

CINÉFRANCE STUDIOS, TFI STUDIO AND CHEZ FELIX PRESENT

MARINA FOÏS

FABRICE ÉBOUÉ



Some like it rare

A ROMANTIC COMEDY BY FABRICE ÉBOUÉ



RUNTIME: 92 MINUTES

CINÉFRANCE STUDIOS, CHEZ FÉLIX, TF1 STUDIO AND APOLLO FILMS
PRESENT

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A FABRICE EBOUÉ FILM

IN THEATERS OCTOBER 27TH



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Synopsis

Vincent and Sophie are butchers whose business is going under and whose couple is on the rocks. But their life will change forever the day Vincent accidentally kills a vegan activist who vandalized their shop... To get rid of the corpse, he butchers it into ham, which his wife accidentally sells. Never has any ham been so successful with the customers! To such an extent that they just might be tempted to try again...

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Fabrice Éboué Interview

When did you come up with the story of butchers selling vegan meat by the pound?

I've been toying with the idea for a long time. I'd written a first screenplay from the point of view of the vegans. They were plotting a terror attack during the Paris Agriculture Fair... But upon giving it more thought, I figured the audience would feel more involved if I went with the majority point of view of a butcher who has been practicing his craft for thirty years, only to find out, through the accusations and actions of vegans, that he is a murderer.

Who wrote the screenplay with you?

Vincent Solignac, who is like a sparring partner. I write a draft, send it to him, he gives me feedback, I make changes, etc. He kind of challenges me, which helps me improve what needs improvement.

Was the part of Vincent Pascal written with you in mind?

Not at all. To the point where I initially wrote with several other potential actors in mind. I didn't see myself as a butcher. Perhaps it was my subconscious reminding me that I'd never seen a Black butcher. But you become a naturalist when you're writing a movie, you feed off stuff you see in daily life. And one day as I was shopping for food, I noticed a Black man was now running my neighborhood seafood store. That's when I realized I'd ostracized myself all on my own, and

the desire to play this character started to grow in me. I gained ten or fifteen kilos, grew a moustache, gave myself a receding hairline... I looked at myself in the mirror: physically I could pull it off. And I'm so glad I did, because playing with Marina was a real treat, and killing people in a violent and realistic way was something I'd never done on screen.

Did you think of Marina Foïs right off the bat, to play your wife?

I thought of her during the writing process. The film speaks for her: as soon as she starts watching the Christophe Hondelatte true crime series about serial killers, she breaks into these little smiles that clearly indicate that she's a little nuts. She played everything spot-on. What's great about Marina is she doesn't merely show up on set to do her work. She's constantly talking about her character, is totally committed. This really elevates the film's level and storyline.

What about the couple they're friends with?

I've known Jean-François Cayrey since my café-théâtre days, before stand-up got big. He's a buddy. I didn't have anyone else in mind for the part and he played it perfectly. For the role of his wife, we had a big casting call. And Virginie Hocq is perfect with Jean-François, in this caricature of crude upstarts, convinced they know everything better than anyone.

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Did you undergo training (as a butcher not a killer)?

I took a training course in butchering. But it was quick. For closeups and inserts, I hired a body double who knows the craft. Because in the first scene we shot with a knife, I cut my finger. We figured that was something to avoid. Even folding the paper and wrapping the meat was challenging for me, so...

But you're great at slapping and kneading a side of beef, as in the film's opening scene...

That shot is amazing thanks to Marina, staring at me with utter hate in her eyes... Because it's important to specify that *Some Like It Rare* is above all a romantic comedy. We therefore had to apply that genre's conventions: the love you thought was impossible or dead, break-up, reconciliation... but enhanced by a certain modernity and other cinematographic conventions that highlight theme and bring on the gore. Here we have this couple on the rocks, whose business is drowning in debt, who've been together long enough that they don't look at one another anymore... As a counterpoint, they're friends with a couple

who are doing very well, and represent a certain success in the meat industry. Through them, I can convey the message that we're not here to encourage mass trade but rather to support mom and pop butcher shops, where meat is treated a bit better.

