



WELLSPRING

Best Foreign Language Film
2005 IFP Independent Spirit Awards Nominee

Official Selection
2004 Berlin International Film Festival
2004 Tribeca Film Festival

**JEAN-PIERRE
DARROUSSIN**

**CAROLE
BOUQUET**

IN

RED LIGHTS

A FILM BY CÉDRIC KAHN

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY GEORGES SIMENON

106 Minutes – Dolby SRD – 35MM – COLOR – 1:85

www.wellspring.com/redlights

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SYNOPSIS

Based on the novel by Georges Simenon, Cédric Kahn's RED LIGHTS is an edge-of-your-seat thriller in the tradition of Claude Chabrol and Alfred Hitchcock. It's a summer holiday weekend in Paris. Antoine (Jean-Pierre Darroussin) and Hélène (Carole Bouquet) are on their way to pick up their children at summer camp, thus joining thousands of other vacationers on the highways to the south of France. At first in high spirits, the couple starts sniping at each other during the drive as tensions in their relationship bubble to the surface. Frustrated by the freeway, Antoine takes a byway detour, much to Helene's displeasure, and then leaves her in the car as he stops for a drink. Once they're back on the road, their bickering escalates, with Antoine blaming Hélène for his drinking. Antoine then stops again to continue drinking at another tavern, although this time, Helene warns that she won't be there when he gets back. Still he defies her and goes into the bar, taking the car keys with him. He panics when he leaves the bar and discovers she has left. Believing that she has taken the train, he drives like a madman to the next station, but the last train is just pulling out. Driving away in a state of dread, he picks up a strange hitchhiker -- not knowing he might have already crossed the path of his soon-to-be-missing wife...

CAST

Antoine	Jean-Pierre DARROUSSIN
Hélène	Carole BOUQUET
Man On The Run	Vincent DENIARD
Waitress	Carline PAUL
Inspector	Jean-Pierre GOS

CREW

A film by	Cédric KAHN
Screenplay	Cédric KAHN Laurence FERREIRA-BARBOSA
With	Gilles MARCHAND
Based on the novel by	Georges SIMENON
Cinematography	Patrick BLOSSIER
Sound	Jean-Pierre DURET
Production Design	François ABELANET
Costumes	Elisabeth TAVERNIER Edwige MOREL D'ARLEUX
1st AD	Valerie MEGARD
Continuity	Elodie Van BEUREN
Editing	Yann DEDET
Sound Editing	Olivier GOINARD
Sound Mix	Jean-Pierre LAFORCE
Production Management	Philippe SAAL
Line Production	Françoise GALFRÈ
Producer	Patrick GODEAU
A co-production by	Alicéleo, France 3 Cinéma, Gimages Films
With	French National Film Center
In association with	Gimages 6, Cofimage 15, Banque Populaire Images 4
With the participation of	Canal+, Cinécinéma
World Sales	Celluloid Dreams
Music	Claude DEBUSSY
Principal Theme	“Nuages” from Nocturnes Conducted by Manuel ROSENTHAL with the kind permission of UNIVERSAL MUSIC PROJETS SPECIAUX Original soundtrack released by ACCORD: 2cd 465 483-2

CEDRIC KAHN – Filmography

- 1992 **Railway Bar** (Bar Des Rails)
- 1994 **Too Much Happiness** (Trop De Bonheur)
- 1997 Zero Guilt (Culpabilité Zéro) (TV Film)
- 1998 **L'ennui**
- 2001 **Roberto Succo**
- 2003 **Red Lights** (Feux Rouges)

