

MARGO CINÉMA PRESENTS



OFFICIAL SELECTION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

NAPALM

A FILM BY CLAUDE LANZMANN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLAUDE LANZMANN



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France 10



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France 14



France 15



France 16



France 17



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NAPALM

A FILM BY CLAUDE LANZMANN

a Margo Cinéma - Orange Studio coproduction
with the participation of the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image animée
and the support of Région Ile-de-France

France - 2017 - Runtime: 100 mins

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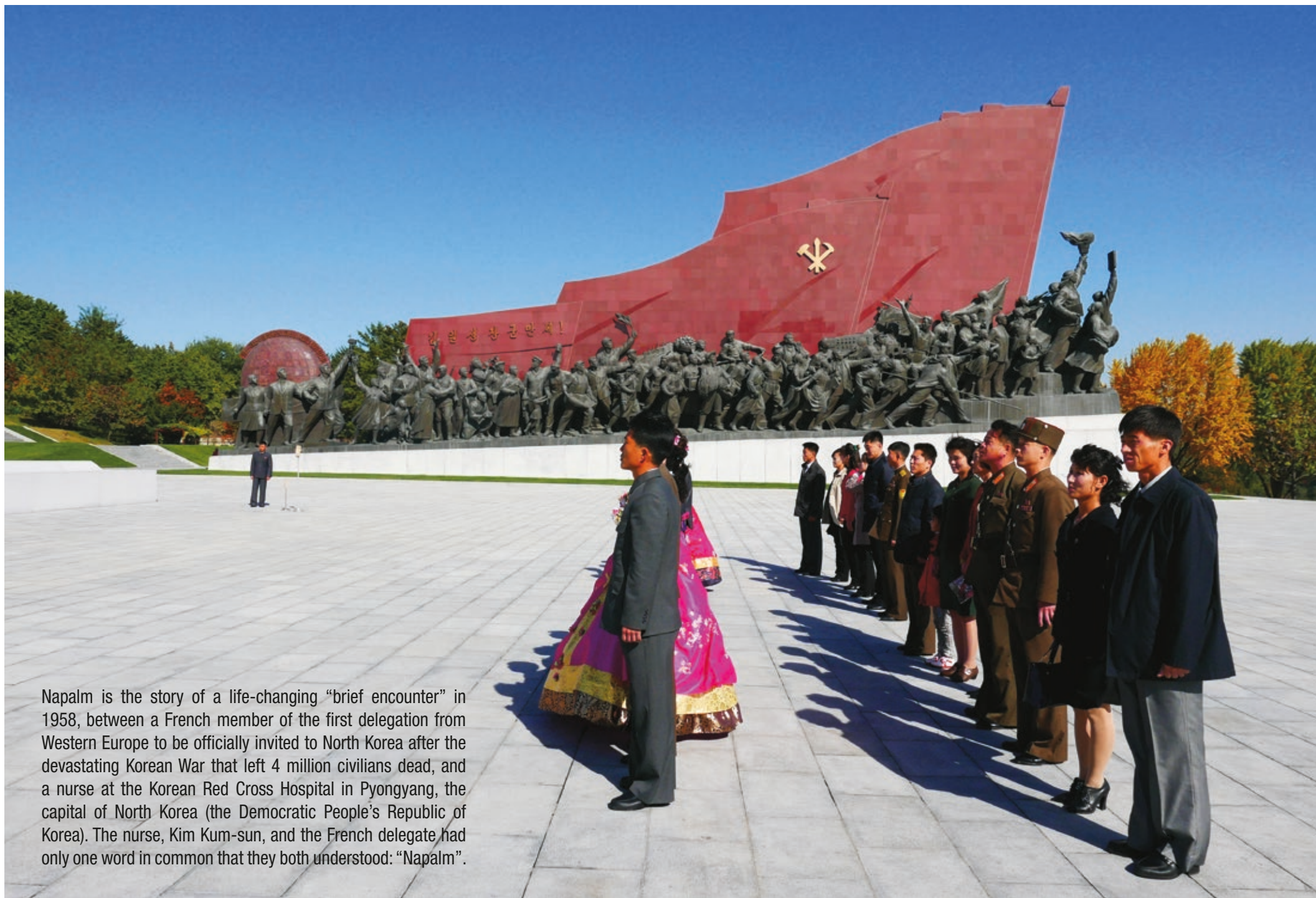
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Napalm is the story of a life-changing “brief encounter” in 1958, between a French member of the first delegation from Western Europe to be officially invited to North Korea after the devastating Korean War that left 4 million civilians dead, and a nurse at the Korean Red Cross Hospital in Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea (the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea). The nurse, Kim Kum-sun, and the French delegate had only one word in common that they both understood: “Napalm”.



