

Nord-Ouest presents

Mathieu Kassovitz

labe Lapacas

REBELLION (aka L'ORDRE ET LA MORALE)

A film by Mathieu Kassovitz

Script Mathieu Kassovitz – Pierre Geller – Benoît Jaubert –

With the collaboration of Serge Frydman

Based on the novel *La morale et l'action* by Philippe Legorjus

Co-starring

Malik Zidi – Alexandre Steiger

Daniel Martin – Jean-Philippe Puymartin – Philippe de Jacquelin Dulphé

With the participation of Philippe Torreton and Sylvie Testud

Produced by

Christophe Rossignon and Philippe Boëffard

French release date: November 16, 2011

Runtime: 136 min.

Photos & press booklet can be downloaded at www.lordre-et-la-morale-lefilm.com

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Synopsis

April 1988, Ouvéa Island in the French colony of New Caledonia.

30 policemen are kidnapped by Kanak separatists.

300 French special-forces operatives are sent to restore order.

Two men face off: Philippe Legorjus, captain of the GIGN, an elite counter-terrorism police unit, and Alphonse Dianou, the rebels' leader.

They attempt to find a peaceful solution based on common values and dialogue.

But, against the backdrop of presidential elections in France, the political stakes are high, and order is not necessarily a moral question.

With this violent and troubling saga based on real-life events, Mathieu Kassovitz makes a powerful comeback in front of and behind the camera.

An interview with Mathieu Kassovitz

How did you come to take an interest in the events in Ouvéa and the character of Philippe Legorjus?

Thirteen years ago, my father gave me the League of Human Rights' *Report on Ouvéa* to read. It gave a minute-by-minute account of what happened. Of course, I had some recollection of events—I was eighteen at the time. I remembered the version given on TV: native Kanaks had massacred some policemen with machetes and taken others hostage. There had been decapitations and rape... I remembered what Chirac, who was Prime Minister at the time, had said: that these were human beings who deserved to be treated as such. In the book, I discovered a completely different story. The report claimed there had been atrocities and summary executions that had left 19 Kanaks dead. Telling the story of those ten days in April-May 1988, the report was a full-on screenplay. Throughout its incredible story, one character recurred constantly at every level: Captain Legorjus, a GIGN officer sent to negotiate with the hostage-takers, who found his hands tied by politicians and the military. The kidnappings took place during the presidential election campaign, which pitted François Mitterrand against his Prime Minister Jacques Chirac. Some time later, when I was shooting *Crimson Rivers*, I went swimming with one of the actors, Olivier Rousset, who told me that for six months in 1989 he'd lived in New Caledonia, on Ouvéa Island with people who'd directly experienced the events of 1988. He'd been accepted by the locals and had fallen in love with the country and its inhabitants. Since then, he'd been back several times. I asked him to organize a trip there so I could meet the Kanaks.

Did you go with the film in mind?

Yes. I knew there was the material for a wonderful movie and the script was virtually written. The dramatic structure was in the report of those ten days. On that first trip, we didn't talk about the movie. We just took a look round, to see who I was dealing with. I was wondering if I could get a project like that off the ground and if it was possible to make it over there. Ten years had passed but people were still withdrawn into their grief. The subject was taboo. There had been no closure. There was a lot of religious and political infighting within the Kanak community. The nineteen dead men came from tribes and families that are all linked together in one way or another. Olivier introduced me to Mathias Waneux (a Kanak tribal chief, and business and political leader) who also has a part in the movie. We lived at his place when we were over there. He talked us through the "custom" and pleaded our case with the various factions. Mathias warned us that it may be too soon and that we'd most likely have to wait another ten years before being able to make the film. I spent ten days exploring the country and meeting the people. When I got home, I started work on the script. In the next five years, I went back on several occasions partly for research purposes and partly to sound people out about making a movie. Every time we had to go through the ritual at the heart of Kanak culture, the "custom."

How would you define the "custom"?

The custom is a discussion that ends in tacit agreement, which must not be broken because it is made eye-to-eye. Kanak society is based on a person's word, which has great value and is an absolute commitment, while lending a sacred dimension to all things. In New Caledonia, everything hinges on the custom. The discussions are very interesting—I've never encountered anything like it anywhere else—and they can go on for hours or even days. There's a time to speak, a time to listen and a time for the decision. We went through the whole process with Olivier. They said, "You can make this film if everybody agrees." We asked what they meant by "everybody." "All the victims' families," they replied. "And anybody who is in the custom and is entitled to his or her say." As a result, we often found ourselves explaining what we wanted to do and why to forty or more people. What complicated matters for me from the outset was that I wanted to tell the story from the point of view of Philippe Legorjus, whom many Kanaks believe betrayed them precisely because he didn't—or couldn't—keep his word.

Why were you so determined to tell it from Legorjus's viewpoint?

Because he's the thread running through the whole story. Because it was an arduous, surprising and very powerful life-experience for him. At the time, I hadn't met him, but I'd read his book, *La morale et l'action* ("Morality and Action"), which gives a clear picture of all he went through—how a relationship of trust was forged between him and the rebels' leader, Alphonse Dianou, and how he had to betray it in spite of himself. It's Shakespeare! Moreover, his point of view was easier for me to explain, if not defend. I'm not Kanak, I'm not here to defend the Kanaks' cause, but to express a point of view that mainstream audiences can understand—the story of a white man who could be the guy-next-door and who encounters other people from another culture and experiences something very powerful. It's only through Legorjus's eyes that we could set out the political and human dilemma. I explained that to the Kanaks during the custom and they replied, "Sure, but he's a traitor." I told them the point of the movie wasn't to portray him as a hero—or a traitor, actually—but to tell the story of what he went through. During the customs, we found ourselves in some pretty tense situations, but everything always turned out okay because we were talking. We were often confronted with people who were very wary of white men and mainland French people—young 25-year-olds who were 5 when their father or uncle was killed. They live with that memory, the image of their father or uncle sprawled on the ground with a bullet in his body. It's made even worse by the fact that nobody talks about it. There's a huge question mark over what truly happened, which simply spurs all kinds of fantastical theories. Some people rebuked us for opening up old wounds. We tried to explain that, on the contrary, it could be a way of helping those wounds to heal.

