

FABIO CONVERSI PRESENTS

AUTEUIL

KASSOVITZ

# THE LOOKOUT

A FILM BY MICHELE PLACIDO

GOURMET

RUNTIME: 89 minutes

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# SYNOPSIS

CAPTAIN MATTEI (DANIEL AUTEUIL) IS ON THE BRINK OF ARRESTING A NOTORIOUS GANG OF BANK ROBBERS WHEN ROOFTOP SNIPER (MATHIEU KASSOVITZ) SHOOTS AT A UNIT OF COPS TO ALLOW HIS ACCOMPLICES TO ESCAPE. ONE OF THE GANG IS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, WHICH FORCES THEM TO CHANGE THEIR PLANS. HIDING OUT WITH A CORRUPT DOCTOR (OLIVIER GOURMET), THEY HAVE TO POSTPONE SHARING THE SPOILS. AS CAPTAIN MATTEI ORGANIZES A MAJOR MANHUNT, THE GANG STARTS THEIR DESCENT INTO HELL...

# INTERVIEW WITH MICHELE PLACIDO

WHERE DOES THE LOOKOUT FIT INTO YOUR FILMOGRAPHY?

The film's genesis goes back to the producer Fabio Conversi, who acquired the rights. The two screenwriters also wanted me to make the film because they had been struck by ROMANZO CRIMINALE. I thought having a very French-inspired cop thriller shot by an Italian director was a real honor, although I was a little intimidated at the start. After I'd gone through the script and seen that Daniel Auteuil, Mathieu Kassovitz and Olivier Gourmet were on board, I started to feel calmer. All three are excellent and more importantly, they corresponded perfectly with the image I had of the characters.

DID YOU BRING A PARTICULARLY ITALIAN PERSPECTIVE TO THE FILM?

I have been influenced by all cinematic genres. I was raised on Truffaut, the New Wave, Melville and Becker, and I have always been a huge fan of Jean Gabin. Even in his more minor films, his subtlety, humanity and irony are amazing. During the shoot, I felt more of a Parisian than a foreigner with an Italian view of France. In aesthetic terms, I viewed Paris more as a theater stage than a movie set. I wasn't bothered about seeking out a typically Parisian feel because I was determined to put the emphasis on it being a contemporary narrative with universal themes.

Under the guise of a cop thriller, we also deal with young soldiers sent to Afghanistan. The audience should feel that our civilization is undergoing a kind of collapse in terms of human relationships. The story shows this through links that bind Daniel Auteuil's character, his son and the French secret services. Paris is like the arena for a settling of scores from that war, as well as providing a wonderful backdrop for this thriller.

YOU SAID THAT YOU ALSO WANTED TO EXAMINE WESTERN DECADENCE. OTHER THAN THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, IS OLIVIER GOURMET'S CHARACTER SYMPTOMATIC OF THAT DECADENCE?

Absolutely. The screenwriters wanted to make Olivier's character a little bourgeois Parisian whose parents did everything to make him a good man. But there is a disturbing side to him that leads him to become the exact opposite. That really reminded me of Pirandello's work, and the way he dealt with the discomfort of the Western bourgeoisie. Olivier Gourmet's performance really takes that to its limit. He is corrupted by evil and allies with it, despite his profession as a doctor, his education, and the morals that his parents tried to instill in him.

Nowadays, all you have to do is to look at our politicians who are supposed to lead by example but who behave appallingly behind their masks. Olivier Gourmet is the perfect embodiment of this two-faced character, a Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde of the modern age.

OLIVIER GOURMET HAS ALWAYS ENJOYED AMBIGUOUS ROLES. DO YOU SHARE HIS ATTRACTION FOR HUMAN COMPLEXITY AND THE THIN LINE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL?

I also love exploring dark areas. Right now, I'm working on Shakespeare's "King Lear" as both a director and an actor. To my mind, he was the inventor of the modern man with all his contradictions. In *THE LOOKOUT*, I wanted to explore those who, at first glance, are either "goodies" or "baddies," and make the audience think about who they view as the real guilty one. It is a reflection, like Shakespeare's, on good and evil.

You could say I identify more with outlaws because justice is sometimes inadequate and erratic. When one watches the news, one is more surprised to learn that a politician has betrayed the trust of the people rather than a criminal, because the criminal is, in fact, abiding by their own rules.

YOU HAVE SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE A POLITICAL FILM. BUT THAT IS, NONETHELESS, A THEME THAT IS CLOSE TO YOUR HEART, IS IT NOT?

I made an action movie with general appeal, without weighing it down with a political discourse. But in terms of my own career and those of filmmakers with whom I've worked, like Marco Bellocchio in particular, you can really feel politics coming through. I can't help it. Without wanting to be controversial, the problem with Italian cinema isn't about communicating an aesthetic, but reflecting the country's problems.

There is a crisis of freedom of expression and one of the reasons for that is the distribution monopoly of Rai and Medusa. We definitely need more independent distribution companies.

