



RESCUE DAWN

PRODUCTION NOTES

RESCUE DAWN

Synopsis

In the annals of history's great escapes there is no other story like that of Dieter Dengler, the only American to ever break out of a POW camp in the impenetrable Laotian jungle. After months plotting his getaway and a death-defying journey through some of the world's fiercest wilderness, Dengler appeared at his first press conference looking like a dashing movie star and showing neither sentimentality nor bitterness – simply an indomitable will to survive that allowed him to triumph against impossible odds.

Now, from legendary director Werner Herzog (*GRIZZLY MAN*, *FITZCARROLDO*) and starring acclaimed actor Christian Bale (*BATMAN BEGINS*, *THE PRESTIGE*) comes the incredible true story of a renegade who, from the depths of total darkness, blazed his own willful path to freedom. A blistering adventure and a stark epic of survival, ***RESCUE DAWN*** reveals how Dieter Dengler relied on the most primal qualities of evasion, endurance, tenacity and courage to find his way home.

Dieter (BALE) had dreamed of flying since his childhood in wartime Germany. The only place he ever wanted to be was in the sky, but now, on his very first top-secret mission over Laos, the ace aviator's plane is shot down to earth. Trapped in an impassable jungle far from U.S. control, Dengler is soon captured by notoriously dangerous Pathet Lao soldiers. Though he quickly realizes he is in the most terrifying and vulnerable of circumstances, he never gives an inch.

After a shocking initial ordeal, he is taken to a small Laotian prison camp, where he meets two American soldiers already held captive for a stultifying two years – both nearly broken in spirit. Duane (STEVE ZAHN) can only recommend keeping quiet to stay alive, while the barely sane “Gene from Eugene” (JEREMY DAVIES) insists they are all about to be released any minute now. But Dengler has no intention of sticking around the nightmarish camp, so he begins to dream up an escape plan that takes his fellow prisoners by surprise with its savvy and audacity. Dengler doesn't even know where he is – but he knows with unwavering certainty that he must not stop fighting for his life. As he makes his way into the jungle, his journey will never let up, as it takes him from the bonds of fraternity to the brink of despair, to one of the most remarkable rescues in modern history.

RESCUE DAWN is written and directed by Werner Herzog, who was close friends with the real Dieter Dengler. Ten years ago, while Dengler was still alive (he died in 2001 of Lou Gehrig's disease), Herzog made the acclaimed documentary, “Little Dieter Needs To Fly,” about Dengler. Now, he returns to tell more of the story in an epic narrative.

RESCUE DAWN is produced by Steve Marlton, Elton Brand and Harry Knapp. The executive producers are Kami Naghdi, Jimmy De Brabant, Michael Dounaev, Elie Samaha, Gerald Green, Nick Raslan and Freddy Braidy. Shot on location in the stunning jungles of Thailand, the film features a behind-the-scenes team that includes director of photography Peter Zeitlinger (*GRIZZLY MAN*) editor Joe

Bini (GRIZZLY MAN) and composer Klaus Badelt (PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL, GLADIATOR.)

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RESCUE DAWN

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

“I love America because America gave me wings.”

-- Dieter Dengler

RESCUE DAWN marks the first truly American film from internationally acclaimed director Werner Herzog. Based on the true story of the courageous POW escapee Dieter Dengler, the film once again takes Herzog on an intense adventure into the dark heart of human peril, but comes out the other side with a heart-lifting sense of all that is meant by duty, honor and triumph over adversity. Says Herzog: “Dieter Dengler embodied everything I love about America: courage, perseverance, optimism, self-reliance, frontier spirit, loyalty and joy of life. He was the quintessential immigrant into America – a young man who arrived with a great dream and came to represent the best of the American spirit.”

The story of Dieter Dengler has long had a grip on Herzog, the German-born director who has attained legendary status for his groundbreaking and unforgettably lyrical films -- both harrowingly truthful fictional narratives and mischievously inventive documentaries -- that have provided ecstatic visions of human reality. Earlier, he created an acclaimed, Emmy® nominated documentary about Dengler, **LITTLE DIETER NEEDS TO FLY**, in which the real Dieter Dengler, then living a comfortable life in Northern California (he passed away in 2001 after a final battle with Lou Gehrig’s Disease), looked back on his jungle odyssey with a gritty, astonishingly unsentimental yet emotionally stirring frankness. Though that film was an evocative work in its own right, Herzog says: “I knew in my heart the story remained incomplete.”

Thus was born **RESCUE DAWN**, the first time Werner Herzog has written a screenplay entirely in English and his first film working with major Hollywood stars such as Christian Bale, who is rapidly emerging as the leading talent of his generation. With this revisiting of Dengler’s story, Herzog once again finds himself in the ragged borderlands where truth and fiction meet – turning a true story that he previously turned into a documentary back into a fictional narrative that seems to cut to the core truth of human experience at its most intensified.

