THOMAS LANGMANN PRESENTS

**VINCENT CASSEL** 

# PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE

A FILM IN TWO PARTS BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS RICHET



# PRODUCER THOMAS LANGMANN

# A TRUE STORY

Jacques Mesrine, last of the great French gangsters, was declared public enemy number one during his lifetime. He regularly finished atop the list of newsmakers in opinion polls. His spectacular death, shot full of holes by police at close range in the middle of Paris, put the crowning touch on his legend. Nearly thirty years after his demise in 1979, the myth of Jacques Mesrine is very much alive. Now, for the first time, an ambitious project is bringing his life to the big screen.

At once a thriller and a biopic, the project is shot through with action and emotion, yet remains as faithful as possible to factual reality. Far from making a model or a superhero out of Mesrine, the film will portray the character in all its complexity, including the darkest aspects. What will emerge is the story of the man behind the icon.

## THE MAGNITUDE OF THE FILM: ONE FILM TURNS INTO TWO

Jacques Mesrine's autobiography, L'Instinct de Mort [Death Instinct], was the first book I chose for myself. I must have been 10 or 11 years old. It was a real shock and the book has stayed with me ever since. Very early on, I fantasized about making it into a film. When I met with Jean-François Richet and Abdel Raouf Dafri, the density of the project forced us to make it two films.

Jacques Mesrine's life is so rich that it's impossible to do it justice in two hours. One of the strong points of this project is that it will be divided into two parts, two distinctly different films corresponding to each act of his life. The first film is about a man inventing himself, his first experience of violence and the underworld, his relationships with women, especially his passionate love affair with his alter ego, Jeanne Schneider, who accompanies him on his extravagant and incredible flight to Canada. The second film shows the now famous personality cultivating his own legend, his battle with the penal system, his never-ending provocations when confronted with power and with the police, and the pursuit of his "ideals" which will lead to his death.

## AN FPIC SHOOT

Parts one and two were shot concurrently. The 33-week shoot began May 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 and was completed in January, 2008. The action is set in France, Canada, the United States, Spain, UK and Algeria, all the countries along Mesrine's long ride.

## VINCENT CASSEL IS THE MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES

The autobiography, which Jacques Mesrine wrote in prison shortly before his final spectacular escape, tells the incredible story of a daydreaming kid from a well-to-do family who, little by little, builds an image of a rebellious and provocative gangster. The most fascinating part is the romanesque quality of the character. During his metamorphosis, reality outdoes fiction over and over again, to such a degree that, even now, the question remains: Who was the real Jacques Mesrine? An upper class kid? A draftee during the Algerian War? A ladies' man? A bank robber? A doting father? An escape artist? An extremely violent man? A mediatic manipulator? Mesrine wears all these masks at once. In fact, adept at changing his appearance to evade the police, he was known as "the man of a thousand faces."

To bring it off, an actor equal to the character had to be cast. The choice of Vincent Cassel was an immediate slam dunk. The intensity he brings to a character, his ability to handle complex, even contradictory emotion and his physical dexterity give access to all the dimensions of Jacques Mesrine. And Vincent Cassel's commitment to this role – he had no qualms about gaining forty pounds for it – makes it tempting to predict this will be one of the major performances of his career.

# **DIRECTOR JEAN-FRANÇOIS RICHET**

# PROJECT ORIGINS

#### - A perception of Jacques Mesrine, shared by Thomas Langmann and Vincent Cassel?

A lot of people have a fantasy vision of Mesrine. They see him as a sort of Robin hood, which he is not, or as a murderer, which he isn't either. We shared a common point-of-view, which was about showing the shadowy areas as well as the lighted areas - to hide nothing from his life.

#### - And what set it in motion?

An immediate desire. I usually start out with a refusal but not in this case. The idea of telling one portion of France's history through «micro-history,» not through a Bonaparte or a Louis XIV but through a man you might have passed on the street... In '59 Mesrine got back from the Algerian war and in '79 he was a friend of left-wing militant Charlie Bauer. What happened in those twenty years?

#### - A film about Mesrine is an ambitious project, isn't it?

A diptych is pretty rare and the casting is prestigious. Vincent Cassel, Mathieu Amalric, Gérard Lanvin, Cécile de France, Ludivine Sagnier, Gérard Depardieu, Gilles Lellouche, Samuel Le Bihan... And above it all a constroversial subject - an individual executed right in Paris, for everyone to see.

#### - Your meeting with Abdel?

I wanted to work with Abdel because I found his work structurally exemplary. We have the same focus, the same point of view. We agreed right away. We had read all the books, the newspaper articles, met the witnesses, etc. Then we put together the screenplay with all this information and we chose the key moments that helped to understand the character.

## THE CHARACTER OF JACQUES MESRINE

#### - On a gut level, who is Mesrine for you?

A man of honor, that's the first thing that comes to mind. He gives his word, then no matter what the circumstances, he tries to keep it. A man who lived in his dreams. A complex character who was nicknamed "the man of a thousand faces," and each one is a facet of his personality. It's much more fun to work on a character like that but it's also much more difficult. You're possessed; even now, I'm still discovering things and learning things about him. He lives out his dreams and doesn't dream away his life. A member of the middle class, he made himself out of negation, at odds with his own milieu. It isn't social determinism that pushes him to a life of crime. He doesn't want to work in a factory - he goes to get money where you find money - in banks. He dreamed himself the life of a gangster, with honor, as he forged his own path. He had a fantasy about the business of being a gangster that came out of Gary Cooper movies. He was probably traumatized by the Alergerian war, like many young men who fought there.

#### - A ladies' man?

A romantic, a true romantic who wrote very burning love letters to Jeanne Schneider (Cécile de France).

#### - Is there a Mesrine style?

Robbing several banks in a row - waiting for the police sirens and then getting into the car to take down a bank on the next street over.

#### - A manipulator?

No, a man possessed of great charisma. So he doesn't have to manipulate. Everyone describes him as extremely intelligent and extremely nice.

