

KUNUK COHN PRODUCTIONS  
IGLOOLIK ISUMA PRODUCTIONS  
BAROK FILM  
PRESENT

A FILM BY ZACHARIAS KUNUK AND NORMAN COHN

**“THE JOURNALS  
OF KNUD RASMUSSEN”**

STARRING LEAH ANGUTIMARIK PAKAK INNUKSHUK NEEVE  
IRNGAUT UTTAK NATAR UNGALAAQ  
SAMUELIE AMMAQ PETER-HENRY ARNATSIAQ  
CATHARINE ALARALAK ABRAHAM ULAYURULUK TOMMY  
UTTAK APAYATA KOTIERK JENS JØRN SPOTTAG KIM BODNIA  
JAKOB CEDERGREN

CAMERA NORMAN COHN SOUND RICHARD LAVOIE  
DESIGN ZACHARIAS KUNUK LOUIS UTTAK  
CHARLOTTE BECH PAULOSSIE QUILITALIK  
COSTUMES MICHELINE AMMAQ ATUAT AKKITIRQ  
MARY QULITALIK SUSAN AVINGAQ  
EDITING NORMAN COHN CATHRINE AMBUS  
FELIX LAJEUNESSE

PRODUCERS NORMAN COHN ZACHARIAS KUNUK  
VIBEKE VOGEL ELISE LUND LARSEN  
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY

ZACHARIAS KUNUK AND NORMAN COHN

PRODUCED WITH THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION OF TELEFILM CANADA  
SODEC CTF QUEBEC TAX CREDIT DANISH FILM INSTITUTE  
CANADIAN TAX CREDIT NUNAVUT FILM NORDIC FILM & TV  
FUND GREENLAND HOME RULE THE NUNA FUND WITH THE  
COLLABORATION OF DANISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION  
NUNAVUT INDEPENDENT TV NETWORK  
WITH THANKS TO CANADA COUNCIL FIRST AIR  
AIR GREENLAND

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After completing “Atanarjuat The Fast Runner,” set in the mythological past in a community whose balance of life had not changed for 4,000 years, Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohn chose to depict a series of events that took place in 1922, when Shamanism was replaced by Christianity – and the balance of life was changed forever.

Kunuk was inspired to make the film for “a first audience that is Inuit: elders who are still alive and young people looking for a future beyond boredom, unemployment and suicide. It tries to answer two questions that haunted me my whole life: Who were we? And what happened to us?”

Cohn adds “If the Inuit of “The Fast Runner” ended up in church, then the Inuit depicted in the “The Journals of Knud Rasmussen” have ended up in today’s headlines, all too often living desperate lives on the margins of society.”

For the team at Igloolik Isuma Productions, the best result of making “The Fast Runner,” was that many Inuit in the community discovered great things could be accomplished today through the same collaboration and teamwork on which the very survival of their people had once depended. The central rule of life, anchored in collaborative community effort, had not often been demonstrated since the changeover took place in 1922.

Igloolik Isuma’s mission begins and ends with the community. Depicting the lives of ancestors of people who worked on the production recognizes, dignifies and honors people who had a good sense of the world and their place in it, and thereby draws renewed sustaining energy into our world.

***“We believe happy people should not worry about hidden things. Our spirits are offended if we think too much.” Avva***

The words of the last great Iglulik shaman, Avva, and his life story, were recorded by the Danish adventurer Knud Rasmussen on his 5<sup>th</sup> Thule Expedition across the Canadian Arctic.

Avva followed ancestral rules and taboos because they worked to protect human kind. They came out of life and were turned toward life.

SYNOPSIS

Iglulik, 1922-23. Real people, actual events.

The great shaman, Avva, and his family are living on the land some distance from Iglulik, his home community that lately has taken up the teachings of Christian missionaries.

Explorer/adventurer Knud Rasmussen pays Avva a visit, accompanied by two fellow Danes: trader Peter Freuchen and anthropologist Therkel Mathiassen.

Rasmussen hears and records Avva's life story and that of his wife Orulu.

Their son, Natar, impulsively agrees to guide Freuchen and Mathiassen north to Iglulik.

