



69th

Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin

Forum Expanded

The unlikely love story of two people trying to escape an absurd nightmare in Harlem

FALSE BELIEF

a film by
Lene Berg

press kit



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Norway | 2019 | 105 min | English
16:9 | DCP | Sound 2.1 / 5.1

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SCREENINGS AT THE 69TH BERLINALE

10.02.2019	Sunday	12:30	Arsenal 1
11.02.2019	Monday	17:00	Silent Green
13.02.2019	Wednesday	15:30	CinemaxX 6 (Press & Industry)



SYNOPSIS

False Belief, is the love story of a couple caught up in the gentrification of a neighborhood that is wiping out a seminal African-American cultural legacy and displacing its original residents. In 2008 Norwegian artist and filmmaker Lene Berg moved in with her partner, a black New York publisher, who will be referred to as D. After giving a statement to the police about being harassed by his neighbor in Harlem, D was arrested, prosecuted, and imprisoned. But for what exactly? This initiated a journey where D's faith in the American justice system put everything he cherished in life at risk.

Berg attempts to untangle the circumstances around the criminal case through D's candid storytelling accompanied by her own narration, driven by collaged images, court documents, and still and moving images. By scrutinizing what at first seems to be an isolated minor case, **False Belief**, uncovers the larger picture of a corrupt justice system that employs incarceration as a political and economic weapon. The film also embodies Berg's idea of an expanded cinema in which various artistic media beyond the moving image comprise essential components in building a plot.



FALSE BELIEF

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I didn't really want to make **False Belief**. As a white European woman, I did not feel capable of addressing the particular racial conflicts underlying American society. How could I say anything valid about cultural subtexts that I did not grow up with?

When I moved to Harlem to live with D, I didn't understand everything that was going on around us. It was about the time the financial crisis broke out and Barack Obama was elected. Although I noticed the increased police presence on our block, I had no idea how serious the conflicts between economic development and the residents of Harlem were or to what degree the history of slavery still marks U.S. society. I was in New York on an artist fellowship and didn't pay attention to the disputes D got involved in on our block. I didn't think they mattered that much, even after D got arrested. The reason for his arrest seemed trivial, so I did not realize what kind of danger he was in. We worked together, lived together, and traveled together. Then he got arrested again—and again. And I had to learn terms like *arraignment* and *restraining order* and *grand jury*.

The longer the case carried on, the more confused I got. D never received any official notice of the charges against him, not even before the trial. The prosecutor had “photographic evidence,” but the images didn't indicate any crime being committed. The accusations were absurd: for example, that D had stomped on somebody's flowers or held someone's hand for too long in greeting. No dates, no witnesses, and no locations were identified. Yet the



Manhattan District Attorney kept the case going for three years, until it was brought to trial. Why would they go to the trouble of prosecuting such a small case with no real evidence? How did they think they could win this case? And most puzzling of all: What made them think it was worth expending so many resources? I certainly didn't want to make a film about it; I just wanted it to end. But as the situation evolved I realized that the only way out of the Kafkaesque trap D was caught in was to try to comprehend what was happening to him, and to us. So with the help of our own words and memories, still and moving images, paper dolls and collages, courtroom transcripts and speculations, I have tried to make sense of it.

It still doesn't make any sense, at least to me. But that is not the point. In the end **False Belief**, is about one man's belief in his right to speak his mind, grow his hair, live where he likes, and protect the people he cares about—and the price he had to pay for that belief. The opposite of justice is not merely injustice: it is the fear, distrust, hypocrisy and moral breakdown of society. **False Belief**, is based on a true story, on our story. Some will say it is a one-sided story because our opponents speak only through the statements they made in court and to the police. But they lied, and we didn't. Now you can decide.

