



A Viewfinder MFZE and Thai Occidental Productions Presents

Trafficker

Starring:

Guy Ratchanont
Jonathan Raggett
Vithaya Pansringarm
Om Puri
and
Amanda Donohoe

Director/Producer
Producer
Executive Producers

Story by
Editor
Production Designer
Songs by
1st Assistant Director/LP
Costume Designer
Sound Recordist
Casting by

Larry Smith
Charles Salmon
Haik Vartany
Martin Vestergaard
Ken Kwek
Olly Stothert
Adrian Smith
Thanh Bui
Ralph Eisenmann
Chantika Kongsillawat
Chai Kongsillawat
Carl Proctor
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Trafficker

Dahn sits alone in a Singapore prison cell, far away from everyone he has ever loved. Whether a matter of fate or free will, his life has spun out of control, and now he faces the death penalty for his role in a drug trafficking scheme.

Years earlier, before the choices, the charges, and the trial, Dahn and his older brother Hao leave Vietnam as refugees and arrive in Sydney, Australia. In that city of promise and opportunity nothing comes easily to the brothers. Prejudice, poverty, and stigma push them toward crime, and eventually onto the complex path to redemption.

By a twist of fate, Hao falls in love with Ling, the sister of a drug trafficking kingpin. Hao, the only father that Dahn has never known, finds himself involved with a vicious Asian triad and to the very brink of disaster. As he is sucked into a world of crime, he quickly realizes that it is one from which he can never escape. But when times turn tough, the younger Dahn resolves to save his brother from the clutch of death.

Caught by the authorities carrying heroin into Singapore, a nation with severe and unbending penalties for drug trafficking, Dahn faces impossible odds. While his lawyer, Alison, fights to save his life and his brother struggles to find hope in an often unforgiving world, Dahn awaits his sentence, no longer as a boy but as a man. For a brief moment, he glimpses the fragile thread that they all must hold on to, and understands that to lose hope is to lose everything.

TRAFFICKER was directed by Larry Smith (known for his work on films such as *Eyes Wide Shut*, *Bronson*, *The Guard*, and *Only God Forgives*) and stars Golden Globe® Winner Amanda Donohoe (*The Madness of King George*, *Liar Liar*), rising actors Jonathan Raggett (*The Lady*, “*Wolfblood*”), Guy Ratchanon Suprakob (Thai films *Tai Hong*, *Kao Rak Tee Korea*) and features Honorary OBE Om Puri (*The Hundred Foot Journey*, *East is East*, *Gandhi*, *Ardh Satya*).

About TRAFFICKER

Larry Smith was hooked when he first read TRAFFICKER script five years ago, while working on the set of *The Blue Mansion*. “Another director said, ‘Not for me,’ so I swooped in and took it,” says Smith, recalling how the framework for his directorial debut began to take shape. “I’ve always been attracted to true stories.” Based on a true story, TRAFFICKER was inspired by the real-life capture, trial, and hanging of Nguyen Tuong Van, a Vietnamese refugee who was caught trying to sneak over 390 grams of heroin through Singapore and sentenced to death despite international pleas for clemency. Script writer Ken Kwek was a journalist with *The Singapore Straits Times* when the news broke, and Van’s ongoing case captivated him. “I was just a little older than Van,” he says. “I could have been him. The story kept playing in my mind; I knew then that I had to write TRAFFICKER.”

Although drug trafficking is a dark and heavy subject to tackle, TRAFFICKER has strong underlying human elements that, according to Kwek, give the film a prevailing air of hope and redemption. “Ling is there as a ray of light,” says Krystal Vee of her character, “the story would be dark without her. We all need to hope, we need to keep that sense of faith while Dahn sits in a jail cell and waits to die.”

The message goes beyond hope, however. Amanda Donohoe says, “The story strives to give us a greater understanding of the human condition. What makes people do what they do? Poverty is the greatest crime, forcing people into all sorts of situations—the young girls that work in go-go bars, families living in huts on the side of a freeway. [TRAFFICKER] makes us question our policies and the things we don’t necessarily want to think about, like the death penalty. I think we see that it’s just not applicable; it’s arbitrary, capricious and has no place in society.”

In a larger sense, that is what the movie is about: exploring the politics of our time. Smith says, “It has to be a story of redemption, of hope. Look back 500 or 600 years—how have we evolved in the way we treat other people? What’s changed? Our society doesn’t have to follow the laws of natural selection. That’s the strength of TRAFFICKER: the theme is absolutely timeless.”

