

VERSUS PRODUCTION and ADCB FILMS present

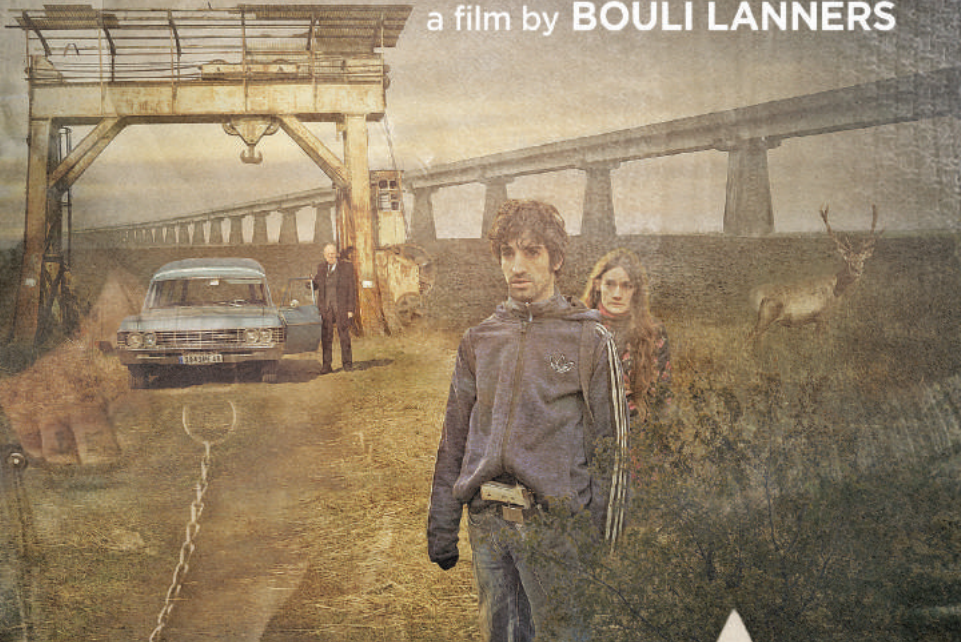
# BOULI LANNERS

# ALBERT DUPONTEL

Berlinale  
 66<sup>e</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Panorama

# THE FIRST THE LAST

a film by BOULI LANNERS



**SUZANNE CLÉMENT MICHAEL LONSDALE**

**DAVID MURGIA AUREORE BRÛTIN PHILIPPE REBBOT SERGE RIABOUKINE LIONEL LABELANSKI VIRGILE BRAMLY MAX VON SYDOW**

WITH THE EXCEPTIONAL PARTICIPATION OF

VERSUS PRODUCTION and ADCB FILMS present THE FIRST THE LAST a film by BOULI LANNERS with SUZANNE CLÉMENT MICHAEL LONSDALE DAVID MURGIA AUREORE BRÛTIN PHILIPPE REBBOT SERGE RIABOUKINE LIONEL LABELANSKI VIRGILE BRAMLY MAX VON SYDOW. Produced by BOULI LANNERS and MICHAEL LONSDALE. Screenplay by BOULI LANNERS and MICHAEL LONSDALE. Directed by BOULI LANNERS. Cast: Suzanne Clément, Michael Lonsdale, David Murgia, Aurore Brûtin, Philippe Rebbot, Serge Riaboukine, Lionel Labelanski, Virgile Bramly, Max von Sydow. Music by Thomas Saubier. Production: Versus Production and ADCB Films. Distribution: Versus Production and ADCB Films. Contact: Versus Production, ADCB Films. Website: www.versusproduction.com, www.adcbfilms.com. © 2018 Versus Production and ADCB Films. All rights reserved. Logo: Versus Production, ADCB Films, Canal+, Ciné+, Wild Bunch, etc.

Versus production et ADCB Films present

**BOULI  
LANNERS**

**ALBERT  
DUPONTEL**

# THE FIRST THE LAST

A film by **Bouli Lanners**

With Suzanne Clément, Michael Lonsdale, David Murgia,  
Aurore Broutin, Philippe Rebot, Serge Riaboukine,  
Lionel Abelanski, Virgile Bramly  
with Special Guest Appearance by Max Von Sydow

Belgium / France - Running time : 1h38 - Image : SCOPE 2.39 - Sound : 5.1

## **INTERNATIONAL PR**

### **THE PR FACTORY**

MARIE-FRANCE DUPAGNE  
mariefrance@theprefactory.com  
+32 477 62 67 70  
BARBARA VAN LOMBEEK  
barbara@theprefactory.com  
+32 486 54 64 80

