

# Press Kit

## *Lie to Me*

GENRE/FORMAT

Feature Documentary / 94' / 52' minutes

Investigative / Society & Politics

LANGUAGE

English



Laurels



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CPH:DOX

F:ACT Award Competition

International Premiere

## Screenings in Copenhagen

### Screening 1 EMPIRE BIO

**MON 18 MAR 2024** 16:30 – 18:35

+

**Talk:** Meet the man who exposed an international crypto scandal

Multi-million dollar scams in various cryptocurrency adventures. How can this happen again and again? Is there a future for cryptocurrency trading that isn't tainted by tech opportunists ready to empty out our pockets?

Join us for a conversation with Norwegian Blockchain investigator Bjørn Bjercke and the film's director Bår Tyrmi and producer Dag Mykland. The conversation will be moderated by tech expert and consultant at Global Focus, Henrik Chulu.

Before the film, there will be a free beer (w/o alcohol) from To Øl.

Language: English

### Screening 2 DAGMAR TEATRET

**THU 21 MAR 2024** 19:00 – 20:35

Tickets

<https://cphdox.dk/film/lie-to-me/>

### Logline

Some scams are just too good to be true

### Very Short Synopsis

'Lie to Me' is the story of how tech nerd and blockchain expert Bjørn Bjercke overturned the OneCoin pyramid scheme – the biggest Crypto fraud in history.

## Short Synopsis

1

OneCoin launched in 2014 and was named the BitCoin Killer. Anyone could become a crypto-billionaire overnight! But OneCoin is not a cryptocurrency. It's the biggest crypto scam in history and the man who took them down is the Norwegian Bjørn Bjercke. Despite arrests, murders, and lies, the scam continues to operate to this day. How is this possible?

2

Launched in 2014 by the charismatic Bulgarian economics professor Ruja Ignatova, OneCoin promised a cryptocurrency revolution of gigantic returns for all investors. OneCoin was called 'the BitCoin killer', but was never a true cryptocurrency. And the Norwegian blockchain specialist Bjørn Bjercke revealed the world's biggest, ongoing cryptocurrency fraud.

3

OneCoin promised a cryptocurrency revolution but turned out to be one of the biggest scams in history. Professional scammers exploit the fundamental human nature for their own benefit. Together with people's life savings, they steal their dreams. Ten years and countless scandals later, OneCoin is still in full swing. A docu-thriller about psychology and manipulation in the crypto-age.

## Long Synopsis

1

Some scams are just too good to be true. Launched in 2014, OneCoin was heralded as 'the Bitcoin killer.' Anyone could become a crypto-billionaire overnight. But OneCoin is not a crypto currency, instead it turned out to be the biggest pseudo-crypto scam in history. And it was the Norwegian Blockchain expert Bjørn Bjercke who took down the house of cards. More than eight years on, the scam is still running, although the founders are gone, wanted by the FBI, dead or arrested. How is it possible for the scam to continue when everybody know the facts? The anatomy of a fraud runs deep. Is it sometimes easier to continue feeding the lie than facing the truth?

The documentary 'Lie to Me' investigates the OneCoin scam in Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, Uganda and Germany, with footage from Europe, Asia, and North and South America.

2

In 2014, the crypto-currency OneCoin was launched. Calling itself the 'Bitcoin killer,' OneCoin promised a digital revolution in the financial market. Anyone could become a millionaire overnight, as long as they invested in OneCoin. With the charismatic Ruja Ignatova as its official queen, OneCoin quickly became the talk of the town from Silicon Valley to Europe and Africa – until Norwegian whistleblower Bjørn Bjercke discovered that there was no actual currency behind this digital house of cards. OneCoin was closer to a pyramid scheme than anything to do with blockchain. Ten years later, after countless scandals, imprisonments, and deaths, OneCoin, incredibly, lives on.

## Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/865675273>

## Featuring

Bjørn Bjercke, tech nerd – blockchain expert

### *The man who brought down OneCoin*

In 2017 the Norwegian blockchain specialist Bjørn Bjercke received a call from a headhunter. He was a top candidate for a well-paid programming job with an apartment and car in both Bulgaria and London. The job was tempting. Bjørn had used the pseudonym 'Mr Bitcoin Norway' for several years when he was online, and was flattered that his reputation had reached out internationally.

