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OFFICIAL SELECTION 2011

GUILLAUME CANET
LEILA BEKHTI
SLIMANE KHETTABI

A FILM BY
CEDRIC KAHN

A BETTER LIFE

**LES FILMS DU LENDEMAIN
MAIA CINEMA
& CINEMAGINAIRE
PRESENT**

A BETTER LIFE

**Directed by
CEDRIC KAHN**

Starring

GUILLAUME CANET LEILA BEKHTI SLIMANE KHETTABI

2011 · FRANCE/CANADA · 112 MIN · 35MM · COLOUR

Download press kit and photos from WWW.WILDBUNCH.BIZ

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SYNOPSIS

Yann, a cook, and Nadia, a waitress and mother of 9-year-old boy, decide to risk everything on the purchase of a restaurant.

With plenty of talent, energy, love and dreams, but no finance of their own, they find themselves pushed into a jungle of financing and bank loans that quickly overwhelms them.

To bail them out, Nadia has to take a job in Canada, while Yann is forced to stay behind to save the restaurant. Together, he and the boy confront a relentless avalanche of creditors, an uncaring system and the daily grind from which there is no respite... until Yann finally understands that his only chance of salvation lies in joining his lover – as well as reuniting mother and child – and following Nadia to Canada and a better life.

WRITERS' NOTE

We began with an assessment: it's hard to escape your condition. The world we live in is a world where the only business available to the poor is bad business, a world in which they are condemned to pay most dearly for everything.

Those who can't pay cash for their new fridge or car must pay double, as they need to take out credit. The banks keep their best rates for their best clients - their richest clients. Loans to the least advantaged are restricted, so they're forced to rely on revolving credit and other loans at exorbitant rates - loans that quickly reveal themselves as hellish downward spirals from which escape is impossible.

The free market has been devised to allow each of us the chance of improving his or her life. It claimed to offer the possibility of upward mobility to the enterprising. Today, it does exactly the opposite: the free market has become a machine for impoverishing the poor, for casting low-income households into destitution. The sub-prime crisis in the United States is the most striking and gloomiest recent example: sub-primes offered the most vulnerable households the possibility of becoming homeowners. And left millions by the side of the road.

The characters in the film are condemned by their desire to improve their lot. They pay dearly for having wanted to be a little less poor. In that sense, theirs is a tragic fate.

But we very quickly realized that the film could not exist simply as a harsh illustration of the downward spiral of debt. We constructed an emotional and psychological plot that allowed the characters to be caught up in tensions more complex than basic money problems. And very quickly it transpired that the real subject of the film, above social ambition and debt, was first the construction and then the survival of the family unit.

Besides, news reports, discussion forums for those with severe debt problems, stories that we hear around us bear all witness to it: financial problems destroy families. It's money problems that make Nadia leave. Money problems that push her towards making the unthinkable move of separating from her son.

And yet Nadia has kept and loved this son in the face of all: the family that wanted no part of him, the father who abandoned him. For him she has sacrificed her studies and her professional ambitions.

It's she who sets in motion the story's romantic plot by leaving. Secretly she's looking to give her child a father. And it's her he must seek, find and win back again.

But it's Remi who carries the narrative. Ambitious, it's his ambition that traps him. By turns stubborn, proud, unbending, awkward, foolhardy, he's charged with energy to the point of naivety. He invents, he initiates, he starts again; he sets the rules then breaks them. The narrative is carried by his vitality.

The film begins from a bleak premise but, paradoxically, it must become radiant as the character that carries it: essentially what it reveals is the birth of a relationship between a man and a child, a mutual adoption between two people starved of affection.

The child is the key, the film's secret hero. He allows the survival of an emotional bond when all social connections disintegrate... It's through him that the adults save themselves and find a meaning to their lives. And it's thanks to him that life can begin again.

- *Catherine Paillé, Cédric Kahn.*

CEDRIC KAHN

Biography

Born in 1966, Cédric Kahn made his directorial début in 1991 with **BAR DES RAILS**, which was officially selected in Venice. Three years later, his sophomore feature **TROP DE BONHEUR** was awarded the Jean Vigo Prize and the Youth Prize in Cannes. Following his performance in Xavier Beauvois' **DON'T FORGET YOU'RE GOING TO DIE** (1995), and **CULPABILITE ZERO**, the TV film he directed for Arte in 1996, Kahn enjoyed huge success with his third feature, **L'ENNUI** (1998). Adapted from a novel by Albert Moravia, the film was awarded the Prix Louis-Delluc, as was his 2001 feature **ROBERTO SUCCO**, the true-life story of an Italian serial killer, which screened In Competition in Cannes. In 2003, his Georges Simenon adaptation **RED LIGHTS (FEUX ROUGES)** was shown In Competition at the Berlin Film Festival. In 2004 he directed **L'AVION**, based on a comic strip series by Denis Lapière and Magda Séron. His love story **LES REGRETS** (2008) starred Yvan Attal and Valéria Bruni-Tedeschi. Shot from an original script, **A BETTER LIFE (UNE VIE MEILLEURE)** is his ninth feature.