After a celebration, Rasmussen leaves to head west while Avva, facing strong headwinds, sets out with his family and guests en route for home.

His beautiful daughter, Apak, has troubling dreams about the road ahead.

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In an oral culture that never anchored its history with pen and paper, digital technology today affords new opportunities for storytellers. High-definition cameras are particularly well suited to the ancient art and values of Inuit storytelling, which invites viewers directly into a world of sentient beings – with no introductions – welcome to watch, listen and think for themselves.

## ABOUT THE CAST

**Leah Angutimarik**, who plays Apak, is a member of Artcirq and the Aqsiit Project, which offered circus training to young people. She has participated in youth training projects in art, dance and video. “The Journals of Knud Rasmussen” is her first appearance on screen. She is currently unemployed and lives with her family in Igloodik.

**Pakak Innuksuk**, who plays Avva, is a well-known carver and actor. He has played in the theater and several small film roles. He played

Atanarjuat's older brother in "Atanarjuat The Fast Runner." He is currently unemployed and lives with his family in Igloolik.

**Neeve Irngaut Uttak**, who plays Orulu, has worked as a television host and producer of weekly programs on Igloolik's local channel. She appeared in "Atanarjuat The Fast Runner;" and currently works as a postmaster for Canada Post and resides with her family in Igloolik.

**Natar Ungalaq**, who plays Nuqallaq, is a well-known carver, guide and actor. He played the title character in "Atanarjuat The Fast Runner;" and has had several other roles in major films, including "Kabloonak," "Glory and Honor," and "The Sleep Murders." He has also worked as a television producer and director; and coordinated a training project for young people in film and television production. He is currently working as a producer with Inuit Broadcasting Corporation in Igloolik.

**Samuelie Ammaq**, who plays Umik, is a hunter and outdoor guide for polar bear hunts. He played Atanarjuat's father in "Atanarjuat The Fast Runner" and lived in an outpost camp for fifteen years until he moved to Igloolik with his family.

**Peter Henry Arnatsiaq**, who plays Natar, is a well-known hunter and actor. He played Oki, the jealous rival in "Atanarjuat The Fast Runner." He also had a small role in "The Snow Walker." He lives in Igloolik and is currently acting in the new feature film "Before Tomorrow," on location in Northern Quebec.

**Abraham Ulayuruluk**, who plays Evaluarjuk, is a hunter and a great storyteller and singer. He played the wicked shaman Tungajuaq in "Atanarjuat The Fast Runner." Abraham is an elder who lives with his sons and grandchildren in Igloolik.

**Jens Jørn Spottag**, who plays Knud Rasmussen, worked extensively both as a stage player and director before appearing in films in the late eighties, including "Rami og Julie" (1988) and "En verden til forskel" (1989). In 1993 he was celebrated for his role in "Sort høst". He went on to star in the television series "Bryggeren" (1996). He has appeared in "Silkevej" (2004) and the very successful "Kongekabale" (2004). He was featured in a new stage production of "Woyzeck," with music by Tom Waits that premiered in Copenhagen in 2001.

**Kim Bodnia**, who plays Peter Freuchen, is best known internationally for his leading role in Nicolas Winding Refn's "Pusher" trilogy (1996-2005).

He has been one of Denmark's leading stage and screen actors since his breakthrough film "Nattevagten" (1984), which was later remade in Hollywood as "Nightwatch." Bodnia has appeared in "Bleeder" (1999), "I kina spiser de hunde" (1999) and "Den gode strømmer" (2004). This year, he appeared in Michael Knighton's UK production "Wicked" and Anders Morgenthaler's film "Ekko" for Zentropa Productions.

**Jakob Cedergren**, who plays Therkel Mathiasen, had a successful career on stage before breaking into the limelight in the television series "Edderkoppen" (2000). In 2003 he had major role in the feature film "Rembrandt." Cedergren has also appeared in "Den blå munk" (1998) and "De grønne slagtere" (2003). In 2005 he can be seen in "Bag det stille ydre" and "Voksne mennesker". Most recently, he has appeared in "Forestillingen om et ukompliceret liv," "Sprængfarlig Bombe," "POP" and "Offscreen." He was named a European Shooting Star at this year's Berlin Festival.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION TEAM

**Zacharias Kunuk's** first feature, "Atanarjuat The Fast Runner," won the Camera d'or at Cannes 2001 and Best Picture at Canada's 2002 Genie Awards. He is president and co-founder in 1990 of Igloolik Isuma Productions, Canada's first Inuit-owned independent production company.

