

PHILIPPE LIÉGEOIS PRESENTS

PATRICK
D'ASSUMÇÃO

SOFIA
LESAFFRE

LAETITIA
CASTA

SIMON
ABKARIAN

ALBAN
LENOIR

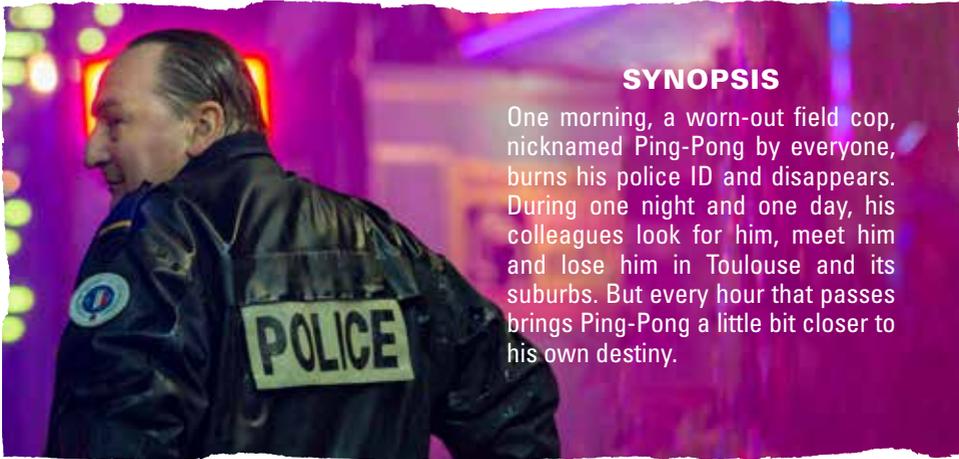
ÉMILE
BERLING



COP GOES MISSING

a film by FRÉDÉRIC VIDEAU

WITH CORENTIN FILA AGATHE BONITZER MATTHIEU LUCCI IDIR AZOUGLI WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF JEAN-FRANÇOIS STÉVENIN



SYNOPSIS

One morning, a worn-out field cop, nicknamed Ping-Pong by everyone, burns his police ID and disappears. During one night and one day, his colleagues look for him, meet him and lose him in Toulouse and its suburbs. But every hour that passes brings Ping-Pong a little bit closer to his own destiny.

INTERVIEW WITH FRÉDÉRIC VIDEAU

Interview by Anne-Claire Cieutat

HOW DO YOU PREPARE TO WRITE AND DIRECT A FILM ABOUT THE POLICE FORCE, IN FRANCE, TODAY?

I started by doing some research for four months, without writing a single word of screenplay. I set up a bibliography, I read materials and wrote notes, I watched and watched again documentaries or fiction films, either French or foreign, as well as many immersive reports. But most importantly, I met with police officers in the street at random, with cops on patrol who were entering or leaving police stations. It was the real challenge of the film: I had to turn each of those cops into a subject, with a face, a name, a story, and to consider how the work cops do and the way they do it affect them, depending on who they are. Public authorities in France have always tried to anonymise cops in order to turn them into an indistinct, faceless and nameless crowd. Treating these women and men as individuals was not only essential for the script, it was first and foremost an ethical and political imperative. Because I knew that by talking about them, through them, I would say something about the state of my country today. A scary thing I have noticed.

THE FILM ADDRESSES, AMONG OTHER THINGS, HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO ACCEPT AND OWN THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A POLICE OFFICER, OR THAT YOU WANT TO BECOME ONE. ZINEB, FOR INSTANCE, LIES TO HER FAMILY ABOUT IT, EVEN THOUGH SHE CLEARLY HAS A CALLING...

The police are responsible for law and order. They play a key role in a democracy. Police officers should be recruited, trained and commanded with the utmost care, intelligence and sense of moral responsibility. The film shows otherwise: officers are badly recruited, poorly trained, unorganised and poorly commanded, in that they are mainly commanded for the sake of social coercion. Therefore, police officers are bound to be unpopular, rejected and loathed. And my characters suffer the consequences.

THE CHARACTER OF ZINEB SEEMS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO YOU...

She belongs to the "oppressed" class: she is a young woman of Arab descent, born in the projects... And I have always filmed the "oppressed". My will to make films probably stems from this: I want to give silenced people a chance to speak. I am not saying that my characters are wrong or right, I just let them speak, I feel that it is my job as a filmmaker. Street cops come from low-income families. I want to look at them. Even the most ambivalent ones. I am deeply fond of my characters, even when I totally disagree with them.

YOUR EXTERIOR SETS ARE ALMOST DESERTED, AS IF THE WORLD WAS PUT ON HOLD, WHICH CAUSES TENSION THROUGHOUT THE FILM...

