

Material for the script was sourced from newspaper reports on the trial



EXCLUSIVE

MURDER BY NUMBERS

THE GOLDMAN CASE Cédric Kahn's absorbing drama puts anti-Semitism in the dock.

In a year of splendid French courtroom dramas like *Anatomy of a Fall*, Cédric Kahn's *The Goldman Case* is another to join the ranks. In 1976, French activist, left-wing intellectual and criminal Pierre Goldman (Arieh Worthalter) stood trial for two murders he didn't commit. As the trial gets underway, he blatantly admits to armed robbery charges, much to the exasperation of his attorney Georges Kiejman (Arthur Harari, the Oscar-winning co-writer of *Anatomy...*).

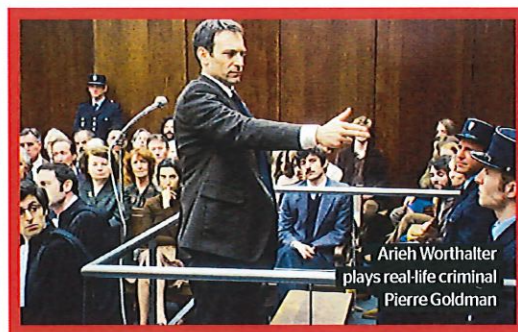
Kahn (2018's *The Prayer*) first discovered Goldman through reading his book *Dim Memories of a Polish Jew Born in France*. 'It was both an autobiography and a creed,' says Kahn, when *Teasers* meets him in Paris. 'And so it was interesting to have his take on the way he defended. He told his story and defended the case, but also he told the story of his parents, his family. And I was fascinated by the character and by his speech, by his mastery of speech.'

Raised by ardent Jewish communists, Goldman's colourful life makes for a fascinating backdrop, but the film is primarily centred in the courtroom, never leaving its confines. Kahn saw it like a sports match. 'I wanted it to be a re-enactment of the actual trial, but really a dialectic sports game... for

this confrontation. And that's what I expected from the actors, not to be settled in their positions, but really to play hard and quick.'

Rather than using Goldman's book, Kahn and his co-writer Nathalie

'I was fascinated by the character and by his mastery of speech'
CÉDRIC KAHN



Arieh Worthalter plays real-life criminal Pierre Goldman

Hertzberg preferred to source material on the trial from newspaper reportage at the time. Where the film becomes truly dramatic is as Kiejman cross-examines witnesses – disproving many who claimed to have seen Goldman commit the murders.

Key to the case is Goldman's Jewish religion, which makes him a target for anti-Semitic witnesses. As Kahn notes, Goldman said, 'I'm being accused because I'm Jewish, because all the witnesses are anti-Semites, and so they're not judging me as a criminal, but as a Jew.' And we don't know the level of honesty of this analysis. Was it just strategy, or did he really feel that?

However tense the drama remains, Kahn seems delighted by those he got to work with. 'Sometimes [as] the director, you really feel that you have to carry the others through the shoot. And here I felt carried away. What I remember, really, is the first time that I went in this full room, and there were 120 people there. And I remember that moment I was really nervous. It was very special.' He chuckles. 'But what you really know as a director... it's not because you enjoy the shoot that the film is going to be good!' **JAMES MOTTRAM**

THE GOLDMAN CASE OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 20 SEPTEMBER.