## **INTERNATIONAL SALES**

**wildbunch**

CAROLE BARATON cbaraton@wildbunch.eu  
OLIVIER BARBIER obarbier@wildbunch.eu  
NOEMIE DEVIDE ndevide@wildbunch.eu  
VINCENT MARAVAL ndevide@wildbunch.eu  
EMILIE SERRES eserres@wildbunch.eu  
SILVIA SIMONUTTI ssimonutti@wildbunch.eu

Photos and trailers can be downloaded from  
<http://www.wildbunch.biz/movie/first-the-last-the/>

# SYNOPSIS

As inseparable bounty hunters Cochise and Gilou travel through endless windswept flatlands looking for a stolen phone containing sensitive information, their path crosses that of Esther and Willy, a couple on the run. Is this the end of the world? In this godforsaken little town where everyone seems to wash up, will they discover the best in human nature? They may be the last men, but are they really so different from the first?

# INTERVIEW WITH BOULI LANNERS

## What was the starting point for the film?

An image, just an image I saw while I was on the Toulouse-Paris night train and couldn't get to sleep. I saw something that looked like a kind of launching pad, made of concrete, crossing the flatlands for miles<sup>(1)</sup>. I didn't know what it was, I thought it was an aqueduct. I noted the names of the stations we were passing, I went back, and that was that.

## How was the film born from this one image?

This image inspired me to write a story about two very marginalised characters, both extremely fragile, wandering in a straight line, thus escaping any classic geographical sense.

All the other elements of the film attached themselves to this idea of two characters on the run: Cochise and Gilou, the search for a stolen phone, the lost town, the mummy, etc...

## How did you write the screenplay?

I spent a year and a half trying in vain to write a screenplay. Then, after overhearing a conversation, I realized that a lot of people share the idea that the end of the world could happen in the near future – it's not just me! Suddenly, the monorail, the couple on the run, the scraps of this hybrid screenplay all started making some sense and in five weeks everything was in place. To develop the characters, I drew inspiration from personal experience, in particular for Gilou, who is very close to me.

(1) Hover train trial tracks, built in 1968 to link Paris to Orleans, disused since 1977...





### **Was Albert Dupontel a foregone conclusion for the part of Cochise?**

There was only one personality who could complete the Cochise-Gilou duo, and he was it! I know him well, I admire him and we've worked together a lot. He is very rational, quite protective, and very warm yet very reserved. In real life we have the same kind of relationship that Cochise has with Gilou. Furthermore, he is an exceptional actor who exudes this particular something that makes Cochise a cold-blooded animal, a real potential killer.

### **A few words about Esther and Willy, the young couple?**

Esther and Willy are on the margins of society. I like fragile characters who could fall at any moment. There's a kind of absolute purity about them that fits with the image I have of the first men, meaning that they incarnate the best in human nature.

### **Why "The First The Last"?**

There is a recurring theme in all my films: the exploded family unit that we try to piece back together by any means possible. What connects us to the first men - we, who are perhaps the last - is this same absolute desire to live through the clan. I like the idea that we are still connected to them, it reassures me. Also, the first, the last, it's God. The first men, unlike animals, had a conscience and sought the divine. Even if my faith is battered, I too am still looking for the divine. We might be the last men but we are not so different from the first.

### **Can you say a few words about Max Von Sydow and Michael Lonsdale?**

Aside from the privilege of working with them, it is the image of the father I tried to recreate when I entrusted them with these two roles. I needed two characters who were older than Gilou, more fragile physically but much stronger morally. What Gilou needs to bounce back and regain possession of himself is a father who can help him understand that his own fragility is relative.

## **Then there's Jesus, as played by Philippe Rebbot**

Philippe is an El Greco Jesus. We met while shooting a film by Solveig Anspach <sup>(2)</sup> and became brothers. I told him: "You're going to be Jesus, you're going to take off your glasses and you'll have Christ's kindness in your eyes..."

For me, Rebbot in the film is the real Jesus, thus he is a man. A man with doubts, a man who knows that a special fate awaits him but who doesn't know exactly where. A man who's not afraid to use his gun. A gunslinger Jesus! He's my Jesus, perhaps not to everyone's tastes, but I couldn't care less!

## **The Beauce in mid-winter offers a splendid and wild setting, not unlike that of a western...**

Yes, it's very beautiful, those infinite flatlands, very pictorial, like in certain westerns. But it was hell, with that relentless icy wind! It looks wonderful in 'Scope, that wilderness, but it was tough.

## **How did you approach the photography, the look?**

Well in advance, as always. At the end of *The Giants*, I told Jean-Paul De Zaeytijd, my DP, that the next film would be darker, more crepuscular, harsher, with confined, dark interiors and very cold exteriors. And that's what we've done.

