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MATHIEU KASSOVITZ PRESENTS

# JOHNNY MAD DOG

A FILM BY  
JEAN-STEPHANE  
SAUVAIRE

«IF YOU DON'T WANNA DIE,  
DON'T BE BORN»

PRODUCED BY  
MATHIEU KASSOVITZ & BENOIT JAUBERT



With

**Christopher Minie and Daisy Victoria Vandy**

Based on the novel «**Johnny Mad Dog**»

by **Emmanuel Dongala**

France / Liberia / Belgium - 2008

1h33 - 35 mm color scope 2:35 à 25ims - Dolby SRD

**FRENCH RELEASE : not dated**

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MATHIEU KASSOVITZ PRESENTS

**JOHNNY**

A FILM BY  
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**MAD**

**DOG**

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## SYNOPSIS

Africa today.

Johnny, 15, a child-soldier, armed to the hilt, is inhabited by the mad dog he dreams of becoming.

With his small commando - No Good Advice, Small Devil, Young Major - he robs, pillages, and slays everything in his path. Teenagers swamped with Hollywood imagery and disinformation playing at war...

Laokolé, 13, pushing her disabled father around in a rickety wheelbarrow, trying to imagine the glorious future her brilliant studies seem to have in store for her, strives to flee her city, occupied by teenage-soldier militias, with her little brother Fofo, 8.

As Johnny advances, Laokolé flees . . .

Childhoods cut short, an Africa ravaged by absurd wars, a people who are trying, in spite of it all, to survive and to save their humanity.

**How was this project born?**

CARLITOS MEDELLIN, which I filmed in Columbia, was originally meant to be a fiction of Medellin's boys fighting against the FARC. This proved difficult and the project became a documentary on the spot. After this experience I discovered Emmanuel Dongala's book «Johnny Chien Mechant», which deeply moved me. I saw in it the possibility of pursuing the project, to move towards fiction based on a similar subject: that of children plunged into the violence of armed conflicts. This was in 2003, and rather than focus on writing an original script, I wanted to start with a classic narrative structure taken from a book and confront it to the reality of the terrain. To blend a literary work with something more documentary and realistic.

**Why choose to film in Liberia?**

It was primordial for me to work with ex-children soldiers, who seemed to be the only ones capable of giving a sincere testimony of this horror. Liberia was not an easy choice at this time; the war had ended in August 2003 and a transitional government had been set up. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's election in January 2006 made filming in Liberia possible. We really sensed the government's support, its desire to welcome us, its need to give testimony.

What was important was to say that we would speak of children soldiers, a subject which has touched Liberia; but it is also a way to show that today the country is stable enough for us to shoot a movie in it.

For Liberians, it was a way to assess before the international community that they had moved on, that they had turned the page after 15 years of war.

**Was security a determining factor?**

We had to be able to film in peace, not in between three gunshots like in Medellin. Filming fiction in a place where there is shooting everywhere can be at once out of place and complicated. We needed stability. At the same time, Liberia still wore all the stigmata of war and the people wanted to speak, to testify of it: that was the most important.

To be alone facing only yourself while working on a film like this one was out of the question: I felt all this strength, this energy, all this desire behind me.

**Were you able to avoid a too "official" recuperation of the film?**

No one tried to influence the project. The Liberian president's support -Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's- has avoided us pressures and resistances. When I began casting and I entered the heart of the matter, I spent nearly a year going to see Charles Taylor's or Lurd's ex-generals with whom I made ties and explained our project. But I was never reproached anything; on the contrary everyone entered the adventure pretty naturally.

**How did you find the ex-children soldiers who play in your movie?**

I first turned to the NGO on the spot before realizing that they kept to very specific networks. I then felt the need to go on the field. I focused on Monrovia and the ghetto zones surrounding the city. The ex-generals pointed out war leaders who were in charge of the children at the time. I was organizing castings in the districts with those who had fought. I must have seen 500 or 600 children to choose 15 of them. Amidst these children, I had to find those who stood out from the crowd, who had the personality to act. It was a long-winded though fascinating task, which allowed me



to understand a lot of things and to meet the true actors of these conflicts.

