

A man in a grey tank top is the central figure, looking down with a somber expression. He is holding a small, framed portrait of a woman with dark hair. The background is a blurred crowd of people, some wearing orange and white clothing. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, orange and brown tones, creating a sense of urgency and tragedy.

KARAGANDA

HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO TO SAVE THE ONE YOU LOVE?



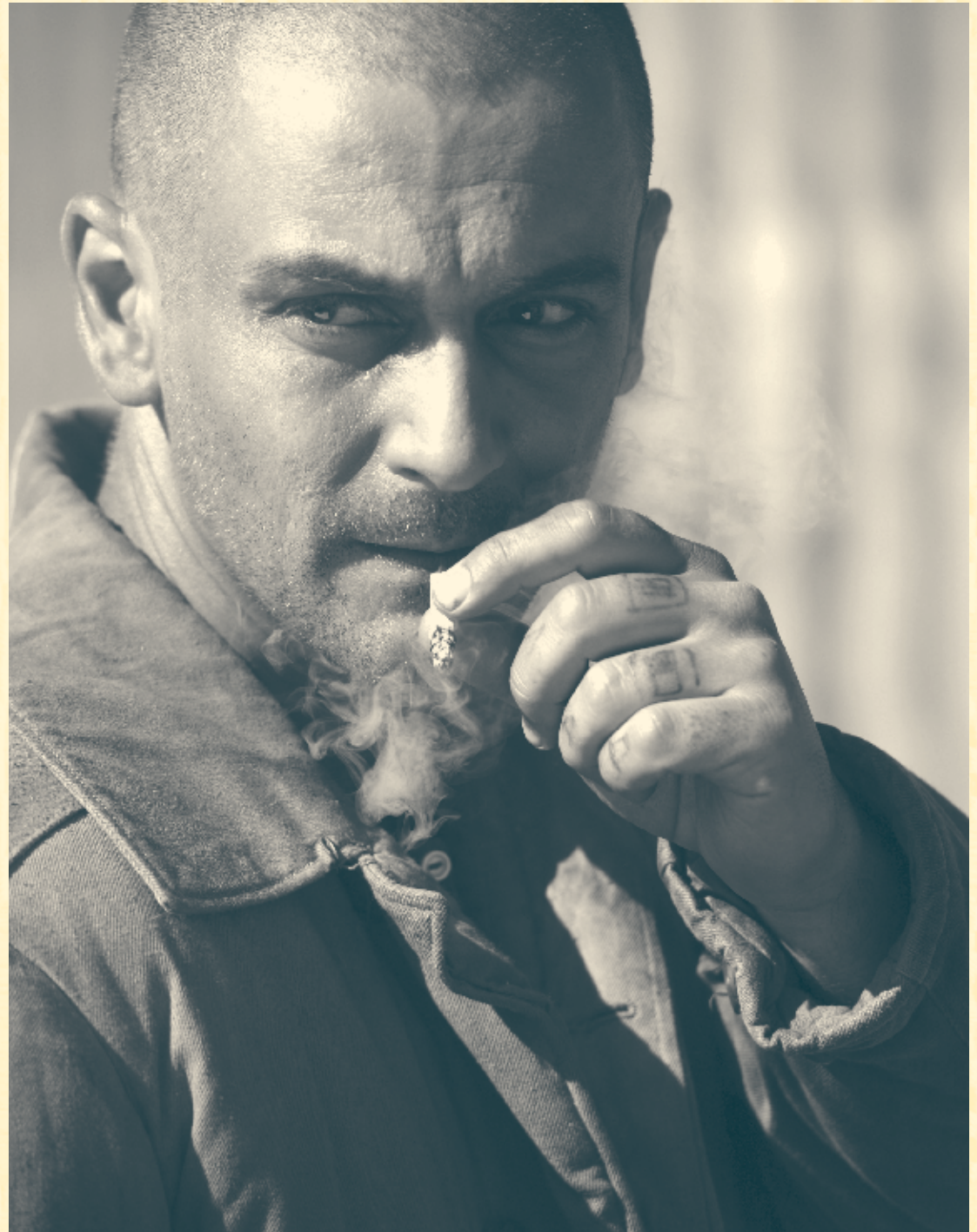
RULE 1:
**“A VOR SHALL HAVE NO FAMILY OF HIS OWN:
NO MARRIAGE AND NO CHILDREN.”**



**“I only ask for
one thing.”**

—VLADIMIR

Vladimir is a prisoner in a Soviet prison camp on a mission to find his wife who is also imprisoned in the *Karaganda* region. In order to rescue her, he joins the Vory v Zakonye, a criminal gang that controls the camps. The Vory succeed in finding her, but at a cost that will haunt Vladimir as he transforms into a powerful crime boss in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn.





