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DISTRIBUTION

An investigation documentary of 90'

Directed by Paul Moreira
Produced by ARTE France & Premières Lignes

IN THE NAME OF LAW & ORDER



The social contract is threatened. How did it come to this? New revolts, less and less supervised, subjected to a low intensity war. We must avoid killing. “Less lethal” is the new norm: rubber bullets, grenades... But these dangerous weapons can cause harm.

For democracies, the challenges are multiplying. How can the relationship between the population and the police be restored? What are the responses to street disturbances?

SYNOPSIS

From the teaser, we understand that this is a global investigation. It is the global nature of the film that will give it its full extent.

There will be right from the start, shots that will respond to each other between France of the Yellow Vests, Germany of the Black Lives Matter protests, the USA of the Portland and California uprisings, Lebanon of the anti-corruption protests, Chile of the demonstrations against the high cost of living, Israel in the territories, Hong Kong and its protests against the Chinese takeover...

Various demonstrators will be seen, but the same scene will be replayed over and over again : that of a crowd of desorganized civilians facing a police force that is becoming more and

more similar and homogeneous from one country to another. Images taken from social media will immediately appear, a new landscape and battlefield, referring to the planet's collective brain.

Through a succession of words from demonstrators, police officers and experts, we will immediately set up the mechanics of the film, its search engine.

What is changing in the street? What part of the social contract? Why are all these people injured? Where do these weapons that cause harm come from? Who makes the decision to shoot? Who are the men behind the visors? Is the right to protest under threat?

IMMERSION

The film opens in France, in a conflictual demonstration, where the confrontation between police and demonstrators will occur. Yellow Vests or Adama Traoré Committee.

On the police side and on the demonstrators' side. It is a sequence that exposes, leads to feelings in order to create the desire to decipher and investigate. For the maintenance of order, a sovereign use of violence, is a matter of emotion, fear and anger. A reality that is absent from the words of experts and politicians who distance themselves from it.

In Lebanon, Chile and Hong Kong, the new demonstrations have also broken with the codes of political protest. They are driven by anger that brings them to the verge of insurrection. Social unrest, increases in the price of tickets or basic foodstuffs that throw the impoverished middle classes and their children into the street...

In the virtual War Game, the military sees riots break out everywhere and city centers fall under the control of insurgents. That's what's going to happen in Real Life in Portland in 2020. So much so that President Trump will send in unidentified federal forces to arrest "anarchist" protesters.

The emotion is established from the beginning of the film, to be felt by the spectator.

This first sequence, shot with several cameras, will mix in the editing the proximity of the faces, allowing to penetrate the emotion, and the movements, the dynamics of the crowd management. Thanks to a deciphering, it will allow to dissipate a little the fog of the war.

All this while giving a voice to Police Operations Managers.

Z-BELLION

"According to this scenario, many members of Generation Z -off-shoots wounded by 9/11 and the great recession of 2008, crushed by their college debt, and disillusioned about their professional future- have given up hope of having a good life and believe that the system is rigged against them. In 2025, a leader emerges who launches a protest movement. They occupy the parks, demonstrate. It starts in the northwest, in Seattle, and spreads everywhere: Los Angeles, DC, Vegas, Austin..."

Rebellion against racist acts: in the USA, in Germany... Anti-globalization uprisings against the summits of the powerful. Demonstrations are looking more and more like riots.

NON-LETHAL WEAPONS, BUT AT WHAT COST ?

The rubber gun is the notch just before the machine gun in a dangerous country. The picture of the people who were blinded by rubber bullets has become a symbolic meme of the new repression. But these weapons have a history...

For this world tour of non-lethal weapons we have explicit archival images that place these weapons and the maintenance of order in a context where war and civil protest are intermingled.

This is an important turning point for understanding the arrival of a certain form of policing in Western democracies.

The British army used them for a long time in Northern Ireland before stopping, too much damage. And in Israel, even today, Israeli soldiers shoot Palestinians with bullets wrapped in black rubber. Deadly bullets at close range.



During the Yellow Vests movement, the police fired 19071 defensive bullets, 1428 tear gas grenades (GLI-F4) and 5420 disencryption grenades.

Source : Amnesty International

FROM THE GUETTO TO THE CHAMPS ELYSEES : THE WAR OF IMAGES

Back to Paris for the Yellow Vests demonstration on December 8, 2018. We are on the Champs Elysees. Poc! The dry and almost discreet sound of a rubber ball shot.

Marie-Claude Druet, 70 years old, is hit in the arm. She is in pain, she is crying. Her husband, a retired policeman, is panicked. She is evacuated by the emergency services. Her physical wound will be healed but not her psychological outrage.

Her complaint for illegal shooting to the IGP and then to the justice system, will be closed without follow-up in spite of the non-respect of the law...

As for the point of view of the police officers, who are often on the front line in the demonstrations, the permanent panoptic gaze makes them hyper-sensitive.

For the past few months, the Ministry of the Interior has been drafting a response to the influx of images on social media. The prefecture of police themselves publish some, for example, the "Dirty Jew", uttered by a demonstrator during a rally for Adama Traoré, is published a few minutes later and immediately taken back. The Adama Traoré committee have to explain themselves while the demonstration is still going on.

Social media is becoming an instantaneous parallel battlefield.

IN THE U.S.

During the Black Lives Matter protests, the stakes of the images were very high. They triggered the movement, since it was the filmed death of George Floyd that set the whole country on fire, and then all the way to Europe.

In the US, as in Europe, smartphones testified to what was happening on a daily basis. In particular the mutilating use of non-lethal weapons.

Over the past 10 years, the American riot police have become massively militarized. They have bought back tanks that were used in Iraq and Afghanistan, making the streets look like cities at war.

