



OFFICIAL SELECTION
OUT OF COMPETITION
CLOSING NIGHT
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

RICHARD GRANDPIERRE AND JEROME SEYDOUX PRESENT

ORLANDO BLOOM FOREST WHITAKER

ZULU



A FILM BY JEROME SALLE

SCREENPLAY BY JULIEN RAPPENEAU AND JEROME SALLE
FROM THE NOVEL "ZULU" BY CARYL FERREY

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present



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A FILM BY **JÉRÔME SALLE**

WRITTEN BY
JULIEN RAPPENEAU & JÉRÔME SALLE
ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL "ZULU" BY CARYL FÉREY
(PUBLISHED BY GALLIMARD - SÉRIE NOIRE COLLECTION, 2008)

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SYNOPSIS

IN A SOUTH AFRICA STILL HAUNTED BY APARTHEID, TWO POLICE OFFICERS ARE TRACKING THE KILLER OF A TEENAGE GIRL. FROM THE TOWNSHIPS OF CAPE TOWN TO THE LUXURIOUS SEAFRONT VILLAS, THE INVESTIGATION WILL TRANSFORM THE TWO MEN'S LIVES, FORCING THEM TO CONFRONT THEIR INNER DEMONS.



INTERVIEW WITH JEROME SALLE

DIRECTOR — CO-WRITER

LET'S START WITH THE FESTIVAL DE CANNES. YOU'RE A YOUNG DIRECTOR, ZULU IS ONLY YOUR FOURTH FILM. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING IN THE UNIQUE POSITION OF CLOSING THE WORLD'S BIGGEST MOVIE GATHERING?

I'd be lying if I said I didn't feel stressed. You have the feeling that it's all down to one screening! There's the feeling of an instant verdict. But I'm very proud to be taking ZULU to Cannes. The pride is winning out over the stress.

IS THE ZULU ADVENTURE DIRECTLY LINKED TO LARGO WINCH II, WHICH ITSELF WAS AN INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION?

Yes and no. The films are so different. Emerging from the LARGO episode, I felt as though I'd made progress and had soaked up a lot of experience, while at the same time I was frustrated because the film wasn't really me, and others weren't seeing what I was capable of and what I really wanted to do. I absolutely had to have a more personal project. In other words, I had to find a story that really moved me, and tell it in my own style.

AND THAT PROJECT BEGAN LIFE WITH CARYL FÉREY'S NOVEL?

I was finishing the shoot of LARGO II and my editor, Stan Collet, told me about Caryl's book, saying that the producer Richard Grandpierre had bought the rights and was looking for a director. He said he thought it would be a perfect subject for me. So I read Caryl's novel which, as it turns out, I loved. I contacted Richard via my agent. It all happened very quickly, even though I must admit I approached this project with a certain amount of caution. The story takes place entirely in South Africa and all the characters are South African. Apart from knowing about Mandela and Desmond Tutu, like everyone does, I knew very little about this country. So I didn't know if I'd be able to make this film, or be legitimate. Richard had the great idea of me going to spend two weeks there, to travel around and soak up the atmosphere. It was an excellent idea because I really fell in love with the place, especially Cape Town where the story is set. What's more, having lived there for almost a year, I really feel at home there now. It's quite a surprising feeling. In any case, my first trip there convinced me that I had to stay faithful to the book, in which South Africa is a character in its own right. Above all, we had to avoid "frenchifying" any of the characters using any screenwriting subterfuge, which had been suggested at one point. We had to make a real South African film. That was, of course, more complicated, because it meant making the film entirely in English, with an international cast. Not easy. Fortunately, Richard had the desire, the courage and the folly to take on the adventure!

GIVEN THAT THE FILM IS BASED ON THE ORIGINAL NOVEL, WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OR THEMES WHICH INSPIRED YOU WHEN STARTING OUT ON THE PROJECT?

