



THE  
MOUNTAIN  
IS  
ANGRY

# EVEREST DARK

THE DOCUMENTARY CHANNEL PRESENTS "EVEREST DARK" MINEMA TSHI SHERPA, CHHIDING SHERPA, PASANG TENZING SHERPA AND JASWANT DEV SHRESTHA AS THE VOICE OF THE FATHER  
WITH CELIN AGUIAR PROD BY ALAN FLETT JONI CHURCH DIRECTED BY KYLE SANDLANDS EDITOR/PRODUCTION DESIGNER ELIA SARKISY SCOTT SIMPER  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS IVA FISHMAN MERIT JENSEN CARR MICHAEL BOONARCHUK JEREMIE WATT JANEENE STAUFFER KURTIS STAUFFER SUE HOUGHTON  
PRODUCED BY ALEXA ROSENTHALER KYLE SANDLANDS WRITTEN BY JEREMIE WATT MERIT JENSEN CARR MICHAEL BOONARCHUK DIRECTED BY JEREMIE WATT & MICHAEL BOONARCHUK EDITED BY JEREMIE WATT

Manitoba TELFORD CANADIAN ROGERS Documentary Fund ROGERS OUTLOOK KILLBETT

PRESS KIT

# Everest Dark

Directed By  
Jereme Watt

Written By  
Jereme Watt and Michael Bodnarchuk

Produced by  
Merit Jensen Carr, Jereme Watt, and Michael Bodnarchuk

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## Logline

Famed Nepalese mountaineer Mingma Tsiri Sherpa risks everything to appease the gods of Everest and bring home a fallen climber's body.

## Short Synopsis

Mount Everest has become a graveyard strewn with the bodies of dead climbers. To appease the angry Mountain Gods, famed Nepalese mountaineer and national hero, Mingma Tsiri Sherpa, risks everything to return to Everest one last time and attempt to recover a body.



***“The mountain is angry.”***

– Mingma Tsiri Sherpa





## Long Synopsis

Mount Everest is no fairy tale. It has become the highest graveyard on the planet. Since Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay first summited Everest in 1953, more than 6,000 people have reached the peak with over 300 climbers dying in the attempt. To this day, around 200 bodies remain abandoned on the mountain, frozen in ice and snow. Tragically, one-third of those bodies are Sherpa.

Revered in Nepal as a national hero, Mingma Tsiri Sherpa stands among the best high-altitude climbers of all time. Over the years, he has led numerous rescue missions on Everest, sadly witnessing many climbers' final moments while surviving through many close calls himself. After the 2015 earthquake killed 21 people at Base Camp and nearly 9,000 others across Nepal, God visited Mingma in a haunting dream stating if he tried to summit Everest again, he would die there. Despite being two summits away from a world record, Mingma swore off climbing forever.

But when 15 more climbers perish in traffic jams high on the mountain in 2019, Mingma makes a fateful decision. The mountain has been desecrated. The mountain gods are angry. And the only way to appease them is to embark on a life-threatening mission with a small team of elite Sherpa climbers and attempt to recover a body from Everest's unpredictable and hostile Death Zone.

Oscar-nominated executive producer Ina Fichman (*Fire of Love*) teams up with veteran producer Merit Jensen Carr, writer/director/producer Jereme Watt and partner writer/producer Michael Bodnarchuk to tell the extraordinary story of Mingma Tsiri Sherpa in *Everest Dark*. The film pulls no punches as it explores the profound impacts of the climbing industry on both Mount Everest and the Sherpa people – examining their culture, lives, and future.

Mingma's mission is to expose the dark side of Everest, where increasing crowds and deaths highlight the life-threatening risks Sherpa guides face. Through his story, Mingma hopes viewers will come to respect the mountain and better understand the true cost of its commercialization.

## The Subject

Perhaps no other people on Earth are more closely associated with the highest point on the planet as the Sherpa. For Mingma Tsiri Sherpa, Mount Everest, which the Sherpa call Chomolungma, is a sacred and holy place. A home to the Mountain Gods.

Born in the remote Nepalese village of Beding in the Rolwaling Valley, Mingma grew up as one of nine children in a family struggling with poverty. Money was always very tight. But hard times forged strong familial bonds. While potatoes nourished his body, love for the mountains and the Mountain Gods nourished his soul.

But the mind hungers for enlightenment. Since there were no good schools in their village, Mingma's parents made the difficult decision to send their son far away to the monastery in Thame. Here, Mingma became immersed in Buddhist teachings and culture, soon blossoming into a devoted Buddhist. This proved to be a formative period in Mingma's life--the spiritual seeds were sown.

Mingma's early fascination with mountaineering began with his father, Nim Sherpa, who worked as a mail runner for Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay during their historic 1953 Everest first ascent. After four years at Thame, Mingma felt the mountains calling. He returned home where his father began to mentor him in the ways of the Himalaya. During an early trek, young Mingma ventured onto a glacier where he peered into a deep crevasse and saw the body of a dead porter. This experience changed Mingma in a profound way, forging a deep respect for the power of the mountain Gods.

