

# THE SILENCE OF LORNA

Written and directed by  
Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne



Starring Artav Doshmehi Jérémie Renier

Belgium/France/Italy 2008 / 105 minutes / 1:1.85 / Dolby SRD

Certificate: 15

Winner Best Screenplay Cannes Film Festival 2008

THE SILENCE OF LORNA OPENS IN NOVEMBER 28th IN THE WEST END AND  
SELECTED CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Released with the support of the MEDIA Programme of the European Union

**new wave *films***

Written and Directed by  
First Assistant Director  
Director of Photography  
Camera Operator  
First assistant camera  
Editor  
Sound Engineer  
Sound Editor  
Sound Mixer  
Production Designer  
Costume Designer  
Key Make-Up Artist  
Location Manager  
Production Manager  
Stills Photographer  
Produced by

Executive Producer  
Co-Producer  
Associate Producers

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne  
Caroline Tambour  
Alain Marcoen s.b.c.  
Benoit Dervaux  
Benoît Rizzotti  
Marie-Hélène Dozo  
Jean-Pierre Duret  
Julie Brenta  
Thomas Gauder  
Igor Gabriel  
Monic Parelle  
Natali Tabareau-Vieuille  
Philippe Groff  
Delphine Tomson  
Christine Plenus  
Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne  
Denis Freyd  
Olivier Bronckart  
Andrea Occhipinti  
Arlette Zylberberg (RTBF)  
Sabine de Mardt (Gemini Film), Cristoph  
Thoke (Mogador Film), Stefano Massenzi  
(Lucky Red)

A co-production LES FILMS DU FLEUVE, ARCHIPEL 35, LUCKY RED, RTBF  
(Belgian TV), ARTE France Cinéma and ARTE/WDR

In association with GEMINI FILM, MOGADOR FILM  
With the support of CENTRE DU CINEMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL,  
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BELGE, TAX-SHELTER ING Invest de Tax Shelter Productions, Programme MEDIA  
Plus de la Communauté Européenne, Programme MEDIA i2i audiovisuel, LA  
LOTERIE NATIONALE DE BELGIQUE and SOFICINEMA 3.

## CAST

Lorna  
Claudy  
Fabio  
Sokol  
Spirou  
Policeman  
Andreï  
Kostia  
Monique Sobel  
Mental health nurse  
Detective  
Morgue employee  
Doctor  
Male bank clerk  
Female doctor  
Pharmacist  
Locksmith  
Claudy's mother  
Claudy's brother  
ER paramedic  
Drug dealer  
Female bank clerk  
Woman at the burial  
Obstetrician nurse  
Dry cleaner owner  
Policewoman  
Plainclothes policeman  
ER receptionist  
Micky  
Dry Cleaner Employee

Arta Dobroshi  
Jéréemie Renier  
Fabrizio Rongione  
Alban Ukaj  
Morgan Marinne  
Olivier Gourmet  
Anton Yakovlev  
Grigori Manoukov  
Mireille Bailly  
Stéphanie Gob  
Laurent Caron  
Baptiste Sornin  
Alexandre Trocky  
Cédric Lenoir  
Cécile Boland  
Serge Larivière  
Philippe Jeusette  
Sophia Leboutte  
François Sauveur  
Christian Lusschentier  
Stéphane Marsin  
Laurence Cordonnier  
Anne Gérard  
Annette Closset  
Isabelle Dumont  
Patrizia Berti  
Léon Michaux  
Alao Kasongo  
Claudy Delfosse  
Marie-Ange Pougin

## SYNOPSIS

Lorna is a young Albanian living in Belgium. In order to become the owner of a snack bar with her boyfriend, she becomes an accomplice to a plan devised by a mobster named Fabio.

Fabio has orchestrated a sham marriage between her and Claudy, a hapless drug addict. The marriage enables her to obtain Belgian citizenship, and then to marry a Russian Mafioso willing to pay a lot of money to acquire the same citizenship quickly.

However, for a second marriage to take place, Lorna has to get a divorce from Claudy, but she discovers that Fabio does not want to wait and is planning for Claudy to be killed by a drug overdose...

