



COURAGE

**A Film By
Greg Zglinski**

Press Kit from Polish Distributor Best Film

Distribution Switzerland: Cinélibre
Postfach 534, 3000 Bern 14
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CAST

Alfred..... Robert Więckiewicz
Jurek Łukasz Simlat
Viola Gabriela Muskała
Father Marian Dziędziel
Mother Anna Tomaszewska
Klara Karolina Kominek
Kosa Paweł Tomaszewski
Silny Tomasz Schuchardt
Misiu..... Paweł Ferens
Brachu Kacper Gaduła-Zawratyński

CREW

Directed by..... Grzegorz Zglinski
Written by Janusz Margański, Grzegorz Zglinski
Director of Photography Witold Płóciennik PSC
Editing Leszek Starzyński PSM
Musical Score Jacek Grudzień, Mariusz Ziemia
Sound Michał Kosterkiewicz
Make-up Izabela Andrys, Patrycja Puławska – Krasicka
Wardrobe Małgorzata Zacharska
Production coordinator..... Jacek Gawryszczak
Produced by Łukasz Dziecioł, Piotr Dziecioł

ABOUT THE FILM

Action Drama

TRT:..... 85 min

Country of Production..... Polska

Year of Production 2011

Production..... Opus Film

Co-financed by Polish Film Institute, The City of Lodz Office

Distribution Best Film

Polish Premiere November 4th 2011

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AWARDS AND FESTIVALS

36. Gdynia Film Festival

- Winner, Best Script – Janusz Margański & Greg Zglinski
- Winner, Best Supporting Actress – Gabriela Muskała
- Winner, Best First or Second Film – Greg Zglinski

16. Pusan International Film Festival - Flash Forward Official Selection

27. Warsaw Film Festival

- Winner, Best Actor – Robert Więckiewicz
- Winner, SIGNIS Award

27. Haifa International Film Festival

26. Mar Del Plata International Film Festival

OPIS

The strongest movie of the year! Robert Więckiewicz plays the role of a lifetime, breaking all stereotypes of leading men.

Your life can change in a matter of seconds.

Alfred (Robert Więckiewicz) lives on the edge. He likes fast cars and adrenaline, but it's his younger brother that takes more risks when it comes to running the family business. Everything divides them: a woman, their business, their parents' attention. Alfred's jealousy and resentment begins to turn into open arguments.

Today, Alfred will do something that will change his life forever.

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REVIEWS ABOUT THE FILM

As one of Kieslowski's brightest students, the director gives the protagonist a chance for salvation. Can he attain this salvation, if he doesn't believe in himself? Is he destined to be the one that couldn't cut it? Is he also a victim? I haven't seen such an astute commentary on the matter since "A Short Film About Killing." Reminiscent of a classic Hitchcockian thriller, Zglinski's "Courage" presents accidents that become the driving force of a person's fate.

Tadeusz Sobolewski, Gazeta Wyborcza

With its intensity and own brand of emotional brutality, the film's paradoxically subtle tone gets underneath the audience's skin and leaves them in a stupor. The story is tragic, real, and totally accidental. Zglinski's film remains in your mind long after you leave the theater and has rocketed him into the pantheon of today's young film talent that would make Andrzej Munk, Krzysztof Kieslowski, and Wojciech Has proud.

Katarzyna Kasperska, Wp.pl

(...) a great film, well acted (Robert Więckiewicz soars!), well put together and proof that Zglinski not only has a great sense of cinema, but is also growing as an artist.

Jakub Majmurek, Krytyka polityczna

"Courage" is a film that makes one reflect their own morality. At times, that morality is put to the test in the least expected moments. The protagonist, though not a sympathetic figure and with whom it is difficult to identify, inspires compassion. Mostly because "Courage" is a film about the fragility of life.

Przemysław Lewandowski, Stopklatka.pl

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was interested in touching the basic topic of cowardice and the guilt that is associated with it. Everyone has had a situation (some more serious than others) in which they cowered. I don't think it happens because we are bad people, but simply because we are weak. Weakness is something that we (especially men) tend to hide, but it is a defining part of human nature. Weakness is embarrassing and grotesque, but gives us a chance at redemption.

I always try to show my characters as fully dimensional human beings. I'm interested what they would do in extreme situations. It is often the case that an unexpected situation makes a person react contrary to their beliefs and habits. At the same time, they reveal a hidden part of their nature. They don't want to admit to being this way or that; they deny. However, when their backs end up against the wall, they try to escape from having to take responsibility for it, defending themselves in all manners until they are inevitably forced to remove their everyday masks. In doing this, they save something that ends up being the most important thing: love. This is exactly what this film is about.

