



CAST

Armand Lacourtade: **Ludovic BERTHILLOT** • Curly: **Hafsia HERZI** Robert Rapaille: **Pierre LAUR** • Durandot: **Luc PALUN** • Paul: **Pascal AUBERT** • Le commissaire: **François CLAVIER** • Jean-Jacques: **Bruno VALAYER** • Jean: **Jean TOSCAN**

CREW

Directed by **Alain GUIRAUDIE** • Written by **Alain GUIRAUDIE**, **Laurent LUNETTA** - With the collaboration of **Frédérique MOREAU** • Producer **Sylvie PIALAT** • Production Manager **Thomas SANTUCCI** • Director of photography **Sabine LANCELIN** Sound **Xavier GRIETTE** • Set Designer **Didier PONS** Editing **Bénédicte BRUNET**, **Yann DEDET** • Costums **Roy GENTY** • Make-up **Natali TABAREAU VIEUILLE** • Music **Xavier BOUSSIRON** • Line producer **LES FILMS DU WORSO** • In co-production with **GLADYS GLOVER** • In association with **ARTE / COFINOVA 4** • With the support of **RÉGION MIDI-PYRENEES** • Developped with **COFINOVA DEVELOPPEMENT** International sales **LES FILMS DU LOSANGE**



ALAIN GUIRAUDIE

2009 **THE KING OF ESCAPE** • 2007 **ON M'A VOLÉ MON ADOLESCENCE** (TV) • 2005 **TIME HAS COME** • 2003 **NO REST FOR THE BRAVE** - *Director's Fortnight, Cannes* 2001 **THAT OLD DREAM THAT MOVES** (Medium feature) *Director's Fortnight, Cannes* 2000 **SUNSHINE FOR THE POOR** (Medium feature) • 1997 **LA FORCE DES CHOSES** (Short) 1994 **TOUT DROIT JUSQU'AU MATIN** (Short) • 1990 **LES HÉROS SONT IMMORTELS** (Short)



SYNOPSIS

Armand Lacourtade, 43, an agricultural equipment salesman, is sick of life as a single gay man. After meeting Curly, a brash teenage girl, he goes straight. With all kinds of people on their tails, they defy every danger to be together in their forbidden love. But is this really what Armand dreamed of?

2009 / FRANCE / 35MM / COLOR / 2.35 / DOLBY SRD/1H37

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LES FILMS DU WORSO present

HAFSIA HERZI

LUDOVIC BERTHILLOT



CANNES 2009
Quinzaine
des Réalistes
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT

THE KING OF ESCAPE

(LE ROI DE L'ÉVASION)

A FILM BY **ALAIN GUIRAUDIE**

PIERRE LAUR **LUC PALUN** **PASCAL AUBERT** **FRANÇOIS CLAVIER** **BRUNO VALAYER** **JEAN TOSCAN**
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **ALAIN GUIRAUDIE** PRODUCERS **SYLVIE PIALAT** PRODUCTION MANAGER **THOMAS SANTUCCI** DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **SABINE LANCELIN** SOUND **XAVIER GRIETTE**
SET DESIGNER **DIDIER PONS** EDITOR **BÉNÉDICTE BRUNET**, **YANN DEDET** COSTUMS **ROY GENTY** MAKE-UP **NATALI TABAREAU VIEUILLE** MUSIC **XAVIER BOUSSIRON**
LINE PRODUCER **LES FILMS DU WORSO** IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH **GLADYS GLOVER** IN ASSOCIATION WITH **ARTE / COFINOVA 4** WITH THE SUPPORT OF **LA RÉGION MIDI-PYRÉNÉES**
DEVELOPPED WITH **COFINOVA DÉVELOPPEMENT** INTERNATIONAL SALES **LES FILMS DU LOSANGE** www.filmsdulosange.fr



INTERVIEW WITH ALAIN GUIRAUDIE

► What was the starting-point of this film?

The film stems from my own and my friends' reflections on the mid-life crisis, the period when you want to give your life new impetus. But you find yourself facing a cruel lack of possibilities. It's a period marked by a serious loss of desire paradoxically accompanied by a resurgence of your libido. Existential desire fades while your sex-drive suddenly revs up. And I also wanted to consider the hiatus between real life and fantasy. And so make a film halfway between dream and reality. An important question underpins the film: can you break free of yourself, overcome what you are, what you have always been? The idea of changing my nature has occurred to me throughout my own life: dating a young woman, living together, like everybody else. It's easy to get bored of living on the edge of society.... Giving up your dreams, falling into line, not feeling so lonely anymore. That's the great temptation for Armand, that of the dominant model. If everybody does it, it can't be so bad.

■ *Le Roi de l'évasion* is markedly different from your previous film.

In my previous film, I was working from a world of legend (inhabited by warriors and bandits) and introducing current events and my own preoccupations. With *king of escape*, I wanted to show the world today. I didn't have a predetermined style. The style of the film came out of the process of making it. I wanted to go back to a naturalistic universe... Naturalistic as Flaubert defined it when he wrote that art is at its most beautiful and noble when it acts like nature, when it allows people to escape..

■ The film is a comedy with the codes of a melodrama: two people with nothing in common fall in love and are hounded by conventionally society...

