

**STUDIO CANAL**

**SILENZIO** Photos: Sébastien Bossi



BRIO FILMS AND STUDIOCANAL PRESENT

**ALBERT  
DUPONTEL  
ALICE  
TAGLIONI**  
**THE  
PREY**  
A FILM BY **ERIC VALETTE**

WITH **SERGI LOPEZ STÉPHANE DEBAC NATACHA RÉGNIER CATERINA MURINO**  
**ZINEDINE SOUALEM SERGE HAZANAVICIUS JEAN-MARIE WINLING LUCIEN JEAN-BAPTISTE**

SCREENPLAY BY **LUC BOSSI AND LAURENT TURNER**

102 MINUTES

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**STUDIOCANAL  
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## SYNOPSIS

A bank robber escapes from prison to track down a former cellmate trying to make him take the fall for a series of murders.

A female cop leads the chase for the fugitive, who soon becomes public enemy n°1.

When the three protagonists have pushed themselves as far as they can go, who will be the hunter and who will be the prey?



# INTERVIEW WITH ERIC VALETTE

## Director

### Why did you want to make THE PREY?

When writers Luc Bossi and Laurent Turner contacted me, their project was still only an idea, but I was immediately seduced. They only had a few pages, but they were onto something exciting with real potential. Whenever I can, I like to be there at the very start of a project in order to move forward with as much depth as possible. For a long time now, I've wanted to make a film with a dark hero. I like the idea of the amorality of a hero with his own codes and his own course of action. The fact the story is fed with a few real events also appealed to me. That brings realistic echoes and a "news bulletin" feel to the movie. In the meantime, I made STATE AFFAIRS, but I never forgot about this new movie. Luc and Laurent regularly sent me their synopses and ideas that we bounced around, with me sending them notes, suggestions and different areas to explore. Right from the moment they began writing, we agreed on the need to combine a feel of pure entertainment with a dramatic and psychological complexity.

I wanted to make a real action movie, something that truly entertains, without forgetting the form and the

emotion. I've always wanted to make that kind of film, the kind I love watching. To me, making something that is good Saturday night entertainment can work together with the idea of making something high quality, that offers a few ambiguities and even a little sarcastic touch.

### The casting brings together a fine palette of top rank actors. How did it come together?

I immediately thought of Albert Dupontel to play Franck Adrien, the escaped robber. He is a great actor and one of the few in France to be able to handle the very physical nature of the role. He brings real strength to his character. Albert has a density, a rage and a determination that strengthen the role. He offers real humanity, which detracts nothing of the darkness of the part. He is a powerful actor who totally invests himself in his work. The public is also very fond of him, which immediately makes this complex character appealing. You want to know what will happen to him. For the role of Claire Linné, we didn't immediately think of Alice Taglioni, initially because the role was written for someone in their forties. The character was made younger and Luc suggested we meet with her. Beyond her charm and beauty, Alice gives off something very physical and very concrete, and the role of Claire released her somewhat from her usual role of glamorous blond. It's a fairly new departure for her and I think it was interesting, both for the film and for her.

The role of the killer was absolutely key. After quite a lot of looking, we ended up turning to someone less well known, with whom the public is less familiar and who, because of that, would be like a blank page with no preconceptions. We did

some tests and I found Stéphane Debac totally convincing. He manages to give off something ambiguous, both when he's being calm and when he descends into madness, whilst always being totally spot on and interesting. Stéphane did a lot of preparation for the role. He thought about how Maurel would speak, dress and hold himself. His method wasn't at all overwhelming on set and I appreciated his investment. The rest of the cast involved people I knew and with whom I love working like Serge Hazanavicius who'd never played a cop before, and people whose work I admire like Natacha Régnier who is perfect as the slightly batty and submissive Christine Maurel and Zinedine Soualem who has never been used in a key role in an action film before.

We were also very lucky to get some special guests for certain roles like Sergi Lopez and Caterina Murino, who were very enthusiastic about the script and their characters, even if they have relatively few scenes. I was delighted to work with them and I tried to do them justice on the screen.

### **How did you tackle the different universes in the film, from the prison scenes to the impressive chase sequences through natural landscapes?**

My experience of prisons is limited but I still had a strong idea of what I was looking for. I deliberately wanted to describe a prison in clinical terms, like something similar to a really cheap hotel like the "Formule 1" hotels they have in France. This is because our research showed us that in this country, that's what new incarceration facilities look like. We shot the exteriors at the La Farliède prison in Toulon, a place with a very graphic building. Taking the audience to places they've never seen before is always interesting.