If I wanted to make a film right now about Italian politics over the last few years, it wouldn't be possible. I think there is more room for maneuver in the French movie industry because religion and state are separate, whereas in Italy, Catholicism is still very powerful. Aside from Matteo Garrone and Paolo Sorrentino, few filmmakers dare to venture into sensitive territory. I dream of being able to make an important political film in France.

I have noticed that the French are more enthusiastic about cinema, or at the very least, they are more open to many different genres and cultures. The success of *A SEPARATION* perfectly illustrates this. In Italy, the audience is more likely to watch TV and go to the movies to watch comedies. Almost all the art-house movie theaters have disappeared, those places that help encourage the rarefaction of *auteur* directors. Currently, 60 films are shot in France for every five in Italy, four of which are comedies. That is pretty telling.

AMONG OTHER SOURCES OF INSPIRATION, YOU MENTION *HEAT* BY MICHAEL MANN. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT ONE OF THE VERY FIRST SCENES OF THE FILM, A MOMENT OF BRAVURA WHERE A SNIPER CUTS DOWN THE POLICE?

We had some amazing stunt artists, as well as car and weapons experts – the same ones who have worked with Michael Mann. Mathieu Kassovitz made quite a lot of suggestions to help. Not having a Hollywood budget, we did a huge amount of upstream preparation. I spent a lot of time walking around Paris doing reccies, and I found the perfect place for the action. We needed to take a huge number of precautions and I wasn't able to destroy as many cars as Michael Mann in *HEAT*. My past life as a cop was also very useful.

WHAT DID YOU RETAIN FROM THIS EXPERIENCE AND HOW HAS IT FED INTO YOUR MOVIE-MAKING?

I was born in Puglia in the south of Italy into a large and not particularly well-off family. Like the vast majority of my friends, I was educated in a Catholic institution and afterwards, the choice was clear: become a policeman or emigrate, to Germany or France for example. I know many people who left and then sank into illegality to earn a living.

It's all a question of choice. People are responsible for their own lives, but I find it hard to condemn those delinquents because they are often from modest backgrounds, like prostitutes. How many people who have the opportunity to become a lawyer or a politician fall into similar circumstances? As Berthold Brecht so wonderfully said, "I came to the table as well, but they'd already eaten all the cake."

DOES THAT EXPLAIN YOUR EMPATHY TOWARDS THOSE "STRAY" CHARACTERS, CRIMINALS EVEN, AS IT IS ONCE AGAIN THE CASE WITH THE LOOKOUT?

Absolutely. In my movies, you can feel that I've known men who do good and evil and have looked them in the eye. I also have a literary approach to people: authors like Dostoyevsky who create the passions and great mysteries of the soul have had a huge influence on me. I believe I have learned to respect all human beings. That comes from my Christian – and not my Catholic – culture, with that so-beautiful image of Christ.

MATHIEU KASSOVITZ IS ONCE AGAIN IMPRESSIVE AS A SHARPSHOOTER...

We got along very well, although we had to work together to find the right way to interpret such a complex role. Mathieu feels more like a director than an actor, despite being a very powerful performer. He is also very critical, in a constructive way. The fact that he's often questioning – a little like Hamlet! – meant he helped me a lot because the results were better. Once Mathieu is confident, he gives his all. I loved working with him again.

DANIEL AUTEUIL HAS PLAYED A GREAT MANY COPS IN HIS CAREER. HOW DID THE TWO OF YOU APPROACH THE CHARACTER OF CAPTAIN MATTEI?

Mattei thinks a great deal but doesn't do much. There is a sadness in his eyes about the world that is crumbling around him. It's a very different idea of a police officer than you normally find in an action movie. Daniel made himself extremely available and he is a great actor to direct. Right from day one he had a lot of fun watching me show him how to play the character. Mathieu and I had a director-to-director relationship, whereas with Daniel, we related to each other as actors. It reminded me of what Clint Eastwood said about directing actors: he doesn't speak much, acts the scene and then asks the actor to do the same. That is similar to how it worked with Daniel who, happily seated in his chair, appreciated what I was showing him. Off set, we shared a lot of fun moments.

THERE ARE TWO VERY STRONG AND DETERMINED FEMALE FIGURES AT THE HEART OF THE ACTION: MATHIEU KASSOVITZ'S LAWYER AND THE GANGSTER'S WIFE. WHAT ROLE DID YOU WANT TO GIVE THEM IN THE NARRATIVE OF THE FILM?

It was the French production company who offered the role of the gangster's wife to my daughter Violante, after having seen her with George Clooney in THE AMERICAN. Originally, the couple wasn't supposed to be Italian, but it just came together with Violante and Luca Argentero.

I liked the idea, which I'd seen before in films like LE CERCLE ROUGE with Gian Maria Volonté. The couple enables the introduction of a love story and a romantic side to the film. The character of the lawyer is more disturbed, but I wanted to use these two women to highlight their religiousness. Women are capable of following anyone because of love. They are braver and more sentimental, which isn't necessarily the case with the men. The women are important to this fairly hard story because they offer a healthy counterpoint.

