

MIRROR DARKLY,
BEARDCORE MEDIA
AND GRLA

PRESENT

FATHER THE FLAME



A FILM BY CHAD TERPSTRA

WWW.FATHERTHEFLAME.COM

78 MIN | 2.35 | USA | 2018

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LOGLINE

For centuries, the tobacco pipe has been a symbol of contentment. Through the window of this transcendental artifact and its sacred origins *Father the Flame* is a cinematic exploration of legacy, family and love.

SYNOPSIS

Father The Flame follows Lee Erck, a world-renowned pipe maker from far Northern Michigan, as he travels the globe to explore the nearly forgotten art of tobacco pipe making. Featuring a charming cast of characters—from the royal family of Danish pipemakers, to the Italian briar cutter known as the world's greatest, to a fourth-generation Native American sacred pipe maker—this story speaks to a slower pace of life, a luxury in our sped-up world. Contemplative and hypnotic, *Father the Flame* immerses the viewer in the cultural and spiritual significance of the tobacco pipe and what it can teach a modern generation about legacy and the things we leave behind.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I grew up without a father living at home, which left me with a pronounced longing for a sense of stability and purpose. Meanwhile I found myself helplessly drawn to the arts as a place of deep fulfillment and I eventually committed my life to them. But when the time came that I learned I would soon be a father, I struggled to find answers to the many questions and uncertainties I still had swirling around within me. This film was born at the intersection of this phase of my life with stumbling into a largely overlooked pastime: pipe smoking.

I first picked up a pipe while walking to dinner with my wife past a tobacco store in our neighborhood. We never had gone in before, but for some reason on that day I knew I wanted to get a pipe. On my first light the pipe seemed to speak to me from a far away place. The way the smoke drifted off to the sky and the tobacco glowed a deep red, it seemed elemental, connecting me to nature itself. Previously I'd only thought about pipes the way most people today do - possibly a bad habit and a relic from a generation gone by. But now I started to see something deeper in the bowl that I wanted to explore. Why has it gone out of fashion? What is it about the iconic nature of the pipe that carries such associations of a father or grandpa? What is behind that mysterious allure to smoking itself?

As you enter most subcultures you find a mixed bag of people and paradigms, but they're always centered around a common set of core experiences. For the pipe world I was surprised to see a diverse group of people that spanned the globe and all manner of class strata coming together around simple ideals of letting go of differences, slowing down and thinking deeper. In that contemplative headspace I saw themes of fatherhood, legacy and spirituality repeatedly emerge. For example, in the Native American tradition the pipe sprung from

nothing less than the heart of Man's relationship with the Divine. So if the pipe is a symbol for a tradition that has been all but left behind, I began to wonder if there are other traditions we as a society have let fade that need to be remembered, or others still that we carry on that need to be re-evaluated.

The characters from around the world that populate this film have taught me more about lasting values, fatherhood, and even love itself than I ever imagined possible. What began as a short film exploration of a single pipe maker made way for a spiritual journey in the form of a feature documentary that would take seven years and six countries to complete. It evolved organically from a very wide scope to distill a set of universally relatable human experiences.

If there is one take away from the film I hope audiences receive, it is the invitation to slow down in an age of nowness and speed, to reflect on what previous generations have handed us and where we are taking that towards the future as individuals and as a civilization. I'm excited for you to take this somewhat unexpected journey.



CAST



LEE | PIPE MAKER | USA

“With each pipe I make, I am potentially leaving a little piece of myself behind.”

Lee Erck is a world-renowned pipe maker who lives in a remote region of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Drawing inspiration from the wilderness that surrounds his small workshop outpost, his pipes are said to have a distinct American flavor in their design. Yet his work has won the hearts and minds of high grade pipe collectors from Japan to Russia to Italy, in addition to across the US.

Both Lee's father and grandfather were pipe smokers. This may have influenced Lee's initial interest in the pastime, however pipes are special to Lee now because of the connections he forms through them. After over forty years in the industry, and numerous honors and awards, he remains quietly dedicated to his craft, yearning for his next connection through his latest creation.

In 2013 he was awarded the Chicago Pipe Club's highest honor, the Doctor of Pipes award. Despite his accolades and many friends in the business, he remains humbly dedicated to his craft, yearning to find his next connection through his latest creation.

CAST



MIMMO | BRIAR CUTTER AND PIPE MAKER | ITALY

“Pipes are a good excuse to make some life nice.... why not?”

Romeo 'Mimmo' Domenico, or as everyone calls him Mimmo, is a second generation briar cutter living and working in Northern Italy. Mimmo is well known in the artisan pipe making world as one of the best sources of cut briar wood. He learned how to cut briar from his father, Filippo "Pippo" Domenico, and eventually moved from understudy to owner. He has further built the business on his father's well-established reputation. Mimmo believes what makes the briar special is the nature of the wood, and also the energy and time that goes into it. He lives with his wife Karin and their two daughters in the house and workshop that his father built decades ago.

CAST



LARS | PIPE MAKER | DENMARK

“In the case of my father, his knowledge is not gone. It lives on in me. And now it lives on in Nanna.”

