FROM THE DIRECTOR OF STARBUCK

GERARD JUGNOT BERENICE BEJO

DHANUSH

ERIN MORIARTY BARKHAD ABDI

THE EXTRAORDINARY OF FINAL INTERPREDICTION OF



ABEL JAFRI BEN MILLER STEFANO CASSETTI SARAH-JEANNE LABROSSE HEARTY SINGH AMRUTA SANT

TO ESCIT INCOMPANIENT BOSS DEMANDABILITAS DEMANDA FRANCES DEMANDA PRETILAS DEMANDA PRETILAS

















BRIO FILMS and VAMONOS FILMS present

A film by





GERARD JUGNOT BEJO BEJO

DHANUSH

ERIN MORIARTY BARKHAD ABDI

Screenplay by Romain PUERTOLAS and Luc BOSSI With the collaboration of Ken SCOTT

Based on the best-seller by Romain Puértolas «The Extraordinary Journey Of The Fakir Who Got Trapped In An Ikea Wardrobe » (published by Editions Le Dilettante)

Running time: 100' A France - India - Belgium production

RELEASE DATE MAY 30, 2018

Learn more about the film: www.facebook.com/LExtraordinaireVoyageDuFakir.LeFilm/ Twitter #VoyageDuFakir

Download press kit at: www.sonypicturespresse.fr

