

DARK BRIDGE

BINAURAL BRAINWAVES

a Marcelo von Schwartz film



MANIFESTO

Happy Ending

Directed by
Marcelo von Schwartz

Produced by
Marcelo von Schwartz, Oscar Eguia

Written by
Jonathan Bennett, Marcelo von Schwartz

Starring
Nate Harrison
Jeab Li
Peter Rnic
Christopher Evans
Antonio Pineda
Keysha Monique Mabra

MANIFESTO
Happy Ending Films
Pl. Vila de Gracia 11
08012 Barcelona, SPAIN

19 Sukhumvit Soi 13 Sukhumvit Suite Bldg. Suite 19/509
Bangkok 10110 THAILAND
+66851632524

happyendingfilms@gmail.com
www.dark-bridge.com

“...I ‘ve found a magical bridge in Bangkok.
A bridge between East and West,
the present and the past,
and a father and his son.”

Marcelo von Schwartz

DARK BRIDGE

BINAURAL BRAINWAVES

One-sentence Outline

A nightmarish, dark and weird journey of an American doctor who gets lost in Bangkok, uncovering a heavy debt of his father's hidden past.

Synopsis

Dark Bridge is a Fantasy Psychological Thriller, a *Neo-Noir Film*. Like a Moebius stripe, it develops in a dreamlike atmosphere, where the boundaries between dream and reality are no too clear, they are mixed up. The non-linear story appears fragmented through bursts of complementary images and will at the same time shows flash-backs that will allow David White to move forward along that dark bridge towards the opposite bank, the one with the hidden history, and the *hellish* ending.

David White [Nate Harrison] has the uneasy sensation he is being watched. The American 40 year-old surgeon has just arrived in Bangkok for a conference, but from the moment he sets foot in the airport, he can't shake off the feeling someone is watching him. He tries to ignore this feeling and sets off to explore the city – but wherever he goes, someone seems to be following him – a beautiful Thai young woman, Li [Jeab Li]. But every time he tries to catch a glimpse of her, she isn't there. Confused and desperate for answers, he visits a shaman, who tells him that he won't be able to leave Bangkok, and that every crime has a price to be paid – a message David doesn't really understand.

As he moves forward along the Dark Bridge of his family history, David White unfolds the nightmarish puzzle and discovers a debt to pay.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Dark Bridge is a Fantasy Psychological Thriller, a *Neo-Noir Film*. Like a Moebius stripe, it develops in a dreamlike atmosphere, where the boundaries between dream and reality are no too clear, they are mixed up. The narrative is non-linear. The story appears fragmented through bursts of complementary images and will at the same time shows flash-backs that will allow David White, as well as the audience, to move forward along that dark bridge towards the opposite bank, the one with the hidden history, and the *hellish* ending.

The story is presented from the single point of view of David White, who, emotionally altered, gives an emotional and intriguing account throughout a long and increasingly nightmarish flash-back since his arrival to Bangkok to the end. The two ends of the bridge are clearly differentiated: the story in the present, of urban character, presents a harder image with unsaturated colors and high contrasts. David White will feel lost, and will find the city around him more and more confusing. He will be more and more trapped by it.

On the other hand, and as a visual counterpoint, as David White moves forward along that bridge towards the secret history, more and more flash-backs will appear, showing fragments of his father's history with Li. They are bucolic images, flooded by the light, which reinforce the spirit of the hidden story but contrast violently with its fatal outcome.

About the story

In “The Book of Heaven and Hell”, Borges and Bioy Casares quote a text by Voltaire about an old idea: *A crime, a penalty can be paid by even up to the fourth generation of descendants of he who has committed it*. In other words: Everything ends up being paid for, sooner or later. And I believe that it is. Many individual acts end up having collective consequences. And often, they end up being paid for by innocent people.

I think that the narrative of the film can be read as a narrative itself, but also as something else: a metaphor on crimes and penalties, and their repercussion on innocent people from later generations. At the same time, is a thought about the past, and how we tell to our children and to our next generations all the wrong and bad actions we have committed. How we can assimilate it, how we can live with this. Could be hidden underground with some effort, but always ends coming up to the surface...