Lars Ivarsson is considered the most influential pipe maker in the world, second only to his late father, Sixten Ivarsson. At a time when pipes were limited to relatively simple shapes, Sixten changed the landscape of the world of pipes with unparalleled quality, style and generosity never before seen in the industry. Now Lars carries that mantle and has passed it on to his daughter, Nanna.

CAST



NANNA | PIPE MAKER | DENMARK

“He was just waiting for me and kept me working. And then he said, ‘what you’re doing now today, that’s good.’”

Nanna was the youngest of Lars Ivarsson's two daughters and the one to pick up the family interest in pipes almost from the very beginning. She eventually worked with both her grandfather and father as a pipe making apprentice and now joins with her father as one of the world's most recognized pipe makers. She often feels that Sixten's spirit is watching over her as she works. For instance when she needs a particular tool, she turns to his almost infinite collection to find the piece that is just right.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

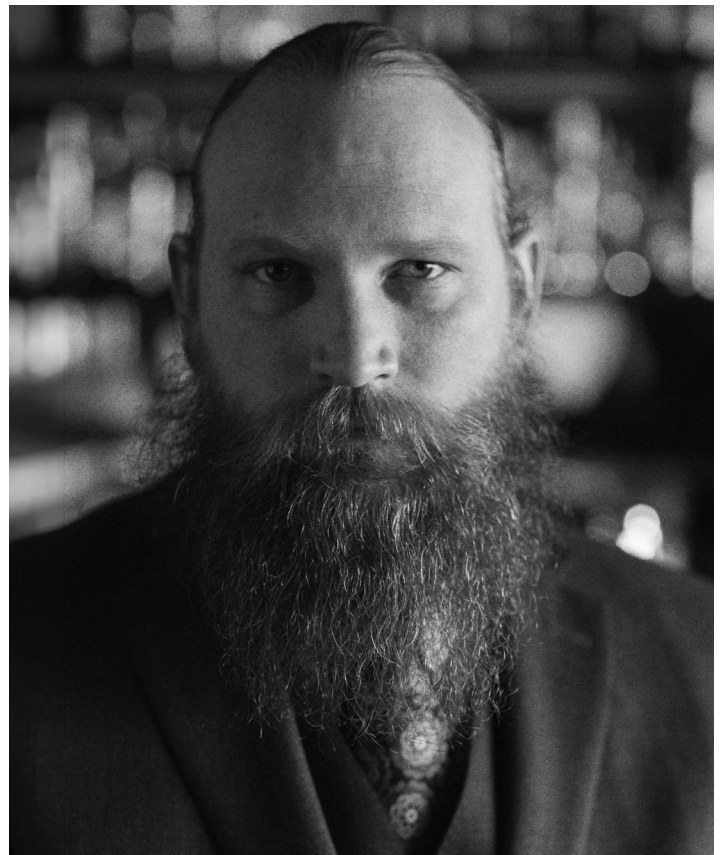


CHAD TERPSTRA **DIRECTOR AND CINEMATOGRAPHER**

Chad Terpstra is a director and cinematographer of independent and commercial films. He has worked all over the world and his documentary work has screened at SXSW, Telluride, AFI Docs and Palm Springs film festivals, along with numerous Vimeo Staff Picks. His commercial client list includes Lexus, Microsoft, and Uniqlo. When he's not behind the camera or in the color suite, he's hosting weekly film screenings at his home theater in Grand Rapids, Michigan where he lives with his wife and two children.

RUSH BEARDCORE **PRODUCER**

Jeremy Dow Rush is a freelance film producer who is known for his Beardcore Media and Apparel brand based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has produced 3 independent short films with the third film going into post production soon. Along with short film he has also produced music videos for national and international touring bands.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS



STELLITA BOUMA TERPSTRA **PRODUCER AND LEGAL**

Stellita Bouma Terpstra is an attorney and a producer. She practices business and entertainment law. In 2011, she and her husband started Mirror Darkly, a production company in Grand Rapids, Michigan that focuses on creative film projects.

SCOTT MCCAMBRIDGE **EDITOR**

Scott McCambridge is an editor of independent and commercial films with eight years of professional experience. As an editor he has had the privilege to traverse the globe working with a commercial client list that includes Riot Games, Lexus, Uniqlo, Amway, Kitchen Aid, and Yoplait. His work has been recognized with numerous accolades including national Addy awards and a Vimeo Staff Pick.



MIRROR DARKLY

Mirror Darkly was formed in 2011 by husband and wife team, Chad and Stellita Terpstra, with the goal of creating meaningful and thought-provoking media that defies expectation. With Chad bringing a background in cinematography and Stellita a background in law, they hope to foster an honest and independent voice for filmmakers looking to step off the beaten path. As their first endeavor, "Father the Flame" fits perfectly in this category as a film that challenges the common conception of pipe smoking and uses the occasion to think deeper on life's core questions.

CREDITS

DIRECTED BY

Chad Terpstra

PRODUCED BY

Stellita Terpstra

Jeremy Rush

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Eric Machiela

Ross Vande Waa

Eric Johnson

EDITED BY

Scott McCambridge

MUSIC BY

Kyle Calvin Campbell

STORY CONSULTANT

David Michael Phelps