#### - Fond of provocation?

Provocation out of taste, as resistance, for the ego. Being public ennemy number one and giving Paris Match an interview when every policeman in France is looking for you, yeah, that's a provocation.

#### - His rebellious streak?

A true rebel. He's someone who says no, who says, «I don't like the laws, they're made for the rich,» and «I don't like the government,» and «I don't like maximum security areas.»

#### - He's practically a character conceived for film.

He dreamed his life that way - and movies were a big part of that. He would have loved a film about his life. I hope we live up to his expectations. He had an ability to make friends. He loved to cook - when he kidnapped a millionaire he cooked him a lapin chasseur. He ended like a dog. With or without warning, can a lawful state truly afford to do that?

#### - Has Mesrine become a myth?

Because he was able to create his own legend. He's an extraordinary personage. He had talent and charisma. Because he knew how to use the media, and made some incredible scores.

#### - Does his death have anything to do with it?

Of course. He's also a legend because of his death. But there is some dimension and complexity to the character behind it. What interests me is the emotion of this guy who died only a few miles from where he was born, gunned down like a dog in his car.

## THE DIRECTION

#### - A controversial subject?

In its essence, yes. Was it a murder or not? Were there warnings or not? As Mesrine said in his tape-recorded will, that's not the point. This is the story of a little guy from Clichy who was proclaimed "public ennemy number one." It's the story of a man who opens himself up to the world around him, who is hunted and caught in his own trap.

#### - The film is something between a genre film and an art film?

Is a genre film the antithesis of an art film? I don't think so. Is it a genre film because it's about gangsters? We didn't structure it to respect the codes of a certain genre, we made it about how best to serve the character. Yes, there's action, humor and romance. I don't think about the rest of it, which benefits my point of view.

#### - The connection between the two films?

The end of the first film is the end of Mesrine's innocence. There is nothing romantic about gangsterism, and that's what he strongly believed. As the second film opens, he is Mesrine, public enemy number one, a man who self-fuels his own legend for his own survival, by making himself mediatic and attracting people to his cause. In France, we like characters who say no. France was built out of protest - the revolution, the Paris Commune, May '68. Mesrine is a sort of anarchist, a dissident. We like those characters. Jacques Mesrine is the guy who doesn't want to get labeled and boxed. Part Two is more frantic, with more plot lines, filmed more like a war movie. Part One is more a film about strategy where that war is being planned. There is no public man and private man. He's the same. We tried to show all that.

#### - The balance between action and emotion?

I don't like action for action's sake. It has to reveal something about the character and his rough edges, it has to change him somehow. Mesrine is a man of action packed with emotion.

#### - How do you make it coherent? Is there a distinctive mark for each film?

There's one distinctive mark for the first film, and another for the second. The period from 1959 and 1973, during which Mesrine is finding himself, he has the support of a «mentor.» In Part Two, he is surrounded by colleagues and friends. He's more egocentric and paranoid. He's a showman. I like both characters, for different reasons. The two films tell the story of the same man's life but the photography and staging sets them quite apart. Both can be watched from beginning to end without regard for the chronological order.

#### - Does the film describe a sort of inevitable movement toward death?

In his will, he said, «I'm in a prison from which there is no escape.» As a director, I asked myself what was the hub of that prison? It's Porte de Clignancourt. If he winds up a legend, it's because of Porte de Clignancourt and that comes back, from various points of view, throughout the two films. Jacques Mesrine is very lucid. He has a good feeling for

things. How could he not know that the machine of the state was going to chew him up? By playing craps with his own life for so long, that "death instinct" naturally caught up with him.

#### - How does this film fit with your path as an artist?

I feel like it corresponds to everything I've directed before. Of course it's a more mature work. I have a less Manichean vision than before. This is the first time I've made a film about one man's life, his strengths and weaknesses, his lovedones, his fears. I also wanted to show that he was a man who didn't pick on innocent bystanders, and that characterized his whole life.

#### - Were many liberties taken with the facts?

The facts are so novelistic there was practically no need to invent. He is a movie character.

#### - And the preparation?

A year and a half of writing, location scouting and then nine months shooting. Hundreds of locations. I wanted to film as much as possible in the actual places where things happened.

#### - Your DP made the texture of each film different?

The dominating colors are not the same. Black, blue and red for Part One. Black, brown and orange for Part Two.

## VINCENT CASSEL A SLAM DUNK

#### - Was casting Vincent Cassel an easy choice?

It was him, or I wasn't going to do the movie. He made that role his own, first and foremost physically. He was totally invested in it. He was completely possessed, he was Jacques Mesrine. From the beginning of the first film to the end of the second, he is not the same person. He's an extraordinary actor. I've known Vincent for about fifteen years and during this shoot I forgot the Vincent I know.

# - Did he try to correspond as well as he could physically? Did knowing how Mesrine talked inspire him or did he give it his own interpretation?

We rejected the copy-and-paste method. What we were after was the emotion. Vincent made the character himself, working as an actor and not as an impersonator.

#### - Were decisions made together as to the construction of the character?

It was truly a collaboration. I decided to film Vincent differently from the others. Mesrine was a man who needed space - the technical side has to follow him and not the other way around. In Part One when he is still finding himself, the frame is much narrower. In Part Two, it's Mesrine who fills the whole space.

## THE CAST

I love working with actors. Here I was lucky to have the cream of French cinema with me - Gérard Depardieu, Gérard Lanvin, Mathieu Amalric, Ludivine Sagnier, Cécile de France, Gilles Lellouche, Samuel Le Bihan, Olivier Gourmet, Florence Thomassin... There are others, but I was really dealt a full hand. We were like a small theater company.

For the role of Janou, a strong and severe woman, in total symbiosis with Mesrine... Cécile gave me something that no one had ever asked of her before. When I met her, I knew it was her.

Ludivine is Sylvia, the last of the women in his life. He loved her. He wrote her love letters like teenagers do, with lots of poetry, awkward but sincere. She paid for it with her flesh. Ludivine gets across all of Sylvia's fright and her crossing into lunacy at the crucial moment of execution. I want a hundred percent, she gives me two hundred percent.

