

IN HER NAME

LGM CINÉMA, BLACK MASK PRODUCTIONS AND STUDIOCANAL PRESENT

DANIEL AUTEUIL

A FILM BY VINCENT GARENQ

SEBASTIAN KOCH MARIE-JOSÉE CROZE

RUNTIME 87 minutes

US DISTRIBUTOR

Distrib Films US

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SYNOPSIS

In 1982, André Bamperski learns about the death of his 14 year-old daughter, Kalinka, while she was on vacation with her mother and stepfather in Germany.

Convinced that Kalinka's death was not an accident, Bamperski begins to investigate. A botched autopsy report raises his suspicions and led him to accuse Kalinka's stepfather, Dr Dieter Krombach, as the murderer.

Unable to indict Krombach in Germany, Bamperski attempts to take the trial to France, where he will dedicate his life to Kalinka's justice and the imprisonment of Krombach.

INTERVIEW WITH VINCENT GARENQ

Why did you want to make a film about André Bamperski?

I'd followed his story and seen his book, "Pour que justice te soit rendue" ["So Justice May be Done"], but I held back from reading it right away because I thought that after PRESUMED GUILTY, it wouldn't be sensible to make another legal film. But I ended up changing my mind. I bought the book and I was overwhelmed by the emotion. I read it in a single night.

What did you find so overwhelming about the book?

I was amazed by his perseverance and his tenacity. For 30 years, he never let go, and was absolutely fanatical about making the truth be heard and getting justice for his daughter. Over time, he became a legal expert, and often knew more than his lawyers. Nothing could stop him, and in the end, he managed to overcome the stasis of the French and German justice systems. That was meat and drink for a screenwriter. There is a heroic, very cinematographic side to it, but it's also a story about paternity, which really struck a chord with me because I have two children who are the best things that ever happened to me. Paternity is something fundamental to me and which is at the heart of all my films.

The "heroes" in your films share the fact that they are all real-life people.

Why is that?

Because the sincerity and purity that emanates from their stories is very moving, and has an irresistible appeal. They inspire me. I have never found the inspiration for my films within me. I draw it from outside of me, in the lives of others, when something has a particular echo in me. Then, by telling their story, through the process of writing it, I identify with them and that brings a kind of personal ring to it.

I also think that reality is very inspirational, and fertile terrain for a writer. It is often said that it is stranger than fiction and that's very true much of the time. It generates more freshness and sincerity in films. To me, a good story is one that is anchored in reality, in real life. Moreover, I don't like films by "screenwriters". I can spot the strings they pull, or worse still, the movie-lover references. They don't move me, unlike those that give off a feeling of something actually experienced, such as MON ROI by Maiwenn, for example.

Being able to empathize with people is perhaps necessary for you to make a film. But that is surely not enough. What is the thing that rings the little bell and tells you this is the one?

It needs to be a true story, of course, with rich material and little side plots that can be developed and written into the story. But after that, it's very instinctive. It's like a bolt of lightning, so I can't give you a rational explanation. Suddenly, the desire is there, and a feeling of urgency that just happens one day helps a lot. It gives you the strength to go and convince a producer to join in the adventure. I have never proposed a subject to a producer without the firm conviction that there would be a film at the end of it. And even when you believe very strongly in it, you sometimes come up against some problems. The plot of THE CLEARSTREAM AFFAIR, for example, really gave me a hard time. It was fascinating, but extremely complex to write.

Do you also need your stories to be "exemplary"?

That's true. All my films are constructed around characters that, on the surface, seem ordinary, but who find themselves in situations that are out-of-the-ordinary, in which they reveal extraordinary character and strength in the face of a prevailing conformity. It's a common thread. And if they aren't nonconformist in the start, they end up becoming that way.

BABY LOVE tells the story of a gay man who has a child. PRESUMED GUILTY recounts the story of a man wrongly accused of being a pedophile. THE CLEARSTREAM AFFAIR is about a journalist investigating the world of international finance. And with the character of André Bamperski in KALINKA, I think I've reached the apotheosis of this kind of character, because he has this capacity for tenacity that is unimaginable for ordinary mortals!

You are a fiction filmmaker, not a documentary Filmmaker.

How do you respect the truth of these people whose lives you explore?