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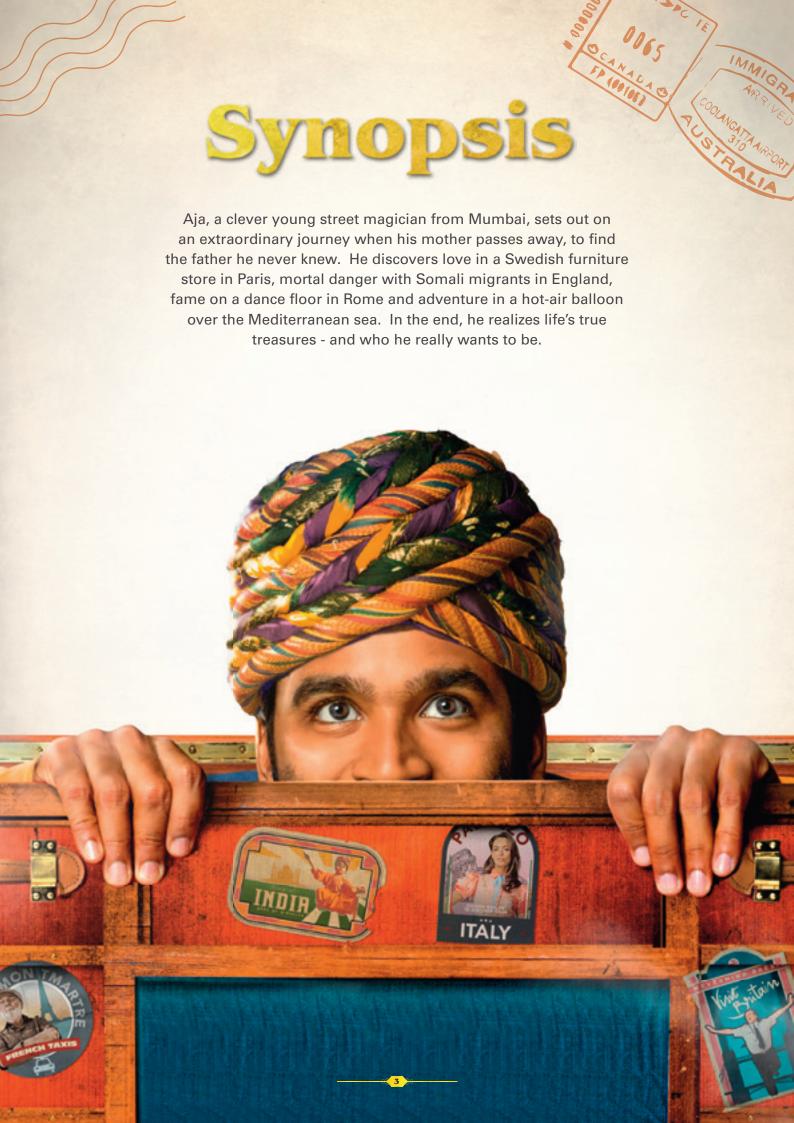
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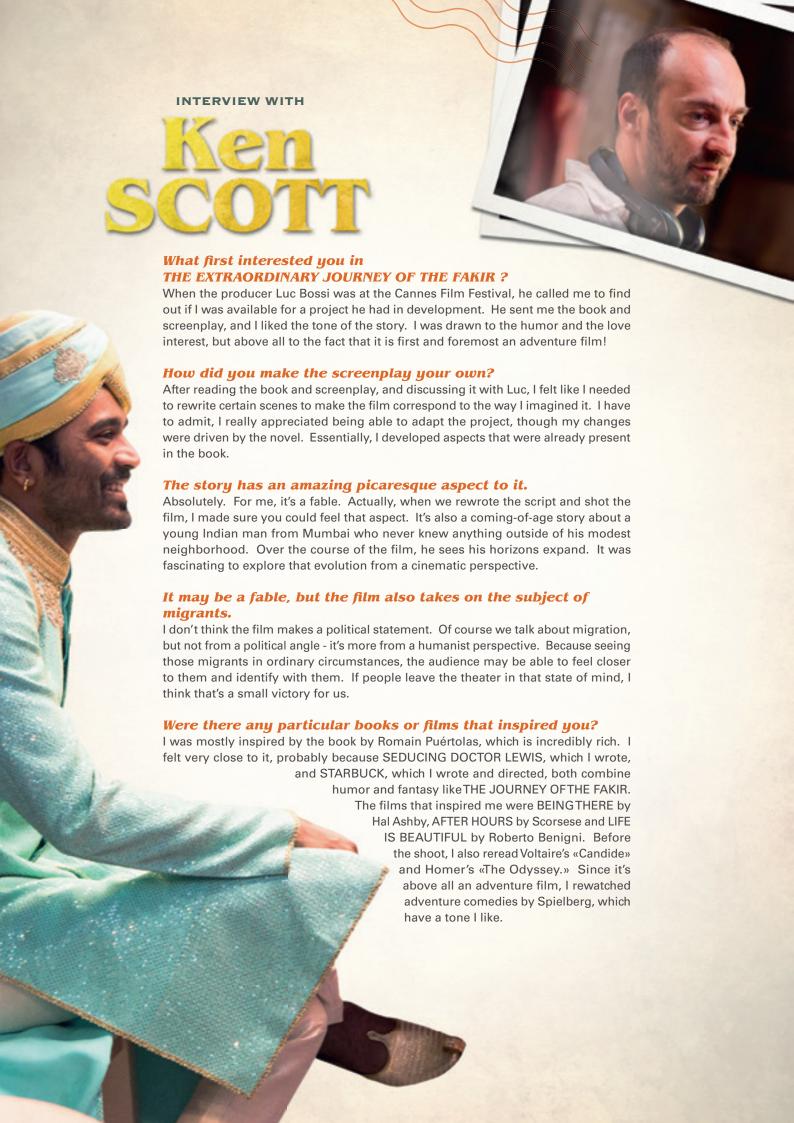
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It was obviously a pretty complex shoot! But it was essential to actually go to the different countries where the story unfolds to capture the atmosphere. And even if it was often difficult, it was worth it, because we had to make sure that each one of the places the characters traveled through influenced the narrative and the protagonist's journey.

INDIAN = AIRLINE

You also brought together an international cast.

As he travels, our protagonist meets many characters who only have a few scenes in the film. But their presence had to be striking, so we brought on board great actors from the countries we traveled through. That was one of the most exciting aspects of preproduction.

You directed actors from very diverse cultures and backgrounds. Was that especially difficult?

