



# STORM

(Sturm)

Directed by Hans-Christian Schmid

***“Acting across the board is splendid.”***

*-Kirk Honeycutt, The Hollywood Reporter*



**Germany, Denmark, Netherlands | 2009 | Political Thriller  
In English, German, Bosnian, Serbian | 105 min. |  
1:2.35 | Dolby Digital**

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## **SYNOPSIS**

Hannah Maynard, prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague, is leading a trial against a former commander of the Yugoslavian National Army who is accused of the deportation and later killing of dozens of Bosnian-Muslim civilians. When a key witness commits suicide, it looks like the case will unravel, however Hannah refuses to give in.

Hoping to uncover new findings, she travels to the witness' burial in Sarajevo and meets his sister Mira, who she senses has much more to say than she is willing to admit. Despite threats of violence, Mira reluctantly agrees to testify at The Hague. However, she and Hannah must both risk life and limb to make it to the court, only to discover that there are traitors among their own ranks.

## **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

**WINNER** – Amnesty International Film Prize – **Berlin Int'l Film Festival**

**WINNER** – Prize of the Guild of German Art House Cinemas – **Berlin Int'l Film Festival**

**WINNER** – Reader Jury of the "Berliner Morgenpost" – **Berlin Int'l Film Festival**

**WINNER** – Bernhard Wicki Film Award – **Munich Film Festival**

**WINNER** – Audience Award, Trieste Film Festival

**Official Selection** –

Taipei Film Festival; Sarajevo Film Festival; Haifa Int'l Film Festival; London Film Festival; Mumbai Int'l Film Festival; Chicago Int'l Film Festival

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

### **Hans-Christian Schmid**

"A polite and inconspicuous woman in her fifties sits across from Bernd Lange and myself at her completely disordered desk and offers us some tea. She cuts off some slices of ready-made cake with a plastic knife and puts them on paper plates in front of us. She is neither prepared for visitors, nor is she a particularly good hostess. There are more important things in her life.

At the time, Hildegard Uertz was a prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. She had abandoned her home and family to conduct the first international lawsuit in which rape was acknowledged as war crime. She and her colleagues nearly brought Slobodan Milosevic to his knees, and only Serbian demagogue Vojislav Seselj's hunger strike really got her infuriated. During our third meeting beginning of last year, Hildegard Uertz told us that, if

necessary, she'd let him starve to death. She explained how she was fed up with the way he continuously blackmailed the Court, constantly trying to fool everyone. And how she worried about her husband, who received threatening phone calls at home in Bochum by Seselj's nationalistic party companions. But instead of finally giving up the fight and retiring to a quiet German provincial court, she is investigating as a member of the Hariri-Commission in Lebanon since last spring.

The encounter with Hildegard Uertz gave the initial start-up for this project, and after two years of script development, and some maybe inevitable detours, my focus still lays on our central character, Hannah, and the dilemma in which she suddenly finds herself once the tribunal advises an arrangement with the defense. A deal that allows accelerating the proceedings. It seems a reasonable compromise, for all parties involved. Except for Hannah.

Integrity on the one hand, and stretching the truth on the other hand - this is the conflict of values in which Hannah has to maneuver. Witnesses' individual fates, like Mira's, are endangered to fall in disadvantage because the tribunal must subordinate itself to an arbitrarily set time limit.

I am interested in the discrepancy of a woman for whom the fulfillment of institutional duties had been highest priority for years, and who all of a sudden finds herself being an outsider because of her persistence. Who is confronted with the fact that a system, which she had always believed in and passionately supported, turns against her. "Storm" is about two women, Hannah and Mira, whose lives' courses overlap for a few days, who both risk a lot and finally go through a decisive development."

## **DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY**

Hans-Christian Schmid was born 1965 in Berlin, where he still lives today. Following his studies at film school in Munich, he graduated in scriptwriting at the USC in Los Angeles. Schmid's films include "23", "Crazy" and "Distant Lights". In 2004, he founded the Production company 23/5, that has so far produced Schmid's "Requiem" and "And Along Come Tourists", directed by Robert Thalhem, which Schmid wrote.