Can you tell us what touches you most in this story?

The relationship that grows up between the GIGN officer and the young separatist leader, the encounter between two characters who are immediately on the same wavelength. They share the same aims and need for justice. The GIGN isn't a typical special-forces unit. These guys have their own philosophy and ethics. If a mission results in someone's death, they

consider it a failure. Legorjus wanted to be a monk. In 1968, he battled with riot-control units he later joined.

Alphonse Dianou also wanted to be a priest. He studied theology for seven years and later committed himself to a struggle that he didn't necessarily want but completely embraced to the point of self-sacrifice. It's fascinating to be dealing with two such contradictory but similar characters. I asked Philippe if they'd become friends. He replied, "It wasn't friendship. It was fraternity." What touches me first and foremost is the human angle. And immediately after that, the terrible injustice of it all. In a world that's not even perfect, just normal, Legorjus would have been given the time to resolve the issue and nobody would have died. The political issues, which gradually emerged as I dug deeper into the story, are overwhelming. How politicians are prepared to sacrifice hostages if it serves their interests. How there is an obvious lack of respect, dialogue and, in a word, intelligence. It resonates with me because, to a lesser extent, it's exactly what's happening in the inner cities. Also, the story has a universal aspect that I find compelling. The way people's resources are pillaged while laws and rules are imposed on them that cannot work in their culture. And, beyond all that, there's the pressure, with the presidential elections at stake!

What was the hardest part of the writing process?

Having two hours to tell the story of ten days that were extremely complex on almost every level—historical, cultural, social, military, political... Every scene matters, everything has to be perfectly understandable and there can be no shortcuts. The question is, how do you make it cinematic without over-dramatizing or playing fast and loose with historical reality? How do you capture the essence of those ten days in a two-hour movie? That was the big challenge and it took us a long time. In the end I think I wrote something like 25 drafts! I wrote the first with a co-writer immediately after my first trip, but I soon realized we were on the wrong track. I started over, reminding myself we constantly needed to be with Legorjus because everything is seen through his eyes. Then I called in Benoît Jaubert, whose father was a soldier, to help me clarify the relationship between men from different corps of the military. And Serge Frydman lent a hand on the final drafts.

You didn't involve Philippe Legorjus in the process?

No. In fact, I only met him once the project was well underway. But I soon gave him all the early drafts of the script to read. I needed his opinion on options we'd taken, and his corrections, to rectify any misapprehensions. I knew how much this story mattered to him. Those ten days marked his life forever. He's lived with the nightmare ever since. He started his life over shortly afterwards by resigning from his unit. If he was still a serving officer, it would have raised a few issues in my mind, but now it's impossible to have the slightest doubt about his sincerity, honesty and integrity. He has the greatest respect for his unit, but continues to abhor the cowardice of politicians. That surprised me, and also reassured me.

Did you send the script to the Kanaks, too?

Yes, we followed the same process with the Kanaks. But then you arrive in a village where nobody has ever read a script and they all stop at the top of page two, which reads *Legorjus wakes up at home*, and say, "What are we doing in Legorjus's house?" You think to yourself

that the fun's only just beginning. At the same time, crucially, it brought people together. Many Kanaks, for whom Mathias Waneux acted as a kind of spokesperson, needed to expiate the past and meet the families of the policemen. It's something they had to do themselves and they saw this project as an opportunity to meet them and Legorjus. He also needed to meet them and explain what he did. Not least in order for us to keep the project moving forward, it was essential that everybody talked so they could come to terms with their anxieties and lay their ghosts to rest. For five years, we worked like crazy on all kinds of levels.

Did you plan to play Philippe Legorjus from the start?

No, I looked for other actors, but I soon realized that the movie was going to be long and hard to make. We constantly went from "Yes, we can" to "No, we can't." I couldn't hire an actor when I wasn't sure we'd ever actually shoot, with the obvious consequences for the film's funding. Above all, it soon became apparent that for all the people I was dealing with it was the best proof of my total commitment to the project. I wasn't keen to act in the movie because it was a tough shoot and I'd have been happier to stay behind the camera, but I soon realized that the picture would only come together, in funding terms and everything else, if I carried it from A to Z. It was important for everybody involved that I should play Legorjus. It gave my approach a stamp of authenticity.

What was most complicated for you as an actor?

The real Legorjus is a professional, who doesn't let emotions get the better of him because they hamper your judgment. Before I met him, I pictured him as a much more romantic, cinegenic character, but his professionalism soon became the main axis of the movie for me both as director and actor. It allowed me to step back from *his story* and let *history* take over. Legorjus is simply our guide. Knowing that he'd never cried and almost never raises his voice gave me his angle and the film's rhythm. In fact, I had the same problem as actor and director—keeping a cool head. I knew I couldn't give into panic and, if things went wrong, I had to hold the line and keep the troops behind me.

Besides you, Sylvie Testud, Philippe Torreton and Malik Zidi, there are few well-known faces in the cast.

My big problem was finding the right person to play Alphonse Dianou. I think there are only five Kanak actors listed in mainland France, and four of those were the wrong age for the part. We thought about casting African or Caribbean actors, but we soon ruled that out. We could shoot somewhere else, but we couldn't make the movie without Kanaks. I looked for "my" Alphonse in villages, in Nouméa, absolutely everywhere. Even then, I knew that as soon as I found him, he would be in a very tricky situation. Would he be entitled to play Alphonse if he wasn't part of the family? Would his tribe agree to it? Would his family agree to it? It wasn't just about finding a good actor. Then my casting director found Iabe Lapacas, a Kanak living in France and studying to be a lawyer, who also happens to be Alphonse Dianou's cousin. After asking his family, Iabe accepted the part, fully aware of what he was getting himself into. All I did was teach him the basics of acting—breathing, pitch, rhythm... The rest clicked into place. It was the same with Philippe de Jacquelin Dulphé, who plays

General Vidal and is a genuine military man, a former colonel. He had something to say about what it means to be a soldier. When I considered my cast, I thought, "We'll have a Kanak who's never acted in a movie playing Alphonse, surrounded by about thirty other guys who've never been in a movie either. Who do I cast opposite them? Real actors? Well-known faces?" Instead, I went looking for ex-soldiers, foreign legionaries or guys from the GIGN, some of whom live out in the Pacific, and I threw them in with real actors, which kept everybody on their toes.