Like the shop of Vincent Pascal, whom you portray as a craftsman, a true lover of meat?

Exactly. Vincent Pascal isn't in love with money, he does his job out of passion. There are many like him, some who started out thirty years ago and are now in their fifties, who simply practiced their trade, which was celebrated by society, and who couldn't have imagined that they'd one day be called killers, that theirs was a profession of death and that their shop would be wrecked for it. It's incredible to see how much society has changed, how actions and statements unimaginable thirty years ago are now taking place. Even bakeries have been targeted by vegans, because eggs and milk are products of animal exploitation! But once again, Vincent and Sophie's meat industry friends do usher in a certain



ambivalence. This is not a pro-meat or pro-carnivore movie. I sought to convey balance. Hence the activist trio on the vegan side, in opposition to the butchers' daughter who is herself engaged to a vegan claiming to be open-minded... but who isn't really.

As you say, he isn't really, and by the end of the lunch scene we realize he is as radical as his cohorts. Are they all the same?

Of course not. In fact, the fiancé is there to contrast with the "radical/activist" vegans that you see on TV. I wanted him to have what appears to be a composed and thoughtful standpoint. On set, I had a vegan crewmember who joked that it was painful for him to work in a butcher shop for a month. And yet he didn't boycott any scenes, and at the crew screening he and his friends had a good laugh.

A comedy with meaning. Short of being a "film with a message", is Some Like It Rare meant to stimulate debate?

One thing is for certain, Some Like It Rare is not an activist movie. It's actually the first film in which I emancipate myself from questions of identity. I might denounce a certain overly excessive activism, but above all it's a comedy meant to make us laugh at the society we live in and all its extremes. Extreme people are caricatural, and being a caricature is in itself funny. I have nothing against vegans. I just find the topic fascinating because it exemplifies an era of communitarianism, a return to certain topics, a time when people need to belong to a group. We live in a country endowed with an exceptional culinary culture. So obviously, if we start forbidding ourselves from eating meat and every animal byproduct, we're breaking away from our own country's culture. Veganism cuts you off you from it. Everyone is free to do that, of course, as long as they're not proselytizing. This could apply to certain religions: as long as your beliefs or lifestyle don't interfere with other people's, it doesn't matter. We're not far removed from the debate around secularism!

You had a vegan crewmember on set, but did you also have a vegan consultant?

No. I had initially done a comedy bit on the topic. But when I started working

on my first draft of the screenplay (which was from the vegan POV) I read a number of books, including the one written by French journalist and animal rights advocate Aymeric Caron. I also gorged on YouTube videos made by vegan activists, in order to assimilate their objectives and beliefs – which helped me nourish my characters (pun intended). And which is why I decided to tell the story from the point of view of the butcher: I don't like to place myself in a viewpoint I don't adhere to and which I can't really master. I prefer to adopt a stance that is closer to my own and which I can better grasp.

Why did you shoot the movie in the city of Le Havre?

The city is never mentioned in the film, which I did on purpose to convey the feeling that the action takes place in a working-class suburb like Seine et Marne, for example. But I did want to shoot away from the Paris region, in order to get that remote location feeling. Normandy was perfect, and enabled those who wanted, to go home to Paris on weekends.

Were some scenes more difficult to shoot than others?

As I direct a film every three or four years, I always need a little adjustment period. I generally start off with rather straightforward scenes. In Some Like It Rare, it was the car sequence where I run over the vegan. It helped me get to know Marina, with whom I'd never worked, so that we could start to establish trust between us. But I always work a safety valve into the schedule, because I know I'll generally need an extra day or so, to reshoot some of what we did in the first three days of principal photography.

Did you watch many reruns of *Faites Entrer l'Accusé* (French True Crime series) before starting the writing process, in order to stimulate your imagination? And to invent all those assassins like the Hospital Clown Killer, the Brest Slayer or the Bethune Seamstress?

No, I just had the show in mind. And coming up with all those cases was simple: pick the name of a town or a region that sounds good and where something vaguely happened, mash together a few true crime stories and presto! Coming up with all those names was great fun!