First, I forced myself to understand what they needed to give us their best. Of course it was a real challenge to work with actors from different countries, but it was also a real joy. Beginning with Dhanush, who has made so many films in India. It was incredible, because at the end of each shoot day, we talked about the film we were making and his character, as well as the way we make movies: we compared my vision and approach as an Occidental director with his vision as an Indian artist, and we compared the reaction of audiences in the Occident to those of India. Our discussions enriched my vision of the world and the way I make films.

Did you have any difficulties related to cultural differences?

The language barrier was sometimes an obstacle, especially since I had to make myself understood and we were constantly pressed for time. I remember, for example, taking the time to explain to some of the extras what they were supposed to do, and then realizing that they didn't speak a word of English - but they were too polite to tell me!

Did you set up rehearsals or read-throughs before shooting began?

Not really. Since we were shooting in so many countries, we never had the chance to bring all of the actors together. Despite that, I did rehearse with some of them, but again, the most important thing in my mind was to find the method that worked best for each of them. Talking with Dhanush way before we began, I realized he preferred not to rehearse too much, to preserve his spontaneity. With the actors who had only a couple of shoot days, we had to rehearse a minimum, just to make sure they really understood the tone of the film.





Do you give your actors a margin of flexibility?

I'm pretty precise when I direct, because I know what I want to get from my actors to be able to tell the story my way. That said, I give them a lot of freedom and start out by encouraging them to give me their own interpretation of the scene. After that, I explain my vision and we narrow things down.

What visual style did you want for the film?

First, the style was determined by the fact that it's a fable. After that, since we go from one country to another along the protagonist's journey, it was important that each of the places we went through had its own visual identity. So I filmed each country differently, letting myself be influenced by the atmosphere, locations and local culture. It was essential for the audience to feel we were in different worlds throughout the film - whether it was a dance number in the pure Bollywood tradition, a Monty Pythonesque musical number in England, or a chase scene in Italy swinging to the rhythms of Nino Rota style music.

How did you work with the composer?

The music was essential on this project. We brought on Nicolas Errera, who I had already worked with, and we got inspiration from Indian melodies, even if it's not a Bollywood film. We made Indian culture present throughout the score.

What did you take away from this unique experience?

It was a collaboration with great talents from many countries. It was an especially ambitious project for a relatively modest budget. We had to be inventive and extremely prepared. And I think we were! I really feel like the whole cast and crew worked together towards the same objective, to serve the film, and were totally committed.

What do you want the audience to take away from the film?

I mostly want them to really enjoy themselves, because first and foremost, it's entertainment! But it's also a movie that talks about immigration, and even though it doesn't offer any ready-made solutions, I hope it will fuel some discussion and debate.





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FILMOGRAPHY

THE EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY OF THE FAKIR with Dhanush, Bérénice Bejo, Erin Moriarty, Barkhad Abdi and Gérard Jugnot

2015

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (JET LAG) with Vince Vaughn, Tom Wilkinson, Dave Franco and Sienna Miller

DELIVERY MAN with Vince Vaughn and Chris Pratt

2012

STARBUCK with Patrick Huard and Julie Lebreton

- People's Choice Award Calgary International Film Festival (2011)
- Best Actor Valladolid International Film Festival (2011)
- Special Jury Award and Best Actor Alpe d'Huez International Comedy Film (2012)
- Golden Ticket Jutra Awards (2012)
- Best Narrative Feature Palm Springs International Film Festival (2012)
- Most Popular Canadian Film Vancouver International Film Festival (2012)
- Best Original Screenplay, Best Original Song, Golden Reel Genie Awards (2012)

STICKY FINGERS with Roy Dupuis, Patrice Robitaille and Aure Atika

2004

SEDUCING DOCTOR LEWIS (screenwriter)

with Raymond Bouchard, David Boutin and Benoît Brière

- Audience Award Montreal Comedy Festival Just for Laughs (2003)
- •6 Awards (including the Golden Ticket) Jutra Awards (2004)
- Audience Award Boston Independent Film Festival (2004)
- Audience Award Sundance Film Festival (2004)
- Grand Prix Alpe d'Huez International Comedy Film Festival (2004)





TALKS ABOUT...

