

FIDÉLITÉ PRÉSENTE

CHRISTIAN CLAVIER CAROLE BOUQUET VALÉRIE BONNETON ROSSY DE PALMA STÉPHANE DE GROODT SÉBASTIEN CASTRO

UNE HEURE DE TRANQUILLITÉ

(DO NOT DISTURB)

Selfish ?... Me ?



UN FILM DE **PATRICE LECONTE**

SCÉNARIO, ADAPTATION ET DIALOGUES DE **FLORIAN ZELLER** D'APRÈS SA PIÈCE «UNE HEURE DE TRANQUILLITÉ»

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Christian CLAVIER
Rosy DE PALMA

Carole BOUQUET
Stéphane DE GROODT

Valérie BONNETON
Sébastien CASTRO

DO NOT DISTURB

A film by **Patrice LECONTE**

Written and adapted by **Florian ZELLER**

from his stage play *Une heure de tranquillité*

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SYNOPSIS

When passionate jazz fan Michel finds a rare album at a flea market, he can't wait to listen to it – at home, on his own – but the whole world seems to be ganging up to prevent him from doing so. His wife picks this moment to make an unwelcome confession, his wayward son appears out of the blue, one of his friends drops by announced, and his mother won't stop calling... Not to mention that today is Neighbours' Day. Nowadays, is it ever possible not to be disturbed – even for a single hour?

Glib and manipulative, Michel will lie through his teeth to get what he wants: in this case, an hour of peace. Even so, it will take all his energy, cunning and powers of deception to keep his sunny morning from degenerating into a nightmare.

A CONVERSATION WITH PATRICE LECONTE - DIRECTOR

Can you tell us how the project originated?

Marc Missonnier and Olivier Delbosc, who produced my last film *A Promise*, were convinced that Florian Zeller's play was great film material. Once I saw it at the theatre, although I realized it needed a lot of adaptation, I agreed with them immediately.

What did you like about the project?

It struck a chord with me. I saw myself in it. Having been hyperactive for years, always making sure that each day is a whirl of activity, I do long to take a break, like the main character (Christian Clavier), if only for one hour... to take the time to daydream, smoke a cigarette and watch the clouds passing by... We lead such frantic lives, particularly in cities.

***Do Not Disturb* portrays an extraordinarily selfish man... He doesn't care about his wife's revelations, his mistress' worries, his neighbour's feelings. He has only one thing in mind: listening to this jazz record, *Me, Myself and I* – great title by the way – by one Neil Youart, a record he has spent years looking for...**

He reminds me of a character (brilliantly played by Paul Meurisse) in a play by Françoise Dorin, much in the Molière tradition. In revisiting this theme and without plagiarizing anything, Florian Zeller portrays another egoist - ideal, cheerful and marvellous. We could all use him as a lightening rod: this guy crystallises all our flaws. We can mock him but we'll still feel the finger pointed at us in secret and can take delight in his troubles, as he's not nice. It wouldn't be funny if he was a pleasant man.

With her great dark eyes, the young Filipino girl who observes him throughout the film is a bit like our conscience...

She's a very important character: the only one to hold a mirror up to him so he can really see himself. It's thanks to her and her view of things that he finally decides to listen to the record with his father, who introduced him to jazz when he was a child. This sentimental step redeems him from all the appalling things he has expressed until then.

You've often said you don't try to portray the times we live in. But beyond comedy, *Do Not Disturb* reflects contemporary concerns: Neighbours' Day, the Portuguese worker posing as a Pole...

It's true, I'm often trying to escape from the reality of our times But sometimes it catches up with me: beneath the comedy, *Viens chez moi, j'habite chez une copine* and later, *Une époque formidable* by Gérard Jugnot were comic accounts of our times. As, in its way, is *Do Not Disturb*. And I quite like that.

Fabrice Luchini was a roaring success as Michel on stage. We could have expected him to take the role in the film...

When Florian Zeller was adapting his play, he was convinced Fabrice would love the project and I was delighted at the thought of working with him again. We worked together on *Intimate Strangers* - with Sandrine Bonnaire - and got along famously. But Fabrice decided against it in the end - he felt he'd already spent too much time with this character. When he pulled out we immediately thought of Christian Clavier whom I've dreamed of working again with ever since *Les Bronzés 3*. Christian loved Florian's writing and immediately agreed, on one condition: he didn't want the film to be "The Clavier Show" and insisted on the idea of an ensemble. I liked that: there's a real sparkle to his character and while he remains the lead, the others around him - Carole Bouquet, Valérie Bonneton, Romy de Palma, Stéphane de Groodt - are far more than mere foils.

