

GUSTAF SKARSGÅRD

MATIAS VARELA



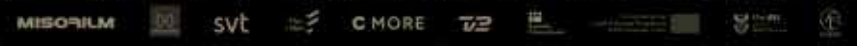
FESTA  
DEL CINEMA  
DI ROMA

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SELECTION 2019

# 438 DAYS

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

SCREENPLAY BY PETER BIRRO DIRECTED BY JESPER GANSLANDT BASED ON THE NOVEL 438 DAYS BY JONAS PERSSON AND MARTIN SCHIBYE  
GUSTAF SKARSGÅRD MATIAS VARELA FAYSAI AHMED NAT RAMABOLANA FREDRIK EVERS JOSEFIN NELDEN  
SOPHIA OLSSON  
ANNA SKOVEMAN PETER POSSNE BRIGID O'LEEN MARLOWE DE MARBY JONAS ALLEN PETER BOCK SANDRA HARRIS KARE FREDRIK ULFING  
MISOFILM SVT C MORE TV2 DANMARK THE SWEDISH FILM INSTITUTE CALLIE MARTIN





## SYNOPSIS

*438 Days* is the true story about journalists Martin Schibbye and Johan Persson who put everything at stake when crossing the border between Somalia and Ethiopia. They want to investigate and tell the truth about how the hunt for oil affects the population in the Ogaden region. Five days later they lay shot in the desert, and another story begins.

The film *438 DAYS* is the story of two men who are thrown into a nightmarish reality when the hunt for truth turns into an international political game of life and death, a fight for survival where friendship becomes the most important weapon.



Photo: Charlie Sperring

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This feature is based on a true story. The events taking place happened to Swedish journalists Martin Schibbye and Johan Persson. They happened to Abdullahi, state TV-producer of Ogaden, Ethiopia. They happened to the Swedish ambassador of Ethiopia at the time, Jens Odlander, and to the heavily questioned Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt.

It's not as simple as two Swedish journalists who just happened to get captured while going into the Ogaden region without a visa. It's not as simple as just a whistle-blower in the Ethiopian propaganda TV-production.

I see the story as a mosaic of angles on freedom of speech and free press. The reality of being jailed for trying to investigate the people in power and the companies operating under an oppressive regime's sheltering hand. And then of course, the people within the story; Abdullahi, who reluctantly is called to take action by his own sense of morale. He fears for what might happen to his family if the state finds out that he is hiding the video where one easily can see that the interviews with Martin and Johan are manipulated, and that they have been victims of mock executions. Martin Schibbye, who leaves his wife Linnea at home to go to Ogaden illegally because no news ever comes out of the region. Johan Persson, who stays away from Sweden to take photos of reality and report abuse of power and oppression wherever he finds it.

Martin and Johan decide to go to Ogaden to investigate the Swedish oil company Lundin Oil, which is being accused of condoning the burning of villages and even the killing of innocent people to get to the oil in the region. They are all tangled up together as Martin and Johan are shot and captured, and Abdullahi gets ahold of the video material showing that they are forced to say what they are saying in the interviews. When Martin and Johan are sent to prison accused of terrorism, they quickly learn that many people in Ethiopia are being jailed for speaking out against the government or simply just for being journalists.

When Martin and Johan are offered the opportunity to ask for pardon to be released from prison, we can also ask ourselves questions about the difference of being white and from Sweden and being black when jailed for the same crime. When they get out of prison, they have effectively and against their will become the story themselves. This leads to an awareness of the situation for jailed journalists around the world. It's an unexpected and interesting by-product of their failed investigation into Lundin Oil's affairs in Ogaden.

The story didn't take us where we thought it would go, and I believe that is the most interesting thing about it.

Abdullahi finally takes the video evidence to the Swedish ambassador and because of that, the world sees how Martin and Johan's confessions were forced. But it was not released until after Martin and Johan had bowed down and admitted their guilt and formally asked for pardon. The Ethiopian government is too proud, and should not be angered before Martin and Johan have been released from prison. And Abdullahi, he is separated from his family to escape capture.

The film is a study about having to question one's ideals when faced with a much more complicated reality.

It is a story I think, that needs to be told.