Will she keep silent?

## INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-PIERRE AND LUC DARDENNE

*The main character of your movie, Lorna, is played by an actress from Kosovo. How did you find her?*

One of our assistants went to Pristina, Skopje and Tirana in order to audition about one hundred professional and non-professional young actresses. We selected Arta Dobroshi. We had seen her in two Albanian movies a few weeks before. We went to Sarajevo, where she lives, to meet her and we filmed her with our DV camera for a whole day. We filmed her walking, running, singing and also playing in scenes like those in our movie. Then she came over to Liège and we filmed her acting with Jérémie Renier and Fabrizio Rongione. She was amazingly beautiful and natural. In the evening, before she flew to Sarajevo, we told her that we had selected her for the role of Lorna and that she would have to come back to Belgium a few months before the shooting to rehearse and learn French.

*Unlike your previous movies which were shot in super 16 mm, this one is shot in 35 mm with a less mobile camera and wider frames. Why did you go for this?*

We tested 5 digital cameras, a 35 mm and a super 16 mm. The images shot at night with the 35 mm were closest to our project. Plus, we had decided that this time round, the camera would not be constantly moving, would be less descriptive and would be limited to recording images. Because of its weight the 35 mm was best suited for us.

*All your previous movies were set in Seraing, the industrial town where you spent your childhood. This time round, you decided to set your story in Liège, which is a big city.*

It's just a few miles away. We agree that Liège is a bigger city, with plenty of people in the streets during the daytime as well as in the evening. For Lorna, the main character, who comes from Albania, a big European city embodies all sorts of hope. We also wanted to see Lorna in the midst of the crowd, people physically close to her but who knew nothing of her secret.

*Despite the dramatic dimension of the story, your movie has a sensual and sweet quality.*

We owe it to Arta, the actress. Her face, her voice, the way she moves, the way she speaks French with her special accent ... and it's probably because of our camera's perception of things, and probably because the movie is also a love story.

Interview by William Sobel

## ***Cahiers du Cinema*, July-August 2008**

**‘Conversation with the Dardenne Brothers’ by Eugenio Renzi**

***Le Silence de Lorna* won the script award in Cannes. Are you under the impression that you have made a more scripted film than usual?**

**Luc Dardenne.** In a few instances our script attempts some daring features which may be surprising. I am thinking of the ellipsis in the film when Claudy dies.

**Jean-Pierre Dardenne.** This is a more complex film than our previous works, with more intrigue, more of a novel if you like. In this film several storylines intersect. There is clearly a heroine, Lorna, but the characters who surround her are far from being secondary.

**Luc.** We gradually have the male characters leave the narrative. One after the other: Claudy, Sokol, Fabio, Spirou. The film tells how Lorna manages to part from these four men, and eventually retains a trace of them inside her belly.

**In practice, how did this come about?**

**Jean-Pierre.** As regards the treatment, we sketch out an outline in which we can already perceive the structure of the script. It comprises between fifty and sixty scenes. We usually proceed scene by scene. The development here required that we consider the film as a whole.

**Luc.** On the one hand it was necessary to pace the information related to the plot. Providing information, and in providing it, hide something else that was going to keep the viewer in suspense. On the other hand, an overtly opaque development of the story would have made it difficult to follow Lorna’s moral path, so to speak. The difficulty of the writing stemmed from the fact that these two poles needed to be in mutual equilibrium. Hence the necessity to constantly keep in mind the film as a whole. It took time.

**In the past, you mostly filmed a certain eloquence of the gesture. Here you do the opposite: you give the voice back to the words.**

**Jean-Pierre.** Things developed gradually. In its first version, the script consisted of several scenes where Lorna was seen working. It is probably the phantom of *Rosetta*. We were looking to reveal her more through her gestures. It took us time to admit to ourselves out loud that this was not necessary.