But there was something jarring. The headhunter wouldn't tell him the name of the company that wanted to hire him or the exact nature of their business. Before Bjørn accepted the job offer, he wanted to know more. The little information he was given set off all the warning bells.

'When I heard it was OneCoin, my heart sank.'

The company was called OneCoin, they had created a new cryptocurrency, and Bjørn's job was to build a blockchain for the company. While Bjørn was considering the generous job offer, CEO Ruja Ignatova took to the stage in front of tens of thousands of investors in Bangkok and announced that OneCoin's blockchain was now online and that you could soon start trading OneCoin like Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.

Right then and there, Bjørn realized that he had proof that OneCoin was a scam. In the years to come, he worked relentlessly to expose OneCoin and support the growing numbers of victims. But did he understand the consequences it was going to have for him and his family?

Jonatan Wigerup, former OneCoin investor

*'They can't all be lying, right?'*

We follow the former OneCoin investor Jonatan Wigerup for more than two years, until he finally agrees to go undercover on a OneCoin event outside Stockholm in November 2022. The people behind the OneCoin scam simply refuse to stop!

We learn how Jonatan struggles to convince himself that all the money he invested is lost, and that the promised astronomical value of his OneCoins is just air.

Will Jonatan follow Bjørn's advice and delete all his OneCoins?

Duncan Arthur, South-African banker

*'I guess all OneCoins have two sides.'*

The South-African banker Duncan Arthur was approached by the same headhunter as Bjørn Bjercke, and was offered a job at OneCoin. Unlike Bjørn, Duncan accepted and worked his way up to the top of the criminal organization.

Daniel Leinhardt, OneCoin investor (UG)

*'They presented it as the Bitcoin-killer, a risk-free investment.'*

Erica Stanford, author and crypto expert (UK)

*'It was the first scam that combined multi-level marketing with Crypto.'*

Mufti Amjad M. Mohammed, Imam (UK)

*'The only time when the greed of a human will be met is when he has got soil in his mouth.'*

British Islamic scholar, dean and head scholar at the British Olive Foundation. He has written and lectured extensively on fiqh, Sharia, organ donation, moonsighting, jurisprudence for Muslim minorities in the West, Muslim education within the West, usul al-fiqh, and Islamic finance. He sits on multiple Sharia and fatwa boards, and holds advisory positions at several financial institutions pursuing Islamic banking or finance.

Also featuring:

Layla Begum, OneCoin investor

Ruja Ignatova, CEO, OneCoin

Anniken Fjelberg, Influence specialist

'Chris', Bank fraud investigator

Daniel Leinhardt, OneCoin investor

Carl Alfred Dahl, Journalist

Ingrid Grav, Chief fraud specialist

Tommi Vuorinen, OneCoin head of recruitment

Tim Tayshun, Blockchain expert

Lone Charlotte Pettersen, Department director economical crime unit

The stories of Bjørn, Jonatan and Duncan are supported by rich archive material, close encounters with fraud victims and investors from Oslo (N), London (UK), Stockholm (SE), and Uganda (UG), experts in crypto and branding, fraud hunters, and journalists.

## Context / Background to the Story

November 2022. In Sollentuna outside Stockholm, dozens of people gather with one and the same hope: A return on their investment. On stage is Finnish Tommi Vuorinen. He is enthusiastic and optimistic. 'One, one, one,' he shouts and gets most of the crowd on board. But wait a minute... Wasn't OneCoin exposed as a scam, and aren't the founders behind bars or wanted by both the FBI and Interpol?

In 2014, OneCoin was launched as 'The Bitcoin Killer,' and the world got excited. OneCoin combined the hype of Bitcoin and cryptocurrency with the recipe for success of multi-level marketing, promising tremendous returns for those who joined. Too good to be true? Of course!

'Lie to Me' is the story of how Norwegian Bjørn Bjercke toppled the pyramid in what has been described as one of the world's biggest fraud cases. It is also the story of how and why people are fooled again and again – and how to spot the red flags.