The screenplay

It had a fantastic message to send out to the world, combined with irresistible humor. It was also the promise of a journey I hadn't yet dared to take in my career. You rarely get the chance of being offered a role like that.

Le personnage d'Aja

The character of Aja

He is a street magician. He is charming and can get out of sticky situations most of the time. But he is also a character who most viewers can identify with, because he is truly philosophical about life - and doesn't hesitate to take off on a mind-blowing adventure.

Ken Scott

He is an extremely pleasant director and at the same time, he has a very clear vision of what he wants. It's fantastic to be directed by someone who knows how to take you exactly where he wants you to go, yet allows you to make the character your own. He encourages real team work; with him, I felt like we were building scenes together, getting inspiration from both his approach and mine. I learned a lot with him.

Work methods

I didn't have time to do readings or rehearsals, but in retrospect, I'm really happy about that. Because I was able to keep a certain freshness and spontaneity that I wouldn't necessarily have had if we had rehearsed.

Partners from all over the world

It was fascinating to work with actors from different countries and cultures.

I really appreciated discovering their approaches to the craft of acting, especially since it is such a rare experience.

Bérénice Bejo

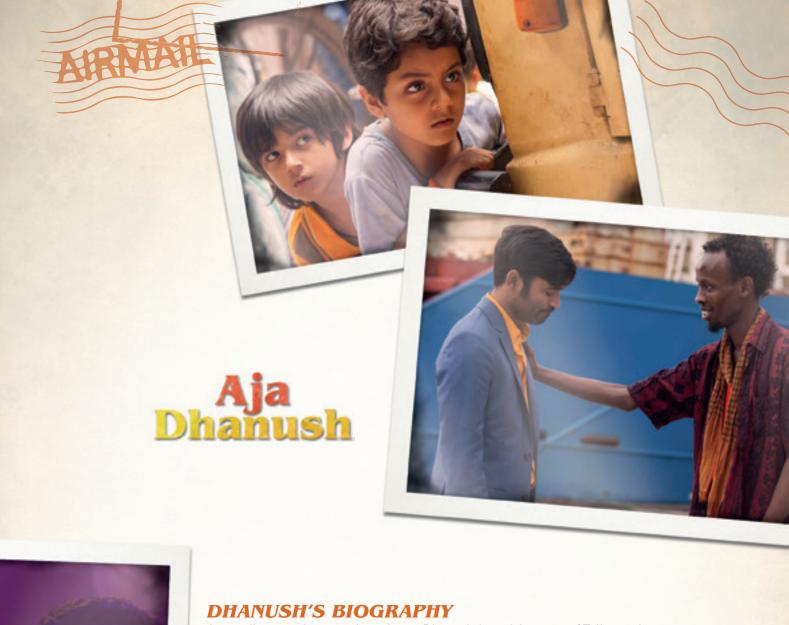
Bérénice Béjo is wonderful and a very good acting partner. She is warm, encouraging and cooperative. We had an excellent time together, especially in the dance sequence.

Dancing

It's an art that is an integral part of Indian culture. I've done more than thirty films in India, and in most of them I had dance scenes. Since I'm used to dancing on a regular basis, I didn't really need to do any preparation for that.

A different world

Probably the most difficult thing for me was adapting to a world so radically different from what I am used to. I had to get accustomed to different work methods and a different shooting style. During the first week, it was pretty tough for me, but after that, I really had a blast!



Actor, director, singer and producer, Dhanush is a rising star of Tollywood (Tamil cinema) and Bollywood. Born in Chennai, he is married to filmmaker Aishwarya Rajnikanth, daughter of Tollywood superstar Rajnikanth. His screen success began at the age of 18 with the films THULLUVADHO ILAMAI (2002) and KADHAL KONDEIN (2003), followed by the blockbuster THIRUDA THIRUDI (2003). Since then, his career has skyrocketed with hits in both Tamil and Hindi, such as POLLADHAVAN (2007) inspired by BICYCLE THIEVES, YAARADI NÉE MOHINI (2008), KUTTY (2010), and CONFRONTATIONS, a realist film about cockfighting for which he won Best Actor at the National Film Awards. In late 2011, Dhanush wrote and recorded the song «Why This Kolaveri Di,» a viral hit that has 90 million views YouTube to date. He began his career in Bollywood in 2012 with RAANJHANAA by Anand L. Rai. Dhanush has made more than 40 films seen by hundreds of millions of people in his

country. THE EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY OF THE FAKIR is his first lead role in an international coproduction.