In terms of directing, I tried to be graphic without being over-stylized because I wanted it to have a certain rawness. In the film, there are practically no slow downs, few cross dissolves – it's cuts all the way. I like that abruptness.

In terms of set design and the film's look, I didn't want to deprive myself of ugly things if they are interesting. To my mind, THE PREY is really a provincial and

suburban film, with housing developments, industrial zones and places we all know, where we live and which are often underrepresented in French cinema. I wanted to take chases, explosions and drama to those places.

### **Albert Dupontel has a particularly physical role in this film. How did you bring out this aspect of his acting?**

In addition to the technical set-up and the skills of the whole team, the fact that Albert did all of his own stunts was a real bonus. He brings action into his performance and performance into the action. Albert took every possible risk: He fell from a building, jumped onto a moving train, fought with realism and plenty more besides. On the façade of the Maurel home, he climbed up the pergola with no safety harness or specially strengthened structure, just using the strength in his arms. Albert saw the light was right and the cameras were rolling and then just went for it. These are exactly the kinds of things he's really willing to do. He goes for it and you can really feel he's enjoying himself. There is not one single shot where we used a body double. I was both petrified and fascinated by the risks he was taking. You can't be cautious and hold back an actor who gives so much. My only choice was to become his partner in crime. I just had to take what an actor like him can give and show it to the best of my abilities. It's rare,



precious and superb. And beyond his physical commitment, Albert is a great dramatic actor. He is this body and this voice, he knows how to play in every register and he is an enormous asset to the film.

Although she doesn't go to the extremes seen in Albert's performance, Alice Taglioni's character also has some pretty physical scenes. Alice put a lot into it and we only used a body double for just a few scenes when she falls.

### **Since STATE AFFAIRS, your work seems to follow two main directions with the same rigor: Action scenes and psychological drama.**

I try to be the first audience for my own work. Even if it's not the same, I get pleasure from both the action scenes and the dramatic ones. Mingling the two is fascinating. During the action scenes, which are technically exhausting, you really feel like a kid arranging your toy soldiers in a game. The comedy scenes are more comfortable. When you're filming a face-to-face with two major actors like Albert Dupontel and Sergi Lopez in the visiting room, all I have to do is record, depending on my "score". I know at exactly what moment I have to go close up, and exactly when I have to slowly track towards them. In my head, I have a kind of shot music, and watching the actors perform the notes of that music is fascinating.

Before, I used to storyboard everything – without being very good at drawing! – and that took a lot of

time. Now, I only draw the action sequences because it serves as a tool for the whole team. However, for the rest, I do a precise list of shots that I want for each scene. I know I have to change focus at such-and-such a moment, that with a particular line it will be interesting to have a particular movement. I try to conceptualize the directing but in a much less precise way than using a storyboard, and giving a lot more freedom to the actors. So when I arrive on set, I'm always very well prepared, and if you arrive very well prepared, you feel confident about changing everything, but always to improve things. To improvise well, you're better off being really well prepared!

#### **Tell us about the preparation and the shoot.**

When you have a big cast and very busy actors, it's almost impossible to get everyone together for readings. So I do individual readings to allow everyone to get their lines right. And the fact they meet each other on set also encourages a certain kind of spontaneity. Having worked on the text, they can dedicate themselves to their performance and concentrate on the intention.



I do very few takes. I try to find a middle ground between what the actors need in order to be comfortable in their work and what I think is necessary. It's always a question of attitude. During the first few days, you discover how each of them works. I started by filming the Maurel couple in their best and worst moments. After that, we shot the end, the final confrontation, the scene where the three characters finally come together. Then we worked backwards, seeing each one in their own quest. Technical constraints meant we didn't really have a choice but it didn't matter. So this meant the actors quickly spent time together.

We shot a lot of the film in the Alpes-Maritimes. We also shot in the Paris region, in Toulon, and because of difficulties having the right authorizations, one of the biggest chase scenes involving lots of cars and a train was shot in Prague. I fantasized a lot about that sequence. The action, four cameras, a very determined cast and crew and what was at stake both narratively and visually was all extremely motivating. From the start of the chase to the moment when Albert jumps on the train in the countryside took five days to shoot. Everyone came out of it absolutely exhausted, particularly Albert who also suffered physically having sprained his ankle twice in the process.

