

ICE 3 AND PATHÉ PRESENT

THIERRY **NEUVIC** HÉLÈNE **FILLIERES**

OLIVIER **BAROUX** MARILYNE **CANTO**

Les Papas du Dimanche

A FILM BY

LOUIS BECKER

WITH **NINA RODRIGUEZ** NICOLAS ROMPTEAUX ARAÛNA
BERNHEIM-DENNERY

SCREENPLAY & ADAPTATION OLIVIER TORRES, LOUIS BECKER

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF FRANÇOIS D'EPENOUX, JACQUES PIBAROT AND
CÉCILE BOISROND

BASED ON THE NOVEL "LES PAPAS DU DIMANCHE" BY FRANÇOIS D'EPENOUX

PUBLISHED BY ÉDITIONS ANNE CARRIÈRE

AN ICE 3 – PATHÉ – FRANCE 3 CINÉMA – ALVY PRODUCTIONS COPRODUCTION

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF CANAL+, CINÉ+ AND FRANCE TÉLÉVISIONS

WITH SUPPORT FROM THE CHARENTE-MARITIME DÉPARTEMENT AND THE POITOU-
CHARENTES RÉGION,

FROM THE PROCIREP AND THE ANGOA

AND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L'IMAGE
ANIMÉE

ORIGINAL MUSIC NATHANIEL MÉCHALY

FRENCH RELEASE **25 JANUARY 2012**

RUNTIME: 90'

SYNOPSIS

Cheated on by his wife, Antoine leaves the family home and moves in with Léo, his childhood friend. Léo and his wife Léa help him through this difficult time. The toughest part is how much he misses his three kids. The notorious access on alternate weekends makes him a “Sunday dad” – a bit of an amateur, like an angler or a Sunday driver.

But life goes on, the smiles and good times slowly return. It’s a painful yet gradually rewarding learning process for this new life, as the possibility a new romantic encounter comes into view.

INTERVIEW WITH

LOUIS BECKER

How did the project **LES PAPAS DU DIMANCHE** come into being?

When I was producing **LOVE ME NO MORE**, adapted from a novel by François d’Epenoux, François had me read his latest book, “Les Papas du Dimanche”, the subject of which was close to his own life as a divorced man with very limited access to his children.

For my part, I strongly identified with what the character in the book was going through, so I optioned the novel. Since I didn’t envisage directing it and I wanted to test the material out, I hired Olivier Torres to do an initial adaptation that I thought I’d offer to a director.

I really liked Olivier’s first version, which he’d adapted freely from the novel, so I

started to think about filmmakers. “Auteur” directors have a hard time accepting commercial propositions, and offering it to a director who’s simply a technician is not my style. In fact, I gradually realised that I was finding all the right reasons to offer the film to me and me alone. Once I’d accepted this – and having got over the fear that everyone, especially my father, would take me for a usurper – I decided to direct the film. In fact, it became a burning necessity for me to do it. It was all I thought about, day and night for months on end. I have three children from two different mothers. I’m so protective towards them that my friends call me “the Jewish mother”; it verges on the ridiculous. They themselves don’t really care, although deep down I think they quite like it.

I read Olivier’s script and I thought that if I directed this movie, I didn’t want to film it as it was because I wanted it to be closer to situations that I had experienced, and to introduce more of my own language. To put it more simply, I wanted to make an adaptation for Louis Becker the director. Cécile Boisrond, Jacques Pibarot and François d’Epenoux then gave me a lot of input.

And that’s why the story in the film, which is nothing like my own, is in fact quite autobiographical in terms of its feel: the sentiments, how much I miss my kids, my isolation, my moments of sadness and my readapting to a new life, new encounters and new loves.

Why did you want to tackle this topic from this point of view?

