

A Film by
Diana Maria Olsson



FIRST CLASS CITIZEN



The Power and Control Wheel





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In the beginning, I wanted to make a film to encourage other women to leave their violent husbands, I wanted to say "leave him you will get help...." Now I would say: "stay with him, keep silent, let him beat you because then you can stay with your child."

SHORT SYNOPSIS

When director Diana Maria Olsson survives violence in an intimate relationship she wants to encourage other women to leave their violent spouses. She discovers the system in Sweden and her film turns from a journalistic investigation into a personal tragedy. The judicial process transforms her intimate story from a personal struggle into a geopolitical thriller. Systematically removed children, hierarchies, aggressive silence, structural violence, the violation of fundamental human rights are all part of the exposure of the dark unknown scandal in Sweden.

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/582881866>

TAG LINE

Let him beat you
because you can stay
with your child







LONG SYNOPSIS

"First-Class Citizen" is a Swedish-Lithuanian documentary about power and control from the micro (family) to the macro (country) level. It is a path-breaking story for foreign women and their children in Nordic countries. The film is about toxic masculinity, patriarchy, misogyny, child abuse, victim-blaming, and alienation. "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" according to George Orwell. As we learn through the film that society looks towards foreign women as "double disable".

It is well-known that victims don't leave violent homes because they are afraid they will lose their children and home. During 2 years of filming suddenly I became proof of that. A woman with 4 university degrees and work experience in Television and Parliament, loses everything and becomes homeless in the name of love. The story tells that you should be careful not of your enemies, but of those who say: I love you. The film plot suddenly expands through a 12 years timeline, where everything started with love: I took my Master's diploma and after one week I met my husband in the old church in Vilnius.

It can happen anywhere to everyone. Every 4 women in Sweden are experiencing violence in intimate relationships. The COVID-19 pandemic just highlighted the problem. If we do nothing we are a part of a problem. The personal struggle illustrates the violence in intimate relationships and institutional abuse, it takes the spectator into the corridors of the Swedish social system and questions the Swedish justice system. As scene by scene, we learn how an exemplary foreign mother can lose the battle over her child's custody. We also see from other European mothers that they were battling uneven battles with their abusive ex-husbands and eventually losing their children due to false accusations.

As we see through the film the judicial process quickly degenerates into a Kafkaesque scenario for a foreign-born mother. In 2019, because of violence in the family, the court in Malmö decided that my son would live permanently with me, but would be able to see his father every week. After the divorce, my ex-husband was awarded full custody of our child. My 3-year-old son only had the right to see his mother four times a year. Never leave your violent spouse. Let him hurt you! We still live in an age when your husband has the right to beat you in front of your child, to form relationships with several women while he is married and to get his mistress pregnant, threaten his wife with a knife, take no interest in their child and yet be granted full custody of the child after the divorce.

Separation is a dangerous time when violence by ex-partners can escalate and children can be at serious risk. Harassment and revenge often go hand-in-hand. Abusers use their children, manipulate people in the environment, and carry out economic harassment, which is a clear example of how the justice system is used. Decisions about who gets listened to come back to nationality. Second-class humans, according to nationality, race, gender, and income have no opportunity to protect themselves or their children.

According to the experts, the statistics (of how many children are taken) are manipulated and deliberately hidden. The most fragile families are exposed to this, especially mixed families. Approximately 30 000 of all children in Sweden will be taken away from their parents by social services. There are no recent statistics of children with foreign parents, this information has not been published since 2014. Behind every taken child there is a story. A story that is rarely or never heard.

The film *First-Class Citizen* depicts the director's very personal story - of her life as a young Lithuanian woman living in Sweden. She survived violence followed by a divorce from her Swedish ex-husband. This personal journey takes us into the dark corridors of the Swedish social system and questions the justice system of this Nordic country. As scene by scene, we learn how an exemplary foreign mother can lose the battle over her Childs' custody. We also learn from other European mothers that they were battling uneven battles with their abusive ex-husbands and eventually losing their children without any justifiable explanation. First, the man abuses his partner alone, but as she decides to leave, he abuses her together with the whole social and legal system. Research shows that there are 5 % of partners (with some inclination to narcissistic psychopathy) who go through a separation, will do everything to destroy their ex-partner and this is happening all around the world, every day, and in well-developed, civilized countries too. This documentary is a wake-up call to all of us who care.

