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ba bekhti benssalah bouchez brahim darroussin
de la comédie-française
adèle gilles miou-miou denis fred
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je verrai toujours vos visages

een film van jeanne herry



cinéart

PERSMAP

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**Meer over de film:
Persmaterialen:**

[Cineart.nl/films/je-verrai-toujours-vos-visages](https://www.cineart.nl/films/je-verrai-toujours-vos-visages)

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Synopsis

In de hoopgevende Franse film *JE VERRAI TOUJOURS VOS VISAGES* snijdt Jeanne Herry (na *PUPILLE*) opnieuw een belangrijk sociaal thema aan. De film laat zien hoe we als mensen samen de wereld een stukje beter kunnen maken.

Het herstelrecht biedt zowel daders als slachtoffers de mogelijkheid om met elkaar in gesprek te gaan in een veilige omgeving. Nassim, Issa en Thomas zijn veroordeeld voor diefstal met geweld. Grégoire, Nawelle en Sabine zijn slachtoffers van soortgelijke misdrijven. Onder begeleiding van hulpverleners Paul en Judith komt de groep bijeen om te praten over hun ervaringen. Tussen woede en hoop, en stiltes en woorden krijgen deze mensen een gezicht. Als wantrouwen langzaam overgaat in genegenheid, blijkt hoe belangrijk het is om te blijven praten.

De film was een hit in Frankrijk en brengt een Franse sterrencast bijeen, met sterke rollen van onder meer Adèle Exarchopoulos, Leïla Bekhti, Gilles Lellouche, Miou-Miou, Jean-Pierre Darroussin en Dali Benssalah.



Director: Jeanne Herry

BIOGRAPHY

Jeanne Herry began her career at a theatre school in London. Shortly after she went back to France, she was admitted to the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique.

Jeanne Herry, start her career as an actress in Louis Malle's MILOU EN MAI in 1990, began her career. She also appeared in the series MAIGRET and Clara Sheller in 2002 and 2005 before turning to directing and then writing.

In 2005, she published her first novel, 80 ÉTÉS. Then she began writing a feature film script ELLE L'ADORE, which would bring Sandrine Kiberlain and Laurent Lafitte together on screen a few years later. This dramatic comedy earned her a nomination at the 2015 César Awards in the Best First Film category, while Sandrine Kiberlain was nominated for Best Actress.

In 2016, Jeanne Herry directed L'OR ET LA PAILLE by Barillet and Gredy, at the Théâtre du Rond-point, then directed the famous series DIX POUR CENT (episodes with Juliette Binoche and Isabelle Adjani).

In 2018, she signed the feature film PUPILLE which received 6 nominations at the 2019 Césars, and in 2019, she created the series MOUCHE for Canal+, then directed the show Forums with the troupe of the Comédie Française at the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier.

In 2023, Jeanne Herry will release JE VERRAI TOUJOURS VOS VISAGES, starring Adèle Exarchopoulos, Gilles Lellouche and Miou-Miou.

FILMOGRAPHY

DIRECTOR

2023	JE VERRAI TOUJOURS VOS VISAGES
2018	PUPILLE
2014	ELLE L'ADORE

ACTOR

2004	GABRIELLE
1990	MILOU EN MAI

WRITER

2023	JE VERRAI TOUJOURS VOS VISAGES
2019	LES PETITS FLOCONS
2018	PUPILLE
2014	ELLE L'ADORE

Interview with Jeanne Herry (Director)

“I like to explore good feelings. Good feelings are complex”

Created in 2014, restorative justice is still little known in France. Where did the idea of making a film about it come from?

After PUPILLE, I was looking for a new project and I started researching two topics of interest to me: how the brain works and the justice system. I've always been fascinated by news items, trials, big names in organized crime, big-shot lawyers... One day I stumbled upon a podcast about restorative justice. I was intrigued, then captivated: what I found interesting in this process was precisely what drove my research on the brain: repair.

What do the two have to do with each other?

The link. Restorative justice gives victims of abuse and perpetrators the opportunity to meet, talk and put things right. When face to face, victims and offenders can express their feelings and emotions while developing new relationships where empathy can sometimes take precedence over fear. This collective repair process involving the rebuilding of links has much in common with brain plasticity, which allows the brain to repair itself by recreating connections.