Sofia, played by Elena Anaya, is the mother of Mesrine's children. There are lots of scenes where she attempts to set him back on the straight and narrow. Elena is surely one of the film's revelations.

Sarah, portrayed by Florence Thomassin, is the woman who supposedly took his virginity, a prostitute. Florence has a

bewitching voice. We've crossed paths for years and I knew she would be able to give me that hard yet fragile dimension

Mathieu Amalric plays the supremely intelligent François Besse. No blood on his hands, low-profile, athletic... he is the exact opposite of Mesrine, who lives fast and loose, eats lapin chasseur and drinks Cristal Roederer champagne. They form a very unlikely duo. In this very physical role, unusual for him, Amalric is unbelievably believable. He rappelled 35 feet down the wall of La Santé prison in only a few seconds. He leaps off the screen.

Depardieu portrays Guido, who took on Mesrine as his protégé and moved him up the ladder in a sort of a parallel world, staying out of the way of the mob. He's almost a substitute father for Mesrine. Gérard started right in talking about the historical and political context. Gérard is a gold mine of information.

Working with Gérard is a unique experience and I think all the actors who played scenes with him felt that as well. He brings the whole world of film into the room with him. He's awesome.

Roy Dupuis is a Canadian star who plays Jean-Paul Mercier, a gangster affiliated with the FLQ (Quebec Liberation Front) who is much more violent than Mesrine, with whom he teams up for a good stretch in Part One.

Gilles Lellouche plays Paul, Jacques' childhood friend. He teaches him a little about life in Paris by night - the women, the gambling joints. He is a subtle, hard-working and sober actor.

Samuel Le Bihan plays Michel Ardouin. He's mobbed up, a real gangster who must have been a little different from the others because he stayed with Mesrine for so long. For this role, we needed someone who could stand up to Mesrine. Just like Vincent, Samuel gained 35 pounds for the role. It's impressive.

Charlie Bauer suggested Gérard Lanvin to portray him. Charlie is a political person. He's not a gangster. He is someone who has influenced me for life. It was an unforgettable meeting between two human beings. He's gone through some very difficult stuff. He loved Jacques. Gérard Lanvin absorbed Charlie. He doesn't play Charlie - he is Charlie.

We needed a great actor to play Commissaire Broussard, the man who nails Mesrine. I remember that very difficult shot at Clignancourt. We were losing light and we did a track shot following Broussard, who's running across the intersection. The camera operator gets off the Quad and the Quad continues on. We go from a track shot to a steadycam, at a dead run, all in one shot. Gourmet keeps running, there are cars headed for him in every direction, brakes screeching all over the place. We were running behind him with the camera. It was Broussard, forgetting everything, the camera, his security... it was Broussard! Gourmet is extraordinary.

I like all the characters. I don't claim they're right. We didn't glorify them, but you can have admiration for certain actions.

## FII MOGRAPHY

2005 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

2001 DE L'AMOUR ALL ABOUT LOVE

1997 MA 6-T VA CRACK-ER

1995 ETAT DES LIEUX

# SCREENWRITER ABDEL RAOUF DAFRI

For Mesrine, any excuse will suffice for turning the street into theater. It's no accident that, at the end of the film, the Place de Clignancourt is crawling with cops, setting the stage for his final scene. The final scene of his life, the death of a gangster. He is his own fantasy. The way out must be ever more splendid from his point of view. There must always be flair, even if it costs him his life.

In the first film, the scenes of violence strike a very human, very passionate chord. It's his apprenticeship. In the second film, he is playing with it, having fun.

I really like Jean-François, his humanity and his professionalism. We're from the same background. We both grew up in the projects. We're not from money. It's funny, we both got interested in a guy who started out with every advantage and nevertheless decided on the crime business. Through Mesrine, who was the crystallization of French society, I was also trying to comprehend that society as it was when he lived.

In the sixties and seventies, things were much more political. Whereas people today want a credit card, back then they wanted a party membership card.

It was a right-wing era, all stiff and upright and proper, a very closed, very partisan and conservative society. Mesrine ran wild in that society and excited the imaginations of rich and poor alike.

One police detective from the period said, "Mesrine was a a gangster with marketing savvy."

# **VINCENT CASSEL IS JACQUES MESRINE**

HE LOVES WOMEN, WEAPONS, BANKS, AND GLORY. NAMED PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE IN BOTH FRANCE AND CANADA, HE IS THE MOST NOTORIOUS GANGSTER OF HIS TIME. HE LOVES CINEMA, MODELS HIS LIFE AFTER FILM, AND MAKES UP HIS OWN EPIC THAT LIES BETWEEN ROMANTICISM AND CRUELTY. BETWEEN FLAMBOYANCE AND TRAGEDY.

#### A NINE-MONTH SHOOT

The first time Thomas Langmann spoke to me about the project was seven years ago. This was the longest shoot I've ever been on – nine months straight. It was a marathon. My first fear was running out of steam, not being able to keep up that intensity all the way through. But Mesrine's life was so rich, so many things happened to him in what amounted to only a few years that I forgot all about time. After the last end clap, all the fatigue fell on me at once. It was hard for me to realize that it was really over.

#### LEGEND AND REALITY

Many of our locations were places Mesrine had been. Each time, people would come over with lots of things to tell us. When we were shooting in the building which was his last hideout, on Rue Belliard, the neighbors and shopkeepers – even some former crooks – would come around to talk about him. Between his former accomplices, his ex-wives and the cops who chased him, some fifteen books have been written about Mesrine. We quickly realized that each one rewrote the story a little, including Mesrine himself. So where is the truth? Where is the fantasy? It's very hard to know. That goes along with popular characters and that's how their legends are born.