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That reminds me of the theory that says that serial killers often have double first names, like Patrick Henri, Guy Georges or Emile Louis!

That's right. Which leads us to consider that Vincent Pascal and Sophie Pascal were all set to become serial killers, with their double first names!

How did Christophe Hondelatte (host of the French True Crime series) react when he read the script?

Very well! We sent him the script one night and he responded the very next morning. It's always fun to direct experienced TV show hosts. For instance, I directed Michel Drucker in *Coexist*. On a TV set, they are so at ease that everything goes very fast. On a film set, they're more tense – despite it being exactly the same thing for them, as they're playing themselves. But this can be a bit of a problem. Not with Hondelatte. He was very professional. In a single afternoon, we had all his scenes in the can.

In the end, beyond a social phenomenon, was *Some Like It Rare* an opportunity for you to make a film about serial killers?

I'd wanted to make a serial killer movie for a long time. Among my all-time favorites are *Man Bites Dog* (*C'est arrivé près de chez vous*) and the *Fargo* series, which I subtly nod to in the film. And I am passionate about local news items and shows that reference them. When you see the business flourishing around serial killers, it tells you I'm clearly not the only one. Nowadays there are even comics devoted to them! Beyond that, the serial killer is a pretty incredible character - someone deprived of emotion, laughter, tears, empathy. But what we did in *Some Like It Rare* is we took a Joe Blow-type nice guy with a Machiavellian and manipulative wife who pushes him into committing the irreparable. And he goes from having a hard time killing to it being an entirely mundane action, to the point of carrying on a conversation about potatoes au gratin as he's doing it. The whole challenge was to get the audience to empathize with a couple that kills people to eat them. Hence the «romantic comedy» aspect: after all, the film is about love rekindled through murder. Initially they are an utterly unremarkable



couple that turns into a kind of Bonnie and Clyde. In the end, they rediscover their love for one another, through a bloodbath. Which is rather symbolic for a couple of butchers.

Less symbolic and more taboo is cannibalism...

In my tortured mind, when I think of murderous butchers, I feel that they're not going to kill just for the sake of killing. A corpse is obviously meat. So it started as a story about butchers seeking revenge against vegans, but who realize that their vengeance can generate a profit if the meat is good, which is plausible since the victims are herbivores. And then there is the erotic dimension of cannibalism. Love is all-consuming, it's biting, it's turning back into savage beasts... There is something sexy about meat which, in this case, transfers to their bodies because they are butchers.

Aren't you pushing that a bit far? We're not animals!

No, but more seriously, *Some Like It Rare* is a film about reconnecting with virility. At first, my character has totally lost his manhood. He no longer touches his wife, she rejects him from the marital bed and looks at him with contempt. Meanwhile, the dominant male is represented by his money-earning friend... By returning to his hunter's instinct, my character becomes a lion again, recovers his masculine appeal, which in turn causes his wife's desire for him to be revived. When a woman no longer wants to have sex with her man, it's because habit has killed what she liked about him. She originally saw an animal side of him. Settling into a daily routine destroys this wild side. Desire is generated by instinct. If everything is controlled and organized, out goes the sex. This is why the film's hunting scenes end in passion between these two beasts, in an explosive release of everything that is pent-up. It's no coincidence that killers like Guy Georges receive thousands of letters. That ferocious animal aspect is fascinating.

Given the amount of politically incorrect jokes in the film, do you take wicked delight in breaking the rules?

It's done without calculation. The only question I ask myself is: does this make me laugh? And what makes me laugh is stuff that goes all out. That's my kind of

