LOVE ME NO MORE
(DEUX JOURS A TUER)
a film by Jean Becker
Albert Dupontel
Marie-Josée Croze
Pierre Vaneck

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85 minutes
French release 30 April 2008

Produced by ICE3 - KJB Production
A StudioCanal - France 2 Cinéma coproduction
NOTE TO JOURNALISTS

Please help us keep the film's ending a secret. Furthermore, please note that the song that plays over the closing credits is an integral part of the film for Jean Becker. Please listen to it until the end. And enjoy the film!
Advertising executive Antoine is 42 and a pretty successful guy. He’s married to Cécile, has two kids, and lives in a nice house in the Paris suburbs where he gets on well with his neighbors. Of course, there’s his discreet affair with the beautiful Marion, but it’s nothing that could upset this happy balance.

And then one ordinary day, his life is turned upside-down. During a meeting with one of his agency’s big clients, he gets carried away and screws up the project. His partner suggests he takes a break and gets some rest, but Antoine is determined to put an end to their partnership and offers to buy him out.

Back home for the weekend, he starts to systematically destroy everything he has built up over the years. His wife accuses him of having an affair and he doesn’t deny it. He’s unpleasant, elusive, and he pushes her right to the limits, without the slightest explanation. For his birthday, his kids do some drawings for him. Suddenly, his usual indulgence evaporates and he comes down hard on them. An old friend asks him for his advice about buying a classic car, but instead of helping him, he simply screws up the deal. His friends are waiting for him at his house where they’re throwing a surprise party, but he takes great pleasure in insulting them all, one after the other, and even insults the beautiful Virginie, too tempting for his taste. Nobody can understand what’s got into him. The soirée quickly turns sour and ends in a fight. In a last fit of rage, Antoine throws everyone out. After one final, dreadful conversation with Cécile from which there is no going back, he leaves the family home.

In the space of a single weekend, Antoine – a seemingly trouble-free guy – destroys his entire life. Is it a mid-life crisis? Is he losing his mind? It’s anybody’s guess...
How did you come across François d’Epenoux’s book “Deux Jours à Tuer” (published by Anne Carrière) upon which the film is based?

A friend leant it to me. I was in Scotland at the time, and once I started reading it, I couldn’t put it down. I was instantly intrigued – disturbed, even – by the behavior of this man who, in the space of a weekend, throws everything into confusion. At the start of the novel, you don’t understand what’s going on, and you can’t see the reason why Antoine is acting in such an incomprehensible manner. He’s mean to his wife, he’s tough on his kids, and he attacks his friends....

I liked the story even more in that there was a real explanation for Antoine’s behavior – a credible reason that was revealed at the end of the novel.

Was it difficult to find the right actor to play Antoine?

I think Albert Dupontel is excellent in both his own films and those of others. I remember characters with a slightly disturbing physique, with a piercing and strong eye – exactly what was needed to take on Antoine’s strange behavior.

How did you adapt it for the screen. How did you divide up the work?

Three of you adapted it for the screen. How did you divide up the work? It was the first time I’d worked with Eric Assous, but my son already knew him. I entrusted him with the whole first part of the adaptation until the moment Antoine leaves home. Everything that happens after that in Ireland serves to throw light on his character. Who is he really? What is his relationship with his father? I wanted the audience to discover Antoine in a different light so I gave all of the second part to François d’Epenoux. I didn’t see the point in asking him to go back over what he’d already written, but for the second part, our collaboration was very fruitful. When everything was ready, I took the whole thing and went to work in my ivory tower. Just like I always do now.

The Irish sequence is a perfect example of the kind of universe you like to explore...

We shot in Connemara, in Ireland. I already knew the area as I’d spent several days on holiday with my family at the same hotel where General de Gaulle stayed. I was very keen to film those landscapes and the light there. I feel good out in the open, in those huge spaces. Everything’s easier for me there.

Was the dinner party scene tricky to orchestrate?

That scene required some special research. Albert and I wondered how to tackle it in order for there to be a sense of progression. Antoine had to start out being likeable and it required subtle handling. It was all in the dialogue which once again underscores the importance of the writing. There are two essential things in any film: the writing and the editing.

Antoine seize that moment to give his friends a piece of his mind, mainly criticizing their cozy little lives and their blinkered attitudes... Is this kind of anger something that’s familiar to you?

Yes, I have actually told people I know that their comfortable little lives bore me stiff. And it’s a relief to do it! For some, money has become an obsession. They’re so afraid of losing what they’ve got that they protect themselves and no longer look at anything or anyone around them. Having money helps of course, and perhaps if I didn’t have it, I’d react differently,
but there have been times in my life when I haven’t had a cent and I was just as happy then as I am now.

Does this film have a special place in your collected work?

