



in coproduction with



present

# LOS ÁNGELES

in the competition of the new LA MUSE section

at the 20<sup>th</sup> LA FILM FESTIVAL



**Written & Directed by: Damian John Harper**  
**With Mateo Bautista Matías, Marcos Rodríguez Ruíz und Lidia García**

Germany, Mexico 2014 | Length: 97 min.



#### International Sales

Picture Tree International  
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INTERNATIONAL

**Stills and trailer can be downloaded at [www.losangeles-film.com](http://www.losangeles-film.com)**

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# LOS ÁNGELES

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### WEYDEMANN BROS.

PRESENTS

### LOS ÁNGELES

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY **DAMIAN JOHN HARPER**

PRODUCED BY **JONAS WEYDEMANN & JAKOB D. WEYDEMANN**

CO-PRODUCED BY **FRANK EVERS, HELGE NEUBRONNER & ANDREAS EICHER**

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **FRIEDE CLAUSZ**

SOUND & MUSIC BY **GREGOR BONSE**

EDITED BY **LORNA HOEFLER-STEFFEN**

A **WEYDEMANN BROS.** PRODUCTION

IN COPRODUCTION WITH **CINE PLUS** AND **ZDF DAS KLEINE FERNSEHSPIEL**

WITH THE SUPPORT OF **FILM- UND MEDIENSTIFTUNG NRW, MITTELDEUTSCHE**

**MEDIENFÖRDEUNG, KURATORIUM JUNGER DEUTSCHER FILM, DEUTSCHER FILM FÖRDER FONDS**

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### SHORT SYNOPSIS

MATEO (17) PREPARES TO MIGRATE TO LOS ANGELES IN ORDER TO SUPPORT HIS HUMBLE FAMILY IN THEIR SMALL ZAPOTEC VILLAGE IN SOUTHERN MEXICO, YET BEFORE HE CAN DEPART THE LEADER OF THE LOCAL GANG DEMANDS THAT HE COMMIT MURDER TO BECOME A MEMBER.

TITLE	<b>LOS ÁNGELES</b>
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	<b>2014</b>
DURATION	<b>97 MIN.</b>
COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION	<b>GERMANY</b>
COUNTRY OF SHOOTING	<b>MEXICO, GERMANY</b>
GENRE	<b>DRAMA</b>
SHOOTING FORMAT	<b>ARRI ALEXA</b>
SCREENING FORMAT	<b>DCP</b>
RATIO	<b>1 : 2,35</b>
LANGUAGE	<b>ZAPOTEC/SPANISH</b>
SUBTITLES	<b>ENGLISH</b>
PRIZES	<b>"BEST FIRST FEATURE" GUADALAJARA/MEXICO</b>

## LOS ÁNGELES



### PRINICIPAL CAST

MATEO	Mateo Bautista Matías
MARCOS	Marcos Rodríguez Ruíz
LIDIA	Lidia García
DANNY	Daniel Bautista
DONASIANO	Donaciano Bautista Matías (Chamoy)
VALENTINA	Valentina Ojeda

### PRINCIPAL CREW

DIRECTOR/WRITER	Damian John Harper
PRODUCERS	Jonas Weydemann, Jakob D. Weydemann
CO-PRODUCERS	Frank Evers, Helge Neubronner, Andreas Eicher
COMMISSIONING EDITOR ZDF	Katharina Dufner
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Linda Ramos
CINEMATOGRAPHER	Friede Clausz
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	Adán Hernández
COSTUME DESIGNER	Abril Alamo, Felicitas Adler
SOUND DESIGNER	Gregor Bonse
COMPOSER	Gregor Bonse
EDITOR	Lorna Hoefler Steffen

## LOS ÁNGELES



### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My concept of family was torn apart at a very young age when my parents separated. Over time a resilient patchwork family was formed, who from an early age nurtured my yearning to learn about other cultures. Thus it was no surprise to them in 2000 when I finished my B.A. in Anthropology and left home to live for a year in the small hamlet of Santa Ana del Valle in central Oaxaca, Southern Mexico. There I worked as an ethnologist and was allowed the opportunity to make great friends and experience firsthand the Zapotec culture. Their reciprocal forms of social organization, their strong family values and their yearly fiesta amazed me while their daily struggle for existence made an impact that I will carry with me forever.

In order to survive families are torn apart as members undergo the dangerous and excruciating journey over the US-Mexico border. In Los Angeles they work illegally, many of them to be exploited, yet their collective sacrifice and the dollars they send home represent the life-line which keeps the village viable. Upon their return home the migrants bring with them the

comforts of the 21st century and a large portion of American popular culture, including Los Angeles style street gangs. In the last twelve years I have visited my dear friends in Santa Ana del Valle several times and feel obligated to tell their story.

LOS ÁNGELES is my way of personally processing and sharing my experiences there. Loosely following in the footsteps of Italian Neorealism, ten years of friendship and observations have culminated in the story-line which I have consolidated and sculpted into script form. Accordingly it was written with the idea that my friends, the actual villagers (non-actors) would portray themselves in the film, a filmic form which has brought me much joy and satisfaction in the past.

The story is anchored firmly in the village giving a voice to those left behind, those returning home and those youngsters about to migrate for the first time. It is the story of an ethnic minority in a forgotten corner of Latin America whose struggle exemplifies the universal values of family resiliency and brotherly love - values which persist among all cultures despite all odds.



## LOS ÁNGELES



### LONG SYNOPSIS

MATEO, 17, strives to gather enough money to pay for the coyote who will smuggle him across the U.S.-Mexico border after the yearly fiesta in his small Zapotec village in Oaxaca, Southern Mexico. His dream is to work hard in Los Angeles and support his mom and kid brother back home.

