

Clips from the French Newspapers on *YOUNG YAKUZA*

Featuring the yakuza boss Kumagai Masatoshi and his new protégé, Jean-Pierre Limosin's *YOUNG YAKUZA*, his latest documentary, will be screened as a Jurors' film in YIDFF 2013. Upon its release in France in 2008, the filmmaker and the gang leader discussed the film separately in different media. We have quoted their statements from three separate articles, rearranging them in an imaginary dialogue.

Kumagai Masatoshi: I never dreamed I'd become a gangster. [...] I did a year in prison. When I got out, at age 18, I was hired by the yakuza. [...] I started at the bottom. My five years of training, I spent scrubbing the floor, filling the boss' fridge, to ensure that everything would be perfect. Then, I quickly climbed up through the ranks.^[1]

Jean-Pierre Limosin: I saw it as a film about an apprenticeship in evil, following the first steps of the young man. As for Kumagai, he wanted a sort of calling card for his political progress through the hierarchy of the mob syndicate. He was playing a role. At the beginning, for example, something was wrong with his voice. It was more hoarse. He was playing Marlon Brando in the Godfather. He must have seen the movie dozens of times, indeed, like the other yakuza.^[2]

K.: What interested me was to show the reality, the respect for discipline, for the code of honor, the protocol of the family. There are many misrepresentations of us, because of films like *The God-*

father.^[1]

L.: What interested me was to see what the cinema could draw out of this opaque milieu, itself haunted by images from films. The yakuza have forged a mythological role to justify their presence. Crime syndicates were involved with the studios in the production of more than a thousand films. Most of the actors playing members of the yakuza are former yakuza. These men are worked by this legend, and always acting.^[3]

K.: I don't want to talk about the organization. [...] Our sphere of activity is increasingly limited. The anti-gang legislation of 1991 reduced the power of the syndicates. We have less strength and vitality than ever before. But I do not despair. Isn't the specialty of the yakuza to get around the law?^[1]

L.: I signed a moral contract with Kumagai: I would not film his illegal activities, and would not conduct an investigation. Obviously, it wasn't a question of my condoning crimes. My idea was to capture the metamorphosis of the affects, bodies, and characters. To let the masks fall, and all of the fantasies living behind them, to discover something more human, more fragile. Rather than serving Kumagai's strategy, the film shows a world in decline, in which everything is falling apart, a world whose image is marred.^[3]

K.: I'm a practicing Catholic. I pray never to return to prison. Yet, I know that's in the rules of the game. Death, however, doesn't scare me. [And when it comes knocking, and I must face God.] He will forgive me.^[1]

(Translated by Mark D. Roberts)

Sources

[1] « Fantômes et réalité de la mafia japonaise » par Emmanuèle Frois, le 9 avril 2008, *Le Figaro*.

[2] « "Yakuza," parrain désemparé » par Bruno Icher, le 9 avril 2008, *Libération*.

[3] « En filmant les yakuzas, il ne s'agit pas de fermer les yeux sur leurs crimes » par Jean-Luc Douin, le 9 avril 2008, *Le Monde*.

■ Screening

YOUNG YAKUZA [JF] 10/14 10:00– [A6]