The film diverges quite radically from the play...

The framework is the same of course but what was only hinted at in the play has been considerably developed. Certain characters and events have changed radically - the son (Sébastien Castro), the Filipino family, the Portuguese worker, the cleaning lady, Neighbours' Day... And instead of being confined to the sitting room, the film takes place in an apartment, with bedrooms, corridors, stairwells, landings, an elevator... a great playground for a director! We are not at all in the theatre anymore.

***Do Not Disturb* revisits the spirit of Molière's *The Bores* and Feydeau's comedies. But the film has a British feel too...**

I take that as a great compliment! Without denying the tradition of the Comédie Française, artistically and sentimentally speaking, I'm more akin to Anglo-Saxon humour.

Let's go back to the "bores" of the film, all "hideous", all treacherous but in the end all very endearing.

They are all slightly off-the-wall but I can't see which of them you could hate. I've always been incapable of directing characters I don't like. Nathalie (Carole Bouquet) moves me; I find Elsa (Valérie Bonneton) endearing, totally lost after years of loving a man who doesn't give a damn about her. I'd do anything for Pierre (Christian Charmerant) – a loser for sure but a loveable one. Even Pavel (Stéphane De Groodt) who is organizing Neighbours' Day – he's a total bore, but one I find touching. He is Jollyon Wagg from *Tintin*; a first class pain in the ass, but what conviction, what enthusiasm!

He's almost unrecognisable.

I thought we had seen so much of him lately; I wanted him to have a new face. It's not much: the cheapest pair of old specs we could find, which give him a strange look, a dab of hair gel... it's marvellous when actors are willing to play the game.

Christian Clavier, Carole Bouquet, Valérie Bonneton, Rosy de Palma... Your fondness for popular actors is again quite clear.

I love actors! And it's such a comfort to work with actors who are well known, they gain you so much time with the screenplay. When a door opens and you see Carole Bouquet coming in, there's no need to talk about who she is or where she comes from: she is the character. You can move faster. It's a lot harder with an unknown actor.

Talking of speed, the film moves along at an incredible pace...

I frame the shots myself in all my films. Even though I'm hardly 25 anymore, I decided to shoot this one entirely hand held. I wanted the camera to be one of the characters, I didn't want to be on a comfortable bourgeois shoot - even though we were filming bourgeois characters - I wanted everything to move at full speed, almost giving a feeling of a live documentary. To avoid hours of setting up for each shot, my D.P. Jean-Marie Dreujoy and I equipped the whole apartment (built in a studio) beforehand. When we were shooting in the bathroom we'd press a button and, according to the axis, we'd switch such or such a light. Same thing when we were shooting in another room. I insisted on the actors knowing their lines perfectly. We did 52 shots in one single day once: three takes, one more and on to the next one! We shot the film in five weeks; I loved this amazing energy, even if, by the end, I was shattered.

How can you go at such speed and yet not lose grip on the emotions, which are palpable in each scene and in each character?

That is precisely what's interesting: go too quickly, the characters become puppets and I would get no pleasure at all in pulling their strings. What I love, despite the constraints of pace and genre - in this case, comedy - is to continue to film people - fictional characters, for sure, but in whom you can recognise yourself - endowed with true humanity. If they bustle around in front of you in vain, without the audience being able to identify with them, you have failed. Rossy de palma, who plays the cleaning lady, is eccentric, wild and surreal; you imagine her straight out of an Almodòvar film but despite that, she is real. I couldn't direct a film that was disconnected from real life.

Lets talk about the breakneck pace. The characters are so wrapped up in events that they have no time to feel sorry for themselves... and even less for others.

Yes, thanks to which emotion is always slightly to the side. Without comparing myself to them, which would be insanely pretentious, Cukor and Capra were masters at this. Capra used to time his takes. If they lasted fifteen seconds he would ask his actors to try to act them in twelve. They would do that while remaining in the emotion of the scene, and it gave his films tremendous heightened rhythm. The characters' emotions and their economy act as a counterpoint to moments of pure comedy, giving a real depth and substance to the content.