What I mainly wanted to develop was the idea of forgiveness which runs through the whole film. As Desmond Tutu said: "There's no future without forgiveness." The film deals with the difficulty and the necessity of forgiving to move forward. I've had an agent in Los Angeles since my first film, ANTHONY ZIMMER, and I regularly receive scripts from over there. Quite a few of them fall into the category of "revenge movie". This theme of revenge is almost a genre in its own right in the United States. I have a problem with the idea of glorifying this urge. The greatest classic in the field of vengeance stories is "The Count of Monte Cristo", and that happens to be my favorite book. But in Dumas's novel, the ending makes you feel the absurdity, the pointlessness of vengeance. That's not the case in most "revenge movies", far from it. So I liked the idea of making a thriller that runs counter to this sub-genre and the philosophy that goes with it. And South Africa is the perfect backdrop for talking about forgiveness. At the end of apartheid, the government set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to avoid a spiral of vengeance, and to allow the persecutors to ask forgiveness from their victims. They would then benefit from an amnesty, being pardoned. This kind of peaceful reconciliation process has since been copied in other countries in Africa and Latin America.

IT'S A VERY HARSH VISION OF SOUTH AFRICA, WHERE ONE HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT A SOCIAL APARTHEID HAS REPLACED THE RACIAL APARTHEID.

Honestly, I don't think my vision is harsh. That country is like the parable of the glass half-full or half-empty. When you talk to South Africans, you're struck by the dark, often very pessimistic view they have of their country. And I'd often say to them: "Look around, you did something incredible. After decades of an atrocious regime, you got out of it without a bloodbath. And even though it's not always easy, you manage to live together. That alone is a success!" But because there was evolution, and not revolution, that creates the impression things are changing slowly. Too slowly for some. But a traumatism like apartheid cannot be healed in a generation. These things take time, but that's not always easy to accept.

WHEN A FOREIGN DIRECTOR ARRIVES THERE WITH A FILM ABOUT VIOLENCE, DRUGS, AND THE TOWNSHIPS, HOW DOES IT GO DOWN? WHAT SORT OF RECEPTION DID YOU GET?

Going there, I gradually came to think that being a foreigner was perhaps ultimately an advantage for me to tell this story. I don't have the weight of guilt on my shoulders that many whites of my generation might feel, nor the weight of past suffering and humiliation that blacks, mixed-race or Indians might feel. And that no doubt gives me greater freedom to converse freely with everyone. You also have to take time to meet people, to discuss and understand. You know, the South Africans themselves are quite lucid about the state of their country. They are often harsher judges than I might be. In the end, I think ZULU is a genuine South African film: there were only five French people in the crew. All the rest of the crew and cast, apart from Forest and Orlando, were South African. I was clear from the start, telling them I'd come to make a film about them, their country, and that I was approaching the job with great humility, and that I needed them in order to stay close to the reality of this very complex country. I wanted it to be a film that a South African audience would view as a South African film. The casting process lasted several months. There are some amazing actors in South Africa who, unfortunately, often only ever get small roles in international productions. This shoot resulted in some nice stories. Conrad Kemp, for example, the young actor who plays Dan Fletcher and who turned out to be quite extraordinary, is going to move to New York this summer because he's appearing on Broadway with Orlando Bloom in "Romeo and Juliet", starting in September. And Randall Majiet is a former gang member who was in rehab when he was spotted by one of the casting scouts. Randall has a real natural talent and filled this key role with incredible assurance. During the day, he was filming opposite Forest Whitaker, and in the evening, he went home, always accompanied by a minder, to his rehabilitation center. I saw him recently and he's left the center. He's doing well, he's got a job. He has an agent and he's made up his mind to continue on that path. This acting job allowed him to give a new direction to his life. All these actors brought so much to the film.

BUT YOU HAD TO AVOID THE PITFALL OF FILMING SOUTH AFRICA LIKE A POSTCARD. THERE IS OF COURSE SOME WONDERFUL SCENERY, NOTABLY THE BEACHES AND DESERT, BUT THIS IS NO TOURIST GUIDE.

