



A BASE JUMPER'S MIND

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A BASE Jumper's Mind – A Tribute to the Dream of Flying – David Durstberger's Fascinating Documentary Film

The 48-minute documentary *A BASE Jumper's Mind* offers a captivating insight into the world of BASE jumpers—individuals who leap from cliffs, buildings, and bridges to live the dream of flying for just a few seconds. “Through this film, we aim to share not just the thrilling visuals, but the humanity behind the jumps—the emotions, the struggles, and the passion that fuel these incredible individuals,” says director David Durstberger. But the story behind the making of this film is just as fascinating as the jumps themselves.

A Spark of Inspiration Ignites the Idea

In 2012, in St. Pölten, Austria, David Durstberger was in his second year of Media Technology studies with a focus on audio and video production at the University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten. As a skydiver, paraglider, slackliner, and climber, he was well-versed in extreme sports. However, a conversation with his friend and fellow skydiver Christian Müller, who aspired to become a BASE jumper, sparked a new idea. Fascinated by Christian's passion, David began delving deeper into the world of BASE jumping. It was fundamental questions that inspired the idea for *A BASE Jumper's Mind*: Who are these individuals who risk their lives to jump? What drives them, and how do they overcome the ever-present fear? What does this dangerous sport mean to them?

The First Steps: A Pilot Project as a Milestone

The first connection to the BASE jumping community was established when David and Christian met Cameron Tracey, an Australian BASE jumper willing to participate in a pilot project. The short film *Out on a Ledge* documented Cameron's jump in the Höllental, Lower Austria. The film's success—it was broadcast on German television and screened at the Bergfilmfestival in Cinema Paradiso in St. Pölten—motivated the team to seriously pursue the idea of a documentary.

From South Tyrol to France: Vincent Descols and the Magic of Wingsuit Flying

During their research, David and Christian came across Vincent Descols, one of the world's top wingsuit BASE jumpers. Vincent, known for his daring flights just a few meters above the ground, immediately captivated the team. Their first meeting in the Dolomites of South Tyrol marked the beginning of an intense collaboration. Initially skeptical, Vincent gradually opened up and shared his emotional and personal experiences. Together, they filmed jumps and interviews that delved deep into Vincent's life

as a BASE jumper. Soon, Vincent invited David to France, where they continued filming in Grenoble, Devolui, and Chamonix. David lived in Vincent's garden during this time, sleeping in his camper van and carrying film equipment—including a custom-built, four-kilogram camera crane—up the mountains on foot. Particularly impressive were the shots David captured with his paraglider, documenting spectacular moments from the air as the BASE jumpers flew past him.

Meeting a Legend: Matt Gerdes

A highlight of the filming process was meeting Matt Gerdes, CEO of Squirrel, one of the leading manufacturers of wingsuits. Matt is a legend in the BASE jumping community and the author of the definitive guide *The Great Book of BASE*. Having read and admired this book multiple times, David was thrilled and awestruck to meet Matt in Bex, Switzerland.

The interview with Matt provided valuable insights into the technical and emotional aspects of BASE jumping and its philosophical dimensions. For David, the conversation was a personal milestone that enriched his film.

Setbacks: The Dark Hours of Production

The filming process was not without setbacks. In France, David's car was broken into, and nearly all his film equipment was stolen. For two days, David was devastated but decided to buy new equipment and continue the project. Another blow occurred at the Eiger North Face, where David was filming a jump with an English film crew. One of his cameras fell unsecured from an exposed ledge—a further loss for the already tight production budget. However, a BASE jumper from the team generously lent David a camera, allowing the work to continue.

Lauterbrunnen: The “Mecca of BASE Jumping”

One of the most memorable moments of the production was filming in Lauterbrunnen, the “Mecca of BASE jumping.” Here, David met Chris McDougall, another legend in the scene, as well as BASE jumper Justine Pyott. Together, they created stunning interviews and jump sequences, including the famous “Sputnik” jump through a narrow rock gorge in Walenstadt.

Post-Production: A Decade of Challenges

After intense filming, post-production was delayed as David focused on building his company, Magma-tic Films. It wasn't until 2024, more than ten years after the project began, that he resumed editing the film. Despite the long pause, he managed to preserve the original vision of the documentary.

Music: An Emotional Soundscape for the Highs and Lows of Flight

The film's music plays a crucial role in *A BASE Jumper's Mind*. David enlisted Florian Schmidl, a friend and talented musician, to record exclusive guitar and vocal tracks. The music was further enriched by David's own compositions, a piece by Christian Hölzel—a relative of the famous Austrian musician Falco—and contributions from other artists.

2025: The Launch of the Documentary

In 2025, A BASE Jumper's Mind will finally be released. The film is more than a documentary—it is an emotional portrait of individuals who live their dream of flying. David Durstberger not only showcases the spectacular jumps but also captures the humanity and unbridled passion behind the extreme sport.

FILM DETAILS

Titel: A BASE Jumper's Mind

Length: 48 minutes

Language: Englisch

Director: David Durstberger

Production: Magmatic Films

Featuring: Vincent Descols, Chris McDougall, Matt Gerdes, Justine Pyott, Fabian Equey, Zak Tessier, and others.

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