Herzog recalls first hearing of Dengler back in the 1960s, when he read of his remarkable quest for survival against all odds in the pages of a major German magazine. Even then, Dengler’s story resonated with Herzog, who was already pursuing the theme of heroic struggles in his early career. More than that, Dengler’s childhood eerily mirrored that of Herzog’s. Both were raised in

remote areas of Germany without a father – Herzog in mountainous Bavaria, Dengler in the Black Forest. And both suffered from starvation and deprivation in the harsh years following the end of World War II, leading each man down a different path, Dengler to become a pilot where he would be up above it all, and Herzog to become a filmmaker renowned for getting deep down in the visceral guts of life's most wrenching and amazing moments.

Years later, Herzog was approached to create a segment for a television show entitled "Voyages To Hell" about his own harrowing imprisonment in Africa. Not wanting, as he says "to circle around my own navel," Herzog decided instead he would do a piece on Dengler. Though he had no connection to Dengler, following a mere hunch as to where he would have wound up, Herzog found the former Naval pilot in the Marin Yellow Pages. After a brief meeting, at which Dengler expressed some initial hesitation about becoming the subject of a film, the film director spontaneously showed up on Dengler's doorstep with a film crew. This began not only their collaboration on *LITTLE DIETER NEEDS TO FLY* but a deep-seated and long-lived friendship.

"I truly loved the man," says Herzog. "Even now, when I get into complicated situations, I often will ask myself: 'What would Dieter have done?'"

Yet at the premier screening of *LITTLE DIETER NEEDS TO FLY* Dengler turned to Herzog as soon as the lights came up, gave him a meaningful look and whispered: "Werner, you know what? This is unfinished business."

It turns out that Dieter had held back some of his most revealing stories, especially regarding life in the camp – largely because he did not want to say anything negative about his fellow prisoners, and reveal the true tensions that developed among them in the camp. "Fact is they would have strangled each other in certain moments -- if they had a hand free," says Herzog, "but of course they were all six men cross-handcuffed with their feet in medieval foot-blocks."

Now, in hearing the tale anew, Herzog, too, saw it in a different way. He decided then he would return to the story – this time as a more epic narrative, one that would give audiences an entirely different kind of experience than the documentary, a visceral journey with Dieter as he is thrust headlong into the abyss yet emerges into the sheer euphoria of being alive.

Although the film takes place in what was to become one of America's most controversial and tragic wars, the story of *RESCUE DAWN* is ultimately neither about war nor politics. Dengler is celebrated not so much as an iconic military warrior as a man who represented the best of what humanity can be under extreme pressure. It is that central humanity, which motivated each of his actions, that makes Dieter a hero to Herzog.

"Dieter never wanted to be a soldier, his only dream was to fly," says Herzog. "He didn't want to go to war, but when he did, he was a good soldier. He was fair, courageous and loyal. When America gets into turmoil, one misses men like Dieter."

Yet, Herzog also notes that Dengler had a playful, maverick side and that he, not unlike America, was taken by surprise when his mission in Laos turned so devastating so quickly. "At the

time, there was no conception that the war in Vietnam was going to expand. But then, literally from one minute to the next, for both America and Dieter, everything changed and Dieter found himself in a world that seemed to be incomprehensible and that led him to the very center of his being,” says Herzog.

As relentlessly suspenseful and dramatic as **RESCUE DAWN** is, the film defies expectation in that it is completely devoid of blood and gore. Even in the POW camp, though it remains clear that Dieter and his fellow prisoners are being put through grisly tortures, the film never for a second exploits that for easy drama nor turns Dieter’s Laotian captors into simplistic villains.

“Neither I as the director nor the audience wants to see defenseless people suffering,” says Herzog of his decision to avoid unnecessary carnage. “I don’t like that kind of violence. And Dieter himself was very always gracious about his captors. In fact, he became fascinated by Asia and Asian culture throughout his life,” notes Herzog.

When it came to casting the film, Herzog took another unexpected turn – turning to a trio of Hollywood actors to portray the American POWs. “This story truly called out for young actors of great caliber to do it justice,” he says.

Christian Bale, who has already attained a reputation for fearlessly diving into the most demanding of roles, was Herzog’s choice to play Dieter. “He fit very much what I had seen in Dieter, and let’s face it, Christian is arguably the best of his generation,” says Herzog. “But what I love about the movie is that he is also part of a fabric of other very fine actors – Steve Zahn and Jeremy Davies. It is fine to be a Humphrey Bogart but you can only develop your best qualities if you have the right context and textures to surround you. And I think both Christian and I were privileged to work with the best of the best.”