#### TWO VERY DIFFERENT FILMS

Although the two works respect the continuity of Mesrine's story, we pretty much knew right away that each would be distinct and different. Jean-François Richet didn't use the same techniques in shooting them and it's not the same time period. The fifties and sixties are not at all like the seventies. The cars are different, so are the hairstyles and the music. And attitudes, especially, are different. Each of the two films develops a theme which completes the other. PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE – PART ONE is about a young man who's searching for his identity. PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE – PART TWO is about a man who knows where his life choices lead and decides to there anyway. The first film is almost a genre picture, a good detective story. The second film, however, is more of a psychological thriller, about the paranoia of a guy who knows instinctively how this is all going to end.

#### MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES

When Mesrine was on the run, he constantly had to use disguises so as not to be recognized, which is how he got that nickname, "the man of a thousand faces." For an actor like myself, who enjoys changing his appearance, this seems absolutely ideal. But it's also a trap. You don't want to lose the character by disguising him all the time. The hair and make-up department worked with us very hard on this in order to maintain the subtlety and the coherence between the changing times and these on-the-fly makeovers.

#### **GAINING FORTY-FIVE POUNDS**

To play this part, it was always clear that I owed it to myself to gain forty-five pounds. I didn't realize just how much this changes things. You don't act the same way when you're 45 pounds heavier. The way you move, the way you walk, the way you breathe and even the way you speak changes. Everything is different. Not only are those 45 pounds visible on the screen, you can hear them in the sound! I put the weight on in four months prior to the shoot and I lost it in nine over the length of the shoot. We shot backwards because I knew I couldn't gain a single pound when I was working. The stress on the set always makes me lose weight. Even with the medical supervision, and the endocrinologic support, this is the last time I submit my body to that kind of swing in poundage.

#### GOOD GUY OR BAD GUY?

A man who puts himself out so far is often a source of inspiration for «normal» people, those who wouldn't dare. Mesrine surely committed some unpardonable acts at times and he also pulled off some exceptionally daring deeds. It is precisely those contradictions that make for such an exciting character. Some will think he's despicable and reactionary, some will like the fact that he followed his own path right to the end, shouldered the responsibility, and will identify with him. Even now, after nine months shooting, I find it hard to judge him.

#### **CO-STARS**

Out of 150 shooting days, there were only one or two when I was not on the schedule. It was non-stop. It was a good thing I had new acting partners constantly showing up on the set. Cécile de France, Gérard Depardieu, Gérard Lanvin, Elena Ayana, Ludivine Sagnier, Olivier Barthélémy, Mathieu Amalric, Michel Duchaussoy, Gilles Lellouche, Samuel Le Bihan, Olivier Gourmet... That was a great help because with each new person came a radically different energy. They say an actor changes according to who he's playing with, and that fits for Mesrine, who changed according to he was with.

#### JEAN-FRANÇOIS RICHET

Like most of the good ones, his strength is that he knows what he wants or doesn't want, yet remains open to what's going on around him. If someone gives him a suggestion, he always takes the time to consider what he can do with it. In nine months' shooting, it never once got tense between us. He's got experience, style, real knowledge of cinematic history. He is curious about everything, sure of himself technically and, because he used to be an editor, he always maintains the necessary perspective to see where it's all headed. This is a director who is now in his prime and it is a pure joy to work with him.

#### THOMAS LANGMANN

Thomas is, in my opinion, a rare director - he's stubborn, even pugnacious, with a real madness and sense of sweep. An «old-school» producer. I believe that Mesrine was his first "vision" as a producer. He got the idea when he was very young, still in school. So for him this project goes back along way and he has a very deep, practically emotional connection with it. This project is, first and foremost, his project.

# VINCENT CASSEL SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2008 A Deriva Heitor DAHLIA
- 2007 Sa Majesté Minor His Majesty Minor Jean-Jacques ANNAUD
- 2007 Eastern Promises David CRONENBERG
- 2006 Sheitan Kim CHAPIRON
- 2005 Derailed Mikael HAFSTRÖM
- 2004 Ocean's Twelve Steven SODERBERGH
- 2004 Blueberry Renegade Jan KOUNEN
- 2002 Irreversible Gaspard NOE
- 2001 Sur mes Lèvres Read My Lips Jacques AUDIARD
- 2001 Birthday Girl Jez BUTTERWORTH
- 2001 Le Pacte des Loups Brotherhood of the Wolf Christophe GANS
- 2000 Les Rivières Pourpres The Crimson Rivers Mathieu KASSOVITZ
- 1997 Dobermann Jan KOUNEN
- 1995 La Haine Hate Mathieu KASSOVITZ

## TIMELINE

- 1936 Birth of Jacques Mesrine in Clichy. His parents are blue-collar workers. His father works in the lace industry.
- 1956 Departure for the Algerian War, from which he will return three years later with a certificate of good conduct.
- **1961** Marriage to Maria de la Soledad in Paris (who inspired Sofia's character in the film). They have three children but separate in 1965.
- 1962 First prison sentence for robbery.
- 1966 First encounter with Jeanne Schneider, his female alter-ego, with whom he fled to Canada.
- **1969** Abduction of Quebec billionaire, Deslauriers. Mesrine and Jeanne Schneider are accused of murdering a hotel employee. They are later declared innocent.
- 1969 Mesrine's and Jeanne Scheider's arrest in Texas, extradition to Canada and condemnation to 15 and 10 years of detention respectively.
- 1972 Mesrine's escape from the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul penitentiary, which he attacks 15 days later to free his companions. He is declared Public Enemy Number One in Canada. He attacks several banks before fleeing to Venezuela.
- 1972 Return to France
- 1973 First arrest before his phenomenal escape from the Compiègne Tribunal, where he takes his own judge hostage. He gets arrested again by commissioner Broussard, whom he welcomes with champagne. From this moment on, he is also considered France's Public Enemy Number One.
- 1977 Publication of *Death Instinct*, the autobiography he wrote and distribute clandestinely in prison. Famous trial in Paris: through his pranks, Mesrine attracts the media before being condemned to 20 years of prison.
- 1978 Escape from the Santé prison with his accomplice François Besse. Attack on the Deauville Casino. First encounter with Sylvia Jeanjacquot, with whom he travels to Italy and London. Attempted abduction of Judge Petit.
- 1979 Abduction of billionaire Lelièvre. Abduction of the journalist Tillier, whom he leaves for dead. Mesrine explodes in the media, granting interviews and permission to be photographed. A police unit called "anti-Mesrine" is created.
- **02.11.1979** Mesrine is shot to death in the center of Paris at place de Clignancourt by the men in Broussard's unit. His girlfriend, Sylvia Jeanjacquot, is badly injured.

