



M

A FILM BY **YOLANDE ZAUBERMAN**



**"A FILM WITHOUT CONCESSIONS, CANDID AND AT THE SAME TIME  
EXTREMELY CRUEL. A REAL REDEPTIVE PUNCH IN THE STOMACH."**

**"ZAUBERMAN'S UNOBTUSIVE OBSERVATIONAL STYLE BRINGS  
ITS OWN REWARDS."**

SCREEN

M

A FILM BY **YOLANDE ZAUBERMAN**

Runtime: 105min – France – 2018 – 1:85 – Dolby 5.1

FRENCH DISTRIBUTOR: NEW STORY (First semester 2019)

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## SYNOPSIS

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Suburbs of Tel Aviv. Bnei Brak, world capital of the Haredim, the ultra-Orthodox Jews.

When he was a kid, Menahem Lang was known for his kindness, his commitment to Talmud school and especially his golden voice, which made him a renowned performer of liturgical chants. But he was hiding a secret: for years, he was raped by members of the community that worshipped him.

After 10 years, Menahem returns to the scene of the crime. It is also a return to the places he loved, a path of initiation sprinkled with incredible encounters, recovered rituals... a reconciliation.



## INTERVIEW WITH **YOLANDE ZAUBERMAN**

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### **How did «M» originate?**

I saw Menahem Lang in a film by Amos Gitai, «Kedma». I wondered how a boy of 20 could speak such good Yiddish, this intrigued me. Then I saw him in a documentary by Valérie Mréjen, «Pork and Milk», about young people who have left the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community. He says he was born into the most orthodox of the orthodox dynasties: Netoure Karta. They don't even speak Hebrew; for them Hebrew is the language of the Bible, prayer and the Sacred. You don't say: «Pass me the bread,» in Hebrew, you say it in Yiddish!

I asked Amos Gitai for his phone number as I wanted to offer him a part in my next film. I typed in his name on Internet and a blog came up about orthodox children who were raped in their communities. There was a sequence in which Menahem chases one of his rapists with a hidden camera and forces him to confess his crime. I assumed he was preparing a film and I said: «Maybe I can help you produce it in France.» He replied: «No, I filmed that for Israeli television ten years ago, then I received death threats and I stopped.»

After that he called me to say I must make this

film. I didn't think a woman could film in that environment but when I got there I found they let me in pretty well anywhere.

### **Why do you think they let you in?**

Menahem was a fantastic Open Sesame. And when I film, I become invisible. I just love people only seeing my smile. Together, Menahem and I radiated something that made people come and talk to us. And when they discovered I speak Yiddish, all the doors opened. We had the feeling that something bigger than we were wanted us to make the film.

For me, it was incredible to be able to enter a community that is firmly closed to all non-believers. It was absolutely extraordinary to be there, to witness all that vitality and passion, that incredible sincerity. I felt as if I was entering the world of my ancestors through a wound, the wound of Menahem and many others.

### **You made the film thanks to Menahem... and for him a bit?**

I find the film has overtaken us all, him and me, the orthodox community and the Jewish community and Israel and... The film



addresses a universal, world problem that exists everywhere, in all religions and even in societies without religion. Rape changes one’s relationship to politics, to obedience, to everything. Child abuse has existed since time began, it marinates in silence and in shame, it’s something that must be brought into the light.

**What is the common denominator between all your films?**

Transforming victims into heroes. When I was very young I saw Marcel Ophuls’ film «Memory of Justice» about the Nuremberg Trials. A French politician, Edgard Faure, who spoke with a lisp, said: «A victim talked of the horror he went through in Auschwitz and it was very moving, then a second victim, then a third. By the fourth, we started to feel it was a bit repetitive. At that moment Goering stood up in the dock and the whole courtroom was electrified...» I said to myself: «Even there the executioners are the stars!» and I

swore I’d make the victims «sexy», and see them as heroes! All my films revolve around that issue: what can we do in order not to suffer all one’s life under the weight of the past? What freedom do we have?

**Have the people who were abused as children seen the film?**

Yes, of course. Lots of them. Anyway, so many people are concerned by the subject, it’s their own story. It’s terrifying. And now they can talk about it at last, it’s joyful to connect with truth. You just have to see the people I filmed in Bnei Brak. They were so different at the beginning, completely crushed by their personal histories. As the shooting advanced, they were released from the secret that was their prison and maybe their curse. When trapped in silence, a rape victim can turn into a rapist. They were happy to speak at last and they became more and more beautiful. It was magnificent.