Moving into surprising new territory in the film is Steve Zahn, the versatile actor who has become best known for his more light-hearted comic roles. Herzog, however, was impressed with some of Zahn’s earlier performances and felt he had what it took to embody Duane, the only POW to escape into the jungle with Dieter, and the man with whom Dieter would develop a remarkable and raw friendship as they spent nights huddled together against the cold. Says Herzog of Zahn: “I was always convinced that I would take the man to where he had never been before.”

Likewise, Herzog was impressed with just how far Jeremy Davies – who came to the fore as part of the ensemble cast of Steven Spielberg’s World War II epic *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN* -- would go to bring alive the role of Eugene DeBruin, the civilian who worked for Air America and whose final whereabouts to this day remain a mystery. “What a phenomenal performance,” Herzog says of Davies.

Indeed, Herzog says that every single performer in the film, across the board, matched his expectations. “From the Laotian guards to even the village dog, everyone in the cast was quite remarkable,” he says.

DIETER DENGLER'S ODDYSEY

In the winter of 1966, US Navy Pilot Dieter Dengler launched from the aircraft carrier USS Ranger in an agile Skyraider plane to fly along the tricky, sinuous border between North Vietnam and Laos. It was the very first mission Dengler would fly in Southeast Asia and it was about to become one of the greatest epics of survival in history.

When Dengler was shot down that day over the Ho Chi Minh Trail and his fellow squadron members saw the twisted wreckage of his plane, they knew his chances were grim. Dengler had crashed into a Laotian jungle sweltering with heat, teeming with poisonous insects and snakes, surrounded by unfriendly villages and ringed by utterly impassable limestone hills. Even if he'd managed to survive the plane's fiery explosion and the endemic dangers of the jungle, he'd be an immediate target for Pathet Lao soldiers, the local equivalent of the Viet Cong, who considered a captured American a rare prize. The facts were not promising – indeed, those few Americans who had already been captured by the Pathet Lao in the early 60s had not been heard from again. (To this day, about 500 Americans remain missing or otherwise unaccounted for in Laos.)

At the time, the United States did not even acknowledge that it was conducting military operations in Laos, so Dengler was literally lost to the world. No one knew where he was and no one was likely to even attempt to rescue him. He quite likely would have died there, if it were not for the fact that he took matters into his own hands – buoyed by an internal light no matter how dark the external circumstances.

Part of Dengler's defiant attitude towards his desperate situation – which put practical plans before fatalism at every turn – lay in his already astonishing personal history of survival, which began in childhood. Born in 1930s Germany, he had grown up in the remote Black Forest, amidst the horror of World War II. His father died fighting in Russia and Dieter's own house was severely damaged by bombs. Even so, Dieter became obsessed with the Allied Aircraft that buzzed his bedroom at night. Though he knew the planes he admired could easily kill him, they were so magical in flight that he determined he would do whatever he had to do to one day learn how to fly.

Later, young Dieter suffered terribly from hunger and bewilderment in Germany's grueling, surreal post-War conditions, but by then an unremitting determination towards survival had become deeply ingrained. He never reclaimed his childhood. By his teens, he was working full-time as a tool-and-die maker and blacksmith, beaten by his boss on a regular basis. Dieter was not yet an adult, but he had already seen the worst of humanity, which perhaps cushioned the shock of what was to come in Laos. He would later say that his experiences in Germany were his first lessons in survival.

Finally, at the age of 18, lured by the promise of an Air Force recruiting ad he saw in a magazine, Dieter arrived in America with empty pockets. He joined the Air Force right away, but as an uneducated immigrant, found himself not in pilot school but assigned to such mundane tasks as

peeling potatoes. Still undeterred, he worked his way through college earned a spot as a Naval pilot. In the Navy, he was known for his playful sense of humor— marked as a renegade from the start.

But once Dengler crashed he would have to carefully await his opportunities to use his maverick spirit. Now that he was the Pathet Lao's prized possession, Dengler was initiated into a daily ritual of interrogation and forced marches from village to village. Ultimately, he was brought to the a small prison camp where he was found two other American POWs – helicopter pilot Lt. Duane Martin and Eugene DeBruin, a civilian who worked for the CIA's covert airlines, Air America. Dengler was elated to at last have companions, but horrified by their deteriorated condition, and their conditioned fatalism about the future. From day one, he told his new friends that he intended to escape, and it was only their warning that it would be suicidal to do until after the approaching monsoon season that kept him there that first night.

Over the ensuing months, Dengler and the others were subjected to torture, hunger, illness and what by all rights could have been an overwhelming mood of despair. But Dengler never gave an inch to doom. He was simply waiting patiently to make his move towards freedom. Finally, in Summer, came the day of Dengler's long-awaited escape. In the ensuing hail of gunfire, only Dengler and Duane Martin managed to make their way into the jungle.

