

# GOING UNDER

**Directed & Co-written by  
Eric Werthman**

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## **“GOING UNDER”**

2004, USA

98 MINUTES, 35MM

### **SYNOPSIS**

PETER, A PSYCHOTHERAPIST, AND SUZANNE, A PROFESSIONAL DOMINATRIX, HAVE BEEN MEETING ONCE A WEEK FOR OVER TWO YEARS. IN THE PRIVACY OF A DUNGEON ROOM IN AN S & M HOUSE, SUZANNE DELICATELY PIERCES, PRODS AND ULTIMATELY SOOTHES PETER AS THEY ENGAGE IN SENSUAL, DOMINANCE AND SUBMISSION REENACTMENTS. PETER’S WIFE PAT KNOWS ABOUT HER HUSBAND’S OTHER LIFE, BUT THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THEM; WHAT HAPPENS IN THE DUNGEON IS RELEGATED TO THE WORLD OF FANTASY. THERE ARE RULES. NOW IT SEEMS THOSE RULES ARE ABOUT TO BE BROKEN AS PETER AND SUZANNE, UNDENIABLY DRAWN TO EACH OTHER, AGREE TO SEE EACH OTHER ON THE OUTSIDE. THOUGH SUZANNE IS CLEARLY AMBIVALENT ABOUT ANY SORT OF PHYSICAL INTIMACY, PETER BECOMES INCREASINGLY OBSESSED WITH CONSUMMATING THEIR RELATIONSHIP. THE MORE SUZANNE PULLS AWAY, THE HARDER PETER FINDS IT TO LET GO. AS THEY MEET IN COFFEE SHOPS, BARS AND RESTAURANTS THROUGHOUT NEW YORK CITY, PETER REMEMBERS THE EROTIC “SCENES” BETWEEN THEM AND THE RELATIONSHIP THESE FANTASIES HAVE TO HIS PAST. A SUDDEN CRISIS IN SUZANNE’S LIFE LEADS PETER TO A MEETING WITH SUZANNE’S FAMILY WHERE SOME OF HER OWN PAST TORMENTS ARE REVEALED. WHAT DRAWS PETER AND SUZANNE TOGETHER, HOWEVER, IS ALSO WHAT PULLS THEM APART. EVEN THOUGH BOTH SEE THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE AFFAIR, IT IS PETER WHO SUFFERS MOST WHEN SUZANNE DECIDES TO CUT OFF CONTACT. WHETHER OR NOT THIS RESOLVES THE EMOTIONAL AND EROTIC ISSUES THE RELATIONSHIP CREATED FOR BOTH OF THEM REMAINS A QUESTION.

*FESTIVALS: SÃO PAULO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, CINEQUEST FILM FESTIVAL, JACKSONVILLE FILM FESTIVAL, PORT TOWNSEND FILM FESTIVAL, FILM FEST NEW HAVEN, CINEKINK NYC 2005, NORTHAMPTON INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, US VIRGIN ISLANDS INT’L FILM FESTIVAL, MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL.*

*AWARDS: BEST OF THE FEST, NORTHAMPTON INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL; BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE, CINEKINK NYC 2005*

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### **DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT**

IN 1960 ANTONIONI DISTRIBUTED A STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF HIS FILM “L’AVVENTURA.” HE COMPARED THE EXPERIMENTAL WORLD OF SCIENCE, WHICH IS ALWAYS READY TO QUESTION WHAT IS THE ASSUMED REALITY IN ORDER TO ADVANCE FORWARD, WITH THE FIXED AND RIGID IDEAS OF HUMAN MORALITY WHICH PEOPLE CONTINUE TO FALL BACK ON EVEN THOUGH IT IS ENTIRELY UNSUITED TO THEIR NEEDS. BUT WHEREAS ANTONIONI SAW EROTICISM AS A SYMPTOM "FROM WHICH THE EMOTIONS ARE SUFFERING," AND THE RESTLESSNESS AND LACK OF COMMITMENT IN HIS CHARACTERS AS A SIGN OF THE UNHEALTHY STATE OF EROS, THE CHARACTERS IN "GOING UNDER" USE EROTICISM AS A WAY TO RELEASE THEMSELVES FROM PRESSURES OF PAST PSYCHOLOGICAL WOUNDS.