WHY DOES MICHELE PLACIDO THE DIRECTOR SO RARELY WORK ALONGSIDE MICHELE PLACIDO THE ACTOR?

The director wouldn't be able to be honest with the actor and would give in to the worst kind of compromises. There isn't necessarily a role for me and I'm more interested in directing than acting. In my "King Lear" theater project, I do both and it scares me. I am a little shy about directing myself and I deeply believe that an actor must confront the view of a director.

If I had to play one of the roles, Olivier Gourmet's would have been most interesting to me. I can see more of myself in his character, which is complex and therefore more human. I like characters who commit a lot of sins. As for choosing a scene, I'd go for the last one, that of the murderous triangle!

WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE LOOKOUT AS A VERY DARK, HUMAN TRAGEDY, OR AS A TOUGH THRILLER?

Beyond the aesthetic of the cop thriller, human beings are what interest me. Between an outlaw, a man that no longer feels that laws apply to him and someone who has no more boundaries, you're at the very heart of human tragedy.

# FILMOGRAPHY

## MICHELE PLACIDO

2012 THE LOOKOUT  
2011 ANGEL OF EVIL  
2008 THE BIG DREAM  
2005 ROMANZO CRIMINALE  
2004 OVUNQUE SEI  
2002 A JOURNEY CALLED LOVE  
1997 DEL PERDUTO AMORE  
1995 UN EROE BORGHESE  
1992 CLOSE FRIENDS  
1989 TOMATO

# INTERVIEW

## DANIEL AUTEUIL

### POLICE ID

The interesting thing about Mattei is the duality between his role as a tough cop and his position as a father adrift, due to the parallel investigation into the death of his son. He is an unimpeachable captain, calm and collected, but he's on a razor's edge. Michele Placido saw Mattei as a complicated man, a bit of a character who, like certain people in fiction such as Arlequin in Molière's comedies, ends up becoming a reference. If you look at cop thrillers, films by Melville or those about people in jail, there is always a Mattei kicking around somewhere. Aside from the genre aspect, there's a lot of human tragedy in the role.

I don't need to feel empathy with a character in order to play it. However, I have to believe in the story and there has to be a certain truth to the role. Only then can I let myself go and get into the game of cops and robbers. I may have made a lot of films in my career, including thrillers, but the enjoyment is always the same.

### CHIEF PLACIDO

I thought ROMANZO CRIMINALE was absolutely heart-rending, as was his next film, THE BIG DREAM. What I like about Michele – something you often find with filmmakers who have also had careers as actors – is the freedom he has in terms of his technique and choice of subjects. The shape he chose for his film is very modern and gives the feel of a thriller that mixes it up on all sides. It is completely impregnated with the codes of the genre, and yet totally freed from it at the same time.

I also liked the fact that he doesn't talk much. Without words, there was a kind of recognition between us, because we've both had a full and varied acting career. Our relationship was a simple one, without ego and vanity. We both understand the price of pleasure and know that you mustn't waste it, so we enjoy the exquisite pleasure of new encounters.

I don't think you would say Michele brings a particularly Italian sensitivity to the film. It's more a wealth of cinematographic culture. Cinema always has different accents, depending on its country of origin, but in THE LOOKOUT, the only Italian I see is the director of photography.

Any actor who becomes a director, like Michele, knows how to obtain the right precision and authenticity for a scene from his or her actors. When he was unable to find the words, he'd demonstrate, and that way of working suits me, because I do it too.

But I had no idea Michele used to be a cop! Like Olivier Marchal, he has witnessed the boundary between good and evil, returned from it, and used it to serve his artistic vision. Certain things are clearer to me now.

## PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE

I love watching other actors perform. I was delighted to meet Mathieu Kassovitz, whose directing I like very much. His talent as an actor is striking, notably in the distance he maintains between himself and his characters. I was also captivated by Olivier Gourmet's performance. Mathieu and Olivier have a very strange and personal power in the way they perform. One of the film's strengths stems from how it brings together some very assured and very different temperaments.

I don't really think in terms of "work" with actors like these. If I've enjoyed watching them in films, I'm curious to meet them in the flesh. Spending a few days together and getting to know them a little better is a simple pleasure that is part of the very essence of the profession: exchange. Because you never know if your paths will cross again, or even if you'll be still working tomorrow, I love to seize the moment.

## THE ROOTS OF EVIL

Michele is interested in the very thin line between good and evil, and that's a recurring theme of the genre. Most characters in cop thrillers are victims of their own weaknesses and are seeking redemption, or forgiveness at the very least. The theme is both classic and essential to the intensity of any *film noir*.

There is also that fascination that one has with thugs, like the gang of robbers described in the film. They break taboos, do what you could never imagine, and challenge society's views. Depending on the methods used, some become heroes and others, bastards. THE LOOKOUT deals with all that and forces the audience to think twice because appearances are deceiving and human values are thrown into question.