GUILLAUME CANET

Selected filmography

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| 2011 | THE WAR OF THE BUTTONS
Christophe Barratier | 2000 | FIDELITY
Andrzej Zulawski |
| 2010 | A BETTER LIFE
Cédric Kahn
<i>Toronto International FF –
Special Presentation</i> | | LOVE BITES
Antoine de Caunes |
| 2009 | THE LAST FLIGHT
Karim Dridi | | THE DAY THE PONIES
COME BACK
Jerry Schatzberg |
| 2008 | FAREWELL
Christian Carion | 1999 | I FOLLOW IN MY FATHER'S
FOOTSTEPS
<i>Rémi Waterhouse</i> |
| | LAST NIGHT
Massy Tadjedin | | THE BEACH
Danny Boyle
<i>Berlin International FF –
In Competition</i> |
| 2006 | TELL NO ONE
Guillaume Canet
<i>César – Best Director
César – Nomination Best Film and
Best Adaptation</i> | 1998 | THOSE WHO LOVE ME CAN
TAKE THE TRAIN
Patrice Chéreau |
| | HUNTING AND GATHERING
Claude Berri | | IN ALL INNOCENCE
Pierre Jolivet
<i>César – Nomination -
Most Promising Actor</i> |
| 2004 | JOYEUX NOEL
Christian Carion | 1997 | BARRACUDA
Philippe Haim |
| | NARCO
Tristan Aurouet & Gilles Lellouche | | |
| 2003 | LOVE ME IF YOU DARE
Yann Samuël | | |
| 2002 | ANYTHING YOU SAY
Guillaume Canet
<i>César – Nomination -
Best First Work</i> | | |
| 2001 | VIDOCQ
Pitof | | |

LEILA BEKHTI

Selected filmography

- 2011 **THE SOURCE**
Radu Mihaileanu
Cannes FF – In Competition
- 2009 **ALL THAT GLITTERS**
Géraldine Nakache & Hervé Mimran
César – Most Promising Actress
- LEILA**
Audrey Estrougo
Venice FF
- 2008 **A PROPHET**
Jacques Audiard
*Cannes FF – In Competition -
Grand Jury Prize
Academy Award® nomination -
Best Foreign Language Film*
- MESRINE**
Jean-François Richet
- 2006 **PARIS, I LOVE YOU**
Gurinder CHADHA
- 2005 **SHEITAN**
Kim Chapiron
- MAUVAISE FOI**
Roschdy Zem

CREW

Directed by
CEDRIC KAHN

Screenplay
CEDRIC KAHN
CATHERINE PAILLE

Freely inspired by the novel
"POUR UNE VIE PLUS DOUCE"
by Philippe Routier
(© Editions Stock, 2009)

DP
PASCAL MARTI

Editor
SIMON JACQUET

Set Designers
FRANCOIS ABELANET
EMMANUEL FRECHETTE

Original Music
AKIDO

Sound
OLIVIER MAUVEZIN
MARIE-CLAUDE GAGNE
SYLVAIN BELLEMARE
OLIVIER DO HUU

Costume Designer
NATHALIE RAOUL

Producer
KRISTINA LARSEN
(Les Films du Lendemain)

Coproducers
GILLES SANDOZ (Maïa Cinéma)
DENISE ROBERT and DANIEL LOUIS
(Cinémaginaire)
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FRANCE 2 CINEMA

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CINEMAGE 5

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(France-Canada coproduction)
SODEC
(Société de développement des
entreprises culturelles)
QUEBEC
(Québec Crédit d'impôt cinéma et
télévision - Gestion SODEC)
CANADA
(Crédit d'impôt pour film ou vidéo
canadien)

CAST

GUILLAUME CANET	<i>Yann Lorant</i>
LEILA BEKHTI	<i>Nadia Gorani</i>
SLIMANE KHETTABI	<i>Slimane Gorani</i>

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