Nelly Bérénice BEJO

TALKS ABOUT...

The project

What I liked, right from the beginning, was the fact that it was a resolutely optimistic fable that takes us through different countries and cultures. It's also a family film with very wide appeal, in the best sense of the word, and I have done so many dramas that I was happy to be part of a sunny film. Because the message of FAKIR is that even if your dreams don't come true at the end of the road, it's already an important accomplishment to have taken the journey that got you there.

The character of Nelly

She is a very famous film star who has come to a moment in her career when she is a bit bored. She's already seen it all. She has done all different kinds of films, and nothing is fun for her anymore. When she meets Aja, he comes from a world so different from her own that she likes having him around. So they become friends. She realizes that, thanks to him, she might be able to get back what she has lost. He allows her to rediscover simple things and once again believe in dreams that she may have forgotten.

How Ken Scott directs actors

He is extremely precise and has a good sense of rhythm and humor. He knows exactly when to pause a beat in any given line to make it funnier. With each new take, he encouraged us to change the approach and explore new directions. As a result, our acting evolved from take to take and got closer to what Ken was looking for. It was very rewarding to work with him because he would give us a direction we could understand - and that moved the action.

An important challenge

First of all, I was playing an archetype more than a character - so much so that I had to really get into the character to avoid being just a caricature. On top of that, I had to do a Bollywood dance number with Dhanush. Since I am not a dancer, I had to train three hours a day for a month just to do three minutes on screen! It was difficult, but it was worth it.

Working with Dhanush

It was wonderfully simple. I have a lot of scenes with him where I'm constantly talking while he just listens - to the point where I have to wonder what he thinks! He was always very well prepared, knew his lines, and was very professional. He is an extremely gentle actor.

An unforgettable scene

The sequence in front of the Trevi Fountain was wonderful. You feel like you're back in an Italian movie from the 1950's or 60's. Filming in that place was really emotionally moving to me.

Erin Marie MORIARTY

TALKS ABOUT...

A one-of-a-kind screenplay

I'd never read a project like that. I was touched right away by the fact it took on some very pertinent themes and talked about the difficulty of finding true love. What's more, the script is whimsical and has a dimension of fantasy that give you the feeling that someone is reading you a storybook. That is not very common in today's movies and I loved it!

The character of Marie

When we meet Marie, we understand that she is a little lost. Like a lot of young women at the age of twenty, she is going through a phase where she is affirming her independence and discovering her true identity. In the past, other people made decisions for her, whether it was her ex-fiancé or her parents. In Paris, she is following her own path. That's when she runs into Aja and can't help falling in love with him. She has to find a balance between her need to remain independent and her feelings of love. I think she changes a lot over the course of the film.

A coming-of-age story

It's a real tale of discovery for Marie as well as Aja. Aja comes from a world unto itself, and coming to Paris opens up his horizons. As for Marie, she discovers how much she is constantly influenced by her parents. Once you get past the twenty-year mark, you realize your perspectives of the world have mostly been built by the people around you. So Aja and Marie's evolution throughout the film allows them to discover who they really are. Besides the fact that she is Aja's first love, which is often a rite of passage for a young adult.

An international production

I'd never been on a shoot that brought together actors from all over the world.

And even though I love Paris, it reminds me of New York city. On the other hand, when I went to Mumbai, I felt like I had set foot in an entirely different universe. It was really interesting to compare the different ways that Dhanush, Ken and I make films. It was fascinating to be able to contribute my own experience to this film and combine my two great passions: acting and traveling! I also felt like this experience opened up new horizons for me.