But you ruled in favour of this new judicial tool...

The brain was a vast subject, and it was more a personal interest than a subject for a film. Restorative justice suddenly became a very interesting playground; the ideal setting to write a powerful film, with high stakes, psychological action scenes, room for dialogue; everything I like.

PUPILLE already explored the idea of repair...

Yes, it is another film about the triumph of collective action. And I'm interested in the link, obviously, whatever it is. I like to examine how it is built, transferred, unraveled, or broken. And I also like to explore good feelings. Good feelings are complex.

You clearly spend a lot of time researching before you start to write...

With this film as well as PUPILLE, I shine a light on a little-known real-life process which provides tools that bring hope. However, I don't make these films to talk about adoption or restorative justice. They are not documentaries. I'm touched by the content, but it's the cinema that's important to me. I chose this subject because I felt that I could plant seeds of romance in it, and it would give me the opportunity to make a good film. During my research, one of the people I met told me: "The aim of restorative justice is to release emotions through speech". It is this release I wanted to depict.

Have you attended these meetings between victims and perpetrators?

No. This would run counter to the basic principle of this process, which invites attackers to tell their story with complete freedom. They know that the setting in which they will express themselves is safe and that nothing they say will be repeated. Some of them may even disclose facts that they have never revealed before. The only things I attended, and that was interesting, were training sessions. I attended three: the training of facilitators undertaken by Fanny (Suliane Brahim) and Michel (Jean-Pierre Darrousin)

- I really experienced the first scene of the film from the inside as I took turns playing perpetrators and victims in front of trainees; the training of mediators, the position held by Judith (Elodie Bouchez); and a third online training course in Quebec. In fact, when I prepare for a film, I don't attend anything. However, I ask people to share their experience, I collate life stories that help me clearly understand the "rules of the game", after which I can play around: reacting to what inspires me, merging testimonies, making up stories, drawing from my own life... I acquire a solid documentary basis which allows my imagination to run free. Noémie Micoulet, from the French Institute for Restorative Justice, was very helpful in collecting these testimonies.

It quickly becomes clear that the people brought together in the circle, as the meetings between victims and perpetrators are called, are not chosen at random. You must be very careful who you bring together in the same room.

The restorative justice system does not bring victims into contact with perpetrators who claim to be innocent. They must have at least a partial admission of guilt. And it is because of this admission that confrontation with the victims can help them take full responsibility for their actions. Also, in this configuration, and contrary to mediation, the victims do not meet their own abusers but people who have committed the same type of offence.

It seems that the preparation for these meetings is very time-consuming.

Yes, it is. It can take months, and each participant is prepared in advance by the facilitators, one-on-one, until they are ready. The film tells the story of the preparation of a perpetrator, Nassim (Dali Benssalah) and a victim, Chloé (Adèle Exarchopoulos), but as part of a different process...

This process is mediation. This time, the victim is confronted with her actual attacker. It is no longer a circle but a face-to-face meeting. This is the story of Chloé (Adèle Exarchopoulos), who was raped by her brother as a child and, on learning that he has returned to live in the same town as her, wishes to establish rules so that they never cross paths.

Despite a long, intense preparation - one year on average - these mediations do not always lead to a meeting. And when they do, they can take very different forms. They are either very long discussions where people talk and cry, sometimes hug... or, on the contrary, exchanges limited to two or three questions. I loved this second option. I found it powerful, intense, very interesting, and it's the one I chose for the meeting at the end, between Chloé and her brother. She asks him very specific questions, closed questions that require very short answers: did he break the lock on the bathroom? Did he hurt the cat? What did his mother say to him one morning? It's so interesting to realize that there is an incredibly thick ball of yarn inside her and, by pulling out tiny threads, she manages to untangle the web. I was struck by an example of restorative mediation in Quebec between a couple whose child had been murdered under terrible circumstances. Given the very serious charges against him, the culprit was arrested and convicted despite his denials. But this couple needed to know if it was really him. They asked to meet him, and the guy agreed. They prepared for a long time and, during the interview, the only question they asked him was: "We want to know if it's you". He replied: "Yes, it's me". Thank you, goodbye. That was the extent of the meeting, but it was so intense.

Why choose rape rather than another crime in this section on mediation?