—— Lene Berg

THE FILMMAKERS

Lene Berg

director/writer

Lene Berg (*1965) was born in Oslo and studied film at the Dramatiska Institutet (University College of Film, Radio, Television, and Theater), in Stockholm. In 1997 she directed the feature film **En Kvinna's Huvud** (A Woman's Head) and has since produced mixed-media artworks and installations for galleries, museums, and public spaces as well as a number of short films. Most recently Berg directed the award-winning **Kopfkino** (2012) and **GOMP: Tales of Surveillance in Norway 1948–1989** (2014), two feature-length films that reflect her passionate engagement with societal outsiders who challenge the mores of political and social institutions.

Ingebjørg Torgersen

story editor/producer

Ingebjørg Torgersen (*1963) graduated from the National Film School of Denmark in 1991 and has worked in film, TV and theatre. Her most recent film was **Under et klovnehjerte** (She must be able to kiss, 2016); other films includes the short **Ozonfisk** (1997) and **Folk flest bor i Kina Utopia** (Nobody is perfect in the perfect country, 2002). Torgersen was a participant in the Oslo cultural spaces Gallery Without Name (GUN) and Sound of Mu, and is a member of WIFT-Nordic (Women in Film and TV). Previously she worked with Berg on **Volvox** (1989) and **GOMP: Tales of Surveillance in Norway 1948–1989** (2014).