## FIELD REPORT

I loved working with Michele, the combination of different nationalities and the reassurance of working with actors who are fun to be with – just like when you meet up with friends you made at summer camp the previous year. Michele and I also talked a lot about beautiful Italian actresses.

During a shoot, there is always what we call "a moment of grace." On THE LOOKOUT, it was more of an atmosphere. Meeting up in August in an empty Paris with people blowing stuff up, running across the rooftops of Châtelet... It's a real privilege to be able to forget about reality and be like a kid again. I am totally invested in my profession for experiences like that, and that euphoria of the moment.

I think THE LOOKOUT is a different kind of genre film. It stands alone and has a unique energy. I'm delighted every time I'm offered the chance to grow my career, to find a role within my capabilities that corresponds to my age – I run less than I used to but my aim is just as true.

# SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

## DANIEL AUTEUIL

- 2012 THE LOOKOUT BY MICHELE PLACIDO  
JAPPELOUP BY CHRISTIAN DUGUAY  
LA MER À BOIRE BY JACQUES MAILLOT
- 2010 THE WELL DIGGER'S DAUGHTER BY DANIEL AUTEUIL
- 2008 JE L'AIMAIS BY ZABOU BREITMAN
- 2007 MR73 BY OLIVIER MARCHAL
- 2006 CONVERSATIONS WITH MY GARDENER BY JEAN BECKER  
MY BEST FRIEND BY PATRICE LECONTE
- 2005 THE VALET BY FRANCIS VEBER
- 2004 PAINT OR MAKE LOVE BY ARNAUD AND JEAN-MARIE LARRIEU  
ONE STAYS, THE OTHER LEAVES BY CLAUDE BERRI  
36<sup>TH</sup> PRECINCT BY OLIVIER MARCHAL  
HIDDEN BY MICHAËL HANEKE
- 2002 APRÈS VOUS... BY PIERRE SALVADORI
- 2001 THE ADVERSARY BY NICOLE GARCIA  
SMALL CUTS BY PASCAL BONITZER
- 2000 THE CLOSET BY FRANCIS VEBER
- 1999 SADE BY BENOÎT JACQUOT
- 1998 MAUVAISE PASSE BY MICHEL BLANC  
GIRL ON THE BRIDGE BY PATRICE LECONTE
- 1997 LE BOSSU BY PHILIPPE DE BROCA  
THE WIDOW OF SAINT-PIERRE BY PATRICE LECONTE
- 1996 LUCIE AUBRAC BY CLAUDE BERRI
- 1995 THIEVES BY ANDRÉ TÉCHINÉ  
THE EIGHTH DAY BY JACO VAN DORMAEL
- 1994 LA SÉPARATION BY CHRISTIAN VINCENT
- 1993 QUEEN MARGOT BY PATRICE CHÉREAU
- 1992 MY FAVORITE SEASON BY ANDRÉ TÉCHINÉ  
UN CŒUR EN HIVER BY CLAUDE SAUTET
- 1988 MAMA, THERE'S A MAN IN YOUR BED BY COLINE SERREAU
- 1987 A FEW DAYS WITH ME BY CLAUDE SAUTET
- 1985 L'AMOUR EN DOUCE BY EDOUARD MOLINARO  
MANON OF THE SPRING BY CLAUDE BERRI  
JEAN DE FLORETTE BY CLAUDE BERRI
- 1980 THE LADY BANKER BY FRANCIS GIROD

# INTERVIEW

## MATHIEU KASSOVITZ

### A VERY DISCREET CRIMINAL

I often find it hard to talk about my roles because I see the film more in terms of a global project. Logically, it's the director who holds the keys to his or her protagonists and who is better positioned to talk about them. Michele Placido was mainly looking for a human and visceral approach to his characters. The screenplay was already very clear about Vincent's motivations. He is a man who is constantly on the move and in the action. When we all started working together, it was mainly about fine-tuning the interaction between the multitude of roles. In the scene with Violante Placido, we had to fight and hurl abuse at one another whilst being consumed with tears and passionate emotions – it was a lot of fun to play!

When I'm acting, I force myself to put my directorial experience to one side. I stay as far out of the way as possible, and I try not to mix things up. Observing the darker areas of human behavior, as is the case in *THE LOOKOUT*, is one of the factors that push people to go to the movies. Personally, I'm more focused on human problems thrown up by politics. As a man and a filmmaker, I prefer to talk about the global condition of society than the human condition. But that is logically at the heart of films like *THE LOOKOUT*.

I always view the work of an actor as a clearly marked-out process: you read a script, you come on board and then you do your best to correspond to the director's vision. It is they who think about it, not the actor. I appear in films more for the encounters I have with the director and crew than for the character. The "joy of acting" isn't really my thing!

### L'ARTE DELLA COMMEDIA

I thought the concept that was the basis for *THE LOOKOUT* was very innovative. Michele was particularly interested in human complexity and the transgression of the boundaries between good and evil. I was captivated by his interpretation of the highly-colorful characters in *ROMANZO CRIMINALE*. Each country's cinema has its own codes and production methods. That of the Italians has always had its roots in *la commedia dell'arte*.