Greg Zglinski

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

"*Courage*" is the second film from the Venice Film Festival's Signis and Cinema Avvenire awarded Greg Zglinski. The producer is Łukasz Dziecioł who was captivated by Zglinski's "*An Entire Winter Without Fire*" when it screened at the Gdynia Film Festival.

"I was surprised that the film was being shown outside of competition," recalls Dziecioł, "In my opinion, it was the best film during that festival. And from that time on, I kept my eye on Greg's work. When we met a few years later, Greg introduced me to an idea that would spark our collaboration on '*Courage*.'"

The inspiration for the film was Cezary Harasimowicz's story entitled, "*Jerzy*." The title refers to a real life event in which a man was thrown from a train a few years ago.

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"This specific event occurred in Poland, but I have read of similar situations in other parts of the world besides Europe," says Dziecioł. "The strong idea and universal message inspired me to invest my time, energy, and money in the project."

Łukasz Dziecioł saw artistic and commercial potential in Zglinski's idea. Being raised on action films, the director chose an action-fueled beginning that would act as the dramatic catalyst for a universal story.

"When we began to adapt the story with my co-writer, Janusz Margański, we decided that a small detail in the original story interested us the most: the experience of a witness on the train, a man that seemingly has everything put together, but is falling apart inside. We knew that was going to be our focal point in the film," remembers Greg Zglinski.

The decision to cast Robert Więckiewicz in the lead role was made when Robert helped workshop a scene at "EKARAN" in the Andrzej Wajda Film School.

"I couldn't imagine anyone else for that role, then or now," says Greg Zglinski.

Więckiewicz waited to make this film from the moment he picked up the script. "This is a great family story, in which emotions and events become very extreme," says Więckiewicz. "All of the characters are constructed in a good way. Obviously, I am most interested in Alfred. My character is a very complicated figure. He's introverted, full of anxiety, and has issues. He's afraid. He's uncertain and helpless and therefore very human," he adds.

"The task was not easy: To keep the audience from abandoning the character that Robert was to play," remembers Zglinski, "Alfred is an antihero. He did not help his brother and he tries to hide that. We decided early on that Alfred is not a bad guy; he's just lost sight of who he is. That is what we set out to show. During the shoot, Robert proposed a lot of things and never stopped working on his role. However, he was always open to letting the moment take him where his inner intuition told him to go. That type of actor is a treasure," reminisces Zglinski.

The role of Alfred was also a seminal point in Więckiewicz's career. "Along with Greg, we got to show a common weakness in the protagonist. As an actor who tends to play strong types, this was a perfect opportunity to do something

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different. I tried putting this character together from details and nuances. Giving them shape moderately, defensively even," says the actor, who hopes this role will surprise everyone that associates him with one dimensional tough guys.

One of the greatest challenges for Robert was the key scene, in which a group of hooligans throw out Alfred's brother out of the train.

"I knew that without this scene we don't have our movie. Everything really starts from that point - the road of change that Alfred takes. I felt responsible," says Więckiewicz.

"The challenge stemmed from the fact that I would probably act differently in my own life. Though I can never be completely sure, since I've never been in that type of situation. Sometimes we act quickly, intuitively. Other times, fear can paralyze us. We can be surprised by our behavior either way," he adds.

This key scene was also a challenge for the production. "We needed to film the scene three times," remembers Łukasz Dzięcioł, "In the moving train, in a static train with a green box filling all windows and doors, and on a sound stage where special effects technicians and stunt people simulated Jurek's falling from the train and his body hitting a metal post on the way down."

Action makes up more of Zglinski's film. A great example is the opening sequence, in which the two main characters race their car across train tracks despite a dangerously close oncoming train.

The producer tried his best to help realize the director's vision, in which action and drama would be the main elements. "In every story I look for what is underneath, but I also want to give it an attractive form," says Zglinski, "I think that '*Courage*' was successful in attaining that goal."

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

GREG ZGLINSKI – director, co-writer

A director and screenwriter. Born in 1968 in Warsaw. He lived in Switzerland for 15 years where he played as a guitarist and bassist in numerous rock groups. In 1996, he graduated from the Polish National Film School in Lodz under the mentorship of Krzysztof Kieslowski. His first film, the Belgian-Swiss co-production, "*An Entire Winter Without Fire*," won numerous awards including the best debut at the 61. Venice International Film Festival. He is the co-creator and director of the award-winning TV series, "*The Londoners*."