## MESRINE AND THE MEDIA

Neither the magnitude of his crimes, nor the multitude of his exploits, nor even his sensational death would have made such a legend out of Jacques Mesrine without the phenomenal sounding board provided by the media. His constant desire to entertain and his ability to transform himself attracted journalists, but also made it possible for him to use them. Notorious as a master gangster in Canada since the sixties, Mesrine only became known in France in 1975 when, after reading an article in the French weekly l'Express which was not to his liking, he sent a threatening letter to the journalist. The result was immediate: His picture appeared on the front page of the widely read publication! Two years later, after having published Death Instinct, the autobiography he wrote in prison, a Paris courtroom was the scene for quite a show. Mesrine's audacity and razor-sharp quips were fodder for the press corps, which eagerly reported choice nuggets:

The Judge: And what did you do with the money you took in the hold-up? Mesrine: I put it in the bank, your honor. That's still the safest place to keep it.

Throughout March 1978, after his escape from La Santé prison, Mesrine never tired of writing to national newspapers in order to contradict or rectify an article concerning him. In fact, he provided Paris Match and Libération long interviews revealing the details of his escape, his life underground and his hopes for the future. He exploited the media at every turn, showing his good will by emphasizing his revolt against injustice and his battle to abolish maximum security areas where detainees were held in isolation. Naturally, this was a provocation for authorities and the police. He never missed an opportunity to pose, face uncovered and weapon in hand, for the photographs accompanying the interviews.

Through the media, Jacques Mesrine's escape from prison was experienced by all of France as a live saga. And when his exploits would not suffice, Mesrine had no hesitation about selling pictures of himself and his girlfriend, the beautiful Sylvia Jeanjacquot, to a weekly publication whose readership had no problem electing him Man of the Year 1978, finishing ahead of the Princess of Monaco.

The media allowed Mesrine to build his popularity. But the media also helped him to lose it through his own deeds. The 1979 abduction and torture of journalist Jacques Tillier ended when Mesrine left him for dead, all because he believed Tillier was an informer. His attempts to justify this act took the form of a wordy explanation sent as letters to the editors of Le Monde and Liberation. Three polaroids taken by Mesrine himself were enclosed, showing the victim completely naked, curled up on the floor, his hands tied behind his back and his face bloodied. This time around, readers were overcome with disgust. Mesrine's taunts were no longer amusing. His contact with the media ceased. Two months later, public enemy number one was shot to death by police.

# PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE PART 1 THE ORIGINS

ACROSS CANADA, THE UNITED STATES AND SPAIN, THROUGH FRANCE AND ALGERIA, THE INCREDIBLE RISE OF ONE OF HISTORY'S GREATEST GANGSTERS. ALWAYS ON THE RUN, A RENEGADE EXISTENCE ONLY A BULLET CAN STOP.

# **CÉCILE DE FRANCE JEANNE SCHNEIDER**

"YOU'RE JEANNE? I'M TARZAN!" THOSE ARE THE FIRST WORDS SPOKEN BY MESRINE TO THIS YOUNG, EVEN-TEMPERED PROSTITUTE FROM PIGALLE. IT IS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT FOR BOTH OF THEM. BETWEEN PARIS AND MONTREAL, SHE BECOMES MUCH MORE THAN HIS MISTRESS AND HIS ACCOMPLICE. SHE IS HIS ALTER-EGO.

"I discovered an incredible woman with a rather uncommon life and destiny in Jeanne Schneider. Playing this role was a real treat. I tried to really become the role and draw inspiration from the real world."

"Jacques is the love of her life. Her religion is love, and he is her love. She will follow him everywhere. She will not only be his wife, but also his soul mate and accomplice."

"Obviously, my perception of Jacques Mesrine is not at all objective, as I see him through Jeanne's eyes... He was very educated, he took her to the theater, the opera, and was very tender with her. Very elegant and classy, in fact."

"I feel very lucky to have been able to play this role, a slightly darker role than usual. It is truly exciting for an actress to play a character like Jeanne."

"Vincent masters his role with ease, with a delicate hand, with joy and with incredible calm. We improvised a lot on the set. It's quite intimidating, actually. You show up and you haven't quite gotten your character right and it's all new and you start working with someone who is totally into the character. It's sort of odd and beautiful."

- 2007 Un Secret A Secret Claude MILLER
- 2006 Quand J'étais Chanteur The Singer Xavier GIANNOLI
- 2006 Fauteuils d'Orchestre Avenue Montaigne Danièle THOMPSON
- 2005 Les Poupées Russes Russian Dolls Cédric KLAPISCH
- 2004 Around the World in 80 Days Frank CORACI
- 2003 Haute Tension Switchblade Romance aka High Tension Alexandre AJA
- 2002 L'Auberge Espagnole Euro Pudding Cédric KLAPISCH

# **GÉRARD DEPARDIEU GUIDO**

A PITILESS GANG LEADER, THE FORMER SUPPORTER OF FRENCH ALGERIA IS IMMEDIATELY INTRIGUED BY MESRINE; HE'S CALM, COOL, AND COLLECTED. HE DECIDES TO TAKE HIM UNDER HIS WING. AT GUIDO'S SIDE, THE FUTURE PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE WILL LEARN THE TOOLS OF HIS TRADE AND DISCOVER HIS OWN AMBITIONS. GUIDO IS THE MENTOR MESRINE HAS BEEN WAITING FOR.

"It's rare to make a film about a really bad guy, a true gangster story with a twist. The high security prison, the Algerian war, the Secret Armed Organization [a French nationalist militant and underground organization during the Algerian War], the young men who came back from war, who had no jobs, who played around with their guns... it was one hell of an era! There are no more real mobsters today."