For Dengler and Martin, leaving the camp meant their troubles were only just beginning. Their feet were soon transformed to broken, bloody stumps and, already walking skeletons, they edged ever nearer to death, forced to rely on one another for the most basic yet profound of human needs – warmth, companionship and hope. They knew their one remote shot at survival was to craft a makeshift raft and float down the Mekong River towards Thailand. But the river, too, was filled with mercurial hazards, including raging rapids that nearly drowned them. After several harrowing days on the raft, Dieter and Duane found themselves near a small village. Unable to remain hidden, they were ambushed and Duane, after all that he had been through, lost his life there.

Dengler now struggled forth on his own, days if not hours from death, still forming SOS signals and hoping against all hope to be spotted by the rare US patrol. At last, his story took the turn for which he had persevered: a US Air Force plane flown by Air Force Col. Eugene Deatrick finally spotted Dengler. At first, Deatrick feared the figure waving and jumping frantically below might be a Viet Cong booby trap, but plagued by an instinctive feeling that the man was American, he called in a helicopter rescue, advising caution. The soldiers who pulled Dengler into their helicopter could barely believe what they found: a man weighing less than 90 pounds with a backpack stuffed with snake parts he thankfully would never have to eat for his next meal.

Dengler subsequently received the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism. He continued to fly, returning to America to a career as a test pilot, and though he crashed four more times, he continued to beat the odds, until he succumbed after one last valiant battle against Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's Disease).

“CRAZY OPTIMISM”: BALE ON DENGLER

To play Dieter Dengler would be to follow him into some of the most extreme human experiences – from enduring torture to eating snakes to jumping into rapids – while irreverently defying the clutches of death the whole way. So when Werner Herzog first approached Christian Bale he did so with a potentially ominous warning. “Before we entered into this adventure, I told Christian this role is going to be extremely demanding, very physical, and you will plow through the jungle like no man before you,” recalls Herzog. “Of course, he showed up very committed and prepared and it was clear that we both meant business.”

Perhaps fittingly, Bale originally read the script while he was literally at the ends of the earth, in Tierra Del Fuego at the southernmost tip of Patagonia. He thought he was reading it with a supporting role in mind, but when Herzog asked him if he would play Dieter, he was more than game. “Werner makes movies like he’s wrestling them to the ground,” comments Bale. “He has such great dreams and ideals and I wanted to work with someone like that.”

Despite all that the role would entail, it was Dieter’s overwhelmingly positive nature that initially drew Bale. “I never saw the film as being intense because Dieter is anything but intense. He’s the most unlikely of war heroes, with his prankster nature and his goofy grin. He’s definitely not your typical image of a Special Forces, eats-nails-for-breakfast tough guy. And yet it’s his crazy optimism that I think allowed him to survive and also to keep others alive,” he observes.

That notion of a fierce and wondrous “crazy optimism” lay at the very heart of Bale’s portrait. “I think you could take a lot of different people in the same circumstances as Dieter and it would all come out very differently,” says Bale. “I have to think that Dieter’s way of seeing the world was in part a product of his seeing the chaos of World War II through a child’s eyes. He developed that kind of tunnel vision that a child has, not needing anything except to keep going without ever stopping and that I think that alone can make you a fantastic survivor. I think it is that part of Dieter that Werner always found so alluring because of their similar background.”

Bale was saddened to learn that the real Dieter Dengler had passed away before Herzog had a chance to make **RESCUE DAWN**, but was grateful to have the opportunity to speak with Dengler’s sons, brother and ex-wife. The moving footage from Herzog’s documentary was also an invaluable research tool, as was Werner himself who had come to know Dengler and his stories so intimately. “I built a sense of who he really was, but as with any film character, there was also artistic license,” notes Bale.

Heading into the Thai jungle in a purposefully depleted state would also come to have an impact on Bale’s performance. But no matter what frightening scenarios Herzog painted, Bale was completely undeterred. On the contrary, the notion of an intensely physical, unpredictable production that would take him into the most primal of conditions exhilarated him.

“One of the first things Werner and I talked about was that there would be swimming in snake-infested waters and the eating of maggots – but that all sounded like a great opportunity to

me,” confesses Bale. “Werner never had to push me to do these things because I was happy to do them – and I would do it all over again. I think much of why I like doing what I do was represented by my experience on this movie.”

Naturally, Bale had heard the colorful rumors and stories about the various trials and tribulations of Herzog’s previous productions – particularly his volatile relationship with the similarly intense German actor Klaus Kinski -- but they did not concern him, and he formed his own quite different view of Herzog’s style. “Werner can be, I say *can be*, a gentle soul,” he observes. “I definitely heard all the stories, and quite enjoyed them, but not once did I feel that things crossed any kind of line. Werner cares a great deal and I think he is driven only by what he believes is necessary to tell a great story.”

