

FREDERIC NIEDERMAYER
PRESENTS

PIERRE RICHARD

TIMI-JOY MARBOT

GUSTAVE KERVERN



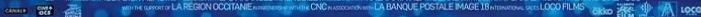
FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2025 OFFICIAL SELECTION
SPECIAL SCREENING

The man who saw the bear

A FILM BY
PIERRE RICHARD



WITH THE FRIENDLY PARTICIPATION OF ANNY DUPREY AND LOUIS-DO DE LENCQUESAING WITH SOPHIE BARBERO JEAN-CLAUDE BAUDRACCO FREDERIC BLIN PATRICK LIGARDES
VINICIUS DOS SANTOS LAGIER WITH PIERRE RICHARD AND ANNE-SOPHIE RIVIERE CATALIN SCARABACCA OLIVIER DEFAYS AND PIERRE AIM EDITING JEANNE KEF
PRODUCTION DESIGNER MATHIEU MENUET COSTUME DESIGNER ELFIE CARLIER MUSIC BY LAURENT LAFRAN VINCENT MAUDUIT STEVEN GROUETI SCRIPT BY AGATHE HASSENFORDER
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ELDDIE GAY ARTISTIC LANGUAGE CHRISTOPHE DUTHUROM PRODUCTION MANAGER FRANCOIS PASCAUD EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS IVAN SAMOKHVALOV
A PRODUCTION MOBY DICK FILMS AND PRODUCTION WITH LPS FINANCES AND INNOBLE IN ASSOCIATION WITH KALAMATA FILM AND OKKO WITH THE SUPPORT OF CANAL+ AND THE BAUDRACCO GROUP CINE+ OCS
WITH THE SUPPORT OF LA REGION OCCITANIE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CNC IN ASSOCIATION WITH LA BANQUE POSTALE IMAGE 18 INTERNATIONAL SALES LOCO FILMS



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
SPECIAL SCREENING
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2025

A FILM BY
PIERRE RICHARD

Duration: 1h28

Synopsis

Grégoire and Michel are not from the same generation, but they are united by friendship, a love of nature, and a deep affection for a bear that escaped from a circus.

Interview with Pierre Richard

Why suddenly the urge to make a film, when you hadn't directed one since 1997?

Because I had nothing to say before this film. But for more than 40 years, I've spent my time in a southern village, Gruissan, mingling with the locals – true characters!

The butcher, obsessed with Johnny Hallyday, who would take me into his cold room to quietly listen to his idol, eyes half-closed, as though he were listening to Mozart.

My mechanic, a former car thief and safe-cracker, idolized me so much that he never charged me for car repairs. I paid him in whisky, which he drank like apple juice.

The restaurant owner where I go would devour dozens of lamb chops while belting out Caruso at the top of his lungs!

These are the people who inspired my film.

And the bear?

The bear too – an idea inspired by a true story: a bear escaped from the Sigean zoo, 30 km from my place. It must have crossed pond after pond until it ended up near my home. And I was in Siberia at the time. I returned to my hotel room, switched on France 24, and saw a young man telling the gendarmes: “Yes, I saw a bear there.”

The camera panned, and I recognized my own land, with those little ponds. It took them about ten days to catch it. It had hidden in a cave...

So I would tell these stories, making everyone laugh. Two or three years ago, I started writing them down. I could have made a book, but I wasn't thinking of a film – funny stories about funny people weren't enough.

I spoke with a friend, Anne-Sophie Rivière, and I told her, as Francis Veber used to say when writing a screenplay: “I haven't yet found the soul of the violin.” She found it – the dramatic thread that underpins and justifies it all: she told me about Asperger's syndrome. Together, we imagined and wrote Michel, an Asperger's autistic character – highly intelligent, with a phenomenal memory, very sensitive and touching. All these traits made my character, Grégoire, deeply attached to him.

They are in fact the main characters of the film... (along with the bear!)

In your previous films as a director, you always had a rather critical view of society. You talked about advertising, arms sales. This time, it's nature...

Yes, I love being indignant – that's my main driving force... I love to rant! Advertising annoys me, stupid TV game shows irritate me, arms sales revolt me. I tackled these topics in my own way: through burlesque.

This time, it's gentler, but just as persistent: the ecological disaster that threatens us. Mainly one subject that horrifies me: the destruction of the Amazon rainforest and its disastrous consequences! And not just for the indigenous people living there – we'll all pay the price sooner or later.

And of course, I sprinkled in a few burlesque sequences here and there to illustrate my rebellious daydreams.

Some things never change...

How did you find Timi-Joy Marbot, who plays Michel?

The casting director met many people and introduced me to about ten actors, all very good. On the last day, Timi arrived – he was the very last one we saw. And immediately, it was obvious. On set, he brought his unusual speech rhythm, his own universe. He was perfect. In fact, I never once had to say, "Let's redo

that.” Whenever we had to reshoot a scene, it was always because of me!