**And what of the two main characters, Laokole and Johnny?**

I found Daisy very late in the process, a month before shooting: we noticed her in the street, she auditioned and we took her. It was in evidence. Johnny I met in 2005 in the district of New Kru town through the medium of Warboy, alias Young Major in the movie. He had the reputation of having long fought and he was the one to introduce Johnny to me, one of his children soldier friends. Johnny was too young at the time, he was 13 years old and I didn't want a 12-13 year old child caught up in the murderous madness as is No Good Advice in the movie; I wanted rather an adolescent on the brink of slipping, who begins to gain an awareness of death, of his actions etc.

The movie was postponed, and with time Babyboy, alias Johnny turned out to be perfect for the role. He fought towards the end in 2003 for the Lurd (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy).

**Was preparation crucial?**

We had to find the children, but also gain their trust. A number told us: journalists come, interview us and disappear. I then explained to them that for a film, I would have to leave and return, go back and forth, invest myself for the long run. I finally moved in with them for a year in a house in Monrovia to instill this trust, prepare the project and begin to work together. 15 ex-children soldiers who have no family structure and have never gone to school, who know no liberty but that of the street, are not necessarily ready to enter a system like that of filming, which implies a certain work discipline. Curiously, the fact that they had fought in opposite camps on the other

hand was not a problem; for them that was past and they even prided themselves on having fought, whatever the side. This preparation also allowed me to master and to understand English as it is spoken in the districts of Monrovia - a very phonetic English, pretty crude and instinctual. We ended up understanding each other very easily and a long preparation such as that one had been indeed crucial.

**How did you initiate the children to actor's work?**

There was the script, but the children couldn't read. At the beginning, I let them improvise on the scenes: I would explain the sequence to them and I would ask them to improvise while I filmed them. It was also a way to familiarize them with the camera and to instill a game system: to have fun with it. They improvised and then saw themselves in the television, understood that they shouldn't look at the camera, talk all at the same time, in short understand how a movie is made.

After, there was a large coaching process with Karine Nuris, based on exercises - a way of saying «Ok, you have your experience, but now you have to enter a discipline, you are actors and you must work, that is to say know how to bring out an emotion, control it, cry, laugh, be angry etc.» By mixing up both, the children very quickly understood the notion of game and of character.

**How do you manage the fact that the children has experienced the reality of most of the scenes?**

It was approached as a therapy: not like something traumatizing, but like a game. Indeed, these were situations they had experienced but the theater can be therapeutic - it was furthermore used by the NGO during reinsertion - and what was at stake in the film was to rebuild their trust, to evacuate those traumas, to speak of it together, to share. If I

had sensed the slightest trauma at re-enacting certain scenes, I would have never continued.

**How did you find a balance between this «reality» and the interpretative work in its literal sense?**

I re-wrote the film a lot according to their improv and to what they were suggesting. What was most complicated was that the children were not really aware of the scenario: every day on set, I asked myself if they were going to bring out what they had amassed during the preparation process. But we had rehearsed so much that at the end of a year it had become natural. They were immediately in character.

The children did not see the scenario as a whole but were aware of the scenes in themselves, of a sort of journey to realize -to fight the ethnicity in power, to cross the bridge, to set fire to the city and overthrow the president, by in large the scheme as it occurred during the war and that they knew perfectly well. There wasn't really any reconstruction of the puzzle, from beginning to end, but a logical movement which imposed itself. Johnny is the only one to remove himself from this dynamic: he becomes aware little by little of the absurdity of the situation and of the reality of death.

**A way to remain concrete?**

We can only be concrete. One day, Warboy told us of an episode he had experienced: a woman wanted to cross the frontlines, she attempted to discuss the matter and they disemboweled her. They found a baby in her abdomen and partied all night: it is in this state of madness without limit that war puts one. I am shocked by the journalists who arrive and ask the children how many people they've killed. We would never ask a Second World War veteran how many people he's killed, it's an aberration. We are not faced with serial killers, but

with soldiers put in a particular state. They kill so as to not get killed, manipulated by their superiors and caught up in this conditioned madness by very precise rituals: costumes, nicknames, the group, drugs -everything contributes to never being yourself, only a killing machine.