humor. I saw *Man Bites Dog* at the movies when I was fourteen, and when the VHS came out, my buddies and I would watch it over and over again, behind my parents' backs! We always had this very macabre, dark humor. So I don't feel like I'm transcending anything forbidden or politically correct, because it comes naturally, it's me. In this sense, *Some Like It Rare* is the film that most resembles me, it's my most personal film. That said, I'm always open to suggestions and good ideas. I worked on the screenplay with Vincent Solignac, and on set with John Wax who is a very good cinematographer and an excellent cameraman - which is not my specialty. He's been with me since *Case Départ*, where he worked as set photographer. In *Some Like It Rare*, he directed the sequence of the vegan raid on the butcher shop and the final slaughter scene. Of course, everything had been storyboarded ahead of time. That sequence took us three days in the studio, with special effects, lots of camera movements... When it came to visual narration, John had lots of ideas, such as inserting clips from nature documentaries after the sequence where my character is compared to a beast of the savannah. Or the film's final image of Marina and me in court - John was the one who suggested I wear that green Umbro t-shirt ... like the one Guy Georges wore at his trial! As long as it makes me laugh, I grab it and run with it. You should never set limits for yourself.

The soundtrack choices are important, like opening with classical music over the first «butchering»...

We wanted to start «light». And end with a 90s rap song that I love: *Le Crim* by Democrate D. It quotes all the movies about serial killers like *Man Bites Dog*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Jack the Ripper*, etc. This is the first time I invest so much of myself in the soundtrack of a film. And it's the one I'm most proud of. Contrary to the way I usually do it, I didn't want the music to be composed early on. Guillaume Roussel worked on the soundtrack once the film was finished. I didn't want the music to illustrate the story, but to enrich it. I wanted it to heighten the characters' psychology, their escalating madness.

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***Some Like It Rare* ends on a cut from the cold storage to the courtroom. Didn't you want to film the couple's arrest?**

On paper, I had written another ending where we saw both of them die. And then it occurred to me that we had to respect the codes of the romantic comedy, where love triumphs in the end. So as in all romantic comedies, they have one

last lover's quarrel after which they don't end up on a train platform but in a cold storage room - because they're butchers. That way, the audience is happy that they end up together. And yes, love triumphs. But in the end, there is the brief visual that shows what then becomes of these killers, perhaps also in order to conclude on some semblance of morality.



Marina Foïs Interview

How did you react when you first read the screenplay of *Some Like It Rare*?

The idea really cracked me up because it's so absurd. The pitch is hilarious: a butcher couple find themselves in a difficult economic and romantic situation and, through a set of circumstances, improve their plight by making ham out of vegans!

There is nothing right about this pitch. And that makes me laugh.

I know this answer might not be enough for you, but it's the best reaction I could have to a comedy, right? It's very hard to explain what causes laughter. Breaking down humor, theorizing it, I don't know how to do that. But I like what's over the top. I often laugh at stuff that is just too much. And Fabrice is often too much.

Were you drawn to the politically incorrect aspect?

I'm very wary of this «politically incorrect» label, which opens the door to vile attitudes under the guise of uninhibited ideas. I don't like the «you can't say anything more» justification to say just about anything. But I do not believe this film is a manifesto. I don't think Fabrice wrote it because he was so upset that he finally wanted to say out loud what everyone had been whispering about vegans. I didn't feel he wanted to write an ode to traditional butchery either. In my opinion, the intention is a bit more subtle. I think he is poking fun at an ultra-contemporary quirk which, whether in the public discourse or at a café

counter, comes with a complete absence of nuance, an extreme simplification of vocabulary, the pressure to pick a side, the impossible in-between and the difficult cohabitation of differing points of view, whether or not the subject matter is serious...

Even if this is not a «pro-butcher film», I'm not going to lie, vegans do get hit hard!

Everyone gets hit hard. Willy is the only one who is saved. For instance, the couple played by the hilarious Virginie Hecq and Jean-François Cayrey, who only talk about money and are ultra-racist, is way beyond the pale. There is nothing there to salvage. Awful people exist... How awful? People whose excuses you don't even want to hear. Conversely, I feel the film conveys the butcher couple with empathy, even if it portrays them as helpless, fearful, small, lost (as we all sometimes can be) and dangerous. But these people bear the weight of shame. Shame is a terrible thing!

Isn't your character the more malicious of the two?