Police officers in the film tend to scare people off. And they are always on the look-out. Who is threatening who? Is their mere presence a threat? The fact is people turn away from them, as if the world was withdrawing as they approach. I never would have guessed that soon after that, we would all be confined

and get this crazy feeling that life itself had deserted the world. It is what the film is about: life has deserted the world and we must bring it back. How? By nurturing each other. In the film, Zineb is the epitome of life. This young woman is full of pep and she wants to live life to the fullest. In the very last shot of the film, she reconnects with the world, or better still, she breathes life into the world again. Life is the only option. We must fight against everything that breaks us.

HOWEVER, THE SCENE WHERE FOUAD (IDIR AZOUGLI) GETS PATTED DOWN CREATES A DRAMATIC CONTRAST...

It is the haunting figure of the battered man. In this sequence, the film takes the time to adopt the point of view of a character who is not a policeman, and who will be assaulted by the cops upon his arrest.

The scenes with Fouad describe the chain of events, from the police check to the final beating, that lead to a blatant case of police brutality, or what used to be called a "police blunder". All the elements are in place for it to happen: a cop who is too young, poorly recruited and badly trained; a commanding officer who fails to use his authority to bring his subordinate to his senses because he is eager to meet his numbers; three colleagues who just sit by, out of indifference, cowardness or in the name of esprit de corps. When we talk about the police today, it is simply impossible not to talk about those who stray off course, deliberately or not, and the film had to address that. Because the hard fact is that there are more and more police misconduct cases. There is no hiding behind excuses like the "isolated case" or the "bad apple" anymore - in my opinion it is plainly dishonest.

What I also show in the film is how some cops think that they are above the law, that they can get away with anything, and how this might explain the criminal behaviour, legally speaking, of some dirty cops - or racist cops, like Tristan and his young subordinate in the film.

ARE YOU TRYING TO REACH SOME KIND OF TRUTH - AT A SOCIETAL, POLITICAL, OR HUMAN LEVEL?

I always try to find meaning, or truth, in the things that I see, in the world around me, I cannot help it. How can you get a little bit closer to the truth? I think there is only one way: by questioning again and again what you have just seen. Playing with viewpoints in the film allowed me to leave room for doubt. Are we so sure to be alive? If the answer is yes, then the question is: at what cost? To what extent? And for how long?

A CONCLUDING REMARK, MAYBE?

"A society is judged by the conduct of its police."

The police system is such a fundamental issue today in France that we just cannot leave it in the hands of politicians alone. Look where it has got us. All citizens, no matter what their opinions are, must tackle it head-on. It is precisely what I have tried to do with this film, using all the resources of fiction and cinema.

FRÉDÉRIC VIDEAU BIOGRAPHY

Born in Angoulême, Frédéric Videau went to the capital with a high school diploma in his pocket to read classics and specially to see films. He skips class, haunts theaters, listens to soul, pop and rap, then resolves to tidy up his life. After La Fémis and ten years as assistant director at the Sports Department of France Télévisions, he directed his first film in 2001, *LE FILS DE JEAN-CLAUDE VIDEAU*, a documentary. *FRENCH VARIETY* followed in 2003, with Hélène Fillières and Gérard Meylan, selected at the International Critics' Week at the Venice Festival and *COMING HOME* in 2012, with Agathe Bonitzer and Reda Kateb, in Official Competition at the Berlinale. *COP GOES MISSING* is his fourth film.





CAST

PATRICK D'ASSUNÇÃO PING-PONG
SOFIA LESAFFRE ZINEB
LAETITIA CASTA DELPHINE
SIMON ABKARIAN TRISTAN
ALBAN LENOIR DRAGO
ÉMILE BERLING JOËL
CORENTIN FILA COP IN LOVE
AGATHE BONITZER RED-HAIRED COP
MATTHIEU LUCCI YOUNG COP
IDIR AZOUGLI FOUAD

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF
JEAN-FRANÇOIS STÉVENIN DRAGO & JOËL'S FATHER



CREW

SCRIPT AND DIRECTION **FRÉDÉRIC VIDEAU**
 PRODUCTION **PHILIPPE LIÉGEOIS**

1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR **RENO EPELBOIN**
 IMAGE **CÉLINE BOZON (AFC)**
 EDITING **FRANÇOIS QUIQUERÉ**
 SOUND **FRANÇOIS MÉREU,**
SÉBASTIEN SAVINE
EMMANUEL CROSET

MIXING **FLORENT MARCHET**
 ORIGINAL MUSIC **KARIM LAGATI**
 MOVIE SET **ÉRIC VEDRINE**
 PRODUCTION MANAGER **VÉRONIQUE GÉLY**
 COSTUMES **MARINE DE ROULET**
 MAKE UP **NATHALIE CHAMPIGNY**
 HAIRDRESSING **STÉPHANE BATUT,**
 CASTING **AGNÈS ALBERNY**

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