On the shoot, it was fun for a French actor to see how Michele tackled the construction of his characters. It was very dynamic and more instinctive than premeditated. Michele mainly works in the moment, with an amazing freedom of movement. A scene might be completely turned on its head by what people suggest, because Michele is completely open to that. It's an approach that is reassuring and yet somewhat destabilizing at the same time – everything is a question of observation, listening and understanding what is happening at each moment on set.

The style of cinema that comes through in *THE LOOKOUT* is one we don't see so much anymore. In France, we still have Olivier Marchal who is interested in cops, but romantic films about criminals are rarely made. Aesthetically, Michele wanted to create an elegant work, but

there is also a cool, timeless side to it. I see it as something surgical that creates the distance necessary to render reality beautiful and not just transcribe it.

## BLACK IS BLACK

To my mind, *THE LOOKOUT* deals more with human bestiality and – as in any good cop thriller – the protagonists are constantly having to deal with their own weaknesses. The interesting thing is that none of the three main characters is able to escape his past or his internal demons.

Michele has had his own experience within the police, which obviously has an influence on the way he views the two sides of cop and criminal, and renders that subtler. The “human tragedy” side to it that Michele wanted is very Italian but also corresponds to the very essence of the cop thriller genre. *THE LOOKOUT* is in the style of 1970s movies like *THE FRENCH CONNECTION*.

What I love about the *noir* genre is those clever screenplays; the Cohen brothers’ cop thrillers, Melville’s films that are full of characters and atmosphere and American cinema from the 1950s. I’m not, however, attached to any particular style or genre. In *THE LOOKOUT*, there are a great deal of references, as well as a unique style. For example, Jacques Audiard has the skill to be able to adapt 1950s and 1960s American cop thrillers. Even when he’s not making gangster movies, like *SEE HOW THEY FALL* and *A SELF-MADE HERO*, they are still impregnated with a cop thriller-like universe and atmosphere.

Nowadays, action films have blurred the boundaries. I don’t understand it when people describe *THE BOURNE IDENTITY* as a cop thriller. Then there are thrillers, slasher movies, while the cop thriller genre remains intimately linked to human problems. If I had to make one, I’d love to work with a David Mamet script, along the lines of “Spiral.” Above all, I’m a viewer and I like investing myself intellectually in order to resolve the mystery that unfolds on screen. To me, the best cop thriller was “Columbo.” In terms of movies, if you put aside American movies of the 1950s, I’m a big fan of *MILLER’S CROSSING*.

## BROTHERS-IN-ARMS

On a shoot, I focus on sharing opinions and personalities, on watching how the director and the other actors work. That doesn’t lead me to make judgments – I couldn’t comment on Daniel Auteuil’s or Olivier Gourmet’s technique. However, I do find that actors are often close to the image we have of them. This is simply because when they act, they inevitably deliver their face, their mannerisms and their truth. An actor’s personality comes through so clearly as they move through their career that one is rarely surprised. The only remaining question is whether or not they became big-headed. When I met Auteuil and Gourmet, I knew what I was dealing with. I have known them for 20 years, although I’d never actually met them. They both love their jobs and fight tirelessly to share their ideas because they know that nothing should ever be taken for granted. They don’t have an ego that prevents them working with others. It’s fascinating to watch them look for solutions to the everyday problems on a shoot. It’s much harder to understand a director because you never know what he is thinking and it can change radically from one film to the next.

## PROGRESS REPORT

From my experience on *THE LOOKOUT*, I will never forget Michele’s innocent fun. He’s not afraid to try out new things and to explore new ideas, relying on his cast and crew. It’s a typically Italian kind of cinema in terms of the production traditions – in the ‘60s and ‘70s, the

guys had almost no dialog, you'd shoot and the results could be amazing. That style of adventure either turns you on, or you don't do it!

