



**EDEN**  
**A L'OUËST**  
A FILM BY  
**COSTA-GAVRAS**

**PATHE!**

 59<sup>+</sup> International  
Festival  
Closing Night



# EDEN

## A L'OUEST

EDEN IS WEST

A film by **Costa-Gavras**

Screenplay by **Costa-Gavras** and **Jean-Claude Grumberg**

With **Riccardo Scamarcio**

**Juliane Köhler, Ulrich Tukur**

**Eric Caravaca, Anny Duperey**

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# Synopsis

## EDEN IS WEST

As in «The Odyssey», the Aegean Sea is the setting when our hero, Elias, sets out on his adventures. On the same waters, under the same sun and the same sky as the dawn of civilization. After countless incidents and accidents, a stopover in paradise and a sojourn in hell, the magical conclusion of his journey takes place in Paris.

Paris, the shining city in the deepest dreams, in the most uncertain sleep of wanderers.

EDEN IS WEST attempts to echo the path, the journey of those (once our fathers and mothers) who cross through lands, braving oceans and seas of uniforms, looking for a home.

Elias' story is not that of Ulysses, nor is it Jean-Claude's or mine. But I see myself in Elias, a foreigner who is not foreign to me.

Costa-Gavras



*«I have enormous respect for a man who immigrates.»*

## INTERVIEW WITH COSTA-GAVRAS

**France's most award-winning director Costa-Gavras takes on a theme with deep personal resonance - EDEN IS WEST is the story of an immigrant's destiny, told with a level of maturity and accuracy only this Greek who has resided in Paris since 1956 could provide.**

### **Where is EDEN IS WEST going to take us?**

To Paris. I wanted this film to be like an Odyssey. A little like Ulysses, my character crosses the sea (my own Mediterranean Sea, actually), braving storms and other tribulations. He faces down some rather modern monsters and challenges the myths of our era. Ulysses' was a journey home, whereas Elias wants to found a new home.

Today, many men and women are forced to uproot themselves and then put down roots elsewhere. «To leave is to die a little,» but to immigrate is to die and be reborn in another place. It's a film about taking root, but in no way takes a static view of what that means - the love of one's land, its mountains, the smell of the grass in the morning when you awake.

Elias is faced with a different, unknown world, our world, and, through his eyes, we see it in a fresh and critical way. In the end, we are forced to take a look at ourselves.



**The beginning of the film is almost like a documentary or a very realistic news report about a freighter filled with immigrants.**

It had to be obvious from the start that these were immigrants - fleeing famine or war, or both, it doesn't matter. Jean-Claude Grumberg and I wanted our main character to be emblematic of all those who have to leave in order to survive. Either because they can no longer feed their families, because they face a dark future in their country, because the powers-that-be want to destroy them, or simply because they are driven by the pursuit of a dream.

We invented a language and did everything we could to keep our character from having an identifiable nationality.

In the opening scene, hundreds of illegal immigrants are being crammed into a broken down freighter. They all have one thing in common - they paid to get on that boat because they were promised Europe, they were promised Eden. Then, suddenly, they are betrayed and abandoned. It's a story common to all immigrants. At a certain point, it's to each his own odyssey, to each according to his dream, his needs and his capabilities.

**Elias' dream is Paris.**

We didn't just pick Paris out of a hat. The City of Lights is the city of tolerance, of culture, of a certain gentleness. Paris was the place I chose, just as it was the place Jean-Claude Grumberg's parents had chosen a generation before me.

**Along the way in this odyssey, we meet characters of varying levels of tolerance and generosity, and it's obvious you paid careful attention to their portrayal.**

They all resemble us. They are one side of us, of our society and its contradictions. Immigration is revealing about who we are at a given moment. The way a society treats immigrants, whether it accepts or rejects them, whether it sets up barriers and procedures or not, its prejudices about those from certain countries as opposed to others all this says a lot about the condition of that society itself.

The treatment of Italians and Poles by the French in the 1930s, then of North Africans before and after the Algerian war, of Portuguese during the same period, to say nothing of the preconceptions about Asian immigrants being «lower-profile, harder workers, easier to assimilate,» all these clich  s go to who we are.