Let’s say that LOVE ME NO MORE evokes a subject that’s important to me. It’s all summed up in the wonderful text by Jean-Loup Dabadie, called “Le Temps Qui Reste”, brilliantly performed by Serge Reggiani. It’s almost a testament but I also read hope in it. He talks about beautiful things, the desire to live and the desire to continue...

To continue making films?

Yes! To continue... Continue making films, telling stories with fascinating characters like Antoine’s. Whatever you may say about him, I think he behaves in an incredibly brave way.
our era. In short, we don’t know ourselves and we are led by our lives more than we lead them. It’s this understanding that pushes Antoine into his extreme “rage”. Money is just a concept invented by man that ends up representing all his anxieties and desires. His “friends” are all successes in society, and consider themselves happy when they are just stupid. They haven’t been through what Antoine has.

You’ve directed three films; BERNIE, THE CREATOR and LOCKED OUT. Was it hard to just be an actor on this shoot?

Quite the opposite. I escape from myself a lot when I’m acting, and the less I recognize myself, the better I feel.

Which scene in the film do you remember the best?

A scene Jean cut during the editing process. Antoine goes swimming in Ireland in water at 10°C. We did three takes and he ended up cutting it. That’s what I call a memory!

Jean Becker often goes back to work with actors he’s worked with before. Would you be interested in working with him again?

Any time, as long as it’s not to play a lifeguard in the frozen north...

What does Jean Becker’s work mean to you?

If you had to find a point in common between all of his films, it would without doubt be their great sensuality. In them, you can hear the slightest breath of wind or vibration of a buzzing insect. There’s also that permanent, explosive mix of drama, like in ONE DEADLY SUMMER and of good times like in CHILDREN OF THE MARSHLANDS, that blend of pessimism and optimism, happiness and violence... It’s a curious combination that you also find in LOVE ME NO MORE, which stands alone as an intense condensed version of Jean’s work.

What drove your desire to play the role of Antoine?

The script was really well-written and the character’s attitude seemed to me to be perfectly coherent with what I would have felt were I in his shoes. I immediately identified with this guy and of course, that helps.

Was it difficult to understand this enigmatic character?

Not particularly. As with every role, I make myself completely available. I don’t think about it, I just give myself up a little more each day. I don’t look to either excuse or justify Antoine’s behavior, just to understand him and end up liking him whatever he does. Faced with the mediocrity of life and his destiny, Antoine reacts courageously: he takes his life in hand and chooses to follow his path. It’s impudent, selfish, crazy and brave, but also extraordinarily elegant. He becomes himself (again) to live through this very unusual time in his existence.

Could he be you, this guy who ruins everything for a reason we only find out at the end of the film?

I’m not sure I’d have the courage, and honestly, I’d prefer never to find out what he finds out.

It looks like you’re really enjoying certain scenes where Antoine offloads. Was that the case?

No more or less than for any other scenes. Again, I can identify with Antoine’s feelings, but not necessarily with what he says. In the dinner party scene, I enjoyed personifying that middle-class rebellion just as much as I enjoyed the scenes when he sees his father again.

Antoine mainly criticizes the ossified comfort of his relationship. Apart from money, what makes the world go round?

Life has no meaning and it’s up to us all to give it one, provided that we know who we are. But we are often only the fruit of our education, of our environment and of the conditioning of our era. In short, we don’t know ourselves and we are led by our lives more than we lead them. It’s this understanding that pushes Antoine into his extreme “rage”. Money is just a concept invented by man that ends up representing all his anxieties and desires. His “friends” are all successes in society, and consider themselves happy when they are just stupid. They haven’t been through what Antoine has.

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INTERVIEW
MARIE-JOSÉE CROZE
You actively went after the role of Cécile. What happened?
I’d never done anything like that before! An assistant director who’d worked on Jean’s last film told me about LOVE ME NO MORE, saying it was great and that I had to read the script. My agent quickly got in touch with the producer, Louis Becker, who sent it to me. Right away, I was very moved by the story. I also remember being very impressed by the length of the argument scene. It was essential not to fall into those televisual clichés that are often a million miles from what one might experience in life. So I met with Jean Becker, who after a relatively short meeting, offered me his trust and the role.

Was gaining his trust sometimes difficult?
Jean knows exactly what he wants. When it’s good, he tells you, and when it isn’t, you know that too, very quickly. He shows his concerns and his doubts. He doesn’t cheat. He’s a sincere and direct person. He knows how to be there so you always feel comfortable. Personally, I always felt like he was there with me, and that’s very reassuring.

What do you like in Jean Becker’s films?
There’s ONE DEADLY SUMMER of course, and other films that I enjoyed without being particularly drawn by the subject. But whatever you like or dislike in Jean’s films, you can’t help but be caught up by his characters and by their obvious sincerity. If there’s one thing that is indisputable, it’s the sincerity of Jean Becker’s films.