Supported by a wealth of archival material and with statements from former investors and victims from Oslo, London, and Uganda, crypto and branding experts, as well as scam hunters and journalists, Bjørn tells his story. When founder Ruja Ignatova stood on stage in Bangkok and presented the company's updated blockchain, Bjørn was offered to develop this very technology for them. At the same time. A bell rang in Bjørn's head. This had to be a scam. From his cabin in Norefjell, Bjørn started a job that would cost both him and the scammers dearly.

Bjørn's motivation is based on two things: A sense of justice and sheer love for the blockchain. When Bjørn realized that he was probably the only person in the world who held the key to tangible proof that OneCoin was a scam, he knew he had to act. Since 2017, he has spent countless hours exposing the scam, educating victims and helping authorities.

Ruja Ignatova had disappeared without a trace since 2017 but in May 2022 she reappeared. Second on the FBI's list of the World's Most Wanted. Bjørn is drawn back into the case. It's time for some closure. He travels to London to meet one of OneCoin's former senior executives, Duncan Arthur. Duncan was with Ruja's brother Konstantin when he was arrested by the FBI in the spring of 2019. Duncan now claims that he was an informant for the FBI ever since he was recruited two years earlier. Could it be true, are both Bjørn and Duncan whistleblowers?

We may never know the whole truth, but one thing is certain. No matter how little the story of the South African former OneCoin leader makes sense, there will always be a seed of doubt. Except for Bjørn. He's sure of his case: Duncan is a crook. The meeting between the two is tense and cool, with no reconciliation.

For investor and victim Jonathan, the revelation of the fraud has triggered strong emotions. The money he has lost is one thing, but rumors of money laundering and human trafficking are another. When he gets wind of a members' meeting in Stockholm - in 2022 - he decides to go undercover. And maybe, just maybe, there is something in the promises that everything is now in order? But the disappointment is huge. Jonathan sums it up like this: "It's still the same message: Recruit more members.

Bjørn, Duncan and Jonathan are seemingly different, but they have a lot in common. They are all searching for a truth and they all have a desire to belong.

OneCoin is reforming into One Ecosystem in 2022 and in this latest attempt to squeeze the lemon, the curtain is about to come down on OneCoin. Thanks to Bjørn and his friends, the FBI and other authorities, the media and even Duncan Arthur. But at the same time, a new hype rolls on. In the spring of 2023, BeMovement brings together thousands of young hopefuls with a desire to be part of the next big thing: "It's my time now! It's MY time NOW! IT'S MY TIME



NOW!". Who's behind it? Yes, you guessed it. Scammers based on the world's most successful crypto scam - OneCoin.

'Lie to me' is a feature documentary about greed, unscrupulous villains, nerdy heroes, deception and personal tragedies set in an international game. But deep down, it's about man's and society's tunnel vision on getting rich, and hopefully the lesson of how to recognize a scam and avoid falling into the trap.

## OneCoin

OneCoin was launched as 'the Bitcoin killer' in 2014, and an entire world fell under its spell. The success was the pairing of the massive hype and excitement surrounding crypto currency with multi-level marketing. For a few hundred dollars, you could be part of the next financial revolution.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OneCoin>

## Blockchain

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blockchain>

## Directors' Statement

In 2014, we started our company, Hacienda, and one of our first projects was 'The Bitcoin Experiment,' which looked into the new hype – Cryptocurrency. The film was sold to TV channels, VOD, and airlines (!) all over the world. During the filming, there was so much noise about Blockchain technology. This was the 'new thing,' which was going to *really* disrupt the entire financial industry, big data, and much, much more.

We then created a second documentary about a technology that, at that time, did not yet exist. 'Code of Trus' was a fusion between interviews with Blockchain experts, big thinkers and tech-nerds, combined with a fact-based fictional universe about a Middle-Eastern refugee utilizing Blockchain technology to build a new life in an undisclosed European country. This film was sold to, amongst others, NRK in Norway. It was a crucial factor for our latest and newest project, because there was one person who saw the film, liked how we portrayed crypto technology, and wanted us to tell his story. So in June 2020 we received the weirdest phone call ever:

'Hello, my name is Bjørn Bjercke. Google me – I'll call you back in twenty minutes.'

So we did, and we got sucked into the unbelievable world of OneCoin, a fake cryptocurrency that had used the hype around Bitcoin to lure and scam people all over the world. And the person that exposed the scam was Bjørn Bjercke.

