

This documentary was subjected to condemnation and attempts for institutional censorship as soon as it was done. It completely divided the society of a small post-communist country that hasn't yet dealt with its past and the fundamental role of the Secret Service

A scandalous case behind Socialism's greatest export – the art of animation reveals a heartbreaking human story.

Meet Uncle Tony.

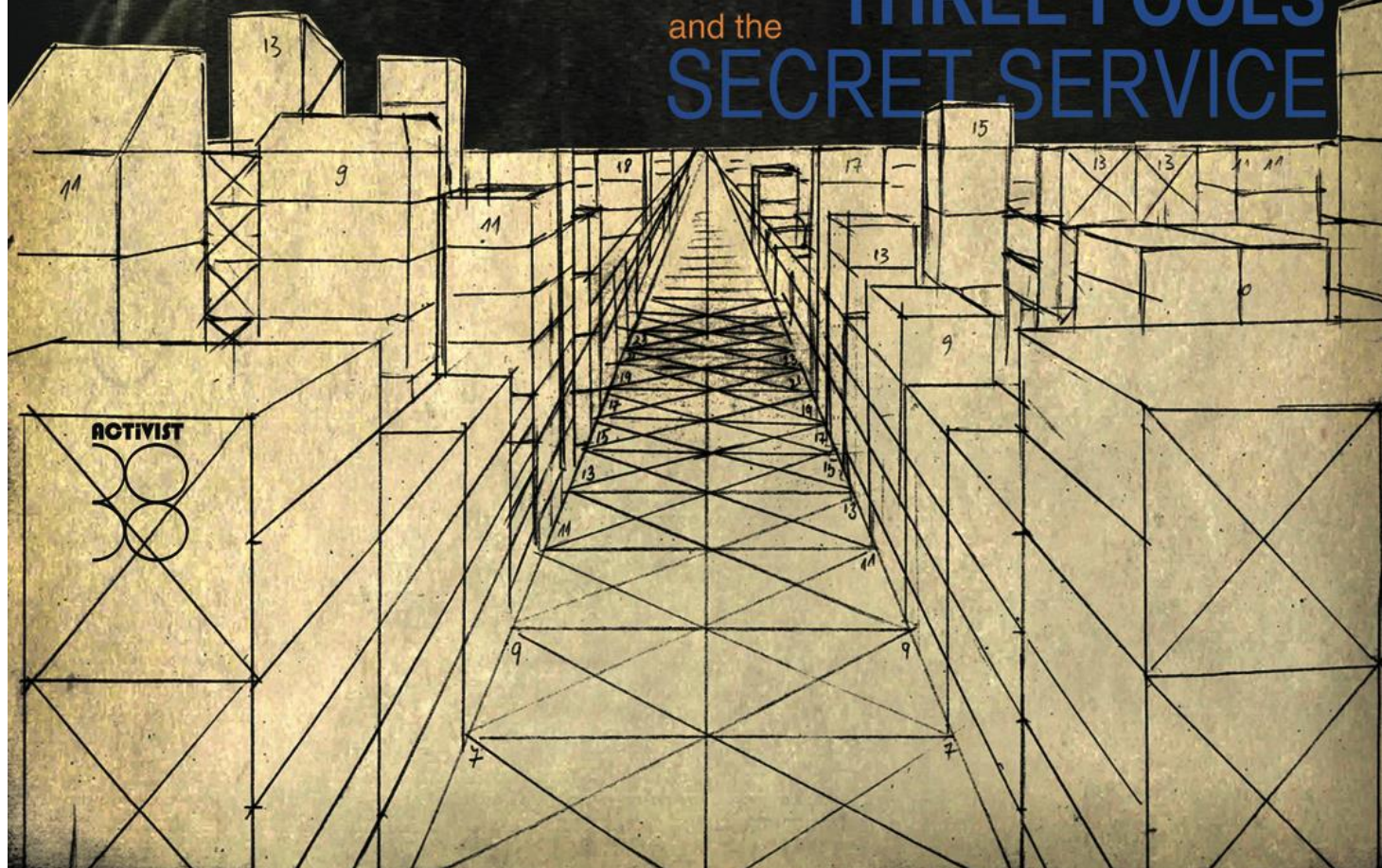
**activist38** presents

# UNCLE TONY

## THREE FOOLS

and the

## SECRET SERVICE





# Uncle Tony, Three Fools and the Secret Service

87-minute documentary co-production between **Activist 38**, the Bulgarian National Television and NovaFilm