I keep the people involved informed. I tell them right at the start that we are going to tell their story as accurately as possible, but that, despite all the precautions we might take, they won't see a 100% accurate portrait of themselves in the film. Because adapting a story for the screen means cheating a little. Even if that only means simplifying things in order to tell 30 years of history in 90 minutes of film. So the challenge is to reinterpret their story, while ensuring that at the end, they still recognize themselves, and all the while making a movie! My worst nightmare would be that they feel betrayed in the end by a film that is supposed to tell their story. I'd find that very hard to deal with. So I take many precautions in terms of the characters who I'm going to bring to life on screen. They get to see every version of the script, and I keep them informed at every stage in the process of making the film.

During the shoot, I sent stills from the film to the Kalinka charity. But I knew that they would quickly end up in André Bamberski's mailbox and that he would appreciate them.

That way, André was able to "digest" the film with us, to be better prepared for when he would see his story in the finished film. And in the end, even if he wasn't always in agreement with how we adapted the film, when he saw it, he seemed satisfied nonetheless. I don't remember the exact words he used, but he mentioned "good work" and "dignity". Right from the start, he was delighted with the choice of Daniel Auteuil. And in the end, I think he was very satisfied with his performance and his modesty.

How did you choose which scenes to keep in the film?

The most hard-hitting scenes in the film were already suggested in the book. The autopsy, the exhumation of Kalinka's body, the testimony of the young girl raped by Krombach that she gave during the trial in Germany – all the most powerful scenes were inspired by reality. In terms of the legal process, we had to simplify things a great deal. You can imagine what 30 years of legal wrangling represents. We just focused on the absolute essentials, taking care not to lose any of the tension in the film.

The film could have come across as mere sentimentality because of its subject matter, but in fact, it gives off a great deal of emotion and at no point does it lapse into voyeurism.

I have a theory about emotion – the more you hold it back the more it comes bursting out. I never seek to push the emotion in a film by thinking that the audience is definitely going to cry at one specific moment. I prefer to hold it back, keep it modest and dignified, and never slip into melodrama, leaving the viewer free to cry where and when he or she wants to. I think that André Bamberski, who is a very modest man, greatly appreciated that. Daniel Auteuil is also somebody who doesn't like displaying too much emotion.

Since I began making films, I've always forced myself never to give way to easy emotion or trigger any kind of voyeurism. That's why I don't like it when people associate me with "public interest stories", as if I were some kind of sensationalist filmmaker. I don't think that generalization applies to me. I make portraits of people. It's people like Alain Marécaux, Denis Robert and André Bamberski who draw me to their stories. It may be that their stories are of public interest, but that's not what draws me in the first place. It's their experiences.

Did you meet Kalinka's mother?

André Bamberski suggested to do so. And she agreed to give us her version of the facts, which is therefore also represented in the film. Once again, André wasn't totally in agreement with that version of events, but he was open enough to allow that other point of view to feature in the film. It was very satisfying to be able to do that, given that the two of them no longer speak to each other in real life. A writer must love all his or her characters and must understand them. And for this character, who raises plenty of questions in the film, I restricted myself to a very simple viewpoint: She is in denial. That's the only defense mechanism she could find in order to cope.

Why did you choose Daniel Auteuil to play André Bamberski?

He was an obvious choice. When I started to write the film with Julien Rappeneau,

I immediately thought of him and was unable to envisage anyone else for the role. Daniel is a brilliant actor, he has this exceptional inner presence and can convey the absolute devastation he is experiencing on the inside through a simple glance, like he does in *THE ADVERSARY* or *A HEART IN WINTER*. We have missed seeing him perform in that register, and I think people will be delighted to see it once again in this film. The role was made for him. And luckily enough, he immediately agreed to take on the part.

The esthetic of your film also contributes greatly to the rigor it conveys. Colors, the lighting, sets, and even camera movements – all these elements contribute to the same desire for sobriety...

I try to put the veracity of the story and the characters first, to make people forget they are watching a film. So a certain sobriety is essential. In terms of the colors of the film, there was virtually no special treatment. There is just the contrast of the sunny light of Morocco, and the grayness of Germany. That contrast allowed us to vary the moods in the film and to give the impression of years passing. It also allowed us to have a sunny start to the film and to move into winter as the story progresses. For the sets, we chose to shoot in the Pyrenees to best convey a feel of the provinces, and to show some sublime landscapes. André Bamberki actually lives in Toulouse, but it seemed to us that Pau best embodied a small town in the 1970s. And then we found the house built below a cemetery. It simply had to be the place where most of the action would take place. I always pay a great deal of attention to sets and to music. They bring an additional dimension to a film.

What image would you like audiences to take away of your André Bamberki? That of a man whose love for his daughter has matured?