Did you work with the GIGN?

No, the GIGN couldn't be directly involved in the movie, but we worked with former GIGN operatives who now work as movie consultants and took us on a week's training course, which helped the group bond and brought people's egos down a notch. Pretty much everybody got into it, and it wasn't easy because the shoot itself was quite tense. On one side, you had the guys playing the GIGN operatives and on the other the Kanaks whose relatives had been killed by various military units... There were a few edgy moments with people laying down the line, but it was a marvelous experience, with 150 extras sleeping in tents and coming to the set on bikes!

***Rebellion* has a dramatic power and range, a cinematic sixth sense, that it's good to see you rediscover.**

A cinematic sixth sense needs the subject to express itself. And the right production company—in this case, Nord-Ouest—which makes a huge difference to how a movie is made. Here, I agree, everything came together. Above all, I'm dealing with a subject that allows me to express something. At the start, when we were due to shoot in New Caledonia and the shooting budget was diminishing as other expenses grew, I talked to my DP Marc Koninckx, whose work on *Johnny Mad Dog* I loved, about shooting the movie with a handheld camera, documentary-style, without a real shot breakdown but with the camera at the heart of the action, a bit like Paul Greengrass' *Bloody Sunday*, which I adore. In the end, I kept that approach for the attack on the police station and the assault on the cave. But when we relocated the shoot away from New Caledonia, there wasn't the same pressure because we were on neutral ground, so I thought we could shoot a more poised, structured, directed movie, which is more my style. We chose to shoot in CinemaScope, which is a format that requires you to fill the frame, to compose the image. It also allows for the lyrical moments, the interludes in the action. At the same time, I tried to intrude as little as possible. We don't often change camera angle; characters are often filmed in profile.

There are also moments of pure cinema. You mentioned the assault on the cave, where we're suddenly at the heart of the action, amid the danger and chaos, but there's also the flashback within a scene, as if Legorjus were actually witnessing the attack on the police station, which took place a few days earlier.

Yes, I allowed myself some directorial touches, but I didn't want to overdo it. It wasn't the right film for that. That flashback made the scene stronger, as if Legorjus was really witnessing events as they were being described to him. We turned the attack on the police

station into a fairly sophisticated sequence shot. And after exploring various approaches for the final assault on the cave and testing different types of digital movie and stills cameras to be as mobile as possible, the DP convinced me to shoot that as a sequence shot, too, as far as our unit's advance was concerned. We rehearsed for a whole day on camera, then we shot full-on for two days, as if it were a real assault. In any case, I knew I only wanted to show the assault as Legorjus saw it. Once again, I had to stick to my decision to see things through his eyes. I couldn't show what was happening in the cave because Legorjus wasn't there. Also, there are a lot of different versions of those events. I'd have been forced to take sides and that wasn't what I was trying to do. Instead, I merely film the GIGN operatives moving forward, coming across Kanaks who have been killed by the commandos. Except the opening scene, which is a bit like a dream. A nightmare, in fact.

This film sees you dealing with political issues again. Is that something you've missed in recent years?

I can't say I've missed it because I've been working on this project for ten years! If everything had gone to plan, I'd have made this movie in 2004. But when the project stalled, I had to find a film to make. First of all, *Gothika* came along, then *Babylon A.D.*, which took five years to get off the ground. On top of that, I was offered some fine parts as an actor in *Amen* and *Munich*, which also deal with political issues.

The title of Philippe Legorjus's book is *Morality and Action* and the original French title of your movie is *Order and Morality*...

For Philippe, "morality and action" sums up his life. They have been his guiding principles. "Order and morality" are the issues at the heart of the movie. Can they be reconciled? If so, how? The title works on several levels, from General Vidal's line when he says, "You will obey orders even if they contravene your personal morality" to the line I have Bernard Pons, the government minister, say, "We will restore order and morality." As if they were the same thing...

In *Rebellion*, you use the music in a particular way, especially during the final sequences when it reinforces the dramatic aspect of the assault.

Music in movies has always raised certain questions for me. I tend to be wary of directors who overuse music. It's so easy to manipulate audiences with it. In *Café au Lait* and *La Haine*, there's a little bit. For *Assassin(s)*, I brought in Carter Burwell, who composed the scores of the early Coen brothers' movies. He wrote an absolutely superb score. I've always believed that if there is music it has to be totally justified and just right. When I was thinking of filming *Rebellion* documentary-style, I was inclined not to use any music at all. But when I decided on a more structured, composed style, I soon realized that I couldn't do without music. But there was no way I was going to lay violins over close-ups of Legorjus to ratchet up the emotion. Usually, I edit without music because it can force you into a rhythm that may not necessarily fit the movie, especially as you get used to it and it becomes hard to replace it afterwards. For this movie, I made an exception and I edited a few scenes to the music of *The Thin Red Line*. It worked really well, so I called Klaus Badlet, who had worked with Hans Zimmer on Terrence Malick's movie, and I talked to him about another film score I

really liked—*Full Metal Jacket*, a slightly discordant military theme. I also mentioned another fantasy of mine as a director, which I try to make real as often as I can: using a theme in the last five or ten minutes that starts softly and crescendos to the end of the movie, like Ravel's Bolero or Carmina Burana. To make that surge of power even stronger and more dramatic, I didn't want classical instruments. We worked with the industrial percussion band Les Tambours du Bronx, who performed the score in their own way. That results in this very particular sound, like a military drumroll, but on metal crates so that it begins to sound like a rumbling tank.

