

Tuesday, December 13 at 10:45 p.m.

# The Atlantic Island

by Gérard Mordillat

With Catherine JACOB, Franck DE LA PERSONNE,  
Julie JEZEQUEL, Jacques PATER,  
Luc THUILLIER, Jean-Damien BARBIN

**arte**



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based on the work of Tony Duvert  
Midnight Editions \*

The Atlantic Island is not played out in the police sphere but in the theatre of intimacy, the family secret where people reveal themselves in what they have most raw, most violent, most heavy. And slowly the unacceptable truth appears: the children, supposedly guilty, are the real victims...

Tuesday, December 13 at 10:45 p.m.



It is an island – but it is a geographical metaphor – a large provincial town where children are bored. They are between seven and fourteen years old; at night, when everyone thinks they are asleep, they run away from their parents to visit houses, villas, properties. They burgle for fun, for defiance, for idleness; the loot counts less than the excitement caused by the theft. Unfortunately, during these night outings, a woman dies of a heart attack and another is murdered by her husband, taking advantage of the opportunity...

There is no longer any question of turning a blind eye to petty thefts; the police must investigate and a commissioner is in charge of the investigations. But this investigation is a decoy...

\* Reprint of "The Atlantic Island" in paperback - "Double" Collection - Les Éditions de Minuit



## Artistic sheet

Chantal SEIGNELET .....Catherine JACOB Robert  
 SEIGNELET .....Franck OF THE PERSON Yvonne  
 LESCOT.....Marianne BASLER Laure  
 BOITARD .....Julie JEZEQUEL Maurice  
 GLAIRAT.....Jean-Damien BARBIN Hugo  
 GRANDIEU.....Patrice VALOTA Gilles  
 GRANDIEU .....Judith BURNETT President  
 GASSÉ.....Luc THUILLIER Melanie  
 GASSE.....Elena DONCEL  
 BARREL .....Jacques PATER  
 TRUMAUD .....Benoît MURACCIOLE The  
 priest .....Bertrand ROTHE  
 Veronica.....Martine DEBIEUVRE The  
 doctor.....Lucien JEAN-BAPTISTE Miss  
 GELLI .....MEFFRE apple Miss Marguerite.....  
 Marguerite TOPIOL The nurse .....Rose  
 Marie LEPAGE

### children

Jean-Baptiste .....Finnegan OLDFIELD  
 Philip .....Leo POUPARD François-  
 Gérard .....Martin JOBERT  
 Herve .....Ivan ASSOULINE  
 Joachim .....Louis FRESSE Amélie-  
 Lyanne .....Sara SUMMA  
 Alan .....Elias MAGNIN  
 René .....Nathan FRANCK  
 Mark .....Laurent CAZANAVE  
 Camille .....Jean-Charles DEVAL  
 Anne-Grâce .....Priscilla ATTAL-SFEZ



## Technical sheet


Realization .....Gerard MORDILLAT Adaptation  
 and dialogues .....Gerard MORDILLAT adapted from the  
 work of Tony Duvert "The Atlantic Island" published by  
 Éditions de Minuit  
 Picture .....Laurent BARÈS  
 Her .....Michel VIONNET  
 Costumes.....Fabio PERRONE  
 Makeup .....Maud BARON  
 Hairstyle .....Stephane DESMAREZ  
 Decors .....Henri LABBÉ  
 Assembly.....Sophie ROUFFIO  
 Mixing .....François GROULT  
 Produced by .....Denis FREYD  
 A co-production .....ARTE France, Archipel 33  
 Director of Fiction at ARTE FranceFrancois  
 Sauvagnargues Program Manager .....Isabelle Huige  
  
 With the participation of the National  
 Center of Cinematography  
 1h31 – ARTE France – 2005



## Interview with Gérard Mordillat


### How the project was born **Atlantic Island**?

It's a project that comes from far away, very far away even...




At the beginning, there is a conversation with Pierre Chevalier about three books that have been very important in my life; books that have accompanied me and still accompany me. Pierre takes me at my word and commissions three films for ARTE based on these books: *In the company of Antonin Artaud* by Jacques Prevel (filmed in 1997), *Learning the city* by Luc Dietrich (filmed in 2000) and *The Atlantic Island* that I just finished. Here, while turning *The Atlantic Island*, I went through with this friendly order.

### What meaning do you give to this trilogy?



To express in cinematographic form my admiration for literature, to depict the incomparable emotions it gives me, to share them, to read while filming...

### Why particularly **Atlantic Island**?



*The Atlantic Island* is a very hard, very brutal book – sometimes comically mean – about violence against children. Not just physical violence, but all forms of violence against them: abandonment, humiliation, denigration, veneration, neglect, etc. I wanted to show that, to push the children to the forefront, to forbid the spectators from looking away or covering their ears. I think that in spirit, the film is very faithful to the novel, even if to stage it, I explored narrative paths specifically cinematographic or television.