For sure. It's as if he has turned her horrendous disappearance into a touching story of love and duty. It's very difficult to put it into words, to analyze why this story gives off such beauty, such poetry, why it touches us so much. One of the first people to see the film told me she would have liked to have had a father like him. Thinking back to her reaction makes me want to cry. That's it. Perhaps this story is just a wonderful tale of the love of one father for his daughter.

INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL AUTEUIL

You must be overwhelmed with script offers. Why did you accept Vincent Garenq's?

I think he's an important director. His films are strong, powerful, crafted, solid. A few years ago, he offered me a part but I had other commitments so I had to turn him down. When he came back with this script, I happened by chance to be free. I read it in one go and I immediately said I'd do it. In the panorama of French cinema, there are few stories of this kind, that are ambitious and human. It was a chance to me to play another of those roles that I particularly relish, like that in *THE ADVERSARY* for example.

What did you find most touching about André Bammerski? The pain he suffered as a father, intense and unremitting since the death of his daughter Kalinka? Or his tenacity, doggedly going through the courts for almost 30 years to have the man he thought was his daughter's killer brought to justice?

Both, of course. Like billions of other men, I'm a father and that's hugely important for me. So naturally, because I understood him internally in a way, I was moved by this man's pain, just like all those who have met him or who have read his book.

But the thing that struck me most wasn't so much his exceptional pugnaciousness regarding bringing the truth to light; it was more the inability he had, and still has no doubt today, to separate himself viscerally from his daughter. It seems that in the beginning, he was ready to grieve for her, but his attitude changed when he first suspected and then became convinced that she had been murdered. To him, that day, it was as if she had died a second time, and his life was turned upside-down. One can never come to terms with the death of a child, but when someone else caused it, the feeling of injustice increases exponentially. And that's when the anger comes. In order to face up to this unacceptable, irredeemable act, André Bammerski had only one choice – to embark on a fight to see that justice was done. That was his own way of continuing to exist without her, and with himself, and in the eyes of society. And to show Kalinka that he still loved her and supported her. Apart from this fight to gain justice, he did very little else. He no longer had a child. And that battle, an almost neurotic one, to ensure that the memory of his daughter never faded for him, nor from public opinion, was something I found infinitely poignant. And amazing. If he hadn't had this terrible experience, André Bammerski would no doubt have lived the life of an ordinary man. The death of his daughter brought out incredible strength and courage in him, and he became an "extraordinary" character, to the point that his story made a book and now a film.

Did you wonder if you would be capable, as a father yourself, if you found yourself in a similar situation, of dropping everything and demonstrating a similar determination for such a long time?

Honestly, no. For the good reason that, because I'm quite an anxious person, I self-censor. I try to block the flow of my morbid thoughts. The death of one of my children would be the worst ever thing for me, so I don't allow myself to envisage the possibility of that occurring. So I can't say how I would react in the face of such a drama. Badly, I guess, like anyone would in such tragic circumstances.

How did you prepare to play André Bammerski? Did you meet with him?

Yes, but only once the shoot was well underway. I think that if I'd met him before, I would have been burdened by his suffering, and thus less free in my interpretation. When we met for the first time, we both kept some distance, no doubt as a kind of mutual defense mechanism. It was almost awkward for both of us. For him, because I was making him into a public figure – a fictional character of course, but public nonetheless. And for me, because I was taking possession of his life to bring it to the big screen. We didn't talk much. I'm not a very chatty guy and nor is he.

But he came on set to watch a scene and there, I saw in his eyes that he understood that what I was doing with his character was going to be useful to him, as a father and as the writer of this story, in order to continue telling it. I mean that he no doubt found a sincerity and truth in the work we were doing, which he appreciated. We didn't twist his story. We didn't appropriate it. We were faithful to his aim, which was to continue to honor the memory of his daughter. Because I honestly don't think he felt the slightest pride that we were bringing his story to the big screen. What mattered to him was bearing witness, regardless of the method.

The fact remains that this sort of mute agreement that he gave you on set was a nice reward for you as an actor.

Well it certainly reassured me in terms of the approach I'd taken to the role.

You seem to share a kind of modesty with André Bammerski. Your performance gives off some intense emotions but it is never over-the-top. Moreover, the film is devoid of any kind of voyeurism...