In fact, the layers in the story of Dahn and Hao—their migration to Sydney and rapid descent into the underworld of crime—and the strength of the script were selling points for much of the cast. Vee says, “I read the script and said to myself, ‘They have to cast me.’” First-time star Guy Ratchanon Suprakob agrees: “It’s so emotionally strong.”

TRAFFICKER is full of emotional moments and powerful messages. Most of all, it has a wealth of human angles. Om Puri, renowned Indian actor, echoes that sentiment: “Dahn is tender. He’s a young boy, and that gives us cause for reflection. But my character, the judge, is bound by law, and there is nothing he can do.” As Jonathan Raggett recalls, “There is this one powerful moment when Dahn is sitting in the courtroom, surrounded by strange people in a strange country, and an overwhelming sense of isolation hits. In that moment he develops from a boy to a man. The script has so much depth—it was as if gravity was pulling me into the movie.”

Behind the Scenes

“We wanted to surround ourselves with a team that we could trust. And that’s exactly what we did,” says Smith. A deeper look at the cast and crew underscores the familiarity that he and Charles were seeking. John Gamble, Adrian Smith, Chantika Kongsri, Ralf Eisenmann, Amanda Donohoe and Vithaya Pansringar. All handpicked people that had been worked with in the past, which explains the palpable sense of camaraderie that pervaded the set.

“I worked with a really lovely crew. What stuck with me was how hard everyone worked, especially the Thai crew that constructed the set,” says Production Designer Adrian Smith. “They found out-of-the-box solutions to some of our trickiest problems. This isn’t to say that there weren’t challenges, like the language barrier, for one, and just getting from set to set around Bangkok. But we all complemented each other and brought different approaches to the table that you wouldn’t get on a typical set.”

TRAFFICKER was independently financed which dictated a tight shoot schedule of 24 days. With that amount of shoot days it was essential to get the best takes quickly, move between scenes smoothly, and have props, costumes, and sets ready to go. It also helped to have Editor Olly Stothert working on set while Smith shot the film. “I tried to give Larry rough footage 20 minutes after the shot. It was a really quick turnaround, but that let him see what was happening while it happened.”

Stothert would talk with Smith in the morning and then enlist his assistant to help sync shots from the previous day. After shooting in the morning, he would look at scenes during lunch. At night, he would sync and break down rushes (the first prints made of a day’s footage), and finally print still shots. “At the end of the day, I’d sit down and refine it. With such a tight schedule, the work had to be done there and then.” As the editorial process went on, he found himself with cleaner cuts and better footage to use as a base for the final edit.

Producers Smith and Salmon had to find ways to get the most from the budget for TRAFFICKER. Smith a long-time student of Stanley Kubrick took a cue from his mentor and work closely with Salmon in monitoring where money was best invested. “A good, successful production needs producers watching where the money goes. Kubrick was a genius with that. Eyes Wide Shut would have cost \$250 million in America, but the final budget was about \$70 million. Salmon knew how to get the best out of the great crew and facilities available in Thailand and Smith knew creatively “I had to make the practical, pragmatic decisions to keep us on target.”

Finding a reliable location manager and smart costume designer saved money without sacrificing quality. “I was pleasantly surprised,” says Adrian Smith of the shooting locations. “Our location manager showed us the Bangkok airport link station that looked just like Changi Airport [in Singapore]; Bangkok has a tremendous range and styles of location.” Costume Designer Chantika “Poo” Kongsillawat sifted through secondhand markets and perused the winding rabbit warren of Chinatown to pick up fabric in the blacks, grays, and dark blues that would embody the heavy tones that Smith sought to capture.

Above all, the team walked away feeling closer to one another. “I made a bunch of friends,” says Vee, with a laugh. “It was lovely working with Guy. He has this infectious energy and enthusiasm. The whole cast was a good mix of young and old. I was kind of in awe when I met Om Puri, but he walked up to me, smiled, and asked me how I was doing. It was like that with everyone. We all just connected.”

The cast is unique. It features a couple of veteran actors, like Donohoe and Om Puri, and stars two young actors—Raggett, from the UK, and Suprakob, already famous in Thailand for his work on TV serials—who are coming into their own. What is more, Suprakob shuffled between sets, continuing to film TV shows. “Guy is superhuman,” says Vee. “He was filming during the day, doing all his own stunts, and then rushing off to shoot TV shows at night.”