IN DEPICTING THE PURSUIT OF ECSTASY THAT THE LEAD CHARACTERS ENGAGE IN WHILE PRACTICING S & M, THE INTENTION IS TO HIGHLIGHT SUZANNE AND PETER’S PLEASURE, THEIR NAKEDNESS, THEIR DARING. VISUALLY THIS TRANSLATES INTO IMAGERY THAT CELEBRATES THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CHARACTERS, BUT IN A NON-EXPLOITIVE MANNER. WHAT IS KEY IS THAT THERE IS NO MORAL JUDGMENT ATTACHED. THE CHARACTERS IN THIS FILM ARE NOT DEPICTED AS UNHEALTHY, BUT RATHER AS PEOPLE MAKING ‘CREATIVE ADJUSTMENTS’ TO INCREASE THEIR AWARENESS OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS.

ANTONIONI'S VIEWS ON THE STATE OF SOCIAL RELATIONS AND HIS IMPLICATION THAT A USELESS HISTORICAL MORALITY HAS CREATED INADEQUATE HUMAN CONDITIONS MAY BE ACCURATE, BUT THE STORY OF “GOING UNDER” ATTEMPTS TO SHOW PEOPLE IN REVOLT AGAINST THESE CONDITIONS. IN THE PRESCRIBED WORLD OF THE S & M HOUSE, PETER AND SUZANNE CAN SAFELY CHALLENGE THEIR SOCIETAL ROLES IN A SELF-CREATED EROTIC THEATER. HOWEVER, IT IS WHEN THESE CHARACTERS AGREE TO SEE ONE ANOTHER OUTSIDE THIS CONTEXT THAT THEY ‘FALL’ INTO TROUBLE.

IN ANOTHER CONTEXT MARGUERITE DURAS HAS DESCRIBED THE SITUATION: BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE, DISSIMILAR IN MANY WAYS, THEIR INTENSE BUT INFREQUENT MEETINGS "...WILL BE THE COMMON GROUND WHERE UNIVERSAL FACTORS OF EROTICISM, LOVE, AND UNHAPPINESS WILL APPEAR IN AN IMPLACABLE LIGHT." THIS IS WHAT THE FILM HOPES TO ACCOMPLISH AS BOTH A STATEMENT ON THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD AND AS A DIALOGUE WITH CERTAIN FILMS OF THE PAST.

## “GOING UNDER”

### KEY BIOS

#### DIRECTOR/CO-WRITER – ERIC WERTHMAN

ERIC WERTHMAN HAS BEEN A PRACTICING PSYCHOTHERAPIST FOR OVER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. BEFORE AND DURING THIS CAREER HE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN FILMMAKING. HE WORKED FOR WALTER MANLEY PRODUCTIONS FOR FOUR YEARS, IS A GRADUATE OF THE NYU'S 'SIGHT AND SOUND' INTENSIVE FILM WORKSHOP AND MADE ONE SHORT FICTION FILM, *THE SCALPER'S LAMENT* BEFORE MAKING HIS FEATURE FILM DEBUT WITH *GOING UNDER*.

#### CO-WRITER/CO-PRODUCER – JESSICA GOHLKE

A GRADUATE OF SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE AND NYU'S 'SIGHT AND SOUND' WORKSHOP, JESSICA GOHLKE HAS BEEN WRITING SCREENPLAYS AND WORKING IN FILM PRODUCTION FOR THE LAST 10 YEARS. HER PREVIOUS COLLABORATION WAS WITH DIRECTOR AMIR NADERI AND CULMINATED IN THE FEATURE FILM *A, B, C...MANHATTAN* WHICH PREMIERED IN THE 'UN CERTAIN REGARD' SECTION OF THE *CANNES FILM FESTIVAL* IN 1997 AND THEN WENT ON TO SCREEN IN THE 'AMERICAN SPECTRUM' SECTION OF THE 1998 *SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL*. IN ADDITION, JESSICA HAS WRITTEN AND DIRECTED TWO SHORT FILMS, ONE OF WHICH (*BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA*) FEATURES A LEAD ROLE PERFORMANCE BY EDWARD NORTON.