Despite all the difficulties presented by some of the action scenes, I wasn't worried about any of them. However, never having shot a love scene, I was pretty worried about the one that opens the film, between Albert and Caterina. But everything was fine.

#### **The film's music is lyrical and dense and contributes to creating an intense experience.**

The music is one of the elements that determine the film's identity. After looking around, I met Norman Fisher-Jones, alias Noko, in London. I had a real osmosis with him as a musical partner. Even if he's quite new to soundtracks, he has some really good experience because he's done a lot of electro and worked on some very varied projects. He may be really contemporary but he works in the old style, composing themes for characters and creating real narrative lines. His work helps

me heighten the scenes, his compositions bring a kind of flamboyancy, a lyricism that often fits well with the sobriety of the acting I was looking for. He brings a kind of perception, a "double discourse" that adds to the performance. I hope the audience will be drawn into the action but that beyond the entertainment factor, they'll also find more powerful deeper things. It is possible to tell real fictional stories with very powerful characters and a lot of action, here in France. The film corresponds to what I felt when I received the script; something that moves along and is entertaining for a wide audience, with touches of darkness but which keeps a clear direction. I liked the idea of making a film like that. I make films I believe in.



## INTERVIEW WITH ALBERT DUPONTEL (FRANCK ADRIEN)

### **What made you want to act in THE PREY?**

I was tempted by a certain radicalism. I'd seen STATE AFFAIRS and I knew Eric was capable of taking the action scenes to their very limits. In this kind of film, you can't have any half measures. You have to go all the way or not do it at all. I was also tempted by the role, which allowed me to invest psychologically as well as physically. If you're going to make an action film, you might as well do it without holding back. Eric agreed that I could do the stunts myself and I was glad about that.

### **How would you define your character?**

Franck Adrien is a robber, the archetype of the guilty innocent man. To define his character and find some references, I'd say a less chatty Lino Ventura.

### **You bring to him your intensity and physical potential. The role is also more powerful because you throw yourself into it. How did you construct the character?**

As an actor, I don't like intellectualizing my work. I'm suspicious of that. I let things come from within whilst trying to make myself smaller in relation to the character. Sometimes, you can be disappointed because they aren't as big as you'd thought and so it's less comfortable. Other times, the character is pretty big and ends up taking you over. In that case, you flatten yourself down before it, and put yourself to work for them. An actor carries fragments, crumbs of a character within themselves and the role means that suddenly, they come together to give a density and coherence to the role. Just like my character, I already felt a sense of injustice, had

the feeling I was doing the right things but screwing them up all the same. So I felt a connection with who he is and what he's going through.

### **At what point did you get to grips with the stature of your character?**

If you end up seeing yourself like in real life, you're damned! If you manage to forget yourself – which isn't easy for egocentrics like me! – then you're into a good working relationship.

To play Franck, I followed the rhythms of this physical, frenetic, violent man who is somewhat caricatured in a good way. He dominated me completely. I had to run like him and feel things like him. He carried me along with him, which allowed me to embody him. Sometimes, you can feel a bit cramped in a role, realizing in a scene that you're going round in circles without managing to take off. That wasn't at all the case with this character.

### **How did you work with Eric Valette and the writers?**

In the beginning, I turned down the project because it was going to be a lot more radical. Then, in talking to Eric and Luc, I felt they wanted to go in the same direction as me, which was encouraging and even somewhat flattering. We were all talking about the same film. I feel comfortable when everyone is in agreement, both as a director and as an actor. I loved making CASH TRUCK and IRREVERSIBLE. Paradoxically, I've no acting ambitions and yet I do want to be involved in powerful, memorable projects. I feel that THE PREY might just be one of those. Eric and I were telling the same story. He was very demanding both in terms of my physical investment and intellectual contribution, which was very real. I wanted him to make the best possible film and I knew that he was open to any ideas, whether he used them or not. Suggesting them is also my job.

### **Your character combines different facets: Father, husband, lover, and robber. How did you make him coherent?**

Franck finds himself in a situation of total urgency. As for his character, I don't want to look at the psychology of it because I immediately put myself in something rapid, abrupt and quick. Each of his actions is motivated by urgency, a vital necessity. That's what his behavior is about throughout the film.