## Awards:

**Best Director** - 6<sup>th</sup> Berlin Independent Film Festival;  
**Royal Reel Award** - 9<sup>th</sup> Canada International Film Festival;  
**Bronze Palm Award** - 9<sup>th</sup> Mexico International Film Festival;  
**Women D/P Finalist Documentary** - 2<sup>nd</sup> Florida Movie Festival;  
**Award of Merit: Documentary Feature** - Accolade Global Film Competition;  
**1<sup>st</sup> place in "Art" category** - 8<sup>th</sup> International Heritage Film Festival "Idols";  
**Honorable Mention** - 4<sup>th</sup> TrindieFest Film Festival;  
**Best Feature Documentary** - 8<sup>th</sup> Bushwick Film Festival;

3 nominations for **Best Film**, **Best Director** and **Best Sound** at the Bulgarian Film Academy Awards 2014.

**Official selections:** 20<sup>th</sup> Sarajevo Film Festival, 18<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Forum for Documentaries, 6<sup>th</sup> Astra Film Festival, 43<sup>th</sup> Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, 30<sup>th</sup> Warsaw Film Festival, 36<sup>th</sup> Cairo International Film Festival, 27<sup>th</sup> European Union Film Showcase - American Film Institute, 26<sup>th</sup> Trieste Film Festival, 6<sup>th</sup> Berlin Independent Film Festival, 11<sup>th</sup> ZagrebDox International Documentary Film Festival, 7<sup>th</sup> Millenium International Documentary Film Festival, 9<sup>th</sup> Flatpack Film Festival, 20<sup>th</sup> Vilnius International Film Festival, 9<sup>th</sup> Canada International Film Festival, 9<sup>th</sup> Mexico International Film Festival, 2<sup>nd</sup> Florida Movie Festival, 8<sup>th</sup> Beldocs International Documentary Film Festival, 8<sup>th</sup> International Heritage Film Festival "Idols", The Accolade Global Film Competition, 1<sup>st</sup> Hoosierdance International Film Festival, 4<sup>th</sup> Madrid International Film Festival, Salt Lake International Film Festival, 4<sup>th</sup> Cebu International Documentary Film Festival, 4<sup>th</sup> TrindieFest Film Festival, 3<sup>rd</sup> AegeanDocs International Documentary Film Festival, 8<sup>th</sup> Bushwick Film Festival, 4<sup>th</sup> BULDOC Berlin 2015 - Days of Bulgarian Documentary Cinema, 3<sup>rd</sup> Phnom Penh International Film Festival, 29<sup>th</sup> Leeds International Film Festival, 26<sup>th</sup> Carthage Film Festival, Cutting Edge Film Festival, Singapore World International Film Festival.



**Uncle Tony, Three Fools and the Secret Service** is a feature documentary debut for Mina Mileva and Vesela Kazakova, made without state funding for production and dedicated to Mina's animation teacher and outstanding animator Antony Trayanov/Uncle Tony.

The film became a mirror for a post-communist society that hasn't dealt with the role of the totalitarian Secret Service in recent history - a role that commands daily life till nowadays and creates a complex political problem. Bulgaria hasn't had a proper lustration process and the dossiers are still closed allowing many former agents and informers to take high political positions.

The authors of the film, subjected to threats and intimidation, were also attacked within their own Film Guild. Official letters were exchanged by the main institutions with the aim to prevent distribution. The Ministry of Culture, FILMAUTOR, CEM (the Council for Electronic Media), the Bulgarian National Television, the Union of Bulgarian Filmmakers and the tax authorities each responded with their own position and contacted the production company Activist 38 for relevant inspections. The copyright society FILMAUTOR illegitimately revoked the contract with Activist 38 and as result the Bulgarian National Television refused to air the film.

This campaign was triggered also by the fact that the film was seen as defaming several prominent directors from the past amongst whom the legendary Donio Donev. Donev, a brilliant animation director, whom Uncle Tony worked alongside with, is perhaps the best known name of Bulgarian cinema. He was also an informer for the Secret Service.

