

NORD-OUEST and LE BUREAU
Present

Emir Kusturica

Guillaume Canet

FAREWELL
A film by Christian Carion

Running time: 1h52'

World Sales
Pathé International

Paris Office
2 rue Lamennais
75008 Paris
Phone : +33 1 71 72 33 05
Fax : +33 1 71 72 33 10
www.patheinternational.com
sales@patheinternational.fr

London Office
Kent House, 14 – 17 Market place
London, W1W8AR
Phone : + 44 207 462 4427
Fax : + 44 207 436 7891
www.pathepicturesinternational.co.uk
international.sales@pathe-uk.com

US/International press contact:

Sophie Gluck

Sophie Gluck & Associates

Cell: +1 917 593 8159

sophie@gluckpr.com

FAREWELL

Synopsis

In 1981, Colonel Grigoriev of the KGB (real name - Vladimir Vetrov), disenchanted with what the Communist ideal has become under Brezhnev, decides he is going to change the world...

Discreetly, he makes contact with a French engineer working for Thomson in Moscow and little by little passes on documents to him - mainly concerning the United States - containing information which would constitute the most important Cold War espionage operation known to date.

During a period of two years, French President, François Mitterrand, was to personally vet the documents supplied by this source in Moscow, to whom the French Secret Service gave the codename "Farewell".

Then master of the White House, Ronald Reagan, set aside his reluctance to work with a French Socialist to put this un hoped-for information from the very heart of the KGB to use. Farewell would in fact decapitate the network which enabled the KGB to gain in-depth knowledge of scientific, industrial and military research in the West.

Once the USSR had been deprived of these precious sources of information, Ronald Reagan's announcement of the new "Star Wars" military programme sounded the death knell of the Soviet Union.

The Berlin Wall would fall before the end of the 80s... In his own way, Farewell managed to change the world, by avoiding traditional espionage methods too well known to the KGB and by not asking for any financial compensation whatsoever – much too capitalist for his taste. He simply followed his destiny, so that a new world might dawn for all his fellow Russians, but especially for his son.

Those were the days of the “Cold War”...

By Marc Ferro

Dean of Studies at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)

In April 1983, an explosive piece of news rocked the French press: it was revealed that French President François Mitterrand had just expelled 47 Soviet intelligence officers. The Farewell Affair, one of the most astounding tales of espionage of the Cold War had come to a head. It would help to change the balance of world power that had reigned since the end of the Second World War.

In the early eighties, the Cold War had entered a new “ice age” which echoed that of the sixties and the Cuban missile crisis. In the United States, the election of Ronald Reagan (in 1980) rekindled animosity between the two superpowers and America was only too eager to flex its muscles: it landed its army in Grenada, an independent island in the Caribbean, convinced that it might become the new Cuba.

In the USSR, it is Andropov, boss of the KGB, who heads strategic orientation, taking over from the ageing and ailing Brezhnev. Throughout the West, the USSR is depicted as a society dominated by the military/industrial complex...

By revealing to the Americans – in the course of G7 summit in Canada – that he was privy to a host of secret arms policy information gathered by the KGB on US soil, as of 1981, François Mitterrand managed to win the trust of President Reagan, while at the same time convincing him that the presence of Communist ministers in his government in no way compromised his political freedom or his loyalty to the USA.

This myriad of information at François Mitterrand's disposal was thanks to the gracious gift of a single Soviet source, Vladimir Vetrov, alias Farewell. It included lists of KGB agents in France, in the US and in other Western countries. Another priceless element: copies of all information the Russians had managed to gather on, amongst other things, new strategic arms development. The initial shock felt by the CIA and

Reagan soon gave way to a reasoned optimism. The fact that a lieutenant-colonel of the KGB could betray his country testified to the difficulties the USSR was facing in protecting confidential information, but also to its incapacity to keep pace with American military might. Having decided to deal the death blow to the Soviets, Reagan orchestrated the bluff of the century in the form of the Star Wars project (The Strategic Defense Initiative) by which the US would make itself invulnerable to Soviet nuclear missile attack. Even though such a feat was impossible, for Reagan it was a means of showing the Russians how obsolete their arsenal was.

From» Farewell” to the Berlin Wall

The Farewell Affair alone would not have sufficed to bring down the Soviet regime; other geopolitical events also deeply undermined the Communist empire. The popular revolts of Berlin in 1953 and Budapest in 1956, as well as the Prague Spring of 1968, were bloodily quelled, yet the spirit of protest was never quite extinguished in the People's Democracies. The closure of the East German borders, the partition of Berlin, struck a severe blow to the heart of many German families. And more recently, in Poland, the emergence of the free worker's union “Solidarnosc” was a worrying proof of independence of spirit for the Politburo. Another major broadside was the election of a Polish pope, John-Paul II, chosen to reign over Christendom. His first trip abroad was of course to Poland, where he rallied several thousand fervent Catholics that Communism had not managed to persuade.

In Russia itself, in addition to prolific anti-establishment dissidents known to the West such as Solzhenitsyn, Grigorenko, Boukovski, or Zinoviev, a certain spirit of rebellion is emerging. Little by little, the Russians are losing their few remaining illusions. They realize that they have been mystified by the Communist myths of progress and happiness, by the gods they adored.

And economic production? It should have outstripped that of the USA (according to Khrushchev's ambitious 1961 pronouncements), yet when the Russians go shopping the stores are empty. And what of that great family of Sister Republics that Russia

was to form with the People's Republics? Though it has not yet disintegrated, revolt is already hatching.

And the all powerful army that was victorious over the Nazi army in 1944? It is coming apart at the seams in the mountains of Afghanistan.