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

THE PUNISHERS

In France and the U.S., some observers say that the level of violence in demonstrations is also increasing because individual police officers are becoming more hostile to protesters. Riot police are discreetly displaying coded badges on their uniforms. The most commonly used is the Punisher, a skull and crossbones, which refers to a character from the Marvel Comics, an avenger

who no longer believes in justice. Ces badges ne sont pas réglementaires. These badges are not regulation. They are signs of belonging to an extreme right-wing subculture, virilist, macho, which claims violence as a culture. Far from the values of public service and peacekeeping that are supposed to be those of the police.

WILL WE STILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE TOMORROW?

The film will end with a choral epilogue on the place of the police in society, the possibility of protest, the increased polarization of the relationship between the police and citizens. We will be able to give voice to some of the characters who expressed themselves in the film on these issues. About possible solutions, about the future.

Jean Louis Arajol, a retired police officer, has written a fictional story about the police of tomorrow. He describes a future society, slightly dystopian, where the rich become entrenched behind high walls while the poor become poorer and angrier. "And in the middle, there is Youssef, the young cop of tomorrow... Who is asked to do the impossible: to hold it all together..."



EDITORIAL INTENTION

Our investigation sheds light on the key moments when history was turned upside down. We will not restrict ourselves to Europe. The robocops of autocrats resemble those of democracies because, good news, no one opens fire on demonstrators anymore, bad news: except with non-lethal weapons.

The film will open with an almost physical experience of fear and helplessness in a targeted crowd. This close-up immersion will be captured by multiple cameras and a stand-alone multi-input audio device to make the often overlooked voices in the heart of the riot clearer. This will allow us to multiply the points of view. The possible abuses that we will witness and the voice of the victims will become one of the driving forces of the investigation. For example, we will establish in an independent way that “less lethal” law enforcement weapons are used illegally, i.e., by aiming at parts of the body where they can create irreversible damage, even though there is no threat to justify the shooting.

We will draw the thread of these non-lethal weapons because their use has shocked the general public and they cross all countries. Initially intended to prevent tragedies, they have ended up being used in an uncontrolled manner. There has never been any investigation on these weapons, their opaque market. A lack that we will try to fill.

The rubber bullets symbolize this new way of dealing with crowds. No more distancing, it is time for an almost military gesture, almost lethal: aim and shoot. This is obviously not the main part of the film, but this simple and concrete element allows us to regularly unfold a moment of investigation, a dynamic element to which the spectator's curiosity will be able to respond.

In addition to this, we will be conducting our own journalistic investigation. We will be able to test for ourselves some of the weapons used in the street. To measure their real precision, to assess their impact and their destructive power, to interview doctors like Dr.

Laurent Thines who have taken sides against these weapons. We will also be able to take samples during demonstrations in order to scientifically measure the effect of tear gas on health, a product of which the exact composition is often kept secret, and of which the long-term effects, or during regular exposure, are little assessed.

The strength and originality of this investigation will be to hear the voices of direct actors and witnesses.

These lively, engaging voices will be supported or challenged by an incredible abundance of imagery. The structuring point of view of thinkers of the conflict and the police, give the film its allegorical nature. For we believe that to examine the police in the city is to show how society has mutated.

For the purposes of the investigation, we will move between the reality filmed by us and the data displayed on the screens. We will have to establish very quickly that the question of policing is as much digital as it is physical.

During the international sequences, we will find ourselves in countries where the levels of violence are much higher than in France. La question qui tendra ces séquences, sera bien sûr : doit-on vendre du matériel à des pays qui maltraitent leur population civile... Il s'agira d'établir au plus près les abus, puis de suivre des personnages cherchant à découvrir la provenance des armes auxquelles ils font face. Ces activistes sont souvent de jeunes femmes minutieuses, utilisant les images des téléphones portables et les réseaux sociaux pour réaliser des enquêtes participatives. Social media will probably never have played such an important role as a means of investigation and resistance, as a true counter-power not only for venting anger.

PARTICIPANTS

The film interviews politicians in the storm, as ministers of the interior Claude Guéant, Manuel Valls, Brice Hortefeux and Gérard Darmanin agreed to share the moment they made certain decisions.

German police chiefs, such as Horst Kretzschmar from Saxony, who was confronted with the rise of the extreme right in the ranks of his riot police, or Uwe Lang from Lower Saxony, who was committed to the strategy of de-escalation in an increasingly radical context. We secured access to the rank-and-file police officers on the front lines, managing their anger under their helmets. While demonstrators talk about their fear and hesitation.

Each speaker will introduce themselves and give a few brief biographical details so that the audience understands who is speaking and where they are speaking from, and what their position in the debate is. This presentation will allow us to underline the main lines of the documentary.

VISUAL APPROACH

The film will be carried by structuring interviews filmed in chiaroscuro in the context and the living place of the speakers. The idea is to make the faces sharp by filming them with a long focal length, detaching the interlocutors, and moving the camera backwards, in order to magnify the speech.

The film uses several sources of images. Clean shootings in FS7 to try to give a cinematographic tint to the reportage sequences, archives, in particular amateur films coming from social media and then submitted to an identification treatment, surveillance videos.

As soon as the elements become technical, we propose to use an infographic to make it intelligible.

The visual writing will have to tell the story of the technological thoroughness of the investigations. Using a very high definition camera, we will zoom into the image in post production to offer the visually fascinating effect of searching for suddenly significant clues.

The original music would be created by Carlos Leiria, probably the best music illustrator at the moment. He is already the author of the music for “Information war: in the heart of the Russian machine” and “Foreign volunteers in the hell of Raqqa”.

Three perspectives, three levels of reading.



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