

A UGC WESTERN VISION

JEAN
DUJARDIN
IS
LUCKY LUKE
A FILM BY
JAMES HUTH

UGC

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**JEAN-FRANÇOIS
BALMER**

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MEDIA

A UGC WESTERN VISION

Jean **DUJARDIN**

LUCKY LUKE

Michaël **YOUN**, Sylvie **TESTUD**, Daniel **PREVOST**, Alexandra **LAMY**,
Melvil **POUPAUD**, André **OUMANSKY**, Jean-François **BALMER**

A film by James **HUTH**

Based on "The Adventures of Lucky Luke" - In tribute to Morris and Goscinny

Screenplay, adaptation and dialogue by
Sonja Shillito, James Huth and Jean Dujardin

A coproduction of
UGC YM - UGC IMAGES – FRANCE 2 CINEMA - FRANCE3 CINEMA
In coproduction with
CAPTAIN MOVIES

French release by UGC DISTRIBUTION : October 21, 2009

Running time: 104'

www.lucky-luke-le-film.com



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SYNOPSIS

Jean Dujardin stars as "the man who shoots faster than his shadow": LUCKY LUKE. The one and only, accompanied by his faithful companion, Jolly Jumper.

While on duty in his hometown of Daisy Town, he crosses paths with Billy the Kid (played by Michaël Youn), Calamity Jane (Sylvie Testud), Pat Poker (Daniel Prévost), Jesse James (Melvil Poupaud) and Belle (Alexandra Lamy).

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES HUTH

How did you get involved with this film?

Yves Marmion showed up one day and said, "...how about Lucky Luke?". He'd come to ask on behalf of Brigitte Maccioni. I was a little absent-minded and immediately answered, "Sure, with Jean, in Argentina." That was in December 2005. When I got out I thought, "What are you, crazy? You always take six months to make up your mind to do a film. Why did you say yes so fast?" Then I remembered how I grew up with "Lucky Luke" comic books. I can still see myself getting out of school and running to the newsstand to buy Panini stickers to put in my "Lucky Luke" album. It was my favorite comic. I also liked "Tintin" and "Astérix", of course, but there was something about "Lucky Luke" that spoke to me more than the others. That cultural crossroads, with a character right in the middle of two worlds... An American western, yet totally French. So many things about the story seemed to fit me...

Later, I asked myself why Jean's name came to me right away, and I realized that what I knew about him on a personal basis corresponded to my vision of Lucky Luke. Jean is a man with his feet on the ground, a steadfast straight shooter with a truly dark side. He really has that soul of the "lonesome cowboy" within him.

Finally, I tried to understand why I thought of Argentina. I'd never really seen pictures but I'd dreamed of going there since I was a teenager. I'd imagined a fabulous country, with extraordinary and tremendous scenery. To bring our French characters to life and give them the mark of realism, I needed the spirit of wide open spaces to make our French western a real western. To me, Lucky Luke is a romantic figure, destined to walk off alone into the sunset, fighting the endless battle against injustice. In my mind, Argentina embodied that romantic image of America. When I spoke the name of the country, I fantasized about scenery and when I went there, I found it all. As if it was waiting for me.

You have always made films like comic books in a way: *The Brice Man*, *Serial Lover* or *Hellphone*, for example. It was only natural that you end up adapting one.

I have a large visual vocabulary and I love comic books in general. I love taking in audiences, pushing the limits of the plausible. I've done a lot of magic, and getting people to feel emotions in a movie theater is pretty similar. You feel a little like the Wizard of Oz, pulling the strings. There's nothing more exciting than pushing back the limits of the possible with an audience that's right there with you.

If I said yes to Lucky Luke so quickly, it's also because right away I saw how the transplanted could work. When you adapt a comic book or any existing work, if you take its world and try to put it into a film as is, there's a 150% chance the result won't be as good as the original. Doing a copy and paste job doesn't work. Adapting means finding the soul of the original work and figuring out how to transpose it into another world. In the case of Lucky Luke, the first step is to bring him to life, to go from a hero to a human being. Same for the other characters: all at once you have to see their sweat, the texture of their skin... for them to come to life, with their voices, accents, fears, worries and sense of humor... After that, we asked ourselves, who is Lucky Luke? I started asking him questions: What's your real name? No one is named Lucky Luke, except if you're a comic book hero. Is Luke your first name or last? And why are you nicknamed "Lucky"? Who are your parents? Why don't you ever kill anyone? Why are you so determined to protect the West? We went through every book, looking for threads to pull out and develop, information that could help us build his character.

How would you describe the film?