No, first off because I wanted to film South Africa as a character in its own right, with all its complexity. And I made sure – and this follows the action in the book – that we filmed all over: in the center of Cape Town, in the residential neighborhoods by the sea, but also in the townships and the Cape Flats neighborhood, the historic quarter of

mixed-race people, known as the gang quarter. Everyone's heard of the townships and seen photos of these colorful shanty towns. They are even on the tourist circuit. But Cape Flats is something else. You won't see any tourists there! It's all poverty, prostitution, and drug supermarkets. The driver of our mini-van during location scouting took me there: a member of his family runs a gang there! We filmed in places where nobody had filmed before us. Nobody. And we used the local residents to help with the production, security, and as extras. It all went very well. The locals were so proud that something positive was going on in their neighborhood.

ONE CAN TELL THAT YOU RELATE TO THIS FILM AS AN AUTEUR AND CINEASTE. WHAT DID YOU ABSOLUTELY WANT TO KEEP FROM THE NOVEL, AND WHAT PERSONAL ELEMENTS DID YOU WANT TO BRING TO THE STORY?

Starting from a novel like that is first and foremost a pleasure. The characters are strong, and the plot is intelligent. That helps! Caryl Férey is a terrific author. I've since discovered that he's also a terrific guy. My co-writer Julien Rappeneau and I still had to simplify things to squeeze a 400-page book into a two-hour film. And again, I concentrated on that theme of forgiveness so that it runs throughout the film: the difficulty and the necessity of forgiving to move forward, whether for an individual, a community or a whole country.

ALONG THE WAY, YOU REWORK THE CLASSIC COP FILM STRUCTURE OF TWO COLLEAGUES WITH NOTHING IN COMMON, BUT WHO HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER TO FULFILL THEIR MISSION.

Yes. You'll notice that Ali and Brian are rarely seen together in the film. Of course, you can really feel their friendship and mutual respect. But deep down, these two guys are also very lonely. They are a reflection of their country, living with the weight of the past. Black or white, they bear responsibility for the acts of their parents and their ancestors.

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR TWO LEAD ACTORS: FOREST WHITAKER AND ORLANDO BLOOM. WERE THEY YOUR CHOICES FROM THE START?

No, things changed as far as Forest was concerned. Another actor was in the frame before I joined the project, but there was a scheduling problem three months before the shoot. In fact, it all played out in one night – a night that started very badly and ended very well. A few hours after having to give up on the initial actor, Forest's manager sent me an email saying he knew about the project, that Forest was free on those dates, and that he'd definitely be interested in the role. It was three o'clock in the morning and I was going round like a madman in my hotel room in Cape Town. To me, Forest is one of the greatest actors of his generation, and wonderfully gifted. We immediately sent him





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the script and two days later, he said yes. As for Orlando, we needed a white Anglo-Saxon and we had a list of three or four possibles. It was me who insisted on him, despite knowing that he wasn't going to be everyone's obvious choice. There were three objective reasons that motivated me: first off, the character of Brian could easily become a caricature. The washed-up cop, who has problems with his ex-wife, who no longer speaks to his son, who drinks and pops pills – it's a bit of a cliché. I thought that Orlando Bloom, who in real life gives off a very positive vibe, could surprise us all and provide another facet to Brian to avoid that cliché. Then, having looked into his background, I learned that he has close family ties with South Africa. His father, Harry Bloom, who wasn't in fact his biological father, was a well-known South African journalist and writer, and an anti-apartheid militant. He had to flee the country and that's how he came to meet Orlando's mother in England. So I thought that was an interesting avenue to explore. Lastly, right from our first meeting I felt the incredible motivation which drives him. He'd perfectly understood the story and the film that it could make. We were on the same wavelength, and since Orlando is an intelligent man, all that remained was to work together to shape Brian. The role was a big risk for him, but he really impressed me.

A RISK AND A CHALLENGE FOR BOTH THE LEADS...

In an ideal world, each film should be a challenge, for both director and actors. We should, on each occasion, scare ourselves, and put ourselves in danger. With ZULU, I really felt that sensation, for them and for me.

TWO TECHNICAL REMARKS: FIRST, THE PACE THAT YOU BRING TO THE ACTION SCENES BY USING A HAND-HELD CAMERA; AND THEN THE SMART EDITING WHICH OFTEN GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT ONE SCENE OVERLAPS WITH THE NEXT.