**What were your objectives for the filming?**

The basis for me is to film people I love and to believe in the veracity of the situation I have to stage. I don't have the ability to recreate everything, I need the story to be there and to become obvious to film. Hence the importance of shooting in a country like Liberia, with people who bring in their own experience. I sought to never cheat or negotiate the children's vision, I wanted only to get closer to the truth. What was important was not to lecture but to content ourselves with retranscribing reality as it offers itself to us. And at the same time, it's about inscribing it in fiction because it's cinema and not a documentary, with a story which takes shape. What was at stake was to find this balance between documentary energy and this story which was building itself. Hence also the use of the scope format, which is a more fiction-oriented format. I've always had difficulty entering the debate on the aesthetics of horror. Be it in a shoulder-DV realism or in a more cinematic format, the question is the same: how can we and must we show reality in a neutral light? From the moment there is a camera, there is a point of view and a way of narrating which imposes itself.

**The film's movement is very direct, were you aiming at stripping it of unnecessary stylistic devices?**

Everything is determined by this immediacy, this importance of the present moment, this spiral in which the children are propelled. During the war, distancing themselves and reflecting

is not possible for them. The system of indoctrination with the use of drugs, songs, rituals or the mechanics of a group force us to move forward all the time. It becomes impossible to recede, as we were explaining to one of the children during his casting -if you withdraw, you get shot, so you don't have any choice but to keep moving forward. But I didn't want to consider them strictly as innocent children entering combat against their will; they take to this game of war, regret can only come after the fact.

**How did you approach the question of representing violence on the screen?**

The question is: how far can we explore violence without it becoming self-indulgent? The war's violence is monstrous. It was important to me to remain within the bounds of a violence of survival, something essentially more psychological than bloodthirsty. For example, I didn't want to approach the question of cannibalism; those are facts so difficult to understand from our point of view, it would be too complex a subject to treat onscreen. We had to avoid disgust, the rejection of the spectator: certain things went so far that they are unrepresentable. One must be plunged into the war to understand its origin.

**Did you have any particular problems at the time of shooting?**

Everyday, a problem can potentially wreck everything: working with actors who aren't professionals, the shooting conditions, the limits of a restricted team etc. That the children be good was my priority; as long as their acting was at its best, I thought it was as good as won. 15 children who aren't choirboys and who each have their personality to handle day-to-day, it takes a lot of energy. We had to wake up

everybody at 7 in the morning to go on set, get dressed, take the bus, the weapons, there was fighting etc. At that moment, it was no longer time to ask myself questions; everything had to be ready. Thankfully there had been all this preparation process...

**Why have chosen not to precisely situate the conflict?**

Emmanuel Dongala's book chose not to specify places but to inspire itself from an imaginary mix of recent African conflicts. In cinema, one must make choices, we find ourselves constantly confronted to reality. The Congolese children soldiers of Kabila, in military uniform and boots, have nothing to do with Charles Taylor's: in Liberia, we are more on the side of fiction, with disguises, a CLOCKWORK ORANGE aspect, something along the lines of madness and game. At the same time, it was not about making a historical film which would have taken Liberia as point of reference. What was important was to share the boys' point of view, who don't have any real awareness of the political aspect.

**How did you exploit the still vivid memory of the conflict's images and places?**

For the bridge scene, for example, everything became obvious: people found themselves on the very places where it had happened. Everything that had been filmed and photographed in Liberia during the fifteen year war served as reference for the writing of the film, so at the time of shooting, it came naturally. That's also why I wanted to include Patrick Robert's photos, war photograph, during the end credits. The village attack of the first scene worked like that: my first reflex was to place the actors, who quickly took the situation into their own hands. The body movements escaped the planned scenography, each gave testimony of all the situations they



## INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

had personally experienced. Joseph Duo, who plays general Never Die, was my military adviser on the film and explained to me how it had really happened. He started as a child soldier at 13 and is today 30 years old. He knew what he was talking about. The challenge was to put myself at the service of reality as it was coming back to the surface. But at the same time, people easily made the distinction between the reality of the situation and the shooting. At the beginning we communicated a lot of information - pamphlets, radio messages - in Monrovia as to warn the population, to avoid confronting inhabitants with the sudden appearance of people in arms...

### **Was editing complex?**

What was essential was not to film based on a precise storyboard, but to capture the energy of the scene, its veracity. From the moment where we turned on the camera, I was adamant about filming in shot-sequence. We couldn't resume a scene in the middle, the boys would have lost all their reference points. Hence the importance of filming in steadicam, in HD, which facilitates the process. This implies that the scene cutting and the choice of takes are done during editing and that's where we look for the moments of interest to build the sequence. It takes a lot more time than traditional editing...