"Guido is a guy from the Secret Armed Organization who finds Mesrine and trains him. He finds his feisty temperament useful until it becomes uncontrollable. "Vincent is great! He's an excellent Mesrine. He's a happy and brave actor, discreet on set, who has a great outlook. He's an amazing guy."

"I think Mesrine had his own code of ethics. He was not a brute. He's a much more complex figure than he might seem today."

- 2008 Babylon A.D. Mathieu KASSOVITZ
- 2007 Astérix aux Jeux Olympiques Asterix at the Olympic Games Frédéric FORESTIER Thomas LANGMANN
- 2007 La Môme La Vie en Rose Olivier DAHAN
- 2006 Quand J'étais Chanteur The Singer Xavier GIANNOLI
- 2004 36 Quai des Orfèvres Department 36 Olivier MARCHAL
- 2003 Bon Voyage Jean-Paul RAPPENEAU
- 2001 Asterix et Obélix: Mission Cléopâtre Asterix and Obelix Meet Cleopatra Alain CHABAT
- 2001 Le Placard The Closet Francis VEBER
- 1995 Le Hussard sur le toit The Horseman on the Roof Jean-Paul RAPPENEAU
- 1994 My Father the Hero Steve MINER
- 1993 Germinal Claude BERRI
- 1994 1494: Conquest of Paradise Ridley SCOTT
- 1990 Green Card Peter WEIR
- 1990 Cyrano de Bergerac Jean-Paul RAPPENEAU
- 1988 Camille Claudel Bruno NUYTTEN
- 1986 Jean de Florette Claude BERRI

# **ROY DUPUIS JEAN-PAUL MERCIER**

MESRINE'S MAIN ACCOMPLICE DURING HIS LONG ESCAPE FROM PRISON IN CANADA, HIS "QUÉBECOIS BROTHER." TOGETHER, THEY ESCAPE FROM THE TERRIFYING SAINT-VINCENT-DE-PAUL PENITENTIARY AND ARE SOON ACCUSED OF MURDERING TWO FOREST RANGERS. THEY PART COMPANY UNDER THE VENEZUELAN SUN, ON "VACATION" WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE FIANCÉES.

- 2007 Shake Hands With the Devil Roger SPOTTISWOODE
- 2005 Maurice Richard The Rocket Charles BINAME
- 2004 Mémoires Affectives Looking for Alexander Francis LECLERC
- 2003 Les invasions Barbares The Barbarian Invasions Denys ARCAND
- 1998 Free Money Yves SIMONEAU
- 1995 Screamers Christian DUGUAY
- 1992 Being at Home with Claude Jean BAUDIN
- 1989 Jésus de Montréal Jesus of Montreal Denys ARCAND

# **GILLES LELLOUCHE PAUL**

MESRINE'S CHILDHOOD FRIEND, HE WAS ALSO HIS FIRST ACCOMPLICE. A LOVER OF THE GOOD LIFE AND A SPORTS CAR AFFICIANADO, PAUL COMES TO PICK MESRINE UP AT HIS PARENTS' HOME. THEY MAKE FREQUENT VISITS TO THE ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE NEIGHBORHOODS OF BLANCHE AND PIGALLE, COMMITTING THEIR FIRST BURGLARIES AND LIVING OUT THE FINAL MOMENTS OF THEIR INNOCENCE, TOGETHER.

## SFI FCTFD FII MOGRAPHY

- 2008 Paris Cédric KLAPISCH
- 2007 Le Gang des postiches Masked Mobsters Ariel ZEITOUN
- 2006 Ne le Dis à Personne Tell No One Guillaume CANET
- 2005 Anthony Zimmer Jérôme SALLE
- 2004 Narco Tristan AUROUET, Gilles LELLOUCHE
- 2003 Jeux d'enfants Love Me If You Dare Yann SAMUEL

# **ELENA ANAYA SOFIA**

MESRINE MEETS THIS YOUNG WOMAN ON A NIGHT OUT PARTYING IN SPAIN. SHE FALLS MADLY IN LOVE WITH HIM AND SOON FOLLOWS HIM BACK TO FRANCE, WHERE THEY MARRY. THEY HAVE THREE CHILDREN TOGETHER. SOFIA WILL DO ANYTHING TO LIVE A HAPPY AND SIMPLE FAMILY LIFE WITH HIM, BUT HER EFFORTS ARE IN VAIN. NEITHER SHE NOR ANYONE ELSE CAN STOP MESRINE FROM LIVING OUT HIS DESTINY.

- 2007 Savage Grace Tom KALIN
- 2007 In the Land of Women Jon KASDAN
- 2006 Alatriste Agustin DIAZ YANES
- 2005 Fragile Jaume BALAGUERO
- 2004 Van Helsing Stephen SOMMERS
- 2004  $\,$  Dead Fish Charley STADLER  $\,$
- 2002 Hable con Ella Talk to Her Pedro ALMODOVAR
- 2001 Lucia y el Sexo Sex and Lucia Julio MEDEM
- 1999 Las Huellas Borradas Whiped-Out Footprints Enrique GABRIEL-LIPSCHUTZ
- 1998 Finisterre Where the World Ends Xavier VILLAVERDE

# PART 1 THE ORIGINS

# CAST

JACQUES MESRINE VINCENT CASSEL

JEANNE SCHNEIDER CECILE DE FRANCE

GUIDO GERARD DEPARDIEU

JEAN-PAUL MERCIER ROY DUPUIS

PAUL GILLES LELLOUCHE SOFIA ELENA ANAYA

MESRINE'S FATHER MICHEL DUCHAUSSOY

MESRINE'S MOTHER MYRIAM BOYER

SARAH FLORENCE THOMASSIN

## **CRFW**

Director JEAN-FRANCOIS RICHET

Screenplay ABDEL RAOUF DAFRI, based on Jacques Mesrine's novel « L'instinct de mort »