**“The home
for angels is
heaven.
The home
for a Vor is
prison.”**

—VOR SAYING

Who are the Vory v Zakonye (AKA Thieves-in-Law)?

An elite criminal organization going back to the time of the czars, founded in Russian prisons. Acceptance into the Vory does not depend on your race, religion, or family, but the number of times you were in prison and the brutality of your crimes. All Vory must follow a strict code of conduct.





RULE 2:
“A VOR SHALL NEVER SHOW HIS EMOTIONS.”



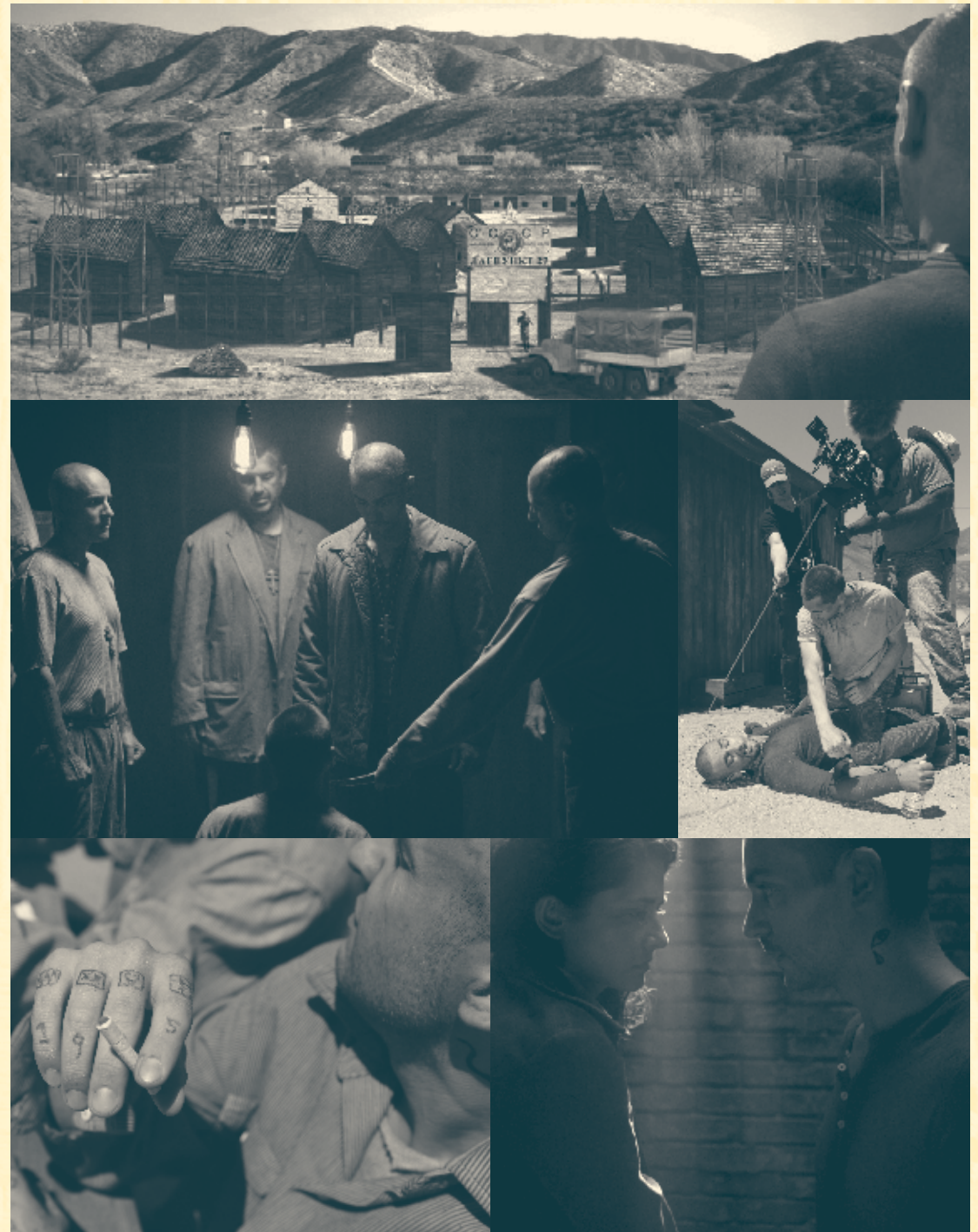
**“In
capitalism,
man exploits
man.
In socialism,
it’s the
reverse.”**