DIRECTOR

Feature films

1993 : Café au Lait
1995 : La Haine
1997 : Assassin(s)
2000 : Crimson Rivers
2003 : Gothika
2008 : Babylon A.D.
2011 : Rebellion

Shorts

1990 : Fierrot le pou
1991 : Cauchemar blanc
1992 : Assassins...
1998 : Article Premier

ACTOR (SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY)

1990 : Fierrot le Pou by Mathieu Kassovitz
1992 : Assassins... by Mathieu Kassovitz
1993 : Café au Lait by Mathieu Kassovitz
1994 : Regarde les hommes tomber by Jacques Audiard
1995 : La Haine by Mathieu Kassovitz
1996 : Un Héros très discret by Jacques Audiard
1997 : Assassin(s) by Mathieu Kassovitz
1997 : The Fifth Element by Luc Besson
1999 : Jakob le menteur by Peter Kassovitz
2001 : Amélie by Jean-Pierre Jeunet
2002 : Asterix & Obélix : Mission Cléopâtre by Alain Chabat
2002 : Amen by Costa Gavras
2005 : Munich by Steven Spielberg
2009 : Apocalypse, la 2e Guerre mondiale by Isabelle Clarke and Daniel Costelle – Narrator
2011 : The Prodigies by Antoine Charreyron

2011 : Knockout by Steven Soderbergh

2011 : Rebellion by Mathieu Kassovitz

AWARDS

1995 : Best Director award at the Cannes Festival de Cannes, for *La Haine*

1995 : César for Most Promising Actor for *Regarde les hommes tomber*

1995 : César for Best Film for *La Haine*

1995 : César for Best Editing for *La Haine*, shared with Scott Stevenson

2001 : Étoile d'or for Best Director for *Crimson Rivers*

An interview with labe Lapacas

Before we talk about *Rebellion*, what do you do and what had you done before you were contacted to play Alphonse Dianou?

I'm currently a law student in Clermont-Ferrand, France, and I work for a community radio station interviewing bands and artists coming through Clermont. I host a music show on which, as we're an alternative media, we play bands other radio or TV stations don't air. I'm 28 years old. I was born in Nouméa and grew up on Lifou, an island near Ouvéa, until I was six when I moved to Nouméa with my mother for school. After that, I moved to France to go to college. I started studying Political Science at Villeneuve d'Ascq University in Lille, but I realized it wasn't for me, so I changed tack. I moved south to Clermont-Ferrand, where I'm close to finishing my MA in corporate and banking law, while preparing for the bar exam so I can keep my options open.

When and how did you hear about Mathieu Kassovitz's planned movie about the events in Ouvéa?

Three to four years ago, I think, when local media in New Caledonia mentioned he was planning to shoot a film there and had already sent a small crew out. For me personally, it all began in late April last year when I was studying for my exams. I received a phone call: "Hi, I'm David Bertrand, casting director on Mathieu Kassovitz's movie *Rebellion...*" I said, "Yeah, sure," thinking it was a hoax. I was about to hang up, but he said, "No, don't hang up. Jean Boisserie gave me your name and number." Jean Boisserie is a "big brother" who's an actor. He's from back home and came to France in the 1960s. He met David when he was casting the Kanak and GIGN roles for the film. David told him he was also looking for a guy to play Alphonse Dianou and Jean thought of me, without even knowing I was related to Alphonse. He told David, "Call him and make sure you tell him first up that I gave you his number or he'll never talk to you."

What did he ask you to do at the audition?

David had sent me three or four scenes and he had me read through in his hotel room and on the roof. Less than a week later, he called me back to say Mathieu wanted to see me, but I had an internship in May. Eventually, I made it to Paris to see Mathieu in late May.

Did being an actor appeal to you, beyond the part he was offering you? Had you ever acted before?

Only in primary school! I remember acting in two school plays and enjoying it, but that's all. To answer your first question, I didn't see things in those terms. Back home—I mean, in the Kanak community—we don't take an individual approach. We have a place in the family that must be respected, and my place, as I'm not married, is as a child. So, I had to ask my parents' permission. I wouldn't have made the movie without it. First, I mentioned it to my older brother, who was living in southern France at the time. He told me, "Go and see

Kassovitz, ask him who he saw back home, why he wants to make this film, what he did in Ouvéa, and so on. We'll see what he says and talk to the old folks." I met with Mathieu and asked him all those questions. He explained his project to me, gave me the script to read and told me that my aunt, Alphonse Dianou's sister, had given her agreement to the film. I told him I had to ask for my parents' permission and I told them the story. They said, "If auntie has agreed to do it, do it."

What appealed to you or touched you most in the screenplay?

I thought it was very well written. It was the first time I read a movie script and I caught myself picturing the action in my mind as I read it. I understood Mathieu's idea of focusing on Legorjus and using the Kanaks' cause, or that of the independence movement, as a counterpoint. If I hadn't liked the script, I wouldn't have done it.

You were very young when the events occurred. What memories of them do you have?

In 1988, I was six years old, so I don't have many direct recollections of events. Besides, back home, we don't talk about it much. We discuss it without really discussing it, as if in some way our parents are trying to protect us, as if they don't want to pollute our minds with that. It was definitely a tragedy, though, and a very complex event from a political point of view.

What struck you when you met Mathieu Kassovitz the first time?

His total commitment to his movie. Total commitment! I knew his movies. I'd seen *La Haine*, *Crimson Rivers* and *Babylon A.D.* I'd even seen the first music video he made, *Peuple du monde*, for Tonton David. He was exactly like the guy I knew from the TV. He fitted the idea I had of him. Afterwards, I got to know him better, but when I met him all that mattered to me were his deep-rooted motivations: why did he want to make this movie?

What really convinced you in what he told you?

His whole journey with Olivier Rousset back home. It was important. If he hadn't made that trip, I'm not sure I'd have accepted. To direct a film like this, there was a path to follow and he followed it. Where Mathieu's genius came out was in making a complex story intelligible and comprehensible, even though he takes Legorjus's viewpoint by working from his novel, *Morality and Action*. Anyway, he says himself that he wouldn't have made this movie—or shot it from that viewpoint, at least—if Legorjus hadn't resigned from the GIGN. Which I can understand, for the film's integrity and his integrity as an artist. If Legorjus was still with the GIGN, it would have been like making a movie defending the special forces. Something else that swayed me is that he dares to raise what happened in the cave at Ouvéa. Talking about that means talking about the troubles, the Kanak people's struggle against the French colonial system of the time. Mathieu took note of everything people told him in New Caledonia—those who supported the project from the outset, the inhabitants and the families of Ouvéa. Mathieu's genius really expressed itself there. He succeeded in capturing it in his screenplay and, now that I've seen the movie, bringing it to the screen.

Are you personally an activist?