For “Napalm”, Claude Lanzman returned to North Korea without a filming permit. Every shot represents an amazing victory over the constant supervision by the regime’s political police, who discovered the real reason why he came back, 60 years later, to this far northern peninsula.

INTERVIEW WITH CLAUDE LANZMAN

How did you get the idea of making a film about the singular love affair you had in Pyongyang in 1958?

It was a brief encounter, and like the love affair in the David Lean movie, it was never consummated – not because I was puritanical like the characters in *Brief Encounter*, but because we were prevented! People had been telling me for years that I should make a film about it, but I couldn't see how it was possible. Anyone else would have made a movie with actors, shot in some place in Asia on the banks of some river, because it's impossible to shoot in Pyongyang. That's probably what Spielberg would have done: he'd have built the city and made the river! But even if I'd had the means to do it, I wouldn't have known how. And because it is *my* story, it is mine to tell – I told it already in *The Patagonian Hare* – and it's mine to film and nobody else's. I also remembered the unhappy experience I'd had with the novel by Claire Etcherelli, *Elise ou la vraie vie* (*Elise, or Real Life*). I'd discovered Claire and helped her and got Simone de Beauvoir to read her book and it won the Femina Prize (in 1967). Then Michel Drach came and asked me to adapt it for the screen, saying it had to be a rush job but as soon as he got the Advance on Box Office grant, I'd be able to rework the script. He got the grant but he wouldn't let me rework the script, so I disowned it and fell out with him. His movie isn't the one I wanted. *Elise ou la vraie vie* isn't really a story about a Frenchwoman and an Arab man in the heat of the Algerian War, it's about how a female

factory worker becomes a writer. My story in Pyongyang was in the same danger of being about something else. For a while, I did think about filming it with actors, I even had a British actor in mind for the role of myself in 1958, but no, I couldn't do it.

It's almost impossible to film in Pyongyang. How did you manage it?

I'd been back there before, in 2004. When I was asked whether I'd been in the country before, I said I hadn't. Otherwise they might have looked into it and refused me a visa. So in 2004, I obtained a four-day tourist visa from Beijing and found myself attached to a bunch of Chomsky disciples who wanted to see what hardcore communism was like. I thought I was going to starve to death. They served us horrible, ratty meat and wouldn't let us anywhere near the Koreans. They told us that Koreans were very hospitable people but didn't like meeting foreigners. One day, I pretended to be sick to avoid going out with the group, exactly the way I did in 1958, as I explain in the film. In 2004 I managed to tire out my minder – he was much younger than me but smoked like a chimney, like all Koreans – and got into a taxi with him. I wanted to see the city I'd known more than 45 years before. I searched for the hotel from back then, but the taxi driver said it had burned down four years earlier. Then I guided the taxi to the Red Cross hospital where I'd taken Armand Gatti in 1958. I was overwhelmed. My minder was completely baffled. I told him I knew Pyongyang

better than he did and explained all about my affair with Kim Kum-sun, “my” unforgettable nurse. He immediately phoned his superiors and half an hour after I got back to the hotel, an official, some sort of vice-minister of tourism, introduced himself to me. We drank whisky and talked and I told him I would love to make a film in his country. He gave me his contact details and I flew back to Beijing the next day and never went back. I was too scared of starving to death!

You never tried to find Kim Kum-sun again, either now or back in 2004...

No, I've preferred to keep the image of her that I remember from 1958. I don't know whether she's still alive. She could be. She was younger than me. I'll be 92 in November, I don't know about her. If she ever happened to see the film, by some amazing stroke of chance that I can't imagine, I would probably never know about it.

And yet, after your second visit to Pyongyang, you did go back...

My affair with Kim Kum-sun has haunted me since 1958. Writing about it in 2009 in my book, *The Patagonian Hare*, probably rekindled my desire to make a film about it. People who had read the book talked to me about it and François Margolin, the producer, whose son was best friends with my son (*Félix, who died of cancer on January 13th, 2017 at the age of 23*), persuaded me to give it a try and go there again, but to make a film this time.

A film about what, officially?

About taekwondo! There are still bits of it in *Napalm*, by the way. But I didn't delude myself: I knew very well that there, I'd only be able to film what they wanted me to. We stayed in Pyongyang for about a month, always under close surveillance, naturally, with the guy you

see in the film who wouldn't let go of my arm. It hurt like hell! I kept trying to shake him off but there was no way. I filmed the War Museum, where the sweetest young woman, a junior lieutenant, guided me around. I filmed the bridge where I'd arranged to meet Kim Kum-sun, and the boats on the river, although they're different from the ones in 1958, which were bigger and could carry up to ten people. And of course I filmed the giant statues of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il on Mansu Hill. It's extraordinary the way those statues make everyone who comes near them – tourists, newlyweds, even filmmakers – stand still. It made me realise that a movie image has no strength unless it is stilled and turned into a photograph. We did that in the edit and I think it works. Those statues make statues of everything. That's what it is.