Butch Morris

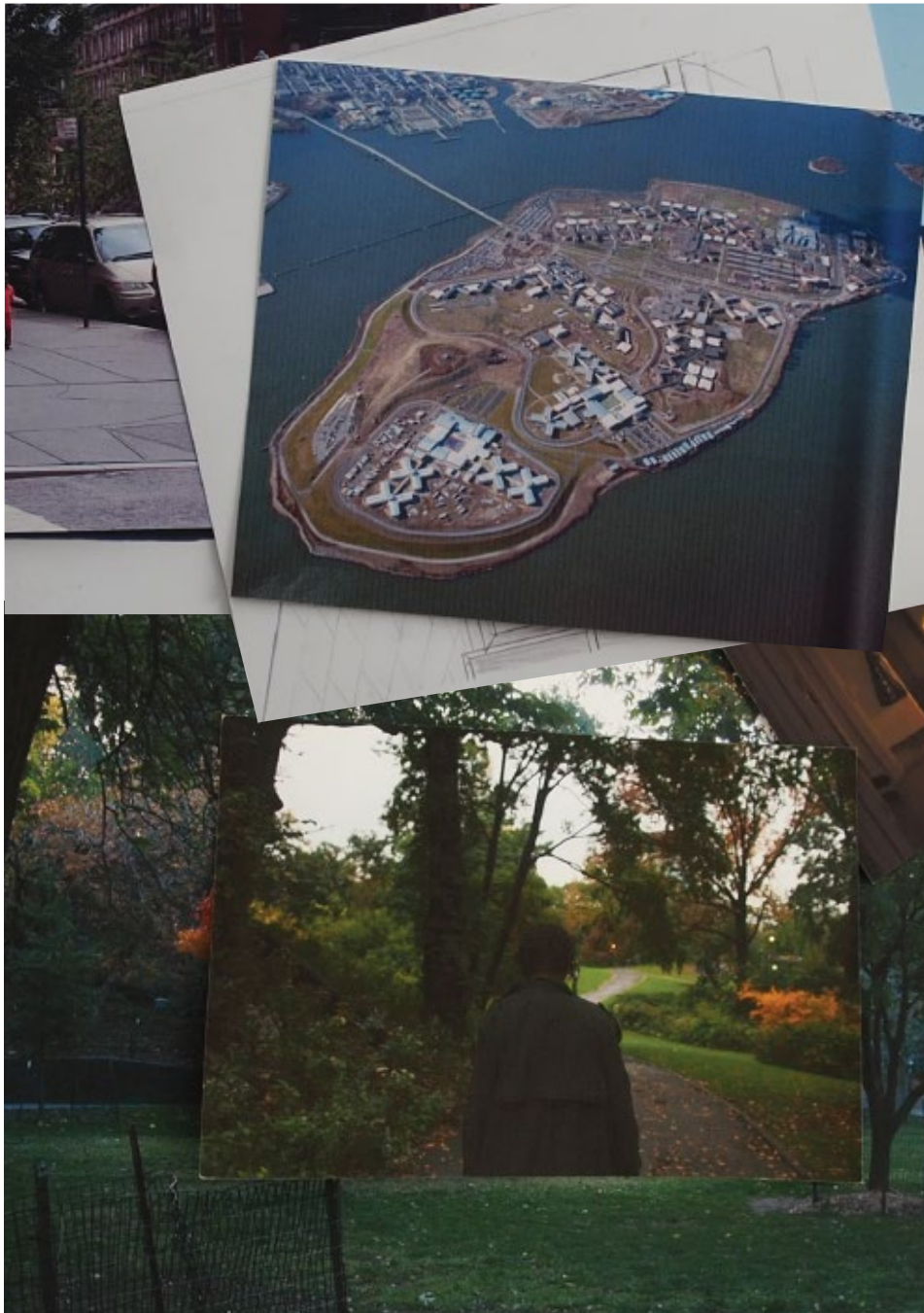
music

Lawrence D. "Butch" Morris (February 10, 1947–January 29, 2013) was one of the finest cornet players in jazz. He is recognized as the principal theorist in the evolution of *Conduction* (a term borrowed from physics), a type of structured free improvisation where Morris directs and conducts an improvising ensemble with a series of hand and baton gestures. From 1974 until his death Morris was an innovator at the confluence of jazz, new music, improvisation, and classical music. The music in **False Belief**, "Nowhere Everafter I, II & III," is from the album *Homeing*, recorded live on November 6, 1987, at Quartier Latin, West Berlin.

Zayne Armstrong

editor

Zayne Armstrong (*1986) has been working with Lene Berg as the editor on **False Belief**, since mid-2017. He lives and works in Berlin and started making moving-image work in 2007 while studying 4-D fine art at Central Saint Martins, in London. Armstrong developed his practice in the MFA program at Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam.



LENE BERG FILMOGRAPHY

feature films

Gompen og andre beretninger om overvåking i Norge 1948–1989

(GOMP: Tales of surveillance in Norway 1948–1989), 2014

84 minutes, Norwegian with English subtitles, produced by Studio Fjordholm AS, Oslo

Kopfkino, 2012

75 minutes, German with English subtitles, produced by Lene Berg, Berlin/Oslo

En Kvinns Huvud

(A Woman's Head), 1997

110 minutes, Swedish, produced by Hinden/Länna-ateljéerna AB

short & medium length films

Dirty Young Loose

(Ung Løs Gris), 2013

32 minutes, German with English subtitles, produced by Studio Fjordholm AS

Shaving the Baroness, 2010

7.30 minutes, no dialogue

Stalin by Picasso, or Portrait of Woman with Moustache, 2008

30 minutes, English with subtitles

The Weimar Conspiracy, 2007

13 minutes, Norwegian with English subtitles

The Man in the Background

(Mannen i Bakgrunnen), 2006

20 minutes, Norwegian with English subtitles

33 minuter (33 minutes), 1999

33 minutes, Swedish with English subtitles, produced by Hinden/Länna-ateljéerna AB

