

# Le Juge et l'Assassin

( "The Judge and the Killer" )

France : 1975 : dir. Bertrand Tavernier : Lira / S.F.P. / FR3 : 120 min  
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

*boys / girls* .....

Philippe Noiret; Michel Galabru; Jean-Claude Brialy; Renée Faure; Isabelle Huppert; Cécile Vassort; Yves Robert; Monique Chaumette; Arlette Bonnard

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ☺	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996 review:

"In a way, the title tells all in this incisive, expertly directed and acted drama: Judge Noiret must determine whether murderer Galabru is insane or faking. Fascinating from start to finish. Shot in Panavision. \*\*\*« "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"At the end of the nineteenth century [actually it says "at the end of eighteen hundred" ] girls and boys are being raped and murdered by an unknown criminal who invokes God [= "die zich op God beroept"]. A country judge, who uses his status to give his own perversity an acceptable form - gets steadily stronger suspicions about the killer's identity. True events lead to a psychological duel in a portrait of a politically turbulent period, strikingly accomplished in every respect by all concerned. \*\*\*« "

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

"Philip Noiret is the juge - public attorney - and Michel Galabru the assassin, a mental patient who has escaped and murdered several children; Noiret sees in the apprehension of this monster a way to ride to national fame, to the extent that he begins to identify with him. The detail (the time is the 1890s) is rich and the debates many but the piece is pointless unless one accepts Tavernier's view, advanced in other of his films, that it is society and not the

individual who is guilty. Isabelle Huppert and Jean-Claude Brialy have supporting roles. \* "

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

"A superbly directed psychological drama in which a judge has to use his powers of observation to ascertain whether a killer is a madman or merely trying to pull the wool over the law's eyes. \*\*\*« "

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"In nineteenth-century France, a rural judge tries to ascertain whether a serial killer is insane or merely faking to escape execution. Interesting but ultimately vague (at least to American eyes) historical drama. In French with English subtitles. Unrated: brief nudity. \*\*\* "

20th London Film Festival ('76) programme review:

" "THE JUDGE AND THE ASSASSIN" is a carefully calibrated, socially conscious work which evokes complex, contradictory reactions... Tavernier purposely challenges the audience with one of the most plausible candidates for capital punishment ever conceived in the person of a genuine madman who roams about sodomising, disembowelling and murdering pubescent male and female shepherds in 1893 provincial France.

Paralleling this are the efforts of a distinguished Lourdes judge to see the murderer apprehended and brought to justice... the killer is viewed as a genuinely handicapped mental case in need of sympathy and cure, not routine punishment, while the cultivated judge emerges as a moral hypocrite of potentially greater danger to society than a lone psychopath. Provocative ambivalence is further inspired by the excellent characterisations of Philippe Noiret as the jurist and, as the killer, Michel Galabru. Scr: Jean Aurenche & Bertrand Tavernier, from an original scenario by Jean Aurenche & Pierre Bost; dir.ph: Pierre-William Glenn . Shown at the 1976 Los Angeles, Melbourne, Sydney and Cannes film festivals. " - Todd McCarthy, Hollywood Reporter

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "International Film Guide 1976", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time

Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. Intriguing, and a very welcome corrective to the ultra-reactionary tendencies of our own time, when the death penalty has been reintroduced with a vengeance across the States, and ever more draconian regimes for "sex offenders" are the order of the day on both sides of the Atlantic. Since Fritz Lang's "M - EIN STAD SUCHT EIN MORD" in 1931, lust-killers of children have been handled very sparingly in the cinema. Gert Frobe played a similar character in "ES GESCHAH AM HELLICHTEN TAG" ('58) and Kurt Raab in "ZUR RTLICHKEIT DER WIRTLICHKEIT" ('73), while Rolf Schübel's 1984 documentary "NACHRUF AUF EINE BESTIE" ("Requiem for a Beast") employed taped interviews in an effort to undemonise a convicted child-killer who died on the operating table during forcible castration.

But the film which approximates closest to this would be Sidney Lumet's "THE OFFENCE" ('73), which was imbued with some of the same ambivalence between police interrogator (Sean Connery) and suspected child-rapist (Ian Bannen), whom he ultimately beats to death. A whole torrent of American TV movies since the 1980s, however, have sought to obscure any distinction between lust-killers, child-rapists and common or garden paedophiles, promoting a political climate which denies debate and necessitates the severest sanctions for all cases. Well-publicised instances of wrongful conviction (eg: Stefan Kisko, the Broadwater Farm "killers") have done nothing to stem the hysteria which attaches to such crimes, as most recently in the Dutroux scandal in Belgium. Any film which calls into question a self-righteous thirst for vengeance must be regarded as a welcome plea for due circumspection.

See subject index under HISTORY and SEX & SEXUALITY for other lust-killer scenarios.

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