CAROLE BOUQUET -- Filmography

- 1977 **That Obscure Object of Desire** (Cet Obscur Objet Du Désir) by Luis Bunuel
1979 **The Persian Lamb Coat** (Le Manteau D'Astrakan) by Marco Vicario
Cold Cuts (Buffet Froid) by Bertrand Blier
1981 **Day Of The Idiots** (Le Jour Des Idiots) by Werner Schroeter
For Your Eyes Only (Rien Que Pour Vos Yeux) by John Glen
1982 **Bingo, Bango** by Pascale Festa Campanile
1983 **Murder Near Perfect** (Mystère) by Carlo Vanzina
Némo (Dream One) by Arnaud Sélignac
1984 **Right Bank, Left Bank** (Rive Droite Rive Gauche) by Phillippe Labro
Good King Dagobert (Le Bon Roi Dagobert) by Dino Risi and Ugo Tognazzi
1986 **Spécial Police** by Michel Vianey
Double Gentleman (Double Messieurs) by François Stévenin
Jenatsch by Daniel Schmid
The Malady Of Love (Le Mal D'aimer) by Gorgio Trevers
1987 **On Se Dépêche D'En Rire** by Paule Muret
1989 **Bunker Palace Hotel** by Enki Bilal
Too Beautiful For You (Trop Belle Pour Toi) by Bertrand Blier
New York Stories by Francis Ford Coppola
1991 **Women In Skirts** (Donne Con Le Gonne) by Gianfranco Piciolli
1992 **Tango** by Patrice Leconte
1993 **D'Une Femme À L'Autre** (A Business Affair) by Charlotte Brandstöm
Dead Tired (Grosse Fatigue) by Michel Blanc
1996 **Lucie Aubrac** by Claude Berri
1997 **In All Innocence** (En Plein Cœur) by Pierre Jolivet
1998 **Lulu Kreutz's Picnic** (Le Pique-Nique De Lulu Kreutz) by Didier Martiny
The Bridge (Un Pont Entre Deux Rives) by Gérard Depardieu
2001 **Blanche** by Bernie Bonvoisin
Summer Things (Embrassez Qui Vous Voudrez) by Michel Blanc
2002 **Welcome To The Roses** (Bienvenue Chez Les Rozes) by Francis Palluau
2003 **Les Fautes D'Orthographe** by Jean-Jacques Zilbermann

JEAN-PIERRE DARROUSSIN – Filmography

- 1980 **Psy** by Philippe de Broca
Celles Qu'on N'a Pas Eues by Pascal Thomas
1981 **Est-Ce Bien Raisonnable?** by Georges Lautner
1983 **Our Story** (Notre Histoire) by Bertrand Blier

- 1984 **Slices Of Life** (Tranches De Vies) by François Leterrier
- 1985 **Elsa Elsa** by Didier Haudepin
He Died With His Eyes Open (On Ne Meurt Que Deux Fois) by Jacques Deray
Ki Lo Sa? By Robert Guédiguian
- 1989 **Mes Meilleurs Copains** by Jean-Marie Poiré
Dieu Vomit Les Tièdes by Robert Guédiguian
- 1990 **Mado, Poste Restante** by Alexandre Adabachian
- 1991 **L'Amour En Deux** by Jean-Claude Gallotta
- 1992 **Little Nothings** (Rien Du Tout) by Cédric Klapisch
Kitchen With Apartment (Cuisine Et Dépendances) by Philippe Muyl
- 1993 **Cache Cash** by Claude Pinoteau
- 1994 **Madame Petlet's True Story** (Le Fabuleux Destin De Mme Petlet) by Camille de Casabianca
- 1995 **Til Death Do Us Part** (A La Vie À La Mort!) by Robert Guédiguian
My Man (Mon Homme) by Bertrand Blier
- 1996 **Family Resemblances** (Un Air De Famille) by Cédric Klapisch
Marius And Jeannette (Marius Et Jeannette) by Robert Guédiguian
- 1997 **Same Old Song** (On Connaît Le Chanson) by Alain Resnais
Where The Heart Is (A La Place Du Cœur) by Robert Guédiguian
Beware Of My Love (Si Je T'aime, Prends Garde À Toi) by Jeanne Labrune
Le Poulpe by Guillaume Nicloux
- 1998 **Who Plucked The Feathers Off The Moon?** (Qui Plume La Lune?)
by Christine Carrière
What's Life (C'est Quoi La Vie?) by François Dupeyron
- 1999 **Season's Beatings** (La Bûche) by Danièle Thompson
Inséparables by Michel Couvelard
Charge! (A L'Attaque) by Robert Guédiguian
The Town Is Quiet (La Ville Est Tranquille) by Robert Guédiguian
Ça Ira Mieux Demain (Tomorrow's Another Day) by Jeanne Labrune
- 2000 **L'Art Délicat De La Séduction** by Richard Berry
August 15th (15 AOÛT) by Patrick Alessandrin
- 2001 **A Private Affair** (Une Affaire Privée) by Guillaume Nicloux
Marie-Jo And Her Two Lovers (Marie-Jo Et Ses Deux Amours) by Robert Guédiguian
The Landlords (Mille Millièmes) by Rémi Waterhouse
- 2002 **Le Retour Du Printemps** by Carlos Pardo
C'est Le Bouquet (Special Delivery) by Jeanne Labrune
If I Were A Rich Man (Ah! Si J'étais Riche) by Gérard Bitton and Michel Munz
Frenchmen (Le Cœur Des Hommes) by Marc Esposito
- 2003 **Mon Père Est Ingénieur** de Robert Guediguian
Un Long Dimanche De Fiançailles (A Very Long Engagement) by Jean-Pierre Jeunet
Cause Toujours by Jeane Labrune

Interview with CÉDRIC KAHN (Director)

Was adapting a Georges Simenon novel something you had been thinking about for a long time?

