

# 'The Judgement' a thought provoking movie from the Netherlands



Photo provided

By Sophie Braccini

Based on a true story still unraveling today, the movie presented in Orinda this month, "The Judgement (De veroordeling)," is a thriller/drama that will provoke reflection on our celebrity and social media driven society.

The Deventer's murder story, named after the city where it happened, has been in the news in the Nether-

lands for over 20 years. But the truth might be so hard to get at that by the end of "The Judgement," spectators might have divergent opinions on who did it. Beyond the pure murder mystery, the film exposes a chilling and shattering aspect of our time: how a celebrity can overcome the police and judicial systems and lead a real witch hunt. It was the first time in the Netherlands that people in the media were able to spread a

conspiracy theory denying facts twice acknowledged by the judicial system.

Journalist Bas Haan had no idea what can of worms he was opening when he started digging into the clues that led to a guilty verdict against Ernest Louwes for the murder of Jaqueline Wittenberg. At first, he just tried to prove that an innocent man had been sent to jail. But his honest and good intended quest got hijacked by Maurice de Hond, a

pollster, entrepreneur and TV-personality, who started a highly mediated crusade not only to free Louwes, but turned the spotlight on another person with no real proof or investigation. That person, Michaël De Jong, claimed his innocence with Haan's support. But his claims remained inaudible, deafened by the media circus conjured by de Hond.

Even if this story was pure fiction, it would still be sad: the lives of two families are shattered, either by police incompetence, or by the selfishness of a group of people with ulterior motives and no decency.

The scenario is complex and it is a bit difficult to follow the storyline at the beginning of the movie, especially for those who do not speak Dutch and have to read the subtitles. But it is worth sticking with it as everything falls into place and the magnitude of the drama is explored.

The cinematography is in keeping with the story: edgy, dark and contrasted. The fast rhythm and the excellent acting make this thrilling movie excellent entertainment. To the American viewer, the cultural differences between the

Netherlands and the U.S. are interesting to observe and ponder, such as the sentence of 12 years of imprisonment given for first degree murder.

The movie is based on a book written by Haan, the journalist who is one of the story's protagonists. It is his version that is mostly presented here, but there are others. For example, Dutch philosopher of science Ton Derksen published a book in which he defends Louwes' innocence.

The movie was awarded the Grand Jury Prize at the 2020 Seattle Film Festival and six awards in the World Competition, including Best Director for Sander Burger; Outstanding Male Performance to Fedja van Huêt as Haan; Best Supporting Actor to Yorick van Wageningen as De Jong; Best Supporting Actress to Lies Visschedijk as as Meike Wittermans; and Best Screenplay adapted from a novel. The showing at the Orinda Theatre is a first in the U.S. to a general audience.

"The Judgement" opens in Orinda on April 15 for at least one week. For further information including tickets, check the website at [www.internationalshowcase.org](http://www.internationalshowcase.org)

# Three Campolindo Odyssey of the Mind teams advance to World Competition



First team members are: (back row) El Reid, Claire Damiano, Sol Dente, Nina Damiano, and (front row) Lily Thomas and Valerie Yarve.

Submitted by Rich Render

Three teams of Campolindo students who compete in Odyssey of the Mind under the Moraga Rotary name, their sponsor, will advance from State to World Championships at Iowa State University. The team coached by Cynthia Manji won first place and also the Ranatra Fusca Award, one of the highest awards you can receive in Odyssey, for their presentation that was described as high risk and completely novel unlike any other machine.

Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem-solving program for K-12 kids that engages students in their learning by encouraging them to think outside the box. Teams made up of 5-7 members have to solve problems (anything from building vehicles to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics) and present their solution to the problem to judges in an 8-minute skit.

Since 2005, Moraga Rotary Club has sponsored the international

Odyssey of the Mind team competitions, held every year beginning in September and completing in May at the World Odyssey Championships. This year, Moraga Rotary sponsored eight teams from grades K through 12, who competed in February at the Bay Regional Tournament, and the three Campolindo High School teams advanced to the NorCal State Tournament. The teams were supported by Student Leader Amrita Malhotra.

The first team coached by Kathi Dente had to create an 8-minute musical about an unsung historical figure. They chose the actor, Edwin Booth, the brother of John Wilkes Booth. He was the most famous actor of the era. His career and fame were cut short by the infamy of his brother.

The second team coached by Cynthia Manji took on the problem to create a performance that includes one or more team-created vehicles that will help a group of characters escape an unusual room. The vehicles must travel to areas within the room and complete tasks that releases a "clue"



Second team members, from left: Brendan Tonomura, Liv House, Marshall Franklin, Henry Franklin, Tae Woo Kim, and Daniel Granicher.

that allows the group to escape the room. The team set high goals for themselves to improve their vehicles' performances in time for the State Tournament.

The third Campolindo team coached by Sandra Franklin and Raphaelle Wirstrom also had to create an 8-minute musical about an unsung historical figure. This is their sixth year competing in Odyssey as a team. They have been to the State Tournament three times and have qualified for World Competition three times as well. The team tied for second place and this will be their first time actually attending the World Tournament in person, so they are super excited!



Photos provided

Third team members: Hannah Cheng, Grace Franklin, Maureen Kang, Ben Tallon, Sofia Thomas, Kylie Wang, and Viggo Wirstrom.

Moraga Rotary is a community service organization that meets every Tuesday at noon at La Finestra Restaurant. Guests and visitors are welcome.

## Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

**Community Service:** We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

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### OTHER

**Green Sofa Cinema Series** and Sustainable Contra Costa present "Our Planet: Too Big to Fail," a short film that explores the connection between the financial system and the health of our planet. Learn how to align your savings with your values and invest in building a sustainable and thriving future at the free online speaker event on April 20, 7 to 8 p.m. Watch the film on YouTube and register at [\[coco.org/calendar\]\(http://coco.org/calendar\) for the event.](https://sustainable-</a></p></div>
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**Paymun Real estate & Development** in collaboration with city of Orinda and Taste of the World Market food trucks is organizing a community fundraiser to benefit the people of Ukraine on Thursday, April 21 from 5 to 7 p.m. in front of the Orinda Library. Bring the family to enjoy the fun activities planned and reconnect with the community for this important cause.

**The Lafayette Community**

**Garden and Outdoor Learning Center** invites you to view the Award-Winning Film: FANTASTIC FUNGI!. Saturday, April 23 at 7 p.m. Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. The viewing is free and will be followed by discussion led by LCG and OLC mycologist Charlie Newton.

**45th Annual Science Day of Discovery** on May 7, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Make a volcano explode, shoot a rocket, make slime, dig for dinosaur bones and test your senses! These are just a few of the many hands-on activities at

the 45th annual Lafayette Nursery School Science Day. The experiments are designed for children preschool age through third grade. It's a great experience for the whole family. Proceeds are donated to a local math or science-based charity. Cost: \$5 per child. Lafayette Nursery School, 979 First Street, Lafayette. 925-284-2448 or [www.lafayettenurseryschool.org](http://www.lafayettenurseryschool.org)

### GARDEN

**Lafayette Garden Club** monthly program April 14, 10 a.m. in the Veterans Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo

Blvd., Lafayette. Our guest speaker will be Nate Bradley, owner of Amphora Nueva in Lafayette. Amphora is a family owned and operated olive oil and balsamic vinegar company with roots in the olive industry for nearly 100 years, with tasting rooms/retail stores throughout the Bay Area. Nate will be enlightening us about olives and bringing a variety of Amphora's specialty olive oils for us to taste. It is free to attend. If interested please contact membership@famsf.org for more information.