I decided quite quickly to focus on meetings between prisoners and victims (the circle)

of violent robberies, a social and societal issue (commonplace, after all, but whose devastating effects on the victims are underestimated), and to explore a family tragedy as part of the mediation system.

Domestic violence knows no social boundaries; it affects all types of families, neighborhoods, classes... These are silent conflicts that take place behind the walls of houses, our homes; everyone can relate, project themselves. Again, I researched at length and wanted to tell the story of a brother who was an abuser, a sister who was a victim and the family where this situation originated. Violence, love, empowerment, shortcomings, and failures... Tragedies that are both appalling and, as we are now aware, terribly commonplace.

The scene between Chloé and her brother is as upsetting as it is intriguing...

This is the climactic scene of the film. I wanted it that way. It had to be restorative for the victim as well as for the brother. I don't know what will become of this boy, but he has understood things. He too may start to move forward. There is a little hope.

Are there failures in these processes, both the circle and the mediation?

In mediation, most cases do not go as far as the actual meeting, but what matters is the journey. Cases are opened and dialogue is initiated through interviews with mediators, even if the perpetrator and the victim do not meet in person. Therefore, it cannot be called a failure. But the results are still quite spectacular. When I started to look at prisoner-victim meeting circles, I really tried to understand the reason behind everyone's preparation, and I saw that these fifteen hours of meetings, three hours per week, could result in the participants hugging each other at the end. Why did it work? As I studied this fine process, I told myself that it couldn't work. All those involved -



victims, prisoners, supervisors - have one word that they use again and again to describe these experiences. They say: "It's powerful, very powerful". It is an extremely dynamic process. Everyone is making progress, repairing themselves by repairing others, in small steps, working away! LET'S GET BACK TO THE SCRIPT. HOW DID YOU MAKE THIS DYNAMIC WORK? It is a psychological, emotional dynamism, which cannot be conveyed through body language - most of the time the characters are seated - but through faces and voices. I'm not going to lie it's my favorite thing to film. The most difficult thing for me was to weave the two stories told in the film: Chloé's and the one inside the circle where six other stories develop. It's a game of snakes and ladders.

There is palpable tension between all the protagonists...

I need to write films in which the characters experience paroxysmal moments in their lives. All of them are going through an important time in their lives, they all say important things, which gives the actors a very vibrant and lively range to play with. There are very few moments outside of the breaks in the circle when people can relax.

In the circle, the victims speak out in a painful or aggressive manner. Is it always the case?

Victims say what they have to say - their distress, their anger - and abusers are generally willing to listen. They have been prepared for this. It is only after expressing their suffering that they take an interest in their attackers and discover their human nature, and the fact that they are also victims... They start wondering about their backgrounds and find out that these people have themselves suffered violence. Perpetrators recognize the suffering of victims caused by their actions, and victims restore the perpetrators' humanity. The film was initially called I MET THE WOLF. It was a sentence everyone could share. Wolves have also crossed paths with wolves, who in turn... etc.

What is striking about the scenes in the circle is that these victims realize that fear affects both sides. Nassim (Dali Bensalem) puts it very well when newel (Leila Bakhtin) says to him: "I've been seeing a shrink for three years and in three hours you've unblocked me."

These meetings open the doors of imagination. It's like a good book or a good film: we make room for others, for the subjectivity of others, for inner worlds that we do not know or understand well... Nassim is also moving forward. Initially, he's a monolith. He's intelligent, but he has been so hardened by life that he has cut himself off from feelings, emotions - his own as well as those of others. He is seriously lacking in imagination. Talking within this group gives him access to himself and others.

Early signs of empathy, even affection between people quickly become apparent.

Yes, unimaginable connections are made during these meetings - the word "meeting" comes up all the time when one is interested in justice - between victims and detainees, between supervisors. I find this camaraderie very touching; it's what you find in all groups who experience great things together.

Fanny (Suliane Brahim), Michel (Jean-Pierre Darroussin) and Judith (Elodie Bouchez) all come from a judicial or associative environment. Their commitment to restorative justice seems to give new meaning to their work and their responsibilities.

Yes, and that's probably because restorative justice goes against the current trend. It's a far cry from hysterical debates, divisions, constant clashes, and the silent hubbub that

flows like an open tap. We are in the opposite situation: a time that helps get seemingly irreconcilable people to sit together, to listen to each other and find balance. And to repair them by allowing them to regain control of their own lives. It is very rewarding.