It didn't take long for Mingma to gain work as a porter and ultimately he rose to become a rescue specialist and one of Nepal's most revered climbers. Mingma has summited Everest 19 times and, along with his six brothers, set a Guinness World Record for the most siblings to summit Everest. Mingma is also the first Nepali to climb the second highest mountain in the world: K2.

A series of deadly disasters in Nepal and on Mount Everest would shake Mingma's beliefs to the core. This deeply spiritual man became convinced that earthquakes and avalanches were the direct result of Everest expeditions disrespecting the mountain by abandoning their garbage and their dead. God comes to Mingma one night in a dream and tells him if he tries to climb Everest again, he will die there. Mingma immediately retires from climbing.

When Mingma makes his fateful decision to climb Everest one last time, his wife Chhiring is devastated and fears for his safety. But she shares his dream to restore peace to the mountain and for the first time accompanies him to Basecamp along with an elite team of Sherpa mountaineers and his beloved brother, Pasang. The mission is high risk. But Mingma must try.

## Director's Statement

I met Mingma in 2015 when he was first introduced to me as a potential subject for a sports documentary featuring an extraordinary athlete. Originally, Mingma aimed to break the world record for most Everest summits by one person. When I went to Kathmandu to film with him, however, the devastating earthquake struck, derailing that attempt.

Over five visits to Kathmandu between 2015 and 2019, Mingma and I became friends. I learned many of the achievements claimed by Western climbers on the world's highest peak would most certainly not have been possible without the help of the Sherpas. Despite their crucial roles supporting every Everest expedition, Sherpas are often overlooked. Sherpas also bear most of the risk: 1/3 of all deaths on Everest are Sherpa.



This realization drove me to share Mingma Sherpa's story from his perspective without inserting a Western climber into his narrative. Mingma graciously welcomed me into his family, trusting me to focus my lens on him as we journeyed through the Himalayan mountain ranges from Kathmandu to the small, remote village in Rowaling where he grew up.

During our journey, we stopped at monasteries where Mingma would pray and passed by schools where he wished he could have studied longer. We followed his path from porter to family man, all the way to his legacy as a successful mountaineer who has guided over 75 clients to the peak of Everest, helping them achieve their dreams. Mingma's dream has always been to honor this sacred land which has provided for him and his family. He now wishes to restore respect and dignity to the mountain he loves – a mountain the Sherpa call Chomolungma.

I hope our film will enlighten audiences everywhere to the complex relationship the Sherpa people have with Mount Everest. I am honoured to tell this story and at how much the Sherpa have embraced a climbing film featuring one of their own as the hero. Mingma's humility reflects what is most important to them: not world records, but rather doing what is right for the land they worship.

**Jereme Watt**

*Director, Co-Writer, Producer, and Executive Producer*



## The Team

### Jereme Watt

*Director, Co-Writer, Producer, and Executive Producer*

An award-winning director of film and over 150 episodes of documentary television for Discovery and History channels worldwide, director Jereme Watt is known for his focus and care in drawing compelling stories from complicated characters.

Jereme has over 20 years of experience in some of the most unforgiving environments in the world. Over the past 10 years he has brought his camera to Nepal and dedicated himself to filming the incredible mountaineer Mingma Tsiri Sherpa in his quest to bring his captivating story to the big screen.

Joined by Oscar-nominated executive producer Ina Fichman (*Fire of Love*), veteran EP and producer Merit Jensen Carr, two of the world's top high-altitude shooters, Elia Saikaly and Scott Simper, along with partner co-producer/writer Michael Bodnarchuk, Jereme has crafted a stunning debut feature documentary about one man's extraordinary attempt to recover a fallen body to bring peace to his beloved mountain and the Nepalese people.

### Filmography

- *Everything's Coming Up Rosie* (2009)
- *Gold Rush* (2021-2022)
- *Highway thru Hell* (2012-2024)
- *Rocky Mountain Wreckers* (2024)
- *Timber Titans* (2023-2024)

### Ina Fichman

*Executive Producer, Intuitive Pictures*

For 25 years, Intuitive Pictures has been producing award-winning documentary and fiction films for television and theatrical release. Led by pioneering veteran filmmaker, Ina Fichman, Intuitive Pictures is dedicated to producing quality documentaries, narrative features and interactive projects with international partners for audiences worldwide. Her latest production, *Fire of Love*, directed by Sara Dosa, was nominated for an Oscar and premiered opening night at the Sundance Film Festival. Other highlights include the feature documentary *VITA ACTIVA: The Spirit of Hannah Arendt*, *Game Fever* (Zed, France), *The Patriot* (TTV Films, Tel Aviv), *The Oslo Diaries* (Medalia Films, Israel), *Shekinah 2*, *Laila at the Bridge*, and *Inside Lehman Brothers*.