The immigrant Elias affords us a look at our own society's reaction to a foreign body.

**Elias is always running away.**

Elias has no trouble settling. His problem is that whenever he does, someone comes after him. He is constantly on the run, hunted. The immigrant today is never considered beneficial to a country. He is no longer in demand, no longer even a problem - he's a danger. All kinds of media now portray him, directly or indirectly, as a danger - an invasive danger - for society. But European society as a whole, and French society in particular, needs immigrants.

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**At one point, he is frightened of firemen.**

He's afraid of all uniforms. In *Modern Times*, Charlie Chaplin is terrified when he sees two sailors. He runs away.

**Or of policemen who are simply supervising a roller-blade parade through Paris.**

Elias is scared, but this time the policemen call him «sir» and protect him, because now he's well dressed.

**The film is fairly dark, but there is also a sweet, comic quality that emerges. That gives this new Costa-Gavras film an unexpected dimension. How did that come about?**

Probably from the fact that I'm moved by this character, more than by others. The sweetness and kindness of an immigrant is owed to his need to gain acceptance, maybe even be loved. But it also comes from an inferiority complex which flows from the paternalistic eyes and behavior that he encounters. I have enormous respect for a man who immigrates.

To leave your country, to move into the unknown as a terrible ordeal. It requires both mental courage and physical courage in unlimited quantities. And it requires intelligence as well - intelligence that comes from life. You need to know how to get by, but also how to interpret and adapt to a set of very different social codes, to say nothing of the language barrier. In the end, it may well be the very best among us who come to join our «Eden.»

Jean-Claude Grumberg and I wanted this film to be a tribute to our fathers, our grandfathers and to those of our generation who came to France in spite of the pitfalls and the storms. Here they are, here we are!

As the Americans say, «Here we stand.» I like that very simple expression. There is pride in simply being there, upright.

It's probably a holdover from the pioneer spirit, but it says a lot.



**February 2009, release of EDEN IS WEST. February 1969, release of «Z» - what has changed in forty years?**

When I was doing films like «Z,» I was raising warning flags, exposing injustice and placing things in the context of a world where everything seemed to be moving toward «progress,» working out «for the best.» So it was important to show how this «best» also contained the worst. Today, the general feeling is that things are getting worse across the board. And in particular, the view of the immigrant is one of impending doom. We didn't want to contribute to this overdramatizing about immigrants. By striking a lighter tone and mixing it with some fairly violent stuff, we were trying to let the issue of immigration «breathe» a little, to come at this «problematic man» from a different angle.

**Anny Duperey is fabulous in the film. She does only one scene, but that scene says it all! She meets Elias and gives him a jacket.**

«With this you'll find work and you'll get to the Champs-Élysées,» she tells him. She's given him a key, a master key. That key is not just a piece of clothing to keep him warm. It facilitates human contact, makes the fear go away. This upper-class Parisian lady knows that. She gives him her husband's jacket, a husband we imagine has passed away.



**She doesn't go so far as to let him into her apartment!**

No, she leaves him on the landing. She does what we all do, she helps a little.

Maybe you can't «take on all the whole world's misery,» but you can maintain your dignity, your humanity. This country is made up of millions of people like Elias or who used to be like Elias. Integration shouldn't be merely a personal victory over adversity. It should be the collective project of a society.

**Among these millions of immigrants who make up France, there is one named Costa-Gavras. Born in Greece, there's a foreigner who has done more than well in his adopted country. What about this film is drawn from your own story?**

Everything. And yet it isn't an autobiographical film. Of course I, too, was a cultural and economic immigrant. I think I'm just like thousands of immigrants. Not all of them became filmmakers, naturally, not all have had the success which I still find so incredible. But I repeat, this is not an autobiography. Still, Elias was drawn from my life, my experiences. This is probably my most personal film.

**Do you consider yourself French?**

When it comes to this, I can only answer, «Do you, as a French person, consider me French? If you consider me French, then I'll go along with you.» I am a product of this country, of this culture, I'm from here. But the answer is in your eyes, not mine. And that is a need that never goes away. It's like a romance. You love a woman

and you can see in her eyes that she loves you back. An immigrant doesn't start to feel French when he gets a roof over his head, a job, official status. That matters, but it's not enough. He's French when people look at him with respect and warmth, when they consider him one of their own.