It was my agent, Dominique Besnehard, who suggested I read the book. Then, everything happened very fast. Immediately, I knew I wanted to make it. That omnipresent road, the main character's quest, the fact that we chase after a man who is heading straight for a brick wall but who, in reality, is rebuilding his life and trying to achieve some kind of reconciliation with his loved ones and with himself, all of that was enticing.

And everything fell into place...?

The working conditions were relatively easy, for which, I have to thank the producer with whom I had not worked with before. Finance, schedule and cast fell into place fairly easily. Patrick Godeau was the first of us to have wanted to make *Red Lights*. He had optioned the book more than twenty years ago. It's a film in which the producer's energy and desire emerged. Which is not to say that it isn't 100% mine too. I'm proud of it and it is close to me.

You adapted the novel yourself. What was your approach?

The real secret to adaptation is not to hide behind the author but to use him to go further. Novels provide a starting block and the challenge is all the more exciting if the book is a good one. I experienced that when adapting Alberto Moravia's book to make *L'Ennui*. And Georges Simenon is another case in point.

The film is built around a surprising couple, Jean-Pierre Darroussin and Carole Bouquet. How were they cast?

I wanted a couple that we hadn't seen before, so as not to fall back into something clichéd. The story wouldn't work with two strong separate characters, it had to be about the dynamics of a couple. Each was sent the screenplay with a note saying that the other had been offered the other part. They both accepted within twenty-four hours. And though the match may seem unexpected, it soon became natural: that was the actors' great achievement. The other challenge for me was working with stars. I've often been told that the hardest thing in cinema is working with non-professionals. For me, the challenge was the opposite.

What did you learn working with two experienced actors?

More than experience, films rely on talent and generosity. Jean-Pierre Darroussin projects an unusual degree of truth and emotion. He really is the film. He draws the spectator in. Through him, the viewer experiences the strongest emotions: love, overexcitement, fear, guilt... And Carole Bouquet is astonishing, in that she remains faithful to an image and yet breaks it. She is beautiful, powerful, like a woman out of a Hitchcock film, but impulsive, frail, her expression wounded. All of which is communicated in a very few scenes... She is a mysterious actress, not overexposed, like someone we have known for a long time but not very well. I found her intriguing before knowing her and I still do.

The dramatic glue that holds the film together is also one of its major themes: the story of a couple facing disaster, who must rebuild their lives.

When the person you love disappears after a quarrel, something traumatic happens and in fiction, it makes you hold your breath. The suspense lies at the heart of the film.

Yet, you don't show marital bliss nor any kind of pretence of marital bliss: you show the broken friendship stuck back together with a bit of lying and a lot of truth-telling.

I fall between two camps. I can't help feeling, in some slightly twisted way, that happiness is a performance... There is a final reconciliation, the idea that everything will go on as if nothing had happened, but that's only a game. On the question of lies, the film does not provide any answers: we never know if the couple reconcile again over something unsaid. I didn't want the end to come across as ironic or cynical, I wanted to maintain my own sincerity in the way I showed the for the reason that family and the children require them to do so.

Another striking aspect of the film is the atmosphere, which is like a thriller...

From the very first shot, we are spending time with a man who is afraid of everything, including himself. He cannot live his own life. That day, he starts drinking and everything starts to go wrong. The film became a thriller quite naturally. I threw myself into the story, into the fiction wholeheartedly, and this gave me, as a director, a great deal of freedom. For the beginning of the film I spent hours shooting slow pans over the business district at La Defense outside Paris. I shot a few details of the concourse there which were ultimately what I used. I wanted a sense of unreality to run through the film: the night car sequences were shot in studio. Sometimes the crew thought I was joking when I said, "I want the road to look red" but I wasn't! I gave myself free reign, since I wanted to go further than I had gone before. In the end, it was a pleasure.

Is that because making a genre movie somehow liberated your eye?

I realized that genre wasn't a constraint, far from it in fact. The film is very close to its characters. I couldn't film unless I knew what the character were feeling and could express that very simply. Jean-Pierre Darroussin's character experiences strong emotions and I wanted to film those emotions. In the end, the actor absorbs the story. The director only follows the actor.

The mystery of Red Lights relates to the story: sometimes one feels this strange night ride is made up of the protagonists' imaginary visions under the effect of alcohol...