I really wanted to show the hidden side of a father who pretends to be an upbeat, well-meaning hero for two weekends a month in front of his children so as not to burden them with his emotional problems and privations. I wanted my sons to understand a little about my inner turmoil on Sunday evenings when I took them back to their mother and, above all, that they should never interpret my lightness of spirit, my joy when we were together as indifference to our being apart.

What do you think divorced fathers separated from their children have in common?

One can’t say it’s common to all, but when I showed this film to some friends, and in talking to some separated fathers and others close to me, I felt that terrible pain of not being around one’s children on a daily basis. That terrible pain of breaking off the dialogue and sometimes of just bringing it down to the level of the dutiful father: “Did you get good grades? Be kind to your mother. Take a break from the computer now!” That sort of thing, the kind of common ground that distances us from them. For example, when you realize that you can’t remember if your children like fish and you have to ask their mother with a guilty look. That fear of becoming a stranger. Giving gifts to win their love, when in fact, the kids don’t care. Only commenting on school grades without ever participating in homework or understanding your kids’ weaknesses and helping them. There’s no time for that with alternate weekends. Speaking well of their mother or her new partner when maybe you don’t think it, just so the children don’t sense any conflict. The list is long, and the film is no doubt “multi-autobiographical”, if such a word exists.

In the film, you don't condemn Juliette, Antoine's wife. Is the wife the only guilty party in this situation?

I definitely didn't want to treat the film as the story of a couple who are splitting up. And above all, I didn't want to be disobliging towards women, the mothers of our children who we have loved and who deserve lifelong respect for their status. Antoine is filled with anger at the start, but the film shifts towards reconciliation and dialogue, and he never criticizes his wife in front of the children. I have walked out, I've been walked out on; in both cases, I think one should adopt the same attitude. Spare the children as far as possible and never condemn their mother. Be aware of everyone's failings. Antoine is definitely a victim but his failings led him to that position. He can't ignore that and take the moral high-ground.

In your film, children play a particularly important role; what is your rapport with them?

I'm very emotional when I talk about them. I can feel tears welling up in no time. When one of them shows some attention, and I feel the love between us, I find it very moving. Of course I'm too overbearing, too loving and therefore maladroit. I have only one wish; that they turn out better than me. They are wonderful people! Once again, that's the Jewish mother in me speaking. We have a great complicity and we laugh together a lot. They come before everything. I think the feeling of missing them goes some way to explaining this excess of sentiment.

Despite this separated family's heartache, the film always feels upbeat, mainly thanks to the best friend's humor and the children's candor. Was this to avoid pathos?

It wasn't a strategy in the script, more the reflection of something in my own character. I always downplay sadness, melancholy and sorrow, and I'm eternally positive. Seeking laughter in the midst of this drama was inevitable. Léo says everything that I'd have wanted to say if I'd been Antoine's friend. I've been in situations where I've been like Léo, and the other way around. A bit of well-intentioned irony always helps. It also shows that Antoine manages to maintain a smile in front of his kids. He gets better at hiding his pain. It ends up fading, thanks to his meeting Jeanne.

At what point did you know you were going to direct the film?

It would have driven me mad to hand the job to someone else, given that the film was so fundamental to me and so sincere. So I forced myself to push ahead with what I felt I had to do, and I got a great response from the partners I wanted to bring on board. And then one day, I realized that was it; I could no longer pull out. I was actually going to make this film, for my sons, and for fathers like me. First I was overjoyed. Then the anxiety kicked in. But all my director friends told me this was entirely normal.

How did you put your crew together?

It's my first film as director, but I've worked as a technician on more than 40 films and produced more than 20. So I looked for people to work on my film among those who had the right skills, naturally, but also those whose sensibility was compatible with mine. In particular, this was the case for Bernard Bolzinger, the production manager, who I've been working with for 12 years and who never talks to me about money, only about the film. He's a guy who knows how to look after a director. He's a precious ally who works 24 hours a day for the sake of the film. Madeline Fontaine, the costume designer, is someone I've always felt a great affinity with. Thérèse Ripaud, the set designer, is passionate and devoted and I've known her a long time. She worked on all my father's films. In a similar vein, there's Stephan Massis, with whom I've worked for many years and who has heaps of talent. And of course Franck Nakache, the editor, who was an invaluable aid, but I can't mention everyone.

