Blauert and me. I then developed the project for several years. Here's an insight into the project's development history. I mention this project history at this point in the interview so that independent filmmakers at the beginning of their careers can understand what project development can mean and what consequences it can have. 1997 script and project development: European Script London, ACE Paris, many meetings with the famous British actor Alan Rickmann 1997 20th Century Fox USA, Bob Aaronson (VP Acquisition and Production) "After

reading the script, Mr. Aaronson was very interested in international distribution, sales, and in a coproduction (for Fox Searchlight).” Bob Aaronson: “No problem with Andrey Nitzschke as director after seeing his film “Bright Day” starring Bruno Ganz 1997 Miramax Films USA, Jennifer Burman (creative director) After reading the script she was very interested in international distribution. 1997 New Line Cinema, USA, Paul Federbush “Because of “the great idea”, the very compelling story and very good script both would like to get updates of further developments with “interest in end distribution of the film”. 1998 Producer Shoko Kimizuka, Japan (“Smoke”) She liked the story very much although she can’t access the project without main producer. producer Wieland Schulz- Keil (worked together with John Huston, Peter Bogdanovich, Roger Spottiswoode, Anthony Hopkins, Alan Rickman, Arthur Cohen) what very interested in production but ends after failed negotiations between agency of authors and him about the contracts script. I was very sad about. My wish was to work with him. Another German producer ultimately won the contract, which proved to be a momentous mistake. We lost the rights to the material for 28 years. The reason for this development was that, after signing the script and directing contract, the producers revealed to us that they would like to realize the film with other well-known authors and a other renowned director. We did

not agree. The consequences were serious. Only this year, together with the agency, did we succeed in transferring the rights back. And

now, 28 years later, I'm sounding out potential producers in England. You can see what filmmaking entails. And now I will give you some information about other future projects. The Arthouse movie „The Sheen of Night, the second part of “Bright Day.” The

film is set in the refugee camps of Greece and primarily in Sri Lanka. It was originally supposed to be set in India, but due to the high costs in India

and my positive experiences in Sri Lanka, I revised the material and

set the story in Sri Lanka. “The Sheen of Night” is, like “Bright Day”, an arthouse movie, telling the story of a great love, telling of farewell. The Thriller “Broken Desert.” The film is a challenging commercial feature film project. I presented it to Paramount USA in

2017, and they found it very interesting. But then the studio management changed. I'm currently in talks with various producers

in England and the USA. Alan Rickmann (Die Hard with Bruce Willis, Harry Potter), who gave me great support in my plans, was interested in the lead role. I got to know him well through the TWO UP project; he was also interested in the lead role in this project for a very long time. Then he died. Oh, before I forget, I've developed a two-part international documentary film in 2024 that will be funded by sponsors. The title: “The Secret.” The film tells the story of the

extraordinary work of Gerhard F. Klügl, a very well-known alternative medicine practitioner in Europe, who has developed a system of subtle, bloodless surgery and collaborates with orthopedists, surgeons, dentists, and other medical professionals throughout Europe. Gerhard F. Klügl also helped me a lot with his method. This will be an extraordinary film. An independent distributor in the USA will market the film worldwide. These projects are now ready for development, financing, and release.

5. What have been some of the most challenging positions you have held in your professional life, and what challenges did you face along the way?

All my positions have been demanding, whether as a writer, director and producer, as a senior coordinator in international medical humanitarian crisis intervention, as a supporter of aid projects in Sri Lanka, as a film teacher for students or as a husband and father. Of course, the suffering experienced in crisis intervention puts many things into perspective. The emotional challenge is great and painful, especially in Sri Lanka.

6. You are from Germany how is the state of the film industry there right now? Which movie—the commercial or the art house—did you prefer?

There is no film industry as such. Unfortunately, many different film funding programs have existed for years, to the detriment of the producers and filmmakers who collect the money. I don't envy the producers who then manage this money with varying degrees of risk. The situation for many independent filmmakers is not good. Most cannot make a living from their work. I don't know how I could give you a detailed answer to that question. To be honest, I don't think the situation is good. You ask me which type of movie making I prefer? Commercial or arthouse? I do prefer good arthouse movies and I do prefer good commercial movies too.

7. In 2025, we will all be reliant on AI filmmaking. What do you think? Is artificial intelligence filmmaking the next big thing in filmmaking?

Yes. AI will have a huge impact on future filmmaking. But I have the feeling AI won't be able to replace the human soul in films. Film, whether commercial or arthouse, is the expression of one soul or several souls. That's something very individual that characterizes us humans. AI is not a soul. We'll see what the future teaches us about that.

8. What is your opinion on independent filmmakers, and how do

they connect or market their films to the right distribution channels?

I think very highly of independent filmmakers. But are we independent filmmakers truly independent? I don't think so! We'll never truly be! Ultimately, it's all about knowing the right people, meeting them, and being able to present a very good script. Everything else either falls into place or it doesn't. Film is teamwork, not just walking on red carpets. Success is not the same. But sometimes that only becomes apparent at the end of one's life.

9. To conclude, once again, many thanks, and what message would you like to share with the next generation regarding your love of guidance?

My advice: Never give up. If film has irretrievably captivated you as a creative medium, be aware that telling stories is sometimes a long marathon. Some filmmakers reach the finish line early, others much later, or not at all. However, there are no defeats. It's the experiences, good and bad, that we experience. Film isn't everything in life. But my advice again: Never give up.

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