Tell us about the preparation phase...

Until recently, this phase was called the preparation workshop. It is now called communication workshop. Basically, it's very similar to my work on scripts. The people in charge explore what the victims and perpetrators have experienced, how they have experienced it and then make room for others: "What did he experience as well?" Then they develop a storyline: "What if the abuser says this to the victim? What if it happens like this? What if the victims feel anger?" ... They tell stories too. What they do is very similar to cinema.

What exactly is the role of the volunteers played by anne benoît and pascal sangla?

They are members of the community and do not intervene much during the discussions. But they listen and support, unconditionally... They are the ones who manage the breaks. They are there to welcome people, to make things more convivial. And without even realizing it, the perpetrators and victims share a coffee, a cigarette... Community members must ensure that the bonding continues during these moments while preventing participants from returning to the substantive discussions, as they must remain within the circle. Their role is to initiate trivial conversations about the weather, the sky, the new pedestrian zone, etc. I love it! It's part of the process; it results in light-hearted moments like the dialogue about Thomas's shirt, which is meaningless.

But it's very funny.

Yes. These are breaths of fresh air, that bring relief, which they all need. Suddenly, these people who have nothing in common discover a common interest: "You're a rapist, I was raped, but we live in the same area, and we like the same book" or "You remind me of my brother". These mysterious, small links which are established, and form part of a whole are also what makes this process a success.

Did you have actors in mind when writing the script?

I wrote for some of them from the beginning: Miou-Miou (Sabine), Elodie Bouchez (Judith), Gilles Lellouche, (Grégoire), Leïla Bekhti (Nawell) Jean-Pierre Darroussin (Michel)... I wasn't sure if Gilles would be interested in the part - after all, his character only appears on page fifty - and I didn't know Leïla Bekhti. For me, they were compasses, it was nice to move forward with them in mind. I quickly thought of Birane Ba for the role of Issa. I found him very inspiring when I worked with him on a show at the *Comédie Française*. There aren't many young characters in my films, and he gave me the desire to create one. Birane is great, he is radiant, very reliable and introspective. Then came Suliane Brahim, with whom I had also worked before, Adèle Exarchopoulos, Dali Benssalah and Fred Testot. They had a lot of lines to learn (few scripts have so many), long monologues which were like bravura pieces and that they experienced as such during shooting. The first to take the plunge was Leïla at the first meeting, with a nine-minute monologue. They took turns applauding and supporting each other. If I want to work with these actors, it is also because I know that they are comfortable with a text and enjoy it.

These circle meetings involve ten people - three victims, three perpetrators, restorative justice facilitators and two volunteers. These closed-door sessions must have generated a lot of tension on the set.

There was stage fright, yes, concentration, a desire to do well... It was also fun, I think! Every actor had a lot of work to do! Not everyone has the same routine of giving their best while acting. Miou-Miou needs quiet and concentration, Fred Testot needs to make jokes and relax between takes, Leïla needs a multitude of takes, Birane often laughs hysterically, Gilles is modest and sometimes nervous... But everyone's needs and habits were respected. Because they all looked out for each other. There was a lot of laughter and a lot of deep, intense silence. They listened to each other as characters but also looked at one another as actors. On a set, one is rarely in such a privileged position to look at others and listen to them at length. And it was hard at the same time. We were in a studio, under artificial light all day, with no possibility of moving for the actors who were always sitting in the same place... I think we were all exhausted after spending three weeks in the studio!

How did you work with them beforehand?

I generally don't do many rehearsals. However, I do one-on-one readings with every actor. We read all the sequences together and that's when we identify any problems with the text, a sentence they struggle with, a word they feel uncomfortable with. I pay a lot of attention to this because I know that afterwards, we can't go back, that it's THE text that they will have to learn. I do not compromise on precision or punctuation. I ask them not to use crutch words such as well, like, actually... I've already written the "wells" and "likes" and I don't need any more, otherwise it would become mush.

So, you are fairly directive...

Let's say I ask actors to be precise. I'm not interested in seeing an actor improvise, my interest wanes. So, I try to create the right conditions for my actors. It's a bit like restorative justice, which provides safe opportunities for dialogue that are conducive to listening to each other and letting go: I try to create safe spaces for them to play so that they can relax and feel good about themselves. I would be deeply unhappy to change the way I work.



