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CREW

Directed by **Joachim Lafosse**
 Screenplay by **Joachim Lafosse, Matthieu Reynaert, Thomas Bidegain**
 D.O.P **Jean-François Hensgens**
 Editing **Sophie Vercruysse**
 Set designer **Anna Falguères**
 Sound **Henri Maikoff, Ingrid Simon, Thomas Gauder**
 Produced by **Jacques-Henri & Olivier Bronckart, Jani Thiltges, Sylvie Pialat, Thierry Spicher**

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CAST

André Pinget **Niels Arestrup**
 Mounir **Tahar Rahim**
 Murielle **Emilie Dequenne**
 Rachida **Baya Belal**
 Françoise **Stéphane Bissot**
 Fatima **Mounia Raoui**
 Samir **Redouane Behache**
 Radiologist **Yannick Renier**
 Dr De Clerck **Nathalie Boutefeu**



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JOACHIM LAFOSSE

2012 - **À PERDRE LA RAISON / OUR CHILDREN**
 2010 - **AVANT LES MOTS (Short)**
 2008 - **ÉLÈVE LIBRE / PRIVATE LESSONS**
 2006 - **NUE PROPRIÉTÉ / PRIVATE PROPERTY**
 2006 - **ÇA REND HEUREUX / WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY**
 2004 - **FOLIE PRIVÉE / PRIVATE MADNESS**
 2001 - **TRIBU (Short)**



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SYNOPSIS

Murielle and Mounir love each other passionately. Ever since he was a boy, the young man has been living with Doctor Pinget who provides him with a comfortable life. When Mounir and Murielle decide to marry and have children, the couple's dependence on the doctor becomes excessive. Murielle finds herself caught up in an unhealthy emotional climate that insidiously leads the family towards a tragic outcome.

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NIELS ARESTRUP EMILIE DEQUENNE TAHAR RAHIM

OUR CHILDREN

(À PERDRE LA RAISON)

A FILM BY JOACHIM LAFOSSE



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INTERVIEW WITH JOACHIM LAFOSSE

/ Where is this story from? You didn't make it up!

I was freely inspired by an incident that occurred in Belgium in 2007. I was in my car when I heard a dramatic report on the radio about a woman who had killed her five children. I immediately felt that this harked back to Greek tragedy and that the incident offered me the possibility to go deeper into what I spoke about in my previous films: excessive love and its consequences, debt, perverse bonds, dysfunctional families, the question of limits... Some choices imposed themselves from the outset: neither illustrate nor document the incident, but take possession of it with my subjectivity, my point of view as an artist. Integrate the idea that in every family story, one person's truth is not the next person's. My task is not to seek out the judicial reality and respect it or to relate it with the objectiveness of a reporter. These tasks have already been carried out and they illustrate their own truths, among others. My task as a filmmaker is different. The goal is to offer an interior and interrogative view of what remains a human tragedy whatever the responsibilities. My role is to allow audiences to share the life of the characters that I have filmed and to allow them to perceive the drama from a fresh angle. I wanted to show that such an act, described as "monstrous", is no accident. People often call the crime of infanticide "unthinkable": my

goal is to incite the audience to consider something that is too often described as inexplicable, to offer a different view, via fiction, and to arouse questions about the perception of reality, as much through my own gaze as through that of the audiences who view the film.

/ Why are you so fascinated by the dysfunctional bonds of the family unit?

The family is where we learn about democracy and is also the best place to observe dictatorship in action. I know that it's a violent setting. What interests me in a family are the dysfunctions. All those things that we are unable to detect but that we take part in. The reasons why we are uneasy without knowing where the problem arises from. Why we are unable to break free of the bonds. Cinematically, a perverse bond is a fascinating subject because it is one that hides and is fuelled by complex characters.

/ There is a colonialist dimension to the character: a European who has adopted a young North African...

Precisely. The problem with colonialism is that the colonizer doesn't make his history with the colonized official, he doesn't recognize it. It remains unofficial and secret for him. Doctor Pinget presents himself as Mounir's adoptive father but he isn't because he hasn't given him his name. That's why I would say instead that Mounir is Pinget's protégé, with all the ambiguity that entails. That is one of the things that fascinated me. You don't make a film with ideas but

with characters. That's the lesson that the Dardenne brothers teach us. And here the characters are what I care about. How do you break free of someone who has given you everything, who has been your protector, your teacher, your educator? It can be a dangerous gift. We can imagine that André Pinget finds it hard expressing his love, that he is concealing a fragile side of his personality. That is what I told Niels Arestrup who plays him: "Your character is like a little boy who has to hand out sweets all the time to have friends in the schoolyard! And if he doesn't have any sweets, he thinks that no one will love him!". André can only imagine bonds from that angle. That is the tragedy of his life and it's a vicious circle.

/ One of the film's strengths is its shadowy areas. Among the many questions that we ask ourselves, there's that of the bond between André and Mounir which is tinged with a certain ambiguity...

I'm not interested in that question. What interests me are the issues of dependence and debt. But, yes, all female aspects are excluded. These two men leave no room for Murielle. They see her only as a wife and a mother. Indeed, who are the couples? That's partly the question that the film asks...

