



FESTIVAL DE CANNES  
2025 OFFICIAL SELECTION  
MIDNIGHT SCREENING



**NO ONE WILL KNOW**



EASY TIGER, SRAB FILMS and STUDIOCANAL  
Present

PIO  
MARMAÏ

SOFIANE  
ZERMANI

LUCIE  
ZHANG

# NO ONE WILL KNOW

MARIA  
DE MEDEIROS

PANAYOTIS  
PASCOT

JOSEPH  
OLIVENNES

NIEMO  
SCHIFFMAN

A film by **VINCENT MAËL CARDONA**

Screenplay by  
**VINCENT MAËL CARDONA** and **OLIVIER DEMANGEL**

Produced by Toufik AYADI, Christophe BARRAL and Marc-Benoît CRÉANCIER  
A coproduction EASY TIGER, SRAB FILMS, STUDIOCANAL, FRANCE 2 CINÉMA and AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES CINÉMA With the support of CANAL+ With the participation of FRANCE TÉLÉVISIONS and MÉDIÉCS  
With the participation of LA RÉGION AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES and CNC Distribution and international sales STUDIOCANAL

Runtime : 1h48

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# SYNOPSIS

In a shabby bar outside Paris, in the early hours of the morning, a few customers are having a last drink or a first coffee, when out of nowhere one of the regulars wins the €294 million lottery. But another customer decides otherwise: a gun is drawn, shots are fired and the winner collapses, leaving the ticket ownerless. The remaining customers lock themselves behind closed doors, and see an opportunity to concoct the perfect story to cover up the crime, then all walk away millionaires. But as unforeseen events conspire against them, their temptation sends them all on a bloody downward spiral.

# INTERVIEW OF VINCENT MAËL CARDONA

**Where did the first spark for this project come from? Did you have a particular concept in mind, or were you guided more by a certain style ?**

It all started with reading Georges Perec's first book, *Les Choses*. Written in 1964, it captures the dizzying effect consumer society has on us. The idea that the life we live is somehow a diminished version of life, and that true, complete life is only accessible through money. There's a line in the book that struck me deeply: "The immensity of their desires paralyzed them; they were waiting for a miracle."

What hit me wasn't just how prophetic the book feels, especially in light of the dizzying acceleration of consumerism through globalization and the digital revolution, but how accurate the diagnosis still is. For Perec, the real issue is our tendency to let ourselves be lulled, to prefer imagined lives over real ones. That was the starting point: telling the story of characters who lock themselves

into a kind of self-imposed confinement and gradually drift away from reality, from common sense, from basic humanity.

It's a bit like a reinterpretation of Buñuel's *THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL*, but without the supernatural element, just the seductive power of imagination, which sometimes convinces us we can bend reality to our will. Or, to borrow La Fontaine's beautiful line: "A flattering illusion carries away our souls." The idea was to take that line literally.

**Why did you choose such a distinctive form ?  
Narrative distortions, multiple points of view, flashbacks and flashforwards?**

This is a film about storytelling itself, which is why the narrative perspective is so central. The difference between Perec's world and ours is that fiction has gradually seeped into every corner of our reality, so much so that we sometimes can't even agree on basic facts anymore. That's

a dizzying thought.

*NO ONE WILL KNOW* is a film that, even in its form, points to the dangerous side of fiction. Dangerous, because while fiction can save us, help us live, and even reconcile us with reality, it can also do the opposite. It's both the best and the worst. But in either case, it relies on our willingness to suspend disbelief, to surrender to the artifice. The film's structure is designed to make that surrender visible.

Symbolically, each character's death marks a turning point. Every death forces the remaining characters to reshape their story (pushing them further from a "believable" fiction). And for the viewer, each death reopens the question of giving up to the gratuitous of the fiction (even the film goes deeper and deeper into fiction). By the end, both converge: the characters are pulled back into reality, and the fiction is left to confront its own excesses. What remains, beyond the "unintentional" (or narrative) deaths, is a

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barehanded crime for which the characters must answer.

#### Why did you choose to center this reflection on fiction around the lottery?

The lottery ticket, and maybe even more so, the glowing lottery terminal you find in every bar or betting shop, is a perfect, filmable symbol of the idea that fortune, miracles, salvation are just within reach. It feeds the myth that “you can make it”, which also implies that you’re currently in the wrong place.

Whether you play or not, the lottery gives shape to the idea of a “dream life,” which is really just the flip side of a “failed life.” It’s a flawless mechanism. No one is forced to play, but no one can deny that anyone could become a millionaire overnight. The odds don’t matter.

And while the dream life remains forever out of reach, we gradually disengage from real life. The film pushes this logic to the extreme: the characters don’t even choose to try their luck, it falls into their laps. Will they take it? Will they pick up the ticket or leave it where it is? The price seems small: just a slight bending of reality. That’s the almost innocent beginning of the “evil” fiction machine, a fiction that turns its back on reality, a manipulation rooted in lies.

