

LIFE OF A GREAT DIRECTOR

by Philippe Lesage



BERLINALE
CO-PRODUCTION
MARKET



LIFE OF A GREAT DIRECTOR

LOGLINE

Sixteen-year-old Jeff is invited to the isolated forest cabin of Blake Cadieux, a legendary filmmaker whom he admires. However, his idol doesn't turn out to be the role model he had hoped for.

BUDGET 3,401,360 €

FINANCING IN PLACE 1,020,622 €

FINANCIERS / PARTNERS CONFIRMED

Maison 4:3, Canada (MG Canadian theatrical distribution)

MTL Grandé, Canada (in-kind investment, camera equipment)

LIFE OF A GREAT DIRECTOR *synopsis*

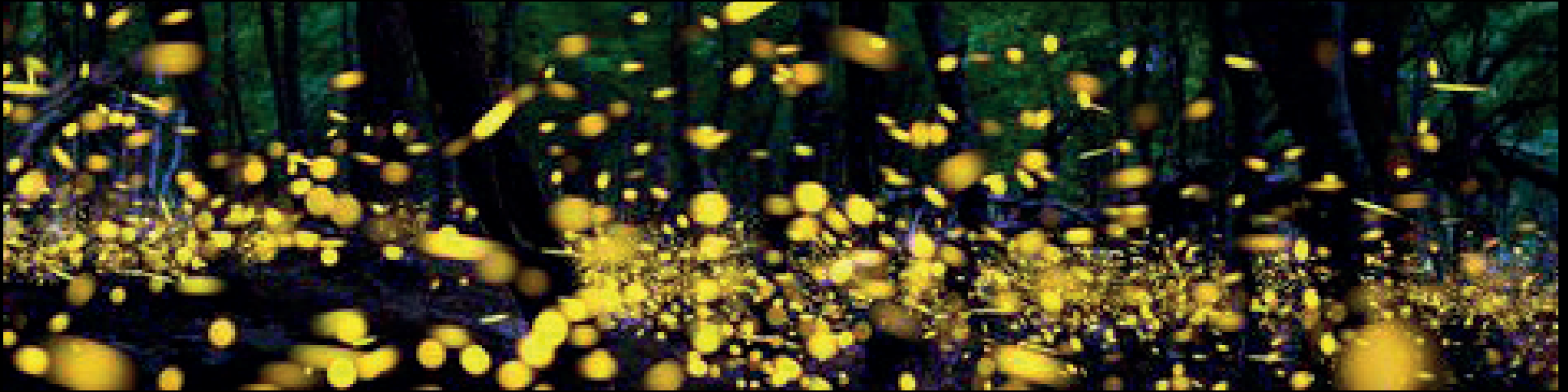
Jeff (16) is invited by his friend Max to spend a few days at the home of Blake Cadieux, the great, legendary and over-the-hill film director whom he admires. Blake lives isolated with his small entourage in a vast forest. Max's father, Albert, was Blake's screenwriter during a very productive period that gave rise to a string of hits.

The virile and authoritarian Blake picks up his guests in a seaplane at the northern end of inhabited Quebec: Jeff, Albert, Max and Max's older sister, Aliocha, who is 18 – and with whom Jeff is secretly in love.

At first, Blake and Albert appear to represent two opposite poles of masculinity. Blake, proud, egotistical and paternalistic, gives the impression that he is afraid of nothing. Albert, in contrast, is a sensitive and generous hypochondriac. Jeff observes the dynamic between these two friends, who are spending time together for the first time in years. Very quickly, Albert becomes both the brunt of Blake's mockery and his scapegoat, and none of the other adults present dare to call the great director to order.



LIFE OF A GREAT DIRECTOR *synopsis*



Jeff's attempts to approach Aliocha, a self-assured aspiring writer, prove awkward, and she rejects his advances. Mortified, Jeff runs out one night and gets lost in the forest where he confronts the power of nature; its threatening cold nights filled with wild animals and the magnificent spectacle of fireflies and the aurora borealis.

Later, Jeff is horrified to discover that Blake and the young woman he loves have been engaging in mysterious erotic photo sessions at night while everyone is asleep. Yet the arrival of a new guest, the grande dame of French acting Hélène Falke, transforms the dynamic of the group. Gradually, Blake's authority wanes, and when Aliocha rejects him, and Albert stands up to him, Blake drags the entire group out on a dangerous canoe trip where one of the guests loses his life. This dramatic turn of events finally allows Jeff to free himself from the toxic grip of his idol.

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LIFE OF A GREAT DIRECTOR *director's statement*



Once, my older brother told me about a memory that stood out in his mind. When he was 16, he was invited to spend time with a famous filmmaker at his summer cottage. His story was fascinating and included encounters with wild beasts, unspoken romantic feelings for his best friend's inaccessible older sister, getting lost in the forest, and, of course, the encounter with the charismatic director greatly admired by his entourage. Yet in truth the director was an aging symbol of the patriarchal ideal, proud as a lion, placing his own life on display for adulation. The story immediately took shape in my imagination: a young man who dreams of being a filmmaker, and who, under exceptional circumstances, is introduced to a great director that he admires. He is intimidated but delighted to have access to this mentor. But how can he trust this potential father figure if he unexpectedly becomes a rival?

LIFE OF A GREAT DIRECTOR *director's statement*



The story has naturally become entwined with the rumours and myths surrounding legendary figures and directors to form this reclusive woodsman-hunter character: a proud, but sensitive creator anchored in stereotypes of virility. I imagined a John Huston in exile in northern Quebec, or an Ontarian Ingmar Bergman who happened to be a fishing expert. I also drew inspiration from certain 70s New Hollywood-style films, where every scene was cinematically mesmerizing, atmospherically rich, and often in CinemaScope, portraying complex characters with interpersonal relations that formed the backbone of the story. This will be a large-scale character study along the lines of *THE DEER HUNTER* and *DELIVERANCE* or the films of Altman and John Boorman.

**UNITÉ
CENTRALE**

PRODUCTIONS L'UNITÉ CENTRALE commits to the creation of quality feature-length author films. Founded and directed by Galilé Marion-Gauvin, it characterises itself by its ongoing interest in developing films with a strong artistic vision.

Previous productions include Dominique Chila and Samer Najari's *Arwad* (2013) and Felix Du-four-Laperrière's *Ville Neuve* (2018), which premiered at Rotterdam and Venice respectively, and Philippe Lesage's *The Demons* (2015) and *Genesis* (2018).

Its co-productions include the animated feature film *Louise by the shore* by Jean-François Laguio-
nie (Canada / France 2016) winner of the Grand Prize at the Ottawa International Animation Film
Festival and Philippe Lesage's *COPENHAGUE A LOVE STORY* (Canada / France 2016). They are
currently in production on Pierre Földes' *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* (France / Luxembourg /
Canada / Netherlands).

MOODBOARD





SHOOTING LOCATION



Seigneurie du Triton,
Batiscan River, Quebec



Seigneurie du Triton,
Edouard Lake, Quebec



Seigneurie du Triton,
Edouard Lake, Quebec



Helicopter,
Batiscan River, Quebec



Mont-Tremblant,
St-Jovite, Quebec



Seigneurie du Triton,
Edouard Lake, Quebec



Seigneurie du Triton,
Edouard Lake, Quebec



Seigneurie du Triton,
Edouard Lake, Quebec



Seigneurie du Triton, Edouard Lake, Quebec