Bale especially enjoyed the distinctively raw, spontaneous, unadorned atmosphere of Herzog’s set. He explains: “Werner is accustomed to living with the people he makes movies with – you’re all eating, breathing, and doing everything together, so that the entire project is an experience beyond the filming. There can be a great deal of intimacy in this case, whether it be fantastically happy days together or people losing their tempers and screaming at one another. It’s all part of the experience. The other thing about Werner is that he always seem to provoke, without intending to, a reaction from people. You simply can’t have no reaction to him. He’s a like a little tornado who sends people bouncing all over the place.”

In the jungle, where both cast and crew were frequently bruised and battered, Bale drew further insight into what Dengler must have experienced even after having escaped the POW camp. “I think the absolute worst thing for him must have been always hoping that freedom was around the next corner, but there was often simply new dangers,” Bale says. “Even worse, he and Duane literally found themselves going around in circles, getting nowhere, knowing the whole time that the end was very near.”

It was during these nightmarish days, that Dieter found himself developing an extraordinarily close friendship with his sole companion Duane – a friendship so stripped of artifice that it becomes one of the most moving elements of the film. Bale and Zahn approached the friendship as having less to do with affection than with raw need. “When everything becomes narrowed down to sheer survival, you don’t give as much of a damn about so-called dignity or pride,” comments Bale, “and you see everybody with their skin peeled back, completely exposed. It goes beyond whether you even like somebody or whether you would be friends under other circumstances. I think there’s simply a profound kinship that comes from sharing that life-or-death predicament, which is what existed between Dieter and Duane.”

In the end, Bale believes Dieter saw the jungle as having shades of both malevolence and transcendent beauty – because it was at once his trap and his salvation. “You can always see the jungle as either romantic or cruel,” Bale says. “If you’re faring badly, it can be quite a terrifying place, but if you’re Dieter and you see a helicopter up above, nothing is more beautiful.”

INTO THE MYTHIC JUNGLE: THE THAI PRODUCTION

Werner Herzog has long had a uniquely ambivalent relationship with the natural world in his films – exploring both its allure and its indifferent ferocity – and with jungles, in particular. His first foray into the jungle came with the internationally acclaimed *AGUIRRE: THE WRATH OF GOD*, the story of a mad 16th century adventurer in search of El Dorado. Herzog returned to the Peruvian jungle with *FITZARRALDO*, the tale of a rubber baron with an intent dream of bringing an Opera House to a remote area off a tributary of the Amazon.

Though Herzog has a clear fascination with the abject terrors and chaos of the jungle, he also has unveiled its mythic dimensions. Herzog once said: “The jungle is all about our dreams, our deepest emotions, our nightmares. It’s not just a location. The jungle is a form of our soul – fears and dreams, a fabulous, luxurious wealth of growth, forms and shapes. It’s a state of our mind.”

Naturally, the ordeal of filming in such remote and perilous locales has also resulted in Herzog’s reputation for productions that flirt with disaster. In this respect, and in spite of its Hollywood pedigree, ***RESCUE DAWN*** fits right into the legendary pantheon of Herzog’s films.

RESCUE DAWN was shot on location in the remote Northwestern Hill Country of Thailand, near the border with Burma, and an area known for its fecund beauty -- its landscape a thick, jewel-green jungle dotted with rocky hills and simple tribal villages, similar to that in which Dieter found himself after escaping from the POW camp. Luxuries in this location were notoriously few for the cast and crew – yet the primal conditions were also in keeping with the intensity of the tale being told. There weren’t even chairs, let alone trailers, for the actors. Instead, between takes, Bale, Zahn and Davies could often be found resting on the ground, sheltered from the penetrating sun only by the shade of a tree.

Each and every day brought new physical and mental challenges, as the cast ate slithery maggots, snatched real snakes with their bare hands, moved through the jungle in a deeply vulnerable state of bare feet and raggedy clothing and, during the rafting sequences, spent hours submerged in water. Cast and crew each gathered a growing patchwork of lacerations, bruises and mysterious rashes.

But, for Herzog, for whom filmmaking has always been a tactile, physical art, the more enveloping and true the locations, the better. Yet for all the natural challenges of filming in Thailand – which Herzog sees not so much as challenges as simply an organic part of the process of creating powerful imagery – real disasters were few in number. Herzog especially praises the Thai support for the film. “The crew was very professional,” he says, “and I can only advise Thailand as a location for filmmaking because it has such a wide variety of locations, a great infrastructure and very experienced crews. It was really a pleasure to work with the people there.”

Shooting in the Hill Country also enabled Herzog to film authentic tribal villages, largely unchanged from those that Dieter saw as a prisoner forty years ago. “The villagers liked that I wanted to show them as they really are,” notes Herzog. “No one is dressed up, they are wearing what they normally wear.”

