

Berlinale
 64th Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Forum



**THE KIDNAPPING
OF MICHEL
HOUELLEBECQ**

A FILM BY GUILLAUME NICLOUX

SYNOPSIS

September 16th 2011. The TV news networks, newspapers, blogs, websites and radio stations are all reporting on one story: star author Michel Houellebecq, winner of the prestigious Prix Goncourt in 2010, has been abducted. Some members of the media go so far as to suggest that Al-Qaeda may be involved.

For the next few days, the news ripples through literary circles and members of the press, feeding buzz and speculation. A brazen kidnapping? An identity crisis? A plan to escape abroad? A schizophrenic delirium?

Michel will never provide the media with any rational explanation for what happened to him.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

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Michel Houellebecq. Who is he really? A good writer? A great author? Even more than that? The most widely read living French writer in the world? The most hated and the most respected one? Does he deserve to be classified among those celebrated enfants terribles of our national prose, right there next to Artaud, Céline, Genêt or Gracq?

If we agree that, ever since the theoretical work of Christian Metz, all documentary is a fiction, then *The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq* is a portrait covered up as a funny criminal chronic. A mise en abîme using the storytelling and the news item as a starting point.

His kidnapping is the launching pad for introspection through various strips and ways. An experimentation lab where the actual writer becomes mixed up with the fictional writer, literally peeling off all of his various skins and aspects. An attempt to strip himself bare, using lies as a potential truth.

This 'angle of attack' focusing in through the prism of the comedy that is human life allows us to compare and confront ideas and points of view from different worlds that hold opposing beliefs: Michel's world, the world of his of his kidnapers and hosts... all as we address much larger issues such as artistic creation, fear, Poland, the Lottery, reincarnation, European integration, Nietzsche, weapons, Viagra, architecture, Mixed Martial Arts...

Beyond this story, I hope to reveal a writer who is funny, sensitive, endowed with a caustic wit, beset by doubt, naïve, unkind, anxious, intelligent, and in love. The kind of man we don't expect to meet.

Along with a final surprise: *The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq* may also be the portrait of a man who never aspired to be a writer, but rather hoped to become a racecar driver.

Guillaume Nicloux

CAST & CREW

Cast

Michel Houellebecq
Luc Schwarz
Mathieu Nicourt
Maxime Lefrançois
Françoise Lebrun

Director and Script Production Coproduction

Guillaume Nicloux
Les Films du Worso et Chic Films
Les Films du Worso, Chic Films and Arte France,
with the participation of the CNC
Christophe Offenstein

Cinematography Artistic Adviser Costumes 1st AD Editing Sound Line Producer

Olivier Radot
Anaïs Romand
Jules César Brechet
Guy Lecorne
Olivier Dô-Hùu / Fanny Weinzaepflen
Laziz Belkai

Original Title

L'Enlèvement de Michel Houellebecq

France - 2013 - 92 min - 2,35 - SRD 5.1 - French

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