Or the Russia of the Soviets, which proclaimed itself the first "Republic of Human Love"? Its regime produced the gulag, then sent all those who opposed it to mental asylums. And what of science, the pride of the State? In 1986, in Chernobyl, a terrified population witnessed its failings.

"Everything is rotten", declared Andropov to his disciple Gorbachev, aware of the fragility of this clay-footed giant. *"The entire regime must be rebuilt"*. When he came to power, after the Chernenko interlude, Gorbachev immediately proclaimed the need for "Glasnost" (transparency). Very soon afterwards, he introduced free speech. The muted millions suddenly became anti-establishment dissidents.

In the din of this perestroika, no one heard the shot that felled one such dissident, Vladimir Vetrov, alias Farewell, executed on the field of battle.

Yet today, it cannot be denied that the information he supplied to the West was to substantially contribute, a few years later, to the fall of the Soviet empire and along with it the Berlin Wall.

M.F.

Interview with Director Christian Carion

How did you get the idea of devoting a film to this espionage affair so little known to the wider public?

The project was suggested to me by my producer Christophe Rossignon. He had acquired the rights to the screenplay written by Eric Raynaud who had tried unsuccessfully to make the film in the US. And I myself had read the first volume of *Verbatim*, by Jacques Attali, which highlighted how crucial the Farewell Affair had been in the relationship between François Mitterrand and Ronald Reagan from the very start of their respective mandates.

The original screenplay essentially recounted the events of the affair in Moscow and within the secret services. So I suggested to Christophe to rework it in two directions: respecting the original language of the protagonists by choosing an international cast – as I'd done for my previous film *Merry Christmas* – and by recentering the project around the political dimension, by fleshing out the roles of the statesmen who would become genuine characters in their own right. Christophe immediately agreed with this approach.

What kind of research did you undertake?

I began by trying to forget the original screenplay, which incidentally, was very well written! I needed to get to grips with the story itself. Eric had recorded hours of interviews with the key figures involved from the French Secret Service, so I began with that. I also read Sergey Kostine's book, *Bonjour Farewell*, which dealt with the affair from the Russian point of view in particular. In fact, this affair has left quite a number of traces in literature and in the audiovisual media. As Ronald Reagan wrote, it is one of the really major post-war espionage affairs of the 20th Century.

Cold War specialists consider that three key events dealt the death blow to the Soviet Bloc which had been gradually going downhill since the 1970s. First, the nomination, in 1978, of Pope John-Paul II, which brought Catholic Poland to the boil. Hard to imagine the setting up of Solidarnosc in Gdansk, without a Polish Pope in Rome...

Secondly, the war in Afghanistan, which was a disaster for Moscow - Russia's Vietnam.

It was the first time that the Red Army had returned home vanquished. A myth of invulnerability collapsed in the minds of the Soviets...

And lastly, the Farewell Affair, which by revealing the workings of the KGB to the West, deprived Russia of its ultimate weapon: intelligence gathering, thus finally undermining the system.

Which protagonists, or key witnesses of the affair did you meet?

I didn't attempt to meet people from the secret services, in particular on the French side. They had already expressed themselves at length in the interviews I mentioned earlier and I felt it wasn't really in their nature to hold press conferences...I met Jacques Attali on several occasions to sound him out on François Mitterrand and Ronald Reagan. And then, something odd began to happen. The news had gotten out that a film project on the Farewell Affair was in preparation. As a result, people began to come forward to share their personal accounts with me. On condition that I respect their anonymity, they gave me their version of the events, their vision of the affair. It was extraordinary.

Having steeped yourself in archive documents and first hand accounts, did you attempt to take a step back from these elements towards a more fictional approach?

I must admit, at one point my head was in a spin. A lot of the information just didn't add up. It seemed increasingly difficult to reach an objective synthesis. I recall one witness telling me, with a barely concealed smile, that Farewell's body had never been found. Indeed, the family never did receive a death certificate from the KGB... From that point on, I began to steer clear of facts that I wasn't in a position to authenticate. In fact, I feel we'll never know the whole story about the Farewell Affair, especially on the Russian side. And anyway, it's only normal that a tale of secrets should have its shadow side. It took me a while to admit to myself that the facts were putting up resistance, that the story continued to waver. In my previous film, *Merry Christmas*, I'd hunted down the truth. I'd wanted to be as precise as possible on the fraternization that occurred between the enemy camps during that December of 1914. I wanted people to realize the extent of the censorship that had taken place at the time, especially on the French side. With *Farewell* I understood things would be different. One of the closing lines from John Ford's film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* came to mind, when James Stewart explains to a newspaper editor that he didn't kill Liberty Valance despite the whole nation's believing so. The editor replies that between truth and legend, he prefers to print legend...

So what point of view did you wish to underline?

I freely drew upon known or supposed events, without, I feel, betraying the essential aspect, namely the historical dimension of this affair. For example, the fact is that the real Farewell, actually tried to murder his mistress and killed a militiaman who had witnessed the scene. We don't know the reasons behind this murder attempt. Did she try to blackmail him? Had she become too invasive upon his married life? Did he try to bump her off so as to be arrested for homicide and thus avoid the "Farewell" inquiry the KGB were undertaking? In the screenplay, I only dealt with the death of the militiaman, and I filmed it. But during editing, this scene didn't find its rightful place. It only confused our understanding of the events and the character.