Filmography:

- 2011 Courage (Wymyk) – narrative feature film
(also: co-writer)
- 2008/09 The Londoners (Londyńcy) (Directed, ep. 1-3, 11-13) – TV series
(also: adaptation of script and dialog)
- 2008 Pitbull (ep. 28 - 31) – TV series
(also: adaptation of script and dialog)
- 2007 For Better or for Worse (Na dobre i na złe) (ep. 288 - 290) – TV series
(also: adaptation of script and dialog)
- 2004 An Entire Winter Without Fire (Tout un hiver sans feu) – narrative feature film
(also: adaptation of script and dialog)
- 2001 In Your Own Image (Na swoje podobieństwo) – narrative medium length
(also: script, editing, sound, score, production)
- 1997 Life in Lodz (Życie Łodzi – documentary film
(also: script, editing, sound, score, production)
- 1995 Before Sunset (Przed zmierzchem) – narrative short film
(also: script, editing, sound)
Spirits – narrative short film
(also: script, editing, sound, production)
- 1994 Guilt – narrative short film
(also: script, editing, sound, score)
Beating the Mountain (Pokonać Górę) – documentary film for TVP
(also: script, editing, sound, score)
- 1993 QB – documentary film
(also: script, editing, sound)
- 1992 Sputnik – narrative short film
(also: script, editing, sound, score, production)
II. Prize Lucerne International Film Festival / Switzerland 1993
- 1989 Confusion – narrative short film
(also: script, editing, sound, production)
I. Prize & Grand Prix, „Grand Prix Objectiv’89” in Baden, Switzerland.
- 1987 Rummel – narrative short film
(also: script, editing, sound, production)
Outtime - narrative short film
(also: script, editing, sound, production)

ŁUKASZ DZIĘCIOŁ – producer

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A film producer working mainly with new talent such as Sławomir Fabicki, Marcin Wrona, Paweł Borowski and Greg Zglinski. He graduated from the producing program at The Los Angeles Film School and University of Lodz film program. He is the vice president of Opus Film.

PIOTR DZIĘCIOŁ – producer

A graduate of the School of Law at the University of Wrocław and the Production program and Polish National Film School in Lodz. The founder and president of Opus Film. Among others, he has produced Piotr Trzaskalski's "Edi" and "The Master," Franco de Pena's "Your Name Is Justine," Sławomir Fabicki's "Retrieval," Dariusz Gajewski's "Mr. Kuka's Lessons," and has co-produced Andrzej Jakimowski's "Tricks." He is a member of the European Film Academy and a member of the board at the Polish Film Institute and the Polish Audiovisual Producers of Commerce (KIPA).

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

ROBERT WIĘCKIEWICZ – Alfred

A graduate of the National Theater School in Wrocław (1993). He has acted on the stage in many prominent Polish theaters, among them: The Polish Theater in Poznań, *Rozmaitości* in Warsaw, The National Theater, Montownia Theater, and The Drama Laboratory. His most prominent theatrical roles include the lead in Tadeusz Słobodzianki's *Kowalu Malambo*, Mark in *Shopping and Fucking* by Mark Ravenhill, Tytus in Andrzej Saramonowicz's *Testosterone*, the King in Mark Modzelewski's *The Coronation*, Vitali in Nikolaj Kolada's *Dead Princess*. His on-screen debut was in 1993 in Jerzy Skolimowski's adaptation of *Ferdydurke*. He has starred in numerous films by renowned directors, among them: Feliks Falk's *Samowolka*, Filip Bajon's *Poznań '56*, *The Foundation*, and *The Maiden Vows*, Andrzej Saramonowicz's and Tomasz Konecki's *The Body, Ladies, and Half-Joking*, Juliusz Machulski's *Money Isn't Everything*, *Superproduction*, *Vinci*, *How Much Does a Trojan Horse Weigh?*, and *The Good Night Story*, Vlado Balko's *Peace In My Soul*, Paweł Borowski's *Zero*, Wojciech Smarzowski's *The Evil House*, and Jan Kidawa-Błoński's *The Rose*. He has also appeared in many television series.

His role as Cumy in Machulski's *Vinci*, garnered him the attention of the critics and audience alike, as well as a prize for best male lead at the Courmayeur International Noir Film Festival. Another great success was his role as Andrzej, a physical education teacher with a drinking problem, in Tomasz Wiszniewski's *Everything Will Be Fine (2007)* for which he received the best male lead award at

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the Gdynia Film Festival in 2007 and the Golden Eagle (an award given out by the Polish Film Academy), and the best actor award at the Festroia International Film Festival in 2008. In 2009, he received another award from the Polish Film Academy for his supporting role in *How Much Does a Trojan Horse Weigh?* 2010 brought another academy nomination for his supporting role in Smarzowski's *The Evil House*. In 2011, he received the best male lead award for his work on Kidawa-Błoński's *The Rose*. This fall, two films with Więckiewicz in the lead role will grace the screens in Polish cinemas: *Courage*, and *Women Are Kind of Different* by Marek Koterski. In January, 2012, he will appear in Agnieszka Holland's *In Darkness*, which will be the Polish entry for the Foreign Oscar nomination. In the film, Więckiewicz plays Leopold Socha, a Polish sewer worker that saves the lives of numerous Jews in wartime Lwow.

