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SYNOPSIS

In Belgium, today, the destiny of young Ahmed (13), caught between his imam’s ideals of purity and life’s temptations.
DIRECTORS’ STATEMENT

When we finished writing this screenplay, we realized that, in a way, we had written the story of the fruitless attempts made by various characters to dissuade the young fanatic Ahmed, our main character, from carrying out his murderous plan. Whoever these characters may be – his teacher Inès, his mother, his brother, his sister, his caseworker, the judge, the psychologist at the detention centre, his lawyer, the owners of the farm where he is placed, their daughter Louise – not one of them manages to reach the hard, mysterious core of this boy ready to kill his teacher in the name of his religious convictions.

When we began writing, we never imagined that we were creating such an inscrutable character, capable of eluding us to such an extent, of leaving us without any possibility of a dramatic construction to catch up with him and bring him out of his murderous madness. Even Youssouf, the imam at the fundamentalist mosque, this magnetic figure who has harnessed the energy of the adolescent’s ideals to focus it on purity and hatred of impurity, even he, the master, is surprised by his disciple’s determination. But could it be any different? Could it be any different when the fanatic is so young, almost a child, and when, moreover, his charismatic master encourages him to venerate a martyred cousin, a dead man?

How to halt the headlong rush towards murder of this fanatical boy, cut off as he is from the kindness of his educators, from the love of his mother, from the friendship and romantic games of young Louise? How can he be stopped in a moment when, without resorting to naïve optimism or an implausible happy ending, he could open up to life, converting to the impurity he has loathed until that point? What scene, what shots, could allow us to film that transformation and trouble the gaze of the audience that has entered Ahmed’s night, as close as possible to that which possesses him, and to that from which he would finally be delivered?

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne
Jean-Pierre Dardenne was born in Engis (Belgium) in April 1951. Luc Dardenne was born in Awirs (Belgium) in March 1954.

Together they have directed numerous documentaries.

In 1975, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne founded the production company Dérives, which has produced more than eighty documentaries, including their own.

In 1994, they founded the production company Les Films du Fleuve.

**SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY AS DIRECTORS**

**1987:** *Falsch*
Starring Bruno Cremer

**1992:** *Je pense à vous*
Starring Fabienne Babe, Robin Renucci

**1996:** *The Promise*
Starring Jérémie Renier, Olivier Gourmet, Assita Ouédraogo

**1999:** *Rosetta*
Starring Emilie Dequenne, Fabrizio Rongione, Anne Yernaux, Olivier Gourmet
Palme d’Or and Best Actress for Emilie Dequenne – Cannes FF 1999

**2002:** *The Son*
Starring Olivier Gourmet, Morgan Marinne, Isabelle Soupart
Best Actor for Olivier Gourmet – Cannes FF 2002

**2005:** *The Child*
Starring Jérémie Renier, Déborah François, Jérémie Ségard
Palme d’Or – Cannes FF 2005

**2008:** *Lorna’s Silence*
Starring Arta Dobroshi, Jérémie Renier, Fabrizio Rongione
Best Screenplay – Cannes FF 2008
Prix Lux – 2008

**2011:** *The Kid with a Bike*
Starring Cécile de France, Thomas Doret, Jérémie Renier
Grand Prize of the Jury – Cannes FF 2011

**2014:** *Two Days, One Night*
Starring Marion Cotillard, Fabrizio Rongione
European Film Awards – Best Actress for Marion Cotillard 2015
Academy Award® Best Actress
Nomination for Marion Cotillard 2015

**2016:** *The Unknown Girl*
Starring Adèle Haenel, Olivier Bonnaud

**2019:** *Young Ahmed*
Starring Idir Ben Addi, Olivier Bonnaud, Myriem Akheddiou, Victoria Bluck, Claire Bodson, Othmane Moumen
CAST

Ahmed
Idir Ben Addi

Caseworker
Olivier Bonnaud

Inès
Myriem Akheddiou

Louise
Victoria Bluck

Mother
Claire Bodson

Imam Youssouf
Othmane Moumen

CREW

Written & Directed by
Jean-Pierre and
Luc Dardenne

Sound Editor
Valène Leroy

Mix
Thomas Gauder

Production Designer
Igor Gabriel

Costume Designer
Maïra Ramedhan-Levi

Make-up
Natali Tabareau-Vieuille

Location Manager
Guillaume Fernandez

Production Manager
Olivier Abrassart

Post Production
Supervisor (Belgium)
Sébastien Demeyere

Post Production
Supervisor (France)
Cédric Ettouati

Stills Photographer
Christine Plenus

Producers
Jean-Pierre and
Luc Dardenne, Denis Freyd

Executive Producer
Delphine Tomson

Associate Producers
Tanguy Dekeyser, Arlette Zylberber

CREDITS

A Les Films du Fleuve, Archipel 35, France 2 Cinema, Proximus, RTBF [Belgian Television] co-production, with the participation of Canal +, Ciné +, France Televisions, Wallimage (Wallonia), the Brussels-Capital Region, produced with assistance from the Film and Audiovisual Center of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and Eurimages, with the support of the Tax Shelter of the Belgian Federal Government, Casa Kafka Pictures, Casa Kafka Pictures Movie Tax Shelter empowered by Belfius, in association with Wild Bunch, Diaphana, Cinéart and BIM Distribuzione. International Sales Wild Bunch.