

# THE MEASURE OF A MAN

(La Loi du marché)

A film by  
**Stéphane Brizé**



**Best Actor, Vincent Lindon, Cannes Film Festival 2015**

**Best Actor, Vincent Lindon, César Awards 2016**

FRANCE 2015/ 93 minutes / French with English subtitles / Cert PG

**Opens in cinemas June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016**

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## Synopsis

Thierry is unemployed. At the age of 51 and after almost two years of small humiliations in a search for work, he starts a new job that soon brings him face to face with a moral dilemma. How much is he willing to accept to keep his job?

*The Measure of a Man* tells the story of a man and his conscience. Thierry will have to decide whether to stay and be an accomplice of an unfair system, or leave and return to a precarious and unstable life.



## CAST

Thierry Taugourdeau  
Employment Agency counselor  
Thierry's wife  
Thierry's son  
Union colleague  
Dance teacher  
Bank manager  
Mobile home buyer  
Mobile home buyer's wife  
Employment Agency tutor  
Employment Agency interns

Security agent n°1  
Young shoplifter  
Retired woman  
Supermarket manager  
Security agent n°2  
High school headmaster  
Interrogated cashier n°1  
Security Agent n°3  
Security Agent n°4  
Old shoplifter  
Human Resources Director  
Interrogated cashier n°2

**Vincent LINDON**  
**Yves ORY**  
**Karine de MIRBECK**  
**Matthieu SCHALLER**  
**Xavier MATHIEU**  
**Noël MAIROT**  
**Catherine SAINT-BONNET**  
**Roland THOMIN**  
**Hakima MAKOUDI**  
**Tevi LAWSON**  
**Fayçal ADDOU**  
**Dahmane BELGHOUL**  
**Florence HERRY-LEHAM**  
**Agnès MILLORD**  
**Irène RACCAH**  
**Christian RANVIER**  
**Cyril J. ROLLAND**  
**Sandrine VANG**  
**Stéphanie HUREL**  
**Soufiane GUERRAB**  
**Gisèle GERWIG**  
**Saïd AÏSSAOUI**  
**Rami KABTANI**  
**Éric KROP**  
**Françoise ANSELMINI**  
**Jean-Eddy PAUL**  
**Samuel MUTLEN**  
**Christian WATRIN**  
**Guillaume DRAUX**  
**Sakina TOILIBOU**

## CREW

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Director                  | <b>Stéphane BRIZÉ</b>                           |
| Screenplay                | <b>Stéphane BRIZÉ and Olivier GORCE</b>         |
| Producers                 | <b>Christophe ROSSIGNON and Philip BOËFFARD</b> |
| Associate Producers       | <b>Vincent LINDON and Stéphane BRIZÉ</b>        |
| Line Producer             | <b>Eve FRANÇOIS MACHUEL</b>                     |
| Director of Photography   | <b>Éric DUMONT</b>                              |
| Editing                   | <b>Anne KLOTZ</b>                               |
| Assistant Director        | <b>Émile LOUIS</b>                              |
| Sound                     | <b>Emmanuelle VILLARD</b>                       |
| Sound Editing and Mixing  | <b>Hervé GUYADER</b>                            |
| Production Designer       | <b>Valérie SARADJIAN A.D.C.</b>                 |
| Costume Designers         | <b>Anne DUNSFORD and Diane DUSSAUD</b>          |
| Casting                   | <b>Coralie AMÉDÉO A.R.D.A.</b>                  |
| Production Manager        | <b>Kim NGUYEN</b>                               |
| Post Production Manager   | <b>Julien AZOULAY</b>                           |
| A coproduction            | <b>NORD-OUEST FILMS – ARTE FRANCE CINÉMA</b>    |
| With the participation of | <b>CANAL+, CINÉ+, ARTE FRANCE</b>               |
| With the support of       | <b>The ÎLE-DE-FRANCE Region</b>                 |
| In collaboration with     | <b>CNC</b>                                      |

France / 93 minutes / Color / 2.35 / 2k / 5.1 / 2015

Photos available at <http://newwavefilms.co.uk/press.html>

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## THE DIRECTOR: STÉPHANE BRIZÉ

Stéphane Brizé is a French director and screenwriter. He was born on October 18, 1966 in Rennes. He is known for his feature films *Not Here to Be Loved* (*Je ne suis pas là pour être aimé*, 2005), *Mademoiselle Chambon* (2009) and *Quelques heures de printemps* (2012). *La Loi du marché* (*The Measure of a Man*) is his latest film, it was selected in Competition at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival, where Vincent Lindon won the Best Actor award for his outstanding performance as Thierry.