#### CO-PRODUCER/EDITOR – VLAD NIKOLIC

IN ADDITION TO TEACHING FILMMAKING AT THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH AND NYU'S CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM, VLAD NIKOLIC IS AN AWARD-WINNING WRITER/DIRECTOR OF SHORTS, MUSIC VIDEOS, DOCUMENTARIES, AND COMMERCIALS. THESE CREDITS INCLUDE THE INDEPENDENT FEATURE, *BURN*, WHICH HE PRODUCED, WROTE AND DIRECTED IN NYC AND ALSO "LOVE", WHICH HAS IT'S NEW YORK THEATRICAL PREMIERE AT THE TWO BOOTS PIONEER THEATER IN FEBRUARY, 2006.

#### CINEMATOGRAPHER – VLADIMIR SUBOTIC

VLAD SUBOTIC IS AN AWARD WINNING CINEMATOGRAPHER FROM BELGRADE. HE SHOT LOVE BY VLADAN NIKOLIC, WHICH CO-STARS GENO LECHNER. OTHER CREDITS INCLUDE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A TIBETAN MONK, PLAY YOUR OWN THING, THE SPECIALISTS(SHOOTING THIS SUMMER IN GERMANY). HE WILL WORK WITH VLAD NIKOLIC AGAIN IN THE FALL ON 2006 ON ZENITH.

## **“GOING UNDER”**

### **LEAD ACTOR BIOS**

**ROGER REES (PETER)** – ROGER REES HAS MOVED FLUIDLY FROM STAGE, TELEVISION AND FILM THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER, THOUGH HE EARNED HIS FIRST ACCLAIM WITH THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY, STARRING IN SUCH RSC PRODUCTIONS AS *HAMLET*, *LOVE’S LABOUR’S LOST*, *CYMBELINE*, *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*, *THE SUICIDE*, AND THE TITLE ROLE IN *THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF NICHOLAS NICKELBY* (TONY AWARD, OLIVIER AWARD AND EMMY NOMINATION FOR BEST ACTOR).

IN THE WEST END, MR. REES CREATED THE STARRING ROLES IN TOM STOPPARD’S *THE REAL THING* AND *HAPGOOD* AND IN HIS OWN THRILLER, *DOUBLE DOUBLE*, CO-AUTHORED WITH ERIC ELICE. IN NEW YORK, HE APPEARED IN *INDISCRETIONS* (TONY AND DRAMA DESK NOMINATIONS), JOHN ROBIN BAITZ’S *THE END OF THE DAY* (OBIE AWARD), *THE REHEARSAL* (ROUNDAABOUT), *THE UNEASY CHAIR* (PLAYWRIGHTS HORIZON), *THE MISANTHROPE* (CLASSIC STAGE COMPANY), AND MOST RECENTLY IN *UNCLE VANYA* (BROOKS ATKINSON THEATER) ALONGSIDE LAURA LINNEY AND DEREK JACOBI.

ON TELEVISION, MR. REES HAS A RECURRING ROLE ON NBC’S *WEST WING* AS LORD MARBURY, AND HAS ALSO APPEARED ON *THREE SISTERS*, *OZ*, *MY SO-CALLED LIFE*, AND WAS A SERIES REGULAR ON *CHEERS*, *M.A.N.T.I.S.* AND *BOSTON COMMON*.