All I can say is that it's a chapter in our history and our history inhabits us. That's why I said earlier that when you give your word, it's not as an individual but for the whole family. It wasn't fear that made me hesitate. I had to be sure that I was on the right path.

The events in the cave in Ouvéa marked the end of the most violent period in the civil war that took place from 1984-1988 and led to the Matignon agreements. Talking about that episode means talking about a controversial period that caused so much debate without us ever being able to give our version of the story because one of the conditions of the Matignon agreements was the amnesty that everybody on both sides wanted, including both the loyalists and separatists back home. Trouble is, "amnesty" is derived from the same Greek word as "amnesia." Choosing an amnesty to avoid legal proceedings also resulted in memory loss. That's where Mathieu's film is particularly daring. It's not about choosing sides, it simply tells a story of events that happened but don't feature in textbooks and aren't taught in schools. And like I told you, even back home, nobody talks about it. It's a story that took place in Kanaky, but it's also a French story. Talking about this story means talking about our history. It's also a universal story. You don't get involved in something epic like this lightly. Personally, I was almost the last person to join the project. In the end, the story came to me, and making this movie amounted to finding answers to my questions.

Once you were chosen and agreed to do it, did you do any research into Alphonse Dianou?

The information came to me quite naturally. Olivier Rousset arrived in France from back home and told me about it. Auntie Patou (Alphonse Dianou's sister) had given him a letter for me. I called her. She sensitized me to certain issues and gave me encouragement, like the mamas do back home. I could draw on that. I also drew on the knowledge of people who knew him and those who were with him in the cave. I was able to question them and talk to those of them who were on the shoot in Anaa in Polynesia.

Did you set out to look like Alphonse Dianou?

No. Even Mathieu didn't want that. From the beginning, I didn't want to be imitating him but playing the part of Alphonse. The important thing was the spirit of the character. Playing Alphonse Dianou is, as my Kanak poet-brother Denis Pourawa would say, like simultaneously carrying a burden and a feather. A burden because of the weight of the Kanak people's struggle and a feather because I'm a member of his family, so for me it was like playing my big brother.

Now that you've played him and have a better understanding of who he was, what touches you most about him?

His unconditional commitment, which keyed into what my parents taught me: work with love, respect and humility. Like Legorjus, Alphonse was a man of faith. That's why they got on so well. They both almost took holy orders. One chose to become a soldier and the other went into politics. Getting to know the man opened my eyes to what unites us.

Did it make you want to keep acting?

Why not? It will depend on the parts I'm offered, but there's only one Mathieu Kassovitz. Mathieu is a great director of actors. He lets people take their time, come to terms with the requirements of the job—his actors, at least, because it's a whole different ball game for the crew! He trusts you and that trust boosts your confidence and faith in yourself.

How would you define Mathieu Kassovitz as a director?

Never on time! Very intuitive and very good when the pressure's on. Nothing was absolutely preordained. Mathieu's in command but gives everybody plenty of freedom. He's like an orchestra conductor. Often tense, which is only natural seeing the sums at stake. Definitely an artist.

What would you like audiences to remember about the movie?

First of all, I'd like them to grasp the Kanak people's struggle for its independence. And also for it to remind politicians of their responsibilities because they often dodge them. Politics should be about stopping people settling conflicts in an eye-for-an-eye or survival-of-the-fittest kind of way. The French title emphasizes that, but you can interpret it in different ways: French colonial order versus morality, the Kanak spirit and ethics; or French order versus the morality of people whose job it is to maintain order, versus morality as politicians are supposed to embody it. Did politicians betray the French nation or not? Did they betray the democratic ideals of the French republic or not? People will decide for themselves. The same goes for us on the Kanak side. Our uncles, papas and youth were fighting for a cause and they became fighters in every sense of the word because the political body that was supposed to represent and protect them, the FLNKS (Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front) did not take responsibility at the time.

An interview with Philippe Legorjus

Born in 1951, Philippe Legorjus graduated in law from Caen University. Passionate about theology and philosophy, and an activist in the May 1968 student movement, he hardly seemed cut out for a military career. Nonetheless, he enlisted in the Gendarmerie in 1979 and became a member of its elite unit, the GIGN, in 1982. He was made GIGN commander in 1985 and was thrust into the spotlight by the tragic events in Ouvéa.

When did you first hear of Mathieu Kassovitz's project?

In 2004 or 2005, when Mathieu contacted me. He'd read my book, *Morality and Action*, and told me he wanted to turn it into a movie. We met up and immediately got on well, but to begin with I was pretty reticent about transposing what I had written in 1990 into cinematic form.

Why?

The events in Ouvéa only represent part of the book. I wrote it to "debrief" a fairly intense part of my working life and move on. It was a way of drawing a line under that part of my life. And that's what I did. I went from the military-style world of the Gendarmerie, to which I was totally committed and which meant so much to me, to civilian life with an entrepreneurial project in a completely different field. I needed something solid to mark that turning point. That's why I wrote the book. The publisher had raised the issue of rights for a possible film adaptation and I'd always thought that if it ever happened it couldn't be a Hollywood-style action picture. In fact, I was approached by US companies on several occasions and I always refused. Then, around 2004, Mathieu turned up and explained his project in a very appealing way. He'd just got back from Ouvéa, where he'd been getting a feel of the situation. His approach seemed worthy of interest and we started talking, meeting up pretty often. I also met Mathieu's father, Peter, who wanted to make a purely factual documentary about the events in Ouvéa.

Did he keep you updated while he was writing?

Of course. I read an early draft. Then, for a couple of years, not much happened. Radio silence. Then, contact started up again. Another writer had joined the dance, our comrade-in-arms Benoît Jaubert, and we began to move forward. Mathieu, Benoît and I met up often, several times a month. Mathieu often came by my house in Nantes. We'd spend whole evenings going over details, working things through until late into the night. Mathieu had me explain different military attitudes that vary depending on the army corps, personality and even origin, which creates different identities, behavior and approaches to military reality. In 2009, Mathieu started writing alone and it was fascinating to watch. He was like a sponge. At the same time, he was meeting lots of the other protagonists, including people with whom I had an uneasy or unfriendly relationship. One source of inspiration wasn't enough for him.

