

VERSUS PRODUCTION PRESENTS

ABOVE THE LAW

A film by FRANÇOIS TROUKENS
& JEAN-FRANÇOIS HENSGENS

A film by François Troukens & Jean-François Hensgens

ABOVE THE LAW

TUEURS

With

OLIVIER GOURMET - LUBNA AZABAL - KEVIN JANSSENS - BOULI LANNERS

TIBO VANDENBORRE - BÉRÉNICE BAOU - KARIM BARRAS

& with the participation of NATACHA RÉGNIER - ANNE COESENS - JOHAN LEYSEN

86' - IMAGE: SCOPE 2.39 - SOUND: 5.1

BELGIUM / FRANCE - FRENCH LANGUAGE - 2017

INTERNATIONAL PR

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SYNOPSIS



While Frank Valken is carrying out a daring but non-violent hold-up, a commando force steps in and kills an examining magistrate investigating a political case. Charged thanks to rigged evidence, Frank is arrested. In the face of the media pressure, the gangster has no other choice but to escape and attempt to prove his innocence.





FRANCOIS TROUKENS' LETTER OF INTENT

SOME WORLDS ALWAYS STAY IN THE SHADOWS. SOME STORIES NEVER COME UP TO THE SURFACE. THE WORLD OF ORGANIZED CRIME IS ONE OF THEM.

I had a strong desire to write a story rooted in reality. My reality. A desire to create a true thriller by diving into the memories of my darkest experiences. Direct a gangster movie with characters who are true to their commitments. Fascinating men, appalled by their own condition, and who have the boldness of wanting to overcome it, no matter the risks. A small world where panache and courage build reputation and recognition.

These characters have their share of romanticism. They are chasing a dream, a kind of Grail; the incredible job that will allow them to disappear and get away to an island, with their wives and children, and live there for the rest of their lives.

Most of the time they end up in jail, dragging their loved-ones down with them towards a dark and sinister future. Looking through the bars of my prison cell, I made the decision to tell the story of how I made my way into such a sad place. I was going to try to cast light on my life experience through fiction. Glorifying my story was not an option; I need to give myself a final judgment. More than just a story about armed robbers, I wanted to make a thriller, rooted in a story that had affected me. A horrifying case: The Brabant killers.



As a child, I lived a couple hundred meters away from a supermarket in the suburbs of Brussels. My brother and I used to like to dress up as beggars and play music near the store entrance. On a September day in 1985, three masked killers shot and killed anyone they came across. Women, children, elderly people... A dozen victims were executed on that parking lot. Brutally. For no apparent reason. By miracle, my brother and I escaped from the massacre.

For five years, these killers terrorized Belgium. They were after people, not money. They were never identified and no one has ever been able to determine what was their motive. They seemed to kill for the sake of killing. Some thought they were acting on behalf of Stay Behind, a secret NATO cell, during the Cold War. Using « the Strategy of tension » as they did in Italy. 80 people killed in an attack at the Bologna train station. All signs pointed to politics but the person responsible for the case preferred to orient the investigation towards the world of organized crime.

The « black years » (aka « the lead years ») they began with the disappearance of the Congolese politician Patrice Lumumba, assassinated by the Belgian secret service. A few years later, the Brabant killers began to strike. They killed 28 people and left dozens severely wounded. Then came the C.C.C. and their attacks, and finally ended with the assassination of Minister André Cools in 1992.

In order to carry out compromising missions, the secret service manipulates and uses the organized-crime world. When caught, these gangsters have no possible defense. Every single element is turned against them. And they have no credibility.

In prison, they are subject to the worst possible conditions. Drastic security measures. Special diets, total isolation, sensory deprivation. Everything is set up for them to want only one thing – escape, and then they fall even deeper into the twists and turns of the judicial world.

Destiny has brought me to run into a series of people who've been linked in different ways to these cases. While in prison, a part from gangsters, I met ex-policemen, magistrates, and even a few ministers. Characters that I could draw my inspiration from and that led me to bring them to life in this contemporary fiction.

Through this truly popular genre, the underlying theme of the film is the excessive media coverage of particular defendants that I wish to denounce. Prosecutors use them and mold them. They become public enemies. Characters that are played like puppets. A fool's game. Manipulation. Power struggles. Political maneuvering.

The story of Frank Valken is pure fiction. Thirty years later, following new revelations, the killers have come back to erase their traces. In order to cover their tracks, a secret cell manipulates evidence so that it will point to the armed robber, and make him the ideal culprit. The press will only have to drink the acid juice they've been served...