How Ken Scott directs actors

He is a very generous director who won't hesitate to push you to your limits, because he has an extremely precise vision of the result he's looking to obtain. He really works as a team with his actors and leaves nothing to chance. He is aware of how actors can enrich a film with their own interpretations, even though he knows the characters by heart. He is a really hard worker, but he is always relaxed. So he filled the set with positive energy and an open spirit.



TALKS ABOUT...

An appealing project

Even if I was a little wary at first of doing a film in English, I found the book full of fantasy and poetry - and the name of Ken Scott was really a strong draw. I happen to be a great fan of SEDUCING DOCTOR LEWIS.

The character of Gustave

He is an archetypal taxi driver whose business, in my opinion, is a little bit shady! I think he may even be a crook. He complains about Uber, but it's because of guys like him that taxi competitors have developed! Even though he cheats his clients, he is also a bit of a philosopher and a colorful character. For example, he explains his life philosophy in detail to his client Mary when he gives her a ride. It's pop philosophy, but with real wisdom behind it.

Ken Scott

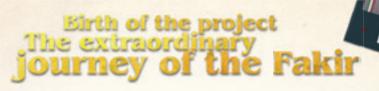
It's pretty funny that we shot this film in English, even though he's
Francophone. He is precise and knows what he wants. And
since he is also a screenwriter, he didn't hesitate to rewrite
certain scenes. I panicked a little because it took me
forever to memorize my text and I really didn't want it
to be changed!

Dhanush

It was really reassuring not understanding a word he said, because he has a very strong accent!

Being an actor-director

Since I've directed 11 films myself,
I go out of my way to make myself
available to the director. I probably
have a better understanding of why the
director makes one decision rather than
another, and why he asks me to do one thing or
another. So it's easier for me to accept redoing a
take because I can understand what motivates it.



After the adventure of making MOOD INDIGO by Michel Gondry, which was based on the book by Boris Vian and released in 2013 in many different countries, the company Brio Films took a shot at its first production in English, THE EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY OF THE FAKIR. Based on the book by Romain Puértolas, it aimed to create a universal fairytale that would take us all over the world.

During the initial development of the screenplay, co-written by the novel's author, a part of the history of India was added to the hero's childhood to accentuate the film's narrative scope and adventurous nature. This also made it possible to build an official Franco-Indian coproduction with the company Little Red Car, cast the Indian star Dhanush, and to film two weeks in Mumbai, before shooting in Rome, Paris and Brussels. Thanks to actors of 15 different nationalities, including Bérénice Bejo, Erin Moriarty, Barkhad Abdi, Ben Miller, Stefano Cassetti, Abel Jafri and Gérard Jugnot, as well as the talent of director Ken Scott, who already enjoyed international success with STARBUCK, it will be the first primarily French film to benefit from a nationwide release in India. It will also be projected in theaters in more than 40 other countries, including Italy, Spain, China, Japan, Russia, USA, Sweden, Israel, Turkey, Australia and Brazil.

Shooting the film

Preproduction of the film necessitated extensive location scouting in many countries with director Ken Scott, director of photography Vincent Mathias (César 2018 for Best Cinematography for SEE YOU UPTHERE), production designers Patrick Dechesne and Alain-Pascal Housiaux (THE CANTERVILLE GHOST) and costume designer Valérie Ranchoux (FAREWELL MY QUEEN by Benoît Jacquot). Filming began in India in April 2017 in the city of Mumbai, primarily in the colorful, narrow streets of the seaside district of Worli, the fisherman's neighborhood where the film's hero grows up. The place where Aja's mother Siringh works is Dhobi Ghat, a famous open-air washing station for hotel linens that employs more than 2000 people. A brilliant and savvy local Indian team lead the European team forward through the stifling heat.

Filming continued in Paris, greater Brussels, and then in Rome in the early tourist season. Sequences shot at the Trevi Fountain gave rise to an amusing standoff with Italian police, who wanted to keep the film crew away from the famous stone border of Nicola Salvi's masterpiece. English sequences were shot in Wallonia, including the Garden City of Le Logis so well loved by Jaco Van Dormael. In Paris, Ken Scott sought to capture emblematic landmarks from inventive new angles. Drone shots heightened by special effects followed the flight of a little paper airplane from the EiffelTower to the Père Lachaise cemetery. Famous Bollywood choreographer Vishnu Deva, along with several Indian dancers, came to lead rehearsals and filming of the dance sequence in an ancient religious location converted into a nightclub. Dhanush, a huge star in all of India but filming for the first time in Europe, infused the entire film with his grace and talent, his flair for improvisational dance and spontaneous song - and the delicious vegetarian cuisine of South India.