— KAMENSKY

PROOF OF CONCEPT:

A 26-minute version of KARAGANDA was filmed in 2013 as a thesis film by directing fellow Max Weissberg at the American Film Institute (budget: \$65,000). KARAGANDA received the 2013 Fotokem grant and was one of 5 films selected for the 2013 AFI showcase. So far, the film has earned 5 awards and screened at 26 festivals in 12 countries. The film is now available on Indieflix and AFI’s online theater.

karagandafilm.com
luftmenschfilms.com



“Are you trying to convince us, or are you trying to convince yourself?”

—VLADIMIR

BUDGET

Approx. \$3.5 million

TARGET AUDIENCES

Males 18-59, Females 25-49

COMPARABLE FILMS

The Godfather (1972):

Budget: \$6 million, Worldwide gross: \$245 million (source: imdb)

Eastern Promises (2007):

Budget: \$38 million, Worldwide gross: \$57 million (source: box office mojo)

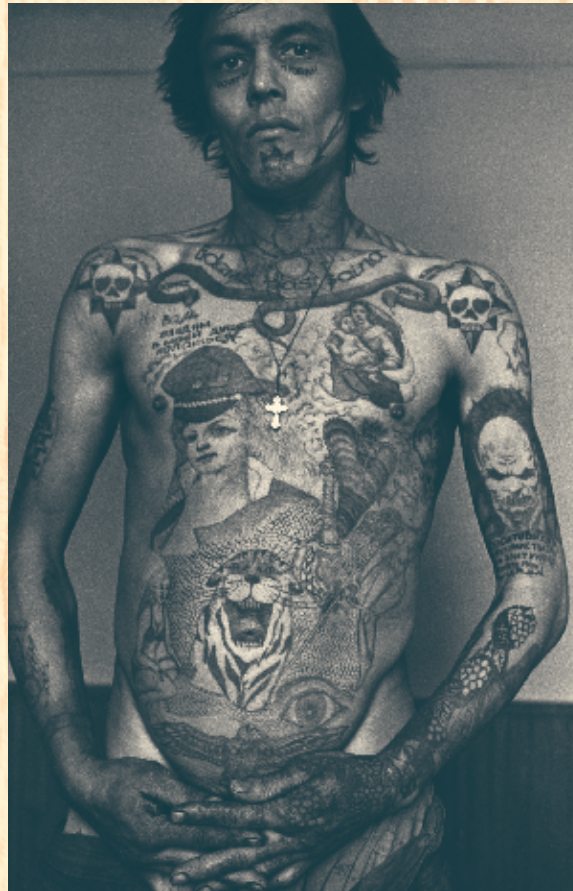
Goodfellas (1990):

Budget: \$25 million, Worldwide gross: \$82 million (source: imdb)

Gemorraab (2008):

Budget: \$6.2 million, Worldwide gross: \$14.6 million (source: imdb)