The watchword that I repeated to the whole crew – especially my director of photography Denis Rouden and set designer Laurent Ott – was my wish to make a gritty film. I didn't want it to look beautiful and cleanly done, but harsh and rugged, in keeping with the violence of the story. The sets are realistic and accurate. Their esthetic is based on their authenticity. In terms of filming, I also had to strive for simplicity and realism. But there's not just hand-held work in the

film, far from it. In fact, the whole toolbox is in there, all the classic toys: Steadicam, crane, helicopter, etc. But I think, and I hope, that it's never flashy. It's always in the service of the narrative. This story was very complex to recount, so from beginning to end I was obsessed by the narrative. In my view, when you're a director, telling a story is the very essence of your job. It may seem simple, but it isn't at all. As for the editing, I called on Stan Collet, who, if you remember, first told me about the novel "Zulu". It's our second collaboration and he came down to edit in parallel in Cape Town, whereas to begin with he was due to stay in Paris. But once on location, I realized that I was going to be rather isolated and I was going to need another viewpoint on the film. His instructions were to let nothing through, to tell me even negative things, and to be intransigent, and he fulfilled this role perfectly. Thanks to digital technology, 24 hours after filming a scene I could see it edited, and as a result I couldn't cheat. I'm proud and happy with the final edit of the film, because it's deceptively simple, packed with little touches throughout. It seems transparent and lucid, but it's not at all.

LET'S RETURN TO CANNES TO CONCLUDE: ZULU IS RELEASED IN FRANCE ON 6 NOVEMBER, BUT FIRST THERE IS THE URGENCY OF THE FESTIVAL CLOSING NIGHT. DOES THIS ADDITIONAL PRESSURE HELP YOU TO LET GO OF YOUR "BABY"?

No doubt, although I'm not one of those directors who has a hard time letting go of their "baby". When you make a film, you enter a contract – legal but above all moral, I believe – with a producer and a distributor. I always try to respect my undertakings, and the delivery date of the film is obviously part of that. Those are the rules of the game. If you don't like it, you'd better not play. Or else find another partner with different rules. The only difference with ZULU is that the mixing, color grading and special effects will all be finished at the last minute, and I won't see the definitive version until Sunday 26 May in the main theater of the Palais des Festivals with 2,500 people around me! Fortunately, even though it's my fourth film, it's perhaps the first of which I'm really proud. In any case, it's the one that is closest to what I want to do in terms of cinema. So that gives me a little serenity. A little.



INTERVIEW WITH CARYL FÉREY

AUTHOR

BEFORE WRITING CRIME THRILLERS, YOU WORKED FOR A TRAVEL GUIDE. WAS IT THIS EXPERIENCE THAT GAVE YOU A TASTE FOR FARAWAY PLACES, GIVEN THAT “ZULU” IS SET IN SOUTH AFRICA AND YOUR TWO PREVIOUS NOVELS, “HAKA” IN 1998 AND “UTU” IN 2004, TOOK PLACE IN NEW ZEALAND?

This passion for travel comes first from my own life. I made a round-the-world trip at the age of 20, and for me, that took the place of studies. The idea was indeed to go far away. I find the feeling of being in a southern-hemisphere land unique and agreeable. In fact, the hardest part is leaving one's home: once you've made up your mind to leave, you can go anywhere.

SEVERAL VERY POWERFUL SENTIMENTS RUN THROUGH THE FILM AND THEREFORE THE NOVEL: THEY ARE DIRECTLY LINKED TO THE EFFECT CREATED BY SOUTH AFRICA. DID YOU FEEL THAT AS A KIND OF SHOCK WHEN YOU DISCOVERED THAT COUNTRY?

I'm quite excessive in life and it's true that South Africa, when you write noir novels, is a godsend. It's the same thing for American authors: their society is at once so fascinating and so terrifying that it can only lead to good books. If you go to Liechtenstein, apart from setting fire to the banks, you won't find much to do, nor anything much to stimulate the imagination. South Africa is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, with an incredible light and fantastic vegetation, but also immense problems inherited from the apartheid era, such as AIDS and widespread violence. All these contrasts do effectively provoke a shock. I was also lucky to make a friend there, a journalist who lived there during the Mandela years. When I arrived, I wasn't a tourist but a writer directly immersed into society, into the townships, in the midst of a society under construction, but also haunted by its ghosts.