Perhaps the element that made the atmosphere on set so inviting was its supportive director. “Larry knew exactly what he wanted, and that took off a lot of pressure,” says Raggett. “That brought us together as a team.”

Top FAQs

Why should an international audience see TRAFFICKER?

“Fundamentally, it’s an extraordinary story. It’s an honest, moving piece of work.” – Adrian Smith

“It’s a phenomenal script. But more than that, it’s something we can all relate to: the loss of someone we love and living on despite it.” – Jonathan Raggett

“The visuals are stunning, but the story is everything. It carries this film.” – Larry Smith

What messages do you find in the story of TRAFFICKER?

“Hope must live on.” – Guy Ratchanon Suprakob

“It’s madness to have the death penalty. We have to take action—all of us—to increase access to education, because it’s the way forward.” – Amanda Donohoe

“Family is everything.” – Chantika “Poo” Kongsillawat

What was your favorite place to work in Thailand, and why?

“Bangkok is a wonderfully chaotic city, an inspiring place. I loved being here.” – Ken Kwek

“We went to Samut Songkhram Province to shoot a scene in a village. The crew set up in this swampy land with jungle all around, and everyone was very friendly. It was real village life.” – Chantika “Poo” Kongsillawat

“I love the greatness of Thailand, in general. The Buddhist mentality of kindness and peace pervades everyday life.” – Amanda Donohoe

Can Thailand become a hub for international filmmakers?

Thailand is the leader in the region for film making experience, talent, facilities and locations. Plus there’s a diverse mix of nationalities and a great tradition of creativity.

However all those advantages are not enough as decisions where to make a film are largely dependant on finance and therefore funding through film incentives. The Thai authorities have recognized this and there will soon be an attractive production rebate that will make choosing Thailand to make movies a natural decision.

It’s been my long standing ambition to promote Thailand from a location based industry to a true production hub; this now will soon be fulfilled I believe. – Charles Salmon

Anything to add?

“I like to watch people watch stuff I’ve made. It’s like a painting—eventually, it’s just finished, and you have to put it out there for people to see.” – Olly Stothert

“Thailand has taught me a bit of humility. There are different ways of creating art here.” – Adrian Smith

The right team is everything – Larry Smith

Putting Three Countries into One

Vietnam, Australia, Singapore. The story of *TRAFFICKER* spans three countries, but each place had to be constructed entirely within Thailand. In creating the look that Smith had conceived, the production team had to be careful, resourceful, and selective.

“Apple was very good at finding the right places to make the different worlds seem separate,” says Adrian Smith. “She found this mall here that was designed by an Australian architect; it felt exactly like Sydney. Visually, the film has an original take on those three countries, the whole atmosphere. I think it all came together at the sport stadium for a prison shot. It was this dark, hulking concrete monster, and the lighting was beautiful. It really portrayed a sense of impending doom.”

The crew attacked the challenge of expressing moods in one shot that often competed with one another. “I’m good at darkness,” continues Smith. “That doesn’t mean that I like it, per se. Together with Larry, we created a very dark universe that really captures the sense of fear and elevates the stakes.”

Finding local extras helped the team make the setting and the film feel real. Stothert says, “There’s a scene with all these refugees on a boat, and a lot of them were actual Vietnamese refugees. That lent a sort of personal aspect to the scene that went beyond the action. You know, we had to be careful, because the movie was inspired by a true story and we needed to capture the conflicting messages of sadness and hope and personal growth.”

Choosing to film Bangkok proved to be both a boon and a burden. “Bangkok is like *Bladerunner* on acid,” jokes Donohoe. “There’s a constant buzz going on, 24/7.” But, as Suprakob puts it, “Vietnam is like Bangkok, but with more motorcycles.” The city could be Sydney at one moment and Saigon in the next. In that sense, it was perfect.

“We captured the emotions that we needed [to realize my vision of *TRAFFICKER*]. The last time you’re going to see someone—that fear and isolation—we got that perfect in the prison cell scene. It felt like this boy, Dahn, was alone in a gray prison cell.”

About the Cast

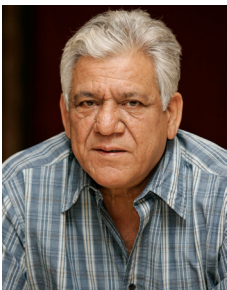


AMANDA DONOHOE (Alison Reid)

Amanda Donohoe is an alumnus of London's Central School of Speech and Drama. She has won critical acclaim for her weekly assignment as attorney C.J. Lamb on "LA Law," picking up a Golden Globe® in 1992. Her film, stage, and television credits, however, are extensive.