### **Do you tackle physical scenes and dramatic scenes in the same way?**

Every scene requires the same concentration, whether it's physical – to prevent you hurting yourself – or dramatic, because you have to listen to your acting partner. When you do a stunt, the concentration is very selfish as you're only thinking about saving your own skin. Performing with others, with Alice, Sergi or Stéphane, requires you to listen hard while you try to communicate with them.

### **Did you prepare physically for the movie?**

I did some specific training with the stunt artists, with whom I'd already worked on LOCKED OUT. Running and jumping you can do. But jumping in certain places, running in a particular way, jumping onto a train – you don't do that every day! I love those scenes. If I hadn't done my own stunts, I'd have only been on set for three days. From the moment you commit, you have to really do it. I have the great excuse of being able to say to myself that it's a role defined within the very precise framework of Eric's directing and in Luc and Laurent's script. You may as well take on board everything the character takes on board. It's great fun. Moreover, doing the stunts myself meant I could take the drama into the action. The tension I bear throughout the film can be felt in each scene. Every evening, we came out of one stunt to do another the following morning. That concentration, that process of becoming aware and that edginess is palpable and feeds hugely into the performance.

### **Were some scenes particularly anxiety-inducing or exciting?**

Nothing worried me. I was very well looked after by stunt coordinator Christian Hening. Each time, a lighting double did the stunts before me both so they could adjust the framing and to show me what I had to do. It was a very good way of seeing what difficulties I was going to face. The film was made at a pace

that helped us all rise to the occasion. And I was very confident working with Eric Valette. He stays very calm on set. He pays a lot of attention to detail and he's full of ideas. He knows what he wants and he's a very good listener.

### **You form a duo with Alice Taglioni, despite only having very few scenes together. How did it go with her?**

Everything was great with Alice. She is a very elegant young woman, very upright and dignified. She is very professional and very open to others. Despite only having two scenes together, it was a pleasure to work with her, as with all the other actors for that matter. Stéphane Debac was a real revelation. He is absolutely wonderful in the perversity and anxiety he gets across. I've admired Sergi Lopez for years and working with him was a wonderful experience.

### **Right from the start one feels this film is different to what is normally offered to moviegoers. What does THE PREY represent to you within the context of contemporary movie making?**

It's a radical and extreme cop thriller; something you don't see much of in France. It's a very carefully measured and successful combination of action and suspense.



**Do you know what place this film will have in your career?**

It's a continuation of the way I invest myself and participate in projects that make a mark. My commitment to this film was real. Actors are very dependent on their directors, but I was very careful to remain vigilant about what had been defined so that the initial aims didn't fall by the wayside. The original idea for which we had all come on board was totally respected.

When I am acting, I let my hair down. Both mentally and physically. You have to take that on with a lot of humility, do it seriously but without taking yourself seriously. It does me a huge amount of good. I refused to admit that for a very long time but it's the truth. And that's why for several years, I haven't been making films. But I am very satisfied with the experience of working on this project.

**Did this film teach you anything about yourself or the way you work?**

Above all, this experience taught me that this was the last film I'm going to make that requires so much physical effort. I felt that I wasn't going to be able to get up if I fell down. For the first time, I was totally exhausted when I got home at night. For the final weeks, I really couldn't run anymore. The stuntman who tried out all the stunts before me was just as tired. And he's a pro who's younger than me, so I found that comforting. The film really called for total commitment.





## INTERVIEW WITH ALICE TAGLIONI (CLAIRE LINÉ)

### How did you get involved in the project?

Eric Valette and Luc Bossi sent me the script. It immediately appealed to me because you read it in one go, because it went right to the very heart of the story and drew me in, and also because it was like nothing I've ever been offered before. The idea of playing a cop, of acting with Albert, of working with Eric Valette whose films I knew was very appealing and very motivating.

### How would you define your character?

Claire is a fairly simple character with a very healthy ambition to do her job as a detective, which she loves. To her, instincts are important and she listens to hers which tell her not to believe what seems obvious and her bosses' preconceived ideas. To me, that instinct is more about her character than her femininity, even if her superior teases her a little in that regard. Claire knows how to think intuitively.