# FILMOGRAPHY

## MATHIEU KASSOVITZ

### ACTOR

- 2012 THE LOOKOUT BY MICHELE PLACIDO  
HAYWIRE BY STEVEN SODERBERGH  
ANOTHER WOMAN'S LIFE BY SYLVIE TESTUD
- 2011 REBELLION BY MATHIEU KASSOVITZ
- 2010 LOUISE-MICHEL BY GUSTAVE KERVERN & BENOÎT DELÉPINE
- 2006 AVIDA BY GUSTAVE KERVERN & BENOÎT DELÉPINE
- 2005 MUNICH BY STEVEN SPIELBERG
- 2003 NADIA BY JEZ BUTTERWORTH
- 2002 AMEN BY COSTA-GAVRAS  
CÉSAR NOMINATION FOR BEST ACTOR  
ASTERIX AND OBELIX MEET CLEOPATRA BY ALAIN CHABAT
- 2001 AMÉLIE BY JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET
- 1999 JAKOB THE LIAR BY PETER KASSOVITZ
- 1998 PLEASURE (AND ITS LITTLE INCONVENIENCES) BY NICOLAS BOUKHRIEF
- 1997 THE FIFTH ELEMENT BY LUC BESSON  
ASSASSIN(S) BY MATHIEU KASSOVITZ
- 1996 DES NOUVELLES DU BON DIEU BY DIDIER LE PÊCHEUR  
MON HOMME BY BERTRAND BLIER  
A SELF-MADE HERO BY JACQUES AUDIARD
- 1995 THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN (UNCREDITED)  
BY MARC CARO AND JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET  
LA HAINE BY MATHIEU KASSOVITZ  
LES FLEURS DE MARIA PAPADOPYLOU (SHORT) BY DODINE HERRY
- 1994 SEE HOW THEY FALL BY JACQUES AUDIARD  
CÉSAR FOR BEST MALE NEWCOMER  
ELLE VOULAIT FAIRE QUELQUE CHOSE (SHORT) BY DODINE HERRY
- 1993 CAFÉ AU LAIT BY MATHIEU KASSOVITZ  
CÉSAR NOMINATION FOR BEST MALE NEWCOMER AND BEST FIRST FILM  
PUTAIN DE PORTE (SHORT) BY JEAN-CLAUDE FLAMAND BARNY
- 1992 UN ÉTÉ SANS HISTOIRE BY PHILIPPE HAREL
- 1991 TOUCH AND DIE BY PIERNICO SOLINAS  
ASSASSINS (SHORT) BY MATHIEU KASSOVITZ
- 1990 FIERROT LE POU (SHORT) BY MATHIEU KASSOVITZ
- 1981 NEXT YEAR IF ALL GOES WELL BY JEAN-LOUP HUBERT
- 1979 AU BOUT DU BANC BY PETER KASSOVITZ

## DIRECTOR

- 2010 REBELLION
- 2008 BABYLON A. D.
- 2004 GOTHIKA
- 2001 LA BALLE
- 2000 THE CRIMSON RIVERS  
ÉTOILE D'OR FOR DIRECTING  
CÉSAR NOMINATION FOR BEST DIRECTOR
- 1998 ARTICLE PREMIER (SHORT)
- 1997 ASSASSIN(S)  
LUMIÈRES SUR UN MASSACRE  
(10 SHORTS AGAINST ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES)
- 1995 LA HAINE  
CÉSAR FOR BEST FILM  
BEST DIRECTOR, FESTIVAL DE CANNES
- 1993 CAFÉ AU LAIT

CÉSAR NOMINATION FOR BEST MALE NEWCOMER AND BEST FIRST FILM

- 1991 CAUCHEMAR BLANC (SHORT)  
ASSASSINS (SHORT)
- 1990 FIERROT LE POU (SHORT)

## DUBBING – VOICEOVER

- 2012 APOCALYPSE, THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
BY ISABELLE CLARKE AND DANIEL COSTELLE
- 2011 THE PRODIGIES BY ANTOINE CHARREYRON

# INTERVIEW

# OLIVIER GOURMET

## BATTLE PLAN

The first time I met Michele Placido, it was in Paris with the two screenwriters. We talked more about my character than about the screenplay as a whole and the themes it dealt with. Without giving anything away about Franck, the film is not a documentary about guys like him. He is only one of the elements of tragedy and cop thriller in the film. Then I met Mathieu Kassovitz and Francis Renaud, among others, for a reading during which we all thought about the interaction between the roles.

Michele was very clear, spelling out the human motivations in the narrative and his aesthetic vision. Above all, he wanted to make a thriller about tough guys. I love films of that genre and I read a lot of detective stories. I often say that there's not much chance of me becoming a director but if I had to make a film, it would be a documentary or a cop thriller!

## A MODEL CITIZEN

Michele's idea was clear-cut. Franck had to be impeccable, with a friendly face that inspires trust in people. We even redid his moustache – like the sound engineer's – to make him more good-natured.

Michele also added things that weren't in the script. In the end, we didn't shoot them but all of that fed into the character. For example, the interior of the little house where Franck lives was initially supposed to have been decorated by his mother: we imagined him having lived with her while she watched the comings and goings outside from behind her net curtains. Michele kept the idea of a house with a feminine touch, which gave the place an odd, rather disturbing feel of something not being quite right.

Franck feels no emotions and gives nothing away. However, when he needs to, he's quite capable of faking them. Michele and I worked together on that. For example, in the first scene, when Mathieu's character aims his gun at him, Franck suddenly starts crying. A man as cold as that would never have felt fear – it's pure acting, pure pretense. Sometimes, he gets it wrong and it comes over fake or exaggerated, because he doesn't always play his part well. Sometimes, Michele asked me to be a bit more excessive, but we agreed to preserve his ambiguity.