About Bangkok

Bangkok is a city that is contagious. In many senses. Lots of different cultures, lots of different people, lots of different times coexist. It seems as if there is a place and a time available for each one of us. The unwary traveller feels increasingly surrounded by its smells, its people, its corners and so on, until he begins to find it very difficult to escape. I know some people who have stepped out into Bangkok and have not been able to return to their places of origin. I myself am one of them. And so too is David White, the protagonist of this story, but for different reasons.

About the bridges

Bridges unite, leading from one place to another. They pass over other spaces, over other sites, to connect two places. When you cross a bridge, you leave behind you a territory that moves further and further away, and get closer to a new territory, a new place. The ends of a bridge clearly indicate that there are two points to unite. But the points are clearly separated. They also say that you cannot be in both locations at the same time. Sometimes you choose the side, sometimes you are led to it.

The space talks

When I studied architecture, I had a professor who said: *Before beginning to imagine a house, before starting to draw the first line, you must listen to the place.* It is necessary to listen to what the place says. The place talks, the place says what kind of constructions it needs, which forms, textures, colours... The same happens with places and stories. I arrived for the first time in Bangkok with the idea of making a documentary, but it was Bangkok that told this story to me.

The space acts

We are born, live, die in spaces created by ourselves. We are not indifferent. Often we act according to the spaces that contain us. But the spaces never remain fixed, immutable. We transform them according to our own perception, according to our mood. It seemed to me interesting to articulate a counterpoint between the evolution of David White's mood and the city, the places that contain him. Thus, a metropolis which is extensive but friendly, disordered but calm, ends up transforming itself into a jail, becoming more and more suffocating, compressing the protagonist more and more, until the end. For David White, the strange but friendly metropolis ends up being a Piranesi jail.

Visual treatment

The two ends of the bridge are clearly differentiated: the story in the present, of urban character, presents a harder image, with unsaturated colors and high contrasts, in which it will increasingly make it difficult to differentiate background and figure: David White will be lost, and will find the city around him more and more confusing. He will be more and more trapped by it. On the other hand, and as a visual counterpoint, as David White moves forward along that bridge towards the secret history, more and more flash-backs will appear, showing fragments of his father's history with Li. These take place among the paddy fields of Esan, in the northeast of Thailand, and in a village called Nonhoi. They are bucolic and colorful images, flooded by the light, which reinforce the spirit of the hidden story but contrast violently with its fatal outcome.

Sound treatment

The music, the sound design, is of capital importance to this film, as it will simultaneously give coherence to the story and will accentuate the progressive desperation of the protagonist. Different elements will be identified through musical and sound leitmotifs that will be linked as the film approaches its climax.

A Dream within a dream

Like Chinese boxes, every part of the dream is contained by another. And the Binaural Brainwaves potentiate the dream sensation. Its not about to 'understand' the movie. As we act with the dreams, it's about to get into them and feel them.

Marcelo von SCHWARTZ

Barcelona-Bangkok, 2014.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Marcelo von Schwartz was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In the 90's he moves to Barcelona after completing his studies of Architecture in the Buenos Aires University and filmmaking with David Jose Kohon, one of the most influential Argentine filmmakers, precursor of the *Argentine Nouvelle Vague* in the 60's. In Barcelona he starts his career as producer and filmmaker. After working as Art Director and Production Designer for some films, he writes and produces the 35mm expressionist short film **Phoenix**. This film competes in over 30 world-wide festivals winning recognition and prizes.

Filmmaker, architect, photographer, designer, *sound architect*, his work is usually focused on the "*dark side of the things*". His nightmarish and dreamlike work is highly influenced by dark artists like Francis Bacon, Otto Dix and George Grosz, and filmmakers like Fritz Lang, Friedrich Murnau, Joseph von Sternberg and the early Polanski among others.

In 1997 he funds the production company **MANIFESTO** and produces documentaries, short film, music videos and video art pieces that were screened worldwide.

In 2007 he funds **Happy Ending Films**, a production company for independent feature films. Now is finishing the postproduction of **Dark Bridge**, his first long feature film, entirely shot in Thailand and preparing his next projects. He has also recently made a visual collaboration with **RECOIL** (Alan Wilder, ex-*Depeche Mode*) for the **RECOIL Selected World Tour 2010**.