**Is «being French» something you learned?**

I don't have the culture that my children have acquired since primary school. When I got here, I read schoolbooks to learn what schoolchildren learned, French songs for example. But naturally, I never lived them, I learned them later in life, and I know very well that they don't totally belong to me. That's what being French really is - it's having friends, little French playmates, and playing with them in French and never thinking twice about it.

**Who are you, then? Where are you from?**

I'm a citizen of France. I'm a Parisian, having lived in that city for over fifty years.

My culture is French and, as a French citizen, I am part of this country, and I try to be worthy of that honor. Sometimes I tell my children, «You're French by accident. I'm French out of choice and necessity.» That choice and that necessity made me who I am.

**Do you feel that today's France is less generous towards immigrants than when you arrived?**

I think it became less generous out of fear - a fear of unemployment, of different religions, of different skin colors. A fear fueled by certain politicians which ultimately made its mark, creating the myth of the invader, a danger to French identity and culture.

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**Riccardo Scamarcio, who plays Elias, must have about ten lines in the entire film. A main character who practically never speaks!**

The great actors of silent movies never speak, but they communicate everything. Elias is an immigrant who couldn't learn French. But he tries to learn it from an old text book. When I hear people say immigrants should learn French before they get here, I'm outraged. Where are they supposed to learn it? In their countries devastated by misery, war or both ?!

**At the beginning of the film, Elias and his companion in misfortune speak in their native language.**

We had to invent a language that wouldn't define the characters' identity. We reversed French words! A linguist friend listened to the result and said: «It sounds like a Semitic language, but the architecture is French.» He made a few changes so it would sound more like from elsewhere, a faroff elsewhere.

**A nouveau riche Greek couple are having an argument in a car. I don't know if friends of yours inspired it, but they're incredible!**

Like every scene in the film, this one has its meaning, its allegoric meaning, you might say. Elias is hitchhiking and the couple who give him a ride is Greek. They could as easily have been Italian or Spanish.

It's a scene about how fickle we are, how we want to be humane, considerate and charitable, as long as it doesn't disturb our comfort or our peace of mind. And that point, our humanism fades, then disappears. You used the term «nouveau riche» and it's not just a cliché. In my experience and from what I've observed, there is more indifference there than anywhere else.

**There are also a few references to French politics and the omnipresence of television, which is always there, but often out of step with the action.**

I wanted the «background» to tell a little bit about our society, to flesh out the world in which the character is evolving.

**In the foreground, despite a certain amount of humor, there is relentless ferocity. Like the scene where Elias has to unclog the toilet with his hands, literally plunging his hands into shit.**

That scene, like the one of the Magician and the «toilet of death,» is a metaphor for the use we make of immigrants. There's this thing stuck in people's heads, in the immigrant's head as well; it's like he



has to accept anything without a peep if he wants to be tolerated and accepted. Humiliation, degradation, even rape. Everything. Because he's weak. He's worse than weak, he's nothing. He can see that in people's eyes and finally submits to it.

Keeping one's dignity, resistance and refusal are not qualities or virtues for the immigrant. They are a source of trouble. And that kind of violence done to a human being is unspeakable. When I was a young man in Greece, we had to be submissive and stay that way. But, little by little, you find your place, you learn to stand up for yourself. That's in the film, too. When Elias rebels, he earns the respect of others and his freedom. That's how he gets out of a factory where he's being exploited through the promise of legal status. He gains his dignity, but he's forced to run away.

**There is another kind of threat in your film as well, that of cops all over the place. A bit like in a Charlie Chaplin film. Even Elias turns into a policeman at one point, though it's only a costume. Does that express how you feel, or is it just a device?**

But getting back to the police, it's true there are a lot of them around. Michèle and I spent our fortieth wedding anniversary in Iceland. We were invited by the President and we got there, knocked on the door and the door opened. Not a policeman in sight. And it's not just Iceland. In many European countries the police aren't as



omnipresent as in France. When you first get here from another country, it's striking. Then you get used to it. For immigrants, the police are danger itself.

So yes, we see them in the film. We see them through Elias' eyes and through his fears.