As for Gustave Kervern, who plays Michel’s father, I had met him on Stéphane Robelin’s “And If We All Lived Together?” He’s wonderful – his acting is never caricatured. He too is one of the “real people.”

How did the idea for the château owner character come about?

Château owners, I know them. I lived in a château at one point in my life. My paternal grandmother never knew the value of money – how could she, when she never even knew the price of a baguette? My grandfather was a stern, rigid man, a Polytechnique graduate, who rode horses every morning before heading to the factory he ran, as did my uncle, also from Polytechnique.

Of course, my cousin, two years younger than me, passed his baccalauréat two years early and went to Polytechnique – naturally. Meanwhile, I had to repeat the exam, two years late.

After scrawling a giant “Shit” on the gravel facing the château, I went back to Paris to rejoin my family of Italian immigrants!
Long live Commedia dell’Arte!

How did you manage the energy on set? The director is the first up, last to bed... and you were also acting!

My friend Duthuron was at my side to help and watch over me. Because when you act, you shift from objective to subjective. At times, while acting opposite someone, I'd think: "He's really good here." And then I'd forget that I, too, had to act well!

As for the crew, I hardly knew anyone anymore (most have gone to shoot elsewhere...), except Pierre Aïm, the cinematographer, with whom I had already worked as an actor. For the rest, I relied on Frédéric, my producer.

Since we filmed mostly outdoors, the real conductor was the weather: apart from a few gusts of wind, storms, and downpours, the shoot went very well, thankfully.

You changed the ending of the film during the shoot?

Yes, after a sleepless night: the spirit of Jacques Rozier (with whom I had the chance to work on "The Castaways of Turtle Island") visited me and said: "You're not obliged to shoot what you wrote." Really?!

So I changed everything – the entire ending of the film! The dialogues, the sets, the situations. Even the music!

The next day, the call sheet was useless. And if you know how crucial a call sheet is to a shoot – it's the bible.

You should have seen the faces of the cinematographer, the first assistant, and so on...

My producer backed me – thanks to him. Christophe Duthuron also helped – thanks to him too.

And thanks to Jacques Rozier, who never knew what he would shoot the next day, even if it meant not filming at all until inspiration struck... and his pen.

Was it difficult shooting with a bear?

At the start, Jean-Philippe Roman, Shadow's trainer, warned us: "Be careful, don't get closer than 10 meters."

After a few days: "Okay, now you can get within five meters." Another month and the three of us could have gone out to dinner together!

I was fascinated by the relationship between Jean-Philippe and his bear: sometimes Shadow would lie down, and Jean-Philippe would rest his head on his belly. Aside from that, Shadow weighs 500 kilos, eats 40 kilos of food a day, and if he ever chased you, remember – he can run 50 km/h.

How did the title come about?

It's actually a twisted expression – and since I had a bear on hand, I thought: "Well, there's my title."

You've always been loved by the public, as we saw again this year at Cannes. But critics haven't always been so kind?

That's true, and I suffered a lot from it at one time.

Even during “La Chèvre,” which was such a hit, there were awful reviews. Then one day in Montreal, a friend told me, “Go buy Les Inrocks.” And I discovered four pages about me – very kind – saying: “We loved Tati, Keaton, Chaplin, and we didn’t realize who Pierre Richard was.” I couldn’t believe it.

Then I returned to Paris, and there were three pages in Téléràma. Then Les Cahiers du Cinéma. Suddenly, it had begun. I became persona grata – when before, I had taken so many hits.

At Cannes, I was deeply moved when the photographers put down their cameras as I arrived, to applaud me all together. It was spontaneous, warm. The love of people means something.

Interview by Michèle Halberstadt

Cast

Pierre Richard.....	Grégoire
Timi-Joy Marbot.....	Michel
Gustave Kervern.....	Nanosh
Sophie Barbero.....	Sylvie
Patrick Ligardes.....	Jackot
Mylène Vareilles	Dédée

With the friendly participation of
Anny Duperey and Louis-Do de Lencquesaing.

Crew

Screenplay.....	Pierre Richard
.....	Anne-Sophie Rivière
Original Music.....	Olivier Defays
Cinematography	Pierre Aïm
Editing.....	Jeanne Kef
Production Design	Mathieu Menut
Costumes	Elfie Carlier
Sound	Laurent Lafran
.....	Vincent Mauduit
.....	Steven Ghouti
Casting	Agathe Hassenforder
1st Assistant Director	Élodie Gay
Artistic Advisor	Christophe Duthuron
Production Manager	François Pascaud
Executive Producer	Ivan Samokhvalov
Production	Moby Dick Films
.....	Frédéric Niedermayer

Format: 2.39

Sound: 5.1