Adaptation/Dialogues ABDEL RAOUF DAFRI and JEAN-FRANCOIS RICHET

Visual Design ROBERT GANTZ
Production Designer EMILE GHIGO
Costume Designer VIRGINIE MONTEL
Editor HERVÉ SCHNEID
Image ERIC CATELAN
Sound JEAN MINONDO

Hair/Make Up DOMINIQUE COLLADANT / THI THANH TU NGUYEN / PATRICK VILLAIN

Casting Director ANTOINETTE BOULAT
Assistant Director LUDOVIC BERNARD
Location Manager FRANCOIS PULLIAT
Production Manager LAURENT SIVOT
Executive Producer DANIEL DELUME

Co-producers MAXIME REMILLARD / ANDRÉ ROULEAU
Associate Producers JEAN COTTIN / EMMANUEL MONTAMAT

Producer THOMAS LANGMANN

A French/Canadian/Italian

Co-Production LA PETITE REINE / REMSTAR / NOVO RPI

Co-produced with M6 FILMS

With the Participation of CANAL+ / TPS STAR / M6 / 120 FILMS / LA REGION HAUTE NORMANDIE /

CNC / TELEFILM CANADA / SODEC

In Association with UNI ETOILE 4 / UNI ETOILE 5 / BANQUE POPULAIRE IMAGE 8 / CINEMAGE 2

35 mm - scope - dolby SRD Running time : 110 mins

# PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE PART 2 THE LEGEND

THE MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES CONTINUES HIS INCREDIBLE LIFE OF CRIME WHILE MANIPULATING THE MEDIA, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE POLICE. HE PLANS HIS LAST AND GREATEST ESCAPE, HOPING TO LEAVE FRANCE – AND THE CHARACTER HE HAS MADE HIMSELF INTO – BEHIND FOREVER.

# **LUDIVINE SAGNIER SYLVIA JEANJACQUOT**

SHE IS MESRINE'S LAST WOMAN, DUBBED "THE BEAUTIFUL ITALIAN" BY THE MEDIA. HER PRESENCE GLAMORIZES HIS FINAL ESCAPE FROM PRISON AND SHE IS THE REALIZATION OF ALL HIS FANTASIES. MESRINE'S FAMOUS RECORDED STATEMENT IS ADDRESSED TO HER. SHE MIRACULOUSLY SURVIVES THE PORTE DE CLIGNANCOURT SHOOTING.

"Jean- François was still a child when Mesrine was killed and so his view of the event is not tainted by nostalgia. He is a man of action that I find very interesting. He also has a very dynamic approach to shooting a film."

"I'm not completely faithful to the historical Sylvie Jeanjacquot. I'm more into the element of fantasy, playing the role of a woman who falls in love with a man like him."

"Vincent fascinates me. I see him as an acting prodigy. He invested so much of himself in this role. His energy, his ability to give and take, and his willfulness are remarkable. It's amazing to see how much he resembles his character, and how he has found all of Mesrine's personality - the humor, the violence, the spirituality and the dark side. He is there, he is present, he has the aura of the character and he has incredible charisma. I am very, very proud. It's been a real pleasure to work with him. We've laughed a lot; he's a very fun-loving person."

"Playing the gangster's hot chick has been great fun."

# SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

2007 Un Secret A secret - Claude MILLER

2007 La Fille coupée en deux The Girl Cut in Two - Claude CHABROL

2007 Les Chansons d'amour Love Songs - Christophe HONORE

2007 Molière - Laurent TIRARD

2003 Peter Pan - P.J. HOGAN

2003 Swimming Pool - François OZON

2002 Huit Femmes 8 Women - François OZON

# MATHIEU AMALRIC FRANÇOIS BESSE

KNOWN AS "THE KING OF ESCAPE," HE IS AS DISCREET AND INTROVERTED AS MESRINE IS BOASTFUL AND PROVOCATIVE. TOGETHER, THEY FORM A RUTHLESS DUO AND MANAGE TO ESCAPE FROM LA SANTÉ PRISON. THEIR CONTRASTING PERSONALITIES, HOWEVER, ULTIMATELY LEAD THEM TO SEPARATE.

"For me, Jacques Mesrine represented my parent's era. And it was quite an era!"

"Certain people must break all the rules. They need to, in order to go on living in society."

"François Besse and Mesrine only met and worked together a few times. They had little in common, but I think they had a lot of affection and respect for one another."

"Besse always tried to remain discreet, to keep a low profile. It was a different tactic from Mesrine's, who had no tactic at all."

"Later on, we had the pleasure of doing very physical things. When I have the chance, I go for it. Escaping from prison, training with weapons."

"It gave Jean-François Richet great pleasure to watch Vincent and me make the scene and the dialog our own, change things around, invent gestures. He loves actors and enjoys filming them. He loves to see what we come up with."

"Vincent is quite a chameleon. He must take great pleasure in transforming himself. He must have also enjoyed exploring his character's relationships with the men and with the women. It's also quite a joyous affirmation of virility, oddly both delicate and heart-warming."

"Is he a hero or not? The good, the bad, the grey zones... Did he have any morals? Can we really judge a man? I think these are ideas that Vincent understands well."

"I felt the incredible excitement and pleasure one must feel when breaking the law."

"Mesrine had a lot of fun. I don't know, Kazan's A Face in the Crowd or John Ford's The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance come to mind. It's the desire to leave behind some kind of trace..."

"We threw ourselves into the water without knowing how to swim. We tried to stay afloat, and something came out of it. All of my scenes were with Vincent. We were "a couple."

"The relationship between Mesrine and Besse was one of respect. Respect of two opposites. Admiration."

# SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

2008 Un conte de noël - Arnaud DESPLECHIN

2008 De la guerre - Bertrand BONELLO

2008 James Bond 22: Quantum of Solace - Marc FORSTER

2007 Le Scaphandre et le Papillon The Diving Bell and the Butterfly - Julian SCHNABEL

2006 Quand J'étais Chanteur The Singer - Xavier GIANNOLI

2006 Marie Antoinette - Sofia COPPOLA

2005 Munich - Steven SPIELBERG

2004 Rois et Reine Kings & Queen - Arnaud DESPLECHIN

# **GÉRARD LANVIN CHARLIE BAUER**

BAUER IS MESRINE'S LAST ACCOMPLICE AND DIFFERENTIATES HIMSELF FROM THE OTHERS BY HIS RADICAL POLITICAL VIEWS. BAUER, AMONG OTHERS, WILL PUSH MESRINE TO USE HIS NOTORIETY TO STRENGTHEN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE CONDITIONS AT THE MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON. HE ALSO ENCOURAGES MESRINE TO GET IN CONTACT WITH EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONARY NETWORKS.