How do your actors feel about it?

I hope the ones I work with enjoy it. At any rate, I do my utmost to ensure they do. The acting is very strange, very mysterious. I was lucky enough to be trained by great masters - especially women (Catherine Hiegel, Dominique Valadié) - at the Paris *Conservatoire*, so I studied a lot, did a lot of acting, while also watching others act a lot, trying things, failing, and I loved hearing my teachers analyze their efforts. It was a place of learning that is very useful to me today, as it helps me control my actors. In all respects. I establish a strict framework by asking them to thoroughly memorize their lines. And I also "control" them in the sense that I am the one throwing them off the mountain while also throwing them a rope. I want them to feel good, I would hate for them to get hurt, to feel pain or tension at work. This does not mean that it's always plain sailing. It turns out that, for this film, all actors were on top of their characters and sang in tune. I felt a lot of desire, concentration, and pleasure, even in difficult times. It was very joyful.

Are you equally demanding the technical crew?

Once the script is finalized, I make a commented version, a sort of pre-preparation for direction with specific and overall guidelines: how will the characters be dressed? How will they be shot? In which room? I dissect every sequence, explaining why I wrote it, what I would like it to feel like; I start to break it down by indicating camera movements - some precise, clear-cut, others less so. Sometimes it's just two lines, sometimes it's a big blurb. This is a way of giving team leaders food for thought. It's quite painstaking, very time consuming but when I get to the actual preparation, I've already given a lot of thought to my film and how to direct it, thus allowing the team to come up with their own suggestions. Then I complete a breakdown into sequences on my own, which I compare with the DP's vision. And we enhance the process, we complete it together.

Nicolas Loir was the film's director of photography...

This is the first time we have worked together. And I loved working with him. Nicolas works very hard and is very meticulous. I like his intelligence and sensitivity, his level-headedness too... It was a great pleasure.

Did you have specific films in mind at that stage?

I always have one or two. When I started writing, EN THÉRAPIE, the series by Olivier Nakache and Éric Tolédano, was coming out on Arte. I liked it very much and it also reassured me: at that stage, even though I did not feel like it, I was still wondering whether to show the attacks on the victims. Did we need to see Sabine (Miou-Miou) having her bag stolen? Would her story be enough? EN THÉRAPIE confirmed the relevance of my choices. The faces in the series were like landscapes onto which we projected our own images. You can trust the power of words and acting. I focused on pleasure and the prospect of seeing my actors perform. Sidney Lumet's 12 ANGRY MEN also inspired me a lot.

There are some flashbacks in the film: some inserts of Chloé as a child, a picture of Nassim in front of the house he is about to break into...

There were more flashbacks to Chloé's life in the script. I realized very quickly that the inserts on little Chloé, treated as flashes rather than flashbacks, would be enough. I needed them for the questions she asks her brother at the end. For the rest, you can read it all on Adèle Exarchopoulos's face... I also liked the idea of a static shot of the

house Nassim is about to break into, with him well hidden. We see it through his eyes, his subjectivity, we feel the stress he mentioned earlier, the vulnerability of the owner from whom he will extract a code. From a cinematographic point of view, it was interesting to only convey an image...

What are you like on a set?

I love being on set, it's a very happy state of mind for me, I'm very focused but I try to always have positive energy because it sets the tone for the crew. I don't do many takes. If I sometimes do more than six or seven, it's because I'm looking for something and haven't found it yet, or because we have a technical problem. It's fun to make movies!

Tell us about the editing process.

We had three cameras in the meeting room and two elsewhere, it gives me more to work with; there was a lot of footage, so it took a long time to edit. It wasn't complicated but it took a long time. You must be attentive and in the right place all the time, and you must speed up the actors' flow - what seems to be the right pace when shooting is often too slow. And we had to cut the material to make it more dynamic; we didn't alter the structure of the script, but we cut out scenes, in whole or in part... Constantly exchanging, in the final phase, with my two producers Hugo Sélignac and Alain Attal who have a very sharp eye for editing and writing a film in general. It really was painstaking work; what Pierre Jolivet refers to as reduction cooking.



