

AMERICAN ZEUS

WORKING TITLE

The Rise, fall & redemption of
Alexander Pantages,
Theater Mogul 1867-1936



Presentation file

Documentary-fiction film 90' 4k usa/ch/greece
for movie theater, television, community TV.
internet distribution.

Pitch: Taso G.Lagos

based on his book AMERICAN ZEUS ISBN 978-1-4766-68.38

Executive production:

NZNTV noyauzeronetwork.org Geneva, Switzerland www.nzntv.org
association is registered in Geneva, Switz.

https://noyauzeronetwork.org/extract_che-240-664-762/

Director & producer: Pier Blattner

Co-production: open



We are in the early stages of preparation for the production of this 90' documentary film.

We're looking for co-producers, sponsors, institutions, medias to start researching, travelling, doing the necessary location scouting and collecting audio-visual material, archives.

Interested ? contact us at contact@nzntv.org

NZNTV StreetTelevision – noyauzeronetwork.org
CH-1207 Geneva

Pitch

Alexander Pantages, owner of the largest independently owned movie theater chain in North America, lies in a small bed in the Los Angeles County Jail Hospital, nine months after being convicted of raping a 17 year-old dancer in his company's headquarters in 1929. The tiny radio beside him crackles with excitement at the opening ceremony of his greatest creation yet: the Pantages Theater on Hollywood Boulevard. The film colony's royalty attend, yet he can barely lift his head. Yet, his mind is elsewhere: can his lawyers get a new trial to overturn his 50-year prison sentence?

"Pan" mythically reigned for a time. Born on a tiny Greek island, he ran away from home at nine, never to see his parents again. Two years on cargo boats, then two more digging the Panama Canal, where he caught malaria, convinced him there was a better way to make a living. He boarded a schooner to San Francisco in the mid-1880's. Dishwasher, server restaurant owner, even drug-dealer followed. He then found his way to the Klondike (Canada) in the late 1890s to seek a fortune in gold digging, but found it instead in entertaining the miners, setting his future into motion.

Movies appeared in the 1890s, but by 1900 they were linked to pornography. Respectable middle-class investors were repelled. This open the gates for immigrants – Greeks, Italians, Jews – to single-handedly establish by the 1920s one of the most powerful industries in the country. He was swept along but also revved up this revolution, the high-tech industry of its time. Silicon Valley was the burgeoning town of Hollywood with its lemon and orange groves and attractive actors from all parts of the planet. But a ruthless industry; few were as ruthless as the short, wiry Pantages with the stylish shoes from Europe.

He didn't invent the movie palace, but took it to another level. The Greek immigrant who could not read or write, but kept all the sales figures in his head, by the 1920s amassed a fortune worth about \$400 million in today's dollars building and opening **78 cinemas across the country and in Canada.**

But this "old goat's" roving eye for attractive young dancers led to one accusing him of sexual assault.

A sensational trial, in a decade of "trials of the century" followed. His career ruined, he conspiratorially blamed others for his fall. Egged on by anti-immigrant press, who turned the trial not just about a rape against an underage woman, but the very country itself, few were surprised by his sentencing.

Joseph P. Kennedy was considered the architect behind Pantages's ruin.



His story parallels a society in deep change – from rural to urban, from religious to secular, from native to immigrant, from farming to technology – like today's America. Split between contradictory forces, drowning in a sea of technological change, the United States then and today sits on a tinder box of inner conflict and repressed grievances. Pan was as much a proponent of the change in his time as he was its victim. That he spent his last few years of his life before passing in 1936 in obscurity reflects less his accomplishments than the power of social change to drown memories. He is erased from film history.

In the second trial in 1931, his conviction was overturned. Thinner, sicker, emotionally beaten into self-neglect, he reunited with his family and left the movie industry forever. He raised horses, spent much of his free time in racetracks. The once cunning businessman now found time to socialize with Greek Americans, who before he shunned. A circle closed; he returned to his roots, and we can only imagine as he lay on his deathbed on his last night on earth whether memories of his island roots came back to sooth his wounded spirit.

We'll never know. He was found dead the next morning.



William Randolph Hearst became editor and proprietor of the San Francisco Examiner in 1887, and by 1930, he had assembled a media empire.

Intention

Note of Taso G. Lagos, Autor & screenwriter

Even before I published the Pantages book, AMERICAN ZEUS, those who heard about it suggested it should be turned into a movie.