- 2008 Secret Défense Philippe HAIM
- 2002 Le Boulet Dead Weight Alain BERBERIAN, Frédéric FORESTIER
- 2000 Le Goût Des Autres The Taste of Others Agnès JAOUI
- 1998 En Plein Cœur In All Innocence Pierre JOLIVET
- 1996 Anna Oz Eric ROCHANT
- 1994 Le Fils Préféré The Favorite Son Nicole GARCIA

# **SAMUEL LE BIHAN MICHEL ARDOUIN**

NICKNAMED "THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER" BY MESRINE, IN REFERENCE TO HIS BUILD, THE 6 FT. 1, 220 LB. ARDOUIN CARRIED A VARIETY OF GUNS AROUND WITH HIM AT ALL TIMES. HE WAS ONE OF MESRINE'S MOST FAITHFUL LIEUTENANTS. THEY ROBBED MANY BANKS TOGETHER AND ARDOUIN PARTICIPATED IN THE SPECTACULAR ESCAPE FROM A COMPIÈGNE COURTHOUSE.

- 2007 Frontières Frontier(s) Xavier GENS
- 2004 The Bridge of San Luis Reyes Mary McGUCKIAN
- 2002 Une Affaire Privée A Private Affair Guillaume NICLOUX
- 2001 Le Pacte des Loups Brotherhood of the Wolf Christophe GANS
- 1999 Vénus Beauté Venus Beauty Institute Tonie MARSHALL
- 1996 Capitaine Conan Bertrand TAVERNIER
- 1995 Une Femme Française A French Woman Régis WARGNIER
- 1994 Trois couleurs: Rouge Three Colours: Red Krzysztof KIESLOWSKI

# **OLMER GOURMET**

# **COMMISSAIRE BROUSSARD**

THE FIRST TIME BROUSSARD NABBED MESRINE, HE WAS WELCOMED WITH A GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE. ON THE SECOND OCCASION, THE GANGSTER HAD NO TIME TO PREPARE – HE WAS INSTANTLY CAUGHT IN A HAIL STORM OF BULLETS AT THE WHEEL OF HIS CAR. ONLY A FEW MONTHS BEFORE, MESRINE HAD ISSUED A CHALLENGE: "NEXT TIME, BROUSSARD, THERE WILL BE NO CHAMPAGNE. IT WILL BE ABOUT WHICH OF US SHOOTS FIRST."

- 2008 Le Silence de Lorna Jean-Pierre DARDENNE et Luc DARDENNE
- 2008 Go Fast Olivier VAN HOOFSTADT
- 2007 Pars vite et reviens tard Have Mercy on Us All Régis WARGNIER
- 2006 Les Brigades du Tigre The Tiger Brigades Jérôme CORNUAU & François CORNUAU
- 2005 Le Parfum de La Dame en Noir The Perfume of the Lady in Black Bruno PODALYDES
- 2005 L'Enfant The Child Jean-Pierre DARDENNE & Luc DARDENNE Palme d'Or Festival de Cannes 2005
- 2005 Le Couperet The Ax Costa-GAVRAS
- 2003 Le Temps du Loup The Time of the Wolf Michael HANEKE
- 2001 Sur mes Lèvres Read My Lips Jacques AUDIARD
- 1999 Rosetta Jean-Pierre DARDENNE & Luc DARDENNE Palme d'Or Festival de Cannes 1999
- 1996 La Promesse The Promise Jean-Pierre DARDENNE & Luc DARDENNE
- 1996 Le Huitième Jour The Eighth Day Jaco VAN DORMAEL

# PART 2 THE LEGEND

## CAST

JACQUES MESRINE VINCENT CASSEL SYLVIA JEANJACQUOT LUDIVINE SAGNIER FRANCOIS BESSE MATHIEU AMALRIC CHARLIE BAUER GERARD LANVIN MICHEL ARDOUIN SAMUEL LE BIHAN COMMISSAIRE BROUSSARD **OLIVIER GOURMET** HENRI LELIEVRE GEORGES WILSON MESRINE'S FATHER MICHEL DUCHAUSSOY MESRINE'S MOTHER MYRIAM BOYER MESRINE'S LAWYER ANNE CONSIGNY

## **CRFW**

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Adaptation/Dialogues ABDEL RAOUF DAFRI and JEAN-FRANCOIS RICHET

Director of Photography

Composer

MARCO BELTRAMI

Production Designer

EMILE GHIGO

Costume Designer

VIRGINIE MONTEL

Editor

BILL PANKOW

Camera

ERIC CATELAN

Sound

JEAN MINONDO

Hair/Make Up DOMINIQUE COLLADANT / THI THANH TU NGUYEN / PATRICK VILLAIN

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Co-Production LA PETITE REINE / M6 FILMS

With the Participation of REMSTAR / CANAL+ / TPS STAR / M6 / 120 FILMS / LA REGION HAUTE NORMANDIE

In Association with UNI ETOILE 4 / UNI ETOILE 5 / BANQUE POPULAIRE IMAGE 8 / CINEMAGE 2

35 mm - scope - dolby SRD Running time : 130 mins



The Marseillaise was playing when they put a gun in my hand - my hand developed a taste for guns.

Death is a faithful mistress who does not leave her lovers.

If you live in the shade, you will never get close to the sun.

There are no heroes in crime.

In hell, you can really have fun. Only people who wouldn't get bored out of their minds on earth get to go there.

Too many people back off.

The mind does not die. The proof is you're thinking of me.



Mesrine



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