

ESPION(S) / SPY(IES)

Director: Nicolas Saada
Cast: Guillaume Canet, Géraldine Pailhas, Stephen Rea, Archie Panjabi, Vincent Reagan, Alexander Siddig, Hippolyte Girardot
Producers: Michael Gentile - The Film, Studio 37, Mars Films, France 2 Cinéma
Running time: 99 minutes

INTRODUCTION

Two years after the worldwide critical and box office success of Tell No One (\$US 33M- World, \$US 6,5M- US), Guillaume Canet returns to the big screen, this time to star in a sensual espionage thriller set in London. Stephen Rea (V for Vendetta, Breakfast on Pluto, The Crying Game) and Archie Panjabi (A Mighty Heart, The Constant Gardener, Bend it Like Beckham) round out the superb cast in this elegant and critically acclaimed detective story, in which the heart can intercept even the most dedicated of spies.

SYNOPSIS

Vincent is a brilliant and reclusive young man, a graduate from one of the top universities, who rejects an ambitious career to work in airport security. To pass the time, Vincent and his co-worker Gerard pickpocket from passengers' suitcases. But when a diplomat's bag explodes in Gerard's face violently killing him, the game comes to an end. The Secret Service gets involved in the case, and Vincent is forced to execute a mission in London under a secret identity, investigating a British businessman suspected of illicit trafficking, Peter Burton. The key to cracking the case lies in seducing Burton's beautiful but vulnerable French wife, Claire. But who will fall prey to whom? Everything spirals downward as Vincent must choose between his heart and his freedom.

Statement of intent by director Nicolas Saada

Spy(ies) is a genre film, a thriller with a romantic element. It tells the story of a young man, Vincent, forced into becoming an informant for the French Secret Services against his will. A source is an average person used willingly or unwillingly to attain information for the Secret Services. The idea of writing a film about a source came to me after coming in contact several times with a member of the French Department of Homeland Security. This role gives Guillaume Canet something to work on outside his usual range, and he creates an alluring and complex portrait of Vincent. Opposite him, Géraldine Pailhas plays the manipulated and bruised Claire movingly and convincingly.

The film, reflecting a contemporary geopolitical climate, is full of tensions shared by the major Western capitals. *Spy(ies)* takes place between two cities, Paris and London, with an international cast that granted me the privilege of working with Anglophone actors such as Stephen Rea, Alexander Siddig, Vincent Regan and Archie Panjabi.

The inspiration for the film came from Hitchcock's great classics (such as *Notorious*) but also from Sidney Lumet's and William Friedkin's urban thrillers.

The film's visual style is elegant and realistic thanks to the strong collaboration of my team: the cinematographer, Stéphane Fontaine (*The Beat That My Heart Skipped*), the costume designer, Caroline de Vivaise (*Intimacy*) and the production designer, Thierry François (*The Patriots*). Additionally, Cliff Martinez's (*Traffic*, *Solaris*, *Narc*) score will contribute to the film's mood. *Spy(ies)* is a contemporary, modern, and romantic thriller.

NICOLAS SAADA

BIOGRAPHY

Nicolas Saada was a journalist at *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* (1987 – 2000), a presenter for the radio show *Nova Fait Son Cinéma* (1992 – 2006) and worked in the fiction department at *Arte* (1992 – 1999). His short film, *LES PARALLELES*, was nominated at the Césars in 2005. *ESPION(S)* is his first feature film.

FILMOGRAPHY

DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER

- 2009 *SPY(IES)*
- 2004 *LES PARALLELES* (short film)

SCREENWRITER

- Soon *EL OJO DESCARNADO* by Giordano Gederlini
- 2004 *DISSONANCES* (TV) by Jérôme Cornuau
Best Fiction Film at the TV Fiction Festival of Saint Tropez
- 2004 *PLAYING "IN THE COMPANY OF MEN"* by Arnaud Desplechin
- 2000 *THE SANDMEN* by Pierre Salvadori