



A SAM CHOU FILM

IN THE HEAT



RED IRON ROAD CREATED BY ALJOSHA KLIMOV AND IOURI STEPANOV WRITTEN BY ELLERY VANDOOYEWEERT
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS IOURI STEPANOV BILL MARKS ARTEM VASSILIEV AND KARINA KABANOVA
PRODUCED BY COURTNEY WOLFSON ALJOSHA KLIMOV MATTHEW LYON ARON DUNN AND JOSH BOWEN
STARRING MICHAEL DOBSON GILES PANTON JOSH PEACE ELLEN-RAY HENNESSEY MICHAEL ANDREW COSH JULIUS CHO



IN THE HEAT

(short animated horror)



SYNOPSIS: When a bruised and battered man claiming to be Santa Clause is arrested for the murder of a child, the interrogating officers uncover a story more bizarre and horrific than expected. A violent Christmas rivalry between the forces of good and evil where the outcome hinges on a promise made decades ago.



The award-winning duo, Sam Chou and Ellery VanDooyeweert, team up again for another animated thriller, this time delving into the turbulent origins of old Father Frost himself.

In The Heat is adapted from a 2008 short story by "Queen of Russian Horror", Anna Starobinets.

IN THE HEAT - TRAILER



Sam Chou - Director

[Sam Chou](#) is an award-winning series creator and director who hails from Ottawa, Canada. He graduated from Algonquin College's animation program and now calls Toronto home.

Before his animated films played at TIFF and Sundance, Sam was a traditional animator on feature films like *Osmosis Jones* (WB) and Adam Sandler's *Eight Crazy Nights*. He co-created and directed the web series [Crime: The Animated Series](#), which premiered at both Sundance and TIFF and won Best Series for Adults at the Ottawa International Animation Festival in 2014. Sam worked with Mattel in 2014 to produce the short film titled, [HE-Man: First Snowfall](#), which played at Fantasia International Film Festival in 2017. His last film, [VRDLK: Family of Vurdulak](#), premiered at Fantasia Film Festival and won the best Animated Short at FilmQuest as well the Audience Choice Award at Lusca Fantastic Film Festival.



Sam is the creative director of development Look Mom! Productions, where he oversees the production company's creative development slate, which includes animated fare for teens and adults.



Ellery Vandooyeweert - Writer

Ellery VanDooyeweert has written for and directed multiple animated series for Mondo Media including Master of Castles, [City in Crisis](#), and the Wrong Block. Over the last few years, Ellery has worked at Cinesite Animation as a development writer, and as head writer and head of development at Nitrogen Studios Canada where he has written for various projects including the children's CG series The Red Canoe and the animated feature Space Rabbits, Go! Ellery has also helped develop many other series and shorts for other studios and creators including the award-winning Writer's Duel and most notably his last short film with Sam Chou, VRDLK: Family of Vurdulak.



When not writing/creating, Ellery works as an editor, where he recently finished editing on the upcoming feature film, [Paws of Fury](#). Other editing work includes Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg's, R-Rated CG animated, [Sausage Party](#), Guillermo Del Toro's Troll Hunters, and MGM's [The Addams Family](#) where he won the Canadian Cinema Editors award for Best Editing in Animation.



IN THE HEAT

Creative Producers

ALJOSHA KLIMOV

MATTHEW LYON

ARON DUNN

Produced by

COURTNEY WOLFSON

JOSH BOWEN

CAST

Michael Dobson



as Santa
aka Father Frost



Giles Panton



as
Det. Harris



Josh Peace



as
Det. Bergh



Elley Ray Hennessey
Lovely



as Alice



Michael Cosh



as Lenchka



Julius Cho



as Connor Chu



Director's Statement

I recently told my two kids that Santa didn't exist. They had already suspected it for a couple of years. But after I told them the truth, I forbade them from sharing it with their friends/classmates. I told them that it's now their job to keep the secret for the other kids, the ones that still believe in Santa. There was an agreement—a social contract.

What if Santa works in a similar way? Santa is a legend for his tremendous generosity towards children, but what if there is some social contract underneath it all?

How do you feel about Santa?

I have mixed feelings about Santa. When I was 5 I sat on his lap for a picture. He asked me what I wanted for Christmas and I replied "HE-Man toy!" Santa then started digging in his red sack and pulled out a neatly wrapped parcel. "Here you go!" he said.

I was thrilled.

Until I opened it. It was a bag of oranges. At that moment I knew it was all a lie. The jig was up.

Fast forward to me at 14, listening to a sermon from my church pastor. I forget the context but I remember the pastor saying "If you rearrange the letters of Santa...you get SATAN!" I was shook. From then on, I viewed him as a commercialized figure used to promote consumerism during the holiday season.

In my twenties, I worked closely and frequently with ad agencies. I discovered that the economic cycle is designed around the holiday season to prolong and maximize corporate profits. That's when I also found the image of Santa that we know and love (jolly, rotund man with a white beard and red suit) was created and shaped by the Coca-Cola company. (thus confirming my bias)

Cut to me, with two young children, introducing them to the tradition of Santa, putting them on his lap for a photo, and watching them unwrap presents (from Santa) with sheer glee.

(with me feeling uncomfortable with the deception involved in perpetuating the belief in Santa Claus, but feeling the social pressure to "continue the tradition")

The film aimed to explore my multifaceted emotions towards Santa, his mythos, and consumer culture, with the ultimate goal of questioning the traditions that we have been taught to accept without scrutiny.

But why does he melt? (spoiler alert)

He is known as Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas, and Kris Kringle, but if you go way back in time, the legend of Santa has European roots and is entwined with Slavic mythology. In short, Santa is the evolution of the character Ded Moroz, or "Father of Winter", the bringer of gifts and good fortune to the children of Eastern Europe. Ded Moroz and Santa have a very similar appearance with their white long beards and Christmas-time gift-giving. But that's pretty much it for similarities because according to historians Ded Moroz is thought to originate from a character named Morozko, a winter wizard, or a pagan ice demon.

This was us highlighting and twisting the mythology.

Production Studios



Lakeside
animation studios

[Lakeside Animation](#) is a premier Canadian studio that specializes in developing content, offering pre-production and post-production services to our clients. Committed to

telling original stories in a variety of genres and perspectives, Lakeside is experienced in international co-production and has collaborated with studios all over the world.

[Look Mom! Productions](#) is a subsidiary of Blue Ant Media tasked with producing compelling animated content for kids, teens, and adults. At its core, Look Mom! believes in a creator-driven approach to developing and producing content. Look Mom! works with creators to facilitate a layered and collaborative process in producing content that engages and entertains audiences



METRAFILMS
STUDIO

[Studio Metrafilms Moldova](#) develops and produces feature films, author-driven series, and animated projects targeted at a wide range of audiences around the globe. Led by CEO Karina Kabanova, the studio's highly experienced producers create and promote animated projects for diverse audiences.



Art
FAQ
L I G H T

Is this film a part of a Series?

Yes. It's part of an animated, horror, anthology series called "RED IRON ROAD".

Canada is a mecca for Animated Children's Programming, how the heck did you produce an animated horror here?

This film/series is a response to the Canadian animation industry. We were just tired of people telling us we couldn't tell the stories we wanted to tell. Why are we limited to kids' shows? Animation is a medium to tell ANY story you want.

Animation is not a genre.

[Lakeside Animation](#)

Courtney Wolfson

Producer

[email](#)

Sam Chou

Director

[email](#)