How did you pick your cast?

Solely with sincerity. I just asked myself whether they corresponded to the character or not.

For Antoine, I wanted an attractive man, someone masculine and in their forties. I didn't want people to say: "No wonder he's been dumped. He's a loser, and ugly to boot."

And so yes, an attractive, intelligent man can also find himself in a position of failure. Thierry Neuvic combines all those things at once and his sensibility is amazing. He is gentle and strong, handsome and serious, sad and joyful, saucy yet moral. After an hour in my office, it was a done deal; no-one else could have taken the part.

For a long time I had wanted to offer the female lead to Hélène Fillières, but after having chosen Thierry Neuvic, I thought it was a mistake because they'd been in the TV series "Mafiosa" together. But Thierry convinced me otherwise and gave her the script. And once again, in a single meeting the whole thing was sealed. I wanted a woman who was no pushover. A sincere and fragile woman. A rounded woman who protects herself. Hélène has incredible grace, a dazzling smile, but she can be icy too, when necessary.

For the role of Léo, when Elodie Demey suggested Olivier Baroux, I only knew him as the actor in the comic duo Kad and Olivier and as a director. He always makes me laugh and I was afraid he'd be too comical in the film. I was wrong on that; he's a great guy, really sincere. He's really friendly and touching and he has this gift for comedy which means that even when he says "pass the salt", it makes you smile. He knows how to be tough and strong. And I needed all that. Olivier had accepted the role before he met me, on condition that we did some tests. I liked him right away.

I knew Marilyne Canto and I liked her a lot in Manuel Poirier's films and others. I wanted a woman at peace with herself, one who had successfully been through a bit of psychoanalysis. That's how I see Marilyne's character in the film.

It was difficult to cast the children because I knew I was an inexperienced director and the law puts tight restrictions on the time children can spend on set. So I had to be sure the children we chose weren't shy or retiring because I wouldn't have the luxury of spending a lot of time working on their acting.

I met Nina Rodriguez, who plays Alice, the day of the premiere of NO AND ME by Zabou Breitman. She was exactly the Alice I'd been looking for.

Nicolas Rompoteaux, who plays Vincent, had played in "Kramer versus Kramer" on stage. His tender look, his self-assurance and honesty were all it took for me to offer him the role.

Arauna, the little Nine, is very young but nonetheless has some experience.

She's a free spirit. She made me laugh. I rewrote her character to match how she is in real life and we dressed her according to her personality.

Thierry Lhermitte has been my associate for 20 years and is someone for whom I have the greatest respect and undying friendship. He was kind enough to do me this little favor.

We were talking earlier about an autobiographical story; does the film contain lots of details that you felt especially attached to?

As I said before, the film appears autobiographical but in fact it isn't.

Nonetheless, there are many details which I absolutely wanted to include, especially regarding Antoine. I located the action outside of Paris, in La Rochelle, because I wanted to take the story out of the specifics of the capital. People break up everywhere. But I definitely didn't want his dress sense to look too trendy nor old-hat. He's an architect and I knew that his car was a must with architects since its curves and angles are still a reference, even if it is a bit outdated. It was touching when François d'Epenoux, the author of the book, came on set. He was very moved by the resemblance with the character. At the time, he had the same car, though I had no idea.

His glasses help to soften him; his coat says not everything is a concession to practicality; his rather bohemian scarf (which is mine); his watch (not a Rolex) – he had to be a blend of all that. That's just a tiny fraction of a thousand details I put in this film.

Tell us about the film's music, composed by Nathaniel Méchaly.

