

PRESS RELEASE

JON JOST ANNOUNCES NEW FILM PROJECT ON THE KIDNAPPING OF HIS DAUGHTER, CLARA JOST AND THE SUBSEQUENT ILLEGALITIES OF THE PORTUGUESE JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES

American filmmaker Jon Jost, who will be attending the Venice Film Festival September 8 through 11 2004, in the Cinema Digitale competition with his most recent feature, *Homecoming*, will announce during the festival the upcoming production of a new film which will deal with the kidnapping of his daughter, Clara Jost, on November 2, 2000, by Portuguese film director Teresa Villaverde from their home in Rome.

The as-yet untitled work is being made with BulletProof Film, of Chicago, Illinois, and with the collaboration of the Portuguese organization 26-4, headed by Paulo Quintella. 26-4 is an organization for Portuguese parents who have had to deal with the juvenile court systems of that country, which have chronically shown themselves to be corrupted and to operate in illegal manners, most frequently adversely to fathers. BulletProof Film has a record of co-production in films with strong social and political content.

Clara Jost was illegally taken from Italy by Teresa Villaverde, her mother, and Portuguese writer/director, on Nov. 2, 2000, and has since been held in Portugal, illegally under the terms of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction to which Portugal, Italy and the United States are all signatories. Italian authorities formally requested the return of Clara Jost in December 2000 under this Convention, and concurred that Clara Jost's removal was illegal under Italian law (sottrazione di un minore). The Portuguese court ignored this request, claiming that Clara was a "habitual resident" of Lisbon, a perjured claim filed by Teresa Villaverde on her arrival in Portugal: Clara Jost had lived her first 6 months in Lisbon, the next 14 in Paris, and the balance of her three and a half years of life at the time of her kidnapping, in Rome. Ms. Villaverde's claim was an act of perjury and a crime - though a crime which the courts, the Attorney General and the President of Portugal have shown no inclination to question, just as they have shown no interest in investigating or correcting the corruption that prevails in that country.

Clara had been cast by her mother in the film *Agua e Sal* in the role of a child abducted by her mother, fictionally played by Italian actress Galatea Ranzi, who, as was noticed by Portuguese critics was a virtual clone of Teresa Villaverde. Owing to the departure of Portuguese actor Joaquin d'Almeida for a Hollywood film, Villaverde shot the fictional kidnapping 10 weeks after she had abducted Clara in reality, despite Jost's vehement objections made to the Juvenile Court Judge Rui Machado e Moura and to producer Paolo Branco.

Following the advice of the US Consulate General and of his lawyer in Portugal, Mr. Jost went through the legal procedures in Portugal only to find that the entire system was utterly corrupted, and that legality, in any meaningful sense, simply does not exist in that country. Following an illegal ruling by the Portuguese Appeals Court (Tribunal do Relacoes) in October 2001, Mr. Jost commenced an Internet

exposure of the corruption of Portugal's Judiciary, its Attorney General, and finally of its President, all of whom are involved in this case. In June 2002, in response to this Internet based effort, the Portuguese newspaper, *O Independente*, published an article on the matter, ending with the statement that "The writer of these emails does not know that corruption is a Portuguese illness seldom mentioned and never investigated."

Prior to Mr. Jost's campaign on behalf of his daughter, the press of Portugal, as suggested in this statement, never mentioned corruption beyond petty instances of police bribery. Immediately after the publication of the *O Independente* article, the press of Portugal sharply changed, and commenced a series of revelations including in the most sordid case, that of Casa Pia, in which a state run orphanage system was used for a pedophile ring which included highest members of Portugal's government and cultural establishment, including its most famous TV presenter, the second ranking Socialist Party officer, and a decorated Portuguese ambassador - the entire case had been kept under wraps by the legal system for over a decade. Exposure of this case, as well as numerous other instances of a systematic and institutionalized corruption at all levels of the Portuguese government have resulted in the most profound political crisis in Portugal since their so-called revolution of 1974 when the remnants of the dictator Salazar's government were thrown out.

Mr. Jost takes full credit for provoking the Portuguese press into taking up its proper role in an alleged "democracy," and for having a major hand in triggering the present crisis in the corrupted political system there.

Mr. Jost has openly and publicly accused (and has the proof to back it up) the following parties: Judge, Rui Machado e Moura, Juvenile Court, Lisbon Attorney General Adriano Machado Souto Moura, President Jorge Sampaio, as well as the Appeals Court and the Conselho do Magistratura Superior (the judiciaries oversight commission), of corruption in this case. All of these parties were involved in this case, and all responded in utterly illegal and criminal manners under Portuguese law. They have all been invited to sue for libel, but understandably have not done so. The Attorney General Souto Moura has in the past week come under intense fire for corrupt actions taken in the Casa Pia case, with former President Mario Soares calling for his dismissal. Similarly President Sampaio has come under intense attack in recent days.

Mr. Jost has also cited producer Paolo Branco, Gemini Films in France and In Portugal, in this case as he is the producer for Ms. Villaverde, and he declined to stop the filming of Clara's fictional kidnapping when requested by Mr. Jost to do so. Paulo Branco postures as a famed "independent" producer in Portugal and France, though all of the funding he receives is from public sources, and derives from corruption of public institutions. Mr. Branco's films never make money, but he himself has established a large thoroughbred horse ranch across the river Tejo from Lisbon - all with Portuguese and EU taxpayer money. Far from being "independent" Branco is totally dependent upon his capacity to extract his funding from public, tax-paid sources that are sustained via corruption. Portugal's government is by its own admission destitute, but nevertheless finds the means to hand out 700,000 Euro each to 4 or 5 Portuguese filmmakers each year, much of this passing

through the hands of Branco, who within the Portuguese film community is perceived as a kind of Mafioso, both feared and despised.

Mr. Jost's film will cover this case in detail, but will also deal on a broader level with the global problem of child abduction, an increasingly common phenomenon, in which courts in many countries twist the law in favor of domestic parties. The film will demonstrate how the corruption which occurs in these cases is reflective of a broader, generalized corruption that pervades the world in this time, including the United States which in its flaunting of international accords and treaties under the Bush administration has inflicted serious damage upon its own citizens, as well as acting against the best interests of the world.

Mr. Jost hopes to have the film completed within the next year, perhaps ready for the Venice Festival, 2005.