## FILMOGRAPHY

*The Measure of A Man* (*La Loi du marché*, 2015)

*A Few Hours of Spring* (*Quelques Heures de printemps*, 2012)

*Mademoiselle Chambon* (2009)

*Among Adults* (*Entre Adultes*, 2007)

*Not Here to be Loved* (*Je ne suis pas là pour être aimé*, 2005)

*Hometown Blue* (*Le Bleu des villes*, 1999)

### Documentaries and Short Films

*Dream Life* (*Une Vie de rêves*, 2004)

*Beautiful Instant* (*Le Bel instant*, 2002)

*L'Oeil qui traîne* (1996)

*Bleu dommage* (1993)



## VINCENT LINDON

Vincent Lindon is one of France's leading actors. He was born in Boulogne-Billancourt in 1959. After working backstage on several films and for the French comedian Coluche, he went on to study acting at the Cours Florent in Paris. He has since appeared in over 65 films, starting in 1983. Vincent Lindon gained recognition with *L'Étudiante* by Claude Pinoteau (1988), for which he was awarded the Jean Gabin acting award, and popular success with Coline Serreau's *La Crise*, in 1992. He has been given several acting awards. He won the Palme for Best Actor at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival for his role in *The Measure of a Man*.

## SELECT FILMOGRAPHY

*L'Étudiante (The Student)* by Claude Pinoteau (1988)

*La-Baule-les-Pins* by Diane Kurys (1990)

*La Crise* by Coline Serreau (1992)

*La Belle Histoire* by Claude Lelouch (1992)

*Le Septième ciel (Seventh Heaven)* by Benoît Jacquot (1997)

*L'École de la chair (The School of Flesh)* by Benoît Jacquot (1998)

*Ma Petite entreprise (My Little Business)* by Pierre Jolivet (1998)

*Vendredi soir* by Claire Denis (2002)

*Le Coût de la vie (The Cost of Life)* by Phillippe le Guay (2003)

*L'Avion (The Plane)* By Cédric Kahn (2004)

*La Moustache* by Emmanuel Carrère (2005)

*Selon Charlie (Charlie Says)* by Nicole Garcia (2006)

*Pour Elle (Anything for Her)* by Fred Cavayé (2008)

*Welcome* by Philippe Lioret (2009)

*Pater* by Alain Cavalier (2011)

*Quelques Heures de printemps (A Few Hours of Spring)* by Stéphane Brizé (2012)

*Augustine* by Alice Winocour (2012)

*Les Salauds (The Bastards)* by Claire Denis (2013)

*Journal d'une femme de chambre (Diary of a Chambermaid)* by Benoît Jacquot (2015)

*Les Chevaliers blancs (The White Knights)* by Joachim Lafosse (2015)

*La Loi du marché (The Measure of a Man)* by Stéphane Brizé (2015)

## INTERVIEW WITH STÉPHANE BRIZÉ

### **Tell us about how this project began.**

My films have always dealt with the intimate without highlighting human beings in their social environment. The next step was to observe the brutality of the mechanisms and exchanges ruling our world by juxtaposing one man's humanity – a vulnerable man with no job security – with the violence of our society. I wrote the script with Olivier Gorce, someone I'd known for a long time but whom I'd never worked with. His analysis and perspective on social and political themes are very lucid. He was the ideal travel partner for this project.

### **At what point did the form of the film become clear?**

Quite quickly in fact. Right from the beginning of the writing process, I knew the film would be shot with a tiny crew, and non-professional actors would work with Vincent. I went even further and told Christophe Rossignon (the producer) and Vincent Lindon that I wanted us to co-produce the project by imposing a limited budget and investing the better part of our salaries in the film, while paying the crew the normal rate. Not every film can be made this way, but this one allowed it. Content, style and financing echoed one another, and I liked this coherence. There was also the affirmation that films could be made differently at a time when the industry is seriously questioning how it finances production. I also had to rethink my set design and staging, as well as my themes. This film is the fruit of necessity.

### **One might see your intuition to have Vincent Lindon work alongside non-professional actors as odd.**

I've had the idea for this sort of clash for a long time now. I had already filmed non-professional actors in tiny roles, and every time I had the feeling that I was getting closer to a truth – which is what interests me the most in my work. I had to push this system even further by throwing an experienced actor into a cast of non-professionals. The idea was to bring Vincent Lindon to uncharted waters in terms of his acting.