What was it like working with Albert Dupontel?
This was the second time we’d worked together. I can’t say that I know Albert – he’s very solitary and very modest – but that distance suits me well. It allows us to come together at the moment the word “Action!” is spoken. I think he knows how to keep back a part of the wonder for the camera. It’s the same thing when I learn my lines. I always do it in my head so that when the time comes, I can say them in a way that’s unexpected for both me and for others. I’m sure that you can see that freshness on screen.

Cécile’s character is all about subtlety and holding back. How do you see her?
She and her husband make a couple who love each other in a very close way. She can’t believe what happens to him. She’s overwhelmed. It made me think about the relationship between Marianne and Johan in Ingmar Bergman’s SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE.

What will you remember from the shoot?
I was very happy on this shoot: happy to share certain scenes with some wonderful theatre actors, happy to have had the chance to work on a film that I felt was hugely important to Jean Becker. There’s something like a cry in LOVE ME NO MORE, a particularly moving kind of urgency.
FILMOGRAPHY
JEAN BECKER

2008  LOVE ME NO MORE (French release 30 April 2008)  
Based on the novel “Deux Jours à Tuer” by François d’Epenoux

2007  CONVERSATION WITH MY GARDENER  
Based on the novel “Dialogue Avec Mon Jardinier” by Henri Cueco

2003  STRANGE GARDENS  
Based on the novel “In Our Strange Gardens” by Michel Quint

2000  A CRIME IN PARADISE  
Based on an original screenplay by Sacha Guitry

1998  CHILDREN OF THE MARSHLANDS  
Based on the novel “Les Enfants du Marais” by Georges Montfrez

1995  ELISA  
César for Best Music

1983  ONE DEADLY SUMMER  
César for Best Actress for Isabelle Adjani,  
Best Supporting Actress for Suzanne Flon and Best Editing

1967  TENDER SCOUNDREL

1965  PAS DE CAVIAR POUR TANTE OLGA

1964  BACKFIRE

1961  A MAN NAMED ROCCA
FILMOGRAPHY
ALBERT DUPONTEL

2007  LOVE ME NO MORE by Jean Becker
      PARIS by Cédric Klapisch
2006  INTIMATE ENEMIES by Florent Emilio Siri
      ODETTE TOULEMONDE by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt
2005  PRÉSIDENT by Limestone Déplante
      ORCHESTRA SEATS by Danièle Thompson
      LOCKED OUT by Albert Dupontel
2003  A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT by Jean-Pierre Jeunet
      CASH TRUCK by Nicolas Boukhrief
2002  IRREVERSIBLE by Gaspar Noé
1999  SACH'S DISEASE by Michel Deville
      THE CREATOR by Albert Dupontel
1996  BERNIE by Albert Dupontel
      A SELF-MADE HERO by Jacques Audiard
1992  DÉSIRÉ by Albert Dupontel

Director and Screenwriter

2005  LOCKED OUT
1999  THE CREATOR
1996  BERNIE
1992  DÉSIRÉ
FILMOGRAPHY
MARIE-JOSÉE CROZE

2008  JE L’AIMAIS by Zabou Breitman
2007  The PROTOCOL by Thomas Vincent
      LOVE ME NO MORE by Jean Becker
2006  THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY by Julian Schnabel
2005  MUNICH by Steven Spielberg
      JACQUOU LE CROQUANT by Laurent Boutonnat
      TELL NO ONE by Guillaume Canet
      MOON ON THE SNOW by Phil Anselm McKay
2004  BIRDS OF HEAVEN by Etane de Labou
      LA PETITE CHANTREUSE by Jean-Pierre Denis
2003  ORDO by Laurence Fenora Barbosa
      MENSONGES ET TRANSEMS by Laurent Tirard
      THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS by Denys Arcand
      Best Actress at the Festival de Cannes 2003
      ASCENSION by Katrin Hussain
      NOTHING by Vicento Natali
2002  ARarat by Atom Egoyan
2001  WOLVES IN THE SNOW by Michel Welterlin
2000  MAELSTROM by Denis Villeneuve
1999  HLA IDENTIQUE by Thomas Briat
1993  FLORIDA by Georges Mhaka

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1993  FLORIDA by Georges Mhaka
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CAST

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Cécile Marie-Josée Croze
Antoine’s father Pierre Vanneck
Marion Alessandra Martines
Virginie Cristina Reali
Eric Mathias Mlekuz
Clara Claire Nebout
Paul François Mathouret
Anne-Laure Anne Loiret
Thibault José Paul
Bérengère Daphné Bürki
Etienne Samuel Labarthe
Sébastien Guillaume De Tonquedec
Mortez Jean Dell
Cécile’s mother Marie-Christine Adam
Cécile’s father Mario Pecqueur
Madame Lemoine Anne-Laure
Jaguar owner Thierry Liagre
Café owner Stephan Wójcikcz
Hitman Xavier Gallais