The Wonderful World of Laundry (2009)

Storm (2009)

Requiem (2006)

Distant Lights (2003)

Crazy (2000)

23 (1998)

Nach Fünf im Urwald (1995)

Himmel und Hölle (1994) (TV)

Die Mechanik des Wunders (1992)

Das lachende Gewitter (1989)

Sekt oder Selters (1989)

**STORM** tells the story of a fictional war monger accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and mass rape during the Bosnian war in the early 1990s. This moment of history has been largely overlooked in the art-house film world, however **STORM** confronts this issue head on, using the International Crimes Tribunal at The Hague as a gateway to open up an unsettling yet thrilling story of international intrigue and deception.

While **STORM** is a film that has been a longtime in the making, it has become exceptionally relevant in the past several months, as Radovan Karadzic's October 26<sup>th</sup> trial commences. Former Bosnian Serb wartime leader Karadzic stands accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and violations of the laws, or customs of war, at the International Criminal Tribunal. Karadzic's trial is a potential turning point in the world's reaction and persecution of the Bosnian genocide, and demonstrates the necessity of continuing to tell these timely and relevant stories through every medium possible, including art-house and international cinema.

# The New York Times

## Karadzic Boycotts Opening of Trial

Published: October 26, 2009

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) -- Radovan Karadzic boycotted the opening day of his war crimes trial Monday and sent no lawyer to defend himself, forcing judges to adjourn the hearing. Judges then vowed the trial would begin Tuesday with or without the former Bosnian Serb leader.

The suspension brought cries of anger and anguish from the small public gallery full of survivors of Bosnia's 1992-1995 war, which left more than 100,000 people dead, most of them victims of Bosnian Serb attacks.

Many survivors had traveled by bus from Bosnia to see Karadzic finally face justice. A small group briefly refused to leave the courtroom after the adjournment and one woman threatened a hunger strike.

Admira Fazlic, who was imprisoned in Bosnian Serb-run camps during the conflict, shook her head as she left the courtroom. "We are shocked," she said. "Radovan Karadzic is making the world and justice ridiculous. He is joking with everybody."

Karadzic, one of the central figures of the Balkan wars triggered by the breakup of Yugoslavia, faces two counts of genocide and nine other charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. His trial -- the most important war crimes case since the uncompleted trial of his mentor, Slobodan Milosevic -- is seen as a chance for the court to redeem itself after allowing Milosevic to hijack his own war crimes trial. The former Yugoslav president died of a heart attack in 2006 after dragging out his defense for more than four years.

Survivors revile Karadzic as the man whose political dream of creating an ethnically pure "Greater Serbia" triggered the Srebrenica massacre -- Europe's worst bloodbath since World War II -- and the notorious campaign of sniping and shelling that turned Bosnia's picturesque capital Sarajevo into a killing field.

His genocide charges stem from the 1995 murder of 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica and from the Bosnian Serb campaign of ethnic cleansing against the country's Muslim and Croat populations.

Karadzic, who evaded capture for 13 years, has repeatedly refused to enter pleas, but insists he is innocent. He faces a maximum life sentence if convicted.

He stayed away from Monday's hearing, claiming he has not had enough time to prepare, despite being in custody and working on his defense since his arrest on a Belgrade bus in July 2008.

Judge O-Gon Kwon said in the absence of Karadzic, who was defending himself, or any lawyer representing him, he was suspending the case until Tuesday afternoon, when the prosecution would begin its opening statement.

Court spokeswoman Nerma Jelacic said the delay was to give Karadzic time to reconsider his boycott. Judges "have figured out what they are going to do: They are going to start with or without him," she said.

In a letter dated Friday and released after the proceedings began Monday, Karadzic again pleaded for more time. "I would and never will boycott my trial, but if I am not prepared that would not be a trial at all," he wrote. "There must be a fair solution." Prosecutor Hildegard Uertz-Retzlaff urged judges to appoint a defense attorney to represent Karadzic whether he likes it or not, saying he should not be able to deliberately hold up the trial.

The only sign of Karadzic in the courtroom was a pair of headphones lying on the desk where he has sat during pretrial proceedings.

Observers say the 64-year-old Karadzic's absence from Courtroom One at the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal should not overshadow the case's significance. Yet Karadzic's boycott and the uncertainty over whether the court should impose a defense attorney on him has raised the specter of a repeat of Milosevic's trial, who also had an attorney forced on him.

Param-Preet Singh of Human Rights Watch said denying Karadzic the right of self-defense could backfire. "To strip him of that right by imposing counsel, you could have

the situation where you have an uncooperative defendant forced to defend himself in a way he did not want," she said.

Seeing Karadzic finally face justice is enormously significant to victims who still cannot put to rest their memories of the horrors, said the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Belgian Serge Brammertz.