THE FILM BLENDS THE COP THRILLER GENRE WITH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ELEMENTS. WAS YOUR AIM AS A WRITER TO ASSEMBLE ALL THE PIECES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUZZLE IN A SINGLE NARRATIVE?

Absolutely: that's the basis of this kind of novel and film. They are not crime thrillers with murders and guys with three guns! That's more video game stuff and I'm not interested in that at all. I want to explore the intimate side of a country; its depths, its contrasts, through characters who allow you to address racial and social problems. Jérôme stuck very close to the book and the core of the characters: he didn't just want to turn it into a thriller.

WHEN “ZULU” WAS PUBLISHED IN 2008, IT WAS A GREAT POPULAR SUCCESS AND ALSO RECEIVED NO FEWER THAN SEVEN AWARDS, INCLUDING THE GRAND PRIX LITTÉRATURE POLICIÈRE. I IMAGINE YOU HAD LOTS OF OFFERS FOR A MOVIE ADAPTATION.

Yes, but Richard Grandpierre got there first! He'd just made a comedy in South Africa and loved the country. He wanted to use the landscapes and atmospheres differently, and shoot a crime film there. “Zulu” came out a few months later and he called me to ask if the rights were available, which they were. From there, things went very quickly and quite naturally. That doesn't mean it was subsequently an easy job to put the film together: Richard had to work hard to bring the project to fruition.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR ENCOUNTER WITH JÉRÔME SALLE? I IMAGINE IT'S ESSENTIAL FOR AN AUTHOR TO GET ALONG WITH WHOEVER IS GOING TO TRANSLATE HIS WORDS INTO IMAGES.

You know, I'm a fairly down-to-earth guy. I detest people with huge egos; that makes me uncomfortable, it doesn't work for me. Right from the start, Jérôme was very straightforward and very pleasant. It took us 10 minutes to reach agreement and get along. Not knowing South Africa in the least, he had a genuine humility towards the country. For my part, I saw what I could bring him, firstly through my novel. It's a very cinematographic country, and the book is written in a way that is broken into sequences like a script, stuffed with fabulously photogenic locations, like the Kirstenbosch botanical park and Table Mountain. I told him he'd find all this material there and lots more in the Cape Town surroundings. And I remember that on his first scouting expedition, Jérôme would call or send me texts saying: “I'm in this-or-that street, I can't find that bar.” And I'd tell him to take the first right, you'll be there, and so on. It was fun, and quite intense to work so closely while 10,000 kilometers apart. Then I went on the shoot, rather on tiptoes, but everyone was very welcoming.

YOU ALSO WRITE FILM SCRIPTS, SO YOU KNOW THAT THIS DISCIPLINE IS ALL ABOUT CHOICES, CUTS, AND CHANGES. AS A NOVELIST, HOW DID YOU ACCEPT THESE SACRIFICES BETWEEN YOUR BOOK AND THE FILM?

That's cinema – it's an adaptation. You know that as a reader, you have more imagination than a camera, and that's why we're often disappointed when we see a film based on a book. You have to appreciate the way things are done, and I had total confidence in Richard and Jérôme. Of course, they made some changes to the novel, but the key elements were respected, notably the very end of the story. For it to be acceptable, it had to correspond to South Africa

and therefore to the fundamental storyline. The narrative is difficult, and so are the characters, but Jérôme's vision of it corresponds to my own, which was the most important thing.

A WORD ABOUT THE ACTORS: DID FOREST WHITAKER AND ORLANDO BLOOM FIT WITH YOUR ALI AND BRIAN ON PAPER?

It's extraordinary, given that the casting changed since the initial idea for an adaptation. In the end, Forest Whitaker took on the role of Ali, and he's more well-built than I'd imagined the character. But when I went on the shoot and I heard him say his first lines, I thought I couldn't have dreamed of a better Ali than him. As for Brian, it was a wonderful surprise. We all know Whitaker is a giant of an actor, he's proved it. But Orlando Bloom hadn't yet achieved that status or tackled this kind of role. All the girls are nuts about him, but not because of this kind of character. When I was on set, he literally jumped on me, saying: "Are you the author? Thank you! This is exactly what I was looking for. For years I've been playing an elf in LORD OF THE RINGS!" He was totally submerged in the role. He arrived three weeks before the shoot to familiarize himself with the locations.