The controversy caused by the film was covered by the main media of the country and some international editions too. The European organisations [EDN](#) (European Documentary Network), [EAVE](#) (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs) and [Cineuropa](#) published support articles. An intellectual group at home created a Facebook page in support of the film entitled: *Please sign in support of freedom of speech, expression and thinking in Bulgaria*.

Despite attempts to discontinue screening the film, it was shown in the cinemas in Sofia for several months, which marks an unprecedented longevity for a homegrown documentary film.

### Creative crew

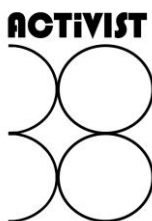
**Directed by:** Mina Mileva and Vesela Kazakova; **Photography:** Plamen Gelinov, Vasilena Goranova; **Editing:** Donka Ivanova; **Music:** Emilian Gatsov; **Sound:** Alexander Simeonov; **Animation:** Antony Trayanov, Mina Mileva



**Mina Mileva's** authored animated films were officially selected at many festivals and received awards. She entered the British animation industry in 1996 and worked as animation director/animator and line producer for films, commercials and TV series. In 2008 Mina set up the company "Activist 38".



**Vesela Kazakova** is an actor and producer. She is the only Bulgarian actress with Silver George Award in Moscow and Berlinale Shooting Stars Award. She turned to film producing and directing in a team with Mina Mileva who set together the company Activist 38. Vesela Kazakova is EAVE 2013 graduate.



**Activist 38** was established in 2008 after Vesela Kazakova and Mina Mileva produced the independent film **"Because of Her"**. Mina graduated animated film directing in "LA CAMBRE" Brussels and Sofia's Film Academy, NATFA and had worked in London since 1996. Vesela Kazakova is a multiple award-winning actress and has produced theatre plays and short films.

The company is attracted to projects with strong political and social engagement as well as a hybrid form and mix between the genres.

Activist 38 is strongly present at international festival markets such as Sunny Side of the Doc at La Rochelle, East European Forum in Jihlava, Zagreb Dox, Dok Leipzig, One world festival in Prague, Baltic Sea Forum, Share Your Slate at Berlinale, Producers network in Cannes and Sofia Meetings amongst others.

Most of their projects and completed films are coproduced by Bulgarian National Television. The animated "Because of Mum", directed by Antoaneta Chetraflova was bought by ARTE to be broadcast in France, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium. Their controversial documentary "Uncle Tony, Three Fools and the Secret Service" ran for seven months in cinemas in Sofia. Animated documentary "River Tales" which participated at BDC Discoveries 2013, selected for Pixel Lab Pitch and awarded with Special mention, was supported for development by the German MDM fund and Creative Europe.

## LINKS:

### IMDB:

[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3492882/?ref\\_=fn\\_tt\\_tt\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3492882/?ref_=fn_tt_tt_1)

### VARIETY review by Jay Weissberg:

<http://variety.com/2014/film/reviews/film-review-uncle-tony-three-fools-and-the-secret-service-1201273936/>

### Official trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWljDjYQMAI>

<https://vimeo.com/84618827>

### Youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRUPUD3vtgKIY9KS-gltqfA>

### Dokweb interview by Filip Šebek:

<http://www.dokweb.net/en/documentary-network/articles/a-bulgarian-documentary-about-an-oppressed-animator-has-to-face-censorship-2607/>

[http://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/kultura/film/bulharske-dokumentaristky-donasec-a-vymazany-mistr-animace\\_324571.html#.VH4VbJJIBOH](http://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/kultura/film/bulharske-dokumentaristky-donasec-a-vymazany-mistr-animace_324571.html#.VH4VbJJIBOH)

### Astra Film Festival – Mina Mileva's interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87EJzngmt2Y>

### Press conference clarifying the scandal:

<http://youtu.be/rZ3b1nOMQ6o>

### Interview in 3 parts by Oana Stupariu:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/article/20141007195421-60307343-bulgarian-secret-services-masters-of-animation-i>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/article/20141008122434-60307343-bulgarian-secret-services-masters-of-animation-ii>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/article/20141009230716-60307343-golden-times-tin-in-bulgarian-secret-services-files-iii>

### Baltic Sea Docs, "Uncle Tony" Q&A:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I\\_e-naQ3f0&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I_e-naQ3f0&feature=youtu.be)