Dzemla Delalic, her gray hair covered by a white head scarf, shook her fists at the tribunal as she left the building Monday, threatening to go on hunger strike if the case does not proceed. "They protect him here and there is nobody here to help us," said Delalic, a Srebrenica survivor who lost 30 male family members in the massacre.

Karadzic has worked hard to avoid facing justice. He says he cut a deal with U.S. peace envoy Richard Holbrooke in 1996 in which he agreed to drop out of public life in return for immunity from prosecution. Holbrooke denies making such a deal and tribunal judges say it would not be binding on them.

Karadzic's whereabouts was unknown for years until his arrest last year when he was posing as New Age healer Dr. Dragan Dabic, disguised behind thick glasses, a bushy beard and straggly gray hair.

Prosecutors wanted to try Karadzic together with his wartime military chief, Gen. Ratko Mladic, but Mladic remains on the run, one of only two suspects still sought by the court. The other is a former leader of rebel Serbs in Croatia, Goran Hadzic.

## SELECT ACTOR'S BIOGRAPHIES

### Kerry Fox

**Kerry Fox** (born July 30, 1966) is an actress from Wellington, New Zealand. She came to prominence playing author Janet Frame in the movie ***An Angel at My Table***, directed by Jane Campion, which garnered her a Best Actress Award from the New Zealand Film and Television Awards. Fox has gone on to build an international career, working far and wide in quality independent films and on television. She received praise and a nomination for the Australian Film Institute Awards for her leading role in ***Country Life***; starred in Danny Boyle's breakout British hit ***Shallow Grave*** with Ewan McGregor, and was nominated for the Canadian Academy Award (Genie Award) for her supporting role in ***The Hanging Garden***. In 2001 she won the Silver Bear for Best Actress for her role as Claire in ***Intimacy*** (directed by Patrice Chereau) at the Berlin Film Festival. In ***STORM***, she takes the role of Hannah Maynard.

### Anamaria Marinca

**Anamaria Marinca** (born April 1, 1978 in Iași, Romania) is an award-winning Romanian actress, and starred in the Palme d'Or winner ***4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days***. She graduated from the University of Fine Arts, Music and Drama "George Enescu" in Iași. She speaks Romanian, English and French.

In 2005, she won 3 Best Actress Awards (the BAFTA Television Awards, the Royal Television Society Award and the 'Golden Nymph' at 45th Festival de Télévision de Monte Carlo) for her role in “*Sex Traffic*”, a CBC/Channel 4 drama about human trafficking. As well as appearing on stage in Romanian theatre productions, she also acted in “*Measure for Measure*” at the National Theatre in London. In 2007, she appeared in the Francis Ford Coppola film ***Youth Without Youth***. More recently, she appeared in 2008 as a supporting character in the BBC 5-episode miniseries “*The Last Enemy*” as Yasim Anwar, a human rights activist and the lead character's love interest.

## CREDITS

### **Directed by**

Hans-Christian Schmid

### **Writers**

Bernd Lange

Hans-Christian Schmid

### **Producers**

Maria Köpf ... *Executive Producer*

Britta Knöller ... *Producer*

Hans-Christian Schmid ... *Producer*

Ralph Brosche ... *Line Producer*

Peter Aalbæk Jensen ... *Co-executive Producer*

Peter Garde ... *Co-executive Producer*

Marie Gade Denessen ... *Co-producer*

Bettina Brokemper ... *Co-producer*

Frans van Gestel ... *Co-producer*

Jeroen Beker ... *Co-producer*

### **Director of Photography**

Bogumił Godfrejów

### **Editor**

Hansjörg Weißbrich, BFS

### **Sound Editor**

Patrick Veigel

### **Cast**

Kerry Fox ... *Hannah Maynard*

Anamaria Marinca ... *Mira Arendt*

Stephen Dillane ... *Keith Haywood*

Rolf Lassgård ... *Jonas Dahlberg*

Alexander Fehling ... *Patrick Färber*

Kresimir Mikić ... *Alen Hajdarevic*

Tarik Filipović ... *Mladen Banovic*

Steven Scharf ... *Jan Ardent*  
Wine Dierickx ... *Jule Svenson*  
Reinout Bussemaker ... *Carl Mathijsen*  
Alexis Zegerman ... *Daliah Sofer*  
Arturo Venegas ... *Arnold Michaels*  
*Dražen Kühn* ... *Goran Duric*