Lucky Luke is not a pastiche. It's not a parody of John Ford or Sergio Leone. It's a "comedy western adventure" - in that order. I think we don't have enough heroes in France, and the film was an opportunity to make a real French hero. That was very important to me.

Why didn't you adapt one book in particular?

If we decided to tell Luke's story, his secrets, what happened to him in his childhood, none of the books in the series could be faithfully adapted. Because none of them contain this information. When UGC told me they held the rights to the complete adventures of "Lucky Luke", I saw we had the opportunity to write a script containing answers to all the questions I'd been asking myself about the character, and to add in the best moments from all of Lucky Luke's adventures. All at once, we were free to bring Billy The Kid, Calamity Jane, Pat Poker and Jesse James into the same film. What a blast! Writing a story without following the story line of one particular comic book meant I could also include classic themes of westerns I grew up with: the family secret, betrayal, revenge... So it was a double advantage to take the structure of a western and borrow from all the "Lucky Luke" comic books. To be able to bring the character to life and do justice to the world Morris created, without compromising any one story.

Then came the question of how to make that world show up on film.

To make a faithful adaptation of "Lucky Luke" for the big screen, we had to translate the spirit of the comic book into emotions.

Lucky Luke has that funny forelock and he dresses in yellow, white, blue, red... The guy's a walking color chart! Also, he doesn't smoke any more, instead he has a blade of grass in the corner of his mouth. Tough for a cowboy... How do you keep him from seeming ridiculous? We worked a lot on the costumes. We balanced textures and colors, and aged the clothes to place our hero in historical context and tell us about his life. He carries his story with him, he wears it. His shirts have been re-sewn a hundred times with authentic old thread... He has a permanent two-day growth of beard, his boots are well worn... All those details were of the utmost importance in bringing our cowboy to life. Same thing with his oversized hat. When Jean saw the hat coming, he said with worry: "Am I really going to wear that?" "Yes, and that's what's going to make you Lucky Luke." Morris drew long lanky characters with large or small hats, or small men with big heads. He played with proportions. We had to find an equivalent for that signature style of his in our characters.

When I started thinking about the sets, I realized it would be impossible to be absolutely faithful to the colors and drawings of the comic books. If you put real characters into paper mache sets, you can't make people believe they exist and have feelings. On the other hand, you can't have the same sets as an ordinary western, because it's not Lucky Luke. So I searched in the spirit of the comic book and decided to push the exaggerated proportions of the characters a bit further by adapting the sets in the same way. Even though all the sets are inspired by historical constructions, it was by distorting the facades, breaking down the lines, adapting the colors and creating lettering on the border between historical truth and Morris' drawing style, that we re-transcribed the world of "Lucky Luke". To create such extreme scenic art, the details had to be as realistic as possible. We let real food rot in the saloon, for example. I didn't go out of my way to film them, but the actors knew they were there. The flies that swarmed around them were real. We were dying in the heat. The film needed that sweaty feeling, that realism.

How did you work special effects into that approach?

It was imperative that we stay within the film's historical period: 1869, which is when the railway linked the East to the West in the U.S.. A major event which would mean the end of cowboys. So it was imperative that the special effects be invisible - that you don't ever get distracted from the action by the realization it was shot today. I have to say the crew did an fantastic job.

We also did a lot of the effects live, for the sake of believability: explosions, objects flying everywhere... I love it!

That must be the prestidigitator in you coming out.

Exactly!

The soundtrack is an explosive and audacious mix, which works perfectly.

It's a reflection of the world of "Lucky Luke": an encounter between two very different worlds, the American West and our French culture. That's what I like: the collision between two extremes. In the film, there's a shot where you see someone turn a sign over from "Closed" to "Ouvert". That was a drawing I saw in "Lucky Luke", which I thought was marvelously symbolic of the comic as a whole. That world halfway between two continents, two cultures, French and American. The music came out the same way, a great split. On the one hand you have the score, filled with a spirit of adventure and heroic themes. I've been lucky to be able to work with Bruno Coulais from my first film on, he always knows how to find the perfect music for my images. On the other hand, you have songs that reflect the western's evolution and the culture that surrounds it today: hard rock, mexican music... We had a lot of fun with the soundtrack. Because Lucky Luke is a celebration, we have to remember that.

If Morris could see the film, how would you want him to feel?