Eric Neveux's score plays an important role.

It wasn't easy to imagine the music for this film, and by the way, everyone was convinced there would be very little of it. Eric - with whom I had never worked before - and I were convinced that, on the contrary, it could reinforce the story's already 'musical' pace. I can't imagine making films without music and this is one more proof.

A CONVERSATION WITH CHRISTIAN CLAVIER (Michel Leproux)

***Do Not Disturb* is your fourth film with Patrice Leconte but the first in which you play the lead.**

We wanted to work together again, more closely, and the opportunity came up. When I received the screenplay I was in the middle of *Les Visiteurs* 3. But I had so much fun reading it that I called him right away to say I was interested. Florian Zeller, Patrice, the producers and I met and we all got along very well.

Did you ever see the play from which the film is adapted?

No. It had finished its run by the time I got the screenplay. I threw myself into this adventure because I really enjoyed the over the top character and found his situation very funny. Florian Zeller is a real writer. He manages to make you laugh with his portrait of one of today's individualists, as fiercely as Feydeau did in his time. This guy is a lot like us, isn't he?

Did you already know Florian Zeller?

I had met him once. His talent really impresses me. I love directors, and have enjoyed long collaborations with a few, like Jean-Marie Poiré or Patrice Leconte. But I'm crazy about writers - play or film, the story always prevails - and it's a delight to rub shoulders with one as talented as Florian. He has an amazing capacity for work and is a great listener. After reading the first version of the screenplay I asked him if he could make a couple of changes. Unlike the stage play, the film couldn't be a one-man show. I suggested that he could enrich the parts around Michel and refine them so we could offer them to key actors. I hoped for more of an ensemble movie. Florian threw himself into the idea with so much enthusiasm and insight. He doesn't have a problem with someone making comments or asking him to re-work one particular thing.

Can you talk about your character Michel...

He's a man who doesn't care about anything or anyone: his wife, his son, his neighbour, his friends, his domestic staff, what goes on at home... He is a man of today, 100% self-centred, and he's going to pay the price for this, because in one single day his life is going to be shattered. Michel is the perfect symbol of our society. Sure, he belongs to a

certain social class, but above all he is a formidable egoist.

And the people around him aren't much better.

Luckily the film isn't a black and white caricature and we can empathise with them. I love to make characters riddled with faults likeable: firstly because they make me laugh and also because I know they are absolutely not aware of what they say and do. Claude, the character I play in *Serial (Bad) Weddings* by Philippe de Chauveron, is a bit like that. I'm incapable of playing a part without throwing myself into it fully.

You succeed in making Michel likeable enough for the audience to share his irritation with anyone who gets in his way.

Yes, he dreams about this quiet moment of solitude but wants it so much, and to the point of excluding everyone, that it's fair he should be punished. There is a moral in all this!

Beyond the portrait of an egoist, *Do Not Disturb* gives a real account of our times: Neighbours' Day, for example, is priceless.

It's fantastic! How wonderful, all these new 'days': Neighbours' Day, Butchers' Day, Day for this, Day for that... They are meant to encourage social interaction and good citizenship - in truly bombastic fashion - and prove that we care about others, when we all know one of the problems of today's society is precisely that we don't notice other enough. People don't say hello to each other, we all walk past without seeing one another, or simply getting irritated. Without trying to hammer a message home, Florian Zeller has fun with all these clichés. He is completely of his time.

How did you prepare your character?

This guy is like us and yet we don't want to be like him. I worked with that in mind. I try never to tone down my characters' feelings as they experience the different situations they go through. I play them fully and sincerely, and then we see what happens. And clothes make the man... physically I saw him as well turned-out. That's how I imagine him... my dentist!

Can you talk to us about the young Filipino girl who observes him constantly?

Her ingenuous observation returns him to himself. She's very important, this girl, she screws up his interior mechanism. It's simple and very strong.

You asked Patrice Leconte to not have a read though of the screenplay with the actors before shooting, as is customary for him...

I find that the less you rehearse - not counting of course the run-throughs to do with technical demands on set - the fresher you are when it's time to shoot. The character starts to exist on its own, things happen that no one could have expected, not you, or your partners, or the director. It's very exciting since it's not planned. The adrenaline rush gives a freshness and imagination that help me to find what I call *nonsense*; it allows me to have fun inside the character and the text. That's why readings bore me: I always have the feeling that we won't be able to remember the ideas we had later during the shoot. It's a bit of a spoiler.