Objective movie-making doesn't exist. To frame in a particular way, or to choose one shot over another, is to offer a vision, a point of view. So there is no objectivity, and thus no one truth. Indeed, point of view is one of the key principles around which I actually built the film. For instance, I'd read that Reagan liked to unwind after working sessions by watching westerns, so as to take a step back and reflect on what course of action to take. So I included the famous night-time duel from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, in which the viewer first sees things through the eyes of James Stewart, and then from the point of view of John Wayne, which of course changes everything.

In *Farewell* we are constantly over to the other side of the mirror, changing sides, and thus urged to see things differently. It is the American point of view which wins out in the end. Firstly, from the historical point of view, with the "Star Wars" project, and secondly on an individual level, with the fate of Farewell.

In what direction did you work the characters? How did you make them your own?

First of all, in the screenplay, I only kept the names of Mitterrand and Reagan, so as to be able to take a certain distance from it all and set sail, as it were. Then, I tried to unearth in each character, the presidents included, a human dimension that could resonate both with me and the viewer. Yet one never really makes a character one's own... Indeed, it's sometimes the very opposite!

Both protagonists are trapped in a dilemma: they are both torn between their "mission" and loyalty to their wives...

Even if, undeniably, they do take risks, that doesn't mean they are "heroes". They find themselves embroiled in a story that both fascinates and escapes them. And what's more, they act in a very selfish manner with regard to their loved ones. Yet I think that's quite a common failing of the masculine species.

Guillaume Canet's character is a kind of "Mr Ordinary" who gets a thrill out of the spying game, a character the viewer easily identifies with...

We know from reliable sources that at least two Frenchmen made contact in turn with Farewell in Moscow. One of them was indeed an engineer with Thomson. I centred the film around this single character, as I really liked his amateurism. Yet the secret services often rely for small favours on hard-to-spot "civilians". It is quite common for journalists to give information to homeland intelligence or to the security services. In return, they get the news scoops. And of course, this practice still continues.

Emir Kusturica portrays a romantic and spirited character, entirely devoted to his cause. How did you get the idea of this passion of his for Léo Ferré's poetry?

Farewell had been stationed in Paris in the late sixties and he had great admiration for French culture. The idea of having the Russian couple dance to *La Melancolie* – a sublime song – came to me quite early on. As for the poetry, I was browsing through the *Lagarde et Michard* anthology of my youth and I rediscovered *The Death of the Wolf* by Alfred de Vigny. I found it very moving and it seemed perfect for my purposes. For me, Farewell was a man who was totally alone. A lone wolf, as they say. What helps him to bear this solitude is the mission he gives himself.

Both protagonists move in a world of pretence, duplicity and lies, while at the same time being sincere and upright, even if they do lie to their wives...

Everyone lies, everyone is a little cowardly... We all muddle along, with more or less elegance, between what we ought to do and what we are able to do. Yet we owe it to ourselves to be sincere. I always had the impression of losing myself when I acted without sincerity. Perhaps that's the quality which touches me most in others.

French cinema almost never deals with real life political figures, especially those still present in collective memory. Did you hesitate to portray Mitterrand and Reagan?

I took on this project because it actually allowed me to film these two presidents! I like politics. I never miss an election, except due to unavoidable circumstances. I admire Anglo-Saxon cinema, which has no qualms about making genuine, no-sham movies about their political reality. A movie like *Nixon* by Oliver Stone, shot in that president's lifetime, has no equivalent in France. I also loved Stephen Frears's *The Queen*, as you feel you are getting a genuine bird's eye view of the corridors of British power, while the storm rages. It was after having seen this film that I decided to seek out a certain resemblance in the screen portrayal of Mitterrand and Reagan.

You based the verbal exchanges between Mitterrand and Reagan, both over the phone and for the G7 scene in Canada, on conversations they'd actually had?

Both presidents called each other quite often. Mitterrand liked to cultivate direct links with most of his counterparts. The discussion about the future of the Communist Party in France took place in Paris in June 1981 between Bush senior, then vice president, and Mitterrand. Then, it was at the G7 summit in July that Mitterrand would give the first elements coming from Farewell to Reagan. I grouped these two events into one, in a stand-off, or kind of duel, between the two president at Montebello.

We are totally immersed in the context of the epoch. How did you choose and work the sets?

The film is set, for the most part, in Moscow. So we spent many long weeks of location scouting there. Myself and Jean-Michel Simonet, the chief set designer, visited a lot of apartments which were still totally in the spirit of the Soviet era. We took a lot of pictures of furniture, wallpaper, carpets, picture frames on the walls etc... We managed to get our hands on genuine wallpapers from the time and quite a stock of "Soviet" furniture. I'm very particular about the sets, on all my films. I recall something Michel Serrault said to me before starting my early feature *Une hirondelle a fait le printemps*: "*We actors need to feel good in the clothes that we wear and the sets we walk around in. If all of that rings true, then perhaps the film will too.*"

How did you work your colour palette: brownish-oranges for Moscow and warmer tones for Paris?

We managed to get hold of a lot of photos of everyday Russian life at the time. And all our received Western ideas, our notions of a grey, dull, black and white Moscow simply vanished. The fact is of course, that there was no advertising, no neon signs in the city. Yet that didn't mean that people dressed drably! They were wearing clothes that were obviously cheap, yet very colourful, sometimes verging on very far out colour combinations indeed. So we got rid of our light grey, dark grey preconceptions and tried to respect the Soviet epoch, by once more adopting their point of view... As for the Western scenes, we simply filmed the locations as they were. The signature note of any epoch is clothing and hairstyles.

The work of reconstitution is extraordinary. Where did you shoot the exterior scenes?