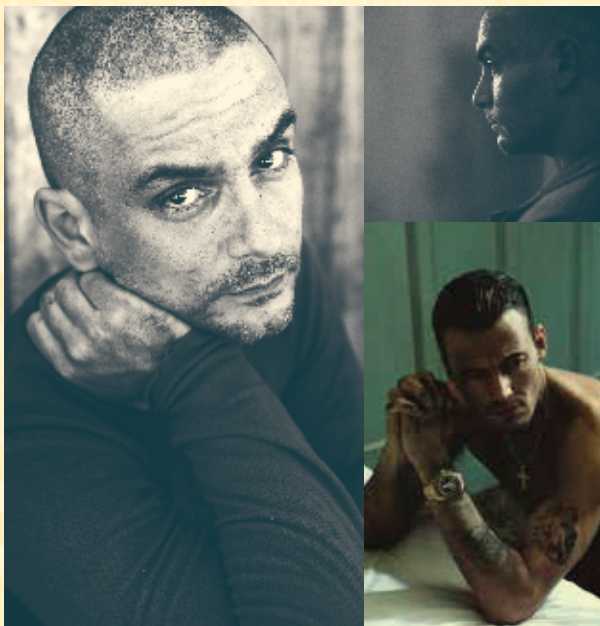




RULE 3:
**“NEVER, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, HAVE A LEGITIMATE
JOB OR SIGNIFICANT PROPERTY”**



CHARACTERS



VLADIMIR

30-40, Dark, Jewish, originally from Kishinev, Moldova. A complex man, caught between two opposing worlds. Imprisoned in a Soviet labor camp in the hostile terrain of Karaganda, he is faced with the impossible task of rescuing his wife, Elena, who is also imprisoned thanks to his carelessness as a smuggler. But to seek her forgiveness has unfathomable costs. After killing a legion of his tormentors and inventing a false past, he secures membership into the elite Vory v Zakonye. He swears allegiance to an ancient code, one which includes forbidding any family, all in order to get to Elena. Later as a crime boss in 1990s Brooklyn, his desire to keep Elena and his family separate from the Vory will become impossible.



ALEKSEI

30-40, Loud, brazen, a natural joke-teller, unafraid to speak his mind. Imprisoned alongside Vladimir, they labor together to meet work quotas. After Aleksei cuts his hand on a saw, Vladimir saves his life by offering penicillin. When Vladimir enters a grudge match held by the Vory, Aleksei enters the fight and wins - but actually fights to save Vladimir from being killed by someone else. Later Vladimir joins the Vory and Aleksei becomes their target and is ordered to be killed by Vladimir. Instead he kills the other Vory, giving Aleksei the opportunity to escape Karaganda. Years later, Aleksei reappears in New York on behalf of the Solnetsevskaya crime syndicate, whose business interests oppose that of Vladimir and his partner, Monya.

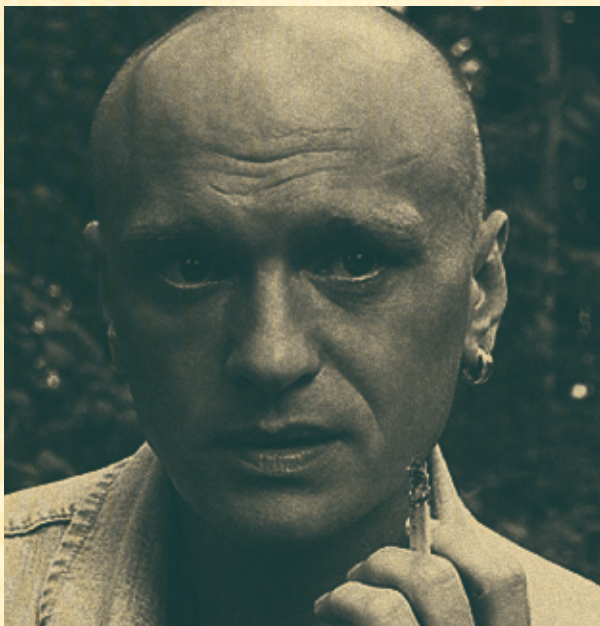


ELENA

30-40, Vladimir's wife. She was once a traditional woman, loving and doting towards her husband. However, by the time Vladimir finds Elena, she is deeply affected by prison life and by the treatment of Vladimir's fellow Vory. Impregnated by her rapist, she forces Vladimir to promise to raise the child as his own. Her desire to keep her family together, in spite of threats and humiliation, will enable her eventual forgiveness of Vladimir's dark side.



CHARACTERS



IVAN

50-60, Senior Vor of Kolyma & Brighton Beach. The undisputed leader of Vladimir's *obshak* (communal fund) in Brighton Beach. He helps Vladimir save Elena on their journey from Karaganda to America, then forces him to carry out a dangerous, yet highly profitable mission. The only Vor aware of Vladimir's secret family, Ivan becomes Vladimir's chief antagonist. Ivan wishes to merge his Brooklyn bank with a Russian bank to increase his power and protect his interests.



MONYA

30s, A Brooklyn native with Russian ancestry. Vladimir's accomplice and business partner in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. A Vor and nephew of Ivan, Monya is ruthless and confident enough to pursue his own agenda. He brilliantly organizes a worldwide business scheme that generates \$100 million, which he plans to park in a Russian bank in order to secure government cooperation. When Vladimir's role in the deal is threatened, however, he arrives in Moscow to fight their way out of the situation. The arrival of Vladimir's old friend, Aleksei, to Brighton Beach causes Monya to question Vladimir's loyalty, putting his plan of starting his own club in doubt.



SVETA

20s, Seductive, sultry, tender, and forgiving. Vladimir's mistress. Born in the USA, but with heavy Russian roots. Deeply interested in the closed-door business activities in the club where she works. She begins a stormy relationship with Vladimir, where the threat of violence is ever-present. Vladimir will dump her, however, after she stumbles upon his family. To get even with Vladimir, she begins dating Aleksei and then realizes she's pregnant.