DID THE EXPERIENCE OF GOING FROM THE NOVEL "ZULU" TO THE FILM ZULU GIVE YOU A TASTE FOR MORE MOVIE EXPERIENCES?

Yes. I'm in the process of writing an adaptation of my latest novel, "Mapuche", which is also a very tough story based on real events: the combat of the mothers and grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires in Argentina. It recounts the fate of the Mapuche Indians who were largely exterminated under the dictatorship. As in ZULU, there are many ghosts floating around.





INTERVIEW WITH JULIEN RAPPENEAU

CO-WRITER

IF YOU LOOK AT YOUR SCREENWRITING CAREER, BETWEEN *36TH PRECINCT*, *HAVE MERCY ON US ALL* AND *ZULU*, YOU HAVE TACKLED SOME GRITTY CRIME FILM ATMOSPHERES THREE TIMES NOW. WHAT FASCINATES YOU ABOUT THAT UNIVERSE?

I find it gives me the possibility to accompany very strong characters who are faced with the violence of the world on a daily basis, while at the same time always having to deal with their own personal and human issues. They are often rich, complex characters, and therefore interesting. That was very much the case with Caryl Férey's novel and these heroes whose personalities are totally forged by South Africa's particular history. Moreover, the crime genre offers the possibility to construct stories with rhythm, that are gripping and mysterious, which is exciting for a screenwriter. *ZULU* contained all that, plus a fascinating additional character, which is an integral part of both the novel and the film: South Africa, especially Cape Town. It's not a country that features much in cinema. And that's obviously one of the things Jérôme Salle and I really liked in reading Caryl Férey's book.

WHEN YOU START WITH A NOVEL LIKE THAT, WHAT IS IT ESSENTIAL TO KEEP AND WHAT MUST BE LEFT OUT OR CHANGED?

The main challenge was the book's richness: 450 pages! A book with a complex plot, lots of secondary characters, and evocations of these characters' past. To arrive at a well-paced movie of a little under two hours, whilst retaining the novel's plot and the multiple points of view, we had to both simplify the story and make it more dense. Obviously, Jérôme and I started with the novel's two heroes, their personalities, and their issues, whilst transposing them to a cinematographic narration. At one point, once we'd decided on the main theme we were interested in – that of forgiveness – we had to close the novel and project ourselves into the film. That does involve making choices, abandoning certain characters and certain sub-plots, to retain the essential whilst respecting the spirit of the book, its tone, and also the room it leaves for the story of South Africa and its current socio-political reality.

ON THAT POINT, I IMAGINE THAT GOING THERE WAS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT FOR THE WRITING PROCESS.

I went with Jérôme to spend two weeks there once we had a first version of the script. Caryl Férey's novel was a very valuable basis, and very well documented thanks to his long spell in the country. Before starting to write, we also read lots of other books and articles about South Africa, and watched some documentaries and programs. After that, the preliminary location scouting allowed us to check if the story we were telling was coherent with the atmosphere, the local culture, the social relations and the geography of the places. That led to some modifications in our adaptation.

THE STORY DEPENDS ON A VERY INTERESTING PARADOX: IT CONTAINS ALL THE CODES OF A BUDDY MOVIE – TWO CHARACTERS WHO ARE QUITE UNALIKE AND YET SOMEHOW COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER – BUT IT BLOWS THESE CODES APART.

That is one of the interesting aspects in the book that we wanted to explore: the unusual friendship that bonds Ali and Brian. They are two guys, both cops, but who don't have the same psychological profile. They lead very different lives, have very different family backgrounds, and yet they are profoundly linked. They have opposing styles, but they want more than anything to work together. Ali protects Brian from everything, including his hierarchy. He wants to keep him by his side, despite a certain lack of professionalism on Brian's part. Deep down, Ali knows that Brian needs the job to avoid sliding definitively into self-destruction. I like the idea of this duo with an apparently traditional antagonism, but whose relationship is in fact much richer, a blend of deep respect and friendship.