**Luc.** Yes, and that it was no longer this type of cinema that we were doing and that interested us for this film.

**Where does the idea of marriage of convenience come from?**

**Jean-Pierre and Luc.** In 2003 we met an outreach educator. She recounted an episode from her personal life. Her brother is a junkie. The Albanian community had contacted him for a marriage of convenience. He would have to marry a foreign prostitute in exchange for a sum of 10,000 euros. His sister had heard stories of junkies found dead of an overdose after having gone through what looked like a marriage of convenience. She warned her brother about the risk. We kept this story to ourselves. It is only after shooting *L’Enfant* that we thought about it again.

## **How does one find information on marriages of convenience?**

**Luc.** We know a police superintendent. A fine man.

**Jean-Pierre.** I love it when he does that. Had he said: 'I know that guy, he owns a café.' He would never have added: 'He is a decent guy'.

**Luc.** It is commonly known that the police are prejudiced against immigrants. Not this man though. He nevertheless does his job as a police superintendent, he takes care of clandestine immigration, and passed on information to us.

**Jean-Pierre. Luc.** We wanted the script to be plausible within our country's immigration law. Which was a real nightmare as the law constantly changes.

**Luc.** Until a few years ago, one could gain citizenship relatively fast. It was almost automatic. Today, a non-EU citizen must have lived in Belgium for a long time before having the right to present a request for marriage. Once a request is filed, an investigation takes place. The police pays surprise visits. Is there enough food for two people in the fridge? And it is better not to have an armchair or a couch that can be converted into a bed, for the couple are supposed to share the same bed. They must also be able to communicate in the same language.

## **Arta Dobroshi did not speak a word of French. What made you decide to give her the role of Lorna?**

**Luc.** We first saw her on video. We immediately agreed that we should meet her. Perhaps it is her gentleness.

## **She brings something maternal to the character. From the first scenes with Claudy.**

**Jean-Pierre.** Perhaps. One can indeed say that her sole real job consists in 'watching over' Claudy.

**Luc.** We actually wanted Claudy to cling onto her like a child to his or her mother. Right?

**Jean-Pierre.** Yes. We all have our own ideas about how to represent drug withdrawal. Here as well, we conducted a little investigation. There are of course some abiding features. Physical pain, especially in the joints. Otherwise, each person reacts their own way. Some violently, some withdrawing into themselves. Our idea was that for Claudy, Lorna acted as a substitute for his dependency. It is the meaning of Claudy's long off-screen voice behind Lorna's bedroom door. He calls out to her. She is not sleeping but she does not want to hear him. And then well, she hears him all the same.

**Luc.** This makes one think of the scene from *L'Enfant*, when Bruno tells Sonia that he loves her and that if she does not want to open the door, then at least she could slide 20 euros under it. Here we are on the other side of the door. We hear Jérémie Renier without ever seeing him.

## **The camera always sides with evil: there the child-seller, here the black widow.**

**Luc.** Evil is more interesting. Someone who sides with evil can change.

**The baby is a kind of ruse thanks to which even death is not final.**



**Luc.** We liked the idea that in a morality tale the question of good and evil is constantly coupled with that of the true and false. The underworld begins by manufacturing the fake: a fake marriage to deceive the police, the authorities, and above all Claudy, then a divorce for a misdeed that never happened, and later death by drug overdose. The ellipsis makes it so that one cannot be sure of what really happened to Claudy. And, finally, the baby. We liked the fact that the mafioso believed in something fake as being true. We also discover that this baby invented by Lorna's body nevertheless exists somewhere. It is fake, but she wants to believe in it as if it were something true.

### **You never considered making the baby exist?**

**Luc.** No, we always knew that it did not exist. It would have been expected to say: she is going to redeem herself in bringing up the baby of the man she killed. Expected, and a bit obscene too. We opted to be a bit more cruel with our character. Many viewers told us: 'Oh, that baby, wonderful!' It is surprising, isn't it? Both men and women told us that.

### **The envelope filled with money is an element of continuity and rupture: it reminds one of the importance of objects in your films. But money is more than a simple object, it is at once something concrete and abstract.**

**Luc.** It can buy things, and it can buy people. But it can also redeem them. Money makes the baby exist. When Lorna tries to put Claudy's money in their son's account, we really believe it. The envelope in a way contains everything and nothing: feelings, moral values, trust, love, debt. Everything that binds human beings together. At a given moment, money becomes a shame, it reminds Lorna of Claudy. She seeks to get rid of it. She attempts to give it to his family who do not want it. Then she hides it.