Doft av Lycka

(Scent of Happiness), 1991

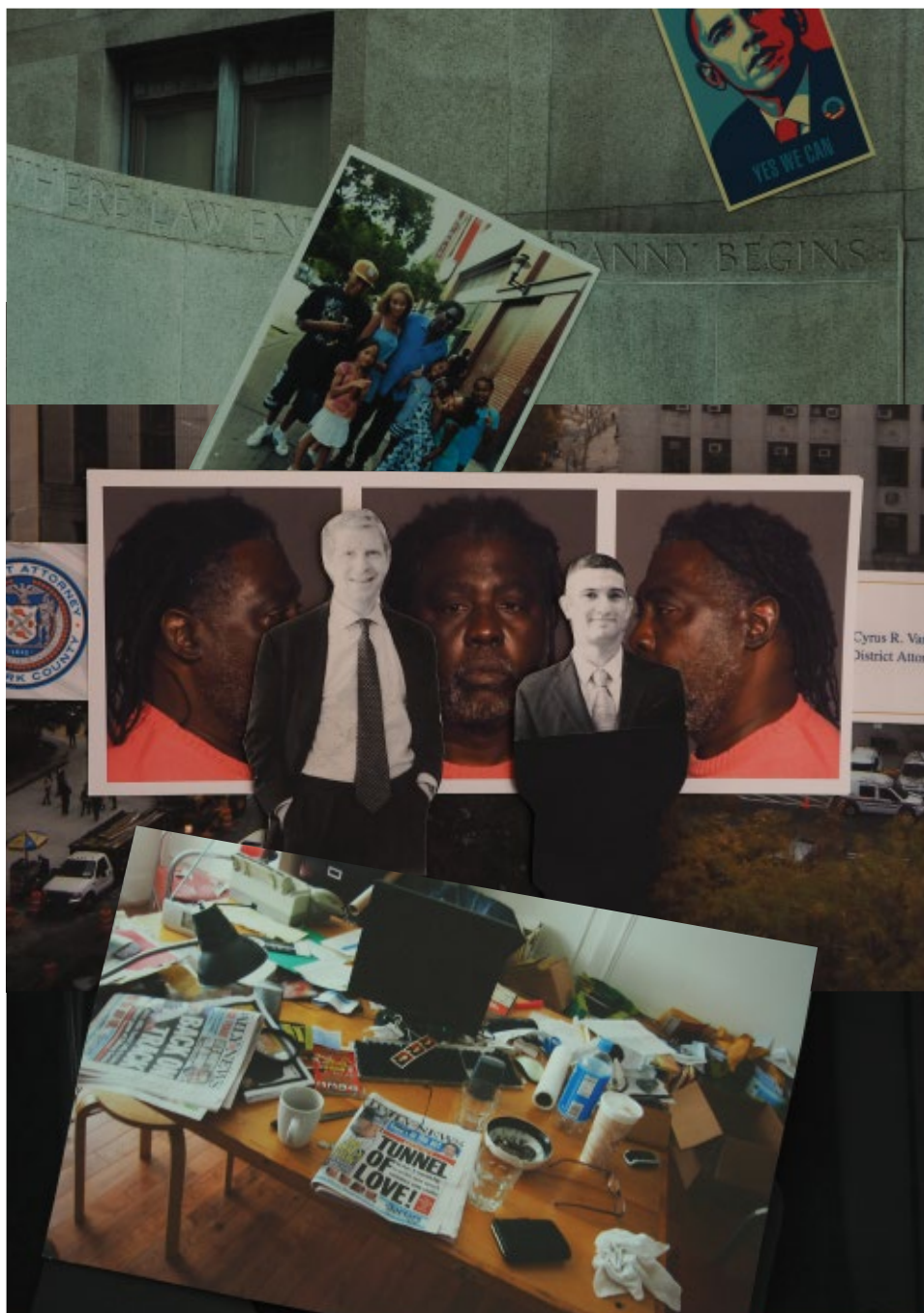
26 minutes, Swedish, produced by Andersö & Berg HB

7 (Sju), 1990

26 minutes, no dialogue, Dramatiska Institutet, Stockholm

trailers & excerpts

vimeo.com/user18434138/leneberg



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written and directed by	Lene Berg
producer and story editor	Ingebjørg Torgersen
editor	Zayne Armstrong
music	Butch Morris
assistant	Mikael Damstuen Brkic
sound design	Svenn Jakobsen
color grading	Stefan King
graphic design	Henning Brehm
produced by	FABB001 AS © 2019

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KUNSTNERNES HUS KINO

Sørnorsk filmsenter



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FALSE BELIEF