### How did you approach the role?

I talked a lot with Eric and Albert about how to define Claire. Even if it's not directly visible for the viewer, telling yourself the story of the character beyond what you see in the film feeds into the performance. It's something I do more and more because exploring a character helps you embody them and frees you up in terms of their interpretation. It's something I do on my own. For example, I imagine Claire studying, precise, considered, dogged. She's not a daredevil who is ready for anything. Nor do I see her as a rebel who is trying to teach men a lesson. She's a woman doing a job she's chosen, surrounded by men, but the film doesn't focus unnecessarily on her femininity. She has to prove herself like anyone does in any job. She naturally integrates into the team. She doesn't try to use seduction either, her main focus is being efficient. It's only at the start of the film that we see her being very fierce, but it's to make a trap work and we sense it's not really her thing.

### She's a woman, but she's also a cop in the field...

The character has to be credible in her job even if this isn't a documentary. I had some training with a former police officer who taught me the moves, how to shoot which is something I'd never done, how to draw a gun and how to run with a gun. I tried to make it so people who are in the job would find the action coherent and realistic.

A character's physical appearance is also important. Claire dresses in a functional way, which doesn't stop her being smart. Her wardrobe is simple but she tries to



choose her clothing with taste. Claire also had to be easily identified in the action scenes, which is why she always wears a ponytail. It's both very practical when she's moving and it also defines her shape.

**When you read the script, did you realize what a physical role it was going to be?**

It was obvious. There are a lot of chases and a lot of action, with my character often on the front line. Of course I had to do some physical preparation but that was mostly about basic training, and being in the good shape which actors are kind of obliged to permanently be in. A shoot is always a physical marathon and this one was even more so. Personally, I began doing sports in SKY FIGHTERS and since then, I've done it regularly. During the four days we did the big chase scene with Albert, we had to run and give our all, 30 times a day. And each time, when Eric said, "Action!", we had to throw ourselves at it. It was very physical. You can see that we really lived it on screen.

**In this role, we discover you in a new light. Can you tell us about that?**

That's no doubt due to the role and Eric's way of shooting. It's also almost certainly because I was determined to be as neutral as possible in terms of my facial expressions. I play a cop, someone who is not supposed to betray their emotions, and someone who never reveals their hand first. I'm often told – and have noticed it myself when watching myself perform – that in comedies most often, I reveal a lot through the expressions on my face. Here, I felt I was working differently, holding back more, stopping myself using any tricks. The aim wasn't to look hard but to situate this woman in her daily life and make her a character that interiorizes. That aspect really appealed to me.

**How did you work with your acting partners?**

We're not together very much on screen but Albert and I spent a lot of time together on the shoot. I think he was really delighted to make this film. He had such a great time, pushing past his own limits, and he made us want to do the same. I've wanted to work with him for a long time. I think he's one of the most charismatic and unique actors there is. There's nobody quite like him. He always brings something special, whatever the register he's performing in. He's so into his character that you just have to follow. He makes things very simple. I was also very pleased to work with Serge Hazanavicius for the first time. He's very open and really wants to work together to obtain the best possible result. Through the dialogue and the attitudes, we tried to create a real complicity between our characters.

I really appreciated working with Zinedine Soualem. He is very invested in his role and very funny on set. We had a real laugh together!

**How did you work with Eric Valette?**

I know and love Eric's universe. I was really struck by MALÉFIQUE: Eric managed to make a real genre film – something rare in French cinema. I also really loved STATE AFFAIRS, which, despite a lot of dialogue – really keeps you on the edge of your seat and never lets the tension slip. I felt totally confident working with him. He knows exactly what



he wants and how to take us there. He sets up a really pleasant atmosphere on the shoot that feels very efficient and everyone feels very open to discussion. To me, having not made a film for three years, it was a truly excellent experience, both in terms of the people and in terms of the acting. Being on location a lot in some fabulous parts of France with all the action and tension of the film was really great.

**When you saw the finished film, did you see things you hadn't anticipated during the shoot?**

I was pleased with Claire's character. She comes across as very down to earth and very willing and not at all hardnosed. I also found certain details, some of which were perfected during the shoot, give her a limit that makes her even more real. For example, when she's chasing Franck, she doesn't jump on the train behind him. This isn't MISSION IMPOSSIBLE or some superhero movie. That also makes the film denser and more believable. I think the script works very well and that Eric knew how to give it another dimension, one that we adore in American movies and which is clearly possible to find here in France.