The story of **RESCUE DAWN** was filmed entirely in reverse, so that the actors could arrive on set having lost, over a period of months, the necessary weight to convey their emaciated, indeed desperate, state in the POW camp -- then gain it back more quickly for the beginning of the film, when Dieter Dengler appears, just as the real Dengler does in vintage photographs, as impressively handsome and fit. Always true to his cast, Herzog dieted in solidarity with his actors, although he committed to only losing half the pounds that Bale, Zahn and Davies did.

When it came to the film’s powerfully imagery, Herzog collaborated closely with cinematographer Peter Zeitlinger, with whom he has made a number of films, including the acclaimed **GRIZZLY MAN** and his forthcoming film set in Antarctica. “What I like about Peter is his physicality and how he plows after the actors through the jungle. He has a great eye for storytelling and a great sense of space and physical intensity,” comments Herzog of Zeitlinger. “He’s also a very powerful man of great physique and a former hockey player!”

Zeitlinger further brought to the film his extraordinarily rare skill with hand-held camerawork. “When Dieter is walking through the jungle to the Hill Tribe villages, there is no Steadicam – it’s all hand-held camera,” notes Herzog.

Adding to Zeitlinger’s cinematography are the film’s opening images – stunning footage of bombs dropping on jungle villages, turning the lush green instantly to shocking phosphorescence. At once beautiful and harrowing, the images seem to establish, if only momentarily, a wider sense of scale before the film drops into the searing intensity of Dieter’s experience. The footage, which was also used in **LITTLE DIETER NEEDS TO FLY**, is public material from the National Archives, shot by the military for the purpose of bomb damage assessment.

“It is a frightening shot because it is so persistent,” Herzog says. “And we set it to very lyrical music – a wonderful, wonderful idea by composer Klaus Badelt to not make it into a dramatic kind of war movie scene but to give it a more poetic feeling, that makes it even more frightening.”

In its entirety, the gripping realism of **RESCUE DAWN** that draws the viewer into the core of Dieter Dengler’s confrontation with death was achieved without special effects or camera tricks. The only digital shot in the entire film comes early on: when Dieter is seen flying the skies over Laos with several other Skyraider planes, digital assistance was required because there remain too few Skyriders in existence to use real planes. But Dieter’s horrific plane crash was filmed authentically -- following three weeks of intensive preparation in Thailand. “What you see is a real fuselage exploding in the jungle and a real man flying through the air – there is nothing added and nothing taken away,” says Herzog.

With imagery so stark and palpable, the score by Klaus Badelt, one of Hollywood's most sought-after composers, adds an elegiac contrast. "Klaus immediately understood that it shouldn't be that kind of orchestrated, wild, battle music of war and action films," explains Herzog. "He proposed that there should be a poetic, lyric quality to the music, which actually makes it more frightening -- you frighten yourself by how beautiful you find it."

As with every other element of the film, the music only adds to the audience's feeling of being immersed in Dengler's journey – from its shocking terrors to its sudden outbursts of beauty to its inspirational outcome. Herzog summarizes, "This is very, very difficult in filmmaking, but I think the film maintains a very high level throughout. From the very first moments it lifts the audience into a different perspective, with an elevated heart -- and neither I as a director nor the actors nor the photography nor the music ever allows the audience to step down."

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ABOUT THE CAST

Born in Wales, **CHRISTIAN BALE** (Dieter Dengler), grew up in England and the US. He made his film debut in Steven Spielberg's World War II epic EMPIRE OF THE SUN. Bale's work to date includes HENRY V, THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY, THE SECRET AGENT, METROLAND, VELVET GOLDMINE, ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS, AMERICAN PSYCHO, SHAFT, CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN, REIGN OF FIRE, LAUREL CANYON, THE MACHINIST, BATMAN BEGINS and THE NEW WORLD.

He most recently starred in THE PRESTIGE for director Christopher Nolan and the independent films Harsh Times for writer/director David Ayer. Audiences will next see him in I'M NOT THERE for director Todd Haynes, and 3:10 TO YUMA for director James Mangold. He begins shooting DARK KNIGHT for director Christopher Nolan later this year.

STEVE ZAHN (Duane) has received critical praise for his work on both stage and screen. His standout performance in Miramax Films' HAPPY, TEXAS garnered him many accolades, including a Grand Jury Special Actor Award at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival, as well as an Independent Spirit Award for "Best Actor."

Zahn will next be seen in the comedy STRANGE WILDERNESS, a Happy Madison and Level One film for 20th Century Fox. Zahn was recently featured in Disney's animated blockbuster CHICKEN LITTLE and in BANDIDAS, opposite Salma Hayek and Penelope Cruz. Zahn also starred in Paramount Pictures SAHARA, and other credits include SHATTERED GLASS, DADDY DAYCARE and NATIONAL SECURITY. Also, Zahn had two major feature releases: John Dahl's thriller JOY RIDE, and Penny Marshall's RIDING IN CARS WITH BOYS.