TALKING OF DUOS, *ZULU* IS YOUR THIRD COLLABORATION WITH JÉRÔME SALLE AFTER *LARGO WINCH* AND *LARGO WINCH II*: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WORKING TOGETHER?

Above all, I think we get along very well. We communicate a great deal about the film, beyond the script itself. I met Jérôme before writing the first *LARGO WINCH* and I learned how to work with him. We form a sort of complementary team. We have certain tastes in common but we each retain our individuality. It is indeed our third film together, but we're not growing tired of this collaboration, because on each occasion, we have tried to refresh things and set ourselves new challenges. For *ZULU*, we had to find a way to convey the human, political and social richness of South Africa, as seen in the novel, while at the same time writing a tight film in which the central thrust remained the characters.

***ZULU* WILL BE SCREENED ON THE CLOSING NIGHT OF CANNES, THE WORLD'S BIGGEST AND MOST PRESTIGIOUS FILM FESTIVAL. FOR A YOUNG SCREENWRITER, IS THAT FIRST AND FOREMOST A SATISFACTION, OR A SOURCE OF PRIDE?**

A source of pride, of course, but above all a pleasure and a nice surprise. *ZULU* is more than just a crime film: it's a powerful police story set against a harsh social and political backdrop, with distinctive characters. Beyond the investigation plot, Jérôme's film has genuine power and inspires real emotions. Going to Cannes is very exciting and fantastic for the film, for Jérôme, for Caryl Férey, Richard Grandpierre and the whole crew. There's no doubt, the screening in the Lumière grand auditorium will be a memorable moment for us.



INTERVIEW WITH ALEXANDRE DESPLAT

ORIGINAL MUSIC

ZULU IS THE LATEST STEP IN YOUR WORK AS COMPOSER WITH JÉRÔME SALLE. WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO CONTINUE THIS COLLABORATION ON A FILM THAT'S VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE LARGO WINCH FILMS?

Jérôme contacted me when he was preparing the first installment of LARGO. We hit it off very quickly. I immediately appreciated his frankness, his energy and his demanding approach to directing. I wasn't mistaken.

A THIRD FILM TOGETHER WAS A NATURAL STEP, THEN?

Experience has taught me that it's never the case. Jérôme was just kind enough to call on me again for ZULU, and I quite logically continued working with him.

ZULU EXPLORES A VERY TOUGH, VIOLENT UNIVERSE. HOW DO YOU APPROACH THIS GENRE OF FILM: DO YOU NEED TO SEE SOME IMAGES, OR READ THE BOOK, SINCE IT'S BASED ON A NOVEL?

I didn't read the book, only the script, that I found quite brutal and difficult. It did, however, help me imagine what kind of music would be suitable – and also what wouldn't! Jérôme quickly understood that it couldn't be action music, because those scenes are always quite blistering in the film, without any let-up. If the music set out to underline the action, it would have had the opposite effect. To me, the music is there more to create a heavy, outlandish atmosphere. I used an orchestra, backed up by lots of electronic elements, but without bringing in any ethnic instruments that might evoke Africa. The idea was to keep a certain distance, to not fall into the trap of a genre film.

IT'S INTERESTING BECAUSE FOR ARGO, FOR EXAMPLE, YOU DID IN FACT CHOOSE TO INCORPORATE SOME PERSIAN INSTRUMENTS AND MUSICIANS IN YOUR SOUNDTRACK.

There was a compelling reason for that: Tony Mendez, Ben Affleck's character, has the mission to enter Iran, a hostile environment, then get out having saved the hostages. So the music, in my mind, represented this enemy universe. The rupture between the start of the film awash with western music, and the second, more ethnic part in Iran was essential. With ZULU, we're in South Africa from the outset, in an inhospitable universe, with two South African characters, one black and one white. They are both looking for the solution to a puzzle, which is complicated by drug networks and gangsters. The local context exists, there's no need to underline it.