I'd want him to feel like he had just closed a comic book as he walked out of the movie theater. I'd dream of him designating the film as the true adaptation of his work. Quite simply, I'd want him to be proud. Today, I can say to myself, "I made Lucky Luke." It's an extraordinary chance, a kid's dream come true, something very personal to me. It's true that coming out of the movie, I'd like the audience to feel the same way they do when they close one of the comic books. Jean and I really felt like this movie was made for us. I can't imagine anyone else in the world who could take on the character like he did. When you look at Morris' artwork, it's like he was drawing Jean. For him and me alike, shooting Lucky Luke was an opportunity that couldn't be missed. Now I only wish for one thing: that people who see the film won't be able to open up a "Lucky Luke" comic book without seeing Jean Dujardin. That would make the film a success.

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN DUJARDIN

What was your first impression when you saw the film?

I found it very consistent, completely on target. I was taken in by it. Lucky Luke is an audacious film that is very much like James Huth. As director, he has the freedom, the skill and that link to childhood which makes the subject perfect for him. The colors, locations and costumes are magnificent. James wanted real clothes, not party costumes, and that perfectionism permeated the whole film. I can tell you he worked hard: when I saw him run a third of a mile at an altitude of over 13,000 feet, I honestly thought we were going to lose him at some point. But he charged forward all the same. James is so strong-willed that he fills the whole team with that same enthusiasm, from the tech crew to the mixers, even the color timers. I also think the actors are perfect for their roles, with Michaël Youn's energy, Melvil Poupaud's nonchalance, Sylvie Testud's friendly dependability, Daniel Prévost's deceitfulness - what a villain for kids - and the benevolence, the old lion's gaze of Jean-François Balmer. None of us thought we were better than the characters we were playing, there was absolutely no cynicism. We all played our parts fully, without being self-conscious.

What went on in your mind when James Huth came to see you and said, "How about doing Lucky Luke?"

Between "How about doing Lucky Luke?" and "We're doing Lucky Luke," three years passed. In the beginning, we talked about it over coffee, it was a fantasy, we had fun with it, like kids... Then it took time for the machine to get started up, to find the budget and the actors, for everyone to agree... When they finally tell you the film is a go, the dreams make way for work. You have to ask yourself from what angle you're going to be able to get into the character. It's very arrogant, pretentious even, to say you're going to "do Lucky Luke". In any case, I'm not going to play Lucky Luke in a flashy yellow shirt and black vest, squinting and pursing my lips like a cartoon. You have to adapt the character, beat down a path to him, and he has to come towards you, too. Who is Lucky Luke? A wanderer, the chosen one, the protector of the West. But what do you want to say about him? From there, you start developing the subject, the script, you ask yourself questions. Why doesn't he ever stop? Why doesn't he ever lay down? Why doesn't he ever sleep? Wouldn't he like to have a farm and take it easy for a while? Isn't he quite simply fed up with his role of upholding the law? In the end, the real question behind them all is: how do you make him human? It was essential to give him roots, and that's why I did the film. I wanted to see a Lucky Luke who stopped a moment to set down his guns. Because deep down I know he's going to pick them up again. That it's just a prelude, and as soon as he starts out again, it's going to be big. So yes, it's that American-style gimmick, but we all love that stuff. Exactly like when Adrian looks at Rocky and says, "Win." You see that again and it doesn't matter how old you are, you cry. As spectators, we were all brought up that way.

What is your relationship to Lucky Luke comic books?

At home, at your cousin's, in your godmother's bathroom, in the old cupboards of old houses in the country, there's always an old "Lucky Luke" around, often next to an old "Tintin" or Asterix". Out of the three comics, I've always felt closest to "Lucky Luke". The drawings in "Tintin" are too minimalist, he always seemed too androgynous... I don't want to put the others down by comparison, but Lucky Luke was the only "hero" to me. As a

kid, I loved heroes on TV and in movies, and Lucky Luke was my comic book hero. “Johan et Pirlouit” and “Achille Talon” didn't measure up... Luke was a cowboy. A French cowboy. That's absurd in itself. Which is a good thing. Playing Lucky Luke is also a chance to play a cowboy. Like secret agent “OSS 117”, he belongs to a range of characters that sooner or later needs to be explored. It's not a risk – it's a gift.

Still, there's a risk involved in taking on such an iconic figure...

It's an adaption of a comic book, so it's an ideal project for getting bashed. That's no reason for not doing it. We took liberties with the character, of course, but I think I've respected him: he's loyal, honest, silent, sometimes dark. And little awkward when it comes to love, which he doesn't know much about.

I never doubted that I was Lucky Luke. It's very pretentious to say that, but I knew that I could be the character. Add something to him, give him masculinity, make him a movie hero. I'm convinced that if you worry too much about the way people see you, you become paranoid. You can't worry about what people think of you. There's only one question to ask yourself: what do you really want to do? Go to Argentina for four months and be a cowboy? Then do it. Thanks to “Lucky Luke”, I had a western to do. A French western, but a western nonetheless.