ABOUT THE NOVEL BY

Romain PUÉRTOLAS

Ken Scott's film is an adaptation of the novel by Romain Puértolas, «The Extraordinary Journey of the Fakir Who GotTrapped in an Ikea Wardrobe» published in August 2013. Born in Montpellier, and currently living in Malaga, Romain Puértolas is a fan of Jules Verne and Eduardo Mendoza. He had various jobs and wrote several novels before getting published for the first time at the age of 37. «The Extraordinary Journey of the Fakir,» a bubbling, witty and wonderful tale he wrote «during his daily travel on the suburban train» was inspired by his love of magic. This feel-good story that holds its readers in breathless suspense was discovered by publisher Dominique Gaultier of Le Dilettante, who took the risk of publishing the novel «with a long title written by a total unknown.»

His inspiration was well-rewarded. Translation rights were rapidly sold to publishers in more than thirty countries, some even before the novel was released in France - Germany, Russia, Taiwan, Korea, Canada, Albania, Australia, USA... In late 2013, the book quickly became a bestseller with more than 300,000 copies sold in large format. The work was just as well received by literary critics, who pointed out the humor and humanism of this tale full of twists and turns, a zany patchwork, an ode to life. Adventures, unexpected trips, love, travel delays, surprising meetings and journeys all serve as a medium through which the story addresses sensitive and important sociopolitical issues: globalization, exile, poverty, acceptance, clandestine immigration. According to Jérôme Garcin, Romain Puértolas «borrows from Gérard Oury and Monty Python for its action, from Michel Audiard for its dialogue.» Adapting the adventures of the fakir Ajatashatru Lavash Patel into a movie couldn't have been





CAST

Aja **DHANUSH**

Nelly Marnay **Bérénice BEJO**

Marie Erin MORIARTY

Wiraj Barkhad ABDI

Gustave **Gérard JUGNOT**

Officer Smith Ben MILLER

Captain Fik Abel JAFRI
Rose Sarah-Jeanne LABROSSE

Pieter Kay GREIDANUS

Siringh Amruta SANT





A film by Ken SCOTT

Screenplay by Romain PUERTOLAS and Luc BOSSI

with the collaboration of Ken SCOTT

Based on the novel by Romain PUERTOLAS

«The Extraordinary Journey of the Fakir Who Got Trapped in an Ikea Wardrobe» (Published by Editions Le Dilettante)

Original music Nicolas ERRERA

Songs AmitTRIVEDI

Director of Photography Vincent MATHIAS

Production designer Alain-Pascal HOUSIAUX

Patrick DECHESNE

Costume Designer Valérie RANCHOUX

Editor Philippe BOURGUEIL

Sound **Dominique WARNIER Damien AUBRY**

Marc DOISNE

Delegate Producer Luc BOSSI

Producers Jaime MATEUS-TIQUE

Grégoire LASSALLE Geneviève LEMAL Saurabh GUPTA

Gulzar Inder Singh CHAHAL

Aditi ANAND Samir GUPTA

Co-producers Nicolas R. DE LA MOTHE

David DANESI Keshav ANAND

Arlette ZYLBERBERG

Executive Producers Mario MAZARROTTO

Yamina BELARBI

Associate Producers Audrey ABIVEN

Michèle BOOS **Luc HARDY**

Pierre WALLON Production Manager

Casting Directors **Marie-France MICHEL**

Sébastien MORADIELLOS

Rachel DESMARETS Avy KAUFMAN

Delegated Production BRIO FILMS

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VAMONOS FILMS

TF1 STUDIO

SONY PICTURES

ENTERTAINMENT FRANCE

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