

Edinburgh International Film Festival 2016 The White King



Alex Helfrecht & Jorg Tittel's opening scene presents an idyllic view of what could be any family relaxing by any beautiful river but we soon see them return to a brutal, dystopian vision of the future, in a military dictatorship where no-one must ever dissent or cross authority.

The family father, Peter (Ross Partridge), is removed to 'work away from home' for speaking out against the regime and his wife and son are left to fend for themselves within a compound where, tainted by his crime, they soon begin to lose food privileges. This is despite the boy's grandfather, his father's father, (Jonathan Pryce) being a well-connected colonel with a party-line wife (Fiona Shaw). One of the more disturbing scenes involves these grandparents persuading the impressionable boy to use his birthday gift – a gun – to shoot a feral cat.

Both mother and son begin to take increasingly desperate measures to improve their lot and find out where Peter has gone. The mother begs a favour from a rapacious general (Greta Scacchi) and the boy enters a waste zone to find a kind of Killing Cave, reminiscent of those in Cambodia. Themes of oppression, loss of freedom and political ideals vie with fairness and the notion that love conquers all in the end and we are encouraged to make up our own minds about what that end will be.

[tweet_box design="default"]Adapted from Gyorfy Dragoman's novel, The White King is a brave and unusual

presentation.[/tweet_box]