Filmography

Short films/Documentaries/Videoart

- El Otro (The Other) [1987]
- Viaje Nocturno (Night journey) [1988]
- Ave Fenix (Phoenix) [1996]
- Barcelona Sculptures [1997]
- Gaudi Moving [1998]
- Anita Dolce Vita [2000]
- Trayectos extremos [2004]
- Carne (Meat) [2005]
- hOPENING [With P. Reig, 2005]
- Los Viajes de la Memoria [2005]
- Don't come in [2006]
- God is Gone [2007]
- RECOIL Selected Tour 2010 [Visual Collaboration, 2010]**

Feature Films

- Dark Bridge** (Color, 90', 2014)

For More Information:

<http://www.dark-bridge.com>

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/darkbridgeeng>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmLNUgrefPIdu6qledYeQHw/videos>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcelo_von_Schwartz

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binaural_beats



“More than watching, it’s like to be dreaming a movie”

Marcelo von Schwartz, director of *Dark Bridge*, the first movie to include a Theta Binaural Brainwave soundtrack.

Interviewed by Punam Mohandas. Photos by Boaz Zippor.

Marcelo von Schwartz is Argentinian by birth, lived many years in Spain and currently resides in Bangkok, Thailand. A graduate in Architecture and in Cinematography in Buenos Aires, he is intensely curious by nature. Art and cinema have always fascinated him and he has tried to marry these mediums together using architectural tenets as the fulcrum. After directing in Barcelona several short films worldwide,

video-art pieces, documentaries and music-videos, he moved to Bangkok to shoot his debut long feature film, *Dark Bridge*. The director, who is in his forties, is self-admittedly heavily influenced by the work of Luis Bunuel and specially David Lynch, who is known for his surrealistic style of film-making which is characterized by dreamy metaphors and obsessive attention to sound. Von Schwartz is also impressed by the intrepid, emotionally raw imagery of Giovanni Battista Piranesi who is best known for his imaginary prisons; as he puts it: “There are two types of architects – those who build buildings, and those who build dreams.”

You come from the architecture. Isn’t cinema a completely different medium for you to explore? How hard was it to make this film?

I’m architect not only because of my education; I’m architect by soul. Amongst the many benefits being an architect is you learn about composition, proportion, light and overall, how to think, design, manage and build a structure. You can apply later these concepts for a building, for a painting, clothes, a choreography, a movie or even a dish. Nowadays you can find architects in all the creative disciplines. And they add their architectural point of view, creating always an important added value. I like to mix disciplines and encourage exchange. Actually, this is nothing new: as before the specialization age –let’s say from the second half of the 20th century-, they were always mixed-up. And this is coming back now.

Focusing on architecture and filmmaking, both they are based in a surprisingly similar creative process: you start alone with the idea, you develop the idea alone or with a few more people, and later you manage a team to “build” it up. The result is different, you finish with a movie or a building, but the process is very similar, even their timelines are.

What *Dark Bridge* is about?

Dark Bridge is a Fantasy Psychological Thriller, a *Neo-Noir Film*. Its a kind of Moebius stripe, it develops in a dreamlike atmosphere. The limits between dream and reality are no too clear, they are mixed up. Like in a dream, it is a non-linear fragmented story, with an open beginning and an open ending.

It has all the requirements to be a WTF movie [laughs]. A WTF movie is the movie you cannot get at the first time you watch it, but it keeps you hooked up. Yes, I’m quite surprised, it is already suggested in some film forums in the top 50 WTF movies... sharing the category with great movies as *Mulholland Drive*, *Eraserhead*, *12 Monkeys*, *The Fight Club*, *Memento*... Of course, I’m very proud of this. Seriously, more and more people is getting bored of watching movies with a classical-conventional narrative...For them, a “WTF movie” is a good alternative.

And the movie is released online...

Yes, Dark Bridge has online distribution through Amazon Instant Video and Vimeo On Demand. And I have to say that the sales are going well, much better than expected.

I hope this will continue till the total recovery of the investment. So we can use this money for the next project.

Meanwhile, I have just finished something very interesting, a very stimulating experience that could be revolutionary in impact. With the technicians of SoundDrugStore we have designed a whole new soundtrack for Dark Bridge. This soundtrack is re-mixed with a full-length Binaural Brainwave. That means while you are watching the movie, you are deeply entering in the main character's mind. You experience the movie not only from his "point of view" but also from his "point of mood". We made a lot of tests with amazing results. Everybody is very excited about.



