



PRESS KIT

AT FULL THROTTLE

Czech Republic/Slovakia, 2021
85 min

Directed by: Miro Remo

Written by: Miro Remo, Juro Šlauka

Produced by: Vít Janeček (D1film), Miro Remo (Arsy-Versy)

Co-produced by: Czech Television, RTVS

Photography: Miro Remo

Editing: Šimon Hájek

Sound: Jan Richtr

Supported by the Czech Film Fund and the Slovak Audiovisual Fund. The editing was consulted in the Dok.incubator CZ workshop.

World premiere: August 2021, Karlovy Vary IFF (Main Competition)

Czech theatrical premiere: September 16, 2021

Slovak theatrical premiere: September 9, 2021

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Further info and trailer: <https://d1film.com/en/films/at-full-throttle/>



SYNOPSIS

Determined quinquagenarian Jaroslav is passionate about two things in his life: fast cars and his school-crush Jitka who infused him with new hope and energy after his marriage had fallen apart. Jitka, the longest-serving autocross driver in the Czech Republic, could hardly find a better couch and mechanic than Jaroslav. Over and over again, he keeps building race cars out of used vehicles for her and together, they're hoping for a victory. However, car racing is just a backdrop for their life struggles in which the couple stands a slim chance for success. When frustration and disillusionment from the past take the wheel, their lives take an unexpected turn. Director Miro Remo presents a real-life mixture of drama and comedy from the forgotten borderland of Moravia and Slovakia.



TREATMENT

The protagonists of the film are Jitka Prokipčáková from Slovakia and Jaroslav Vávra from Moravia, the eastern part of the Czech Republic. A third essential character is Jaroslav's mother Jiřina. Fifty-year-old Jitka is currently the only active female autocross driver in the Czech Republic. Jaroslav, her former schoolmate from elementary school and founder of the DRAKKAR autocross team, takes care of her cars and helps her get ready for the races. On one level, the film invites us to watch them as they're trying to defend their championship in the Carpathian Autocross Cup.

However much more importantly, the film captures the experience of people who have dissolved a large part of their lives in a series of bad decisions and seek hope in a new beginning, both in their personal lives and their professional fulfillment.

Jaroslav was already in love with Jitka in elementary school but he never told her. Instead, he ended up in a manipulative relationship with a controlling wife. In school, Jitka had no idea Jaroslav fancied her and supposedly, she would've returned his love had she known about it. Her first marriage was also unhappy and she spent several decades suffering in the vicious circle of a dysfunctional relationship. Year by year, time began flying faster and faster. A turning point came when Jitka organized an elementary-school reunion where she saw Jaroslav again. Today, Jitka and Jaroslav are living together. They're both trying to prove they still have what it takes. They devote their free time to autocross where as a woman, Jitka is relentlessly fighting against male opponents. Despite the odds, Jitka has managed to establish herself as a high-ranking racer capable of finishing at the top.

To Jaroslav, the job of a race-car mechanic and author of its many modifications is a way to find a meaning and reclaim his dignity which evaporated when he lost his mining job after the revolution of 1989. Miners used to be well paid and the government provided their job with a halo of prestige and stability. Back then, Jaroslav who was young and full of energy was drilling rock and fighting for a better future with his own hands. However, a revolution was under way on the surface above the mine and it eventually stripped workers' professions of their prestige. After the revolution, Jaroslav embarked on a phase of searching by trial and error.

In both the Czech and the Slovak republics, the turbulent post-revolution era deeply affected people's social relationships. This film offers an intimate perspective on one of the many personal struggles to find a new meaning and recover from the consequences of previous blunders.



AN INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR MIRO REMO

How did you discover the protagonists and how did the theme of the film evolve given that the film revolves around car racing but actually addresses much more general themes?

While looking for protagonists who lived for racing, we found protagonists who were racing for their lives. Five years ago, screenwriter Juro Slauka and I decided it would be great to make a film that would eschew the narrative conventions of the local documentary scene. That was the initial idea. Something about car racing, for instance. The original impulse was my memory of playing the Destruction Derby video game as a boy. We started looking for local demolition derby events. We got lucky and Juro found wrecks of destroyed cars somewhere on the internet, so we wasted no time and traveled to the Slovak Očkov village. At an old farming-cooperative compound converted to an autocross track, we met Ríša, an autocross enthusiast, who knew a person who fit our idea of "living for racing". It was Jaroslav from Moravia who brought his partner Jitka along to our first meeting. We knew right away they were what we were looking for. We wanted a protagonist with a strong inner conflict and Jaroslav's life was bursting with unresolvable problems that few can get themselves into.