**FILMOGRAPHY**

**YOLANDE ZAUBERMAN**

Yolande is one of the most exceptional voices of French documentary cinema. An author without filter, without inhibition, experienced in the most sensitive subjects and in the most scorching fields of investigation. Born in Paris, graduated in art history and economics, Yolande Zauberman started to work on films with director Amos Gitai. In 1987, she made her first documentary on apartheid in South Africa, *Classified People*, which won the Grand Prix at the Paris Festival. Her second film, *Caste Criminelle* (1989), shot in India, was selected at the Cannes Film Festival. Three years later, she directed her first fiction with *I Ivan, you Abraham*, which won the Youth Prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

A multidisciplinary artist, alternating between documentary and fiction, feature film and short film, video art and narrative art, Yolande Zauberman invented her own voice

of expression through films that have always sparked lively debates and sometimes controversy. Yolande Zauberman’s films investigate the shadows, break the taboos, incite free speech and force people to listen; they attack places of power, whether religious or economic; she confronts us with realities kept in silence; she stands near the abandoned, marginalized, sacrificed and transforms them into heroes... In 2011, her film *Would you have sex with an Arab?*, presented at the Venice Film Festival, opened a wide debate on the living conditions of Israeli Arabs, addressing the very sensitive issue of sex and desire in this fragile region of the world.

With her pirate camera, infiltrating the secret areas of Tel-Aviv, the filmmaker wondered about taboos in Israel, without judging or provoking, simply by collecting testimonies, capturing portraits. Her new film, *M*, will prolong this reflection through an even more sensitive subject: rapes in the heart of Orthodox Jewish communities.

- 1988 **CLASSIFIED PEOPLE**
- 1990 **CASTE CRIMINELLE**
- 1993 **I IVAN, YOU ABRAHAM**
- 1996 **CLUBBED TO DEATH**
- 2011 **LA GUERRE À PARIS**
- 2004 **PARADISE NOW - JOURNAL D’UNE FEMME EN CRISE**
- 2005 **UN JUIF À LA MER**
- 201 **WOULD YOU HAVE SEX WITH AN ARAB?**
- 2018 **M**



## PRODUCER **CHARLES GILLIBERT**

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Charles Gillibert set up the production company CG Cinéma in 2013. With the company he produced films by Olivier Assayas (*Sils Maria*), Mia Hansen-Løve (*L'Avenir*), Abbas Kiarostami (*24 Frames*), Deniz Gamze Ergüven (*Mustang*), amongst others. After several years working with the group MK2, he produced leading international writer-directors (Gus Van Sant, Abdellatif Kechiche, Xavier Dolan) and established CG Cinéma in the cutting-edge heart of French film production. CG Cinéma has followed a clear strategy right from the start: to accompany and discover great directors, place the *cinéma d'auteur* (independent cinema) at the centre of the industry, build bridges between countries and languages.

Highly acclaimed by audiences and critics, his productions also resonate in top international film festivals. In 2016, the film *Mustang*, winner of four César awards in

France, was an Oscar nomination. That same year, *Personal Shopper* was awarded the Prix de la Mise en Scène at Cannes Film Festival, and *L'Avenir* won the Silver Bear for best director at the Berlin Film Festival.

In 2016, CG Cinéma became the fourth largest exporter of French films, with over a million tickets in the world.

In 2017-2018, the company produced Deniz Gamze Ergüven's second film, *Kings*, shot in Los Angeles with Daniel Craig and Halle Berry; then *Un Couteau dans le coeur* by Yann Gonzalez, selected in the official competition Cannes Film Festival 2018, and awarded the Prix Jean Vigo; also *Doubles Vies*, the new film by Olivier Assayas, with Juliette Binoche and Guillaume Canet. CG Cinéma is also the co-producer of *Un Grand Voyage vers la nuit*, the second film by young Chinese director Bi Gan, selected in Un Certain Regard, Cannes Film Festival 2018.

# CAST AND CREW

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With **Menahem LANG**

Director **Yolande ZAUBERMAN**

Sound **Sélim NASSIB**

Editing **Raphaël LEFÈVRE**

Sound Editing **Philippe DESCHAMPS, Xavier THIEULIN**

Mix **Xavier THIEULIN**

Color Grading **Yov MOOR**

Producers **Charles GILLIBERT (CG Cinéma),**

**Fabrice BIGIO & Yolande ZAUBERMAN (Phobics Films)**







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