## **Why a darker film?**

There is a sort of existential pessimism is evident in today's thinking. I can relate to that. Besides, I went through a difficult period during which the thought of death wouldn't leave me. I had to exorcise it through a story, a film. Since today's 'entertainment and laughs above all' society sickens me, I couldn't make a comedy. The time was ripe for me to make a darker film. And it's ok to make a dark film.

## **But it is not a film without hope!**

No, not at all. Paradoxically it's the only film I have made that ends well. Even if this is the end of the world, even if disease might shorten our lives, what time we have left has to be lived to the full, and for others. To me this film is a real message of hope.

(2) « Lulu in the Nude » (2013).



# INTERVIEW WITH ALBERT DUPONTEL

**How did your professional and personal relationship with Bouli Lanners start?**

I first met Bouli during the filming of “Dead Man’s Hand”, an unlikely Belgian film. The connection felt really good and I couldn’t wait to work with him again.

**How can you explain that - and not the first time - you are two of a kind?**

We’re the same generation, pretty much share the same tastes, the same things make us laugh, we share the same anxieties about life.

**What was your reaction when Bouli talked to you about “The First The Last”?**

Surprise that he’d thought of me, joy that he’d asked me... Then the gnawing fear of disappointing him.

**How did he present it to you?**

As the story of a strong and solid friendship, in which he envisaged the two of us.

**A few words about the character of Cochise and the duo he makes with Gilou?**

Cochise is the quiet conscience of the two: less anxious, calmer, probably more desperate. When Gilou frets, Cochise stops worrying and accepts their future with fatalism. He reassures him, mothers him and helps him to get back on his feet because he needs Gilou just as much as Gilou needs him...

**What were your impressions during the shoot?**

I very much admire Bouli’s determination, his precision, his fine and intelligent way of directing actors. I had an excellent time, he was able to control his natural anxiety and even share a few laughs with me.



### **Did the weather influence the way you worked and the film in general?**

Cold motivates you and intensifies your concentration, you don't want to hang around. The Beauce - the only place in the world where you can never be out of shot (laughs) - offered no any chance of escape and increased my concentration levels even more.

### **Your feelings about the themes of the film: friendship, the end of the world, marginalisation, freedom and others you'd hold dear?**

There are themes close to Bouli's heart, which I share. I understood exactly what he was after and my only fear, again, was that I wouldn't manage it.

### **And your feelings about the spiritual dimension Bouli brought?**

It's a deeply personal, lucid and uncompromising reflection on the improbability of existence and the extraordinary mystery the surrounds us. Bouli answers these questions with great sensitivity and profound humanity.

### **As a director yourself, what are your impressions of Bouli in that role?**

Precise, meticulous, he captures the nature around him to full cinematic effect, filming it in the most generous way, a hymn to life as much as him thumbing his nose at death.

### **A few words about Gibus?**

Gibus is to Bouli what Snowy is to Tintin, that says it all!

### **A memorable anecdote?**

Everything went well and that, believe me, is one hell of an anecdote.





# BIOGRAPHY

# BOULI LANNERS

A familiar face of Belgian and French cinema for the past decade, Bouli Lanners pursued his career as an actor and as a director in parallel, and has been hailed by critics and public alike. **ULTRANOVA**, **ELDORADO**, **THE GIANTS** and now **THE FIRST THE LAST** reveal him as an auteur with a powerfully visual universe and a generous if melancholy humanity.

Drawing on his studies at Liege College of Fine Art, the films of Bouli Lanners evince a powerfully pictorial style - moving tableaux that pay homage to the landscape of his native country. After beginning his career in television as a some-time member of **LES SNULS**, and finding himself in the world of cinema rather by chance, Lanners discovered that this medium was perfectly suited to conveying his dreams of nature and wide open spaces, somewhat dysfunctional families, and chance meetings. By the late 90s, he was regularly to be seen on the big screen, first in bit parts, then larger roles, gradually imposing his gruff, good-natured and dreamy persona to become a solid asset to French cinema.

At the same time he began directing, starting in 1995 and hitting his stride in 1999 with **TRAVELLINCKX**, his first road movie, produced by Versus Production. In 2001, his next short, **MUNO**, was selected in Directors' Fortnight in Cannes.

Lanners followed this with his first feature **ULTRANOVA** (2005), which confirmed the emergence of a very individual director whose sharp vision cast a new light on Wallonia, the region of his birth, and helped to re-define the Belgian cinematic imagination with the precious help of Jean-Paul Zaeytijd, his faithful DP.