JESPER GANSLANDT



Photo: Charlie Sperring

## PRODUCTION FACTS

<b>Original Title:</b>	438 Dagar
<b>English Title:</b>	438 Days
<b>Production Year:</b>	2018/2019
<b>Genre:</b>	Drama / Thriller
<b>Language:</b>	Swedish, English, Somali, Amharic
<b>Running Time:</b>	Approx. 124 min
<b>National Premiere:</b>	August 30, 2019
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	Sweden
<b>Aspect Ratio:</b>	1:2,39 Cinema Scope
<b>Sound:</b>	5.1
<b>Production Company:</b>	Miso Film Sweden
<b>Produced by:</b>	Miso Film Sweden with production service provided by DO Productions, South Africa
<b>Copyright:</b>	© 2019 Miso Film Sverige AB, Sveriges Television AB, Film i Väst AB, Miso Film ApS, All rights reserved

## MAIN CAST

**Martin Schibbye**  
**Johan Persson**  
**Abdullahi Hussein**  
**Werar**  
**Jens Odlander**  
**Linnéa Schibbye**

Gustaf Skarsgård  
Matias Varela  
Faysal Ahmed  
Nat Ramabulana  
Fredrik Evers  
Josefin Neldén

## MAIN CREW

**Director**  
**Writer**  
**Producers**  
  
**Executive Producers**  
**Director of Photography**  
**Editor**  
**Production Designer**  
**Costume Designer**  
**Makeup Designer**  
**Sound Designers**  
  
**Composer**  
**Still Photographers**

Jesper Ganslandt  
Peter Birro  
Sandra Harms &  
Karl Fredrik Ulfung  
Jonas Allen & Peter Bose  
Sophia Olsson  
Hanna Lejonqvist  
Fred Du Preez  
Clinton Booyse  
Evelyn Gambe  
Andreas Franck  
Fredrik Dalen fjäll  
Jon Ekstrand  
Charlie Sperring, Josef Persson



Photo: Charlie Sperring

# DIRECTOR

JESPER GANSLANDT

Jesper Ganslandt (b. 1978) has since his dynamic debut work, the much acclaimed *Falkenberg Farewell* (2006), established himself as one of the most fearless voices in Scandinavian filmmaking.

*Falkenberg Farewell* was nominated for the prestigious Nordic Council's Film Prize, chosen as Sweden's submission for the Academy Awards, and nominated in several categories at the 2007 Guldbagge Awards, including 'Best Film', 'Best Direction' and 'Best Screenplay'.

2009 saw the premiere of his second feature, *The Ape*, which received great reviews, among else in The Guardian where he was declared "a new star director." The film also participated at the Venice Film Festival in the sidebar Venice Days in 2009. So did Ganslandt's films *Falkenberg Farewell* in 2006 and *Blondie* in 2012.

In 2018, Ganslandt opened the International Film Festival Rotterdam with *Jimmie*, a cutting-edge film that shows his unique, psychologically intense and experimental style. *Jimmie*, which tells the tale of a young refugee boy on the run with his father, was lauded by the press and nominated for 'Best Nordic Film' at the Gothenburg Film Festival. 2018 also marked the release of Ganslandt's first English-language feature film *Beast of Burden* starring Daniel Radcliffe.



Photo: Jacob Hansen

# GUSTAF SKARSGÅRD

PLAYING 'MARTIN SCHIBBIYE'

Gustaf Skarsgård (b. 1980) is one of the most prolific actors of his generation. After attending the Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts, Skarsgård joined the permanent ensemble of both the Stockholm City Theatre and the Royal Dramatic Theatre.

Gustaf Skarsgård became a household name with the critically acclaimed feature *Evil* (2003) directed by Mikael Håfström which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Skarsgård won a Guldbagge Award for Best Actor for his role as Johan in *Kidz in da Hood* (2007), and he was also nominated for Guldbagge Awards for his roles in *Evil* and *Patrik 1,5* (2008). Since then, he has continued to successfully combine his work on stage with work in film and television.

In 2012, Gustaf Skarsgård became known to a broad international audience with his role as Floki in History Channel's popular TV series *Vikings* (2013 – ). He has also appeared in HBO's *Westworld* (2016 – ) and *Cursed* set to premiere on Netflix in 2020.



Photo: Mattias Edwall

# MATIAS VARELA

PLAYING 'JOHAN PERSSON'



Photo: Sanna Dahlén

Matias Varela (b. 1980) entered the world of acting by landing the role of the charismatic Chilean drug-dealer Jorge Salinas in the Swedish thriller trilogy *Easy Money* (2010, 2012, 2013). He also played a recurring role on the tv mini-series *Arne Dahl* (2011-2012), before rising to international stardom by appearing in tv series like *The Borgias* (2011-2013) and *The Fat and the Angry* (2014). He also played a role in the 2015 remake of *Point Break*, as well as in the action film *Assassin's Creed* (2016).

