

LES FILMS DU FLEUVE AND ARCHIPEL 35 PRESENT

Y O U N G A H M E D

A FILM BY
JEAN-PIERRE AND LUC DARDENNE



OFFICIAL SELECTION
COMPETITION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

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DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

When we finished writing this screenplay, we realized that, in a way, we had written the story of the fruitless attempts made by various characters to dissuade the young fanatic Ahmed, our main character, from carrying out his murderous plan. Whoever these characters may be – his teacher Inès, his mother, his brother, his sister, his caseworker, the judge, the psychologist at the detention centre, his lawyer, the owners of the farm where he is placed, their daughter Louise – not one of them manages to reach the hard, mysterious core of this boy ready to kill his teacher in the name of his religious convictions.

When we began writing, we never imagined that we were creating such an inscrutable character, capable of eluding us to such an extent, of leaving us without any possibility of a dramatic construction to catch up with him and bring him out of his murderous madness. Even Youssef, the imam at the fundamentalist mosque, this magnetic figure who has harnessed the energy of the adolescent's ideals to focus it on purity and hatred of impurity, even he, the master, is surprised by his disciple's determination. But could it be any different? Could it be any different when the fanatic is so young, almost a child, and when, moreover, his charismatic master encourages him to venerate a martyred cousin, a dead man?

How to halt the headlong rush towards murder of this fanatical boy, cut off as he is from the kindness of his educators, from the love of his mother, from the friendship and romantic games of young Louise? How can he be stopped in a moment when, without resorting to naïve optimism or an implausible happy ending, he could open up to life, converting to the impurity he has loathed until that point? What scene, what shots, could allow us to film that transformation and trouble the gaze of the audience that has entered Ahmed's night, as close as possible to that which possesses him, and to that from which he would finally be delivered?

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne

SYNOPSIS

In Belgium, today, the destiny of young Ahmed (13), caught between his imam's ideals of purity and life's temptations.

JEAN-PIERRE AND LUC DARDENNE FILMOGRAPHY

Jean-Pierre Dardenne was born in Engis (Belgium) in April 1951.
Luc Dardenne was born in Awirs (Belgium) in March 1954.

Together they have directed numerous documentaries.

In 1975, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne founded the production company *Dérives*, which has produced more than eighty documentaries, including their own.

In 1994, they founded the production company Les Films du Fleuve.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY AS DIRECTORS

1987: Falsch

Starring Bruno Cremer

1992: Je pense à vous

Starring Fabienne Babe,
Robin Renucci

1996: The Promise

Starring Jérémie Renier,
Olivier Gourmet, Assita Ouédraogo

1999: Rosetta

Starring Emilie Dequenne, Fabrizio Rongione,
Anne Yernaux, Olivier Gourmet
Palme d'Or and Best Actress for Emilie
Dequenne – Cannes FF 1999

2002: The Son

Starring Olivier Gourmet,
Morgan Marinne, Isabelle Soupарт
Best Actor for Olivier Gourmet – Cannes FF 2002

2005: The Child

Starring Jérémie Renier, Déborah François,
Jérémie Ségard
Palme d'Or – Cannes FF 2005

2008: Lorna's Silence

Starring Arta Dobroshi, Jérémie Renier,
Fabrizio Rongione
Best Screenplay – Cannes FF 2008
Prix Lux – 2008

2011: The Kid with a Bike

Starring Cécile de France,
Thomas Doret, Jérémie Renier
Grand Prize of the Jury – Cannes FF 2011

2014: Two Days, One Night

Starring Marion Cotillard, Fabrizio Rongione
European Film Awards – Best Actress
for Marion Cotillard 2015
Academy Award® Best Actress
Nomination for Marion Cotillard 2015

2016: The Unknown Girl

Starring Adèle Haenel, Olivier Bonnaud

2019: Young Ahmed

Starring Idir Ben Addi, Olivier Bonnaud,
Myriem Akheddiou, Victoria Bluck,
Claire Bodson, Othmane Moumen

CAST

Ahmed

Idir Ben Addi

Inès

Myriem Akheddiou

Mother

Claire Bodson

Caseworker

Olivier Bonnaud

Louise

Victoria Bluck

Imam Youssef

Othmane Moumen

CREW

Written & Directed by

Jean-Pierre and
Luc Dardenne

Sound Editor

Valène Leroy

Post Production Supervisor (Belgium)

Sébastien Demeyere

1st Assistant Director

Caroline Tambour

Mix

Thomas Gauder

Post Production Supervisor (France)

Cédric Ettouati

DP

Benoit Dervaux

Production Designer

Igor Gabriel

Stills Photographer

Christine Plenus

1st Assistant Camera

Amaury Duquenne

Costume Designer

Maira Ramedhan-Levi

Producers

Jean-Pierre and
Luc Dardenne,
Denis Freyd

Chief Editor

Marie-Hélène Dozo

Make-up

Natali Tabareau-
Vieuille

Editor

Tristan Meunier

Location Manager

Guillaume Fernandez

Executive Producer

Delphine Tomson

Sound

Jean-Pierre Duret,
Julien Sicart

Production Manager

Olivier Abrassart

Associate Producers

Tanguy Dekeyser,
Arlette Zylberber

CREDITS

A Les Films du Fleuve, Archipel 35, France 2 Cinema, Proximus, RTBF (Belgian Television) co-production, with the participation of Canal +, Ciné +, France Televisions, Wallimage (Wallonia), the Brussels-Capital Region, produced with assistance from the Film and Audiovisual Center of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and Eurimages, with the support of the Tax Shelter of the Belgian Federal Government, Casa Kafka Pictures, Casa Kafka Pictures Movie Tax Shelter empowered by Belfius, in association with Wild Bunch, Diaphana, Cinéart and BIM Distribuzione. International Sales Wild Bunch.