**What memories of this film will stay with you?**

A great many! All those chases, those situations, that acting... I'll never forget the adrenaline rush when I had to run through all those moving cars. There might have been professionals driving them but they only just missed us!



I also loved the human relationships, which are always essential on set.

I hope I don't become the kind of actress who only comes out of her trailer for takes. I love watching how others work and I know how lucky we are to be able to do this job.

As a producer, Luc Bossi made it possible for us to shoot in France. That's another aspect to this film – there are some splendid landscapes. The shoot also reminded me of how much I love this job. I never feel better than when I'm on a movie set. This film allowed me to do what I wanted. However, it also made me want to get back into comedy which I obviously really love. I think that for the audience, THE PREY is also an occasion to see something else, a real action thriller.



## INTERVIEW WITH STÉPHANE DEBAC (JEAN-LOUIS MAUREL)

### What made you want to get involved in this film?

Initially, I was attracted by what came out of the script – it was powerful and original. I also knew Eric's work, mainly MALÉFIQUE and everything was there to ensure this action thriller would be right up there with its American cousins, with a psychological dimension as well. The idea of playing an atypical baddie was also tempting. Maurel isn't a brute even if he is a monster. He has a Machiavellian side, he's a manipulator. It was about acting the role of someone who can himself act to better deceive. I particularly like multi-faceted roles, especially when they are so unlike me and offer so many nuances and different aspects.

### How did you approach your character?

The test stage is critical. That's when I offer my version of a character. And in this case, it corresponded to what Eric imagined – a kind of normality without harshness, to the point of becoming disturbing. I had to find a contradiction between what Maurel does – the revolting and detestable aspect of the character – and the daily rhythm in which he presents himself. The news shows us every day that the most dangerous individuals aren't necessarily those you notice. Tackling the character in this way seemed more powerful than just creating an obvious psychopath.

### Did you also think about his personality?

In terms of how he operates, I worked on having a lack of morals. Anyone can be driven by his or her urges. Fortunately our education and those things we forbid ourselves hold us back. But that's not the case for Maurel. To his mind, what he does isn't that bad because it is part of his moral framework, it's in his nature. For him, going through with something is the simple concrete expression of his wishes, of a desire, of a crazy urge that he doesn't even question because all the doors are open and there's nothing in his moral framework that can stop him.

### Even if he works alone, he's not a lone killer...

His relationship with his wife is one of the things that make him particularly interesting. I was totally in symbiosis with Natacha Régnier, who plays Christine, his partner. She is a wonderful actor to work with. I have noticed how some men hold their girlfriends by the neck instead of around the waist or by the hand. To me, that's a sign of domination and I used that detail in the market scene. This couple has no real physical intimacy. There is no sensuality between

them. Their attachment is elsewhere. So I explored other areas like spirituality that could bring them together. It's not written down anywhere but it colors certain scenes. I really like all that "off screen" work. Even for a role like Maurel, I'm just a kid having fun.

#### **Were you worried about playing a monster?**

As an actor, the thing that motivates me is forgetting myself in order to put everything I can into the role I'm playing. I'm not there to judge – that's not the job of an actor. When I'm working, I have no ego and I don't seek to promote myself personally through a role. It doesn't matter if I'll be handsome, respectable or otherwise. I just try to make the character exist.

#### **You managed to give him a real attitude that's very different from your own...**

That's one of the ways of defining the character. Each person has a kind of center of gravity. Some walk with their bellies, their feet or their hips – it's an energy that comes off a precise part of their body, which reveals a great deal. Maurel has an almost debonair attitude, a little slow, which almost gives him the shape of a cartoon character, with a steady rhythm and always in control. It's something you work on with the director. Eric, the costume designer and I really worked together to give Maurel that slightly provincial nature, without slipping into caricature, something I know well because I live in the provinces. Through what you see you can imagine his life, his neat closet, his polo shirts lined up, his pants nicely folded by his wife. Through the director, the camera is a merciless eye that sometimes seeks out things that have escaped the actor. Everything the actor shows must, therefore, be coherent with his character. That's why I do a lot of preparation for a role so I am freer on set. That doesn't stop me from being instinctive, but I need to tell myself the character's story above and beyond the viewfinder.

