

TOOTH AND NAIL

A film by
Mihai Gavril Dragolea
Radu Mocanu



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2025

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Short synopsis

Two filmmakers follow an entrepreneur turned eco-activist as he exposes Romania's timber mafia. Their journey takes a dramatic turn when, in the middle of a forest, the three are attacked by a group of 12 angry men. The cameras are destroyed, and all footage is lost.

Faced with this harsh reality, each of them tries to manage the situation as best they can, confronting their own doubts and limitations.

Long synopsis

Two filmmakers set out to document the story of a former businessman turned eco-activist, determined to expose Romania's timber mafia. But their journey takes a violent turn when, deep in the forest, the three are ambushed by a group of 12 furious men. One of the filmmakers suffers memory loss from the beating, another manages to escape and call the police, while the activist negotiates for his life. Their cameras are destroyed, and all the footage is lost.

Faced with this harsh reality, each of them struggles to process what happened, confronting their own doubts and limitations. The filmmakers soon realize that the film they set out to make can no longer be what they had envisioned.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

As filmmakers, we believe that small stories are relevant. One of this film's main characters, Tiberiu is in a constant conflict with woodcutters, foresters, logging industry, the authorities and with himself above all. This personal conflict evolves in such a drastic manner that it engulfs us, the filmmakers, as we end up eaten by the system while making a documentary film.

This whole film started out from a need to seek some kind of closure with the damage we have done to nature, instead we got a deep understanding of the tragic-comedy side of contemporary anthropocentric existence. As we humans fight and bicker over resources, status, power and exposure; nature seems to be looking at us with an thoughtful gaze, manifesting itself all around us and waiting patiently for the mess humans make to wind down eventually... hopefully not in the end.



ABOUT THE TEAM



Mihai Gavril Dragolea

director, screenwriter

Mihai Gavril Dragolea (Romania, 1989) specialises in documentary and hybrid fiction filmmaking. His films focus on alternative and peripheral humans or other types of sentient beings, on which subject he is also doing a Ph.D. Mihai's documentaries have been shown in festivals in Europe and distributed in more than 15 countries. He lectures on Documentary Practice at the Faculty of Theater and Film of Babeş-Bolyai University. Mihai is also working in the ecological and animal protection domain.

- *Aurica, a dog's life* / Director / 2022 / 12 min. / Fiction
- *Everything for Riana* / Director / 2020 / 28 min. / Documentary
- *PhoeniXXX* / Director / 2017 / 53 min. / Documentary
- *O lună din viața lor* / Director / 2015 / 47 min. / Documentary
- *The Golden Robot* / Director / 2015 / 73 min. / Documentary



Radu Constantin Mocanu

director, screenwriter

Radu Constantin Mocanu graduated in journalism at Lucian Blaga University in 2005. He got a job working at a TV station and later moved to Paris to study cinema at Ecole Supérieure de Réalisation Audiovisuelle, where he got a degree in 2009. Returning to Romania, he began working on his feature debut documentary: *The Golden Robot* (2015). Radu currently works as an independent documentary filmmaker.

- *PhoeniXXX* / Producer / 2017 / 53 min. / Documentary
- *The Golden Robot* / Director / 2015 / 73 min. / Documentary



Monica Lăzurean-Gorgan

producer

MONICA LĂZUREAN-GORGAN is an experienced producer and a member of the AMPAS/Oscar and EFA. Monica is the producer of the film *TATA* (2024) by Lina Vdovii and Radu Ciorniciuc, selected in Toronto IFF, *Between Revolutions* (2023) by Vlad Petri, winner of the FIPRESCI award in Berlinale 2023, feature length documentary *Acasa, My Home* (2020) by Radu Ciorniciuc, winner of the Sundance Cinematography Award and other 40 international awards, delegate producer for *Touch Me Not* (2018) by Adina Pintilie, winner of Golden Bear and co-producer for Sundance movie *Chuck Norris vs Communism* (2015) by Ilinca Calugareanu. Monica is the director of feature-length documentaries such as *A Mere Breath* (2016), winner of Best Doc in Sarajevo IFF, Best Doc in CEE Vienna IFF and co-director of *Wood*, which premiered in HotDocs and CPH:Dox 2020.



Elena Martin

producer

Elena has a BA in screenwriting and an MA in film production at UNATC, Bucharest. She has been part of the East-West Talent Lab 2022 in Wiesbaden, EDP – East Doc Series – 2022 with the documentary series *Imaginary Youth* and *Ex Oriente Film* – 2022 with the documentary project *Chasing Stumps*. She is the executive producer of the short films *Kaimos* by Sarra Tsorakidis (winner of TIFF Cluj 2020), and *Laila* by Raya al Souliman (official TIFF Cluj 2020 selection). Since 2019, she has been working at Manifest Film, being part of projects such as the EFA awards nominee *Acasă, My Home*, which premiered in the Sundance Film Festival, and *Timebox*, acquired by HBO. She is developing and producing features, series and shorts, documentaries as well as fiction, by established and emerging directors.

MANIFEST FILM

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