MR. REES HAS STARRED IN SUCH FILMS AS *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM*, *NEXT STOP WONDERLAND*, *SUBSTANCE OF FIRE*, *TROUBLE ON THE CORNER*, *IF LOOKS COULD KILL*, MEL BROOKS’ *ROBINHOOD: MEN IN TIGHTS* AND BOB FOSSE’S *STAR 80*. RECENTLY RELEASED FILMS INCLUDE JULIE TAYMOR’S *FRIDA* WHERE MR. REES STARS WITH SELMA HAYEK, CHUCK RUSSELL’S *THE SCORPIAN KING*, MICHAEL HOFFMAN’S *THE EMPORER’S CLUB* WHERE HE PLAYS OPPOSITE KEVIN KLINE AND *GOOSE CREEK STORY* WHERE MR. REES STARS WITH MARY MCDONNELL.

**GENO LECHNER (SUZANNE)** – GENO LECHNER STARTED HER CAREER IN THE THEATER AND HAS PERFORMED EXTENSIVELY ON STAGE IN GERMANY, ENGLAND AND FRANCE. SHE HAS INTERPRETED MOLIERE, MAMET, CHECKOV, LORCA, PINTER, FASSBINDER, SCHILLER, MUELLER, AYCKBOURN AS WELL AS MANY OTHERS. ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS INCLUDE *TAKING SIDES* IN THE WEST END, DIRECTED BY HAROLD PINTER, *A TORT ET A RAISON* WITH MICHEL BOUQUET AND CLAUDE BRASSEUR AT THE THEATER MONTPARNASSE

IN PARIS AND *THE FOREST*, DIRECTED BY ROBERT WILSON AT THE BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC IN NEW YORK.

SINCE 1990, MS. LECHNER HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN SUCH MEMORABLE FILMS AS STEVEN SPEILBERG'S *SHINDLER'S LIST*, *IMMORTAL BELOVED*, DIRECTED BY BERNHARD ROSE, AND HAL HARTLEY'S *FLIRT*. MS. LECHNER HAS ALSO WORKED WITH RAOUL PECK IN *NOT ABOUT LOVE*, CYNTHIA BEATT IN *PARTY*, RUDOLPHE THOME IN *LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT*, HARALD BERGMAN IN *SCARDANELLI*, YOLANDE ZAUBERMAN IN *LA GUERRE A PARIS*, WONSUK CHIN IN *TOO TIRED TO DIE* AND NICK WARD IN *THE PRESENT* AMONG OTHERS. IN 1996, MS. LECHNER RECEIVED THE BEST ACTRESS AWARD AT THE MAR DEL PLATA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL IN ARGENTINA FOR HER LEAD ROLE PERFORMANCE IN *GESCHE'S GIFT*, THE STORY OF GESCHE GOTTFRIED, A NOTORIOUS SERIAL KILLER WHO LIVED IN BREMEN BETWEEN 1785 AND 1835. MOST RECENTLY, MS. LECHNER PLAYED THE LEAD ROLE IN *CHARLOTTE*, DIRECTED BY ULRIKE VON RIBBECK AND ALSO APPEARED IN *EN GARDE* BY ELYSE POLAT.

MS. LECHNER HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN NUMEROUS OTHER TYPES OF PROJECTS AND HAS COLLABORATED WITH SUCH NOTABLES AS JON JOST, ARTO LINDSAY, JOAN JONAS, DAVID BYRNE, FOUAD EL KHOURY AND NAN GOLDIN.

**“GOING UNDER”**

**CAST LIST**

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

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SUZANNE..... GENO LECHNER  
PETER..... ROGER REES  
PAT..... KIT FLANAGAN  
LISA..... SARA RAMIREZ  
TEENAGE BOY..... ARTIE VALENTINO  
LARRY..... BRIAN J. KEANE  
HERB..... JOE LATIMORE  
CRYING MAN..... JON JOHNSON  
MIKO..... MIHO NIKAIDO  
6 YEAR OLD PETER..... MILES M. WILLIAMS  
TEACHER..... MARGUERITE STIMPSON  
MOTHER..... ELAINE BROMKA  
13 YEAR OLD PETER..... ZACHARY LEE  
TEENAGE SUZANNE..... MARY KING  
ELIZABETH..... MARTHA MILLAN  
PAULA..... WENDY SCHARFMAN  
JUNO..... PHYLLIS SOMERVILLE  
MAN IN BOOKSTORE..... DAVID LITTLE  
WOMAN IN BOOKSTORE..... ANGELA PIETROPINTO  
TERRY..... ANGELA FORREST  
WALTER..... RICHARD EAGAN