Interview with Noemie Micoulet

French Institute for Restorative Justice Co-Ordinator

Since 2016, you have been working at the French institute of restorative justice (IFJR) as a facilitator of offender-victim meetings and restorative mediation, as well as a restorative justice trainer. You have supported many restorative justice programmers and, since 2018, have been coordinating the IFJR's south-east branch. Tell us how this system, which is still very new, was implemented in France.

Several factors explain the re-emergence of restorative justice. The first was the challenge of the criminal justice system as sole response to offences and crimes: its results and the accountability of the perpetrators are being questioned. The second factor is the recognition of the victim and the needs that the offence creates for them. How can we help victims repair themselves and get on with their lives? Lastly, the rediscovery of sometimes ancestral practices from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA and used by indigenous people has led us towards restorative justice. Beyond the punitive aspect, these practices are based on the idea that the offender has cut himself off from society due to the disturbance caused, and that the link between society and said offender, but also between the victim and the offender, must be rebuilt, not only in a material way, as is already the case in the French criminal justice system, but also in a symbolic and psychological manner. The idea is to say: what the perpetrator did is unacceptable. But they remain first and foremost human beings. To reintegrate the offender into society from which they were excluded because of their action, how can they take responsibility for their crime and help to make reparation to the victim? A European directive was adopted, requiring member States to incorporate it into the law of each country from November 2015. Christiane Taubira, then Minister of Justice, accelerated the process by incorporating restorative justice into the French Criminal procedure code in August 2014 as part of the penal reform. Two kinds of measures were essentially implemented: circles, or victim-perpetrator meeting groups, bringing together three or four victims and three or four convicted offenders, who have perpetrated acts very similar to those committed against the victims, in the presence of two facilitators and two other volunteers; and mediations, which give the victim the opportunity to meet with their attacker.

More than six years after its creation, is it used by large amounts of perpetrators and victims?

This year, eighty-three measures involving one hundred and thirty-one beneficiaries are being implemented. This is not enough. Too few people are aware of the existence of restorative justice measures. But when they have access to this information, many express their interest.

How can we get the information out?

This week, for example, I'm in Valence, in contact with victim support associations from the Drome and Isère regions, who are going to train together. Probation officers are involved. On the one hand, I inform them; on the other hand, I train them in developing and coordinating restorative justice programs at the rate of sixty training hours.

You are responsible for the south-east branch. How many such branches are there in France?

There are three in mainland France: North-east, South-east and South-west. While we have colleagues working for the Reunion branch, we do not yet have the budget to create a branch in the North-western part of France and for other Overseas territories. At present, one thousand six hundred and eighty-six people have already been trained to coordinate and run these measures, plus nearly five hundred volunteer pensioners who are members of the Community.

Watching Jeanne Herry's film, it is difficult to distinguish between those who work to bring restorative justice to life on a voluntary basis and those who do it professionally while working in the judicial system...

Because in fact, most of them are volunteers. For example, in the film, Fanny and Michel (Suliane Brahim and Jean-Pierre Darroussin) are what we call CPIPs (probation officers). These probation officers often perform these tasks outside their normal working hours, even though restorative justice measures are carried out by their department. It is a commitment in addition to their original job. Michel is 100% volunteer whereas Judith is employed by the Victim support association. The funding of restorative justice is still very much on the fringes, and even though many associations are funded by the Ministry of Justice - directly or via agreements with the private sector - the application of restorative justice measures is largely dependent on volunteers and the commitment of professionals. Many argue that it gives new meaning to their work.

You mention the victim support associations where Judith works as a lawyer and Michel as a volunteer. What other socio-professional categories do you train in?

People of all walks of life: psychologists, specialized educators, lawyers, the directors of associations themselves...

Tell us about the other kind of volunteers embodied by Anne Benoît and Pascal Sangla...

These are what we refer to as Members of the Community. They only get involved in Prisoner-Victim Meetings and Offender-Victim Meetings (RDV/RCV), i.e. meeting groups between victims and perpetrators. They are ordinary citizens who have also been trained. They are there to let people know that society cares about what they have done or experienced and that it is keen to support them, encourage them and hear what they have to say. Their only role is to be there and support everyone in their journey. They create links during breaks. Their role is also to prevent discussions from continuing outside the group. Nothing that concerns the group should be discussed in individual spaces. There are two of them, like facilitators, so that they represent the entire society. We also try to ensure that they are geographically close to the participants - same area, same city...