### **What was your collaboration with Mathieu Kassovitz like?**

He invested himself in the beginning, in script-writing and in the editing process. It was interesting because he's not only a producer, but also a director and he's an instinctive and talented person. He is able to put his finger on specific things, and pushed me to radicalize the film, to recenter it on the story where I would have wished to pull it towards something more sensory and formal. He's an respectful person, who



understands perfectly the doubts and difficulties you can have as a director. He and Benoit Jaubert stuck by me to the end, which was not always easy and was brave on their part.


**Now that filming has ended, do you remain in touch with the children?**

It was unimaginable for me to reproduce the scheme the children had known during the war: the general comes, takes the children and abandons them as soon as it's over. The year of preparation and the filming created very strong ties, a very cohesive group sentiment. I wanted to continue following the children's progress, trying to help them in their reinsertion. During the preparation, classes were held every morning. We have kept the educator since, a house and created the foundation "Johnny Mad Dog" where they know they can turn to to eat, attends courses, sleep, be listened to etc.

These children still live day-to-day, hour after hour, with a logic of survival which is hard to conciliate with a long-term project. That's what must be addressed. But it's also from this immediacy that they have derived their strength during filming: they experienced everything in the present moment, they gave an enormous amount of themselves. I think it's strongly present in the film and for that I thank them.

I hope this film will be an opportunity to address the problem of child soldiers in the world which unfortunately, is still a topical issue and remains nonetheless unacceptable and intolerable.





**ABOUT THE  
DIRECTOR**

Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire was born on December 31st, 1968. He's been assistant director of Cyril Collard, Karim Dridi, Siegfried, Bernie Bonvoisin, Rachida Krim, Gaspar Noe, Laetitia Masson,... In 2003, he directs **CARLITOS MEDELLIN**, a feature length documentary shot in Columbia, which was selected in a number of festivals around the world and winner of Best Film for Children Rights in 2004. **JOHNNY MAD DOG** is his first fiction feature.

- 2008 **JOHNNY MAD DOG**
- 2003 **CARLITOS MEDELLIN**  
(documentary)
- 2003 **MATALO** (short)
- 2001 **A DIOS** (short)
- 2000 **LA MULE** (short)



**How did you meet Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire, the director?**

**BENOIT JAUBERT:** I have produced a short movie that he had directed in 1991. It was the time of SAVAGE NIGHTS (a film by Cyril Collard) where Jean-Stéphane was an assistant.

**MATHIEU KASSOVITZ:** Yes, we've known Jean-Stéphane for the past 17 years. I knew him at the time when he was an assistant, like me. We used to meet all the time.

**When was the project of Johnny Mad Dog born?**

**M.K.:** Jean-Stéphane came to see us in 2004 on his way back from Colombia and he showed us a documentary he had shot there, CARLITOS MEDELLIN. He also told us about Emmanuel Dongola's novel "Johnny Mad Dog" and he told us he wanted to adapt it at any cost.

**B.J.:** He had already written a first draft of the screenplay, we found it fascinating and decided to join in the project. Mathieu immediately started working on the screenplay with him.

**What attracted you in this project?**

**M.K.:** When we watched CARLITOS MEDELLIN, we sensed the eagerness of Jean-Stéphane to bring back images from the most unlikely places, but mostly because he had a very good feeling with people, especially children. We said to ourselves: we don't know what would come out of him in a fiction, but if he gets the go-ahead and a solid screenplay, we can let him go for it.

**B.J.:** We had also seen his short movies, such as THE MULE, and especially small films shot in Mexico with children going wild during pagan feasts and celebrations of the devil amidst bombs and fireworks.

**Was the choice of shooting in Liberia an option from the onset?**

**M.K.:** At the beginning, I was just back from the shooting of MUNICH and launching BABYLON A.D. We spent a year working on the screenplay, knowing we had little stuff to start with, and having no idea as to where the shooting would take place. The only certainty was that we wanted a country that had gone through a civil war, which was not to the liking of our insurers! At the same time Jean-Stéphane wanted to move away from History with a capital H! In the movie, Liberia is never mentioned, it's a universal story dealing with the reality of any country going through civil war.

**B.J.:** At first, we were supposed to shoot in a French-speaking African country; then we realized that the issue of children soldiers in western Africa had mainly hit English-speaking countries. On his way back from a trip to Sierra Leone and Liberia, Jean-Stéphane told us that we absolutely had to shoot in Liberia! We told him: you're nuts! The fact of breaking away from French-speaking countries posed a few problems in terms of advances on contracts. Moreover the English spoken in Monrovia is rather special: in film financing, language is decisive, so we were already sure we would have sub-titles in all the territories! That wasn't making things easy...