**ELDORADO** (2008) followed and saw Lanners once again invited to Cannes: a 'new Walloon Western', a bucolic and melancholy 'Scope road movie in which guitar riffs punctuate the story of a mythical quest for a hypothetical Eldorado.



Next came **THE GIANTS** (2011) in which, during the course of one summer, three adolescent boys recreate the family that has abandoned them. Through a place where fairy tale meets adventure movie, Bouli Lanners once more questioned society through the prism of the family. He also confirmed his ability to create popular auteur cinema, finding favour with both the critics (the film was once again selected in Directors' Fortnight and was awarded the Magritte Award for Best Film in Belgium) and the public.

2015 sees the return of Bouli Lanners the director, with **THE FIRST THE LAST**, shot in Belgium and the Beauce region of northern France. Lanners imagined the film if it was to be his last, his testament. It is run through with his questions, his concerns, his fears. He and Albert Dupontel play a couple of bounty hunters searching for a phone containing sensitive information. On their journey they encounter Suzanne Clément, Michael Lonsdale, David Murgia and Aurore Broutin, amongst others. Once again, his characters are on the move, as if each one of his films was one leg of the extended road movie that constitutes his filmography. If the motifs remain familiar, the scenery changes: the landscapes of Wallonia and Luxembourg give way to the Beauce, and to the mental and musical landscape provided by Pascal Humbert's rough folk guitars on the film's soundtrack. **THE FIRST THE LAST** will be released in France on January 27th, 2016 and in Belgium on February 24th.

(Texte : A.E.)



# FILMOGRAPHY

**THE FIRST THE LAST** (2015)

**THE GIANTS** (2011) Directors' Fortnight, SACD Prize Cannes FF, Magritte Award for Best Film in Belgium

**ELDORADO** (2008) Fipresci Prize, Directors' Fortnight Cannes FF

**ULTRANOVA** (2005) Berlin FF

**WESTERN** music video (2002)

**MUNO** short (2001)

**TRAVELLINCKX** short (1999)

**LES SŒURS VAN HOOF** short (1996)

**NON, WALLONIE TA CULTURE N'EST PAS MORTE** short (1995)

# CAST

<b>COCHISE</b>	<b>Albert DUPONTEL</b>
<b>GILOU</b>	<b>Bouli LANNERS</b>
<b>CLARA</b>	<b>Suzanne CLÉMENT</b>
<b>JEAN-BERCHMANS</b> <small>GUESTHOUSE OWNER</small>	<b>Michael LONSDALE</b>
<b>WILLY</b>	<b>David MURGIA</b>
<b>ESTHER</b>	<b>Aurore BROUTIN</b>
<b>JÉSUS</b>	<b>Philippe REBBOT</b>
<b>HUNTER LEADER</b>	<b>Serge RIABOUKINE</b>
<b>WAREHOUSE MAN</b>	<b>Lionel ABELANSKI</b>
<b>BASTARD</b>	<b>Virgile BRAMLÉ</b>
<b>UNDERTAKER</b>	<b>Max VON SYDOW</b>



# CREW

Written and Directed by	Bouli LANNERS
Producers	Jacques-Henri et Olivier BRONCKART Catherine BOZORGAN
DP	Jean-Paul DE ZAEYTIJD
Editor	Ewin RYCKAERT
Sound	Jean MINONDO - AFSI Marc BASTIEN Thomas GAUDER
Production Designer	Paul ROUSCHOP
Costume Designer	Elise ANCION
1 <sup>st</sup> AD	Dimitri LINDER
Continuity	Cathy MLAKAR
Casting	Aurélie GUICHARD Joséphine SIEN
Line Producer	Didier ABOT
Original Music	Pascal HUMBERT
Production Manager	Béatrice CHAUVIN-BALLAY
Post-Production Manager	Nicolas SACRÉ
Coproduced by	PRIME TIME VOO et Be tv RTBF (Télévision belge)
International Sales	WILD BUNCH

A Versus production, ADCB Films, Prime Time, VOO and Be tv, RTBF (Télévision belge) coproduction. With the help of the Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles. With the participation of the Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée. With the support of the Tax Shelter of the Gouvernement Fédéral Belge, of Inver Invest, of Casa Kafka Pictures, of Casa Kafka Pictures Movie Tax Shelter empowered by Belfius, of Eurimages, of the Wallonie, of Ciclic-Région Centre-Val de Loire, in partnership with the CNC, the Fonds Audiovisuel de Flandre (VAF) and of the Programme MEDIA of the European Union. With the participation of Canal +, of Ciné +, of Cinéimage 10 and Palatine 13. In association with Wild Bunch and O'Brother Distribution.