Zahn provided the voices of "Archie the Bear" in DR. DOOLITTLE 2 and "Monty the Cat" in STUART LITTLE and the sequel. He was featured in Miramax modern day retelling of HAMLET opposite Ethan Hawke. Zahn received critical acclaim for his scene stealing portrayal of "Glen Michaels" in OUT OF SIGHT, helmed by Oscar winning director Stephen Soderbergh. His additional credits include SAVING SILVERMAN, SAFE MEN, YOU'VE GOT MAIL, THE OBJECT OF MY AFFECTION, and the feature adaptation of Eric Bogosian's play "Suburbia," reprising the role he created in the off-Broadway production.

Zahn's breakthrough performance was in Tom Hanks' directorial debut, THAT THING YOU DO! as "Lenny". A native of Marshall, MN, Zahn was first introduced to improvisational theater in high school. After completing his freshman year at Gustavus-Adolphus College in Minnesota, he crashed the audition of a local production of "Biloxi Blues," winning the leading role in the play. Following his debut, he trained for two years at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, MA, before moving to New York and being cast in Tommy Tune's National Tour of "Bye, Bye, Birdie." Following "Birdie," Zahn was cast opposite Ethan Hawke in "Sophistry" at the Playwright's Horizon. There he caught the eye of director Ben Stiller, who cast him in what would be Zahn's feature film debut, REALITY BITES. Zahn is married to actress Robyn Peterman and resides on a farm in the mid-west.

JEREMY DAVIES (Gene) made his film debut starring in David O. Russell's acclaimed Sundance Film Festival Winner, SPANKING THE MONKEY, for which he received an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Debut Performance. Davies' performance in Steven Spielberg's SAVING PRIVATE RYAN as Tom Hanks' interpreter Private Upham also earned him acclaim.

Davies' other credits include Steven Soderbergh's SOLARIS with George Clooney, Wim Wenders' THE MILLION DOLLAR HOTEL, THE LOCUSTS with Vince Vaughn, NELL with Jodie Foster, UP AT THE VILLA with Sean Penn, Jan de Bont's TWISTER, GUNCRAZY with Drew Barrymore, SECRETARY with Maggie Gyllenhaal and James Spader, as well as Lars von Trier's DOGVILLE and MANDERLAY with Nicole Kidman, Lauren Bacall and Bryce Dallas Howard.

Davies was born in Michigan and raised in Vermont, Alaska, California, New Orleans, Denmark, Mexico and South America.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

WERNER HERZOG (Writer/Director) was born in Munich on September 5, 1942. He grew up in a remote mountain village in Bavaria and never saw any films, television, or telephones as a child. He started traveling on foot from the age of 14. He made his first phone call at the age of 17. During high school he worked the nightshift as a welder in a steel factory to produce his first films and made his first film in 1961 at the age of 19.

Since then he has produced, written, and directed more than forty films, published more than a dozen books of prose, and directed as many operas. Some of his most notable films are GRIZZLY MAN, THE WILD BLUE YONDER, NOSFERATU THE VAMPYRE, STROSZEC, AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD and THE ENIGMA OF KASPER HAUSER.

Herzog will next be seen as an actor in Zak Penn's THE GRAND and Harmony Korine's MISTER LONELY.

Co-founder of Gibraltar Films, **STEVE MARLTON** (Producer) started his career in Portland, Oregon where he operated and owned some of the most notable venues in the restaurant/nightlife industry, including Stephano's and Rockafella's. After making his mark in the nightlife industry in Oregon, Marlton decided to move to Los Angeles to expand into big city nightlife and break into film production. Currently he owns Pearl, Sunset Beach, and just recently opened the new Hollywood hot spot Sugar. All are among the most successful restaurants/lounges/nightclubs in Los Angeles. Also expected in the near future is the highly anticipated MX, which is set to open this summer in West Hollywood.

Marlton formed his own production company, Gibraltar Films, in 2005, along with L.A. Clipper Elton Brand. Marlton's objective was not only to invest in the film business, but also to nurture new screenwriting and directorial talent in order to be able to produce truly "one of a kind" films. Films in pre-production include STRANDED, a thriller coming out in late 2007, and MAYDAY, an action movie of epic proportions. In addition, Marlton also served as producer for SOMETHING'S WRONG IN KANSAS, set to be released on video this summer, and as an executive producer on BOTTOM'S UP.

Co-founder of Gibraltar Films, **ELTON BRAND** (Producer) made a name for himself based on his skills and love for basketball; however Brand has another passion in film. His interest in films and producing has always been in the back of Brand's mind, but after meeting Steve Marlton and discussing the entertainment industry, the passion was pushed to a second career and in 2005 Gibraltar Films was formed.