Neither Vincent Garenq nor I would have accepted being part of a film dripping with good sentiments, or one that was sensationalistic. And that was fortunate because André Bammerski would probably not have accepted that either – he's an extremely reserved kind of fellow. What's more, the story was already rich enough in terms of powerful scenes, such as the one when Kalinka's body is exhumed. We didn't need to add anything. Sobriety doesn't detract from the emotion. Vincent and I wanted a film that would stand up, and that would address the intelligence and the heart of its audience.

Is it difficult to play a living person?

This wasn't the first time. That was already the case with *ONE STAYS, THE OTHER LEAVES* by Claude Berri, when I played him. I told his life story, and he was there by my side as director. And I was constantly afraid of not being up to portraying his pain. When André Bammerski came to the shoot, it was the same. I didn't get smart with it. Fortunately, you have the filter of fiction, and as an actor I can hang onto that.

When you are acting in a film, does the director in you sometimes want to offer his two-cents worth, or does he remain dormant during the shoot?

Sometimes I mix things up, but from a great distance. It's like the man who interjects with humor, as if to say, "Yeah, I know the tune". But it's conceit. Because I always realize very quickly that the person who has the real vision of the film is the director, not me. And that there's no point trying to be clever. That didn't happen with Vincent Garenq, because he has a clear perspective right from the start. He knows what he wants but, he doesn't drag it out of you. He must use a lot of psychosomatic techniques, but he's gentle, and pays a great deal of attention to his actors. He expects a lot, but always with a smile. He's a very intelligent, very scrupulous man. What makes him different than other directors is that after shooting, he does a lot of creative work on the editing of the film. He spent a whole year editing this movie.

Whether in the theater or the movies, you always deliver extremely well constructed characters...

I try. It's harder for me in theater. In general you construct a role over two months of daily rehearsals and you have no perspective. You're right there, in it. And because in theater, time is either speeded up or stretched out, you have to construct successive states of being. Then afterwards, when the show begins, you have to deliver all of that, every evening, in the same way, with the reliability of a

metronome.

In cinema, it's easier. You construct day after day, scene after scene, steadily, without that immediacy. You can start again if you're not happy with it. And you can let yourself be surprised by drawing on the director's perspective.

You have had an almost-perfect career. In general, how do you choose your roles?

It's very instinctive. But you must realize that in the movies, when it's a big role, you don't get to choose it, you get chosen. For less important roles or more adventurous ones, you can be intuitive, and that's where you have all the pleasure of doing the job we do.

I love this job with a passion. It's my *raison d'être*. And whether it's acting or directing, I've been lucky to be able to do it continuously. There is nothing about it I don't like. Oh yes, sometimes when you do scenes in the rain and you get wet – that, I don't like!

If I'd been a painter, I'd have done it with the same passion. I'd have probably produced two paintings a day!

There is a consistency in your roles. They are always either about a beautiful text or a deep humanity. You never seek the easy route. You take risks...

The real dangers are found in real life. If one day, I make a mistake and I look ridiculous, I won't die. It's not a matter of life and death. Moreover, unlike sickness or grief, you can control your work. And when you realize that, you're less self-obsessed. I was lucky to get recognition at a fairly young age. That makes it easier. Today, all I have to do is prove that I'm still capable of having fun, and nothing more. I hope that people will continue to enjoy my work, but there's no real risk anymore. What I've done and what I've had, nobody can take that way from me. And that brings an additional dimension to the films I make.

FILMOGRAPHY VINCENT GARENQ

2015	KALINKA
2013	THE CLEARSTREAM AFFAIR
2011	PRESUMED GUILTY
2008	BABY LOVE
1992	UNE VIE À DEUX (short)

CAST

ANDRÉ BAMBERSKI	Daniel Auteuil
DIETER KROMBACH	Sebastian Koch
DANY	Marie-Josée Croze
CÉCILE	Christelle Cornil
KALINKA (aged 6)	Lilas-Rose Gilberti
KALINKA (aged 14)	Emma Besson
ROBERT	Christian Kmiotek
MR GIBAULT	Serge Feuillard
BAMBERSKI SENIOR	Fred Personne

CREW

Directed by	Vincent Garenq
Screenplay and dialog	Julien Rappeneau Vincent Garenq
Photography	Renaud Chassaing
Editing	Valérie Deseine
Original music	Nicolas Errera
Sound	Pascal Villard Jean-Pierre Duret Marc Doisne
Costume design	Marie-Laure Lasson
Set design	François Abelanet
Casting	David Bertrand
First assistant director	François Domange
Script editor	Yannick Charles
Production manager	Laurent Sivot
Head of post-production	Véronique Marchand

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