**Throughout your work, you've tried to show at what point a democracy deviates, or no longer behaves like a democracy. In today's France, those things are pretty much assumed. There's no need to be vigilant, it's taken for granted.**

Never take it for granted. Always be vigilant.

**Do you think that the way a democracy deals with immigration problems is a measure of its health?**

Today, we no longer judge democracies by wondering if they might turn into dictatorships, or if this guy or that guy is a potential tyrant. Remaking «Z» and setting it in a modern European country would make no sense at all. The military no longer makes threats. Sometimes they even work in communications or on humanitarian missions!

Nonetheless, I think those questions remain. A few years ago, when Pierre Joxe was Minister of the Interior, he asked me, «Why don't you make a film about the blue banana? The blue banana is Europe seen from a satellite. At night, the brightest cities form a sort of blue banana. It is thought that in the next few years, between 20 and 25 million immigrants will try to settle in that blue banana.»

So there's nothing new about it.



But how did democracies behave with respect to that problem? When you see a mother about to be deported because her son has just died and, without him, she loses her right to remain in France, that a cabinet member has to personally intervene on her behalf, it's natural to wonder what's happened to our democracy. To be subject to a cabinet member's whim! Where is the debate? Where is democratic process when it comes to the immigrant?

When policemen say, «Hey you, get over here!» it's humiliating. Because I am not «hey you,» I am «sir.» When Elias is drawn irresistibly to an attractive store window and accidentally bangs his forehead against the glass, the store owner chases him with a gesture meaning, «Get the hell out of here! Don't you even look at my store window, you're not worthy!» That's a form of unacceptable violence as well and it grows more commonplace with every passing day. Any self-respecting democracy channels violence, protects its weaker members and maintains their dignity. I'm not speaking of absolute equality for everyone. That's another issue. But democracy is a refusal to allow the loss of dignity. Immigrant, homeless, unemployed, outcast... nothing should take away their dignity. And that issue is far from settled.

Interviewed by Olivier Ravello



# Costa-Gavras

Born February 13, 1933, Arkadie, Greece.

High school in Athens.

Literary studies at the Sorbonne, Paris.

Film school : IDHEC (Institut des hautes études cinématographiques): 1956.

After graduating from film school, he is offered work and decides to stay in France. First Assistant Director to René Clair, Yves Allégret, René Clément, Henri Verneuil, Jean Giono, Jacques Demy, Marcel Ophüls, Jean Becker.

