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## An Ambiguous Report About the End of the World

*Nejasna Zprava o Konci Sveta*

**CZECH REPUBLIC** 1997, 138 min.

**DIR** Juraj Jakubisko

**PROD** Deana Jakubisková **SCR** Juraj Jakubisko **CAM** Jan Duris **ED** Ludek Hudec **CAST** Deana Horvathová, Milan Bahul, Joachim Kemmer, Klára Issová

One of Central Europe's most acclaimed and controversial filmmakers, Juraj Jakubisko (SFIFF tribute 1991), a Slovak now working in the Czech Republic, returns from a five-year hiatus with a bizarre, torrential allegory of the twentieth century. *An Ambiguous Report About the End of the World* is set in an isolated mountain village near either the beginning—or the end—of the world. Spun between an ethnographer's studied vision and a drunkard's fever dream, the film simultaneously embraces and destroys the costume drama genre, fusing gorgeous backdrops of folklore and tradition onto contemporary scenes of passion and catastrophe. The idyllic, unspoiled village is attacked by hordes of wolves in one scene, government assault helicopters in another. Circus women arrive in horse-drawn carriages, then drag race through the narrow streets on revved-up motorcycles. Roses bloom in serene valleys, only to be decapitated by automatic rifle fire. A drunken priest and a dwarf fight over the tallest woman on earth, and a doe-eyed peasant heroine falls for a leather-jacketed, cocaine-snorting smuggler. Hailed as the Slovakian Fellini (a slightly messier Fellini: shirt untucked and dirtied, eyes twitching), Jakubisko has created a lush and surreal folk epic of cruelty and thwarted love. Culled from a six-hour Czech TV version, the film's singular, unforgettable images point directly to either the beginning—or the end—of the future.

*Jason Sanders*

*Selected Filmography:* Juraj Jakubisko (b. Kojsov, Czechoslovakia, 1938) *The Feather Fairy* (1986, SFIFF 1991), *The Millennial Bee* (1984, SFIFF 1991), *Birds, Orphans and Fools* (1969, SFIFF 1991), *Deserters and Nomads* (1968)