I adore the cello, I don't play myself but one of my sons does. When it came to composing the music, I met with Nathaniel, whose first career was as a cellist, and we decided to go for a pure and sober sound. Cello, piano and double bass. There are some pieces with guitar too, but the cello is dominant throughout.

I wanted the music to have a certain gravitas, but also something sweet-sounding. And I wanted it to have a positive resonance. I got the music that I wanted and that's thanks to Nathaniel.

I also wanted a song by Pauline Croze, who I love, whose song "T'es Beau" has often soothed me. She very kindly composed a song for the film that I find very moving.

The rest of the music already existed and all means something to me. Such as

the singer Blossom Dearie and Sophie Hunger's tender interpretation of "Le Vent Nous Portera" that I've been listening to for several years.

Why become a director so late in life? Have you never tried it before? Is it a matter of "killing the father" (Jean Becker)?

Apart from making some super-8 films as a teenager with my friend Darius Khondji – who today is a renowned director of photography – I'd never really thought about it. Ironically, it was my father who said it first. I don't know if I've become a director, but in any case the only reason I made this film was because it was essential for me. No other consideration came into it. For a long time people compared my father with his own, Jacques Becker, and he was often hurt by these comparisons. People shouldn't bother themselves with that. I'm not in competition with him and I'm in the middle of producing his next film.

I'm perfectly at home with editing and I wanted my film to have a simple grammar. I opted for a digital camera, the ALEXA, so I never had to stop shooting with the children. I used five top-quality lenses and a hand-held camera to be more dynamic. I was only interested in the sincerity of the characters. Above all I wanted it to be a believable story, despite the fact it's not a true one.

You've been a producer for many years. Is it complicated to wear two hats on a film?

At the start, I thought about asking a producer to come alongside to do what I do when I'm producer. In other words, to support and help the director make his film in the best conditions and to act as an objective sounding board.

In the end, I didn't find this kindred spirit, so I just got on with it with the help of some people I trusted, including my wife Sandra.

I have to say, it was quite schizophrenic and tiring. I think I managed to protect myself from having to wear the hat all the time, but my impatience and my knowledge of the job meant I often reacted as a producer would.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in September 1956, Louis Becker is the third generation of filmmaker in his family, the grandson of Jacques Becker and son of Jean Becker.

From the age of 14, with his childhood friend and later director of photography Darius Khondji, he shot films on super-8 which were screened at several festivals and were written about in the press, notably in "Cinéma 74".

He worked as trainee assistant director on the 1975 shoot of THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE by Luis Buñuel. Then he worked in a variety of different capacities on some 30 feature films, including ONE DEADLY SUMMER by Jean Becker, on which he was unit manager, and on about 100 advertisements until 1985.

In 1986, he was associate producer with Thierry Lhermitte on NUIT D'IVRESSE. He was then assistant to Alain Cavalier for THÉRÈSE. In 1988, he was production manager on the series "Palace" by Jean-Michel Ribes (6x52').

From the end of 1988 to 1991, he joined Son et Lumière, acting as producer for some 15 TV movies and series. In 1991, he founded Belt Productions to produce, along with Ice Films (Thierry Lhermitte), THE PROFESSIONAL SECRETS OF DOCTOR APFELGLÜCK. He left Son et Lumière to develop his own projects with Belt Productions, including THE LUZHIN DÉFENCE by Marleen Gorris.

Between 1992-93, he worked as executive producer and actor on Alain Cavalier's film LIBERA ME (Official Selection, Festival de Cannes 1993).