He dug deep and that resulted, in summer 2010, in the 22nd draft, if memory serves me right. He shot his movie from that script. It is *his* movie, not mine. I'm not cut out for shooting pictures or telling stories in film. I placed my faith in Mathieu, fully aware of the risks that entailed.

Meaning?

I know that Mathieu's temperament and way of working could lead him to rewrite a whole scene on set or rework the script live, while he's shooting the movie. When I saw the first rough cut, I realized what a complex business making a movie is. It can't have been easy for Mathieu to play the lead and stay in character while directing the movie, but it underscored his commitment. What surprised me most when I saw that first cut is that I am in almost every scene. I knew the film was structured around me, but I expected events to play out from various angles. It even shook me up a bit during the screening. Five minutes later, I'd got over it, of course! I'd closed that chapter in my life and the film thrust me back into it, bringing back powerful emotions. Above all, it made me think I did the right thing in 1988. Mathieu puts his finger on exactly what I felt back then.

Were you surprised when he said he would be playing you?

Yes and no. He had talked to me about actors he was thinking of. But when he started writing alone and began to drive the project almost on his own, it struck me as logical for him to go all the way by playing my character. I was fine with that because we'd spent goodness knows how many hours together and, in the film world, he is clearly the person who knows me best and who was, therefore, best placed to play me. I was also very impressed by his performance. He plays it so low key. Unlike everything you see from actors in movies nowadays. Mathieu gives such a simple, understated performance. He is always just right, never over the top.

How do you explain his desire to make a movie about this episode?

It's still a mystery to me. I think his first stay with the Kanaks deeply affected him. He had no idea of Melanesian culture and it really touched him. I also think the story itself spoke to him in the differences it throws up between human beings, even soldiers in the field of operations, and a supposedly higher authority disdainfully rolling over human lives. It clearly resonated in the rebellious side of him. Personally, in the last twenty years, I've been struck by the similar character, qualities and values that one finds in a military, business or humanitarian environment and the weakness of character prevalent in the world of politics. We have intellectually high-powered political leaders with superb training, who too often behave as if they were in acute psychological distress. It's down to weakness of character not cowardice, because they can be very courageous, but they never doubt themselves. It's true across the board and the Ouvéa affair exemplifies that because politicians on all sides—supporters of Chirac, Mitterrand or the FLNKS—were equally abject. They sent men on a mission that could only result in fatalities. When you tell them, "Look, it's in everybody's humanitarian interest for the stupidity to stop—you sent men out there, now let's bring them back nice and easy, and resolve this," and they don't listen, it makes you despair. If we could have done that, nobody would have died. It's the only time I failed in negotiations. It

sounds pretentious, but they didn't let me see the job through. I remain convinced that if we had been allowed to go through with the plan to bring journalists to the cave, that would have been an end to it and we might even have come back with the hostages. Once Dianou had broadcast his message to the whole of France on TV, we could have settled everything peacefully. The problem is, we would have settled it before the runoff in the presidential elections on the following Sunday, and that didn't suit anyone, especially not the politicians, on all sides including the leftwing, because Mitterrand was smart enough to know he would benefit from it later, once the election had been won. How can you not resent politicians when you know that?

In what way do you think it's important this film exists today?

It's important because the weakness of character in French politics, since De Gaulle died let's say, stops historical events like this being studied in an appropriate way to enlighten future generations. It's better to redeem negative acts than leave them to fester in silence and caricature, so it's important to revisit historical events, not only for the future but also for the present. I'm not sure that a similar episode today would not be settled in exactly the same fashion.

When you watched the assault scene, what were your feelings?

It's very powerful and pretty accurate, but paradoxically I was much more impressed by the accuracy of the depiction of the relationship between Legorjus—sorry to talk in the third person—and Alphonse Dianou. And by the atmosphere that prevailed in the Kanak village, which is very close to the reality.

In your book, you tell the story of the assault in victorious terms—the hostages and your comrades were freed. The unease and controversy only set in a few days later. In the film, Mathieu Kassovitz compresses time and introduces bitterness at the consequences of this "victory" into the assault itself.

It's an excellent shortcut. And it's very smart, because otherwise the film would have to explore the circumstances around the publication of the article in *Le Monde*, and it would go on forever. I remember that it's exactly what I told my men at the briefing before the final operation, as if I'd had a premonition. I told them, "You know how hard I tried to ensure it didn't come to this, but if we have to do it, let's do it. It's our duty. We'll win and be held up as heroes, but it won't last. Our probable success will be dismissed and vilified, and ideologists on all sides will reach for pens dripping in scorn to dispossess you of the reality of what you are about to do." That's what happened! What's more, a few members of the assault forces did things that gave the scribblers and ideologists I was talking about something to sink their teeth into.

An interview with Christophe Rossignon

How did you react when Mathieu Kassovitz came to ask you to coproduce *Rebellion*?

Actually, I was already aware of the project because Nord-Ouest was initially a partner when Mathieu set up his production company, MNP, and *Rebellion* was one of his projects in development. Meantime, Mathieu has bought back complete control of his company, but he had already made his first trip to New Caledonia, we had met Philippe Legorjus and been impressed by the cinematic potential of this story. Mathieu continued developing his career, both in the USA and with films he produced with his partners at MNP, while went our own way. Then, one day, Mathieu got in contact with my partner Philip Boëffard and myself, saying, "This movie's too big for my little outfit, not only in financial terms, but for me as well. It's difficult to be everywhere at once. Even on the script, I'd like to have your input." It was easy, almost natural, teaming up again.

What do you think motivated Mathieu Kassovitz about this project?

Several things. The human angle, first of all—the encounter between these two guys, Legorjus and Dianou, who have nothing in common except a desire to see justice be done. Then, the political aspect that led politicians in the middle of a presidential election campaign to authorize the assault on the cave resulting in the deaths of 19 Kanaks when the captain of the GIGN unit was on the way to finding a peaceful solution. And then, the Kanaks' cause. Not in the partisan sense, but just to key into the colonial issue and make their voice heard. When you go there, as Mathieu has and I have, you can't not be touched by the Kanaks' soulfulness, their age-old culture, respect for the elders and nature, their amazing receptiveness, the "custom"... What also motivated Mathieu was the universal nature of the story, of events back then, in the sense that nobody listened to these people who were merely claiming their right to be different. It wouldn't have been hard to listen to them. And finally, I think Mathieu also wanted to make another film—without overplaying comparisons with *La Haine*—that had a political edge without being dogmatic. All those motivational elements combined from the start and they never changed.