## PLACIDO MA NON TROPPO

Michele worked a lot upstream with his director of photography on the cutting, lighting and shots he wanted. During the shoot, everything was very concise and precise. Michele told me that he felt more at ease *in situ* and he loved putting himself in the actors' shoes. He talked a lot, or he'd come and perform on set. He literally got under the character's skin, which was both great and a little disconcerting. In the beginning, he played Franck with great breaths and exaggerated gestures. I was a little taken aback but then I realized it was to make himself understood and not for me to copy!

Michele works on instinct and needs to feel the emotion and dynamism of a scene for himself. He also talked a lot about theater which is his great passion. It's no coincidence that the film has a tragedy-like structure.

I didn't feel that it was an Italian perspective, but rather Michele's own view of Paris and the cop thriller genre. It was the same with ROMANZO CRIMINALE which is similar to THE LOOKOUT. He has his own sensitivities and confers a unique tone on the film. There is an unrelenting feel to it right across the whole narrative. For example, when we were shooting the climax, there was a clear Western influence that could be felt. Sports coats were opened up and long glances exchanged. The way the set was arranged drew us into that atmosphere. The two men arrive at opposite ends of an alley and are forced to face off. Michele also brought a cool feel of Italian neorealism to the movie. The fact Michele was a cop in his earlier life was obviously also a very positive thing for the film. He understands the human motivations of cops because he was there, on the ground. His personality and his culture are richer for that. There are atmospheres and colors that he experienced which have definitely found their way onto the screen.

## THE BETTER PART OF DARKNESS

I never judge the characters I play, unless it's a parody. This is a genre film with general appeal, a spectacle, and it's a pleasure to perform with all those codes. Michele nonetheless wanted us to get as close as possible to the humanity of these men. The main trio is marked by solitude: that of the father who is unable to grieve, that of a soldier who has deserted and who hasn't let go of violence, and that of a sick man, reclusive in his depravity. But Franck has no excuses: he is educated, he's a doctor and he understands the line between good and evil, skulking in the shadows.

THE LOOKOUT doesn't tackle the monster Franck is in a scientific way, but I had his characteristics in mind: he has an outsized ego, he likes to dominate, he is paranoid, and he only sees the world through his own prism. He also has moments of clarity regarding his behavior, as I have seen in many documentaries. Franck manipulates, possesses and destroys others: it's a kind of adrenalin that he needs, but he never quite manages to satisfy his thirst.

## A GANG OF DIEHARDS

I have wanted to work with Daniel Auteuil for a long time. I really appreciate his work: he's simple, direct and goes straight to the essential of a scene without tormenting himself. Mathieu is sometimes more complex. He works very hard because he needs to understand things in depth. He is a director so he needs to grasp how a shot is going to work. He often queries things, questioning the screenplay and the dialogues. It's nice to see an actor who gets so involved in a story and the resulting film.

I question myself too, but like Daniel, it's more of an upstream process. The dynamic between the three of us was settled when we started shooting. We'd not spent too much time together beforehand so everything happened during the scenes.

## UNDER THE GUISE OF A COP THRILLER

Michele wanted to use this genre film to talk about Western decadence and barbarism, but we didn't talk much about that between us. However, we knew the film would tackle powerful subjects at times, such as human savagery, grief and Afghanistan. The richness of the screenplay comes from those themes, distilled into the very heart of this genre film. The roles and situations are very strongly anchored – we were anything but caricatures of good and evil. I like the idea that we all have, in our pasts, elements that explain what we do: all the characters are tangible and form an integral part of social reality.

In ROMANZO CRIMINALE, Michele succeeded in fleshing out his heroes, making them human and accessible. Understanding his sensitivity as a filmmaker, I knew that he'd attach the same importance to THE LOOKOUT. That simply served to make this cop thriller even more dense and complex.

## INVESTIGATION REPORT

I got a huge amount of pleasure out of taking on this character, even though I knew the film wouldn't explore the innermost depths of his spirit. I was able to do my own research into characters like him and get a glimpse of what drives them.

Making an action film is also enjoyable. There is always a childish pleasure in playing cops and robbers. For an actor like me, who enjoys exploring the motivations of the soul but who likes to play around, I was in my element!