Jarda and Jitka are powerful film protagonists. They are both funny and dramatic and the tribulations they've experienced in their lives are a prelude to the story of the film. What were their lives like before they became partners in life and racing, a driver and her coach and mechanic?

Jaroslav is a former miner. A strong man who can get his way. Nevertheless, he has seen his life crumble several times. Since childhood, his life was difficult. His father took to drinking after his property had been confiscated by the government and probably also as a way to cope with the pressure from the Communist Party which he had refused to join. Because of his father's defiance, Jaroslav couldn't become a mechanic and started working as a miner instead. Even as the revolution was taking place on the surface, he kept mining underground and exceeding his quota. He welcomed the revolution with hope. After a serious injury, he left the mine and started his own business. After initial success, he became victim of the dark side of early capitalism since just as many others (my parents, for instance), he was unable to fully understand the new, fiercely evolving world where money decided everything. With the last remnant of his strength, he fought his debt but the struggle in which he took justice in his own hands proved too exhausting. His family suffered. The challenging period destabilized his relationships and growing antagonisms led to his divorce. Unfortunately, he lost touch with his children and today, he is waging a court battle against his own daughter. Jitka used to lead a family life but since the details concern other people from her past and the film concentrates on Jaroslav, I won't go into any more detail. Nevertheless, the film hints on many things from Jitka's past. She is also divorced and pursues a new hope for happiness. Perhaps, she wasn't cut out to be a housewife. Perhaps it was love she lacked in the past.



The film features several plot lines which develop in parallel. Over what time span did you follow the protagonists?

The shooting took three years. The various situations evolved and we just documented the reality and waited what would happen next. The upside was that we got to know the protagonists well and became friends with them. This natural friendship proved necessary to tell an intimate story of a man who represents the fates of many others who have lost their illusions. Often, people

like Jaroslav were undeservedly betrayed by the system they trusted and have become bitter spectators of what they consider a mere political theater. Jaroslav hasn't given up. He expends all the strength he has left to do his own thing on his own terms. Even after taking so many blows, he isn't giving up. It's fascinating.

The story of the film is very vivid, it's always in the present which is typical of feature films. To what extent is it based on authentic life as opposed to screenwriting devices to emphasize the chosen themes? Did the protagonists help you stage some of the situations or did you simply carefully observe them when you felt you might capture a powerful moment?

Full Throttle only consists of authentic situations. The themes of the film appear in the form of true images from the lives of Jaroslav and Jitka. We followed them closely with the camera, often literally fulfilling the "racing for life" motto. During the shooting, the two protagonists underwent strong personal development. Gradually, more and more authentic and often even fatal situations started occurring while the camera was rolling. I don't think I've ever seen so much authentic development in the life of my protagonists in any of my films so far.

One of the layers of the film presents a moving insight into relationships between generations, both loving and traumatic. At the same time, the film shows how the tone and the evolution of personal relationships is reflected in the protagonists' political views. Did you expect to see this connection between the personal and the political levels from the beginning or did the course of the story surprise you?

Cherchez la femme, as they say. And if it isn't a woman, it's the family. I believe that these things are essential to life and deficiencies in this area cause lifelong traumas. Nobody wants a dysfunctional relationship, still we often end up in one. Nothing influences our lives as much as our relationships. It happens beyond our control, we are just earthly beings seeking happiness. But life is very short and this game isn't endless or, in other words, there are races that can't be won.

The story that began unfolding in front of the camera lens kept surprising me more and more. It had to do with the increasing intensity of our shared experiences which I've already mentioned as our growing friendship allowed us to witness ever more emotionally tense situation in Jaroslav's former family. At a certain point I realized that his family was the key and together with the protagonists, we started following this theme. It was complicated, I didn't want to delve into the actual conflict in the family but it turned out it was an important decision in directing the film. I'd always discuss our next steps with both Jitka and Jaroslav. As the conflict had already made its way into the film, the challenge was to show its effect on the protagonists without sinking into the dark side of life. Today, everyone craves conflict. If you live a normal life, nobody is interested in you, you're boring. It wasn't easy but we didn't want to

film yet another tragic film. We actually had a lot of laughs during the shooting. I hope the audience laughs as much as we have.

In some scenes, it's obvious the film was shot using many cameras and demanded somewhat unorthodox technical solutions. Even though it will mostly interest filmmakers, could you say something about that?