- 1965** **COMPARTIMENT TUEURS** (The Sleeping Car Murders)  
Director and screenwriter. Adapted from the novel by Sébastien Japrisot.  
Starring Yves MONTAND, Simone SIGNORET, Jacques PERRIN, Catherine ALLEGRET, Michel PICCOLI, Jean-Louis TRINTIGNANT.  
This first film was made possible by the support of Yves Montand and Simone Signoret. It was ranked as one of the best films of the year after its release in the United States.  
Edgar Poe Award.
- 1967** **UN HOMME DE TROP** (Shock Troops)  
Director and screenwriter. Adapted from the book by Jean-Pierre Chabrol.  
Starring Michel PICCOLI, Jean-Claude BRIALY, François PÉRIER, Charles VANEL, Jacques PERRIN, Bruno CREMER, Claude BRASSEUR.
- 1969** **Z** - Director. Co-screenwriter with Jorge Semprun. Adapted from the book by Vassilis Vassilikos. Starring Yves MONTAND, Jean-Louis TRINTIGNANT, Irène PAPPAS, Pierre DUX, Jacques PERRIN, François PÉRIER, Julien GUIOMAR. Cannes Film Festival : Prix Spécial du Jury à l'unanimité (unanimously voted the Jury's Special Award) and Prix d'Interprétation (Best Actor) for Jean-Louis TRINTIGNANT. New York Critics Award. Two Oscars (five nominations)
- 1971** **L'AVEU** - (The Confession)  
Director. Co-screenwriter with Jorge Semprun. Adapted from the book by Arthur and Lise London.  
Starring Yves MONTAND, Simone SIGNORET, Michel VITOLD, Antoine VITEZ, Gabriele FERZETTI
- 1973** **ÉTAT DE SIÈGE** - (State of Siege)  
Director. Co-screenwriter with Franco Solinas. Starring Yves MONTAND, Jacques WEBER, Jean-Luc BIDEAU. Louis Delluc Award.
- 1975** **MONSIEUR KLEIN** - Co-scénariste avec Franco SOLINAS  
Réalisé par Joseph LOSEY
- 1975** **SECTION SPÉCIALE** - (Special Section)  
Director. Co-screenwriter with Jorge Semprun. Adapted from the book by Jacques Villeret.  
Starring Louis SEIGNER, Pierre DUX, Michel GALABRU, Claude PIÉPLU, Michel LONSDALE, Jacques PERRIN, Yves ROBERT, Bruno CREMER.  
Cannes Film Festival: Prix de la mise en scène (Best Director).
- 1977** **LE CORMORAN** -  
Co-screenwriter with Franco Solinas.
- 1979** **CLAIR DE FEMME** - Director and screenwriter. Adapted from the novel by Romain Gary.  
Starring Romy SCHNEIDER, Yves MONTAND.
- 1981** **MISSING** - Director. Co-screenwriter with Donald Stewart. Starring Jack LEMMON, Sissy SPACEK, John SHEA. Palme d'or at the Cannes Film Festival. Prix d'interprétation (Best Actor) for Jack LEMMON at the Cannes Film Festival. Writers Guild of America Award. Oscar for Best Screenplay (4 nominations).
- 1983** **HANNA K** - Director. Co-screenwriter with Franco Solinas.  
Starring Jill CLAYBURGH, Jean YANNE, Gabriel BYRNE.
- 1985** **CONSEIL DE FAMILLE** - (Family Business)  
Director and screenwriter. Adapted from Francis Ryck's novel. Starring Fanny ARDANT, Johnny HALLYDAY, Guy MARCHAND.
- 1987** **BETRAYED** Director. Written by Joe Eszterhas. Starring Debra WINGER, Tom BERENGER, John HEARD.
- 1989** **MUSIC BOX** - Director. Written by Joe Eszterhas. Starring Jessica LANGE, Armin MUELLER-STAHL, Frédéric FORREST. Golden Bear Award at the 1990 Berlin Film Festival. Oscar nomination for Jessica Lange.
- 1992** **LA PETITE APOCALYPSE** - (The Little Apocalypse)  
Director and co-screenwriter with Jean-Claude Grumberg. Adapted from Tadeusz Konwicki's novel. Starring André DUSSOLLIER, Pierre ARDITI, Barbara ROMANTOWSKA.
- 1994** **IL MONDO DE LA LUNA** - Opera by J. Haydn, libretto de C. Goldoni.  
Directed this opera at the SanCarlo Theater in Naples.
- 1994** **À PROPOS DE NICE, LA SUITE** - Directed one segment.  
(Cancobales about Jean-Marie Le Pen in Nice).
- 1995** **LES FILMS LUMIÈRE** - (Lumière & Co)  
Among other directors, made a short film (one minute) in the same conditions as the Lumière Brothers.
- 1997** **MAD CITY** - Starring John Travolta and Dustin Hoffman (Warner Bros).
- 2000** **MON COLONEL** - Screenwriter. From the novel by Francis Zamponi. Directed by Laurent Herbiet.
- 2001** **AMEN** - Director and co-screenwriter with Jean-Claude Grumberg. Adapted from the play «The Representative» by R. Hochhuth. Starring Ulrich Tukur, Mathieu Kassovitz, Ulrich Mühe.  
Best European film 2002 : Foreign Press Association Awards, Italy  
Best European film 2002 : Foreign Press Association Awards, France  
Cesar Awards (Paris): Best Screenplay 2002
- 2004** **LE COUPERET** - THE AX  
from the novel by Donald Westlake. Screenwriter and director.  
Starring José Garcia, Karin Viard, Olivier Gourmet, Ulrich Tukur
- 2009** **EDEN IS WEST** -  
original screenplay written with Jean-Claude Grumberg. Director.  
Starring Riccardo Scamarcio, Ulrich Tukur, Julianne Kohler
- 1971 - 1973:** President of la Société des réalisateurs de films (Film directors' Society).  
**1982 - 1987:** President of La Cinémathèque Française.  
**1991:** President of the first Cinémémoire Festival.  
**1992:** Vice-president of Le 1er Siècle du Cinéma (Celebration of Film's First Century) (President: Michel Piccoli).  
**2007 -** present: President of La Cinémathèque Française

# Jean-Claude Grumberg

Playwright, born 1939 in Paris, France.