CREW

Producers Jacques-Henri Bronckart
Olivier Bronckart
Coproducers Raphaël Rocher
Bart Van Langendonck
Line producer Gwennaëlle Libert
Writers François Troukens
Giordano Gederlini
DOP Jean-François Hensgens A.F.C — S.B.C.
Set Designer Stanislas Reydellet — A.D.C.
Costume designer Pascaline Chavanne
1st AD Dimitri Linder

Editors Sophie Fourdrinoy
Dimitri Amar
Sound Marc Engels
Ingrid Simon
Thomas Gauder
Original music Clément « Animalsons » Dumoulin
Music A&R Dino Carapelle « L'Ombre du Sourire »
Production manager Sophie Casse
Post-production manager Nicolas Sacré

CAST

FRANK VALKEN Olivier GOURMET
LUCIE TESLA Lubna AZABAL
VIK Kevin JANSSENS
DANY BOUVY Bouli LANNERS
SANTO Tibo VANDENBORRE
NORA Bérénice BAOO
ALAIN ROLESKO Karim BARRAS
JUDGE VÉRONIQUE PIROTTE Natacha RÉGNIER
HÉLÈNE Anne COESENS
PROSECUTOR JEAN LEMOINE Johan LEYSEN





OLIVIER GOURMET



KEVIN JANSSENS

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

THE MINISTER - 2011 Pierre Schoeller
MESRINE part II - 2008 Jean-François Richet
THE SON - 2002 Luc et Jean-Pierre Dardenne
Best Actor Award - Cannes 2002
READ MY LIPS - 2001 Jacques Audiard

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

THE ARDENNES - 2016 Robin Pront
VERMIST (TV) - 2007-2010 Nick Bulens

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

THE FIRST THE LAST - 2016 Bouli Lanners
9 MONTH STRETCH - 2013 Albert Dupontel
RUST AND BONE - 2012 Jacques Audiard
ELDORADO - 2008 Bouli Lanners

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

CORIOLANUS - 2012 Ralph Fiennes
GOODBYE MOROCCO - 2012 Nadir Moknèche
INCENDIES - 2010 Denis Villeneuve
PARADISE NOW - 2005 Hany Abu-Assad



BOULI LANNERS



LUBNA AZABAL



HENSGENS' BIOGRAPHY

TROUKENS' BIOGRAPHY

FRANÇOIS TROUKENS IS A BELGIAN MEDIA PERSONALITY. A WRITER-DIRECTOR, BUT ALSO A COMIC STRIP WRITER AND HOST OF A TV MAGAZINE FOCUSING ON LEGAL MATTERS. A FORMER UNDERWORLD FIGURE, SINCE HIS RELEASE FROM JAIL HE HAS EMBARKED UPON A LARGE-SCALE REFLECTION ON THE PRISON WORLD AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REHABILITATION VIA HIS CHARITY GROUP CHRYSALIBRE.

The former gangster is now bringing his experience and passion for writing to the direction of his films. François Troukens had a childhood marked by literature and the stories that his mother read to him. At an early age he was fascinated by the works of Flaubert, Rimbaud's imaginary world and Simenon's skill with narrative, and decided to make writing his profession. He began artistic studies, turned to photography and finally dreamt of becoming a special correspondent.

On his release in 2010, after 10 years in jail, he continued to write while fighting for a better approach to the process of rehabilitation for prisoners. François Troukens is currently developing screenplays from comic strips, notably with Les Éditions du Lombard, writing his memoirs that will be published by Les Editions du Moment, and writing his first feature film screenplay.

Hired by RTL, he became a radio commentator for the show On refait le Monde alongside Patrick Weber in February 2015. A few months later, he began his TV career when he was asked to host the judicial magazine Un Crime Parfait, a weekly programme on RTL-TVI.

In jail, he wrote the screenplay for his first short film, CAÏDS, that he directed in 2015, produced by Versus production. While behind bars, he also completed the screenplay of his feature film, TUEURS. The latter, largely based on his personal experience, focuses on the issue of the excessive media attention given to organized crime and its consequences with the case of the Brabant killers as its background.



Jean-François Hensgens began his career as a camera assistant on films by the Dardenne Brothers and numerous other directors. A few years later, he became director of photography on Dikkenek, the first film by Olivier Van Hoofstadt, before working on art-house movies (by Joachim Lafosse or Dominik Moll) and French or foreign action movies (Go fast, Banlieue 13, Antigang...).

A genuine partner for the director, it is fairly logical that Jean-François should now turn to directing with his first feature that he will co-direct with François Troukens.