The film is against the idea that people should know their place and stay there. Against the established order, therefore. We've already seen movies where heterosexuals give homosexuality a try... I wondered



what it'd be like the other way round, with an important age difference between the two protagonists. Suddenly, you have two unconventional heroes-a homosexual in his early forties and a passionate young woman chasing after him. We're in the extreme realm of impossible love. Obviously, they have the whole world against them... Especially Curly's father and the police. Melodramatic ingredients are in the mix, except that the hero is confused and doesn't really know what he wants, which gives rise to very funny situations in terms of his relationship to the world and other people. From an existential point of view, however, it's more serious. It's the story of impossible love. He has to leave the young woman and the way he extricates himself is not very dignified.

■ They're not a very obvious couple... Some people might say very unlikely even.

At the beginning, I wanted to situate the film in a sort of banality with a young classically handsome lead. But everything changed in the auditions when I met Ludovic Berthillot, a bulky and touching man. In the end, as with all the other protagonists, the screen tests decided who I wanted to film. And I agree it made for some surprises... From the beginning, the audience is confronted with an unconventional couple-a cuddly guy and a slim Mediterranean young woman. Hafsia Herzi is perfect in that respect. She slips easily from teenage girl, who's barely more than a child, to young woman. The big gamble was whether their love affair would work. *king of escape* hinges on that-a couple that might seem mismatched at the beginning gradually finds their fit.

■ There are some wonderful supporting roles. Where do you find these actors?

People often ask me about the non-professional actors I use in my movies and I guess it's because of their accents or their faces or even the quality of their acting. And the biggest compliment you can pay an actor is thinking that maybe they're not an actor. But the actors I work with are (with one or two exceptions) professionals that you find by organizing auditions... And they act in other French movies, on stage and TV. I work with a casting director who doesn't think twice about leaving the beaten track and with whom I share a desire for striking, new faces. It's fair to say that actors such as François Clavier (the Police Captain), Jean Toscan (Jean), Luc Palun (Curly's father) and Pierre Laur (Robert Rapaille) bring their personalities to their characters and contribute a lot to the movie.

■ Starting with the scene when they meet, Armand turns out to be a different kind of knight in shining armor...

Armand is a dreamy fellow, constantly out of his depth. The scene when they meet is significant in that respect. Armand's much bulkier than the young thugs picking on Curly, but he's not very brave and a bit lazy... He finds a cowardly way out by withdrawing cash from an ATM. It's the behavior of a loser who's scared to get his teeth knocked out. But afterwards, he shakes free of that aspect of himself and shows real courage. He starts off floundering and ends up transcending himself.

■ Between them, is it passion?

For Curly, yes. She totally believes in it. Armand finds himself carried along by events. He doesn't make an explicit decision. She embraces the possibilities, with her teenage energy and recklessness. And as in all the great love stories, she wants it to last forever. Armand is swept away by her energy. And he enjoys tagging along after her. As long as they're running across the countryside to escape their pursuers, Armand is driven by strong desire. But when he finds himself stuck in a house living like a real-life couple, that changes everything.



■ Is the film a "hymn to nature"? Or just "naturist" in the sex scenes?

I confess there's a certain "naturist" lyricism to filming sex scenes in the great outdoors, but I'm not tempted by some primitive return to nature. It's more a kind of sensual freedom... But the result for me is always disappointing because I take a lot of care choosing my locations and they always end up in the background. I always end up making the interaction between the characters the priority. I'll admit to having a pastoral side, but here it's always spoiled by outside elements.

■ There are also fantasy elements, such as the "do-root"...

That's a kind of modern-day mandrake that has the same effect as Viagra and EPO, with aphrodisiac side-effects that make you lose your inhibitions. A doer's dream. You find them in special places deep in the forest, grown like precious treasure by Robert, a local farmer. And he doesn't grow them to make money, but for his and his friends' personal consumption.

■ In your films, and this one is no exception, there are always homosexuals in places and jobs that are usually not open to them. Humor or shock-value?

Gays in movies are often represented in the same way--young, good-looking, dapper if not effeminate, middle-class at the very least and urban, but definitely not farmers or working men. In my films, I admit that the proportion of homosexuals is far greater than in reality. Even so, guys go cruising out in the country! It's a discreet universe of men who love men without necessarily feeling they are part of the gay community. And roadside cruising spots where you find teachers, farmers, students and salesmen, young and old, are the subject of increasing police surveillance. The repression is low-key but very real. Beyond homosexuality, I also want to show a community of men. Like hunters in South-West France who live together in their hideouts for weeks. I'm

not saying they get up to anything in there, I've no idea, but I can fantasize about it. Gay or not, men all want to meet up in a cabin in the woods. Which is how the film ends.

■ Do you consider yourself a gay filmmaker?

When I see *Du soleil pour les gueux* and *Pas de repos pour les braves* in the Gay section of a video store, I find it simplistic and very annoying. For a long time, I thought homosexuality didn't determine the movies I made. I showed a homosexuality that was unthreatening. But it was a form of denial. In fact, socially, it remains a problem. Even if homophobia isn't really an issue for Armand, his homosexuality is a problem for him. He falls in love with a young woman in a kind of reverse coming-out, only to wind up in the arms of an old man.

■ In its representation of sex, the film is pretty graphic.

Perhaps. At the same time, it's much softer than what was written. That was a major issue--how to avoid being obscene while getting physically as close as possible to their bodies and what happens during lovemaking. It was crucial that the sex between Armand and Curly should be credible, so people believe Armand has started batting for the other team. ■