## WRITTEN FOR THE STAGE

- 1968** **Demain une fenêtre sur rue**  
Prix des U
- 1969** **Mathieu Legros**
- 1969** **Michu, Rixe**
- 1973** **Dreyfus**  
*Prix Plaisir du théâtre*
- 1974** **Chez Pierrot**  
**En r'venant d'Expo**
- 1979** **L'Atelier**  
*Prix Ibsen (Ibsen Award), Prix du Syndicat de la critique (Critics' Award), Grand prix de la ville de Paris (City of Paris, Grand Prize), Molière for best actor in a play and best repertory play (1999)*
- 1990** **Zone Libre**  
*Molière for best playwright*
- 1997** **Adam et Eve**
- 1998** **Rêver peut-être**  
*Prix du Syndicat de la critique (Critics' Award)*
- 2000** **L'Enfant do**
- 2009** **Vers toi, Terre promise**

## WRITTEN AND CO-WRITTEN FOR THE SCREEN

- 1988** **LES ANNÉES SANDWICHES** dir. Pierre Boutron
- 1980** **LE DERNIER MÉTRO (THE LAST METRO)** dir. François Truffaut
- 1992** **LA PETITE APOCALYPSE (THE LITTLE APOCALYPSE)** dir. Costa-Gavras
- 1998** **LE PLUS BEAU PAYS DU MONDE (THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH)**  
dir. Marcel Bluwal **FAIT D'HIVER** dir. Robert Enrico
- 2000** **AMEN** dir. Costa-Gavras
- 2003** **LE COUPERET (THE AX)** dir. Costa-Gavras
- 2007** **EDEN À L'OUEST** dir. Costa-Gavras

## WRITTEN FOR TELEVISION

- 1983** **Thérèse Humbert** dir. Marcel Bluwal
- 1985** **Les lendemains qui chantent** dir. Jacques Fansten  
Music-hall dir. Marcel Bluwal
- 2003** **Un fils de notre temps** dir. Fabrice Cazeneuve
- 2004** **93, rue Lauriston** dir. Denys Granier-Deferre
- 2007** **Clémentine** dir. Denys Granier-Deferre

## PROSE

- 2003** **Mon Père**, inventaire published by Les Editions du Seuil

# Riccardo Scamarcio

Born in Trani, southern Italy, Riccardo Scamarcio was trained as an actor at the National School of Cinema in Rome.

He made his screen début in the Marco Tullio Giordana film *THE BEST OF YOUTH*, but his career as a film actor had a breakthrough in 2004 with the Luca Lucini movie *TRE METRI SOPRA IL CIELO (THREE STEPS OVER HEAVEN)*.

- 2009** **LA PRIMA LINEA** dir. Riccardo De Maria
- 2008** **ITALIANS** dir. Giovanni Veronesi  
**EDEN IS WEST** dir. Costa-Gavras  
**IL GRANDE SOGNO** dir. Michel Placido  
**COLPO D'OCCHIO** dir. Sergio Rubini
- 2007** **GO GO TALES** dir. Abel Ferrara  
**MY BROTHER IS AN ONLY CHILD** dir. Daniele Luchetti  
**HO VOGLIA DI TE** dir. Luis Prieto  
**MANUALE D'AMORE 2 (MANUAL OF LOVE 2)** dir. Giovanni Veronesi
- 2005** **ROMANZO CRIMINALE (CRIME NOVEL)** dir. Michele Placido  
**TEXAS** dir. Fausto Paravidino  
**L'UOMO PERFETTO** dir. Luca Lucini
- 2004** **TRE METRI SOPRA IL CIELO (THREE STEPS OVER HEAVEN)**  
dir. Luca Lucini
- 2002** **THE BEST OF YOUTH** dir. Marco Tullio Giordana