Pairing seems very important in this system.

It is an intangible framework that makes sense both during the preparation and the group meeting. The principle can also apply to mediation. This is apparent in the film: the character of Judith (Élodie Bouchez) is supervised by the one played by Denis Podalydès. This is very important.

Let's get back to the group meetings. The talking stick, which participants use to express themselves, seems to play a key role.

First, facilitators are often reluctant to use it. They feel it will prevent exchanges. But they soon realize that it is actually very useful. The stick makes people listen. When a participant grabs it, they know that even silence can be listened to. And when someone else grabs it, the first participant is ready to hear what they have to say, because the others listened to them earlier.

In the film, two victims speak first, but then two perpetrators (Issa and Thomas) speak before the last victim, Sabine. Are there rules as to who speaks first? Do victims always speak first as seen in the film?

Not always. Those who feel able to speak will do so. This is determined during the preparatory interviews. Some victims first want to hear what the perpetrators have to say. We try to adapt.

How long do these preparations take?

This varies greatly depending on the restorative justice measure. Those for meeting groups usually take place over two to three months, with a minimum of three individual preparatory interviews with each participant. Mediation preparations can last several years. This type of measure takes time. You can't rush people engaged in this approach; it must be done at their own pace. Our exchanges with them are sometimes put on hold because they need a break, because they have doubts or due to an interruption by an external event - job loss, bereavement, separation. We must give them space; it's about accompanying them.

Restorative justice has supported sixty-nine mediations since 2017. Did all of them really lead to a meeting, as is the case between Chloé and her brother Benjamin in Jeanne Herry's film?

For novices, the word meeting immediately triggers the image of a physical exchange. And this is perhaps the first thing our mind should forget about. Beyond the physical contact, it may be an exchange of letters, words, or questions that professionals convey from one to the other... The idea is not to undertake restorative measures at all costs but to ensure that these people have sufficient room for dialogue together in safe spaces. If a face-to-face meeting is to take place, we know of course that there will be no question of physical or verbal violence, but will the two people in question be able to hear what the other has to say? Will either of them have the resources needed to deal with the situation? This is where the issue of security conditions arises. So, all possibilities are checked. Having accompanied many supervision professionals in mediations (the role Denis Podalydès plays with Judith/Élodie Bouchez), I know how important it is to ask the right questions. If we realize that someone does not have the resources to participate in the restorative mediation meeting, it is our responsibility to put an end to it. It won't change anything for this person, but at least it won't make things worse. Hence, once again, the importance of supervision in the restorative justice process.

Let's return to the offenders. They have nothing to gain from these new measures - no reduction in sentences, no compensation. What motivates them to participate?

First, there is an absolute prerequisite if they want to participate: they must confess to the acts of which they are accused. Most of them do, albeit conditionally: Whether they

were getaway drivers or robbed people at gunpoint without committing murder, they all need to say: "It's true, I drove the car" or "I was violent even though I didn't kill my victim(s)". Our aim is to give them room to talk, and this room can make them aware that, incidentally, they too contributed to the trauma of the people they attacked and that they are answerable for this. When restorative justice measures were put in place, we were told: "You are idealists. No prisoner will want to take part in this". And I would reply: "Please stop thinking that these people are donkeys and need a carrot to move forward. They have the same desire for dignity and humanity as we do. If they feel valued and capable of regaining self-respect, they will be on board". Well, yes, these people exist. So, I'm not saying this is true for all of them. But it's more than you think. One day, I was leading a debate in a prison, talking about these new practices, and pointing out that they did not yield any gain, and I vividly recall being taken to task by a prisoner: "Stop thinking there always needs to be something to gain before we do anything!", he shouted. "Keep in mind that we too have an interest in participating in this process. We too have things to say that we did not say at the trial. I'm interested, I'll do it for myself and for the victim, not for anyone else". His heckling strengthened my conviction that it is precisely by considering offenders incapable of self-examination that we deprive them of any capacity to do so. In short, we were deciding for them.

Group meetings seem to allow for quite unprecedented awareness. In Jeanne Herry's film, Nassim and Issa, the two robbers, who until then were quite indifferent to the harm inflicted upon others, find out about the trauma suffered by Sabine (Miou-Miou) whom they suddenly equate with their mother...