In the film are interviews with the survivors of domestic violence. Foreign women are afraid to separate from their husbands because they are afraid to lose their children and home. We must hear these women and make conclusions. The film is a part of a rising movement #Wetoo. To organize and unite all foreign-born mothers, Diana created the organization "Child and Family in Focus". All foreign-born mothers want to get their children back and live a peaceful life by giving their children mothers love, care, and education.



A woman from Ukraine: "They took my daughters from me and said: "Institutions are big and you are a very little person".

CREW

Written, produced and directed
by Diana Maria Olsson

Co-Producer

Rasa Miškinytė

Cinematographers

Hampus Linder

Diana Maria Olsson

Editors

Diana Maria Olsson

Armas Rudaitis

Colorist / Technical Director

Tomas Rugys

Sound Design and Postproduction

Lina Semaškaitė

Animator

Vykintas Labanauskas

FEATURING

Eveliina Sinisalo

Author and Expert in Intimate
Partner Violence

Tatjana Janjic

CEO of International Women
Centre

Tove Karlsson

Scientist and Author

Foreign-born women

TECH SPECS

Duration: 57 min.

Languages: English / Swedish

With English subtitles

Screening format: DCP



Director
Diana Maria Olsson
Zen Division, Sweden



Diana is a director and a journalist. She was working with Lithuanian National Television (LRT) and Swedish National Television (SVT). She was the editor and scriptwriter of telecasts "Portraits of time", and "Attitude" found in the Golden Archive of LRT

Diana has double master's and double bachelor's degrees — in directing, journalism, public relations, and visual culture from Vilnius University and Lund University (Sweden). She has also studied a civilization course at Sorbonne University. Diana has also experience within politics (Lithuanian Parliament). She can speak Lithuanian, English, Swedish, Russian, German and French. She is a founder of a film production company "Zen Division" (Sweden) and the president of the organization "Child and Family in Focus" (Sweden).

ZEN DIVISION COMPANY PROFILE:

An independent film production company in Malmö, Sweden, founded by Diana Maria Olsson in 2018. The first documentary in Swedish "Flickan Flaskan och Fosterlandet" (58 min) was fully funded by SVT.

Co-Producer
Rasa Miškinytė
Era Film, Lithuania



Rasa studied film production management at Lithuanian Music Academy, at the Theatre and Cinema department, and at The European Film College, Denmark. After their studies in Denmark, she got employed at Lithuanian Radio and Television Public broadcaster as the Head of the Film production department. Since 2006, Rasa has been working as an independent producer within her own company UAB "ERA FILM" (www.erafilm.lt).

ERA FILM COMPANY PROFILE:

Established in Vilnius in 2001 by the Lithuanian producer, Rasa Miskinyte, ERA FILM is known for producing award-winning international documentary films. Made more than 20 films most of which are co-productions with: France, Germany, Poland, Ireland, Spain. ERA FILM has co-produced or cooperated with such broadcasters as MDR (Germany), NHK (Japan), TG4 (Ireland), BBC-NI (UK), AVRO (The Netherlands), YLE (Finland), TVP2 (Poland), Belsat TV (Poland/Belorussia), ERR (Estonia), DR (Denmark), SVT (Sweden), NRK (Norway), TSR (Switzerland).

The film "Exemplary Behaviour" was completed in 2019, awarded: Golden Dove International Competition Long Documentary and Animated Film at the 62nd DOK Leipzig (28 October - 3 November 2019). The film also took home the Prize of the Interreligious Jury and the FIPRESCI International Critics Prize. Special Mention at Documentary Film Festival in Ljubljana, 2020. Special Mention at ZagrebDOX International Competition, 2020. Vesna Award for the best original Music to Marjan Sijanec at Festival of Slovenian Films, 2020. Main Award Documentary Competition 18° Festival Internacional Signos da Noite, 2020.

Cinematographer
Hampus Linder
Nordic Factory, Sweden



Hampus Linder is a Swedish director and Cinematographer, active since 2002. Hampus started his film career as a 16-year-old student at the Film School on Swedish Ingmar Bergman island, Gotland, and has subsequently studied at the different Swedish film schools.

He studied directing and screenwriting in Gothenburg. He has filmed high cultural value projects for Swedish National Television (SVT), such as "Cobra", "Music Special" and "K-special". Hampus Linder directed the documentary "Gudrun - The Art of Being a Human", a film about a famous Swedish feminist politician, which was presented not only in Sweden but also in Europe and the USA.

NORDIC FACTORY COMPANY PROFILE:

Nordic Factory is a Swedish/Danish collaboration for art & media production and development with a focus on film, TV, web, and training.