RULE 4:
**“HELP OTHER VORS: BOTH BY MORAL AND MATERIAL
SUPPORT, UTILIZING THE COMMUNE OF VORS.”**





MAX WEISSBERG
DIRECTOR

A graduate of the American Film Institute's directing program, Max Weissberg co-produced and appeared in the feature documentary film, *HOTEL GRAMERCY PARK* (2008), which included cameos by Ben Stiller, Winona Ryder, and Kanye West. The film earned a jury citation at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival and screened on the Sundance Channel for several years. Max's feature film, *SUMMERTIME IN NEW YORK* (2011), screened at festivals including SXSW (as *ROOM 4 RENT*), and won best screenplay at First Time Fest. The film is available on a dozen VOD outlets. In addition to the award-winning AFI thesis film *KARAGANDA* (2013), other credits include work for CMT, MTV, VH1, Comedy Central, Discovery, PBS, Vice, and the Sundance Channel. Other shorts include: *TAKE IT!* (2008), *HERPES: A LOVE STORY* (2011), *I'M NOT SORRY* (2012), *THIEF-IN-LAW* (2012), and *THE DRESS* (2016).



NINA GORTINSKI
PRODUCER

A graduate of the University of Southern California with a B.S in Business and Southwestern Law School for her Juris Doctorate, Nina's eclectic background includes nearly a decade of advertising and marketing experience. More recently she has worked in the technology and entertainment sectors, including some years managing global partnerships at Yahoo and at a Silicon Valley gamification start-up. Her first love was naturally film, and alongside her corporate work she has produced several films in Europe and the U.S. Her producing credits include: the award-winning feature *BEAUTIFUL BLUE DANUBE* (2008), *BURY THE DOG* (2012), *TAROT* (2013), *LOVE OR LAUGHS* (2015), *THINGS THAT NOBODY TOLD HIM* (2016) and *DATING IN REAL LIFE* (2016).



EDWIN MEJIA
PRODUCER

During his six years in the finance industry at Lehman Brothers, Smith Barney, and Fidelity Investments, Edwin managed approximately \$4 billion of commercial real estate holdings and a portfolio of over 700 private and institutional accounts. Over the past seven years, Edwin has been a partner and lead producer at the Vldar Company, responsible for developing the production slate and managing sales. Credits include the award-winning hit film, *GENERATION IRON*, (2013) narrated by Academy Award Nominee, Mickey Rourke. This film was one of the top five highest grossing documentaries in 2013, and Edwin handled all the domestic and foreign distribution sales. Most recently, he produced the fashion film biopic, *JEREMY SCOTT THE PEOPLE'S DESIGNER* (2015) (featuring Katy Perry, Miley Cyrus, A\$AP Rocky, and Rita Ora), now available on Netflix. Currently, he is producing *THE HURT BUSINESS* with producer Jim Czarnecki (*BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE*, *FAHRENHEIT 9/11*), narrated by Kevin Costner.



VORY V ZAKONYE ADDITIONAL RULES — A VOR SHALL...:

“FORSAKE HIS RELATIVES: FATHER, MOTHER, BROTHERS, AND SISTERS.”

“RULE AND ARBITRATE THE CRIMINAL WORLD AND PROTECT THE BASIC NEEDS OF FELLOW VORS.”

“KEEP SECRET INFORMATION ABOUT THE WHEREABOUTS OF ACCOMPLICES.”

“TAKE THE BLAME FOR ANOTHER VOR’S CRIME IN UNAVOIDABLE SITUATIONS (IF A VOR IS UNDER INVESTIGATION OR IS ARRESTED).”

“PUNISH ANY OFFENDING VOR AS DECIDED BY THE JUDGMENT OF THE VORS’ COUNCIL.”

“HAVE GOOD COMMAND OF FENYA, THE VORS’ SLANG.”

“NEVER GAMBLE WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO COVER HIS LOSSES.”

“TEACH THE CRIMINAL WAY OF LIFE TO YOUTH WITH POTENTIAL.”

“NOT LOSE HIS REASONING ABILITIES WHEN DRUNK.”

“HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE AUTHORITIES”

“MAKE GOOD ON PROMISES GIVEN TO OTHER VORS.”

“NEVER DENY HIS VOR STATUS DIRECTLY.”





**“I only
believe in
what I see
and what I can
take.”**

— KAMENSKY

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