**How is it to prepare a shooting in Liberia where no movie has ever been shot?**

**B.J.:** We always loved to shoot in unlikely countries, like Vietnam for example, not only to take up challenges, but because the authenticity of a movie is also determined by the location of the shooting. So we consulted the insurances, they followed us on the project, and we realized that conditions were rather favourable: Liberia was entering a period of

moratorium and the President Ellen Johnson-Sirlea, who had just been elected, had undertaken the eradication of corruption and changed things in-depth.

**M.K.:** We arrived during that reconstruction period: the disarmament, the trial of Charles Taylor, etc. That's without counting the 15000 UN soldiers posted there to guarantee security.

**What were the relations with the people there like?**

**B.J.:** We got there with our project not knowing what will come out of it. But we received the authorisations from the Ministry of Culture and Youth, and the president herself gave us her blessing and assigned a maximum of people on the project. Everything was arranged with the local notaries. The Liberian law is a copy of the American one, it's rather complex, so we had to play it clean: we had tutors all the time, children went to school in the mornings, etc. Everything was official up to fees and bank operations, etc.

**M.K.:** Seeing the extent to which the whole country was in reconstruction logic, we tried to be as responsive as possible and be up to the task. In a way, the national reconciliation process was a permanent backing to our project.

**And from a technical and logistic point of view?**

**B.J.:** From the point of view of infrastructures, there was absolutely nothing; but the main problem came from the total embargo on arms. We contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations, and the American Secretary of State to lift the embargo for the demilitarised arms but to no avail. Shooting a war movie where there are constant shootings makes it much more complicated obviously! Though the United Nations finally gave us some arms from the stocks they had recuperated there.

**M.K.:** We've mainly used 'toys' replicas.

**How did shooting go with the local population?**

**B.J.:** First we wondered how people were going to react to the street shooting scenes. But they were hardened against it, there's no naivety left in them on that issue, and they perfectly know how to differentiate between reality and cinema. For the big scenes of extras requiring crowds, it worked perfectly: everybody screamed and ran and then went back taking water quietly as soon as we said "cut"; the first scene that was shot was a big street sequence with shootings from all sides. I called Elisa Larrière, the executive producer, while I was transiting in an airport en route to the shooting: she told me that everything went smooth. On this type of movie, you have to rely on luck, the first moments are decisive: we can evaluate, from the start, the chances of things working out fine or not.

**M.K.:** Actors were eager to render reality: they would hit each other for real to express the violence they've endured.

**So everything went ideally well?**

**B.J.:** We can't put it this way either: the English partners dropped us after 6 months of development, one month away from shooting and we found ourselves investing large amounts of our private money. After that, it's a big gamble; you're in "quit or continue" logic permanently. At the very beginning, we lost the camera during transport and shooting had to be postponed 6 days – which in such circumstances has catastrophic consequences. We shot in HD, which is a little feat, but with a rather classical crew: 18 French and Belgium technicians, a thirty or so local technicians. We were very lucky with the weather, it hardly rained.

**M.K.:** It's much harder to produce a movie like this one



than an 18 million Euros comedy! Anything can blow at any moment: technicians because of difficult conditions, children going out of control, what they often did as a matter of fact! When you're paying from your own money, you're never sure of making it till the end. We had to be very present on the shooting.

**How did you share out tasks?**

**M.K.:** Benoît was permanently commuting between the shooting of BABYLON A.D, the one of TWO WORLDS and Monrovia. Me, I want to be present during writing and editing: I'd rather not be where the camera is, and I don't want to be on the shooting.

**Shooting with children is always a challenge; how about children who had been soldiers?**

**M.K.:** One year before shooting, Jean-Stéphane went and settled down there to find children, particularly the two main characters: Johnny and Laokolé. He slowly found the ones he wanted, who in turn formed their little gang - the adult playing the commander was a real war leader during the last war. Afterwards, you have to be sure that the filmmaker is capable of carrying out his movie till the end. Hadn't we seen the documentaries of Jean-Stéphane, the way he worked with children, we would've never embarked on the project.