# FILMOGRAPHY

## OLIVIER GOURMET

- 2012 THE LOOKOUT BY MICHELE PLACIDO  
LA TENDRESSE BY MARION HANSEL
- 2010 THE MINISTER BY PIERRE SCHOELLER  
BEST DIRECTOR AT THE ANGOULÊME FESTIVAL 2011  
BAYARD D'OR FOR BEST SCREENPLAY AT THE NAMUR FESTIVAL 2011  
ACTING PRIZE AT THE MAR DEL PLATA FESTIVAL 2011  
CÉSAR NOMINATION FOR BEST ACTOR 2012
- 2009 BLACK VENUS BY ADBELLATIF KECHICHE  
ROBERT MITCHUM IS DEAD BY OLIVIER BABINET & FRED KIHN  
GRAND PRIX DU JURY AT THE ANGERS PREMIERS PLANS FESTIVAL 2011  
NOMINATED FOR BEST FIRST FILM RAINDANCE LONDON 2011  
AVANCA SPECIAL MENTION OF THE JURY 2011  
OPENING FILM OF THE OFFICIAL COMPETITION AT THE FESTIVAL DE MILAN 2011  
IN COMPETITION AT THE FESTIVAL FRANCOPHONE IN NAMUR 2011  
SELECTION ACIDE, CANNES 2010
- 2008 MESRINE: PUBLIC ENEMY #1 BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS RICHEL
- 2007 HOME BY URSULA MEIER
- 2006 THE COLONEL BY LAURENT HERBIET
- 2005 LE PARFUM DE LA DAME EN NOIR BY BRUNO PODALYDES
- 2002 THE SON BY JEAN-PIERRE DARDENNE & LUC DARDENNE  
BEST ACTOR, FESTIVAL DE CANNES 2002
- 2001 READ MY LIPS BY JACQUES AUDIARD

# CAST

DANIEL AUTEUIL	MATTEI
MATHIEU KASSOVITZ	VINCENT KAMINSKI
OLIVIER GOURMET	FRANCK
FRANCIS RENAUD	ERIC
NICOLAS BRIANÇON	MEYER
JÉRÔME POULY FROM LA COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE	DAVID
VIOLANTE PLACIDO	ANNA
LUCA ARGENTERO	NICO
ARLY JOVER	KATHY
CHRISTIAN HECQ	GERFAUT
MICHELE PLACIDO	GIOVANNI
HOCINE CHOUTRI	GYPSY ARNAUD
PASCAL BONGARD	MITCH
GÉRALDINE MARTINEAU	SONIA
FLAVIEN TASSART	MARCO FRANZETTI
CÉDRIC MELON	MOTORBIKE COP
PIERRE DOUGLAS	THEO
SÉBASTIEN LAGNIEZ	HEIST DRIVER
YVES GIRARD	BOUNCER MITCH
BEN BADRA	KARIM
TCHEWK ESSAFI	GYPSY ANGELO
AMANDINE NOWORYTA	YOUNG GIRL
JOEL SAINT JUST	HOTEL COP
VINYE	HEIST COP
STÉPHANE COHEN	POLICE MARKSMAN
VINCENT AGUESSE	POLICE MARKSMAN
ARMEL CESSA	POLICE MARKSMAN
SHIRLEY BALTIMORE	GIRL AT MITCH'S PLACE

# CREW

DIRECTOR	MICHELE PLACIDO
SCREENPLAY AND DIALOG	CÉDRIC MELON AND DENIS BRUSSEAU
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	THIERRY VERRIER
SCRIPT SUPERVISOR	LYDIA BIGARD
CASTING DIRECTOR	JULIETTE DENIS (ARDA)
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	JEAN-YVES ASSELIN
PRODUCTION MANAGER	PHILIPPE CHAUSSENDE
UNIT MANAGER	FRANCOIS PULLIAT (AFR)
PHOTOGRAPHY	ARNALDO CATINARI (A.I.C.)
EDITING	SÉBASTIEN PRANGERE - CONSUELO CATUCCI
SET PHOTOGRAPHY	STÉPHANE KYNDT
SOUND ENGINEER	JEAN MINONDO
SOUND EDITING	FRÉDÉRIC DEMOLDER - NICOLAS PROVOST
SOUND RE-RECORDING MIXER	PHILIPPE BAUDHUIN
SET DESIGN	JEAN-JACQUES GERNOLLE (A.D.C.)
COSTUMES	VIRGINIE MONTEL
MAKE UP SUPERVISOR	JOEL LAVAU
HAIR SUPERVISOR	LAURENT BOZZI
ORIGINAL MUSIC	NICOLAS ERRERA
ORIGINAL MUSIC	EVGUENI & SACHA GALPERINE

A FRANCE - BELGIUM - ITALY / BABE FILMS - CLIMAX FILMS – FILMARNOCOPRODUCTION  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH RAN ENTERTAINMENT

PRODUCED IN FRANCE WITH STUDIOCANAL - FRANCE 2 CINÉMA - APPALOOSA FILMS -  
APIDEV 2010 - RAN ENTERTAINMENT

PRODUCED IN BELGIUM WITH RTBF (BELGIAN TELEVISION) —  
MADE WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE BELGIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TAX SHELTER

CASA KAFKA PICTURES & CASA KAFKA PICTURES MOVIE TAX SHELTER

EMPOWERED BY BELFIUS

PRODUCED IN ITALY WITH RAI CINEMA

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF CANAL + AND CINE +

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF FRANCE TÉLÉVISIONS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH CINEMAGE 6, PALATINE ETOILE 9 AND COFIMAGE 23

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE ILE-DE-FRANCE REGION

INTERNATIONAL SALES STUDIOCANAL

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS S ÉRIC TAVITIAN AND JÉROME ROUGIER

PRODUCED BY FABIO CONVERSI

COFIMAGE 23