

“TEENAGERS” (Paul de Métairy, France) - Can a film save the world ?

Imagine the scene: a young 14 year African boy storming with his kalachnikov in Charlie Hebdo's redaction room. Imagine he says to Cabu: « If I don't kill you, I will be killed myself and all my family too ». Imagine that Cabu, to spare the life of this young boy, accepts his fate and gives his life for him. Would it not be a strong example against terrorism ? Would we not erect statues of Cabu everywhere in the world?

Now, it's what happened in 1998 with Lucas and Saïd. In a song the young Lucas had composed, he denounced the massacre of children by terrorists. Those condemned him to death (of course...) and sent Saïd (14 years), a boy of their organisation, to execute Lucas. But when Lucas and Saïd met, they discovered each one at the other the affection that they missed. Problem: if Saïd did not carry out his mission, it is him who would be killed with all his family, what Lucas could not accept. He gave his life for Saïd; but having to kill his only friend was unbearable for Saïd, who died a few minutes later, from a heart failure. That's the story of the 1st part of “Teenagers”.



Death of Lucas and Saïd (photo from Teenagers)

« A young European, blond and Catholic, who gives his life for a young African, brown and Muslim, is a slap in the face of all the bloody terrorisms of the world » says the director.

Part 2 is the story of Lucas at 12 years, when he gave full affection to Erwan, 15 years, who had a very bad behaviour against him because he was unhappy. In part 3, Alexis, 15 years, tries to live according to the message of love and hope left by Lucas to all the young people. He dissuades a young delinquent from committing suicide, thanks to Lucas' messages. The youths discuss deeply about what happens when terrorists and their victims meet in the Next World...

« If Ben Laden had could watch this film on the little TV in his hideout, he had received the shock of his life! » says Paul de Métairy.

The best or the worst film in the world? On one side, Teenagers is the most awarded independent French film: winner at the California Film Awards, at the Oregon Film Awards, at the Honolulu Film Awards, two awards as Best Actor for Robert Castel, Special Mention in Brussels, People's Choice Award at Brisbane, etc. Even excerpts have been awarded as short films (New York), and even the music was winner at the Global Music Awards! On the other side, on Internet there are only bad reports in the press (except from the film-maker LaBruce). Why? « *The film is intended for young people adrift or adults in distress, not for people with a rather glamorous life... who confessed to have watched only a little part of the film, like eating only the mustard of a hamburger... The film saved already several lives of youths, it comforted adults, even in jail; very positive messages were received from doctors, psychologists, sociologists, medical festival, families with children, religious and institutional authorities, but all that has to remain confidential and cannot be splashed all over Internet, sorry* ».

It was maybe because of the naturism scenes? « *Children and youths don't have problem with innocent naturism scenes, but well some adults, who forget that we are not born with clothes; if to be seen like Nature or God made us is obscene, then is Nature obscene, then is God obscene (!!)*. Those adults have maybe “a problem” ».

Did Cannes have a “problem” too? « *By a big mistake, Cannes transmit me copy of an internal e-mail. The accurate sentence was: “En plus tous ses films sont très douteux, d'un point de vue éthique” (ALL his films are VERY doubtful on ethical level). When I see the selected films with extreme violence or extreme sex at Cannes, I wondered what in hell's name could be worse in ALL my films. Actually, the only common point in all my films are affection scenes between boys; Cannes, homophobic, I couldn't believe it, and I asked them the question; in their (vague) answer, they didn't deny... Of course, Cannes has progressed about (adult) gay people, but a love-story between young boys, it stuck in their throat* ».

But why legal proceedings? « *I hoped for an amicable settlement, like free screenings at the Marché du Film. But, then, I received an appalling letter from a mother whose 13 year daughter hanged herself, and this wretched mother revealed me that if her little daughter had could see the film she would still be alive. That was the straw that broke the camel's back.* »

Which was the result of the lawsuit? “*The judges estimated that one does not have the right to complain about calumnies of the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, that I had just the right to shut my mouth, and I was condemned for abusive proceedings...* ”.

What do you expect now? « *After Cannes' calumnies, I can forget distribution in France. One chance would be dubbing the film in English, Spanish, Arabic (!) and/or do a remake of part 3 with more bankable actors. Would there be on Earth a courageous distributor to earn plenty of money and give the film its chance to spread its bold positive messages? If not, we can stop to complain about Daesh, Boko Haram, the killings between young people in Marseille and in Los Angeles, and the suicide of our best youths...* ».

And you have precisely a “big” problem with the islamists... « *Yes, they are very angry because of the efficiency of the film to dissuade young people to become terrorists and to do think young people who are already in these groups. The French minister of Police offered me protection, but I refuse that policemen with family would lose their life for someone without family and twice older... I will probably finish like the poor Lucas, it is only a question of time, it is enough for a Jihadist of Syria to call a “buddy” of my area. Most ironic is that I will be eliminated for a film that only festivals and the Jihadists watched! Most lamentable is that the Cannes Film Festival and the Jihadists will together (!) have prevented this film from exerting its positive effects to make our world a little less bloody and more livable. Lucas, Saïd and myself will have died for nothing* ».

Did you contact President Holland? « *Yes, at 14 occasions, but as I am not a supposed drug trafficker or his wife, I am not “interesting”, and I did not receive any answer and more less an invitation... My films thus will disappear with me, whereas actually they are likely to give a better image... of Muslims (those who are correct). This film can thus bring the communities closer, and fight the current mistrust and hostility. That can thus even bring back peace in certain places of the world. If the Cannes Film Festival had understood that, and if the film had been able to exert its positive effects, the Cannes Film Festival could perhaps even receive the Nobel Prize of Peace, who knows...* ».

Film website: www.lucas-said.net.



Some of the awards received in the USA