In 1981, Kunuk sold three sculptures in Montreal and brought home the arctic's first video camera. As director in the Isuma production team Kunuk's credits include the short dramas "Qaggiq (Gathering Place)" 1989, "Nunaqpa (Going Inland)" 1991, "Saputi (Fish Traps)" 1993 and documentaries "Nipi (Voice)" 1999, "Nanugiurutiga (My First Polar Bear)" 2001 and "Kunuk Family Reunion" 2004. Isuma's 13-part series "Nunavut (Our Land)" 1995 was broadcast on Bravo! and selected for exhibition at Dokumenta 11 in 2002.

Isuma's collective work for the past twenty years has been showcased at numerous festivals and museums in sixteen countries with personal presentations at National Gallery of Canada, New York's Museum of Modern Art, among many others. He is presently completing his latest documentary, "Kiviaq versus Canada," set to air on The History Channel/Canada in the fall. Kunuk is winner of the National Arts Award,

National Aboriginal Achievement Award and in 2005 was awarded the Order of Canada.

**Norman Cohn** is secretary-treasurer and co-founder of Igloolik Isuma's collective. Living since 1985 both in Igloolik and Montreal, Cohn developed with Zacharias Kunuk, elder Pauloosie Qulitalik and the late Paul Apak, Isuma's signature style of "re-lived" cultural drama, combining the authenticity of modern video with the ancient art of Inuit storytelling. Has been producer and director of photography for "Atanarjuat The Fast Runner," "Nunavut (Our Land)" and the rest of Isuma's collective videography. Before coming to Igloolik Cohn was a widely exhibited video artist. The solo exhibition, *Norman Cohn: Portraits*, opened in 1983 at Toronto's Art Gallery of Ontario, National Gallery of Canada, Vancouver Art Gallery and other Canadian museums, and Cohn's 1987 experimental feature documentary "Quartet for Deafblind" was selected for Dokumenta 7. Winner of a 1990 Guggenheim Fellowship and numerous Canada Council Awards, Cohn was co-winner with Kunuk of the 1994 Bell Canada Award for Outstanding Achievement in Video Art.

Co-Producer **Vibeke Vogel**'s interest in video art led her to the position of managing the Video Gallery in Copenhagen (1989-92), where she built up the gallery's collection of video art and also produced a number of festivals, exhibitions and workshops about art and the new media.

She has directed and produced documentaries, but also music videos and interactive media, among them award winning "Talk Like Whales," "8 Minutes Grandma" and "The Collectors". She joined Barok in August of 2000. Among the films she has produced at the company are Max Kestner's award winning animated documentary "Max By Chance," Anne Wivel's feature length documentary "The Land of Human Beings" and the dance film series "Moving North." She is a graduate of the Department of Film and Media, at Copenhagen University, 1989.

In the autumn of 2006, Vibeke Vogel is launching the new company Palomar Productions together with Elise Lund Larsen. The aim of the company is to produce innovative and original documentary and fiction films for an international audience.

Co-Producer **Elise Lund Larsen** completed her education at The National Film School of Denmark in the summer of 2003 by producing the film "The Pact," written and directed by Heidi Maria Faisst, which was selected for the Cannes Festival's competition for film school productions and the short film competition at Sundance 2004. Elise joined Barok Film right after the Film

School. Among others, she produced Max Kestner's award winning animated documentary, "Max By Chance", "The Silk Route" a feature film directed by the highly-acclaimed director, Jytte Rex, and post produced ", Anne Wivel's feature length documentary, "The Land of Human Beings." She has also produced several documentaries to be released in autumn 2006.

In the autumn of 2006, Elise Lund Larsen is launching the new company Palomar Productions together with Vibeke Vogel.

For more information about the production, please visit the Live From the Set pages at [www.isuma.ca](http://www.isuma.ca).

Running Time: 112 minutes

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