I was fortunate to work with an exceptional team. Not only did they have talent, but also, and above all, an insatiable urge recreate this vanished world. We filmed in Kiev and Kharkov in the Ukraine for the summer scenes and in Helsinki and the Arctic Circle for the winter scenes. We were not able to shoot in Moscow for reasons which my producer Christophe Rossignon, will explain in his interview. In the cities of the Ukraine, we came across neighbourhoods, squares, which really epitomize the Soviet spirit of the eighties! It was fascinating.

The Oval Office of the White House has never before been shown in a French film. How did you go about it?

We found this huge space, an empty factory in Ivry-sur-Seine, in Paris, in which we built a life-size mock-up of the Oval Office, as well as the sets of the KGB prisons and the Russian interiors.

How did the casting come about?

I rewrote the screenplay with Guillaume Canet in mind, from the very start. I very much wanted to do another film with him and I felt he'd bring a nervousness and feverishness to this character somewhat adrift in this whole affair. As for Emir, it was when the original

Russian actor pulled out that I began to consider a "non-Russian" solution. Susie Figgis, my casting director, suggested Emir and I thought it was a great idea...

And the two actresses who play the protagonists' wives?

To my mind, Ingeborga Dapkunaite had quite simply illuminated *Soleil trompeur* by Nikita Mikhalkov. Her sensuality, the subtlety of her acting, really touched me. We met in Moscow, and it all seemed right. She brings a lot of depth to the scenes she shares with Emir. Filming the dance scene to Léo Ferré's music was a very strong moment on set. And I discovered Alexandra Maria Lara in that wonderful German film *Downfall*. I wanted her to play Pierre Froment's wife in my film as I felt she'd bring a genuinely anguished dimension to the story.

Philippe Magnan and Fred Ward are very credible, without ever lapsing into caricature, to such an extent that we almost forget the two presidents' real faces. How did you choose and direct them?

I always felt that Philippe Magnan had something of Mitterrand in his gaze, and in his attitude too. I nonetheless met other actors – a kind of Mitterrand casting session - and Philippe seemed the obvious choice. From that point on, Dominique Colladan, our make-up artist, and I, began to "work" Philippe's face to bring out resemblances to Mitterrand. Magnan studied a lot of documents concerning the president and listened to voice recordings, especially the interviews with Marguerite Duras which are wonderful.

For Fred Ward, whom Susie Figgis had pre-selected, I went to meet him in Los Angeles, as he didn't want to play Reagan. He explained to me that for the Americans, this president had indeed been a sort of icon, a monument solemnly buried before a gathering of all US Presidents still alive. But as a Democrat, Fred was reticent to play the character of Reagan... We talked for hours on end, and finally he agreed. I was delighted, as I knew he'd be wonderful. He worked in the US with a coach, on the voice and gestural aspects in particular. And when he arrived in Paris, Dominique Colladan added a few little touches, but everything was already there...

How did you approach the music?

On my two previous films, I worked with Philippe Rombi who composed two magnificent scores. But for *Farewell*, I wanted something different, especially with regard to the music played in the film: Simple Minds, Joe Jackson, Pink Floyd and above all, Queen.

So I approached Clint Mansell, who composes the music for Aronofski's movies, as his pop-rock culture was in keeping with what I was after. I really admire his work, as he managed, in a very short time, to come up with a highly personal music which lends an atmosphere to the film, a flavour which nourishes the soundtrack without taking it over.

Music plays a very important role in the movie. "Soviet" airs rub shoulders with Western standards of the time. There's a kind of rivalry going on in the sound track... I think that one of the reasons why the Soviet Bloc went under is that the Soviet youth wanted to buy into Western leisure pursuits. The scene in which Igor struts around in the middle of the ferns to the tune of *We Will Rock You* perfectly symbolizes what was about to happen: the dam would burst and music, cinema and Coca Cola would sweep across the countries of the Warsaw Pact... No wall on earth could hold that desire back. Today, it is China which is trying to contain that tidal wave within.

Biography

Born in 1963 in Cambrai (Northern France), Christian Carion, having studied to be an engineer, joined the Ministry of Agriculture, while continuing to cultivate a passion for cinema which had begun in his teens.

His meeting with producer Christophe Rossignon would be decisive.

He directed his first feature in 2001, *Une hirondelle a fait le printemps*, starring Michel Serrault and Mathilde Seigner, which on its French release attracted some 2.4 million viewers.

In 2005, his second feature, *Merry Christmas*, a historical piece devoted to the fraternization between enemy troops which took place in the trenches in 1914 during the "Great War", topped the 2 million viewer mark on its French release and was highly acclaimed during its presentation in official selection at the 2005 Cannes festival. The film continued its career in Hollywood with nominations for both the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film and the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film.

In 2008, he began shooting the *Farewell* affair (considered by Ronald Reagan to be the most important espionage affair of the 20th Century) starring Guillaume Canet and Emir Kusturica, for whom it was his first major role in cinema.

Interview with producer Christophe Rossignon

How did the project come about?

A producer friend of mine, Bertrand Faivre, asked me to read a screenplay he really liked, written by Eric Raynaud, and which he didn't wish to produce alone. I found the story fascinating, even though I felt the screenplay would have to be reworked a little. However, I had my doubts about producing the film as a tandem. So Bertrand suggested the following: either we found an English director, and he would become principal producer, or we found a French director, in which case I would lead the project. I thought it was a great idea and I quickly thought of Christian Carion, who to my mind, was the right person to give the project a genuine human dimension. We asked him to read Eric's screenplay and he agreed to do it, even agreeing to put off the film he was supposed to make after *Merry Christmas*.

Had you known about this affair?