#### Why the French title “LE ROI SOLEIL”?

First, because it’s the name of the bar where the story unfolds, and that place is arguably the film’s main character. It’s a stage, a set, but also a trap. And if that trap is called LE ROI SOLEIL, it’s because of everything that name evokes. For me, it immediately conjures the image of a social pyramid: the King at the top, the middle ranks, and the masses at the bottom. The lottery, as a fantasy, taps into that exact imagery, the idea that a stroke of luck can reshuffle the deck and let anyone climb into the King’s bed. But it’s also the name of an old fiction, a powerful fable, now completely devalued (to the point of being the name of a bar), but one that once structured society. It’s a way of questioning the fictions that have taken over today.

#### NO ONE WILL KNOW could have been a comedy or a dramedy. Why did you choose darkness over joy?

I’m not sure I really chose. In the initial set-up, there’s a bit of everything. There’s the everyday aspect of a situation that could happen to anyone. The extraordinary nature of an accidental death, of course. But also the lighter, almost comic element of a winning lottery ticket. There’s a lot of improbability. The situation definitely has a

burlesque side.

And then, yes, there’s something very dark, sad, and harsh in what it says about our humanity. A kind of inner flaw that reminds me of Hannah Arendt’s line in *The Origins of totalitarianism*: “The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction no longer exists.” The characters’ fatal mistake, the thing that leads them to the worst, is letting themselves be swept away by the intoxicating power of fiction.

#### Your cast of characters feels like a kind of “world casting”, people from all walks of life: a trader, police officers, a student working as a waitress, a nurse. It’s a snapshot, albeit a simplified one, of what France might look like. How did you build this ensemble?

I didn’t set out to create characters that would represent globalization or the diversity of human profiles. That came about more indirectly. It started with thinking about the bar-tabac itself. Because a bar-tabac is a bit of a relic, old-fashioned, a symbol of the “old world.” My previous film, *MAGNETIC BEATS*, was very much about this notion of bygone world, but *NO ONE WILL KNOW*, I wasn’t interested in



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nostalgia. What interested me was the bar-tabac as it exists today, its contemporaneity.

Putting it in the hands of a character from an Asian immigrant background, Xianzeng Pan, allowed me to position the film exactly where I wanted it to be. And then there are the serendipities of casting, which is above all a process of encounters. I happened to meet Pio Marmaï and Sofiane Zermani on the same day, for the same role, and I immediately wanted to see them act together. Lucie was the only French actress of Chinese descent I knew, and she had exactly what it took to bring Esmé to life. Panayotis and Joseph are actors I'd already worked with, and this was the perfect opportunity to collaborate again. As for Maria de Medeiros playing Picon-Lafayette, that was a dream that came true.

But yes, this very heterogeneous group feels right to me. It's heading in the right direction. Because even if the bar-tabac is a place that's slowly fading, it's still a melting pot, a place where people from all social classes and all ages cross paths. And that's increasingly rare in a world that's becoming more and more compartmentalized. A bar-tabac opens onto the street. It is a place where people pass through, stop, interact. Things happen there. When writing stories and trying to take the pulse of our time, this remains a

rich environment for observation. Misery rubs shoulders with comfort. Yesterday's world meets today's.

The bar's layout lends itself to characters, to sharp dialogue, to a kind of theatricality of everyday life. And the cast embraces that theatricality: each character enters with a label, just like anyone walking into a bar-tabac. Every character is playing a role right until the moment when the mask drops.

**The bar-tabac setting brings with it the idea of a chamber piece. Was this a stylistic challenge you consciously wanted to take on?**

Yes, absolutely, the stylistic exercise was part of what excited us about making this film. And when I say "us," I mean the whole team I work with, who are all true cinephiles and naturally drawn to the challenge of working within that kind of form.

In this case, the idea was to treat the film itself as a kind of chamber piece. You "enter" the story, gradually forget the outside world, and then reality comes back to claim you. With Olivier Demangel on the script, Mathilde Profit on continuity, Marion Burger on set design, Brice Pancot on cinematography, Samuel Aïchoun, Raphaël Mouterde and Pierre Bariaud on sound,

Flora Volpelière on editing, and of course the cast, we all worked to translate that experience of derealization. That hesitation between staying "inside" or stepping "outside." We explored our collective memory of fictional imagery, the balance between theatricality and the "realist pact."

We also really enjoyed the idea of anchoring the shoot in one place, of creating a kind of troupe, with actors present together on set, shooting in continuity, searching together, writing as we went.