In 2017, Varela starred as Jorge Salcedo, the head of security for the Cali cartel in the third season of the Netflix series *Narcos* (2015-2017) and received both critical kudos and fans all over the world.

Matias Varela's upcoming projects include *Blinded*, a thriller TV series set in the world of finance and the TNT series *Raised by Wolves* directed by Ridley Scott.





Photo: Dani Werner

## FAYSAL AHMED

PLAYING 'ABDULLAHI HUSSEIN'

Faysal Ahmed (b. 1983) is a Somali American actor born in Yemen who migrated to the United States in 1999. He started acting in Bedlam Theater and worked as youth program coordinator in 2009.

He was chosen over 700 actors at an open call to book a role in the Tom Hanks film *Captain Phillips* (2013), directed by Paul Greengrass. Faysal then appeared in *A Stray* (2016), the Academy Award nominated short, *Watu Wote: All of Us* (2017), the Sony feature, *Sicario: Day of the Soldado* (2018), and is now shooting a recurring role in the hit Hulu Original Series *Castle Rock* (2018 –).

## NAT RAMABULANA

PLAYING 'WERAR'

Nat Ramabulana (b. 1983) is a South African actor who has appeared in several film, television and stage productions in his home country, including *Muvhango* (2017), *Madiba* (2016) and *It's Complicated* (2015). He studied at the University of the Witwatersrand Drama School in Johannesburg and graduated with an Honours in Dramatic Arts in 2008.

Nat has also appeared in several large international productions, including *Blood Diamond* (2006) starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Djimon Hounsou and *The Good Lie* (2014) starring Reese Witherspoon, as well as the new highly anticipated BBC drama series *Noughts + Crosses*.



Photo: Desire Seko

## FREDRIK EVERS

PLAYING 'JENS ODLANDER'



Photo: Björn Körner

Fredrik Evers (b. 1971) studied at the Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts and has belonged to the permanent ensemble at Gothenburg City Theatre since 2005. He has also worked on some of Sweden's largest theatre stages, including the Royal Dramatic Theatre, Uppsala City Theatre and Riksteatern.

On screen, Fredrik has appeared in several films and TV series including the Academy Award-nominated film *A Man Called Ove* (2015), *Our Time Is Now* (2017 –), *Hotel* (2013) and *30 Days in February* (2012-2016). This fall, Fredrik can be seen in the theatre production *Long Day's Journey into Night* at Gothenburg City Theatre.

## JOSEFIN NELDÉN

PLAYING 'LINNEA SCHIBBYE'

Josefin Neldén (b. 1984) made her screen debut in 2005 in Ulf Malmros' *God Save the King* and her stage debut in *One Must Live* at Angereds Theatre in 2007. She has also performed in several productions at Backa Theatre and Gothenburg City Theatre.

Josefin studied at Wendelsbergs Teater och Skolscen and Ecole Philippe Gaulier in Paris. In 2014, she was nominated for a Guldbagge Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Lena in the musical drama *Shed No Tears* (2013) based on the lyrics and music by Swedish artist Håkan Hellström. Most recently, Josefin could be seen in the role as Margareta Nilsson in SVT's hugely popular TV series *Our Time Is Now* (2017 –) and as Esther in *Border* (2018) directed by Ali Abbasi.



Photo: Peter Pousard



# SANDRA HARMS

## PRODUCER

Sandra Harms (b. 1980) has produced the feature films *Princess* (2009) by Teresa Fabik, which was nominated for several Guldbagge Awards including Best Film; *Bekas* (2012) by Karzan Kader, a Swedish-Finnish-Iraqi co-production set exclusively in Iraqi Kurdistan; and *Us* (2013) by Mani Maserrat after a script by Jens Jonsson. In 2012, Sandra was designated Sweden's "Producer on the Move" at the Cannes Film Festival, and in 2014 she started working for Miso Film as producer and managing director in Sweden. During 2015 she produced the 8x45 min TV series *Modus* for TV4 with scripts by Mai Broström and Peter Thorsboe and concept director Lisa Siwe (*The Bridge season 1*). Season 2 was released in 2017 on CMORE. In addition to *438 Days*, Sandra is also currently producing *I'll be home for Christmas* directed by Ella Lemhagen set for theatrical release in November 2019 and the crime TV series *Box 21* directed by Mani Maserrat set for release on Viaplay in early 2020.