### **How did you find them?**

Many of the roles corresponded to specific jobs: the security guards, the banker, the staff at the unemployment office, the cashiers, etc. Coralie Amédéo, the casting director, first looked for people who worked at the same jobs as their characters. I was blown away by the people I met. I doubt they can do what actors do – but I don't think any actor is capable of doing what they can do. It is fascinating to see people walk up to a filmmaker and casting director, in an office they're completely unfamiliar with, and impose their crude and powerful truth with mind-blowing authority. Where does their ability to be completely themselves in front of a camera come from? It's a mystery that continues to fascinate me.

### **Did it change Vincent Lindon's acting style?**

Yes, no doubt. I know him rather well now, since this is the third film we've done together. I found him incredible in *Mademoiselle Chambon* and *A Few Hours of Springs*, but here, he reaches new heights. Here he learned to let go – as I did as a director. He did it almost without a safety net.

### **Why do you say almost?**

Because I know where I'm taking everyone. I don't throw them together in some random spot and wait for a miracle to happen. I have a road map with all the destinations and detours.

### **How do technical aspects – and the image, more precisely – fit into your setup?**

First, I chose to take on a cinematographer who had only made documentaries. I wanted someone who was used to being completely autonomous with framing, focussing and aperture. I worked with Éric Dumont, a young director of photography, who was barely 30 years old and had never shot a fiction film. I would tell him very precisely about the point of view of the scene and let him translate that into a composition. At that point, he became a full-on actor in the scene because, based on what he was framing, he gave it one meaning or another. What interested me was Thierry / Vincent's point of view. He's at the centre of the story. Whatever he sees and hears is what interests me. That's why I sometimes film him for a long time, even when he isn't necessarily the motivating agent of the scene. I film him like a boxer getting punched without necessarily filming the person punching him. That was, incidentally, what fuelled the choice of cinemascope, since I sometimes needed to show what was happening across from or next to Thierry.

### **Would you call this a political film?**

Yes. "Political" in the sense of "organization of the polis" or city. I looked at the life of a man who gave his body, his time, and his energy, to a company for 25 years before being left on the sidelines because his bosses decide to make the same product in another country with cheaper labour. This man is not kicked out because he didn't do his job well. He's kicked out because some people want to make more money. Thierry is the mechanical consequence of a few invisible shareholders whose bank accounts needed a boost. He is the face of the unemployment statistics we hear about every day in the news.

They might take up two lines in the paper, but behind them are human tragedies. On the other hand, there was never any question of using tear-jerking clichés either. Thierry is a normal man – even though the idea of a normal man has taken a beating these past years – in a brutal situation: he has been unemployed for 20 months since his factory shut down, and is now obliged to accept just about any job he can get. And when this job places the individual in a morally unacceptable situation, what can he do? Stay and be an accomplice of an unfair system, or leave and return to a precarious and unstable life? That is the heart of the film: a man's place in a system.

### **You follow Thierry for a long time before finding him a job.**

Yes, it was important to take the time to show Thierry in the context of the social humiliation resulting from his unemployment. His appointments at the unemployment office, his work placements that lead nowhere, the bank lecturing him, the job interview via Skype, and so on. No one is really mean, but in their own way, everyone – without really wanting to (or wanting to see it) – is participating in the violence of this world. This is our world. And the time we spend observing it allows us to understand that Thierry has absolutely no choice but to accept this new job.



**You also refuse to paint a caustic portrait of this profession, which is often caricatured.**

That's because the people I met were not at all caricatures. I didn't meet any cowboys who abuse their tiny bit of power. I met very pleasant men and women whose job it was to stop people from stealing things in their shop. I also added something that doesn't exist in the warehouse superstore where I filmed, which is that the manager fires employees at the drop of a hat, and then refuses to replace them in order to inflate his revenue.

**Did you invent that or had you heard about it somewhere?**

I'd heard about it a long time ago in a documentary, then filed it away for later use. It's one thing for a business to make money. It's another if it physically or morally abuses its employees to do so. Work has become a rare commodity. Like water. And companies ultimately have an enormous amount of power. If a company is healthy, the exchange with its employees is harmonious. But if this company acts like a dictatorship brandishing a nuclear weapon, then the employee becomes little more than cannon fodder. At that point, what is left of his/her dignity? This is what I wanted to explore.