Her first film role came in 1986 as a supporting actress in the comedy *Foreign Body*. She then starred in numerous British TV movies, usually cast as the femme fatale. In 1990, she was nominated for the Saturn Award® for Best Actress for her work in the horror movie *The Lair of the White Worm*. She turned to classics for her role as Lady Elizabeth Pembroke in the *Madness of King George* in 1994. She gained a wider audience from her part in *Liar, Liar* opposite Jim Carrey. On stage, she has appeared as Mrs. Robinson in a London production of *The Graduate* and Yelena Andreyevna in a New York production of *Uncle Vanya*.

Donohoe is an avid and active supporter of women's rights and egalitarianism.



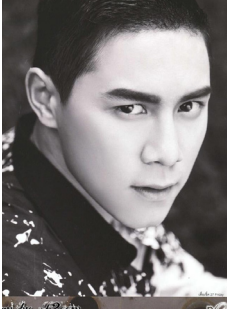
OM PURI (Supreme Court judge)

Om Puri has had a long and illustrious career. From India to America and everywhere in between, he now finds himself in Thailand, delivering a cameo performance in one of the most integral moments of *TRAFFICKER*. Puri's career took off with the sociopolitical Indian drama *Ardh Satya* (literally meaning Half-Truth). With that performance his reputation for versatility began to solidify. "It took me quite some time to make it," he said. "I started with art films, but really hit it big with *Ardh Satya*." He

went on to star in *East is East*, a moving drama with comedic elements about a Pakistani Muslim named George Khan who marries a Caucasian British woman, has seven children with her, and tries to navigate the changing social landscape in London. Later, he played in a handful of popular American films—opposite Val Kilmer in *The Ghost and the Darkness*; Patrick Swayze in *City of Joy*; Jack Nicholson in *Wolf*; Tom Hanks and Julia Roberts in *Charlie Wilson's War*—and he had a cameo in *Gandhi*. He has starred in many dozens of popular Indian films.

In 2004, he was named an Honorary Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his service to the British film industry. Other awards include a 1982 National Film Award for Best Actor for *Arohan* and a 1984 National Film Award for Best Actor for *Ardh Satya*. In 1990, he won Padmashri, India's fourth highest civilian award.

About the Cast (cont.)



GUY RATCHANONT SUPRAKOB (Hao)

Guy is a well-known actor in Thailand, having starred in numerous TV serials such as Hua Jai Ploy Jone, Song Pradtana, Marnya Risaya, and most recently, Sud Sai Pan. He has previously acted in films Kao Rak Tee Korea, Die a Violent Death, and Hunting Me. A former singer and model, Guy makes his acting debut on the international stage playing Hao in TRAFFICKER. He spent much of his childhood in the United States before returning to Thailand to pursue a career in acting.



JONATHAN RAGGETT (Dahn)

Jonathan Raggett first appeared on screen while he was in secondary school. In The Lady, the riveting tale of Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi, he played the part of Kim, Aung San's oldest son.

He returns to silver-screen drama as Dahn in TRAFFICKER. The arrow is pointed up for the prodigious Raggett.



VITHAYA PANSRINGARM (Tran)

Vithaya Pansringarm only began acting five years ago, at the age of 49. Which just goes to show, better late than never. Since then, he has had a cameo in Hollywood hit The Hangover II, and he shared the screen with Ryan Gosling in the Bangkok-based noir Only God Forgives. Now, he returns to the international stage as the mafia boss Tran in TRAFFICKER

About the Crew



Larry Smith – Director, Producer, Cinematographer

TRAFFICKER is Larry Smith's directorial debut. A distinguished crew member on numerous films, Smith grabbed onto the script a few years ago and worked back and forth with writer Ken Kwek before he began production.

Smith has worked under prodigious filmmakers, such as Stanley Kubrick on *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut*, and most recently, Nicolas Winding Refn on *Only God Forgives*. He worked as Director of Photography on 2008's *Bronson* and Cinematographer on *The Blue Mansion*, *Red Dust*, and the yet-to-be-released *Calvary*. At the Dinard British Film Festival in 2011, he won the Kodak Award for Best Cinematography for his work on *The Guard*, a movie starring Don Cheadle. Smith has also won the Danish academy award (the Robert award) for *Only God Forgives* as well as the Sitges award in Spain. He has worked with academy award Director Tom Hooper and is a member of the British Society of Cinematographers (BSC).