#### **How did you get along with your acting partners?**

I really like Albert Dupontel's work. He makes films that are often very strong, with unusual and original perspectives. But when I'm working opposite him as an actor, I try to forget all that. Albert invests a lot in his character and I feel close to that. As both an actor and director, he helps save time. Our characters have some extremely powerful interactions when it's always a question of life or death and that requires a lot of intensity. Alice Taglioni and I had already met and working with her was a great pleasure.

We only have one scene together, a critical one in which a game of liar's poker is played with a lot at stake. She plays her role in a very pure and sober way, which, like everything that looks easy, requires a great deal of work. We each have our own basis: My character tries to manipulate her and she's nobody's fool.

#### **What do you think of Eric Valette?**

Eric is not happy with simply shooting a script. He offers a real point of view to the audience. The scope of the action scenes never makes him lose sight of the implications of the plot and the characters. If you watch the film several times, beyond the direction that carries you along, you'll see that he films each character in their own rhythm, which never throws out the overall balance. Whether it's the police investigation, whether it's Maurel, or the robber on the run,



all the chases have slightly different tempos, several registers that merge and that he has combined perfectly to construct the whole he wanted. People will find it a real entertainment movie with a lot of action, beauty, feeling and even black humor. I felt happy and confident with his way of filming. Eric is passionate about his craft and his actors and I hope we'll work together again one day because with him, you always feel like you're making a real movie.

#### **If you only had one memory from this experience, what would it be?**

A very short moment, when I'm chasing my victim to the forest. My character is almost animal-like. It's very base. That was the moment when I really descended into the very blackest heart of my role. I felt the truth of it. It wasn't easy but it was a very powerful experience in my career as an actor.

# HOW THE MOVIE CAME ABOUT

## An interview with writers

### LAURENT TURNER and LUC BOSSI (also producer)

**Luc Bossi:** “The idea of a serial killer, something that is more Anglo-Saxon, has only become a reality in France over the last 15 years with the widespread adoption of DNA testing and computer records. The police have been able to connect murders in different regions or identify criminals who have been committing crimes for years. Some of these cases contain incredible elements like the suicide of the gendarme called Jambert who was hunting Emile Louis in vain, the chillingly cold-blooded MO of the Fourniret husband and wife team or the poignant drama of Patrick Dils, imprisoned for a double murder he didn’t commit whilst the real killer, Francis Heaulme, was roaming free. There are also stories of victims’ parents trying to carry out their own investigations to make up for the failures of the justice system. It’s fascinating material for a thriller and my co-writer Laurent and I looked for a subject for a movie that would transcend these true stories, and would not recount the facts within but capture their intensity, their themes and the dramatic power of the outrage they inspire.”

“The notion of innocence is unclear and changes a lot in these stories so our central idea was to create a hero character who would give off that ambiguity – a robber, a criminal whom, if set against a serial killer, would suddenly find himself on the ‘right’ side. Right from the beginning, Laurent was convinced that was the richest angle from which to explore the world we’d chosen.”

**Laurent Turner:** “The story’s central character, Franck, has no choice other than to escape in order to save his family from the hands of a killer, whilst himself being hunted down by the police. Moreover, the killer goes so far as to try and have him accused of his own crimes. It’s an intricate plot where each character has their own motivations. The title of the film encapsulates it and can be read on several levels because each protagonist, at some point or other, becomes THE PREY of the others.”

**Luc Bossi:** “Right from the start we had real ambition in terms of both the direction and the casting. We asked Eric Valette to come on board as director very early on. From MALÉFIQUE to STATE AFFAIRS, he has clearly demonstrated his skills. He’s comfortable with action but he has a universe and a personality that mean you avoid the risk of ending up with a finished movie with no character. He has worked in both Europe and the States, and from this he’s gained experience that allies efficiency with sensitivity. He has all the codes and knows how to go beyond them to tell stories in his own way.”

**Laurent Turner:** “From our narrative framework, which was written as a series of traps that put the hero in ever increasing danger, many elements made this an atypical story. From the cop character with a tendency to run away, to those leading the investigation, we were really looking to get away from the stereotypes. That goes for the killer as well, normally presented as someone acting alone. The idea of a couple in love and the fact they would look completely normal seemed really innovative. They look like the kind of couple about whom people would say, ‘You’d never have expected it from them.’ So we wrote supermarket and barbecue scenes; all those things that make a couple totally average. We wanted to get away from the usual cliché of a crazier serial killer. The fact they are really close makes them all the more frightening.”