Not at all. When Bertrand spoke to me about the project I did some research on the Internet, before meeting with some journalists from the French news magazine *Le Point* who dug up all the articles which dealt with the affair at the time. One must remember, this story caused quite a stir in France as Mitterrand - as the affair reached its climax - proceeded to expel over 40 people working for the Soviet embassy in Paris. I also, of course, read the book by Sergey Kostine, a Russian journalist, who on the Russian side, carried out a major investigation into this affair and its real-life protagonist Vladimir Vetrov, upon which the film is loosely based. It was on this book that Eric Raynaud had based his screenplay.

So how did Christian Carion make the film his own?

First, he spoke at length with Eric Raynaud, before rewriting the screenplay to work in his own point of view. He immersed himself in a series of interviews that Eric had done with several people involved in the affair, and then did his own investigation to build up a network of information. He met with Sergey Kostine, but also with several political figures of the day who had witnessed the events. We also met Jacques Attali, who was close to François Mitterrand at the time the affair unfolded. The exciting thing about an espionage movie, is that you can never have all the answers. The Farewell Affair has been subjected to multiple interpretations, from the American, Russian and French points of view, so Christian had to give his own version of things.

What was your involvement in the screenplay development?

Christian and I were very rapidly on the same wavelength about what he wanted to do in the film, in terms of what he wanted to bring out in the story, its poetry, its human and political dimension. Otherwise, my role was pretty much the same as in our previous collaborations; I was a sounding board who helped him to stay on track.

Were there fears at times, concerning the nature of the subject, or the need to shoot in Russia?

With experience I've developed a kind of night-time vision, as it were, which helps me to foresee the difficulties. Yet there are times when you have to let go of them in order to maintain a degree of candour and just go for the project, because things can appear totally impossible if one is too clear-sighted. Like for instance when he told me he'd chosen to personify Mitterrand et Reagan in the film...

For once, a French film has dared to bring two political figures to the screen. Were you in favour of this option from the start?

Absolutely, and our reference in the matter came from US cinema. We just wondered how far we should go in terms of imitation and physical resemblance, what would be the right measure.

And for the scenes at the Elysée Palace?

We were fortunate to be able to meet the right people thanks to the intervention of the Minister of Culture. That said, the initial response was no, on the pretext that never before had a shoot been permitted at the Elysée. Yet we did insist and were able to meet other interlocutors who finally agreed to read the screenplay. From that point on, the head of security, who knew of the Farewell affair, really loved Christian's treatment of the story and helped us, along with another high-ranking official at the l'Elysée, to get authorisation.

In the end, there are not that many scenes at the Elysée...

Yet, because we cut several scenes during editing. We said to ourselves that the difficulty of shooting certain sequences, including those at the Elysée and the White House, should not be an excuse for avoiding whatever cuts proved necessary for the film to work. During the editing, Christian and his editor's key concern was how to maintain the dramatic force, the story-telling and the pacing of the film.

How did you go about casting the Russian colonel?

We initially looked for a Russian actor and Christian immediately thought of Nikita Mikhalkov. Via his French agent, we passed on a copy of the screenplay, Christian managed to meet him in Moscow, and they really hit it off. He agreed to do it, even though it meant interrupting the shooting of his own film to act in *Farewell*. In the end, however, it proved too complicated and Mikhalkov asked Christian to postpone his shoot, which was of course impossible. Mikhalkov fully understood our constraints, yet agreed to remain our executive producer in Russia, while recommending another wonderful actor he had often directed.

And then?

When the Russian actor in question came to Paris for his costume trials he received a phone call from the Russian ambassador in France – who later became Culture Minister – who advised him to think twice before making this film. He explained to him that we had made Vetrov into a hero, while from the Russian point of view he had been an absolute traitor to the homeland. The actor got scared and withdrew from the film. Initially sure of being able to work things out, Nikita, despite his influence, understood that he would face considerable resistance... So he too withdrew from the project and we lost, in one fell swoop, our actor and the possibility of shooting in Russia. Then, by chance, in the space of a fortnight, Emir Kusturica agreed to do it.

So in the end where did you shoot?

In the Ukraine and in Finland. Yet we also did a few establishing shots in Russia, keeping a very low profile, of course... In the end, contrary to Moscow, where modernity is visible on every street corner, the Ukraine allowed us to avail of locations which were very close to early eighties Russia. The same goes for Helsinki, where entire neighbourhoods bear the Soviet architectural stamp. So as a result, what first appeared as a major setback turned out to be really advantageous for the film. And to do it required partners not easily fazed, such as Pathé, Canal+, France 2... who all went along with us never wavering in the faith they had placed in us.

Christian Carion found himself directing two actors who are also renowned directors...

I had been very impressed watching Christian direct Michel Serrault for his first feature: Michel had shown great restraint in this film and had really appreciated working with Christian on his first feature. Back then I already felt that Christian was a wonderful director of actors, which was borne out by *Merry Christmas*. Even though at first it took Emir Kusturica and Guillaume Canet a while to find their marks and understand each other, Christian managed to take full advantage of the situation and to use it in the interests of the film. I tip my hat to him.

Did the fact of having produced Christian Carion's two previous films facilitate your working relationship?

I produced his last short film and his three full-length features. I didn't produce his first short films, but I did act in them! What brings us even closer is the fact of sharing common roots: We're both from northern France, and our parents were farmers. We received a similar upbringing. That helps to forge very strong bonds which go beyond the professional sphere.

Contrary to *Merry Christmas*, Christian Carion's previous film, this time around you only have one partner, Pathé. Yet the film is also a big budget movie, equivalent to *Merry Christmas*, for which you had, I think, 25 partners...