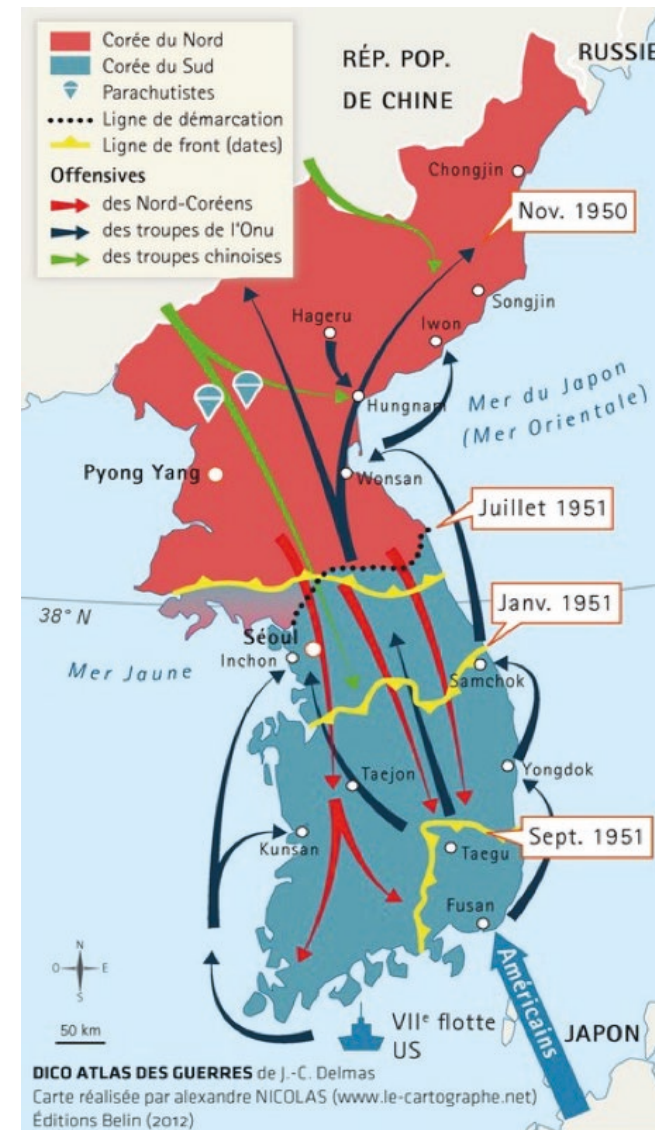
With regard to the brief encounter itself, you could only tell the story straight to the camera...

I had no other choice. In a way, I broke down the dichotomy between documentary and fiction. I wrote in *The Patagonian Hare* that I didn't think my “brief encounter” would ever make it to the screen. I truly thought so at the time. And now it's a movie. And I can't get over it.

KEY DATES IN NORTH KOREAN HISTORY

- 2333 B.C.: Mythical foundation of Korea by a man named Dangun, the son of Hwanung and a female bear transformed into a woman.
- 1231: Mongol invasion.
- 1592 and 1597-98: Attempted invasions by Japan repelled by Admiral Yi Sun-sin.
- 1637: Korea defeated and made a vassal state by the Chinese Manchu Qing dynasty. Korea is nicknamed the “Hermit Kingdom”. All foreigners who enter it are forbidden to leave.
- 1905: Korea is made a protectorate of Japan.
- 1910: Korea is annexed and declared a province of Japan.
- March 1st 1919: Uprising against the Japanese occupation and demand for independence.
- 1945: Korea is liberated and divided into two zones separated by the 38th parallel. The South, supported by the United States, declares its independence on August 15th, 1948. The North, backed by the Soviet Union, becomes the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on September 11th, 1948.
- June 25th, 1950: North Korean troops cross the 38th parallel, starting the Korean War that lasts three years and claims the lives of four million civilians. The US military intervenes, backed by the United Nations. China supports the North and sends hundreds of thousands of volunteers to fight.
- July 27th, 1953: Peace treaty signed at Pan Mun Jom by the United Nations, China, North and South Korea, defining a border between the two countries very close to the 38th parallel. A demilitarized zone (DMZ) is established between North and South Korea.
- July 8th, 1994: Death of President Kim Il-sung, ruler of North Korea since its creation and founder of the Workers' Party of Korea. He remains the “Eternal Leader” of the country. His son, Kim Jong-il, succeeds him, adopting the titles of “Dear Leader” and “Supreme Commander of the Army”.