In a way, we tried to do the impossible. In some parts of the film, we needed to document car-racing situations. We experimented a lot and fixed cameras in all kinds of places. The film only features a tiny bit, less than a fraction of a percent of the racing footage we've collected over the 3 years which covered dozens of hours of races on different tracks shot with multiple cameras. Eventually, luck favored the prepared and we captured several very powerful moments, some of which were literally nearly fatal. It was more of a scientific experiment, work towards an uncertain result. Eventually, it makes you even happier to see these sequences in the editing room. I felt like I had outdone myself. (laughs)

You finished shooting the film just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Did it affect your protagonists' lives in any way?

How should I put it? (laughs) Autocross drivers weren't too worried about COVID-19, the film crew was much more careful. Maybe it had to do with autocross being a rather dangerous sport and the drivers not seeing COVID-19 as much of a threat in comparison. But I'm more inclined to believe that when you're racing for your life, COVID-19 matters less to you than to ordinary mortals.



Miro Remo (photo by Karlovy Vary IFF)

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

MIRO REMO or Miroslav Remo was born on April 9, 1983 in Ladce, Trenčín Region, Slovakia. After finishing high school, Miro started studying mechatronics at the Trenčín University. However, he soon switched to documentary filmmaking at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava where he earned his PhD in 2012. Miro directs, writes and photographs short, middle-length and feature-length documentaries. His student film *Arsy-Versy* is one of the most awarded films in the region. Miro worked on several television series and programs for RTVS such as *Umenie 2013*, *Celnice – Ježkovy voči*, *Slovenské kino – Strach a napätie*, *Fotografi – Tibor Huszár – Návrat späť*, *Nezvyčajné príbehy na slovenskom sídlisku – Beverly Hills 01863*, *Konzervy času – Osmičkári*, etc. His films (especially *Arsy-Versy*) were screened and awarded at various festivals including Vienna, Žilina, Tehran, Padua, České Budějovice, Telč, London, Toronto, Zlín, Krakow, Jihlava, Talinn, and Munich. Miro co-founded the Ozon Film (2004-2014) and *Arsy-Versy s.r.o.* (since 2010) companies.

Filmography: (director and screenwriter unless stated otherwise) student shorts: *Jano* (2004; + co-photographer), *Cold Joint* (2007, *Studený spoj*; + co-editor), *Ecce Homo* (2008; + co-photographer, editor, producer) and *Arsy-Versy* (2009), medium-length documentaries: *Chill* (V-2011, *Pohoda*; + production) and *Vrbovian Wind* (V-2014, *Vrbovský veter*; + co-photographer., co-producer), featurelength documentaries: *Comeback* (2014; + co-producer), *Coolture* (2016, *Cooltura*; + co-photographer, co-producer) and *Richard Müller: Undiscovered* (2016, *Richard Müller: Nespoznaný*; + co-photographer, co-producer), *Full Throttle* (2021, *Láska pod kapotou*; + co-photographer, co-producer). (source: filmovyprehled.cz).



A NOTE FROM VÍT JANEČEK, THE FILM'S CZECH PRODUCER



Miro and I have been friends and colleagues for years. Miro collaborated on several films I made with Zuzana Piussi and proved to be an invaluable photographer with a great talent for capturing situations and bringing characters close to the audience.

In *Full Throttle*, he managed to find and work with people whose lives reflect their strong personalities and temperaments while to a large extent, they also personify the feelings of a large portion of the middle and elder generations in regions that haven't managed to develop their potential in the past decades.

Jaroslav embodies the qualities of a down-to-earth self-made man whose realism and self-reliance charge his life with great energy despite the many setbacks he has faced in the past as well as the ones the audience witnesses in the film. As a director, Miro respects reality and the authenticity of situations without trying to artificially make them more appealing or intense. Instead, he exhibits a great sense for the dramatic quality of both ordinary and exceptional moments as he follows the protagonists' struggles at the closest possible range without judging or moralizing.

Despite the above, Miro's style and approach to characters produce a narrative film which tells an intense story of concrete people while reflecting on its historical context.

Miro exhibits fascinating thoroughness bordering on (well-handled) megalomania in finding technical solutions needed to capture the dynamics of situations which stem from the fast movement of race cars and their drivers' reactions, complemented by his ability to be with his protagonists in places and at times when life puts them to a test.

In his depiction of relationships, will struggles, identities as well as stubbornness, Miro balances tragedy with laughter which draws on the protagonists' own sense of humor.

Although the film is completely universal, Miro managed to tap into the unique Moravian culture including its language and temperament that have inspired many unique Czech films in the past such as Věra Chytilová's *The Inheritance*.

I'm convinced that Miro has created an exceptionally vivid, thrilling as well as funny portrayal of contemporary life that will not only entertain but also inspire us to reflect on the world we live in.