**Luc Bossi:** “We also decided to make the cop a woman to give an extra dimension to the strange psychological relationship between the police officer and the person they are hunting down. While we were writing the screenplay, we met a female detective who inspired us. Many women are working at that high level in the French police force, with their own skills men appreciate, such as the analysis of motivation. Our heroine, Claire Linné’s conviction in the face of everyone who is accusing Franck is one



of the drivers of the film. We also looked at some of the often very exciting investigations led by the real police.”

**Laurent Turner:** “We took risks with situations and narrative choices to increase the plot twists and maintain the suspense right to the end. With Luc wearing the producer’s hat too, we were guaranteed that our most ambitious ideas would find their way onto the screen.”

**Luc Bossi:** “We showed our financial partners that we wanted this story to travel right across France, that we wanted to make a film that would take place, like in the real news, in places where cop films don’t normally go. So taking it from Paris to the mountainous landscapes of the Alpes-Maritimes where the final action scenes take place, and passing through the middle of the country were an essential part of the project. Eric Valette knew how to draw the breadth and the rhythm of the film from these visual style elements, giving an extra dimension to the story.”

**Laurent Turner:** “It was great knowing who was going to direct while we were writing the project. We were happy to be writing for him and it made the project even more coherent. You feel that when you see the film. Eric Valette brought his contribution and improved many scenes in a much better way than I’d imagined. The one where Franck hides, with his sights on Maurel through the window is a striking example. You feel like you’re in a western.”

**Luc Bossi:** “Eric worked with us in a very pertinent manner while we were writing. His vision of the characters and his radical approach to direction pushed us to go further. He also had a very precise vision of the action scenes. He constructed their filmic architecture and how they would play out in locations very closely linked to our scouting trips. There is a major chase scene with Albert Dupontel that begins on a freeway and ends on a train. I’d held back on the writing but Eric thought we should go further and deny ourselves nothing in terms of the action. I have to say that the shoot gave me a few cold sweats but the result, thanks mainly to Eric’s direction and Albert’s commitment, but also to Alice and the whole team, really made it worthwhile. The first people to see the film talked about it being a very intense experience and to me, that reflects the commitment the team had to making it work.”

**Laurent Turner:** “We were very lucky to go straight into a clear-cut cop movie straight after our romantic comedy, LA CHANCE DE MA VIE, which was released in January. Like any moviegoer, we don’t like confining ourselves to one single genre. But I have to say that our experience with THE PREY was particularly satisfying and made me want to put everything else on hold so I can get down to another thriller straight away!”



# CAST

Franck Adrien **Albert Dupontel**  
Claire Linné **Alice Taglioni**  
Manuel Carrega **Sergi Lopez**  
Jean-Louis Maurel **Stéphane Debac**  
Christine **Natacha Regnier**  
Anna **Caterina Murino**  
Lucciani **Zinedine Soualem**  
Lafay **Serge Hazanavicius**  
Pascaud **Jean-Marie Winling**  
Alex **Lucien Jean-Baptiste**  
Brice **Yves Verhoeven**  
Amélie **Jaïa Caltagirone**  
Manzon **Yves Girard**  
The Kazak **Ilja Nikitenko**  
The big guy **Sébastien Vandenberghe**  
The translator **Patrick Medioni**  
Melissa **Claire Bouanich**  
Novick **Olivier Schneider**

# CREW

Director **Eric Valette**  
Screenplay **Luc Bossi and Laurent Turner**  
Original music **Noko**  
Photography **Vincent Mathias**  
Set Design **Bertrand Seitz**  
Costumes **Fabienne Katany**  
Sound **Didier Coudoul, Pascal Villard, Cyril Holtz  
and Philippe Amouroux**  
Editing **Christophe Pinel and Fabrice Rouaud**  
First assistant director **Jean-André Silvestro**  
Script supervisor **Elsa Melquioni**  
Postproduction manager **Julie Léger**  
VFX Supervision **François Ferracci and Laurens Ehrmann**  
Production manager **Philippe Besnier**  
Produced by **Luc Bossi**  
Coproduced by **Brio Films, StudioCanal and TF1 Films Production**  
With the participation of **Canal+ and Cinécinéma**  
In association with **Cinimage 5  
A plus Image 2  
La Banque Postale Image 4  
Banque Populaire Images 9**  
With the support of **La région Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur  
and Le département des Alpes Maritimes**  
In partnership with **CNC**