Photo: Shahab Salehi



# KARL FREDRIK ULFUNG

## PRODUCER

Karl Fredrik Ulfung (b. 1966) has produced and co-produced features and TV-dramas since 1993, and founded Stockholm-based Breidablick Film in 1999. He was nominated for Best Film at the 2006 Guldbagge Awards with the feature *Storm* by Mårlind & Stein. He received the Kristallen Award for Best Children and Youth Program for the Christmas calendar series *The Hedenhös Children Invent Christmas* in 2014. The same year, Karl Fredrik was appointed senior lecturer in film and TV production at the Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts. Karl Fredrik joined Miso Film Sweden in 2016. In addition to *438 Days*, he is also producing the crime TV series *Box 21* directed by Mani Maserrat set for release on Viaplay in early 2020.

Photo: Bengt Wanselius

## PETER BIRRO

### SCREENWRITER

Swedish-Italian screenwriter Peter Birro (b. 1966) is one of Scandinavia's most admired and prolific screenwriters. His groundbreaking TV series *Hammarkullen* (1997), *The New Country* (2000) and *How Soon Is Now?* (2007) are sweeping visions of Swedish society, marginalized people, political sagas and deeply human, emotional stories. For cinema he has written the successful biopic *Waltz for Monica* (2013) about internationally acclaimed jazz singer Monica Zetterlund, as well as *Easy Money II* (2012) and *We Can Be Heroes* (2002) starring Michael Nyqvist. His work has been awarded some of Europe's most prestigious prizes multiple times, like Prix Italia and Prix Europe. In 1997 he received The Ingmar Bergman Award, from the director himself.



Photo: Johan Lindstén



Photo: Nadja Hallström

## SOPHIA OLSSON

### DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Sophia Olsson (b. 1972) is a Swedish cinematographer who studied at the National Film School of Denmark and Valand Academy in Sweden. She has shot several award-winning features, including *Sparrows* (2015) and *The Charmer* (2018), that have competed at film festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin and Sundance. In 2018, Sophia was nominated for a Guldbagge Award for Best Photography with Amanda Kernell's critically acclaimed debut drama *Sami Blood* (2017). She received the Sven Nykvist Cinematography Award for the photo in both *Sami Blood* and *The Charmer*.



Photo: Per Arnesen

## JONAS ALLEN

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Jonas Allen (b. 1971) has worked in the film industry for 15 years. Jonas specializes in developing fiction films and TV-series and take cares of the creative production at Miso Film. Jonas studied at UCLA's School of Film & Television in Los Angeles, USA and also holds a cand.mag. in Film & Media Studies from Copenhagen University. Jonas has previously produced for Yellow Bird Films, FilmPeople, Per Holst Film / Nordisk Film and was a creative producer at one of Denmark's leading advertising agencies Wibroe, Duckert & Partner. Jonas co-founded Miso Film with business partner Peter Bose in 2004.

## PETER BOSE

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Peter Bose (b. 1966) has worked in the film industry since 1996. Peter is specialized in film financing and business management and has structured the financing and production of a large number of Scandinavian productions. Peter worked in the financial business, before joining Victoria Film as Head of Financing in 1996. In 1998 Peter became Vice President at Per Holst Film (a division of Nordisk Film). In 2000 Peter co-founded the production company FilmPeople and from 2003 to 2005 he held a position as Executive Producer at Yellow Bird Films. Peter co-founded Miso Film with business partner Jonas Allen in 2004.



Photo: Per Arnesen



Photo: Magnus Bergström

# JOHAN PERSSON / MARTIN SCHIBBYE

## JOURNALISTS

*438 Days* is based on the true story about the two Swedish journalists Martin Schibbye and Johan Persson, who after an assignment in the conflict-ridden Ogaden region in Ethiopia were sentenced to 11 years in prison for terrorism in 2011. They were later pardoned and released in 2012. "We wanted to investigate how the brutal hunt for oil effected the population in the closed and conflict-ridden region. We didn't only want to hear stories, we wanted to see it with our own eyes". After they had been pardoned and released, they return to Sweden on 14th September 2012 and subsequently held a press conference telling about their time in Ethiopia. Their story received massive press attention.

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