YOU ARE PART OF A SHORT LIST OF COMPOSERS WHO ARE VERY MUCH IN DEMAND, WORLDWIDE, AND YET YOU CONTINUE TO SELECT YOUR PROJECTS WITH HUMILITY AND CURIOSITY, ESPECIALLY IN FRANCE.

I'm always delighted to work with a new director, or when one calls me back, like Jérôme or Jacques Audiard, for example, for a new adventure. I also like to vary musical experiences: LARGO WINCH was more about a Bond-style ambiance, "John Barryesque", if you will. ZULU took me down a different path, one I felt that was taking some risks. And that's nothing like what I have just recorded for MARIUS and FANNY by Daniel Auteuil. That's what I find exciting: I'm not doing a bungee jump, but that's how it feels!

ZULU IS GOING TO CLOSE THE FESTIVAL DE CANNES. YOU KNOW THIS EVENT WELL, HAVING HAD FILMS IN COMPETITION THERE AND HAVING SERVED ON THE JURY IN 2010. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE JÉRÔME SALLE, RICHARD GRANDPIERRE AND ALL THEIR TEAM TO HELP THEM DEAL WITH THE ANXIETY OF A SCREENING IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE OF WORLD CINEMA?

I'd simply tell them to stay humble, and also to have faith in their film. ZULU is a remarkable adaptation of Caryl Férey's novel, carried by a fabulous cast with Forest Whitaker back to his best and Orlando Bloom as you've never seen him before, with directing that is brilliant in its simplicity – and extraordinary music, obviously!

CAST

BRIAN EPKEEN

ALI SOKHELA

DAN FLETCHER

RUBY

CLAIRE

DE BEER

CAT

OPPERMAN

ZINA

TARA

KRUGER

STAN

JANET

JOSPEHINA

RICK

CAPTAIN ADAMS

THEMBA

MAIA

MYRIAM

ORLANDO BLOOM

FOREST WHITAKER

CONRAD KEMP

INGE BECKMANN

TINARIE VAN WYK-LOOTS

REGARDT VAN DEN BERGH

RANDALL MAJIET

PATRICK LYSTER

JOËLLE KAYEMBE

TANYA VAN GRAAN

DANNY KEOGH

CHRISTIAN BENNETT

IMAN ISAACS

NOMHLE NKOYENI

DEAN SLATER

OSCAR PIETERSEN

KHULU M SKENJANA

CHUMA SOPOTELA

THENJIWE STEMELA

CREW

DIRECTOR

JÉRÔME SALLE

WRITTEN BY

JULIEN RAPPENEAU & JÉRÔME SALLE

BASED ON THE NOVEL «ZULU» BY

CARYL FÉREY

(GALLIMARD- SÉRIE NOIRE COLLECTION 2008)

PRODUCER

RICHARD GRANDPIERRE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

FRÉDÉRIC DONIGUIAN

CO-PRODUCERS SOUTH AFRICA

ERIC VIDART LOEB, JULI LOTTER

CO-PRODUCER

ROMAIN LE GRAND

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

FLORIAN GENETET-MOREL, VIVIEN ASLANIAN

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

DENIS ROUDEN

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

LAURENT OTT

MUSIC

ALEXANDRE DESPLAT

EDITOR

STAN COLLET

COSTUME DESIGNER

RAE DONNELLY

CASTING

MITO SKELLERN

SOUND MIXER

NICO LOUW

SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR

PASCAL VILLARD

SOUND RE-RECORDING MIXER

JEAN-PAUL HURIER

LINE PRODUCER

JANINE VAN ASSEN

FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

BRIEUC VANDERSWALM

SCRIPT SUPERVISOR

TASMIN HALL, VINCA COX

HAIRDRESSER

RICK FINDLATER

MAKE-UP ARTIST

RAINE EDWARDS

COSTUMES

GIZELLE BAUMGART, ROCHELLE SISSING

LOCATION MANAGER

ETIENNE VAN NIEKERK

KEY GRIP

ROB FISCHER

GAFFER

WAYNE SHIELDS

POST-PRODUCTION MANAGER

DORIS YOBA

STUNT COORDINATOR

KERRY GREGG

SPECIAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR

CORDELL MCQUEEN

BEHIND-THE-SCENE

SIMON PHILIPPE

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