

UGC presents

Emilie Dequenne
Catherine Deneuve
Michel Blanc
Ronit Elkabetz Mathieu Demy Nicolas Duvauchelle

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN

a film by
André Téchiné

Screenplay - adaptation - dialogues
André Téchiné, Odile Barski, Jean-Marie Besset

produced by Saïd Ben Saïd

Based on the play "RER" by Jean-Marie Besset

A SBS FILMS production, in coproduction with FRANCE 2 CINEMA,
in association with SOFICA UGC 1 and SOFICA SOFICINEMA 5,
with the participation of
CANAL +, TPS STAR and the National Cinema Centre (CNC)

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Length : 1H45



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SYNOPSIS

JEANNE (Emilie Dequenne) lives in a house in the suburbs with her mother Louise (Catherine Deneuve). The two women get along together well. LOUISE earns a living babysitting. JEANNE, without too much conviction, is looking for a job.

One day, when reading an ad on the Internet, LOUISE believes that destiny has finally knocked at her door.

She hopes to get her daughter hired by the firm of SAMUEL BLEISTEIN (Michel Blanc), a well-known attorney she once knew when she was young.

Jeanne's world and that of BLEISTEIN are light-years apart...Nevertheless, they are going to meet because of an incredible lie that Jeanne concocts.

The film is the story of this lie which is to become the most mediatised and politicised news item of recent years.

*"I amuse myself
by showing you
how beautiful,
how very beautiful is this story
of a revealed lie."
Luigi Pirandello
"Dress Those Who Are Naked"*

INTERVIEW WITH ANDRÉ TÉCHINÉ

Before thinking of making a film, what memories do you keep of the "RER D affair", which occurred on 9 July 2004?

That of the most mediatised and politicised news item of the last ten years. But it was thanks to Jean-Marie Besset's play, entitled "R.E.R", that I remembered this case. I was shaken by the violence of the act of this young woman, and everything that it aroused. This story became the mirror of all French fears, fears deeply anchored in our society, a revelation of what we call the "collective unconscious". How an individual's lie is transformed into truth with respect to the community at large and their fears? It's a truly fascinating subject.

The film is divided into two parts. First, the circumstances, and then the consequences of the lie.

Yes, one of the first ideas was to cut the film in two. First, relate the genealogy of a lie, then the incredible consequences that this fabrication was to bring about, until the judgement by the courts. I kept of Jean-Marie Besset's play his documentary work, all which belonged to the public domain. On the other hand, the more intimate part, the work on the characters and their relationships was completely changed. I equally made use of the reporting of the news event. I rigorously reproduced the declarations made in the reality of the period. I simply emphasised the fact that the all was based on an empty judicial case.

But did you invent the romance between Jeanne (Emilie Dequenne) and Franck (Nicolas Duvauchelle)?

The true heroine of this news item was closely attached to her companion and her mother. When she was interrogated as to the reasons for her act, she answered that she wanted to "exist more" in the eyes of these two people. The triangle is therefore quite real. But it's only a reference. From that point on, I invented everything.

To "exist more" is somewhat vague. The great mystery remains the motivation behind this lie...

The motivations of the heroine are not transparent. They can't be. Her lie surpasses her. It was important for me to preserve her enigmatic character. Even if I tend to think that was a need for love which took on monstrous proportions, it remains puzzling and disturbing. When you get right down to it, I think that it was the scandalous and monstrous aspect of this character which led me to make the film. I'm a bit fed up of wishy-washy characters in the cinema. With Jeanne, there was suddenly something inhuman which came to the fore. She became an "extra ordinary" character, both a real one and one from a fantasy film. She might be what is called as well a "subversive character", I really don't know. We collide with a block of resistance if we try to understand. With a film, one always pursues the invisible. And, at the same time, it was out of the question for me to imagine her as a pure Martian! On the contrary, she has a certain *joie de vivre*, she glides along on her rollerblades, both physical and dream-like. In any event, I wanted to love this woman, without darkening or clearing her, she who was at the root of the whole scandal...

She's someone who believed she touched happiness with the her fingertip, and suddenly everything was taken away from her...

All through the romance with Franck, I followed her step by step, from their first meeting until their final separation, without any ellipsis. I wanted their desire to build from sequence to sequence, and for a bond to be created between them. It was both a cinematic and erotic experience to give birth to a couple. I had no programme for that. It wasn't in the script. For example, I showed their dialogue as if filmed by a Webcam, for as an explorer of sorts I was unfamiliar with this extremely modern and widespread means of establishing personal contacts. It takes place in a time which is the same, but in a space which is different. This defies the traditional rules of angle/reverse angle, and moreover, it's quite realistic. Their looks cannot cross. Their presences are both virtual and real. We find ourselves at the heart of an intimate yet highly sexually charged imaginary. On the contrary, when I show the news on television, we are transported to the collective imagination of the news and truth. It was important for me to present the true victim of anti-Semitic aggression according to the "mass" version of TV news. Raw footage was transplanted into the film. This certainly played a role in the fabrication of Jeanne's lie. This is the case of many elements in the first part of the film that we come across once again as deformed in the lies of her declaration. In any event until the blow of the knife, which arrives only after one hour, the film has nothing dramatic to it. I sought on the contrary a form of pleasure and availability. I used stressed her rollerblades to give freedom of movement, that feeling of joy of being on the ground yet being able to take off. I wanted something light, like a dance. In this first part, above all, I had to avoid programming the coming storm. I hate the "shadow of the impending drama" aspect. It was necessary to simply show moments of happiness.