Brainwaves in a movie... How does it work?

It is based on a neuroscientific principle called "Brainwave Entrainment". Some scientists began speculating about it 100 years ago, after the invention of the EEG [electroencephalography], but last 20 years have seen many amazing new advances. It is about the brain capability to react and synchronize its own frequency brainwaves with external stimuli. Many tests are now being done and many resulting research papers being published by well-known laboratories and prestigious universities worldwide. The uses of brainwaves has become a popular topic and this is only just the beginning. Many developments will take place involving brainwaves in the next few years. This is quite certain.

How did you get involved with this?

Everything started a couple of years ago. I met a fascinating character at a film festival in Korea. He is an American and looks like a crazy scientist, while also being a highly awarded sound engineer. He is completely obsessed with acoustic and sounds. He has a sound laboratory, and as I discovered is is also an underground composer of an unclassifiable kind of "futuristic" music. I think he lives in the 23rd century already. But he is obsessed to stay anonymous. And all his compositions –he has more than 100- are yet unpublished.



He doesn't care as composing is a kind of hidden second life. After I requested many times and made many appeals, he finally gave me some of his "compositions", and they are absolutely amazing. It's like listening to an electronic Edgar Varese of the 23rd century. I very much hope that he will 'come out' but until then, i will keep his secret.

What happened when you met this person?

So I met him at this film festival in Korea and we were talking about the brainwaves. He was working as sound engineer with a group of people hired to create a hi-tech brainwaves website –is called SoundDrugStore- based on the latest advances of the brainwaves synchronization. And he told me an idea he had, -to make the brain synchronize with some specific frequencies while watching a feature film, in order to go emotionally deeper into the story and to drastically open some mind perception doors. It sounded totally crazy and

fascinating at the same time, and I offered Dark Bridge to make a test, due its dreamlike narrative. So we started working together and it took almost one year to design the frequencies and to conduct the tests required to produce the final mix. And believe me, the result is shocking. You need to watch the movie with headphones to keep the binaural effect. It will look like a normal soundtrack as the brainwaves are almost inaudible. But something is happening in your brain. Suddenly you start experiencing the movie as if were a dream, you feel like you are inside Dr. White's upset mind. Amazing. For all I know, they are making now some other experiments with some classic horror movies. I can't wait to experience this.



It will be released on-line?

Yes, DARK BRIDGE Binaural Waves will be distributed worldwide by Vimeo On Demand at a very affordable price. For sure, you will not regret giving it a try experiencing it.

Are you working on another script right now?

Yes, I just finished the script of my next project, a black and white horror movie. Again, the architecture is very important: as the space is at the same time both witness and an accomplice of the murders.

So does this mean you have left behind the architectural profession?

I don't think so, I'm always looking everything as an architect. I'm also developing some projects, some of them real, some of them just utopian –or dystopian- ideas... but this is for another whole interview. As I use to say, they are 2 kinds of architects, the ones who design buildings and the others who design dreams■

MANIFESTO and Happy Ending Films
Presents

DARK BRIDGE

DAVID WHITE-PRIVATE WHITE
NATE HARRISON

JEAB LI

SLATER
PETER RNIC

DR. MARQUEZ - ORGANISER 1
ANTONIO PINEDA

DR. JONES - ORGANISER 2
CHRISTOPHER EVANS

SHAMAN
JOHN LADALSKI

CABARET DANCER
KEYSHA MONIQUE MABRA

YOUNG SLATER
JOHN WINTERS

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY
MARCELO VON SCHWARTZ

SCREENPLAY
JONATHAN BENNETT

MARCELO VON SCHWARTZ

PRODUCTION MANAGER
OSCAR EGUIA

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
JUTHALUCK SUANGSIRITAVORN

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
ADRIAN BELINKY

LOCATION SOUND RECORDER
PAUL CLARK

EDITOR
MARK WEISS

SOUND DESIGN
BRUNO BRUGNANO

MARCELO VON SCHWARTZ

ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY
BRUNO BRUGNANO

SONGS BY
RECOIL - ARRANGED & PRODUCED BY ALAN WILDER