### Merit Jensen Carr

*Producer and Executive Producer, Merit Motion Pictures*

Over the past 35 years, Merit Jensen Carr has built her boutique company, Merit Motion Pictures, into a production powerhouse with a reputation for excellence and putting people first. Merit has produced a wide slate of internationally award-winning television and theatrical documentaries and is the proud recipient of numerous international awards including the prestigious HOT DOCS Don Haig Award for Special Achievement in Producing. Production highlights include *Kingdom of the Polar Bears* (CBC, National Geographic, France Television, Terra Mater Factual Studios); *Great Lakes Untamed* (TVO, Smithsonian Channels, ARTE, Terra Mater Factual Studios); *Turtle Beach* (BBC, ARTE, Blue Ant, CBC), and *Reef Rescue* (CBC, ARTE, Vulcan).

## **Michael Bodnarchuk**

*Writer, Producer, and Executive Producer*

Michael Bodnarchuk graduated from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology's film and television program in 1990. Over the past three decades, he has carved a niche as an award-winning storyteller chronicling the struggles of sometimes marginalized men and women as they battle against nature, society, and themselves. Highlights include *Polar Bear Town*, *Rust Valley Restorers*, *Back Roads Truckers*, *Gold Rush*, *Hellfire Heroes*, *The Brigade*, and *Ice Road Truckers*.

## **Kyle Sandilands**

*Director of Photography*

Kyle Sandilands is an award-winning Canadian director and cinematographer with experience working around the globe. As a cinematographer, he has contributed and lensed projects for Netflix, HBO, Discovery and CBC respectively, while as a director on his own films have been privileged to travel to regions around the world. Regardless of the project, the goal is always the same: to use bold visuals, strong characters and authenticity to tell great stories.

## **Elia Saikaly**

*High Altitude Shooter*

Elia Saikaly has participated in nearly two dozen high-altitude expeditions around the world, including 11 expeditions to Mount Everest with five successful summits – the most summits by a Canadian. His extensive high-altitude cinematography experience combined with his ability as an athlete to perform consistently in low-oxygen environments make Elia an asset on any extreme production.

## **Scott Simper**

*High Altitude Shooter*

Scott Simper is an award-winning Director of Photography in film and video, specializing in remote long-form documentary, adventure, natural history, science, and sports projects. He has worked on all seven continents, and is extremely adept at shooting, directing, and keeping everything working in remote and challenging conditions. A born adventurer, Scott is an accomplished skier, kayaker, and climber with several alpine first ascents. Scott has reached the summit of Mount Everest three times, won an Emmy for NBC's Ford Ironman 2011 World Championship, has been nominated for sports/camera Emmy's in 2022, 2017, 2016, 2012 and 2006. Scott won the Banff Mountain Film Festival Audience Award in 2005, 2006 and 2008 and 2020.







## **Al Flett** *Editor*

Alan Flett is a Scottish-born, Vancouver-based editor and story editor. A graduate of Ryerson University, he has worked in the industry for close to 30 years. Starting back in the 90s with music videos and indie features, Alan has cut more than 160 hours of programming, ranging from dramas, feature docs, TV docs, reality and unscripted. Al's work has been seen around the world with hit shows like *Ice Pilots NWT* and *Jade Fever* both sold to more than 15 countries. Other projects have screened at festivals including TIFF, Tribeca, Sundance, and Yorkton. Al has been nominated for Canadian Screen Awards and the Leos. His latest projects include editing the hit hybrid doc series, *Deadman's Cruise*. Alan has an interest in how documentary can blur the lines with fiction, and how real experiences can have a dramatic impact.

## **Joni Church** *Editor*

Joni Church is a Canadian film editor who has been working across the country for over 25 years. She moves comfortably between feature films, series television, and documentaries. Joni has edited the successful *Trailer Park Boys* series and movies, multiple award-winning feature films, and popular TV series such as David Suzuki's *The Nature of Things*. Her work has drawn critical praise internationally. In addition to film editing, Joni has given talks and workshops at the University of Manitoba, served as the Chair of the Programming Committee on the Board of Directors at the Winnipeg Film Group, and was the Supervising Editor at MTV Canada in Vancouver.

## **Colin Aguiar** *Composer*

Colin Aguiar is an award-winning, Indian-Canadian composer and was a musical prodigy performing at two and writing music at ten. He is known for his left-field approach to film scoring, and a specialization in unique scores and world music. He grew up living across parts of India, the Middle East, Europe and Canada studying the music of various cultures before writing music for musicals, theatre and film. His music has won awards the world over in New York, London, Italy, Barcelona, Venezuela, Calcutta, Nairobi and on almost every continent. He is the protégé of Oscar-winning composer, Mychael Danna.