ŁUKASZ SIMLAT – Jerzy

Born in 1977 in Sosnowiec, Poland. He graduated from the Warsaw Theater School in 2000. After finishing school he was a featured player in numerous theatrical companies. From 2007, he acts in the he acted in the prominent theater *Teatr Powszechny*. He had his television debut in the TV series *The House* (2000). For a large part of his career, he has spent appearing in featured roles in TV series and films, among them: Dariusz Gajewski's *Warsaw*, Wiesław Wójcik's *The Pack*, and Maciej Dejczer's hit *The Officer*. On the set of the sequel to *God's Innerlining* he was noticed by the director, Izabela Cywińska, who offered him a the role of Arek, an emotionally distraught man, in *The Lovers From Marona* (2005). The nominated for the prestigious Zbyszek Cybulski Award. He also starred in the award-winning film "*Extras*" (2006) by Michał Kwieciński, and received praise for his memorable role as Adas's father in Marek Koterski's "*We're All Christs.*" In 2007, he appeared in Janusz Kamiński's "*Hania*" and Jacek Bromski's "*In God's Garden*" where he played a government agent. He also played a bailiff in "*Fail Safe System*," an accountant in the Polish version of "*Ugly Betty*," a cardiologist in "*Pitbull*," A Police inspector in "*The Unmoved Mover*," and a Gestapo agent in "*Time of Honor.*" Recently, he took on the roles if Kosmateus/Rajter in the narrative feature film, "*From Hell*" by Michał and Józef Skolimowski. He will also appear in a new film by Małgorzata Szumowska.

GABRIELA MUSKAŁA – Viola

36. Gdynia Film Festival – Winner, Best Actress

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A film and theater actress and a playwright. A graduate of the acting program at the Polish National Film School in Lodz (Class of 1994). She has garnered numerous awards for her theater acting at festivals, from juries and the public alike. She has starred in many films, among them: *"Queen of the Angels," "Aria Diva," "The Trip," "Krzysztof," "To Be Like Kazimierz Deyna,"* as well as Greg Zglinski's award-winning french language film, *"An Entire Winter Without Fire."* She became very popular as Ewa in the TV series *"The Londoners."* The role brought her a nomination for "Outstanding Actress" at the TVFest Festival in Monte Carlo. On the theatrical stage, she has worked with prominent directors such as Mariusz Grzegorzek (lead in *"Agnes From God,"* Laura in *"The Glass Menagerie,"*), Barbara Sass (Irina in *"Three Sisters,"* lead in *"Marilyn Mongol"*), Mark Fiedor (Podsiekalnikova in *"The Suicides,"*), and Łukasz Kosa (wife in *"The Coronation"*). Her plays, *"Journey to Buenos Aires"* and *"Daily Soup,"* which she writes with her sister, Monika, under the the pseudonym Amanita Muscaria, have been translated into English, German, and Italian and have been produced for many years by theaters in Lodz and Warsaw.

MARIAN DZIĘDZIEL – Father

A graduate of the National Theater School in Cracow (Class of 1969). His cinematic debut was as a freedom fighter in *"The Salt of the Black Earth,"* (1969) the first of the Silesian Trilogy by Kazimierz Kutz. Among his many films, he has starred in *"The Pearl in the Crown"* (1971); *"Death Like a Piece of Bread"* (1994) by Kazimierz Kutz; Krzysztof Krauze's *"Street Games"* (1996) and *"My Nikifor"* (2004); Bogusław Linda's *"A Season for Bream"* (2000); Maciej Ślesicki's *"Show"* (2003); Juliusz Machulski's *"Vinci"* (2004), Feliks Falk's *"The Collector"* (2005) and Marek Koterski's *"We're All Christs"* (2006). His breakthrough role came when he played Wiesław Wojnar in Wojciech Smarzowski's *"The Wedding"* (2004) for which he received a best male lead Polish Academy Award and the best actor award at that year's Gdynia Film Festival. For his work in Smarzowski's 2009 film, *"The Evil House,"* Dziędziel received the Golden Duck for best actor in the 2009/10 season. In 2011, he received an award for best supporting actor at the Gdynia Film Festival for his role in Rafael Lewandowski's *"The Mole."*

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