



THE PARTY IS OVER

COMMON --- DESCENT

WRITTEN BY
BENJAMIN YOUNG

STORY BY
EELKO FERWERDA • BENJAMIN YOUNG

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ZEF

*The salary, the bonuses ... it buys distraction.
Just enough to help us ignore the chaos we cause.*



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written by
BEN YOUNG

story by
BEN YOUNG & EELKO FERWERDA

director
EELKO FERWERDA

producer
RAYMOND VAN DER KAAIJ

genre
THRILLER

length
90 MINUTES APPROX.

language
English

location
UK/IRELAND

status
DEVELOPMENT, THIRD DRAFT SCREENPLAY

start shooting
AUTUMN 2011

supported by
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COMMON DESCENT

- synopsis -

The boys at Occident Global do what they want. They run a supreme ‘black box’ hedge fund, untouched by regulation or scrutiny of any kind. The precise source of their dividends may be opaque—only three senior executives know the full picture—but investors are not complaining.

Zef Hoffman is a 29-year-old quantitative analyst at Occident Global. He is quiet, neurotic, and somewhat out of the loop. Even so, Zef’s intricate trading models have performed beautifully of late. In response, the company’s founder and chief executive—legendary fund manager **Marcus Sturgeon**, 61—has handpicked Zef for a promotion. This weekend, Sturgeon and his top two lieutenants will treat their new partner to a congratulatory bacchanal at the company’s isolated countryside estate. Sex, drugs, and crony capitalist bonding: Zef Hoffman has arrived.

But there is trouble at the top. Unbeknownst to Zef, Marcus Sturgeon has been all but usurped by his two associates, **Graham Tennant** and **Henryk Sobieski**. Both still in their mid-thirties, Tennant and Sobieski are protégés of Sturgeon who have come to resent their boss. In their eyes, Sturgeon is a flat-footed dinosaur with a tenuous grip on reality. Tennant and Sobieski’s relationship with their former mentor is part dysfunctional family, part palace coup, and Zef has climbed straight into the line of fire.

Nevertheless, the first night of Zef’s initiation at the country estate appears to be a roaring success. The drinks are flowing, a horde of young party monsters have transformed the Occident Global mansion into a warehouse rave, and Zef is at the centre of it all, like a nerd in Nero’s court. Amid the free-for-all, Zef encounters a woman named **Kathryn**. She is subdued, yet magnetic—not to mention a hell of a lot more interesting than the other rent-a-guests. But when the party descends into chaos, Zef and Kathryn’s connection is broken. Guests evacuate the house and drive away as Graham Tennant locks horns with Marcus Sturgeon in a furious row. For the first time, Zef glimpses the profound disorder behind his employer’s regal façade.

The next morning, Zef, Tennant, and Sobieski emerge from their bedrooms with epic hangovers. They are surprised to find Kathryn downstairs, cooking breakfast for them. Zef rekindles his rapport with Kathryn, the tension of the previous evening gives way to a relaxed morning after, and balance is restored. But that moment of relative peace evaporates when Zef and his colleagues discover that three important things have gone missing overnight: their laptops, their mobile phones, and their boss.



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- synopsis -

As a weekend away turns into a nightmarish day of personal and professional reckoning for Zef and his colleagues, Kathryn asserts her control over them. She has compiled a massive dossier of Occident Global's illegal and unethical activities, complete with voluminous emails and transaction records, and she is now ready to release it to the public. An enraged victim who has long since lost faith in conventional routes to justice, Kathryn wants compensation worth more than money.

As Kathryn reveals the fraud at the core of Occident Global, she provokes Zef's long-buried conscience and drives a wedge between he and his colleagues. Forced to confront the reality behind what he does for a living, Zef must choose between what is right and what is good for his career. But when desperate negotiations with Kathryn turn into a horrific and surreal predawn manhunt through the forest beyond the house, ethics take a back seat to survival.

A taut and distressing thriller in the tradition of *Funny Games* and *Deliverance*, *Common Descent* penetrates the fog of the global financial crisis and distills it into elemental human urges. Infused with timeless themes of greed, guilt, and self-deception, this film tackles the web of immoral and amoral forces behind a disaster that continues to shape our individual and collective fates.



COMMON DESCENT

- moodbord -



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- moodbord -



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COMMON DESCENT

- biographies -

About the director

Eelko Ferwerda is dedicated to creating energetic, inventive, and compelling stories. After graduating from the Willem de Kooning Academy, he started his career as a video stage designer in theatre before moving into VFX and motion design for commercials and feature films. Since then, he has become a highly sought after director of commercials for major brands. His first short film, *American Dreams*, was the recipient of the Hollywood Discovery Award at the Hollywood Film Festival. His recent follow-up, *Born and Raised*, premiered at Clermont Ferrand and has gone on to win eight audience and jury awards at festivals around the world.



About the writer

Born in rural Indiana, Ben Young started off in politics and journalism (including a stint on Al Gore's ill-fated presidential campaign) before going on to work in publicity and development for Fox Searchlight and other studios. Upon moving to London in 2004, he wrote plays and multimedia performance pieces that appeared throughout the UK and Australia. After lecturing in Creative Writing at Oxford, he joined Ten Alps, Bob Geldof's multiplatform production company, where he is now a Senior Scriptwriter. He is also a Senior Lecturer in Writing for the Screen at Teesside University, a graduate of the USC School of Cinematic Arts, and a graduate of Goldsmiths College, University of London.



COMMON DESCENT

- biographies -

About Revolver Media

Revolver develops and (co)produces groundbreaking films by young and upcoming talents from Europe and beyond. Committed to nurturing strong, distinctive, and author-driven stories, we believe in capturing international audiences through the marriage of art and commerce. Recent feature releases include *Club Zeus* (David Verbeek, IFFR2011, Return of the Tiger competition), *Crips, Strapped 'n' Strong* (feature documentary, IDFA 2009, Locarno 2009) *Vivere* (Best Feature Film at the 2009 Festival del Sol, Artistic Achievement Award at the Outfest in Los Angeles), *Deja Vu* for Arte France, *Happy Family* by Martin Koolhoven, *22nd of May* by Koen Mortier. Our current development slate includes Mexican director Ernesto Contreras's *I Dream in Another Language* (Sundance Global Filmmaking Award 2011), Tamar van den Dop's *Supernova*, and Michiel van Jaarsveld's *Vic's World*.

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