### **There is a very beautiful scene between Lorna and Claudy in front of the dry-cleaners.**

**Luc.** Money, which the previous day had provoked a brawl, is here the driving force of a sequence of romantic comedy. She puts the envelope in his pocket. He keeps it for a bit, then gives it back to her. From then on he trusts her. She is delighted about it. He sees it, asks her when she will be coming back home. For once she replies. He offers to cook something. She agrees. Personally I always laugh when I see him say: 'then give me a little money back for the shopping, please.'

### **Why abandon Seraing for Liège?**

**Luc.** It was important to shoot in a crowded city. We wanted Lorna and her secret to be surrounded by people. In Kurosawa's *Between Heaven and Hell*, the boy who kidnapped the boss's baby and the boss himself meet up every evening, they look at shop windows together. Only large cities allow this.

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**Lorna is an enigmatic character. She changes her type of relationship with Claudy in no time.**

**new wave films**



**Luc.** Oh yes, it happens with the brawl scene.

**When she throws the key out of the window and takes her clothes off, she is still being totally pragmatic. Right after, we sense that she is sincerely moved while kissing Claudy.**

**Jean-Pierre.** We had told her: wait, wait. We did not tell her how long for though. She had to wait for the moment when she felt that she could kiss him and it would ring true. It concerns a single shot with a slight panning movement of the camera, which then moves back a bit. The shot lasts four and a half minutes in total. She herself found the appropriate rhythm.

**Luc.** At the time, we got the feeling of an apparition, of the creation of a character. And when we saw the scene again in the editing room, it had kept the same strength.

**Why do you attach such importance to redemption?**

**Luc.** We want to see whether guilt gives rise to a new humanity. Through Bruno's tears in *L'Enfant*, through Lorna's madness here, we want to show how the human being, in a given moment in time, disarms. How the human feels the need for a bond with the other that would not mean a utilitarian bond, but a human one. We are more cruel with Lorna than we were with Bruno. In the end, she leaves us. She leaves the earth. This is why she forgets her handbag, her papers, her money. She no longer thinks of it. One can say that her guilt has led her to madness. She has, at the same time, gained back her trust in the world. It is our profound hope: that human beings, before committing the irreparable, and even afterwards, try to find themselves again. Try to find the other. In our films we are much more optimistic than in reality.

**Jean-Pierre.** We cannot admit that we are doomed once and for all.

Translated from the French by Diane Gabrysiak

## THE DARDENNE BROTHERS

Jean-Pierre Dardenne was born in Engis, Belgium, in April 1951.

Luc Dardenne was born in Awirs, Belgium, in March 1954.

They made numerous documentaries. In 1975, Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne founded the company “DERIVES,” which has since produced some 60 documentaries, including their own. In 1994, they founded the production company Les Films Du Fleuve.

### FILMOGRAPHY

2008	THE SILENCE OF LORNA (Le Silence de Lorna) Winner – Cannes 2008 – Best Screenplay
2005	THE CHILD Winner - Cannes 2005 - Palme d’Or
2002	THE SON (LE FILS) Winner - Cannes 2002 - Best Actor for Olivier Gourmet
1999	ROSETTA Winner - Cannes 1999 - Palme d’Or Winner - Cannes 1999 - Best Actress for Emilie Dequenne
1996	THE PROMISE (La Promesse)
1992	I THINK OF YOU (Je pense à vous)
1987	FALSCH

## ARTA DOBROSHI / Lorna

Arta Dobroshi was born in Pristina (Kosovo) in 1979. She attended the Pristina Academy of Dramatic Art for four years. She played in several theatre shows in Pristina (Kosovo) and Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina) including:

Anton Ndreca's SEXTET (directed by Ilir Bokshi), William Shakespeare's A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (directed by Genc Dobroshi), Ekrem Kryeziu's THE CORRIDORS OF HORROR (directed by Ekrem Kryeziu), Ismail Kadaré's THE PALACE OF DREAMS (directed by Altin Basha), MOULIN ROUGE (directed by Jeton Budima), Gjergj Prevazi's TRANZICIONI (directed by Gjergj Prevazi) and Almir Bukvic's ARISTOTLE IN BAGDAD (directed by Aida Bukvic).