Searching for protection and a sense of belonging on the other side of the border he decides to join the village gang before his departure. After getting “jumped in” he learns the truth about his final initiation: he must murder a rival gang member!

At first Mateo is willing to do anything to earn respect but at the last minute he is unable to carry out the murder and refuses, thus enraging the gang leader who swears bitter revenge!

At the fiesta Mateo barely escapes with his life as the gang lures him into a dark alley and attempts to murder him. The next day at the local rodeo they surround him outside the ring as he prepares to ride but

before they can get him he is thrown from a bull and rushed to the hospital.

Released with a shattered leg his family decides rashly to send his kid brother across the border in his place. Accordingly the gang leader promises to have Mateo's little brother murdered upon his arrival in Los Angeles!

Now forced to save his brother's life Mateo races to catch up with him on the road and send him back home safely. Wanting to finally put an end to the violence Mateo decides to take his brother's place on the road to Los Angeles, thus exposing himself to eminent danger.

- LOS ÁNGELES is a story about the value of family, brotherly love and one hopeful young man's struggle for a better life in a world ruled by violence and injustice.

## LOS ÁNGELES

*"A stark and brutal glimpse of life in a small Mexican town. Original and well written. Atmospheric and authentic...A touching and emotional story."*

- Academy of Arts and Sciences Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting

*"The best film in the section, Los Ángeles is a stark reminder that California Dreamin' is often just a dream — a rose-tinted ideal whose ability to get you through the day is offset by the fact that it may not exist."*

- L.A. Weekly

### CAST & LOCATION

The screenplay is based on 13 years of friendship and observation, on true stories and a very real collective struggle. Almost the entire film was recorded in the rustic setting of the small hamlet. In accordance, the entire cast are local villagers. Non-actors, who rather than drawing on acting experience to portray their roll drew upon their genuine and very personal life experiences bring life and authenticity to the diverse characters portrayed in the narrative. The film is a depiction of the Zapotec struggle in the central valleys of rural Oaxaca, portrayed by those true people who face that struggle every day.



## LOS ÁNGELES

### DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Damian John Harper was born in 1978 in Boulder Colorado, USA. After receiving his degree in Anthropology with Magna Cum Laude he worked as an Ethnologist with the Zapotecs in Oaxaca, Southern Mexico than later as an underwater cave dive instructor in Brazil. In 2012 he finished his studies at the University of T.V. and Film in Munich, Germany. Damian's thesis film TEARDROP strikingly shows the state of American Youth illustrating a brutal gang initiation shot in 5 seamless plan-sequences entirely from the P.O.V of the main protagonist. TEARDROP was invited to over 50 international competitions around the globe winning several prizes.



With his debut feature project LOS ÁNGELES Harper revisits the Mexican community in which he used to live as a young Ethnologist. LOS ÁNGELES was a quarterfinalist at the prestigious Academy of Arts and Sciences Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting and also selected for the Berlinale Talent Project Market.

Damian John Harper describes himself as a film maker, photographer and damn good father.

#### Filmography:

- 2014 LOS ÁNGELES / Feature Film / Arri Alexa
- 2011 TEARDROP / Short Fiction / 35 mm
- 2009 FILM CITY MUNICH - OPERA / Theatrical Commercial / 35 mm
- 2008 MOTHER OF EXILES / Documentary / DigiBeta
- 2008 MANIA / Short Documentary / DigiBeta
- 2007 THE FUEL OF LIFE / Short Fiction / DigiBeta
- 2006 THE CYCLE OF HARM / Short Fiction / DigiBeta
- 2005 EASTories: A LONGING FOR COLOR / Documentary / DigiBeta

## LOS ÁNGELES

### PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY



Weydemann Bros. produces films for the national and international market. We have a vision of a narrative cinema that is both entertaining and political. For us film is always a critical look at the world and the times we live in. With our films we do not only hope to get people laughing and crying, but to inform them and inspire them to contemplate.

Weydemann Bros. was founded by Jakob and Jonas Weydemann on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 and holds offices in Berlin and Cologne, Germany.

Filmography (selection): PANIHIDA (*Rome IFF CinemaXXI Award 2012*), SILENCIO EN LA TIERRA DE LOS SUEÑOS (*Torino IFF 2013, FICGuadalajara 2014*).



Jonas Weydemann was born in Hamburg, Germany. After his civil service in Florence, Italy he moved to San Francisco, where he worked in human resources at the McKesson Company before attending several workshops at the Hollywood Film Institute. Jonas gained valuable experience working for the Berlinale film festival as well as for assorted film production companies in Munich, Berlin and Hamburg in the office and on set, before studying film production at the German Film and Television Academy (dffb) in Berlin, Germany.

Since 2007 he is programming director at the short film festival Wendland Shorts. He participated in the IDFAcademy, the Berlinale Talent Campus, the Rotterdam Lab and the Cannes Producers Network. Jonas is alumni of the Media programs ep2c and EAVE Producer's Workshop and recipient of the renowned Robert Bosch Co-Production Prize.



Jakob D. Weydemann was born in Hamburg, Germany. After his civil service in Milan, Italy he worked his way from runner at a TV-Series to assistant director on feature film sets. He studied political sciences and then film directing at the Centre d'Estudis Cinematografics de Catalunya (CECC) in Barcelona, Spain.

Jakob was invited to the Reykjavík IFF TalentLab and to the Young Producers Program at the Sarajevo IFF. He is a recipient of the prestigious Gerd Ruge Grant and participated at the MEDIA programs ESoDoc and Documentary Campus Masterschool. He is alumni of the „International Producing Class“ of the international film school (ifs) in Cologne, Germany.



## LOS ÁNGELES

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### CONTACTS

#### INTERNATIONAL SALES

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