A NOTE FROM IVO ANDERLE, THE CZECH DISTRIBUTOR



A work-in-progress screening of an unfinished film in a theater during a lockdown. A special moment. And what a special film! Then discussing meanings, details, provocations, creativity, frustration, young people and old people, the city and the countryside, love and hate, flying insects, South Moravia and more and more. Taking the debate out of the theater. Seeing things from the film in the street around us. Life with all its complex muddy turns. A ride in an autocross car. Roll the car over and watch the film again with you in a theater. That's what we want.



FINAL CREDITS

FEATURING
Jaroslav Vávra
Jitka Prokipčáková
Jiřina Vávrová

ORIGINAL IDEA, WRITTEN BY
Miro Remo
Juro Šlauka

EDITING
Šimon Hájek

SOUND
Jan Richtr

MUSIC
Adam Matej

PHOTOGRAPHY
Martin Chlpík
Miro Remo

PRODUCERS
Vít Janeček, D1film
Miro Remo, Arsy-Versy

DIRECTED BY
Miro Remo

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY
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Dušan Husár
Lukáš Kačerjak
Ivo Miko
Juraj Mravec
Maroš Žilinčan

SOUND RECORDING
Adam Matej
Boris Vereš

DRAMATURGY
Zuzana Piussi

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS, ARSY-VERSY
Marek Kučera
Veronika Mareková
Miro Remo

ACCOUNTING SERVICES, ARSY-VERSY
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LEGAL SERVICES, ARSY-VERSY
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OFFICE, D1FILM
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CREATIVE PRODUCER, ČESKÁ TELEVIZE
Věra Krincvajová

HEAD OF CZECH TELEVISION FILM CENTER
Helena Uldrichová

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, CZECH TELEVISION
Zdeněk Hala

PRODUCTION MANAGER, CZECH TELEVISION
Michaela Kellerová

PRODUCER, RTVS
Roman Genský

HEAD DOCUMENTARY DRAMATURG, RTVS
Ondrej Starinský

PRODUCTION MANAGER, RTVS
Andrea Beňová

5.1 SOUND MIXING
Štěpán Mamula

COLOR GRADING
Jan Mikita

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Juro Šlauka

SOUND ASSISTANTS
Richard Fůlek
Michal Džadoň
Lukáš Kasprzyk
Boris Varga
Matej Wolf

FOLEY ARTISTS
Jana Ludvíková
Jana Častková

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Petr Bosák
Robert Jansa

SPECIAL EFFECTS
Marek Ježo
Tomáš Lomnický
Miro Remo

TRANSLATION
Tomáš Pártl
Jakub Tlodka

STILL PHOTOGRAPHY
Tomáš Halász
Džaro Novák

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Marek Kučera

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| Michelle Cigánková | Lukáš Moravčík |
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| Martina Čechová | Martin Ohera |
| Erik Drinba | Štefan Ochaba |
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Alžbeta Mackovičová Jakub Viktorín
Albert Malinovský Blažej Vidlička
Kamila Zlatúšková

FEATURED MUSIC

Hana Zagorová, Stanislav Hložek, Petr Kotvald – *Jinak to nejde*
Original song: Masquerade - *Guardian Angel*
Lyrics: Chris Evans-Ironside, Kurt Gebegern
Czech lyrics: Miroslav Černý
Released in 1985
Publisher: Supraphone

Hana Zagorová, Stanislav Hložek, Petr Kotvald – *Můj čas*
Lyrics: Zdeněk Borovec
Music: Petr a Pavel Orm
Released in 1985
Publisher: Supraphone

Petr Kotvald, Stanislav Hložek – *Oh, Suzi*
Original song: Secret Service - *Oh Susie*
Lyrics: Bjorn Algot Hakanson, Tim Arnold Norell
Czech lyrics: Zdeněk Borovec
Released in 1981
Publisher: Supraphone

Věra Martinová – *Poslední Rallye*
Lyrics: Eduard Krečmar
Music: Pavel Krejča
Released in 1989
Publisher: Supraphone

Haddaway – *What Is Love*
Lyrics: Junior Torello
Music: Dee Dee Halligan
Released in 1992
Publisher: Coconut Records/BMG Ariola Media GmbH

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE Czechoslovak Television

Title: Tuzex podruhé, Directed by: Jan Soukup, Produced by: Czechoslovak Television, 1989
Title: Úplatky, Directed by: Jaroslav Bouma, Produced by: Czechoslovak Television, 1989
Title: Súvislosti, Directed by: Petr Slavík, Czechoslovak Television, 1987
Short film
Title: Bitva pod zemí, Directed by: Drahoslav Holub, Produced by: Krátký film Praha, 1949
Jaroslav Vávra's private archive

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2021

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