Brand's impressive work on the court has been highlighted with many great accomplishments. During the summer of 2006, the LA Clipper All-Star was asked to travel to China to play in the World Basketball Championship. Brand won the Gold Metal at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games earlier that year he was named the Pacific Division winner of the 2003-04 NBA Sportsmanship Award, which is designed to honor a player who best represents the ideals of sportsmanship on the court. Brand made his first career All-Star appearance (first Clipper since Danny Manning in 1994) on the Western Conference All-Star Team during the 2001-02 season. That same year, he was named the recipient of the second annual Magic Johnson Award by the Professional Basketball Writers Association, awarded to the NBA player who not only performs at an all-star level on the court but also shows excellent media awareness off the court. After

leading Duke to the 1999 NCAA Championship game, he became the first Blue Devil to ever be selected #1 overall in the NBA Draft; that same year, he was named the 1999-2000 Schick Rookie of the Year.

In the spring of 2000, he started the Elton Brand Foundation, which is an organization that provides support to worthy causes in Chicago, Peekskill, NY and Durham, NC. He is also a member of the Clippers Reading All-Star Team and dedicated his time at A Place Called Home and Children's Institute International throughout the season, reading to children and informing them of the importance of staying in school. Brand also brings hundreds of kids to Clipper games during the season as part of his PlayerZone, "Brand's Bunch."

HARRY KNAPP (Producer) recently produced Daniel Sadek's action picture REDLINE. The film is an adrenaline rush featuring all of the world's super cars in a millionaire's high stakes gambling race, winner takes all. Knapp also produced JEFFREY, IT'S MY PARTY, THE EYES OF TAMMY FAYE, PARTY MONSTER and TRUSTING BEATRICE.

As the Executive in Charge of Production for World Of Wonder, Knapp produced over 50 hours of television for HBO, Cinemax, AMC, MTV, VH1, BBC and Channel Four in London. As a Production Executive at Republic Pictures, Knapp supervised several television MOW's and Mini-Series during the two year life of the company.

JOE BINI (Editor) is a filmmaker and editor working in both fiction and non-fiction forms. He has edited some twenty documentaries and four feature films in the U.S. and U.K. He is best known as having edited all of Werner Herzog's films starting with LITTLE DIETER NEEDS TO FLY and continuing through such films as MY BEST FIEND: KLAUS KINSKY and GRIZZLY MAN.

Bini studied filmmaking at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and was a founder of Outpost Film Center, a post-production facility in San Francisco. He has twice served as an advisor for the Sundance Film Institute's Documentary Lab Program and was a juror at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival.

PETER ZEITLINGER (Director of Photography) is an accomplished filmmaker whose career encompasses cinematography, directing, writing and editing. Zeitlinger first worked with Werner Herzog in 1995 when he was director of photography on the director's documentary DEATH FOR FIVE VOICES. That film began an intensive collaboration that has yielded such documentaries as LITTLE DIETER NEEDS TO FLY, MY BEST FIEND, WHEEL OF TIME and GRIZZLY MAN, as well as the drama INVINCIBLE.

Zeitlinger has been director of photography on some thirty feature and television films, as well as several television series. His credits include: the drama TUNNELCHILD, which he co-wrote and which screened at the 1989 Berlin Film Festival; the dramas ERWIN UND JULIA and FEAR OF THE IDYLL for Austrian director Götz Spielmann; and the documentaries THE CAMPAIGNERS and ANIMAL LOVE. He has directed 20 short and experimental films since 1988. His feature directorial credits include the dark comedy HUSBANDKILLERS and the crime drama CONCEPT OF AN ENEMY, both co-directed with Holger Gotha.

Zeitlinger was born in Czechoslovakia. He was not yet 10 when he left Czechoslovakia with his mother in the wake of the 1968 Soviet occupation. They settled in neighboring Austria, where Zeitlinger making 8mm films as a teenager. He studied cinema and television at the Vienna University of Art, and concurrently studied ethics at Vienna's University of Philosophy.

KLAUS BADELT (Composer) has written the music for over 25 major Hollywood Films including PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN. He has established himself as one of the most sought after composers in Hollywood. Badelt's approach generates original scores with an authentic production value, while maintaining the integrity of a film score. His devoted team spirit, in combination with his personal drive to explore new ideas and push the creative envelope makes Badelt a filmmaker who has distinctive music and intimate style, unique within the industry. His composer credits include CONSTANTINE, Chen Kaige's The THE PROMISE, THE RECRUIT, THE TIME MACHINE, K-19: THE WIDOWMAKER, NED KELLY, BASIC, ULTRAVIOLET, CATWOMAN, Werner Herzog's INVINCIBLE, and Wolfgang Petersen's POSEIDON.