**B.J.:** Casting is the secret of such movies. Then everything rests on the way you deal with the group. Elisa, our executive producer on location, has been very helpful on this point.

**How do you deal with the aftermath of shooting?**

**B.J.:** We created an NGO "Johnny Mad Dog" with one house, two taxi and relays. Jean-Stéphane goes back there every time he can and we are going to raise funds to allow it to go

on as long as possible. We were there very early on; we cannot leave right after shooting is over.

**Emmanuel Dongala's novel goes very far in the representation of violence. What limits did you set for yourselves in this respect?**

**B.J.:** Jean-Stéphane immediately decided to deal with violence with a certain graphic sobriety.

**M.K.:** Anyway, we didn't have the means to create special effects. Jean-Stéphane wanted some shots to be more violent but I explained that it would be too expensive. When you do have the means you ask yourself whether you'd do it or not, so when you don't have them...This type of movie lies heavily on the shooting conditions: lack of money forces the filmmaker to rethink certain scenes, define his choices and impose decisions all the time. We shot with a steadicam because it was impossible for us to have a dolly for example...That's what we're here for: believing in the project of a filmmaker, budgeting sequences, adjusting the screenplay and the direction according to means.

**B.J.:** At first, Jean-Stéphane wanted to shoot with a hand-held camera, but the actors were far too small so the stead became an ideal way of being at the height of the children.

**Does the result meet your expectations?**

**M.K.:** Movies which deal with Africa are often remote from reality, whether it is HOTEL RWANDA, or THE CONSTANT GARDENER and many others. I think the scenario of JOHNNY MAD DOG requires to hold onto this realism: showing the humanity of those children who were deprived of their childhood, you have to move away from any moral judgment and insist on one example among many others, whether the story is linked to a historic period or not or to a precise country.

I find THE CITY OF GOD very impressive, but when I watch it I wonder what is it all about with all these kids who are so cool from the start... is it trying to explain that the favelas are infested with violence? We couldn't limit ourselves to this kind of statement when dealing with civil war. I think also that the fact of being Whites, landing there to talk about such a hot topic, required from us to be immediately concrete: how to be both in a reportage style without putting out fiction? When I did LA HAINE, I was told I was going to be attacked because I was not a suburban. With JOHNNY MAD DOG, I would have loved to direct this movie myself.

**And the fact of being “only” the producer?**

**M.K.:** When I saw the scenario and the images Jean-Stéphane had shot, I knew it was all there. The hazards of the shooting were predictable: I knew he was going to shoot more, improvise differently on the field, etc. My job starts when you have to rough out: a succession of very strong things does not form a strong lot. Jean-Stéphane came with an editing of 2h10 which is enormous for a shooting that lasted 7 weeks. We had to start off from there: cutting down on the direction and go back to the story and the subject, without neglecting the idea that you have to capture the attention of the viewer just as you do for a “normal” movie. My aim was to bring this outside look, that's why I want to be a producer and stay away from the shooting: it's to avoid being the director myself... My role, as a producer, is to be Mr. Bogeyman!(laughs)

**FILMOGRAPHY OF  
MATHIEU KASSOVITZ**

**DIRECTOR**

(FEATURE FILMS):

- 1993 **MÉTISSE**  
Les Productions Lazennec
- 1995 **LA HAINE**  
Les Productions Lazennec  
Awarded Best director at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival
- 1997 **ASSASSIN (S)**  
Lazennec Films  
1996 Cannes Film Festival official competition
- 2000 **LES RIVIERES POURPRES**  
Légende Entreprise
- 2003 **GOHIKA**  
Dark Castle
- 2007 **BABYLON A.D** (release date: 27 August 2008)  
Légende Entreprise

**PRODUCER**

- 2008 **LOUISE MICHEL** (in post production)  
Benoît DELEPINE and Gustave KERVERN  
**JOHNNY MAD DOG**  
Jean-Stéphane SAUVAIRE  
Selected in «Un Certain Regard»  
at the Cannes Film Festival 2008
- 2007 **LES DEUX MONDES** (released: 21th November 2007)  
Daniel COHEN
- 2005 **AVIDA**  
Benoît DELEPINE et Gustave KERVERN  
Official Selection, out of competition Cannes 2006
- 2004 **NEG MARON**  
Jean-Claude FLAMAND BARNY

