

21H PILE (9pm Sharp), a thriller by Jean-François and Vincent Guillou

Statement of intention

While an unprecedented and unending economic crisis leads to a social and political chaos, violent riots break out all around the globe. It is 2pm sharp, and far from this anarchy, lost in a desert, gagged and trussed up on a chair, Vincent is facing his two bullies. He is being held as a hostage by Maëlle and René, two killers working for “Le Nantais”, a crime boss with particularly violent methods. He wants to get back the money and drugs that Vincent and his girlfriend Sara stole from him. The situation is very simple: if Sara, on the run, doesn’t bring the money back to Le Nantais before 9pm, Vincent will be brutally killed.

This situation, which seems simple from the outside and quite usual for our two experienced killers, turns out to be much more complicated this time, taking into account the current political context. They have heard that the United Nations, alongside the NATO, is thinking about creating a unoccupied zone secured by the army, a place that would be hard to get to for them, given their resume. A great deal of money would therefore be needed for them to be able to get through this, and they haven’t got it. René and Maëlle are also well aware that if and when things turn bad, they will be on their own. Le Nantais will not lift a finger to help them.

Even though she’s a woman, Maëlle has always known how to make herself respected in a world ruled by men. That is so because she has become as strong and cold as any of them, but also because she’s true to her word, loyal, and professional. Even in the crisis context, she would have survived anything on her own. But she’s not alone anymore. What she considers to be a youth mistake has brought her a child, an heir that she tries to hide and that only René knows about.

What if Sara didn’t bring the money back? What if Maëlle freed Vincent to help her find Sara and the precious package? She would only need to get rid of René to get half of that appealing amount of cash. A hired man can change his mind very quickly if he happens to be a mother in desperate straits. Yes, for Maëlle, this situation becomes an opportunity to jump at and she’s no woman to hesitate. When your life philosophy is to analyze, to adapt and dominate, you don’t think twice.

As far as I can recall, I started loving movies watching spaghetti westerns. When I was a teenager, these dirty and violent characters, full of defects, were always in my imagination - especially during hard times. This way of filming, “taking its time”, setting the situation and lingering over it was really magical. I honestly think that since the French Nouvelle Vague, the western genre is the last great European revolution in moviemaking. Therefore, I am particularly proud to be, with Angevine Production, the creator of the Almeria Collection concept. I for one think that directing a spaghetti western in the Tabernas desert is like going on a pilgrimage.

With *21h Pile’s* script, I wanted to reuse the characteristics of the spaghetti westerns characters confronting them to current society issues, and above all, confronting them to the fears they can provoke in each one of us, shooting in locations with great historical value. The codes will always be the same: individualistic characters, only thinking about themselves and wanting money, power or revenge. But in this particular case, they will find themselves in the 21st century and will be confronted to a big economic crisis that creates anarchy around them.

Whereas Clint Eastwood and Lee Van Cleef characters were evolving in a new, under construction world with more and more rules, *21h Pile* characters are confronting a world led by laws, a strictly controlled system that tends to disappear. The goal is then to take advantage of the chaos to get as much money as possible and be free from financial worries. Here, cowboys are gangsters, violent men willing to do anything to come through, trusting no one and wanting to solve their problems by themselves.

I’ve also wanted to modernize the characters sphere by creating Maëlle, a woman evolving in a men’s world. Usually, women in spaghetti westerns tend to be widows seeking protection from men, but here she becomes the master of her own fate and it is now others that are seeking protection from her. A female status that is definitely plausible nowadays.

21h Pile is a suspense movie that aims to have the seriousness of Melville while having the black humor of Albert Simonin. This story isn’t a comedy but has to have a little bit of irony and self-mockery. A subtlety that was usually found in spaghetti westerns.

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What I found fascinating in a film that pertains to a specific genre is that, as a viewer, we know all about the tricks, the codes, but that doesn't prevent us to appreciate it. It becomes a real exercise in style, and the movie fan that I am always asks himself: how did he do it this time?

The main goal of the Almeria Collection project being to shed a new light on the landscapes and locations of the Tabernas desert, I find it a good idea to use a digital camera, which would enable me to capture the beautiful white light of the Almeria region. I love what Michael Mann does with HD and I'd like *21h Pile* to have that same result, that is to say a dynamic movie, lively, maintaining a tension and filming close to the actors. I'd also like the lights and make-up to be as natural as possible.

In the end, *21h Pile* is a simple and raw story, where the characters defects are highlighted and make them appear more human than ever. That is also the most terrifying part of the story: each one of us can see himself in these characters.

Because of the economic crisis that Europe is facing today, I sometimes get the impression that I, too, am evolving in a desert. Like the characters in my story, I'm getting anxious and making up stories about a crisis that seems both far and close from me, both oppressing and intangible. And that is what's most scary about it.



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Crew members

(in the process of being selected)

CHIEF CAMERAMAN Romain Lacourbas
FILM COMPOSER Cyril Peglion
ACTRESS Aurélia Izarn-Berger
ACTOR Carlo Brandt
(in the process of being)



Jean-François Guillou Jean-François Guillou is at the origin of the European concept ALMERIA COLLECTION, an idea which he develops with the collaboration of Aurélia Izarn-Berger, as well as Pénélope Lamoureux since 2011. After working alternately as an actor, director and producer for feature films and documentaries, he created Angevine Production in 2004. He has worked with productions companies such as Cinergie Productions and LGM Films and directors such as Benjamin Cappelletti, Michel Hassan and Josiane Balasko. Self-taught person, movie buff, he's also the author, director and producer of two short films: *Laura* and *Pour Une Place Au Soleil*, that were both broadcasted internationally and received several awards.



Light on ...



Aurélia Izarn-Berger is a French actress, singer and voice-over artist. A CIM alumni, Aurélia experimented the training technique Alexander & Meisner, with Agnès de Brugnot and Scott Williams. She started off in classic theater plays such as *Le Malentendu* and contemporary ones such as *Le Dîner de Con*, before working with directors Benjamin Cappelletti and Jean-François Guillou while pursuing her singing career. She's the co-creator of the Almeria Collection concept.

Vincent Guillou is a French author and director. Movie buff like his brother Jean-François, he's also a true comic book fan. He's now part of the Angevine Production team and has worked as a set technician and prop man. He's the co-writer of the documentary *Les Barbelés Oubliés* and *21h Pile's* script.