Do you improvise a lot on set?

Yes, quite a bit but always within the character. I tend to add things at the end of scenes, lines come to me. Then it's up to the director to do what he wants with it. I like to have this freedom. The amount of time I spend prior to the shoot allows me to do that - in fact, I spent as long working with the text of *Do Not Disturb* as it took to film it.

Your character is so very French... you have often played French characters that are very representative of your country.

And I proclaim it loud and clear! I love France, I'm very fond of my countrymen, whatever their weaknesses and excesses, even when they are exasperating. This culture is deeply rooted in me. I'm convinced that if a number of my films have been successful it is precisely because they conveyed a good deal about France.

Many of your films rank among the biggest success of French cinema. Do you feel any responsibility when you reach such numbers at the box office?

I feel very humble with regard to all that. I've been very lucky. The only lesson I take from this is that the audience feels a deep need to be addressed and entertained at the same time... all the more so since we are going through particularly gloomy times. I have often had the feeling I was in tune with a desire for realism and lightness.

You often claim to have been influenced by actors like Louis de Funès, Philippe Noiret, Francis Blanche and Jean Rochefort...

They are actors whose films I adore. But I also acknowledge the influence of British actors like Peter Sellers, or Italians like Nino Manfredi, Alberto Sordi or Vittorio Gassman. They are absolute masters to me. But I very much admire the new generation - I learned a lot while shooting with the actors of *Serial (Bad) Weddings*, and I love the spirit of *Kaamelott* (French TV series). I feel I belong to an extended family whose mission is to make the audience laugh while holding up a mirror to them.

A CONVERSATION WITH FLORIAN ZELLER

– screenwriter and playwright

Why did you adapt your stage play yourself?

From the start, Patrice Leconte, the producers and I felt that the film should stay as close to the play and its narrative structure as possible, and chose to keep its framework. We started working together. After a few sessions and quite a few discussions I finally took on the responsibility of the screenplay: the writing was so close to the play it was pretty much a logical extension.

What difficulties did you encounter during this first film experience?

It was crucial to remove everything that was purely theatrical and that wouldn't have produced anything of cinematic interest. The stage play made use of all the codes of light comedy but in a tongue-in-cheek way. It was a sort of exercise of style that distanced itself from the genre. But this couldn't quite be transcribed in cinematic language. A more realistic, less ironic dimension was needed. The strokes had to be simplified and lightened.

You've really expanded the supporting characters.

In the play, the challenge was to tell a story from barely anything: a desire thwarted by a series of events. The events became more and more improbable so that the whole thing took an almost surrealistic turn. We couldn't make do with such a basis for a film... the contract of plausibility you have with the audience is different, so we had to take another path. That's how the character of Sebastien - who was a caricature of the son no one would want, a musician who ate rats during his concerts - became a somewhat lost, extreme militant leftist... The part was also written with Fabrice Luchini - who played the lead on stage - in mind, for the pleasure of watching him go crazy when faced with his son...

And in the end it was Christian Clavier who took over his role.

Patrice mentioned him and we all thought it was a marvellous idea: we were convinced he would succeed in doing something very strong. Christian has an extraordinary comic talent. He always gets right inside situations, and he has singular charm: he doesn't try to be the good guy. On the contrary, he likes to play unlikeable characters, in an appealing way... Let's say he is radiantly unlikeable. He contributed a lot to the

development of the supporting characters: he didn't want to be in every shot and really wanted to create something funny but as part of an ensemble.

Can you talk a little about your collaboration?

What surprised me first and foremost was his professionalism; he worked on the screenplay for weeks before the shoot, exactly as if had been a theatre play. It's always a mistake to think that great actors rely only on their talent: hard work comes first. Clavier is always searching, and never content to stop at what he knows of himself. He seizes projects with ambition but doesn't hold back when it comes to having fun with them.

His character Michel has only one thing in mind: listening in peace to an improbable record he found in a flea market, *Me, Myself and I* by one Neil Youart...

The title and the musician are of course fictional. What amused me was the fact that it means so much to him but that doesn't interest anyone else at all. Neil Youart? I really liked the thought of this guy being in total admiration of someone with such an improbable, uncool sounding...