**ACTOR**

- 1978 **AU BOUT DU BOUT DU BANC**  
Peter KASSOVITZ
- 1981 **L'ANNÉE PROCHAINE SI TOUT VA BIEN**  
Jean-Loup HUBERT
- 1991 **TOUCH AND DIE**  
Piernico SOLINAS
- 1992 **ASSASSINS** (short)  
Mathieu KASSOVITZ  
**UN ÉTÉ SANS HISTOIRE**  
Philippe HAREL
- 1993 **MÉTISSE**  
Mathieu KASSOVITZ  
**REGARDE LES HOMMES TOMBER**  
Jacques AUDIARD
- 1994 **AVANT... MAIS APRÉS**  
Tonie MARSHALL  
**ELLE VOULAIT FAIRE QUELQUE CHOSE** (short)  
Dodine HERRY
- 1995 **DES NOUVELLES DU BON DIEU**  
Didier LEPECHEUR  
**UN HÉROS TRES DISCRET**  
Jacques AUDIARD  
**LA HAINE**  
Mathieu KASSOVITZ  
**MON HOMME**  
Bertrand BLIER
- 1997 **LE CINQUIÈME ÉLÉMENT**  
Luc BESSON  
**ASSASSIN (S)**  
Mathieu KASSOVITZ

- 1998 **LE PLAISIR ET SES PETITS TRACAS**  
Nicolas BOUKHRIEF
- 1999 **JAKOB THE LIAR**  
Peter KASSOVITZ
- BIRTHDAY GIRL**  
Jez BUTTERWORTH
- 2000 **LE FABULEUX DESTIN**  
**D'AMÉLIE POULAIN**  
Jean-Pierre JEUNET
- TARUBI, L'ARABE STRAIT** (short)  
Kim CHAPIRON
- ASTÉRIX ET OBÉLIX,**  
**MISSION CLÉOPATRE**  
Alain CHABAT
- 2001 **AMEN**  
Costa GAVRAS
- 2005 **MUNICH**  
Steven SPIELBERG

**FILMOGRAPHY OF  
BENOÎT JAUBERT**

**PRODUCER**

- 2008 **LOUISE MICHEL** (in post production)  
Benoît DELÉPINE and Gustave KERVERN
- JOHNNY MAD DOG**  
Jean-Stéphane SAUVAIRE  
Selected in «Un Certain Regard»  
at the Cannes Film Festival 2008
- 2007 **LES DEUX MONDES** (released: 21th November 2007)  
Daniel COHEN
- 2005 **AVIDA**  
Benoît DELÉPINE et Gustave KERVERN  
Official Selection, out of competition Cannes 2006
- 2002 **SNOWBOARDER**  
Olias BARCO

2000 to 2003 **ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**  
**IN NORD OUEST PRODUCTION**

In 1995, production by Lazennec Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh Ville:  
**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

- 2007 **BABYLON A.D** (French release August 27th 2008)  
Mathieu KASSOVITZ
- 2000 **À LA VERTICALE DE L'ÉTÉ**  
Tran Anh HUNG
- 1995 **CYCLO**  
Tran Anh HUNG

# JOHNNY MAD DOG FOUNDATION

The Johnny Mad Dog Foundation was created with the aim of bringing framework and support to the young actors of the Johnny Mad Dog movie. Most of them are ex-children soldiers who have fought in Liberia with Charles Taylor or the Lurd forces (Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy) until August 2003, or children living in the streets without any family structure.

Between June 2006 and May 2007 -end of filming- some fifteen children aged between 12 and 17, were taken in to receive acting tutelage.

The foundation has since set up an educational program in Monrovia, monitored by an educator, and centred on education and health. Its mission is to help and assist the children in their daily life and help them develop long-term projects.

The Foundation's aim is to enlarge its action to the Liberian children, victims of a 14 years-long Civil War, in a country that is today in reconstruction.

Our aim is to develop educational, sport and cultural programs.

Contact :

mail : [contact@jmdfoundation.org](mailto:contact@jmdfoundation.org)

website : [www.jmdfoundation.org](http://www.jmdfoundation.org)



**JOHNNY  
MAD DOG**

**WRITTEN BY EMMANUEL DONGALA**

(Serpent à Plumes publishing)

In this novel, which features teenagers who have hardly had a childhood, Emmanuel Dongola dwells on a nation's struggle to save its humanity in an Africa ravaged by absurd wars.