Ken Kwek – Writer

A former journalist and playwright, a native of Singapore, Ken Kwek began scriptwriting in 2005 on the documentary *The Ballad of Vicki and Jane*. He met Larry Smith while on set for *The Blue Mansion*, a movie for which he also wrote the script. Kwek gained a degree of notoriety when his edgy and provocative collection of short films called *Sex. Violence. Family Values* was banned from Singapore and Malaysia.



Charles Salmon – Producer

Charles Salmon's career began in 1981 and he has worked in the film industry ever since. His experience ranges from BBC TV and films to independent and studio feature films. A founder of Thai Occidental productions, his knowledge of Thailand and its film industry made him a natural fit for TRAFFICKER.

Charles has held many roles in film productions, from line producer to production manager to executive producer, on sets all over the world—Africa, Russia, China, the Caribbean, the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, and of course Thailand. His credits include *The Hive*, *Indus*, *The Darkest Hour*, *The Jungle Book*, among many others.



Thanh Bui - Singer

Born in 1983 of Vietnamese parents and growing up in Australia, Thanh's music career began at a young age and at the age of 10, he began practicing vocals and piano. After receiving a full scholarship at Swinburne University in Melbourne, and graduating with honors, Thanh decided to pursue his passion for music. In 2004, Thanh decided to join the North band, which consisted of 4 members and had three hit songs which gained popularity in Thailand, Indonesia and other countries in Southeast Asia. After the North

About the Crew (cont.)

band disbanded, leaving Thanh to decide to pursue his own music path. “Everybody should follow their heart, because we only have one life to live.”, Says Thanh. “My parents gave me a lot of encouragement to follow my dreams, and so, I did”.

Today, Thanh, already having over 600 songs that he helped compose, and also one of the top 8 contestants on Australian idol, is currently composing music for various films along with recording duets with various Southeast Asian pop singers.

1. “The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot restore when it wants to.”

- Anton Chekhov

2. “...judicial execution can never cancel or remove the atrocity it seeks to punish: it can only add a second atrocity to the original one.”

- Auberon Waugh

3. “In my opinion it’s difficult to tell a story about an immigrant child. I began the first years with frustration and loneliness. Seeing the fear in their eyes and recognizing the contradictions that life tends to serve up, hit home.”

- Thanh Bui

Cast

Amanda Donohoe

Vithaya Pansringarm

Om Puri

Guy Ratchanon Suprakob

Jonathan Raggett

Krystal Vee

Charlie Reudpokanon

Anthony Theil

Miles Meili

Edith MacQueen

Kelly .B. Jones

Lorenzo de Stefano

Alison Reid

Tran

Supreme Court Judge

Hao

Dahn

Ling

Truong

Detective Cavendish

Father Holland

Female Police Officer

Saleswoman

Cop 2

Filmmakers

Director/Producer/Cinematographer

Producer

Executive Producers

Story by

Editor

Casting by

Casting Coordinator

Production Designer

Songs by

Art Director

Costume Designer/ Sound Recorder

Costume Supervisor

Set Costumer

Hair Stylist

Hair Supervisor

Makeup

Production Manager/First Assistant Director

Art Coordinator

Special Effects Supervisor

Stunt Coordinator

Stunts

Camera Operator/Head of Camera Department

First Assistant Camera

Second Assistant Camera

Digital Imaging

Script Supervisor

Production Secretary

Director's Assistant

Production Coordinator

Location Manage

Production Assistant

Assistant Accountant

Production Accountant

Larry Smith

Charles Salmon

Haik Vartany

Ken Kwek

Martin Vestergaard

Olly Stothert

Carl Proctor

Kaprice Kea

Meena Ngammee

Adrian Smith

Thanh Bui

Pongnarin Jonghawklang

Chantika “Poo” Kongsillawat

Chotaya Chanpen

Melanie Taechathammarak

Johnny Live

Piyathida Phorung

Makoree Wackaji

Ralph Eisenmann

Saipin “Omm” Kitsuban

Kevin Chisnall

Brahim Achabbakhe

Lorenzo de Stefano

John Gamble

Wattana Kuasong

Treenuch Erawan

Martin Landsburg

Saithip Boonyasomphop

Supatra Bromilow

Sam Gregg

Padchar Konsillawat

Araya “Apple” Nakkate

Pramote Pongsanon

Panjaporn “May” Pungsopa

Sudkwan “Kwan” Suwansoonthorn

Stills From:

TRAFFICKER

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