In the second part of the film, the focus is on the consequences of Jeanne's lie and the media explosion. A description of the state of a society...

This is the second part. For me, it's almost a second film which begins. When the affair is suddenly picked up by the news, and her mother (Catherine Deneuve) announces to her that she's being talked about on TV, Jeanne can't believe her ears. The fiction which she had invented, cooked up in her little corner with the few elements at her disposal (including the authentic rise of anti-Semitism in the shape of physical aggression), suddenly becomes a "success". All at once it catches on! And the story which everybody then tells - about which everybody must have an opinion - totally escapes the distress of this young suburbanite mythomaniac. In her world, she would have gone straight to the police station to lodge a complaint, but her attacker wouldn't have been found, since there wasn't any, and the story would have been over and done with. The entire affair could have and would have stopped then and there. But it didn't. So, why? How can we explain the "success" of this made-up piece of fiction? The film exposes all the stages of the whirlwind, but leaves it up to the audience to find their own answer. Each will have to attempt to understand why this affair became so blown up and out of proportion. Above all, I didn't to make a film with a message or one to be debated. The most striking point of view is that of Mathieu Demy's character when he says that the State literally invented the whole RER D affair out of thin air, and not this unfortunate woman! But what makes this case so rich and interesting is that not only does it reflect all our fears but also the very danger of our moral order.

The film plays with elements of both tragedy and comedy. Of course, this story is tragic but the exaggeration which follows is almost comical...

One should never be afraid of these elements! It's only when it's comical or tragic that a story proves its true vitality. I do each sequence for itself, for the emotion which it gives off, not how it fits into the rest of the script.

What emotion were you seeking, for example, in the dealer's scene?

For the scene of the dealer, it's like a stab in the back. It had to hurt. I was told, "Watch out for whodunits!", "Watch out for blood and gore!" Little matter! It was important to discover that Frank, the wrestling champ, is a human being too, just like you or me, made out of flesh and blood. I assumed the action with the greatest precision possible, without any special effects such as slow or fast motion, playing on the evolution of balance of power, with the illusion of real duration and employment of concrete space.

The film is not linear. It stirs up a whole host of characters. There is the presence of the past and another and entirely different family, in counterpoint to the mother-daughter couple represented by Emilie Dequenne and Catherine Deneuve.

In the very first scene of the film, we see the mother looking for a job for her daughter on the Web. And then the name of Bleistein appears. One which she has long forgot and now all at once resurfaces. It's this Jewish name which sets the story off. It cannot remain abstract. So I decided to show the individuals who bear it. Three generations. The son, father and grandfather, each in his own

singularity. And then the character of Judith, the stranger who is both integrated and out of synch. All this human matter forms a small world of its own, like a little film in parallel. And then interferences are created with Jeanne's story. And even narrow connections. In the end, grandfather Bleistein will write a book about her and his grandson. Nathan will send her from Venice his first declaration of love. I wanted to make a film-song where poetry and story fuse together, the very opposite of a "case" film.

In the heart of the film, there is the theme of identity...

Precisely, since at the heart of Jeanne's lie lies the desire to become Jewish on the persecutive mode, it's an identification. And then there is the question of Bar Mitzvah for Nathan who becomes both a stake and source of conflict for the family members. It's strange, moreover, that membership in the community entails for Jeanne being held for questioning and the sanction of justice, while for Nathan, it takes place through the religious ceremony which connects him to a community. I put these two identical experiences in parallel at the end of the film. But as to the question, so current, of identity, a sole and seemingly frozen direction would have been a fatal twist. If identity is not plural and discontinuous, it quickly becomes the absence of freedom.

FILMOGRAPHY OF ANDRÉ TÉCHINÉ

2007	THE WITNESSES
2004	CHANGING TIMES
2003	STRAYED
2001	FAR
1998	ALICE AND MARTIN
1996	THIEVES
1994	THE WILD REEDS
1993	MY FAVOURITE SEASON
1991	I DON'T KISS
1987	THE INNOCENTS
1986	THE SCENE OF THE CRIME
1985	ANDRÉ TÉCHINÉ'S RENDEZ- VOUS
1983	MATIOUETTE
1981	HOTEL OF THE AMERICAS
1979	THE BRONTE SISTERS
1976	BAROCCO
1975	FRENCH PROVINCIAL
1975	PAULINA IS LEAVING

CAST

EMILIE DEQUENNE	Jeanne
CATHERINE DENEUVE	Louise
MICHEL BLANC	Samuel Bleistein
RONIT ELKABETZ	Judith
MATHIEU DEMY	Alex
NICOLAS DUVAUCHELLE	Franck
JEREMY QUAEGEBEUR	Nathan

CREW

Directed by	ANDRÉ TÉCHINÉ
Script - adaptation - dialogues	ANDRÉ TÉCHINÉ, ODILE BARSKI, JEAN-MARIE BESSET
Produced by	SAÏD BEN SAÏD
Original music	PHILIPPE SARDE
Cinematographer	JULIEN HIRSCH
First Assistant	MICHEL NASRI
Sound	JEAN-PAUL MUGEL, FRANCIS WARGNIER, CYRIL HOLTZ
Sets	MICHÈLE ABBE
Editor	MARTINE GIORDANO
Costumes	KHADIJA ZEGGAÏ
Production manager	BRUNO BERNARD
Post-production	ABRAHAM GOLDBLAT
Pressbook interviews	FREDERIC BONNAUD
International sales	UGC
Video editions	UGC VIDEO

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