In 1993, Thierry Lhermitte and Louis Becker decided to team up again at Ice Films to produce LITTLE INDIAN, BIG CITY by Hervé Palud. In 1995, the company changed its name to Ice 3 and produced the following films:

1997 QUATRE GARÇONS PLEINS D'AVENIR by Jean-Paul Lilienfeld

1998 CHARITÉ BIZ'NESS by Thierry Barthes and Pierre Jamin

1999 LES COLLÈGUES by Philippe Dajoux

1999 C'EST PAS MA FAUTE by Jacques Monnet

2000 LE PRINCE DU PACIFIQUE by Alain Corneau

2001 PEOPLE IN SWIMSUITS AREN'T (NECESSARILY) SHALLOW by Éric Assous,
THE LUZHIN DÉFENCE by Marleen Gorris

2003 STRANGE GARDENS by Jean Becker

2005 L'EX-FEMME DE MA VIE by Josiane Balasko

2007 CONVERSATIONS WITH MY GARDENER by Jean Becker

2008 LOVE ME NO MORE by Jean Becker

2009 YOU WILL BE MINE by Sophie Laloy 2010

MY AFTERNOONS WITH MARGUERITTE by Jean Becker

In July 2008, he founded a distribution label: LITTLE STONE DISTRIBUTION. Two films have been distributed so far:

2008 THE ART OF NÉGATIVE THINKING by Bard Breien

2009 YOU WILL BE MINE by Sophie Laloy

Ice 3 is producing the next film by Jean Becker, which is currently shooting; BIENVENUE PARMİ NOUS, with Patrick Chesnais, Jeanne Lambert, Miou-Miou and Jacques Weber.

CAST

ANTOINE..... THIERRY NEUVIC

JEANNE HÉLÈNE FILLIÈRES

LÉO.....OLIVIER BAROUX

LÉA.....MARILYNECANTO

ALICE.....NINA RODRIGUEZ

VINCENT..... NICOLAS ROMPTEAUX

NINE.....ARAÛNA BERNHEIM-DENNERY

JULIETTE SANDRA BECKER

MORGAN..... THIERRY LHERMITTE

MICHKA.....SACHA BOURDO

MARTIN.....RENAN CARTEAUX

CREW

DIRECTOR.....LOUIS BECKER
SCREENPLAY AND ADAPTATION OLIVIER TORRES, LOUIS BECKER
WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF FRANÇOIS D'EPENOUX, JACQUES
PIBAROT, CÉCILE BOISROND
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY FRANÇOIS D'EPENOUX, ÉDITIONS
ANNE CARRIÈRE
ORIGINAL MUSIC.....NATHANIEL MÉCHALY
ORIGINAL SONG....."CE N'EST QU'UN HOMME" by PAULINE CROZE
PRODUCTION MANAGER.....BERNARD BOLZINGER
PHOTOGRAPHY.....STEPHAN MASSIS
SOUND.....JACQUES PIBAROT, MATTHIEU DENIAU,
CHRISTOPHE VINGTRINIER
EDITING.....FRANCK NAKACHE
SET DESIGN.....THÉRÈSE RIPAUD
COSTUMES.....MADELINE FONTAINE
CASTINGÉLODIE DEMEY
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FÉLICIE
UNIT MANAGER.....ANNE FÉRIGNAC
SET PHOTOGRAPHER EMMANUELLE JACOBSON-ROQUES
PRODUCTION.....ICE3/LOUIS BECKER
COPRODUCER.....ROMAIN LEGRAND
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER FLORIAN GENETET-MOREL
COPRODUCTION.....PATHÉ-FRANCE3 CINÉMA-ALVY PRODUCTIONS
FILMING TOOK PLACE FROM 7 MARCH TO 27 APRIL 2011 IN LA ROCHELLE AND
THE POITOU-CHARENTES RÉGION.

DISTRIBUTION
PATHÉ DISTRIBUTION
2 RUE LAMENNAIS - 75008 PARIS
TEL: + 33 (0) 1 71 72 30 00
WWW.PATHEDISTRIBUTION.COM

PRESS
MOTEUR ! - ISABELLE SAUVANON
28 RUE DE MOGADOR - 75009 PARIS
TEL: +33 (0) 1 42 56 80 94
ISAUVANON@MAIKO.FR

Press kit and photos available for download at www.pathedistribution.com