You are forgetting Canal+ and France 2 who are also partners in the film. The budget is 17.5 million euros! The budget for *Merry Christmas* was 17 million euros. These are indeed pretty hefty budgets... Without the major participation of Pathé and the faith that Jérôme Seydoux showed in the project from the very start the film simply wouldn't exist. My associate (Philip Boëffard) and I would have had a lot more difficulty putting together a complex international financial arrangement on the scale of what we did for *Merry Christmas* for *Farewell*.

Interview with Emir Kusturica

What aroused your interest in this project?

Contrary to most thrillers and spy movies, this screenplay had a human dimension and a spirituality which I found touching. It's rare to be offered a thriller which attaches such importance to the inner aspects of the human being.

Did the idea of playing a Russian KGB officer appear difficult to you?

To be quite honest, I never thought of the character as a "KGB officer". What I found interesting about him was his wilful determination to change the world and his singular posture between the Soviet Bloc and the West. As a result, I didn't focus on the details of his belonging to a secret service, but rather on how a human being can influence the course of history.

Do you think that Grigoriev did help change the world?

At the time these events took place, the ideological confrontation between East and West was at its height. Poised halfway between these two ideologies, perhaps Grigoriev did not manage to change the world as such, but he was one of those figures who from the heart of the system did help to make it implode.

What do you think of how the CIA is portrayed in the film?

The film really brings out the cynicism and cruelty of the US intelligence services who did not hesitate to sacrifice Grigoriev because they needed a victim: they came to the aid of other people involved in the affair, but didn't even try to save Grigoriev. He was an awkward and embarrassing witness. And this really reveals the cold functionality of the Western intelligence services.

Your character is a rebellious figure, smitten by French poetry and with legendary French singer Léo Ferré. Were you touched by this aspect of the character?

I neither know French poetry nor Léo Ferré very well, but I respect them highly. However, I do really identify with this kind of romantic temperament.

This was your first time filming with Guillaume Canet. How did it work out?

We have totally opposite personalities. Yet in the end, I feel that proved constructive for the film. Indeed, we systematically tried to find the best solutions together.

You are both film directors. Did that create a degree of complicity between you on set?

Even though we both have our own notion of direction, the fact that we are both directors helped us all the more to respect Christian Carion's instructions. We both know what "directing actors" really means!

You worked in two foreign languages. Was this a problem for you?

It was what caused me the most difficulty during the shoot. Yet I also found the opportunity to shoot in two languages very interesting; it was a real challenge. Yet being a musician helps, as to speak foreign languages one must have a musical ear. Of course, I do have some basic notions of French and Russian, but I am incapable of holding a conversation in these languages.

How does Christian Carion direct his actors?

I really appreciated his artistic direction. Christian has a lot of authority and he knows exactly what he wants. That said, he leaves the actors the room for manoeuvre they need and he is always open in his dialogue with others. So in the end, it was quite simple to follow his indications.

Filmography - Emir Kusturica

ACTOR

2009

ALICE AU PAYS S'EMERVEILLE by Marie-Eve Signeyrole

2008

FAREWELL by Christian Carion

MARADONA BY KUSTURICA - Emir Kusturica

2006

THERE IS NO DIRECTION by Sarah Bertrand

2003

THE GOOD THIEF by Neil Jordan

2001

SUPER 8 STORIES by Emir Kusturica

2000

THE WIDOW OF SAINT-PIERRE by Patrice Leconte

1995

UNDERGROUND by Emir Kusturica

DIRECTOR

2009 ALL THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN

2008 MARADONA BY KUSTURICA

2007 ZAVET

2005 LE COURT DES GRANDS

2004 LIFE IS A MIRACLE

2001 SUPER 8 STORIES

1998 BLACK CAT, WHITE CAT

1995 UNDERGROUND

1993 ARIZONA DREAM

1989 TIME OF THE GYPSIES

1985 WHEN FATHER WAS AWAY ON BUSINESS

1981 DO YOU REMEMBER DOLLY BELL?

1978 GUERNICA

Interview with Guillaume CANET

What appealed to you in the screenplay?

Christophe Rossignon had asked me to read the first screenplay (Eric Raynaud's version) to have my opinion, even before Christian Carion offered me the film: it was a somewhat incomplete version, quite different from the final script. However, I'd already found the historical context and the characters very strong, and the various love stories very powerful. It's extraordinary to think that this little known affair had such an impact on the course of world history. In the first version, the character of Pierre - who I play - was a lot older, something I found less interesting. I suggested to Christophe that Pierre would be a far stronger character if he were younger, as he'd have a lot more to lose. When I later learnt that Christian had been of the same opinion, and had made the character younger, I was delighted.

What changes struck you most between the two versions of the screenplay?

When Christian took on the project he managed to bring a more human dimension to the characters, by making them into fallible and complex figures. And also, I found that between *Merry Christmas* and *The Farewell Affair* he succeeded in pushing the dimension of emotional reserve further, adding certain highly personal details, which really hit the mark, especially in the area of the family relationships.

Your character finds himself at the heart of an espionage affair in which he is out of his depth. How did you approach the role?

He's a brilliant guy, who without being a social climber, wants to succeed in his professional life. The responsibility entrusted to him in this regard acts as a kind of trigger as he quickly realizes the enormity of what is at stake. He is married, with young children. He has a key post in Moscow, so he really has something to lose, and I found that very interesting. Even though he is aware of the fact, he has never yet taken a major risk in his life. His existence has always been under control, and for the first time the unforeseen comes knocking on his door. Obviously, this unsettles him, while also giving him quite a thrill.