**What would you like the audience to feel while watching the film? How would you like them to experience it?**

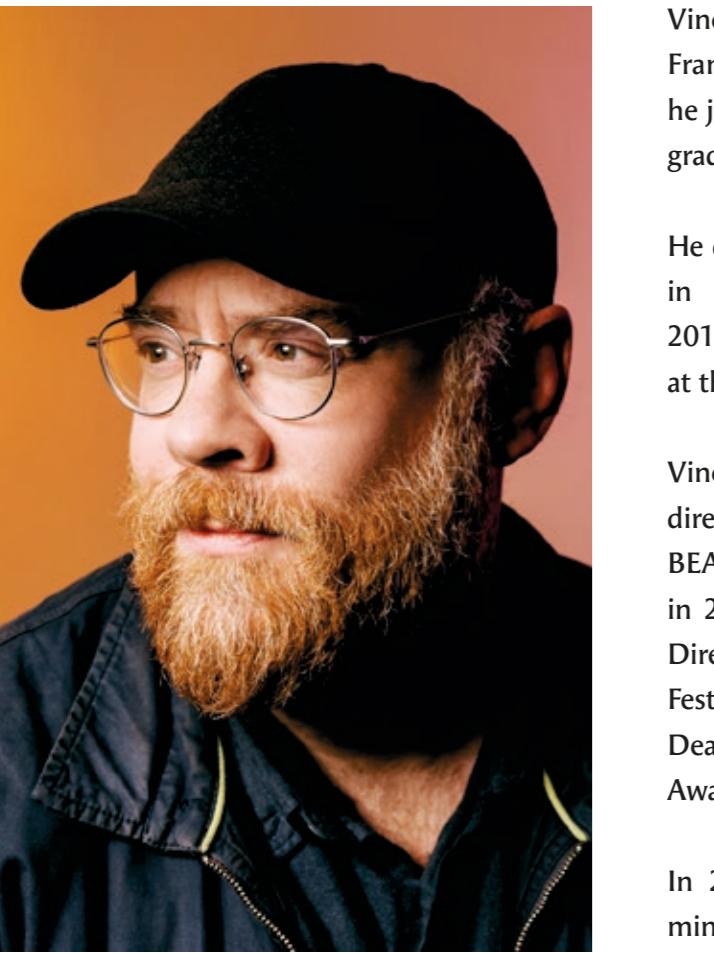
That part doesn't really belong to me. I don't believe in "directing the viewer." I can only imagine a few possible paths. I'd probably be disappointed if the film were reduced to just a "genre film" or a "lottery film", even though it does belong to those categories in some way. So yes, maybe what I'd hope to convey is that while greed is a fairly universal vice, what truly threatens our ability to live together is how little a society built around material success and spectacle values decency and truth.



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# BIOGRAPHY OF VINCENT MAËL CARDONA



Vincent Maël Cardona was born in Brittany, France. After studying literature and philosophy, he joined the directing department of La Fémis, graduating in 2010.

He directed several short films: *SWAN BELLIES* in 2009, then *CLOUD-CUCKOO-LAND* in 2010, which won the 2nd Cinéfondation Prize at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival.

Vincent Maël Cardona then co-wrote and directed his first feature film, *MAGNETIC BEATS*, about free radio stations in the 1980s, in 2019. The film won the SACD Prize of the Directors Fortnight at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival, the d'Ornano-Valenti Prize at the 2021 Deauville American Film Festival, and the César Award for Best First Film.

In 2023, Vincent Maël Cardona directed the mini-series *HAVEN OF GRACE*, a thriller about

drug trafficking among dockers in Le Havre with Olivier Gourmet, Margot Bancilhon, Pierre Lottin for Arte France. The series was selected in the international competition of Seriemania Festival in Lille and won the Best Actress award for Margot Bancilhon.

## FILMOGRAPHY

2025 *NO ONE WILL KNOW*  
2021 *MAGNETIC BEATS*



# CAST LIST

Livio .....	PIO MARMAÏ
Esmé .....	LUCIE ZHANG
Reda.....	SOFIANE ZERMANI
Nico .....	XIANZENG PAN
Erwan.....	JOSEPH OLIVENNES
Abel .....	PANAYOTIS PASCOT
Comar.....	NEMO SCHIFFMAN
Picon-Lafayette .....	MARIA DE MEDEIROS
Mr. Kantz .....	CLAUDE AUFAURE



# TECHNICAL LIST

Director ..... **VINCENT MAËL CARDONA**  
Screenplay ..... **VINCENT MAËL CARDONA and OLIVIER DEMANGEL**  
Producers ..... **SRAB FILMS**  
..... **TOUFIK AYADI and CHRISTOPHE BARRAL**  
..... **EASY TIGER / MARC-BENOÎT CRÉANCIER**  
Cinematography ..... **BRICE PANCOT, AFC**  
Editing ..... **FLORA VOLPELIÈRE**  
Original Music ..... **DELPHINE MALAUSSENA**  
Sound ..... **MATHIEU DESCAMPS**  
..... **PIERRE BARIAUD**  
..... **SAMUEL AÏCHOUN**  
Stage Direction ..... **MARIE LEVENT**  
Script Supervisor ..... **MATHILDE PROFIT**  
Casting ..... **PIERRE-FRANÇOIS CRÉANCIER**  
Production Design ..... **MARION BURGER, ADC**  
Costume Design ..... **GWENDOLINE GRANDJEAN**  
Makeup ..... **EMMANUELLE VELGHE-LENELLE**  
Hair Styling ..... **KATERYNA KAVALER**  
Production Management ..... **OLIVIER LAGNY**  
Location Management ..... **THOMAS DE SAMBI**  
Post-Production Supervision ..... **FRANCESCA BETTENI-BARNES**

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