- 1995-1999: A massive famine afflicts North Korea, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths. In 2004, for fear that floods will cause further famine, the government reluctantly appeals for foreign aid.
- October 9th, 2006: First nuclear test in North Korea.
- December 17th, 2011: Death of Kim Jong-il. His youngest son, Kim Jong-un, succeeds him and is named “Supreme Leader” and “Grand Marshal”.



CLAUDE LANZMANN

DIRECTOR

Claude Lanzmann was born in Paris on November 27th, 1925. He was one of the organisers of the Resistance at Blaise Pascal High School in Clermont-Ferrand in 1942. He took part in the underground urban struggle and fought with the Resistance in the Auvergne. In 1948, he taught at the Freie Universität of Berlin during the blockade. Later, he signed the “Manifesto of the 121” declaring the right of insubordination and denouncing the state repression in Algeria and was one of ten people indicted. His distinctions include the Resistance Medal with rosette, Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, and Grand Cross of the National Order of Merit. He possesses honorary doctorates from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Adelphi University, the University of Amsterdam and the European Graduate School.

Claude Lanzmann is one of the few French intellectuals and artists of international stature whose body of work has reached out and left its mark on millions of viewers all over the world. His films have revolutionized world cinema.

In addition, Claude Lanzmann is chief editor of *Les Temps Modernes*, the literary journal founded by Jean-Paul Sartre in 1946 and still regarded as one of France’s most serious periodicals. He published his memoirs in 2009 under the title *The Patagonian Hare*. This superbly written best-selling story of a life that spanned the 20th century has been translated into ten languages, won the prestigious “Welt” Literaturpreis in Germany and the Prix Henri Gal of the Institut de France, and was voted Book of the Year by a host of publications. Lanzmann followed this in 2012 with *La Tombe du divin plongeur*, a collection of articles written for various newspapers and magazines during his life that testify to the tireless vigilance of his scrutiny of the world and of his writing.

FILMOGRAPHY

2017	NAPALM
2013	LE DERNIER DES INJUSTES (THE LAST OF THE UNJUST)
2010	LE RAPPORT KARSKI
2001	SOBIBOR, 14 OCTOBRE 1943, 16 HEURES (SOBIBOR, OCT. 14, 1943, 4 P.M.)
1997	UN VIVANT QUI PASSE (A VISITOR FROM THE LIVING)
1994	 TSAHAL
1985	SHOAH
1973	POURQUOI ISRAËL (ISRAEL, WHY)



FRANÇOIS MARGOLIN

PRODUCER

After graduating from the IDHEC (now FEMIS) film school, François MARGOLIN started out as Raymond Depardon's assistant and then his film editor.

As a scriptwriter, after his first short film, *Elle et Lui*, won the Jean Vigo Prize, he went on to co-write movies by Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Arielle Dombasle, Szymon Zaleski, and others.

As a director, his debut feature film, *Mensonge* (The Lie) starring Nathalie Baye, won the Grand Prize at the Chicago and Tokyo Festivals. Since then he has directed many award-winning documentaries, including most notably *La Pitié Dangereuse* (co-directed with Rony Brauman), a political history of humanitarian aid, *Falashas*, on the Black Jews of Ethiopia, *L'Opium des Talibans* (FIPA Prize in 2001), and *Les Petits Soldats* on child soldiers in Liberia. In 2016, his film *Salafistes* sparked tremendous debate in France and worldwide.

As a producer, he has worked with many leading film directors including Raoul Ruiz (*La Nuit d'en Face/Night Across the Street*), Hou Hsiao-Hsien (*Le Voyage du Ballon Rouge/Flight of the Red Balloon*), Olivier Assayas (*Boarding Gate*), Djinn Carrénard (*Donoma*), Raymond Depardon (*Empty Quarter – A Woman in Africa*), Hélène Lapiower (*Petite Conversation Familiale/A Little Family Conversation*), Danis Tanovic, Catherine Breillat, Arielle Dombasle, Claire Denis, Costa Gavras, Bernard-Henri Levy, Pavel Lungin and Abbas Kiarostami.

CAROLINE CHAMPETIER

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Regarded as one of the greatest cinematographers in France, Caroline Champetier has partnered the top French movie directors of more than one generation and many foreign filmmakers. Her work has won several awards.

Her collaboration with Claude Lanzmann dates back to the making of *Shoah*, on which she worked as an assistant, first to William Lubtchansky and then to Dominique Chapuis. She has directed the photography of most of his films since then.

CREW LIST

Director **Claude Lanzmann**
Producer **François Margolin**
Cinematography **Caroline Champetier**
Sound **Camille Lotteau**
Still photography **Iris Van der Waard**
Film editing **Chantal Hymans**
Sound editing **Thomas Fourel**
Sound mixing **Antoine Bailly**

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