Writer and playwright, Emmanuel Dongola was born in 1941, of a Congolese father and a mother from Central Africa. While he spent his childhood and adolescence in the Republic of Congo, he studied in the United States and France, and taught chemistry at Brazzaville University.

He resides today in the USA with his family since 1998 after having fled from Congo and its murderous civil war in which he lost everything. He teaches chemistry at Simon's Rock College in Massachusetts, and French literature at the Bard College in the State of New York. His novels have been translated in twelve or so languages and his plays have been produced in Africa as well as in Europe. «Johnny Mad Dog» on which this film is based, draws on his experience of this civil war and his various encounters with child soldiers.

Of the same author:

Jazz et vin de palme, Motifs n° 39

Les petits garçons naissent aussi dans les étoiles, Motifs n° 112

Le feu des origines, Motifs n° 139

Un fusil dans la main, un poème dans la poche, Motifs n° 189



A coproduction MNP Entreprise & Explicit Films  
In coproduction with Scope Pictures  
With the participation of the Centre National de la Cinématographie  
and CANAL+  
With the support of the Republic of Liberia  
Based on Emmanuel Dongala's novel «Johnny Mad Dog»  
published by Editions le Serpent à Plumes  
A film by Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire  
Screenplay and Dialogues: Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire and Jacques Fieschi  
Produced by Mathieu Kassovitz and Benoît Jaubert  
Executive producer: Elisa Larrière  
Associate Producers: Explicit Films / Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire  
Scope Pictures / Alexandre Lippens / Geneviève Lemal

## **CREW**

Director of photography: Marc Koninckx, AFC  
1st assistant director: Nicolas Levy-Beff  
Acting Coach: Karine Nuris  
Assistant director Liberia: Samuel T. Sherman  
Sound Engineer: Yves Comélieau  
Production designer: Alexandre Vivet  
Editor: Stéphane Elmadjian  
Sound supervisor: Les Kouz  
Military advisor: Joseph Duo  
Set photographer: Théo/SynchroX  
Laboratory - GTC/ECLAIR GROUP  
International Sales: TF1 International  
Distributor: TFM DISTRIBUTION  
Publicity: Cédric Landemaine

With the support of the Belgium Federal Government Tax Shelter  
Shot in LIBERIA - Monrovia and its surroundings  
Clayashland - Careysburg - New Kru Town - Ricks Community  
With the support of the Republic of Liberia, France Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs and the UNMIL

## **MUSIC AND SOUNDBITES**

«THIS IS MY WILL»  
Music written and composed by Joseph Duo  
Interpreted by Mohammed Sesay  
and the «Johnny Mad Dog Small Boy Unit»

«STRANGE FRUIT»  
Music composed by Lewis Allan (ASCAP)  
Interpreted by Nina Simone  
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Universal Music Publishing France

Soundbites «I HAVE A DREAM»  
Speech by Martin Luther King  
License granted by intellectual properties management, Atlanta,  
Georgia, as exclusive licensor of the King Estate

Soundbites of the movie «LES ORANGES VERTES DU LIBÉRIA»  
de Zlatina Rousseva  
Produced by GOOD & BAD NEWS

«LEYENDECKER» (DJ EMZ remix feat. Joell Ortiz)  
(John Stainer / Dave Konopka / Tyondai Braxton / Ian Williams)

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Original score written, interpreted and mixed by  
Jackson Tennessee Fourgeaud  
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Dépôt légal 2008

## CAST

JOHNNY MAD DOG

LAOKOLE

NO GOOD ADVICE

SMALL DEVIL

BUTTERFLY

PUSSY CAT

YOUNG MAJOR

NASTY PLASTIC

JUNGLE ROCKET

CPT DUST TO DUST

NEVER DIE

LOVELITA

FOFO

JOSEPH

IBRAHIM

MR KAMARA

MME KAMARA

TANYA TOYO

MAN WITH BIKE

CHRISTOPHER MINIE

DAISY VICTORIA VANDY

DAGBEH TWEH

BARRY CHERNOH

MOHAMMED SESAY

LEO BOYENEH KOTE

PRINCE KOTIE

NATHANIEL J. KAPEYOU

ERIC COLE

PRINCE DOBLAH

JOSEPH DUO

CAREEN MOORE

ONISMUS KAMOH

TERRY JOHNSON

LAWRENCE KING

MAXWELL CARTER

MIATA FAHNBULLEH

MASSIATA E. KENNEH

TOE JACKSON