When Mathieu got back in touch with you, what were your initial priorities?

We began—Philip, Mathieu and I—by listing the difficulties ahead. Deals with the earliest partners on the project needed to be concluded and others needed to be found. Shooting in New Caledonia wasn't a foregone conclusion. Agreement had to be reached with the Kanaks and the army, whose support we still had hopes of receiving. There were lots of things that needed moving forward, including the script, which had progressed well but still needed polishing up.

Did Mathieu Kassovitz already intend to play Legorjus?

He was mulling it over. At first, he was looking for someone else, but I kept telling him he should take the part. It seemed to me that going back to directing a film like this involved acting in it. I sensed that the actor would offer the director protection. Mathieu is a unique and well-liked actor, so he was a real asset for the film. What's more, I was convinced that he would carry the movie even better if, in his mind, he was Legorjus. With regard to the Kanaks, it was also a sign of his total commitment to the project. His physical and mental commitment as director were an enormous help to him as actor when playing the role of the negotiator. Also, for the non-professional Kanaks and army veterans in the cast, he was a great guide on set. So, we resolved one problem after another, the most serious being the shoot in New Caledonia.

What happened?

After our permission to shoot was withdrawn in summer 2009, closing down preparations there, I traveled to New Caledonia to explore the possibility of shooting in summer 2010. During my stay, I participated at various "customs"—open meetings with tribal chiefs—and spent numerous hours explaining what the movie entailed, what we could do and what we couldn't. It was down to me, the relative newbie on the project, to explain the film Mathieu wanted to make, which wasn't necessarily the film they would have made. I had to set out his point of view, justify his choices, say why he had chosen Legorjus as the main character and inform them of how the movie would open and end. I tried to demonstrate that Mathieu had made the right choices. I was very surprised the curiosity of people, even the old folks who knew nothing about movies but asked me lots of astonishingly specific questions: how do you fund a production like this? What was the impact of a French film overseas? And that of the movie? It was really exciting. After that, I had one-to-one meetings, I met the families and we debated the issues in one camp and then another. I stayed a little over one week—ten intense and extremely rewarding days. Alphonse Dianou's son, Darewa, was blocking the project, even though he had initially supported it, helped Mathieu and considered playing the role of his father. I tried to get a mediation process going. Olivier Rousset, who was my guide, and Mathieu's guide throughout this project (he plays the guy holding the drip over Alphonse Dianou at the end) managed to get Darewa to agree to see me in the presence of "the papas" as the elders are known over there. After many hours' discussion late into the night, he said, "I'll let you make your film. I say so now in front of my elders and I won't go back on my word." Unfortunately, next day at 7 a.m., he barreled into my hotel talking like a crazy man, saying he'd changed his mind and threatening to make trouble if we shot the movie. That was the end of that. It was obvious we'd never get all the permission we needed to shoot in Ouvéa. At the airport, waiting for my flight home, I spoke one last time to Mathias Waneux, a tribal chief, elected representative and highly respected figure in New Caledonia who has always supported the project and done all he could to make it happen. He said that we should maybe think about shooting somewhere else. I arrived home down in the dumps, convinced the film was at a dead-end. When I mentioned the idea of shooting outside of New Caledonia to Mathieu, he said he wouldn't hear of it. I asked him to let me try to find a place that would look like Ouvéa, and suit him and the Kanaks. Our location manager, Guinal Riou (one of the key people in getting the movie made) studied all the potential locations in the Pacific and beyond. He set off for Polynesia with a small crew on a scouting mission. At the same time, in Paris, I met with Paul Néaoutyine, a Kanak leader and governor of Northern Province. He

wanted to reiterate his support for the project and its crucial importance. He mentioned a place in Polynesia, Anaa Island, that he had visited some years before and that looks just like Ouvéa at the time of the tragedy. It was the exact same spot that Guinal had scouted out! Mathieu flew out there, gave his approval and we sent a bigger crew out to start preparations for the shoot. Meanwhile, we continued to resolve our remaining problems one by one: funding, the huge overspend caused by all the various issues and glitches along the way—the time and money wasted in New Caledonia, having to start over in Polynesia and fly out about forty Kanaks who would appear in the film.

Did you have trouble getting funding because of the film's subject matter?

It took time to put all the deals in place, but we did it. The problem wasn't the subject matter but the uncertainty hanging over our shoot in New Caledonia. Our partners—UGC and Studio 37 on one hand, Orange Cinéma Séries on the other—gave us their full backing. They really believed in Mathieu's directorial comeback, even though he had started out planning to self-produce the movie. They always believed in the project and never had any doubt that we'd get it made. Hats off to them. When the project reached Nord-Ouest, Philip Boëffard and I set up deals with terrestrial TV and other funding bodies (and injected money of our own). We lost some funding from New Caledonia when the shoot switched to Polynesia, but Northern Province and Islands Province chose to show their official support by providing some residual funding.

Why didn't the army support the project in the end?

I met senior officers who argued that participating in the movie would be a good way to acknowledge what happened and move on. The army could hardly deny the atrocities because Michel Rocard, the French Prime Minister who negotiated an agreement with the FLNKS, had officially admitted they took place in order to justify a general amnesty for crimes committed on both sides. Rocard added that the atrocities weren't committed on orders from the top brass but that, by bringing in shock troops for the assignment, there was a risk of them occurring. For a long time, we hoped we'd get the army's support, even though it was never confirmed to us. We took our case very high, to the government and president's office, but we were informed it was a decision for the Chief of Staff, who refused to allow the army to participate in any way. That was a real problem. In France or Europe, there are simple but costly solutions when making a film of this scale without the army's support. There are always collectors who have Pumas, Jeeps, uniforms, disarmed vehicles and so on, but way out in the Pacific, there's nothing, just a few old wrecks. It was very complicated, but we got by.

How much did you bring the film in for in the end?