Do you think he actually gets the spying bug?

He realizes the strategic importance of the documents entrusted to him because he proceeds to photograph them. Yes, I think he does get a thrill from being a "little spy". That's why he begins to lie to his wife. In fact, he was intelligently baited by the secret service, and he bites on the hook. Thus he feels a certain elation until the affair begins to take on really disturbing proportions.

He finds himself faced with a dilemma.

I think this role of spy actually pleases him, but at the same time, he hates lying to his wife. So he's caught in a bind between his "mission" and his personal life. As a result, he totally panics which prevents him from making a decision.

It was your first time partnering Emir Kusturica...

It was a wonderful experience, even though relations were a bit tense at the start. Emir is not an easy person to "tame" as it were, and it took me a while to understand him. Yet he has extraordinary charisma and I was quite surprised by his seeming nonchalance on set at times, yet which in the end was 100% beneficial to his character. I was amazed by his screen presence. Once I'd understood how he operated, and that I'd chosen to take a step back from it all, everything worked out perfectly.

This is your second film with Christian Carion...

It's a real pleasure working with him. I like how he directs his actors and his enthusiasm. What's great about him is his willingness to listen to others. Yet he's perfectly firm when he needs to be: he's really sweet with his team, but never lets anyone ride roughshod over him. Basically, Christian is a genuinely good person, who really moves me. When he tells me a story, I really want to listen to him and to tell it again along with him. I could make films with him my whole life long.

How does he direct his actors?

He has his film all worked out in his head and he's very precise with the script. He doesn't let go of anything which is very comfortable for an actor. If he hasn't got the take he's looking for, he'll redo until he has. As an actor, I need to be reassured in that regard by my director.

You played several scenes in Russian. Was that problematic for you?

I loved it. Thanks to this film, I discovered what a real pleasure it was to speak in a language I didn't master. It's a rather strange exercise, as you must lend the right musicality and rhythm to words you simply don't understand. First, I had to work the script in French, then in Russian phonetics, keeping in mind that both languages have quite different intonations for saying the same thing. I feel that this bilingualism adds great depth to the character by telling us something about his life and his openness to the world.

So how did the filming go?

Very well. Obviously, thanks to Christian Carion, but also to Christophe Rossignon. It's not the first time I've worked with Christophe and he's one of those rare producers who gives his collaborators everything they need to get the job done. The films he produces are extremely well prepared.

Selective filmography - Guillaume CANET

ACTOR

LAST NIGHT by Massy Tadjedin

2009

THE LAST FLIGHT by Karim Dridi

FAREWELL by Christian Carion

SPIES by Nicolas Saada

THE BUSINESS TRIP by Sean Ellis

2008

RIVALS by Jacques Maillot

2007

THE KEY by Guillaume Nicloux

DARLING by Christine Carrière

HUNTING AND GATHERING by Claude Berri

2006

TELL NO ONE by Guillaume Canet

A TICKET TO SPACE by Eric Lartigau

2005

HELL by Danis Tanovic

MERRY CHRISTMAS by Christian Carion

2004

NARCO by Tristan Aurouet & Gilles Lellouche

2003

LOVE ME IF YOU DARE by Yann Samuell

2002

WHATEVER YOU SAY by Guillaume Canet

THE LANDLORDS by Rémi Waterhouse

THE WARRIOR'S BROTHER by Pierre Jolivet

2001

DARK PORTALS by Pitof

LOVE BITES by Antoine de Caunes

2000

FIDELITY by Andrzej Zulawski

THE BEACH by Danny Boyle

THE DAY THE PONIES COME BACK by Jerry Schatzberg

1999

I FOLLOW IN MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS by Rémi Waterhouse

1998

THOSE WHO LOVE ME CAN TAKE THE TRAIN by Patrice Chéreau
IN ALL INNOCENCE by Marc Jolivet

1997

BARRACUDA by Philippe Haim

DIRECTOR

2006

TELL NO ONE

César 2007 – Best Director

2002

WHATEVER YOU SAY

César 2003 – Nomination for Best First Feature

Interview with Ingeborga Dapkunaite

How did you end up in *Farewell*?

My agent mailed me the screenplay while I was working in Moscow - without my really knowing what the film was about, nor when it was to be made. I began to read a few pages to get an idea of my character – and I couldn't stop reading, I had to finish it! I found the screenplay totally fascinating. From that point on, my only concern was how to convince Christian Carion to give me the role: and after he'd met me, he said: "*You are my Natasha !*" I was over the moon!

Were you familiar, even vaguely, with the affair dealt with in the film?

Not in the least. But speaking with my entourage, some of my friends did recall that Soviet diplomats had been expelled from the USSR embassy in Paris.

To you, did the Russian parts seem true to life?

Absolutely. The chief set designer, Jean-Michel Simonet, did a remarkable job. He often consulted me to know if such and such a set was convincing. The costumes, the accessories, the make-up – all of it was grippingly realistic, without being overdone.

You play the wife of Grigoriev (alias Farewell) in the film, what is your perception of her character?

I think she feels guilty to have a lover and she understands that her couple is in danger. What's more, Grigoriev too is hiding his problems: when she meets Alina, his mistress, she has an inkling that something is afoot between her and her husband. However, they have shared so much of their life together and the bonds which unite them are still very strong. At the end, when the difficulties are piling up, we realize they still have values in common, that she still feels love for her husband and that she supports his undertaking. It's a quasi-unbreakable bond.

You experienced the Communist era. Did you use your personal memories to build your character?