We are passionate about democratic tech – and Cryptocurrency, when applied and used, taking ethics into account, is a great tool for that. However, people do not understand it, and the technology is being misused as an investment tool to make fast money, rather than exploring the vast benefits it could have for society. And this was exactly what OneCoin did. Exploiting

human ignorance, lust, and greed, and employing multi-level marketing. The OneCoin pyramid scheme became one of the greatest scams of all time.

Nine years on, the original founders of the largest crypto scam in history are either gone, convicted, or openly admit it was all a lie. The proof is out there for everyone to see. However, the scam is still in full swing. How is this possible? Why do people still believe?

As a company that is based upon creating engaging stories around knowledge, this story was a no-brainer for us. A true-crime story involving billions of dollars, a Norwegian blockchain expert to expose the scam, and victims all around the world. This is the catchy framework for the film 'Lie to Me'. documentary that stretches deep into the anatomy of a scam to explain why people believe, why they are fooled, and why it is so hard to let go. The film utilizes a range of cinematic tools, from graphics to archive footage, to enable the audience to feel what we felt as director and producer while working on this project. It's hard to spot a scam in a room full of liars.

It has been a thrilling, surprising, and sometimes frustrating ride. Combined with facts to help viewers be better informed when the next 'opportunity' arises, this is what we hope to show with our film. If there is one thing we learned during this period, it is that any of us could fall victim to fraud. You've just been lucky and not met the 'right person at the right time.'

### **Bår Tyrmi**

Director and co-editor

### **Dag Mykland**

Producer and co-director

## Festivals

### **2024**

CPH:DOX

Human International Documentary Film Festival

## Bios

Bår Tyrmi

Director, Co-Editor



Bår Tyrmi (1977) is a Norwegian filmmaker. Since graduating with a film degree from Napier University in Edinburgh in 2002, he has worked as a screenwriter and director on numerous productions around the world. His productions range from feature documentaries on cryptocurrency, factual programs for the UNFCCC, reality programming on the Millennium Development Goals, educational films, to a children's musical about women's rights in Bangladesh. Bår's latest documentaries, 'The Bitcoin Experiment' and 'Code of Trust,' both commissioned by NRK, have been screened at festivals and on international TV channels and VOD platforms. Bår's vision is to present important social issues in new and entertaining ways, with a goal to engage the disengaged. He wants his films to contribute to informed discussions and spur social change.

Dag Mykland  
Producer, Co-Director



Dag Mykland (1981) is a Norwegian producer and director. He's been working in all fields of production such as an editor, director, mastering and post-production. The last years has seen a number of documentaries and short films released from his production house, Hacienda Film. Since 2014 they have had numerous productions with international success and awards. The

films are often seen as making an impact on societal changes and building knowledge about hard to come by topics – everything from the garment industry and breast milk substitute to crypto. Hacienda has previously released two more documentaries about crypto. The latest film, 'Lie to Me' is directly linked to the first film, 'The Bitcoin Experiment,' released in 2015.

Trond Høines, FNF

Cinematographer

Trond is an experienced DOP with everything from feature documentaries, fiction movies, to shorts. He has a particular eye for lighting and is a creative master working in low light, or with little or no lights. He brings visual solutions to scenes and makes the most out of the locations. His experience made him a trustworthy companion throughout our production.

Jo Eldøen, NFK

Editor

Jo is an award-winning editor with a wide range of movies – everything from acclaimed series, shorts, and feature documentaries. He has a narrative frame of mind, which helps all films move in the direction the material and the director wants. He is great at spotting minor things in editing that make a scene stand out and be memorable. A great partner to have in post-production and as a dramaturgical consultant.

Hacienda Film

We create engaging content – movies that make an impact. Hacienda is an internationally award-winning company that makes documentaries, series, and shorts. We are genuinely curious and love working with large international and national organisations to small companies that are passionate about what they do. For us, it is just as exciting to meet a single mother in rural Nepal, a top manager for an international company, or a seemingly ordinary bureaucrat or worker on the floor. It's all about people. Knowledge and competence told with enthusiasm is always exciting! We help you engage, entertain, illuminate, and inspire people. So we make an impact.