It was only by chance that I read an article about the screening of Pier Blatner's PERIPTERO: JE T'AIME MOI NON PLUS in the Greek Kathimerini newspaper and got into contact with him. (AIFF Athens International Film Festival, Oct.2023)

I loved the movie and we began emailing about films, particularly his new film SOME CINEMA IN THE CITY just released at the end of 2023. .

I suggested to him my book, which is the incredible story of Alexander Pantages. a famous Greek emigrant, a classic rags-to-riches story that caught his attention.

Based on his enthusiasm for it, and the possibility of making a documentary out of it, convinced me that he is the right film maker for this adaptation.

From his work I've seen, he has the film maker's vivid visual sense but also the reporter's truth-quest sensibility that combined produce wonderful stories and memorable imagery, I can't wait to write the screenplay.

We now work together on this project.



Note of Director & Producer



Perhaps you should talk about a film as you would a person. If you talk about it as a person, then a film can become your friend. That's the best thing a director can do, make a film his best friend.

Well, a friend would be honest, he wouldn't avoid important questions and above all he wouldn't bore us, maybe he could even be funny. But he'd have to be consistent, because when a friend constantly changes his mind, it's scary. Audiences like consistency, it reassures them.

For most people, life is brutal, dull and long. I'd like to be able to introduce a temporary diversion, to offer something a little entertaining, which might then change something or at least give them a good time. Then they'll like it. A film's dialogue should reflect the universal emotion and irony of everyday life.

The world is becoming increasingly visual. If you don't like filming, nobody will like your film. I can't teach you how to make films, but I can tell you what making films has taught me. One of them is that it's hard to come up with good ideas, you have to find them. And to do that, you have to go hunting for ideas. I've traveled a lot and lived many different lives. I spend a lot of time doing research to make up for my shortcomings.

I write down the ideas or formulas that come to mind, and store them before I need them. They lie in wait until they find their place in the story, in the script. Sometimes I forget certain ideas altogether and replace them with others. The more you work the more results you get. I have a vague structure in mind, like a group of free jazz musicians warming up before playing the first notes. They know the theme and are just waiting for a signal to start playing.

I really start when I see a track taking shape. Research first, then concept. Then correct and correct again to get to the point. I generally like my idea to be simple and familiar, but there are always exceptions.

Good directing is always, I think, preceded by reflection, but there can also be a flash, an unpredictable chance that turns the whole thing upside down. In that case, you have to be open to intuition. There are always moments when you learn something that will change the way you see things. Location scouting is always essential for the process,

You can't ride a film like a horse. You have to remain flexible and know how to adapt while maintaining your stability.

Biographies

Taso G. Lagos



Taso Lagos was born on the Greek island of Euboea and came to the U.S. with his family at eight.

He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 2004, where he also teaches and runs the Greece study-abroad program.

He contributes to The Seattle Times as well as co-runs a blog site, studyingabroadgreece.com.

His published articles in various journals involve research on early motion picture history, Greek-America, democracy and the Internet, social media and civic engagement.

Pier Blattner

Pier Blattner is a Swiss director/producer. After studying photography in Los Angeles, USA he was an set photographer on commercials in Paris while making two short films selected at the Locarno Film Festival and Swiss Television.

Then he spent twenty-five years at the head of Incisif communication agency in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 2006 Pier Blattner founded noyauzeronetwork.org (NZNTV Street Television) an association under the swiss law and registered at Geneva.

Pier is also registered with the Professional Register of Journalists and a member of the swiss Journalists Association «Impresum» (press card).

Filmography

PERIPTERO: JE T'AIME MOI NON PLUS (2023 documentary)

<https://vimeo.com/667097628> password: Athina8590 (screening at Athens AIFF 2023)

DREAM LIFE DIE (2019 documentary)

<https://vimeo.com/789931720>

VIRUS CHAT (2020 fiction)

<https://vimeo.com/573885501>

SOME CINEMAS IN THE CITY (2024 documentary) screening at Lemman Bleu television

<https://vimeo.com/857088566> password: PB4975

Rights

CONTRAT D'ADAPTATION AUDIOVISUELLE

NZNTV own from Taso G. Lagos the adaptation rights of his book for eight years.
[ask for .pdf](#)

Preparation budget

TRAVELS. LOCATION SCOUTING.....Euro 30'000

Greece. Egypt, USA (San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle)
3 months, visas, plane tickets, hotels, car renting,
accommodation, collecting audio-visual material and archives,
scans, rushes before screenplay and editing.

ADMINISTRATION NZNTV

Legal, petty cash..... Euro 5'000

TREATMENT by Taso G.Lagos..... Euro 5'000

TOTAL.....Euro 40'000
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