The shoot took you to Argentina for four months...

I arrived in Buenos Aires a week early to meet the crew, visit the workshops and do costume tests... I found the Argentines incredibly motivated, with a rhythm quite different from ours because they party and go to sleep late. So mornings were a little tough for them, but there was an amazing spirit of enthusiasm on the set, even with the extras. I think everyone was delighted to be doing a western.

The first day, we went out into a sandy desert at an altitude of over 13,000 feet, which wasn't exactly easy. It took a while for everyone to understand each other, since we were speaking English, Spanish and French on the shoot. The light was blinding, we were out of breath, the horses were frightened... But by the next day, we were off and running. We couldn't allow ourselves to slow down: three days in the mountains, three days in Cachi, and so on... Even a small storm would have thrown everything off, but we were adding up our good luck. We managed to avoid the squalls.

I experience some real moments of joy on this shoot. Alexandra and I had a great time, we were happy to be on the screen again together in a context and rhythm completely different from “Un Gars, Une Fille”.

I also remember those sequences riding through the cactus with Sylvie, and laughing uncontrollably with Michaël Youn, who cracked me up with his snotty little boy voice. He did amazing work with his voice, facial expression and presence. Sometimes he really scared me, like when he says, “You stole my youth, Luke. Now I'm going to steal your old age.” He was definitely the right actor - he really fits the part. It was wonderful working with Melvil Poupaud, too. He comes from a very different world from mine, films by Ozon and Rohmer... But he was like a kid, incredibly funny and happy to be there. Testud was born friendly – it takes about two minutes to become buddies with her. Balmer is a hedonist who savors everything. He's in the middle of nowhere in Argentina, where the trucks pass through, up at an altitude of 11,500 feet, and he could care less. He takes off, quite philosophically, exploring the hills, getting carried away by stuff... He could sit in front of an ant hill for an hour and find that fantastic. I'd like him to teach me his secret. Maybe it's age. Or the business. Or Switzerland...

Did that childhood fantasy of “playing a cowboy” come true?

All the time. When you're getting ready for a duel and you ask for the music from “My Name is Nobody” on the set, it's obviously pure childish pleasure. Like when I'm walking on the edge of the pool in “OSS 117”, I'd asked them to play the music from “Le Magnifique” on the shoot. It was also a pleasure to show up on the set of Daisy Town, to stroll down the street of a real cowboy town. I stared at the details like a kid – I couldn't believe it was fake. That's why we make movies: to believe in them. And there, I totally believed it was real.

Was the physical preparation complex?

No. I showed up for lessons from the horse trainer Mario Luraschi. I got on a horse and he said to me, “Okay, you don't know a thing.” Then he added that we were going out for 15 to 20 hours of riding. I worked on the basics, learned how to walk alongside the horse, look at the horse, understand the horse, lean to the left, to the right, close my eyes, let go of the reins. Whether it was walking, trotting or galloping, Mario wanted me to completely forget what was underneath me. I wanted to learn to ride and it was important that I do it, to facilitate the shoot. He said to me: “I'm not going to teach you how to ride a horse, because we don't have time. I'm going to teach you to be a cowboy.” I thought that was pretty smart. He also told me, “The horse is in college, but you're in preschool. He knows he has an idiot on top of him, so he's going to test you.” I had to keep my back straight and learn how to use the reins. Once you succeed, it's fantastic. You're completely one with the horse.

How did it feel the first time you put on Lucky Luke's costume?

I'm naturally a little bowlegged. It was funny. I looked at myself and had the feeling it was going to work. That I could be a cowboy, and why not, Lucky Luke. A costume can be punishment, too. Lucky Luke wears a size 19.5 shoe, with big high heels. The gun is a little heavy, the hat flew off with the 125 mile per hour wind that was constantly blowing in Argentina. You can't see it on screen, but when I'm water skiing in the beginning of the film, the water is 40°F and the wind is blowing 112 miles per hour. We were really at the weather's mercy, it wasn't a ride in an amusement park.

Last question: we notice a few characters have been left out of the film, like the Daltons and Rantanplan. Why?

We often get asked that question. But the Daltons, like Rantanplan, are in all the Lucky Luke comics. There were a lot of other characters to invite, like Jesse James and Pat Poker. And the film is called Lucky Luke. It is the story of that man.

THE CHARACTERS BY JAMES HUTH

**MICHAËL YOUN
IS
BILLY THE KID**

Billy The Kid is the bad boy of the West, with a hat straight out of a Dickens novel. He's capable of killing someone just because he has a nice snakeskin jacket. In a flash, he goes from immature child to dangerous madman – and nobody knows if he'll pull out a Colt... or a lollipop.