I grew up in the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev era and I feel I was incredibly fortunate to have witnessed the fall of Communism. We didn't live in fear on a daily basis, but I do recall being petrified when crossing a border or meeting a policeman. It took me seven or eight years to no longer feel terrified when going from one country to another... So yes, I feel that did help me to play my character.

What was it like to act with Emir Kusturica?

He's a wonderful partner. We gave each other a lot of mutual support: I felt that there was great solidarity between us and that we could really count on each other. And it was thanks to this extraordinary complicity that our couple works on screen, that its relationship rings true.

How does Christian Carion direct his actors?

Christian is very precise in his direction; he knows exactly what he wants and the kind of story he wants to tell, yet he remains extremely generous and is always ready to listen to his actors. We can make suggestions to him and sometimes he'll take them into account and integrate them into the film. He doesn't need to say a lot as he knows when to remain in the background. And the language barrier was never a problem for us. I can honestly say it has been my most wonderful shoot to date.

Filmography - Ingeborga Dapkunaite

2009

ANTALYA by Mikhail Brashinsky

THE MAD COW by Jamie Bradshaw and Alexander Doulerain

2008

FAREWELL by Christian Carion

MORPHINE by Aleksey Balabanov

TERRA NOVA by Aleksandr Melnik

IN TRANZIT by Tom Roberts

DEFIANCE by Edward Zwick

2007

HANNIBAL RISING by Peter Webber

2004

25 DEGREES IN WINTER by Stéphane Vuillet

2003

KISS OF LIFE by Emily Young

THE COSTUME by Bakhtyar Khudojnazarov

2002

WAR by Aleksey Balabanov

SOLITUDE OF BLOOD by Roman Prygunov

2000

THIS LADY BEHAVES by John Malkovitch

1999

MOSCOW by Alexander Zeldovich

1997

SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET by Jean-Jacques Annaud

1996

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE by Brian De Palma

LETTERS FROM THE EAST by Andrew Grieve

1994

SOLEIL TROMPEUR by Nikita Mikhalkov

KATIA ISMAILOVA by Valeriy Todorovskiy

1991

CYNICS by Dmitri Meskhiyev

1989

AUTUMN IN CHERTANOVA by Dmitri Talankin/Igor Talankin

CONFLUENCE OF CIRCUMSTANCE

ELECTRONIC GRANDMOTHER

1986

NIGHT WHISPERS by Isaak Fridberg

Selective filmography - Alexandra Maria Lara

In progress

CITY OF LIFE by Ali F Mostafa

THE CITY OF YOUR FINAL DESTINATION by James Ivory

I REALLY HATE MY JOB by Oliver Parker

2009

THE READER by Stephen Daldry

FAREWELL by Christian Carion

2008

THE KAIFECK MURDERS SELLING TIME by Spike Lee

THE BAADER MEINHOF KOMPLEX by Uli Edel

2007

CONTROL by Anton Corbijn

YOUTH WITHOUT YOUTH by Francis Ford Coppola

2006

SPECIAL by Anno Saul

OFFSET by Didi Danquart

2005

DER FISCHER UND SEINE FRAU by Doris Dörrie

ABOUT THE LOOKING FOR AND THE FINDING OF LOVE by Helmut Dietl

DOWNFALL by Oliver Hirschbiegel

2004

LEISE KRIEGER (short) by Alexander Dierbach

COWGIRL by Mark Schlichter

2002

NAKED by Doris Dörrie

99 EURO-FILMS by Mark Schlichter

2001

LEO & CLAIRE by Joseph Vilsmaier

THE TUNNEL by Roland Suso Richter

HONOLULU by Florian Gallenberger

2000

CRAZY by Hans-Christian Schmid

1999

JUST MESSING ABOUT by Jochen Kuhn

OUR ISLAND IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC by Thomas Bahmann

FISIMATENTEN by Jochen Kuhn

CAST

Grigoriev

Emir Kusturica

Pierre

Guillaume Canet

Jessica

Alexandra Maria Lara

Natasha

Ingeborga Dapkunaite

Choukov

Oleksii Gorbunov

Alina

Dina Korzun

Mitterrand

Philippe Magnan

Vallier

Niels Arestrup

Reagan

Fred Ward

Hutton

David Soul

Feeney

Willem Dafoe

Igor

Evgenie Kharlanov

Anatoly

Valentin Varetsky

Production Credits - Partners

A film by	Christian Carion
Producer	Christophe Rossignon
Original screenplay	Eric Raynaud
From the novel	“Bonjour Farewell” by Sergey Kostine, Editions Robert Laffont
Adaptation and dialogues	Christian Carion
Original music	Clint Mansell
Producers	Bertrand Faivre Philip Boëffard
Associate producers	Romain Le Grand Léonard Glowinski
Line producer	Eve Machuel
Production director	Stéphane Riga
Post production directors	Eric Duriez Julien Azoulay
Camera	Walther Vanden Ende
Editing	Andréa Sedlackova
Sets	Jean-Michel Simonet
Sound engineer	Pierre Mertens
Sound design	Thomas Desjonquères
Mixing	Florent Lavallée
Casting	Susie Figgis
Casting France	Gigi Akoka

1 st assistant director	Thierry Verrier
Script	Lydia Bigard
Costumes	Corinne Jorry
Make-up	Mabi Anzalone
Unit production manager	Thierry Cretagne
On set photographer	Jean-Claude Lothar

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With the participation of Canal+, Cinécinéma, France 2

With the backing of La Région Ile-de-France

In association with Cofinova 5

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Production: www.nord-ouest.fr

Press release and photos downloadable on
www.laffairefarewell-lefilm.com