STEVE..... BEAU VAN DONKELAAR

GRETCHEN..... JENNY STERLIN

MAY..... ELIZABETH MASUCCI

## **“GOING UNDER”**

### **CREW LIST**

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DIRECTOR..... ERIC WERTHMAN

WRITERS..... JESSICA GOHLKE & ERIC WERTHMAN

CO-PRODUCERS..... JESSICA GOHLKE & VLAD NIKOLIC

CINEMATOGRAPHY..... VLADIMIR SUBOTIC

PRODUCTION DESIGNER..... ANN MCKINNON

EDITOR..... VLAD NIKOLIC

MUSIC..... DAVID DARLING

COSTUME DESIGNER..... DONNA ZAKOWSKA

CASTING..... DENISE FITZGERALD

LINE PRODUCER..... SCOTT ZEITZ

UPM..... SIRAD BALDUCCI

1<sup>ST</sup> ASST. DIRECTOR..... TERRY LEONARD

2<sup>ND</sup> ASST. DIRECTOR..... JOSH LEVINE

SCRIPT SUPERVISOR..... LISA McNEIL

POC..... THOMAS CALESHU

LOCATION MANAGER..... JENNIFER QUESENBERRY

ASST. LOCATION MANAGER..... MICHAEL DUDEK

ART DIRECTOR..... ANDREW STEEVER

PROP MASTER..... TYLER ROSEN

SET DRESSER..... JASON SINOPOLI

ADDT'L DRESSER..... EDWIGE GEMINEL  
DAVID. T. RAY

HAIR/MAKE-UP..... LEO WON

ADDITIONAL M/U..... BRIAN ABBOTT  
ROBERTO CAGEY  
LEEZA ANN RAWLINS  
JEFF SILVERMAN

WARDROBE ASSISTANT..... MICHAEL OWEN

1<sup>ST</sup> ASST. CAMERA..... CAMILLE FREER

2<sup>ND</sup> ASST. CAMERA..... JASON VANDERMER

2<sup>ND</sup> ASST. CAMERA..... KENNETH THOMPSON

ADDT'L CAMERA..... ERIC O'CONNOR

LOADER..... MARKUS MENTZNER

SOUND MIXER..... GRIFFIN RICHARDSON

BOOM OPERATOR..... THOMAS COLLARDEAU

ADDT'L BOOM..... ROY MARASIGAN

GAFFER..... CORNELIUS SCHULTZE-KRAFT

BEST BOY ELECTRIC..... PETE MCGILL

KEY GRIP..... JASON VELEZ

BEST BOY GRIP..... ROBERT IZZO

SWING..... JEFFREY KIM

ADDT'L GRIP..... JAMES HEERDEGEN  
RON MORALES  
BRENT POLESKI  
PERRY UNJANG

SOUND EDITOR..... LOGAN SUSNICK

**ASST. EDITOR..... MASAKO TSUMURA**

**EXTRAS CASTING..... ELAINE GORDON MODEL MGMT**

**STILL PHOTOGRAPHY..... STEVE LEWIS**

**LEGAL COUNSEL..... EMERSON BRUNS**

**KEY PA..... ROCHELLE GIBSON**

**SET PA..... TOURE FOLKES**

**SET PA..... BO WRIGHT**

**SET PA..... ALEX FELL**

**CRAFT SERVICE PA..... LOGAN HALE**

**LOCATION PA..... SCOTT FERLISI**

**WARDROBE PA..... BRIAN JENSEN**

**ADDT'L PA..... MATT FELDMAN  
RYAN FIDRICK  
SALLY HASRELL  
SHELLEY HERBERT  
MAURICIO SOTO**

**OFFICE INTERN..... MATT MARHEFKA**

**ART DEPT. INTERN..... JANEL PETERSON**

**ART DEPT. INTERN..... MAGGIE RISO**

**CAMERA DEPT. INTERN..... PATRICE BURKES**