**SYLVIE TESTUD
IS
CALAMITY JANE**

Rifle over the shoulder and flask of whisky at the hip, Calamity Jane goes about her business alone, like Lucky Luke, in a world of outlaws and brutes. She swears, spits and fights like a man. But beneath her layers of animal skins is a sensitive woman, unwaveringly loyal to Luke – and not indifferent to his charm.

**MELVIL POUPAUD
IS
JESSE JAMES**

With his greatcoat and endless flowing cape, his long revolver with a mother-of-pearl handle, Jesse James lays down his own law with nothing more than a dark, unflinching gaze. He robs banks reciting Shakespeare. He's really got class... maybe even a bit too much. Jesse James and Billy the Kid, a dandy bandit and a demented little rascal, make an explosive pair: the perfect “couple”.

**DANIEL PREVOST
IS
PAT POKER**

A charismatic crook, a fascinating and dangerous player, Pat Poker holds all of Daisy Town's cards in his deck. An icy gaze beneath a velour hat, a neatly groomed mustache. He likes to look good. His unpredictable cruelty, combined with his underlying cowardice make him a complex and extraordinary villain.

**ALEXANDRA LAMY
IS
BELLE STARR**

No cowboy can resist the charms of Belle Star, the mysterious and enchanting saloon singer.

Dizzying cleavage, endless legs, eyes as blue as the Western skies. Every night, Belle Starr fires up the outlaws of Daisy Town.

But she secretly dreams of escaping the claws of Pat Poker and having a family with a real man... a straight shooter.

**JEAN-FRANCOIS BALMER
IS
GOVERNOR
AUSTIN COOPER**

A landowner with an iron fist, the President's right-hand man, Governor Austin Cooper is Lucky Luke's godfather and quite likely the man who knows him best in the world.

Warm and charming, he has the energy of a cowboy and the authority of a politician. He's the Lion King.

**ANDRE OUMANSKY
IS
PRESIDENT
WINSTON H. JAMESON**

President Jameson embodies the new America.

He dreams of linking the East to the West with the railway, and nothing and no one is going to stop him.

In his wheelchair, a cigar between his lips, he governs the country with stubborn strength and impeccable integrity. The only man he trusts to resolve a national crisis is Lucky Luke.

**BRUNO SALOMONE
IS
JOLLY JUMPER**

This magnificent thoroughbred, white, blond and brave, is Lucky Luke's most loyal friend, his companion through all his adventures. Together they share the rewards of success and cans of beans under starry skies. Jolly is more than just an ordinary horse, and that's the truth... straight from the horse's mouth.

CAST

JEAN DUJARDIN	LUCKY LUKE
MICHAËL YOUN	BILLY THE KID
SYLVIE TESTUD	CALAMITY JANE
DANIEL PREVOST	PAT POKER
ALEXANDRA LAMY	BELLE STARR
MELVIL POUPAUD	JESSE JAMES
ANDRÉ OUMANSKY	THE PRESIDENT
JEAN-FRANÇOIS BALMER	COOPER
BRUNO SALOMONE	JOLLY JUMPER

Bruno Salomone has spoken horse since he was five years old.

CREW

Director	James Huth
Screenplay, Adaptation, Dialogue	Sonja Shillito, James Huth and Jean Dujardin
Based on "The Adventures of Lucky Luke" - In	tribute to Morris and Goscinny
Producers	Yves Marmion and Saïd Ben Saïd
Executive Producer	Sonja Shillito
Executive Producers Argentina	Oscar Kramer, Hugo Sigman
Image	Stéphane Le Parc
Production Design	Pierre Queffélec
Costumes	Olivier Beriot
1 st Assistant Director	Lionel Steketee
Editing	Antoine Vareille, Frédérique Olszak
Casting	Antoinette Boulat
Casting Supporting Roles and Extras	Anne Barbier, Eugénia Levin
Makeup	Pascal Thiollier
Hairstylist	Paul De Fisser
Special Effects	Doc' Ransanberg
Visual Effects	Alain Carsoux
Production Manager	Ludovic Naar
Post-Production Manager	Abraham Goldblat
Sound	Pierre André
Sound Editing	Alain Féat, Nicolas Dambroise
Mixing	Cyril Holtz, Damien Lazzerini
Original Music	Bruno Coulais
International Sales	TF1 International
Artwork	Rageman
Trailer, Teasers, Promo Reel	Sonia ToutCourt
Set Photographer	Christine Tamalet

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