### Case study for IDF:

<http://www.dokument-festival.com/database/industry-programme-detail/18239|CASE-STUDY-Uncle-Tony-Three-Fools-and-the-Secret-Service>

### EAVE newsletters:

<http://eave.org/news/graduate-mailing/1802/>

<http://eave.org/news/graduate-mailing/eave-in-support-of-bulgarian-filmmakers/>

<http://eave.org/news/uncle-tony-three-fools-and-the-secret-service-unprecedented-box-office/>

### EDN letter of support:

[http://www.edn.dk/news/news-story/article/edn-expresses-support-to-bulgarian-documentary-makers-being-threatened-and-harassed/?tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=220&cHash=515f6ef91b74ac4cd138e0443647d61f](http://www.edn.dk/news/news-story/article/edn-expresses-support-to-bulgarian-documentary-makers-being-threatened-and-harassed/?tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=220&cHash=515f6ef91b74ac4cd138e0443647d61f)

### Dox Magazine:

[http://www.doxmagazine.com/harrassment-of-bulgarian-filmmakers-must-come-to-a-stop/?fb\\_action\\_ids=10152134579907452&fb\\_action\\_types=og.likes&fb\\_source=aggregation&fb\\_aggregation\\_id=288381481237582](http://www.doxmagazine.com/harrassment-of-bulgarian-filmmakers-must-come-to-a-stop/?fb_action_ids=10152134579907452&fb_action_types=og.likes&fb_source=aggregation&fb_aggregation_id=288381481237582)

### Cineuropa's support article:

<http://cineuropa.org/nw.aspx?t=newsdetail&l=en&did=258379>

### AWN - Animation World Network:

<http://www.awn.com/blog/uncle-tony-three-fools-and-secret-service>

### Facebook Support Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/support.UncleTony.ThreeFools.SecretService?fref=ts>

**The following links are in Bulgarian language:**

**Dnevnik:**

[http://www.dnevnik.bg/razvlechenie/2014/06/09/2316313\\_evropeiski\\_kinoorganizacii\\_podkrepiha\\_chicho\\_toni/](http://www.dnevnik.bg/razvlechenie/2014/06/09/2316313_evropeiski_kinoorganizacii_podkrepiha_chicho_toni/)

**Bulgarian National TV – news:**

<http://bnt.bg/predavanyia/sa-obshteniya/tseremoniya-po-vra-chvane-nagradite-na-ba-lgarskata-filmova-akademiya>

**TV Show “Gospodari na efira”:**

<http://www.gospodari.com/?go=video&p=detail&videoid=9704#sthash.NDwkwsae.gbpl>

**Bulgarian National TV – morning block:**

<http://bnt.bg/part-of-show/hh-festival-zlaten-riton-2013>

**Capital Light:**

[http://www.capital.bg/light/tema/2014/01/31/2230530\\_leka\\_nosht\\_ds/](http://www.capital.bg/light/tema/2014/01/31/2230530_leka_nosht_ds/)

**Bulgarian National TV – a debate:**

<http://bnt.bg/predavanyia/denyat-zapochva-s-kultura/denyat-zapochva-s-kultura-3-fevruari-2014>

**Bulgarian National Television – morning block:**

[http://bnt.bg/bg/productions/121/edition/36392/26\\_11\\_2013\\_chicho\\_toni\\_trimata\\_glupaci\\_i\\_ds](http://bnt.bg/bg/productions/121/edition/36392/26_11_2013_chicho_toni_trimata_glupaci_i_ds)

**Bulgarian newspaper “Labour”:**

<http://www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=2488882>

**Darik Radio, Sofia:**

<http://radio.dariknews.bg/?page=audio&id=227808>

**Darik Radio, Plovdiv:**

<http://radio.dariknews.bg/?page=audio&id=229922>

**SofiaLive:**

<http://www.sofialive.bg/izkustvo/filmi/2809-chicho-toni-trimata-glupaci-i-ds.html>

**Today BG:**

<http://www.dnes.bg/kino/2013/12/19/imat-li-trimata-glupaci-drug-bashta-osven-donio-donev.210033>

**Culture Portal:**

<http://kultura.bg/web/%D1%84%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%BC%D1%8A%D1%82-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%8F%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2-%D0%B5-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%83%D0%B7%D0%B0/>

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