In 2004, she performed a song written by Timor Dhomi for a documentary on the massacre in Kosovo.

She also appeared in a dozen short movies and in several features including Kujtim Cashku's MAGIC EYE (2005), which earned her the 2007 Special Award for Best Actress at the Cinedays European Film Festival in Macedonia.

In 2005, she played the leading part in Artan Minarolli's and Ylljet Alicka's VERA and she was seen in Saeed Rana's NA HOON GEY JUDA, a Pakistani production.

In 2006, she played in Piro and Eno Milkani's THE SADNESS OF MRS. SNAJDROVA and then she met Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne in 2007 and got the leading part in their new movie THE SILENCE OF LORNA.

## JEREMIE RENIER / Claudy

Jérémie Renier was born in Brussels in 1981.

He took drama and mime lessons at a very young age and attended the Brussels Circus School and the Annie Fratellini Circus School.

At the age of 14 he got the part of Igor alongside Olivier Gourmet in THE PROMISE (LA PROMESSE) directed by the Dardenne brothers.

And ever since, Jérémie Renier has become one of today's most sought-after young actors.

### Selected filmography:

2008	THE SILENCE OF LORNA (Le Silence de Lorna) (Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne)
2008	SUMMER HOURS (L'Heure d'Été) (Olivier Assayas)
2008	IN BRUGES (Martin McDonagh)
2007	ATONEMENT (Joe Wright)
2006	PRIVATE PROPERTY (Nue Propriété) (Joachim Lafosse)
2005	THE CHILD (L'Enfant) (Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne) Winner – Cannes 2005 - Golden Palm
2001	THE PORNOGRAPHER (Le Pornographe) (Bertrand Bonello)
1999	CRIMINAL LOVERS (Les Amants Criminels) (François Ozon)
1996	THE PROMISE (La Promesse) (Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne)

## FABRIZIO RONGIONE / Fabio

Fabrizio Rongione was born in Brussels in 1973. He acted in several shorts and was seen on television in MAFIOSA, a Canal + series written by Hugues Pagan). In 1999 he was given his first on-screen role in Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne's ROSETTA.

His subsequent performances include Francesca's Comencini's LA PAROLE DI MIO PADRE , Christophe Fraipont's LE TROISIEME OEIL, Luc Bondy's NE FAIS PAS CA !, Robinson Savary's BYE-BYE BLACKBIRD , Stefano Pasetto's TURTLES ON THEIR BACKS, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne's THE CHILD (L'ENFANT), Giancarlo Bocchi's NEMA PROBLEMA, Ariel Zeitoun's MASKED MOBSTERS (LE DERNIER GANG) , Joachim Lafosse's WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY (CA REND HEUREUX).

Fabrizio Rongione has also played in a lot of theatre and has written and directed many shows together with Samuel Tilman: LES FLEAUX (1997 - Grand Prix and Brussels Laughter Festival Public Award), JOHN AND THE WONDERFUL'S (2000) and a one-man-show: A GENOUX (2002 – Belgian Best one-man-show award). In 2004, he made his first documentary: T'ES LE FILS DEQUI TOI ?

## ALBAN UKAJ / Sokol

Alban Ukaj was born in Pristina (Kosovo) in 1980. He attended the Sarajevo Academy of Dramatic Art for four years and studied music. He has appeared in a dozen shorts and in television series. He has also appeared in feature films including Jean-Luc Godard's NOTRE MUSIQUE (2004), Kujtim Cashku's MAGIC EYES (2005), Mathieu Jeufreu's DUB (2006), Antonio Nuic's SVE DZABA (2006) and Namik Kabil's NIGHT GUARDS whose principal photography has just been wrapped.

## MORGAN MARINNE / Spirou

He was born in Namur in 1985. In 2002, he met Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne who gave him the leading role alongside Olivier Gourmet in THE SON (LE FILS). He has since been seen in shorts and TV movies.