The other person is no longer a total stranger... he/she becomes a person we could know, love, and want to protect. Having had the chance to supervise this type of group, I can assure you that this kind of affinity between perpetrators and victims happens often. Apart from the offence that was committed, perpetrators and victims, who seem to have nothing in common, realize that they have more than one thing in common. They do not necessarily have the same skin color, do not necessarily share the same social background, they should be worlds apart and yet they're alike.

Is it true that some victims, as the character of Gregoire (Gilles Lellouche) does with Thomas (Fred Testot), are willing to lend a hand to attackers within the group?

This is made possible by the group. However, in practice, victims are advised not to continue the relationship outside the group as it's bound to be different. We tell them: "The group is at a certain point in time. Take what it has given you, keep it with you so that you can look forward to what comes next".

You were one of Jeanne Herry's special contacts during her search for the script of JE VERRAI TOUJOURS VOS VISAGES.

I also had the opportunity to accompany her on a training course in restorative mediation. I don't know if I played any character in this film: I simply put Jeanne in touch with great people who care about others and inspire me, and I was honored that she gave me the various versions of her script to read. What the film shows is everything I've experienced in real life for nearly ten years. Including grace-filled moments when you feel that this is it, we've achieved our goal.

I've been through a lot of them. It doesn't always happen like that, and when it doesn't it's not the fault of the group or the people involved, and besides it's not so bad because,

despite everything, people were able to express themselves. But in most cases, people are transformed.

Do you have any feedback on perpetrators who participated in these measures? Have they pulled through?

It depends on what you mean by “pulled through”: desistance from delinquency or crime is not a straight line. Restorative justice is not a tool to combat recidivism but allows perpetrators to exchange, restore, and repair themselves. As the title of the film indicates, when these people think about or are about to commit new offences, they may see the faces of the victims they have spoken to, and this may deter them from committing the offence, or lead them to commit less serious offences than those they had previously committed. Most of them say that they have gained confidence and that these measures have helped them in their integration process. What comes next is up to them.



Cast

Issa	BIRANE BA
Nawelle	LEÏLA BEKHTI
Nassim	DALI BENSSALAH
Judith	ELODIE BOUCHEZ
Fanny	SULIANE BRAHIM
Michel	JEAN-PIERRE DARROUSSIN
Chloé Delarme	ADÈLE EXARCHOPOULOS
Grégoire	GILLES LELLOUCHE
Sabine	MIOU MIOU
Paul	DENIS PODALYDES
Thomas	FRED TESTOT
Cyril	PASCAL SANGLA
Yvette	ANNE BENOIT
Benjamin	RAPHAËL QUENARD
Mehdi	SÉBASTIEN HOUBANI
Chloé's grand mother	CATHERINE ARDITI
Probation & Integration service system lady	CLAIRE DE LA RÛE DE CAN
Chloé Delarme as a child	ROXANE BARAZZUOL
Benjamin as a teenager	MAX LIBERT
Gabrielle	NÉMA MERICER
Guardian	PATRICIA JEUDY

Crew

Production	CHI-FOU-MI PRODUCTIONS HUGO SELIGNAC TRESOR FILMS ALAIN ATTAL
Scénariste, adaptation et dialogues	JEANNE HERRY
Réalisatrice	JEANNY HERRY
Scripte	CHLOÉ RUDOLF
Distribution des rôles	ADÉLAÏDE MAUVERNAY
Directeur de production	VINCENT PIANT
Régisseur général	BENJAMIN JOURNET
Image	NICOLAS LOIR
Son	RÉMI DARU GUADULUPE CASSIUS LOÏC BRIAN MARC DOISNE
Chef décorateur	JEAN-PILIPPE MOREAUX
1ère assistante réalisatrice	HÉLÈNE FABRE
Cheffe costumière	ISABELLE PANNETIER
Chef maquilleur	CHRISTOPHE OLIVEIRA
Chefs coiffeur	STÉPHANE DESMAREZ LUCAS COULON
Chef constructeur	FRANÇOIS SCALA
Chef électricien	THOMAS GARREAU
Chef machiniste	TITOUNE DEFOSSEZ
Directeurs de post-production	NICOLAS MOUCHET SÉVERINE CAVA
Chef monteur	FRANCIS VESIN
Compositeur	PASCAL SANGLA