Where did the idea of portraying such an egoist come from?

Quite simply from wanting to make people laugh. I often write dark plays and I felt like finding again the almost childlike joy I experienced two years prior with *La vérité*: it was my first comedy, performed by Pierre Arditi. I was on holiday with friends, I wrote during the day and in the evening I read them what I had written - but only to make them laugh. Once it was finished, the play didn't resemble anything I'd done before and I put it aside. Only a year later did I give it to Fabrice Luchini to read... Convinced, like me, that any great actor is first of all a good comedian, he wanted to play the part and gave himself this 'diversion'...

***Do Not Disturb* was staged in 2013 at the Théâtre Antoine, and there was talk about a film adaptation almost immediately...**

Olivier Dubosc, from Fidélité Films, was convinced that a movie was hiding behind the play. Patrice Leconte got excited about it too, then Christian Clavier agreed enthusiastically only a few days after receiving the screenplay! Everything happened with such a gratifying momentum, we all went so fast!

Behind the comedy of the subject, there is also something darker. Michel, is a monster of selfishness, and the people around him are no saints either...

If he was surrounded by fabulous, lovely people, he wouldn't be redeemable. From the first version of the screenplay we strived to save him slightly - one of the changes from the play, by the way. How can you redeem such a monstrously selfish character? This was one of the considerations that gave Patrice, Olivier and me a lot to think about. It's from here the final scene with the father originated. For over an hour, the character has only one thought in mind: to satisfy his egocentric desire. He is obstinate in wanting to listen to his record, to the point of infantilism. Suddenly we realise that it is in fact an encounter with his own childhood that he is arranging, without knowing it. He discovers that he can share the pleasure of listening to his record with someone else.

The film also paints an incredible portrait of our times.

We wanted to reproduce the atmosphere of the times we live in, without making a big deal about it, without *thinking* the world. The idea was to have fun, to laugh together and make others laugh. And that's no simple task; it's a big ask.

The critics situated your play at the point where George Feydeau and Jean Poiret meet, writing that you managed to reconcile classical and Boulevard theatre...

The relation with Feydeau refers to the pace and situation comedy. This kind of comedy works by a process of accumulation, on which Feydeau's theatre is based. Michel's nightmare in *Do Not Disturb* seems never-ending: the events preventing him from fulfilling his desire just keep on piling up – what's funny is their accumulation. You find the same process in Molière's *The Boreds*, a very simple play about the nightmare of being constantly hounded by others...

Literature, theatre, opera, even song-writing and now film, how do you explain such versatility?

There are so many links between them that I experience each as an extension of the others. This film is my first real foray into cinema, but I haven't forgotten that theatre brought me here. I loved this experience, Patrice Leconte's kindness, and the pleasure he takes in getting things done. I also very much appreciated the support of the producers at Fidélité - they are excellent midwives!

CAST

Christian CLAVIER - *Michel Leproux*

Carole BOUQUET - *Nathalie Leproux*

Valérie BONNETON - *Elsa*

Rossy DE PALMA - *Maria*

Stéphane DE GROODT - *Pavel*

Sébastien CASTRO - *Sébastien Leproux*

Arnaud HENRIET - *Léo*

Christian CHARMETANT - *Pierre*

CREW

DIRECTOR - *Patrice Leconte*

SCREENPLAY - *Florian Zeller*

Based on his stage play *Une heure de tranquillité*

D.P. - *Jean-Marie Dreujou*

EDITOR - *Joëlle Hache*

SOUND - *Paul Lainé*

SOUND EDITOR - *Paul Heymans*

SOUND MIXING - *Cyril Holtz*

PRODUCTION DESIGNER - *Ivan Maussion*

COSTUME DESIGNER - *Annie Perier Bertaux*

ORIGINAL MUSIC - *Eric Neveux*

1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - *Grégoire Barachin*

CONTINUITY - *Margot Seban*

CASTING - *Gérard Moulevrier*

LOCATION MANAGER - *Sarah Leres*

POSTPRODUCTION MANAGERS - *Susana Antunes, Clara Vincienne*

PRODUCTION MANAGER - *Sylvestre Guarino*

LINE PRODUCER - *Christine de Jekel*

PRODUCERS - *Olivier Delbosc, Marc Missonier*

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