That's the main alteration. In the book, you know the story has actually happened. Not so in the film. One can go for the idea that it's all a dream, that the real story is off-camera... Carole Bouquet's story. This interpretation is not the only possible one and the film is all the better for maintaining that ambiguity.

Interview With CAROLE BOUQUET (Hélène)

Why did you say yes to *Red Lights*?

I said yes to the project and yes to Cédric Kahn, whose work I admired. I'm pleased that I did, because I like the film enormously. Even during the shoot, I sensed we were heading in the right direction, in relations to our original intentions. What can I say? Cédric is a talented filmmaker. There's a space in his brain for cinema and it's been there a very long time. A director faces a thousand problems and Cédric reacts swiftly... he doesn't dither. Everything comes freely and spontaneously, and when it does, it's right. The funny thing is that in life he's a shy, reserved young man.

Intuitive but sure: is that your own approach to filmmaking?

Recently, during a screening of Bunuel's films for History of Art students, Jean-Claude Carrière spoke about the Surrealists' collective approach to art. They had what they called a "right of veto", a three-second window in which to say yes or no to a project. No more. I don't mean that this should be a universal rule but it certainly works on a shoot because everything is possible (everything and its opposite), and it's essential that someone should be there to decide; to be able to say they want something specific. That's Cédric's great talent. His nervousness does not show. What does show is an immediate, clear aptitude for making decisions. He has vision.

How did you adapt your technique to this way of working?

I'm not methodical. I like to work fast – in fact it is essential. It feels close to a way of working that seems most natural and I had no problem with that on this set!

Your part in *Red Lights* is almost a metaphor for an actress' part: you aren't on screen for long but you still remain very much a presence off camera, in the imagination of the characters and also in the audience's.

What appealed to me most was the straightforward and realistic quality to the screenplay. I found it a plausible account of the spiral into which a man or a woman can fall. In this instance a man starts drinking in an almost outrageous fashion and we see the consequences of his falling into such a spiral - both for the person involved and those around him. The screenplay provides a clear way to show this process; it is indeed harsh at times, yet it is softened somewhat by a generous ending which is very much Cédric's own choice. He allows a lightness to flow back. I might have been tempted to emphasize the pain, but Cédric's approach is probably the right one. He keeps the door open, and offers an idea that redemption is possible.

How did you keep up the intensity of emotion in your acting with such little time in front of the camera?

I didn't want to make the most of every frame I appeared in, thinking "I'm out of the shot for half the film so I have to make up for it." That would have been a mistake, and would have compromised the mysteriousness of my character and the impact she has in the film. On the other hand, I did bear in mind that there is a burden of sadness in the character from the start. She is going through a version of hell. The story would not be credible otherwise: a couple does not reach such a state of crisis unless there is some history. Their nocturnal separation is not just a fit of madness; it is the fruit of the past, of several years' living together, of things left unsaid.

And so, *Red Lights* is a tale about the truth of being a couple?

Absolutely. It is an issue which I find more and more interesting in films, almost the only interesting issue. The things that life as a couple are about: love, compassion, tenderness, forgiveness. *Red Lights* is a film which brings back something I remember from the movies as a child, the feeling that you are peering at others people's lives through a keyhole.

What was it like working with Jean-Pierre Darroussin?

You would think that we would make a surprising couple, but on screen I think it obviously works. This is clearly because of the strength of the screenplay and the way Cédric uses his camera, but it's also down to Jean-Pierre. Working with him was a pleasure, a source of joy and discovery. The poor man was alone most of the time, with this brutal, awkward character to play. When I returned to the set after being away from some time, I felt sorry for him. I played *Phaedre* on stage in 2002, and even

though I am not a method actor in any way, I know that words and atmosphere engrave something on your soul... they stick to you, and there is no two ways about it. Souls suddenly darken.

Interview with JEAN-PIERRE DARROUSSIN (Antoine)

How did you react when you were sent the screenplay for *Red Lights*?

Just after reading the script, I was sitting in my car, thinking about the part and its vertiginous quality. I was listening to the radio and there was a program about soldiers in the First World War, as it was Armistice Day. It occurred to me that this character, with nowhere to go and a great big fear in him that he can only overcome by drinking, was like a soldier in the trenches; he would need to become someone else for a while to outdo himself. I felt like there was some kind of epic parallel between the character and someone at the bottom of a hole in wartime. Except that in *Red Lights*, he's dug his own hole.

How could a family man like that get himself into such a state?