Around €13.5 million. The shoot was epic, intense, one of the most complicated Philip and I have ever faced but, even though we had to grit our teeth, a week after the shoot we'd forgotten about all the problems we'd encountered. The overriding emotions were a sense of achievement and enjoyment of a wonderful shared experience.

What touches you most in the finished movie?

Its humanity. I think it's a wonderful exploration of the human spirit, including Mathieu's character, the elite forces captain who betrays his personal ethics to obey orders and assumes the consequences. How can you not be touched by his attitude, determination to see the job through and to resolve the conflict without any greater loss of life? What also touches me, obviously, is the humanity of the Kanak community. I'm also struck by the modern aspect of the movie, what it says about politicians' behavior and the questions it asks our fellow citizens.

Did you choose your character in the movie—a radical army officer who even suggests dropping napalm on the cave?

No, it was Mathieu's suggestion. Actually, I owe all my appearances in films I produce (and those I don't produce) to him. A long time ago, we made a bet that I would drive a vehicle in all of his films. Since then, I've developed a taste for these "drive-on" parts that give me a chance to "play the actor." I have to confess that I'm tempted to take it a little further.

In what way would you say Mathieu Kassovitz has most changed between *Métisse* and *Rebellion*?

He'd already changed between *La Haine* and *Assassin(s)*. Then, he became a father and time had its usual effect—you get older and wiser, as they say. Now, besides his maturity, I'd say he deploys that wisdom while remaining true to his instinctive nature, which to my mind is his best quality as a director, even if it's not the easiest quality to keep up with day to day! Mathieu is a wonderful actor, always pitch-perfect without looking as though he's trying, and an incredible director. When we were shooting *La Haine*, I remember him saying, "I need an idea for every shot." But the film is never ostentatious, there are no flashy shots in it. On this film, without him saying those words, he was the same, constantly coming up with ideas, and in the end I think his film is very inventive yet completely natural. He has an amazing cinematic sixth sense. It was great teaming up with Mathieu again, even if it was tough at times, even if we clashed at times. The film was tense, difficult sometimes, grueling, which is only natural when 200 people rock up on a remote island 18,000 kilometers from your base. An island with a population of 300, complicated logistics... A human pressure cooker that had to be handled very gently. On top of that, we had to cope with script changes on the fly, but Mathieu was always very attentive to our problems, always trying to find solutions, especially when the investments required were beyond what we could imagine. For all of us, it was an epic adventure. We're proud to have produced this movie and to have contributed to Mathieu's return to this style of movie. Proud and delighted.

Cast

Captain Philippe Legorjus **Mathieu Kassovitz**
Alphonse Dianou **Iabe Lapacas**
JP Perrot **Malik Zidi**
Jean Bianconi **Alexandre Steiger**
Bernard Pons **Daniel Martin**
Christian Prouteau **Philippe Torreton**
Chantal Legorjus **Sylvie Testud**
Samy **Steeve Une**
General Vidal **Philippe de Jacquelin Dulphé**
Colonel Dubut **Patrick Fierry**
General Jérôme **Jean-Philippe Puymartin**
Lt. Colonel Benson **Stéfan Godin**
Nine Wea **François "Kötrepî" Neudjen**
Djubelly Wea **Macki Wea**
Franck Wahuzue **Pierre Gope**
Hilaire Dianou **Alphonse Djoupa**
Wenceslas Laveloa **Dave Djoupa**
Chief Imwone **Henry "Aïzik" Wea**
Tom Tchacko Pasteur **Aira "Toulousie" Gnipate**
Chief Hwadrilla Mathias Waneux
Lt. Colonel Arthur **Stéphane Delesne**
Captain Jayot **Jean-Christophe Drouard**
Airforce General Norlain **Aladin Reibel**
Etienne GIGN **Elric Covarel Garcia**
Bouler GIGN **Marc Robert**
Eric GIGN **Olivier Rousset**
Bernard GIGN **Simon-Pierre Boireau**
Armel GIGN **Armel Cessa**
Mathieu GIGN **Mathieu Lardier**
Jérôme GIGN **Jérôme Coué**
Dufour GIGN **Yvan Mariani**
Paille GIGN **Richard Oger**
Dubois GIGN **Mikel Haramboure**
Vinz GIGN Hostage **Vincent Heneine**
Vincent GIGN Hostage **Vincent Aguesse**
Larry GIGN Hostage **Laurent "Larry" Alexandre**
Antoine GIGN Hostage **Emmanuel "Te Manu Hei Rere Tané" Donfut**
Gaborit GIGN Hostage **Serge Dupuy**
Captain Benetti **Jean-Louis Andrieux**
Lieutenant Destremeau **Arthur Moncomble**
Philippo **Pierre Poudewa**
Samuel **Daniel Wea**

Séraphin **Gildas Djoupa**
Antonin **Valdo Yakeula**
Tea Carriers' Leader **Jonas Adeda**

Crew

Un film by Mathieu Kassovitz
Produced by Christophe Rossignon and Philip Boëffard
Screenplay Mathieu Kassovitz - Pierre Geller - Benoît Jaubert with the collaboration of Serge Frydman.
Based on the novel *La morale et l'action* by Philippe Legorjus
Original score Klaus Badelt
Performed by Les Tambours du Bronx
Line Producer Eve François Machuel
Associate Producers (MNP) Mathieu Kassovitz - Guillaume Colboc - Benoît Jaubert
France-Kanaky Mediation Olivier Rousset with the precious help of Mathias Waneux
Photography Marc Koninckx AFC – SBC
Sound Yves Comélieu - Guillaume Bouchateau - Cyril Holtz - Philippe Amouroux
Editing Mathieu Kassovitz - Thomas Beard - Lionel Devuyt
Unit Manager Guinal Riou
First Assistant Director Alain Artur
Casting France David Bertrand - Gigi Akoka
Casting Kanaks Marc Robert - Hervé Jakubowicz - Olivier Rousset
Digital Special Effects Rodolphe Chabrier - Delphine Domer / MAC GUFF LIGNE
Production Manager Olivier Hélie
Post-production Supervisors Clara Vincienne - Julien Azoulay
Theatrical Distribution France UGC, Studio 37
International Sales Studio 37, Kinology, UGC
Stills Photographer Guy Ferrandis

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