## Film Credits

Directed by **Bår Tyrmi**

Produced by **Dag Mykland**

Cinematographers  
**Trond Høines, FNF**  
**Dag Mykland**

Script and Research  
**Dag Mykland**  
**Bår Tyrmi**  
**Ellen Morgenstjerne**

Editor  
**Jo Eldøen, NFK**  
**Bår Tyrmi**

Motion Graphics  
**Simen Lauritzen Stensrud**

Sound Design  
**Bår Tyrmi**  
**Jo Eldøen, NFK**

Sound Design and Mix  
**Vidar Grande - STORYLINE**

Colorist  
**Trond Høines, FNF**

Production Manager  
**Ellen Morgenstjerne**

Consultants  
**Siv Rajendram Eliassen**  
**Neil Howard**  
**Danske Bank**  
**Økokrim**  
**Torkel Rogstad**  
**Jamie Bartlett**

Audio Assistant  
**Tomine Stormoen Mykland**

Camera Assistants

**Andreas Lekang**

**Jonatan Barstad**

Uganda Team

**Bamusiime Sylvia** - Producer

**Denis Israel** - A Camera Operator

**Mikka Ssali Chrizestom** - B Camera Operator

**Kamboni Oscar** - Drone Pilot

**Kawuma Paulo** - 1st Sound Recordist/Operator

**Lwere Frederick Jackson** - 2nd Sound Recordist/Operator

Mastering

**Espen Skjørdal** - **STORYLINE**

Music

**Universal Production Music / Artlist.io**

**'Johnny Nash – I Can See Clearly Now'**

(P) 1972 Sony Music Entertainment UK Limited

SFX

**Soundly**

Insurance

**Lyberg & CO**

Accountant

**Revisorteam Tinn**

Audit

**ABC Revisjon AS**

Festival Strategy Consultants

**Elisabeth Aalmo / The Norwegian film institute**

**Olivier Semonnay / Java Films**

Communication Strategy

**Dimitra Kouzi / Kouzi Productions**

International Sales

**JAVA Films**

Featuring

**Bjørn Bjercke**

**Jonatan Wigerup**

**Duncan Arthur**

**Amjad Muhammad**  
**Anniken Fjelberg**  
**Erica Stanford**  
**'Chris'**  
**Daniel Leinhardt**  
**Carl Alfred Dahl**  
**Layla Begum**  
**Ingrid Grav**  
**Tommi Vuorinen**  
**Tim Tayshun**  
**Lone Charlotte Pettersen**

In association with  
**Norwegian Film Institute / Norsk filminstitutt**  
**Klara Nilsson Grunning**

**Southern Norwegian Film Centre / Sørnorsk filmsenter**  
**Ingrid Dokka**

**Zefyr Media Fund / Mediefondet Zefyr**  
**Ingunn Myklevoll Sjøen**

**The Fritt Ord Foundation / Fritt ord**

**The Bergesen Foundation / Bergesenstiftelsen**

Archive  
**BBC News**  
**CNBC**  
**FOX**  
**FBI**  
**Aftenposten**  
**TRT World**  
**Inner City Press**  
**Istock**  
**Pond5**  
**Envato**  
**Archive.org**  
**Times Live News**  
**Meganoticias**  
**Prag News**

Youtube  
**OneCoin Official**  
**ONE ECOSYSTEM**



**Onelife**  
**OneLife IMA**  
**2beFree-info**  
**Blockchangers**  
**Crypto Goldminer**  
**Crypto Xpose**  
**CRYPTONEWSTV**  
**CoinCornerTheONE**  
**Fashion Killer UG**  
**Ken Labine**  
**Alex Ferguson**  
**Spectrocoin cryptocurrency**  
**iuliand.cimbalaonecoindrea1199**  
**One Ecosystem Romania**  
**Raúl Pazos Medina**  
**VIPGlobal.One**

**Hacienda 2024**

## Technical Information

Production: 2020–2024

Duration: 94 minutes

Delivery: DCP 4K

Shot on:

- Canon C500 MKII
- Canon C300 MKIII
- DZO Cineprimes

Edited and graded on Davinci Resolve

## Contacts

HACIENDA FILM

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In the Press

<https://senalnews.com/en/content/java-films-confirms-lie-to-me-international-premiere-at-cphdox-in-the-fact-competition>