/ You relate an exceptional story, the development of paroxysmal suffering from a specific "case" but, at the same time, Murielle's suffering is universal. One can make a feminist reading of the film: it's the all too frequent story of housewives, women subjected to childbearing, women deprived of speech, muzzled, made to feel guilty and beaten...

I saw my mother and stepmother go through multiple pregnancies; I grew up with women from whom I understood how difficult that had been. In Murielle's case, as in that of Medea, having children becomes a force of opposition. Thanks to her children, she profits from the doctor's generosity. And, feeling that she has given these children, she takes them back when she considers herself betrayed. That is how her character functions in the film. But that isn't necessarily a feminist approach: the film doesn't take away responsibility but it doesn't judge any of the characters either. It asks questions and seeks answers through the only medium that allows us to proceed in this way: a fictional account.

/ How can we define Murielle?

While we thought of Shadow of a Doubt for André Pinget, our reference for Murielle was A Woman Under the Influence by John Cassavetes, with her way of pursuing her family life all the time. A woman out of her depth, exhausted, mistreated, preyed on by doubt and fear, and who breaks down. At the start, she is a young woman raised in self-abnegation. A lonely girl. Her parents aren't those she dreamt of and, with André,

she meets the father that she would have loved to have. He is a man who protects her and makes her feel safe. Moreover, this is a situation that matches the times we live in. The doctor is a form of life-insurance. Today, everyone wants to live without danger. The couple thinks that André provides a guarantee of a risk-free existence. The tragedy builds up in an atmosphere of trust and ease. Breaking free of it means taking risks. Pleasure and desire die since there is no longer any risk. Death settles into this world of ease.

/ The subconscious is the key?

I think so. As in the scene in which Mounir wants to make love with Murielle on André's bed. That's his fantasy! French culture easily integrates the role of the subconscious. In the Courjault case, public opinion accepted that something subconscious came into play for that mother who killed and froze her babies. Public opinion was able to imagine that her children were not even real for her, that it was possible not to view her acts as murder. In Belgium, public opinion refused to consider the truth of people's lives that is equally present at times in the very depths of their subconscious.

/ How did you go about writing the screenplay?

A few basic rules were quickly established. For instance, I felt that there was no sense in filming the murders. I wanted to make a film that was purely the fruit of my subjectivity and my imagination. With Mathieu Reynaert and Thomas Bidegain, we decided to use all the journalistic elements available as the source of our inspiration: their words allowed us to seek out the universal beyond the individual in order to better imagine a myth detached from the facts that had brought about our need to make the film. The goal for us was not to write the truth, which we do not know (the press articles relate it in a purely fragmentary manner), or to offer a revision of the tragedy as it was experienced and judged in the real world. No one among us was in that house and knows what happened there and our goal wasn't to find out more or to offer a sort of re-enactment. We have created a fictional work without the pretension of explaining everything, but we wanted to make people think and discover the roots of a tragedy. The writing was also influenced by the film's aesthetic choices...

/ Which are?

Finding the right form to inspire emotion and thought at the same time without resorting to sensationalism. Two things were immediately obvious. We had to film in long takes, shot on a level with the characters and children. And what happened outside the frame. That's what the cinema is, in fact, an art of what happens off screen, an art of talking about things without showing them.



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/ As for "framing" a family, that's become a habit for you!

You joke, but I've ended up by creating a bond between the framework of the family and the cinematic frame. I see each shot as a house and I wonder who lives there, who is going to be ejected from it, who is stifling within it... Furthermore, I decided to delegate this time. Before shooting, I made a short film in a crèche, as preparation for the film, and I discovered that when we didn't look after the children, they forgot us after three-quarters of an hour. And so I adopted the following strategy: only two people on the crew spoke to the children, the others, myself included, were just workers busying ourselves around them. My first assistant was the one who directed them. This referred me back to the subject of the film: on my own, I would never have been able to deal with them on top of all the rest. How is Murielle able to manage alone? There: you don't make a film on your own, just as you don't take care of children on your own!

/ Why did you pick Emilie Dequenne?

My subconscious again! I was just starting at Film School when I saw her tears on receiving her Best



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Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival for Rosetta. That film made a very strong impression on me. She is an incredible actress: she can feed a story and let it impregnate her. She astounded me during the shooting of the scene when she listens to a song by Julien Clerc in the car: we did six takes and she was amazing each time! My father was a photographer and, on seeing Emilie, for the first time I had the impression of offering myself what had been offered to my father: the right to be no more than a gaze.

/ And the men?

I wanted to work with well-known actors so as to be sure to ground myself in fiction. Tahar Rahim takes hold of a complex character who remains submissive but tries to assert himself. He had to show how his character is continually torn between his wife and his protector. Niels Arestrup hasn't played only likeable characters in the past and so brings with him a gravity that made it interesting to give him a pleasant and affectionate character, a sort of doting father.

/ How did you choose the music?

For the first time, I really wanted to use music in a film. It's an art that speaks directly to the audience's subconscious. The musical language is extremely useful in revealing the perversion that worms its way in and lurks behind the images and deeds. Filming a perverse bond means filming what hides. Music can help to show it without being explicit. I use music each time a transgression occurs. Scarlatti underlines this bond. Baroque music is perfect because it carries us beyond psychology.

/ And the title?

I don't think any other title would work! Murielle cannot carry out her act without toppling over the edge. ■