



THE KENNEDY INCIDENT

Inspired by true story

Written and directed by Mart Sander

For Press and Media: Mart Sander, mart@martsander.com

TAGLINE:

A President. A Spy. A Whore. A Fatal Triangle.

LOGLINE:

Two young women, who operate as high-end call-girls, become embroiled in espionage with a young John F. Kennedy, visiting Estonia on diplomatic business in the summer of 1939. Romance, drama, and intrigue ensue.

SYNOPSIS:

In May 1939 the future president John F. Kennedy visits the capital of Estonia, Tallinn, accompanied by Irena Wiley, acclaimed sculptor and the wife of the US ambassador to the Baltic States. To keep the young man out of the reach of both German and Soviet spies – who often come in the shape of attractive girls – Irena arranges for a girl from an elite gentlemen's club to entertain the guest, posing as a niece of a friend. Things go from sweet to sour when the girl falls head over heels in love while another beautiful girl, on the payroll of the German Intelligence, is claiming John's attention.



THE KENNEDY INCIDENT is a 2021 feature film, based on the novel cycle *The Whores* by Mart Sander. This series of books (published since 2015) have become national bestsellers and are currently being translated and published in several countries. In 2018, the TV adaptation became one of the very few Estonian TV projects to have found wide international distribution (AKA *Madame K*). Currently, the series has the highest IMDB rating of any Estonian TV drama (8,8). It won *The Best TV Series of 2019* award on the Estonian Film and Television Awards (EFTA) gala in 2019. Season II (*The Women's War*) premiered in 2021 and became equally successful. This film is a prequel to the series.

WRITER-DIRECTOR MART SANDER:

"John F Kennedy has always had a special place in the hearts of Estonians, some of whom met him in the happy pre-war days. Years later, JFK recalled those days fondly in his address to the Estonian émigrés, who had lobbied for his election. This was a story begging to be filmed and I hope it will be considered my tribute to a great man who remained adamant the US would never recognize the Soviet occupation of my country."



SCREENINGS AND AWARDS:

World premiere: 17th February, 2021 - **Santa Fe Film Festival (USA):** Winner: Best Film.

Anatolia International Film Festival: Winner Best Feature Film

Europa Film Festival, Madrid: Winner Best Thriller Feature; Best Actress (Lisette Pomerants)

Swedish International Film Festival: Winner Best International Feature Film

New York Movie Awards: Winner Best Original Screenplay; Best Hair and Make Up

Sweden Film Awards: Winner Best Feature Film, Best Director Feature Film (Mart Sander)

Budapest Film Festival: Winner Best Feature Film

Venice TV Award: Nominee Best Movie

Texas Film Festival: Nominee Best Feature Film

THE FILM AND THE STORY BEHIND IT

In May 1939, three months before the outbreak of WW II, the future US president, John F. Kennedy, visits the Estonian capital, Tallinn, for two days. There, his path crosses with two very different girls – a call girl, who is willing to abandon everything for love, and a 'decent maiden', who is willing to sell out everyone.

The story is first told through the eyes of Monika, the call girl, who is only supposed to entertain the young guest, but who falls hopelessly in love. She permits herself to nourish hopes of purification through love, and is bitterly punished – a prostitute has no right to fall in love.



The second version of the story is told through the prism of Claudette, Monika's friend. She is initially asked along to chaperone Monika, but things take a different turn.

Even though Kennedy arrives in Estonia incognito, his visit is closely watched by Nazi German spies operating in Tallinn, a hotbed for espionage back in 1939. The son of the US Ambassador to Great Britain, travelling around Europe collecting material for his political study, possesses too much vital information for the spy ring not to close in on him.

When Claudette is approached by her former beau and his colleagues from the German embassy, she agrees to exchange her loyalty – both to her friend and to the guest – for cash.

The girls meet again a year later, on the New Year's Eve of 1940, and piece together the happenings of those days. Their respective versions are told through flashbacks to the spring of 1939. They both feel that they are unable to stop thinking of John. It turns out both girls had become pregnant, but whereas Monika has been persuaded to terminate the pregnancy, Claudette has become the mother of a boy child.

Indeed – as John F. Kennedy became the president of the US, many people in Tallinn recognized him. The agents of the KGB remained very attentive towards a young man, who was born nine months after JFK's visit and who was called *Jaak* – Estonian for *Jack*. He died young – like all the Kennedy men...

As a final twist, the story cuts to New York on that New Year's Eve. John F. Kennedy is asked about Estonia, but it becomes clear that the days in Tallinn – and the girls from Tallinn – haven't really registered in his memory of that European trip, which covered fourteen countries and included a great variety of girls, all smitten by the handsome youth.



Several scenes are filmed at the Palace Hotel's Kennedy Suite, at the top floor, where the future president stayed in 1939.

DATA:

Title:	The Kennedy Incident
Year:	2021
Writer:	Mart Sander
Director:	Mart Sander
Producers:	Mart Sander, Raivo Suviste
Production company:	Go3, FilMinistry, BEC
DOP:	Jaan Kalmus, Jr
Music:	Mart Sander
Production designer:	Mart Sander
Runtime:	101 min
Languages:	English, Estonian, German
Color / BW:	Color
Sound mix:	Dolby Digital
Aspect ratio:	1.85 : 1

MAIN CAST:

John F Kennedy:	Ben Walton-Jones
Monika:	Lisette Pomerants
Maali / Claudette	Britt Korsmaa
Madame Kukk	Merle Palmiste
Irena Wiley	Maarja Mitt-Pichen
Lem Billings	Max Marcq
Ivo Brockmann	Jaanus Nuutre



LINKS:

IMDB page: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12797976/>

Trailer on VIMEO: <https://vimeo.com/707574869>

Feature on VIMEO: <https://vimeo.com/469530727> Password: FilMinistry

Website: <https://www.filministry.com/the-kennedy-incident/>

REVIEWS:

By Nick Clement, on *We Are Cult*:

<https://wearecult.rocks/the-kennedy-incident>

By Jean Sulli, on Santa Fe Film Festival website:

<http://santafefilmfestival.com/index/film/the-kennedy-incident/>

By Raiko Puust, *KinoVeb* (Google translated):

https://kinoveeb-delfi-ee.translate.goog/artikkel/95064119/arvustus-mart-sanderi-kennedy-intsident-on-toeline-armastuskiri-spioonidraamadele?_x_tr_sl=et&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=et&_x_tr_pto=wapp

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Writer-director Mart Sander, a successful orchestra leader and a recording artist, composed several 1930s style songs for the film, which he also performs on the screen, together with his dance orchestra The Swing Swindlers.