She's manipulative, yes. Disgusting, even. If we dig a little deeper, we can also consider that she's in pain. She is unlovable, but above all because she feels humiliated. Her marriage is a wreck, she's bored stiff, she stagnates in a butcher shop that no longer attracts customers. She's quite bitter and feels nothing but disrespect for her husband. However, she's the one who offers him a project that

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will bring them both back to life. Even if the project is horrid, because killing is not a solution. I say this to avoid controversy, I'd hate to be accused of promoting crime to save a relationship (laughter). It only serves to elevate the film's level and storytelling.

How did it feel to play a serial killer?

You'll notice that I do not kill. I keep my hands clean. All kidding aside, like a lot of people I'm fascinated by local news items. Monsters embody transgression. That said, we all have vile impulses and I am fascinated by those who take the plunge and especially by their logic, their signature, their "lifestyle" of crime. I've read many books on the subject, seen many episodes of the true crime series *Faites Entrer l'Accusé*, and what's most interesting is not the crime itself but the way it is premeditated. Usually, one kills to solve something – which is crazy when you think about it, but killers always project themselves into the aftermath and yet we all know the perfect crime doesn't exist. There is no after. Despite this, there are always people planning things and very often it is because of twisted

family histories or social humiliations. In *Some Like It Rare*, it's a woman who manipulates her husband, but in real life it could be a mother who manipulates her children. It happens. This is why, from a psychological point of view, these cases are very interesting.

What do you have in common with Sophie?

The need to have projects - obviously none like hers, I repeat I am against crime and against death in general – in order to avoid feeling bored. That's it! At least, I think it is... I hope! I am not manipulative. I am much more frontal than Sophie. I'm not underhanded.

You had never worked with Fabrice Éboué who says that it always takes a little time for two new partners to warm up to one another. Is that how you feel?

As far as the alchemy between partners goes, it can happen immediately and abruptly, or more slowly. It depends. There are no rules. It can also not happen



at all, without that ever being visible on screen. With Fabrice, we had tons of laughs. I made fun of his pace a lot. Because Fabrice is slow (laughter). Not in his work, but in the actual way he moves. And our thorough enjoyment of our comedic scenes was also thanks to John Wax. In addition to being very funny and corrosive, John is extremely technical. He knows his focal lengths and is excellent at framing. For a sequence like the one in the cold storage room, this comes in handy. *Some Like It Rare* benefited from the perfect mix of Fabrice and John.

Fabrice Éboué considers that *Some Like It Rare* is a romantic comedy. Do you concur?

Absolutely. That was even stated in the note of intent. Romantic comedy is a worn-out genre that needs to be refreshed. And Fabrice does this by mixing two genres. To be honest, I didn't think the couple's story would take up as much space as it does. But when I saw the movie, I found that really good. The romance between the two, which finds meaning in murder, works flawlessly. I hereby confirm that a gory romantic comedy can be a thing!

As crazy as the premise is, psychological credibility is respected because they don't start murdering right away. It takes them, well especially Vincent, a while and many setbacks before they go for it.

It's very, very hard to kill somebody. Technically, the human body is tough. I was friends with Jean-François Abgrall, the cop who became profiler after proving Francis Heaulme's guilt, and he told me that it is very difficult to take action. Killing, as a rule, even when premeditated, only happens after a series of failures, a succession of small screwups. The final crime scene is almost never what the murderer originally imagined.

Can we talk about the scene where you play with a penis?

I don't know a single person in our place who wouldn't have done it, so please don't judge us! (laughter). I even took pictures with it, if you must know everything. We had a briefcase full of fake penises, as fancy as if it contained jewelry. There was also a case of fake fingers. Impossible not to laugh at that. For me at least, it's beyond my strength.





Crew

Director
Screenwriters
Starring

Fabrice Éboué

Fabrice Éboué & Vincent Solignac

**Fabrice Éboué, Marina Foïs,
Jean-Francois Cayrey, Lisa Do Couto Texeira,
Victor Meutelet, Stephane Soo Mongo**

Featuring

Virginie Hocq and Christophe Hondelatte

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Cinéfrance Studios Producer

Jean-Luc Ormières

Coproducers

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TF1 Films Production and Chez Felix

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Guillaume Roussel

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