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

LONG-MÉTRAGES

AFTER LOVE – Joachim Lafosse | Versus production - Les Films du Worso
Cannes Directors Fortnight 2016

NEWS FROM PLANET MARS– Dominik Moll | Diaphana Films

THE SQUAD – Benjamin Rocher | Capture The Flag Films

ALL THREE OF US – Kheiron | Adama Pictures

THE WHITE KNIGHTS– Joachim Lafosse | Versus production – Les Films du Worso
TIFF 2015, San Sebastian 2015

CHUBBY – Bruno Deville | CAB Productions - Versus production

OUR CHILDREN – Joachim Lafosse | Versus production
Cannes Un Certain Regard 2012

TURK'S HEAD– Pascal Elbé | Aliceleo

DISTRICT 13 ULTIMATUM – Patrick Allessandrin | Europa Corp

GO FAST – Olivier Van Hoofstadt | Europa Corp

DIKKENEK – Olivier Van Hoofstadt | Europa Corp

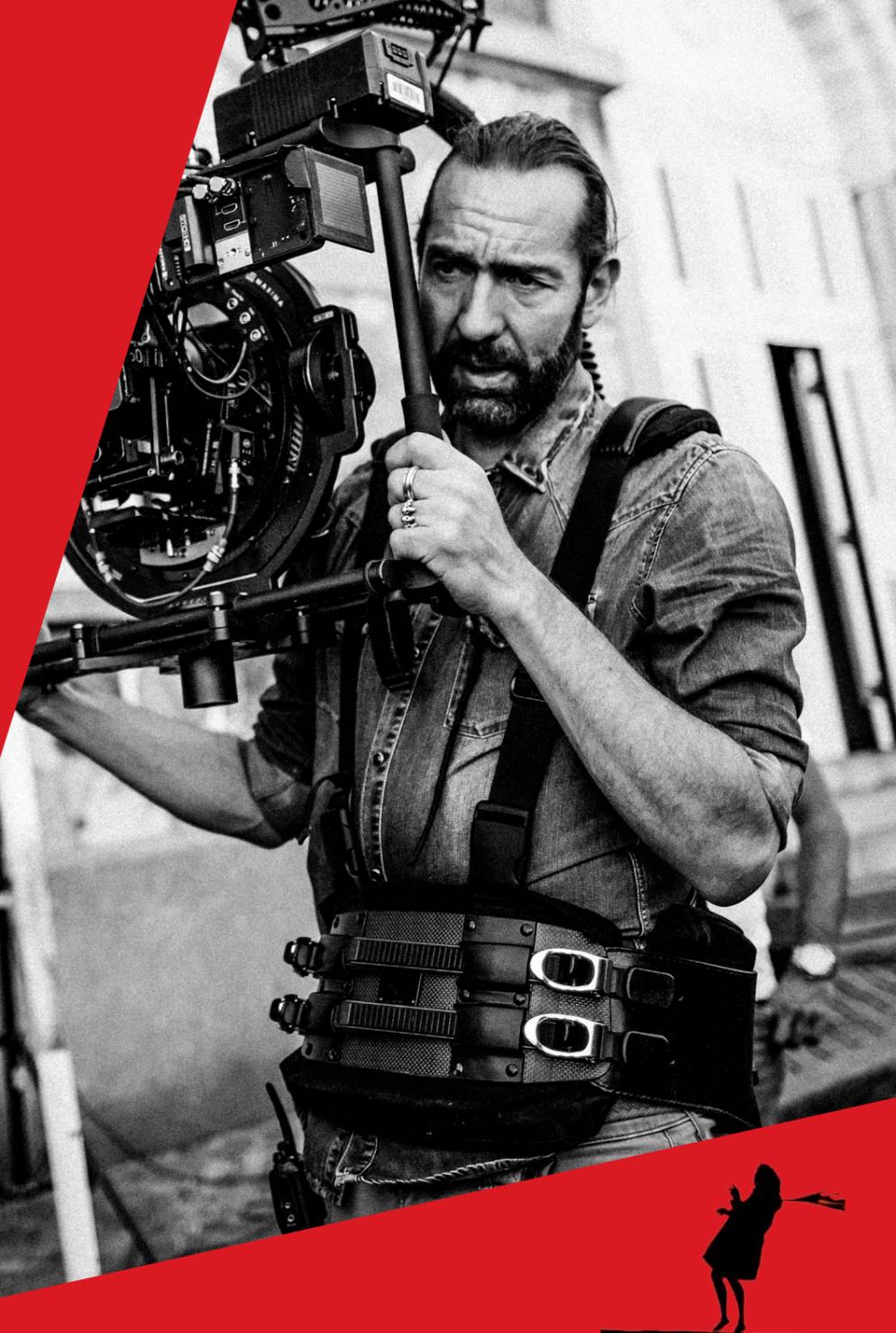
SHOW TV

THE TUNNEL – Dominik Moll | Shine Films

SHORT FILMS

CAÏDS – François Troukens | Versus production

INDUCTION – Nicolas Provost | Versus production



CREDITS

PRODUCTION Versus production - Capture The Flag Films - Savage Film

COPRODUCTION Proximus - RTL TVI

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF Canal + Ciné +

WITH THE HELP OF The Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles - Fonds Audiovisuel de Flandre (VAF) - Tax Shelter of Belgian Federal Government - Inver Tax Shelter - European Commission-Creative Europe Program MEDIA - La Wallonie - La Région de Bruxelles-Capitale

IN ASSOCIATION WITH TFI STUDIO - Indéfilms 5 - Rezo Films - O'Brother Distribution - L'Ombre du Sourire

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