By being so decadent. By trying to fit in with what society expects – something that has made him paranoid. I liked him immediately; he's a tragic hero as far as I am concerned. He develops this crazed passion for self-sacrifice, for pain and fear. He emerges drained and distraught, and when he is returned to his wife, we find out that she has been through something much worse. He is not given the time to become a true hero. He doesn't even win in the suffering stakes. That is the cruelty of Simenon's world; he ridicules his characters by showing that their heroics are derisory. Derisory in comparison with other people's suffering, suffering that one is not aware of which turns out to be even more important than our own. Symbolically speaking, it's exemplary. This man has a moment of selfishness, and it floors him.

But the ending of *Red Lights* is a reconciliation.

One might say that the ending is a happy one for both the man and the woman, who had forgotten who they were and are able to recover some kind of humanity. In the way they touch, in their eyes, there is a greater depth than the fifteen years together has given them. In the space of a few hours, they have become real to each other.

Your character is in a state of perpetual panic, continually in action.

He is physically destroying himself. The strange thing is that destroying oneself over a long shoot requires a minimum amount of fitness. That was my challenge (laughs). I like the idea that one's entire being is required to play a character that is at his wit's end. That was the physical quality of the film and it was a challenge. One has to lay oneself bare. That was my agreement with Cédric Kahn, that I would be defenseless, open, and vulnerable.

You carry the film, you are almost never out of shot.

My character is bears a heavy load. Even on set, I was there nearly every day, talking to the crew. It is part of one's job as an actor, something one actually seeks out..

Cedric Kahn gave you and opportunity.

Cedric and I trusted each other from the start. Because Carole and I are both experienced actors, I think he was afraid that he would find himself having to deal with people who had a fixed notion as to what his film should be. I could see he was surprised that everything went so well. But I have nothing to defend regarding my own personality. I have enough trouble finding the character's personality. Regarding this, Cedric and I were of the same view. We had the same open approach, a slightly intuitive way of making a film. And that kind of mutual trust is rare.

With Carole Bouquet, the challenge was to make life of a couple, a love affair, seem believable in very little time.

Carole and I knew each other slightly at the Paris Conservatory, but I was the only one who remembered that... (laughs) We work together as a couple because Carole is a very generous actress, very playful, and she enjoys her partner. There was room for pleasure and game-playing between us; we shared something together, which is why the relationship works on screen and why it is not so surprising that I should end up with Carole Bouquet. OK, she is one of the most beautiful women in the world and I look somewhat... neutral. (laughs) But why not?

What will you remember about shooting *Red Lights*?

I could tell you that the story of the shoot from the first day from the last. It's all in my head. To play that character, at the time, was my main goal, however hard it may have been. You can experience that range of emotion over a two-month period without feeling slightly shaky and worn at the end. We shot a great deal at night. We were tired. But in the end, I think it was worth it.

ABOUT WELLSPRING

Current and upcoming **Wellspring** theatrical releases include Jean-François Pouliot's Sundance Audience Award-winner *Seducing Doctor Lewis*, Jonathan Caouette's groundbreaking debut film *Tarnation*, Jafar Panahi's Cannes prize-winner *Crimson Gold*, Bruno Dumont's controversial *Twentynine Palms*, André Téchiné's World War II drama *Strayed* starring Emmanuelle Béart, Alexander Sokurov's Cannes prize-winner *Father and Son*, Cedric Kahn's thriller *Red Lights* starring Jean-Pierre Darroussin and Carole Bouquet, Marco Bellocchio's Venice prize-winner *Good Morning, Night* and Anne Fontaine's erotic love story *Nathalie*, starring Gerard Depardieu, Fanny Ardant and Emmanuelle Béart.

Past releases include some of the most acclaimed and successful arthouse releases of recent years such as *Russian Ark*, hailed by Roger Ebert as "one of the most astonishing films ever made.," Akira Kurosawa's masterpiece *Ran*, *The Circle* by Jafar Panahi, *Yi Yi* by Edward Yang, *Under the Sand* by François Ozon and Lorene Machado's *Notorious C.H.O.* **Wellspring** has fostered the careers of some of the most important directors in world cinema today including Bruno Dumont (*Life of Jesus, Humanité, Twentynine Palms*), Alexander Sokurov (*Russian Ark, Father and Son*) Jafar Panahi (*The Circle, Crimson Gold*), Leos Carax (*Mauvais Sang, Pola X*), Tsai Ming-liang (*What Time is It There? Goodbye Dragon Inn*), Olivier Assayas (*Les Destinées*), Claire Denis (*Friday Night*), Bahman Ghobadi (*Marooned in Iraq*), Liz Garbus (*Girlhood*), Marina de Van (*In My Skin*) and Karim Ainouz (*Madame Satã*). **Wellspring** has also been committed to the theatrical re-release of classic films including the works of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Eric Rohmer, Jacques Demy and François Truffaut.

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