### How did you choose the children who are in the film?

By doing tests, again and again. With François Vantrou, my assistant, we must have seen 400 children for about ten roles. When we film

With children, the choice is essential. A child who does not succeed or who succeeds badly, or who is inconsistent, will be so during the filming, and if he is good he will be so during the filming. And then the emotional dimension is very important, as important as the acting skills. You have to feel a real connivance, a complicity. In all modesty, I believe that we were not mistaken for the children or young girls who play in *The Atlantic Island*. If the film is successful, it is first and foremost to them that I owe it.

### I notice some "newcomers" in the troupe of actors who, from film to film, are faithful to you: Catherine Jacob, Frank de la Personne, Jean-Damien Barbin...

It's true that I've filmed a lot with my "troupe", as you say: Luc Thuillier, Jacques Pater, Patrick Valota, Marianne Basler or Julie Jézéquel! But here, I had to widen the circle! For the Seignelet couple, I immediately thought of Catherine Jacob and Frank de la Personne. It was obvious to me, and I didn't imagine for a single moment that they could refuse the role I offered them. Catherine and Frank have this unique dimension of actors capable of acting. It's a commonplace but it's true. Making people laugh is the hardest thing in the world. And it's because they have this rare quality that Catherine and Frank were able to put their art to the service of the opposite: showing the darkest side of the individual, confronting the demons of a terrifying couple, touching on tragedy. As for Jean-Damien Barbin, I had a kind of illumination when I saw him play at the Théâtre du Rond-Point: Maurice Glairat was him! And I don't see who else could have done better than him. I didn't have to try! So, I have three new recruits in my "troop".

### Is there an image that sums up everything you wanted to do?

Two or three, but deep down they are the same... Those of Jean-Charles (Camille in the film) looking at his father and telling him, without lowering his eyes, "it's disgusting", that of Finnegan (Jean-Baptiste) telling his family: "You don't have the right", or of his two brothers facing their parents. *The Atlantic Island* is a film where children judge their parents. And their judgment is merciless.

Interview by Pascale Lanriot.

## G rard Mordillat, the director

G rard Mordillat is an author and director of cinema films, television films and documentaries, some of which were co-produced by ARTE France.

We owe him in particular *Long live social* (1983), *Billy-ze-Kick* (1985), *Fucking Fernand* (1987), *Architruud* (1990), *In the company of Antonin Artaud* (1993), the series *Corpus Christi* (1998, co-directed with J r me Prieur) for ARTE. In 2003, still with J r me Prieur and for ARTE, he directed a new series:

*The origin of Christianity*. Also a writer, he has published around ten works including *Jesus vs Jesus* (Threshold, 1999), *Jesus after Jesus* (Threshold, 2004), and recently *The Living and the Dead* published by Calmann-L vy (2004).



## Catherine Jacob

After her one woman show *Welcome to the Club* In 1985, she gained particular attention in 1988 for her performance in *Life is a long, quiet river*. by Etienne Chatiliez (C sar for Most Promising Actress). She is working again as a director with as much success in *Happiness in the meadow* (1995) and *Auntie Dan* (1990) alongside Tsilla Chelton, whom she would later meet again in *The Thirst* for Catherine Jacob often plays roles of buxom women and mothers as in *Nine months* (1993) by Patrick Braoud , *Thank you life* (1990) by Ber Blier, *God is great, I am very small* (2001) or even *The first time I was 20*, in 2004. His career is also marked by roles all in the comedy register: *The Robbers* by Jean-Paul Salom  (1993) especially *I'm hungry !!!* by Florence Quentin in 2001. In 2003, she appeared in Laurent Lucas's *Who killed Bambi* by Gilles Marchand.

Catherine Jacob completed two shoots a few months ago: *District VI* Laurent Firode where she shares the bill with Johnny Hallyday and Pascal Legitim The aristos by Charlotte de Turkheim. On television, we were able to see her, a few weeks ago, in *Desiree Landru* by Pierre Boutron. And soon on ARTE, in a TV film by Virginie Wagon which will be part of a collection *mothers/daughters*.



## Frank of the Person

After training in theatre at the Conservatoire National de Paris (1983/1986) under the guidance of Michel Bouquet, Franck De La Personne began on stage, alternating between classical and contemporary repertoires and boulevard plays. He made his film debut in 1988 with Claude Chabrol in *A women's affair* and plays the following year in *The surprise* guest by Georges Lautner. He works with many directors such as Jean Poiret, Jean-Michel Ribes, Jean-Pierre Vergne, Ismael Merchant, Claude Berri. He has been seen in *Marquise* by Vera Belmont (1997), more recently in *The Chops* by Bertrand Blier (2003). For television, he appeared in TV films by Jean-Michel Ribes, Yves R gnier, Marianne Lamour, etc. He is on the bill for *Royal Palace* by Val rie Lemercier with Lambert Wilson and Catherine Deneuve.



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