



FILM MOVEMENT®

*Presents*

**Belgium's Official Submission for Best Foreign Film  
89<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards**

# THE ARDENNES

**(D'ARDENNEN)**

**A film by Robin Pront**

*"Straddling the line between arthouse and genre, THE ARDENNES is a very strong debut sure to challenge and reward fans on both sides of that divide." – Screen Anarchy*



**Belgium / 2015 / Thriller, Drama / Dutch, French with English Subtitles  
93 min / 2.40: 1 / 5.1 and 2.0**

*"Imaginative debut film...produced by Bart Van Langendonck (whose work on *Bullhead* received an Oscar nomination), Pront's film is calling up comparisons to *Fargo*, *Trainspotting*, and the early films of Quentin Tarantino." – Indiewire*

**Opens in NY on January 6<sup>th</sup> at Village East Cinema &  
LA on January 13<sup>th</sup> at Laemmle Royal**

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Assets

Official Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1GVE3nsPWU>

Downloadable hi-res images:

<http://www.filmmovement.com/filmcatalog/index.asp?MerchandiseID=519>

## SYNOPSIS

In his debut feature, Robin Pront artfully blends gritty kitchen-sink realism, forbidding noir and surprising, post-Coen Brothers humor to reveal a tense, humanistic and emotionally twisted drama of brotherly love and betrayal on the economic margins of contemporary Belgium. **THE ARDENNES** evokes the same petty criminal milieu as *Bullhead* (2011), and shares with the film a producer, Bart Van Langendonck, as well as a fixation on the blunt facts of life. Brothers Dave (Jeroen Perceval) and Kenny (Kevin Janssens) are lumpen Flemish hoodlums whose ineptitude causes Kevin to take the fall when a heist goes wrong. Four years later, Kevin is out of prison, but, as he slowly learns, things have changed. Unbeknownst to Kevin, his girlfriend Sylvie, played by Veerle Baetens (*The Broken Circle Breakdown*), has moved in with his brother Dave and is pregnant with his baby.

Pront uses the unrevealed secret to sustain tension that seesaws against a backdrop of dark farce and tender remorse. We witness one of the uneasiest family Christmas dinners ever, as well as Kevin's ill-fated stint working at a car wash. Anger management is not Kevin's strong suit. Indeed, his feral impulses soon put the brothers on the wrong side of the law again, and in awkward collusion with Kevin's old cellmate Stef, portrayed by the brilliant Jan Bijvoet (*BORGMAN*) amid a gallery of bizarre characters in the depths of the forest that gives the film its name.

While it nods to such classic crime stories as *GOODFELLAS*, *TRAINSPOTTING* and *IN BRUGES*, **THE ARDENNES** draws its stylish suspense from the specific, nuanced details of its luckless characters', their lowlife follies and tortured fraternity, underscoring the tragically profound hazards of brotherly love.

## LOGLINE

The rivalry between two brothers comes to a slow-burning climax during a sinister trip to the Belgian countryside.

## Select Press for THE ARDENNES

“A straight-on, lean-and-mean genre film from Belgium...hold on to your hats. The kitchen sink drama takes a bizarre turn into David Lynch territory.” – **Film-Forward**

“Tense and entertaining spin on a familiar tale.” – **Way Too Indie**

“Imaginative debut film...produced by Bart Van Langendonck (whose work on BULLHEAD received an Oscar nomination), Pront’s film is calling up comparisons to FARGO, TRAINSPOTTING, and the early films of Quentin Tarantino.” – **Indiewire**

“Pront paints the Belgian criminal underbelly with guts and dark grit...Don’t miss this one.” – **Next Projection**

“A terrific, taut thriller with dry wit, and a narrative gravity-well that drags everybody to its grim center....” – **Toronto Sun**



# CREDITS

## CAST

Dave	Jeroen Perceval
Kenneth	Kevin Janssens
Sylvie	Veerle Baetens
Joyce	Sam Louwyck
Stef	Jan Bijvoet
Mariette	Viviane de Muynck
Gérard	Eric Godon
Khalid	Rachid Appa
Officer Linda	Caroline Stas
Jailer Tommy	Dominique Van Malder
Robert	Peter Van den Begin
Thierry	Kuno Bakker
Cindy	Brit Van Hoof

## CREW

Director	Robin Pront
Producer	Bart Van Langendonck
Screenplay	Jeroen Perceval
	Robin Pront
Photography	Robrecht Heyvaert
Editing	Alain Dessauvage
Set Design	Peggy Verstraeten
Costumes	Catherine Van Bree
Sound	Thierry De Vries
	Robil Rahantoeznam
	Laura Solleveld
	Thomas Vertongen
Line Producer	Xavier Rombaut
First Assistant Director	Peter Ghesquière
Unit Production Manager	Sieber Marly
Casting	Sien Josephine Teijssen
Music	Win Coryn

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

**THE ARDENNES** tells the story of a complex relationship between two brothers – protagonist Dave and his brother Kenneth. Both bear the scars of their shared past, but each deals with it in their own way.



The story pays great attention to character development and unfolds like a crime thriller that reaches its climax in *The Ardennes* (in Wallonia, the French-speaking southern region of Belgium). I wanted to explore the theme of loyalty between brothers and friends, with a specific focus on the harsh environment of these individuals. This is also a recurring theme in my previous short films, characters who act according to standards and values that are different from what is considered normal, and who live in a world where violence is the solution and drugs are invariably present. I always had a great affinity for people who live at the margins of society and who seek extremes, consciously or not. Despite the dark source material, the story also has its humorous moments, because humor is a part of life – people nevertheless try to make things bearable by finding humor in all situations, even if it might be out of place.

The complicated triangle between Dave, Sylvie and Kenneth is central to the plot. It is the main thrust of the story. None of the three characters are happy with where they are right now in their lives and, although it is easy to portray Kenneth as the ‘bad guy’ of the story, this is not what interests me as a filmmaker. I wanted to explore the grey areas between good and evil and to ask myself why people are the way they are and do what they do. After all, everyone is a cute baby at birth – a blank canvas. The answers to the questions of how Kenneth ends up in jail, whose corpse is in the trunk and why it is there, ensure that the characters are always seen in a different light by the viewer, and that is what I want to achieve.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### ROBIN PRONT — Director

Belgian filmmaker Robin Pront is known for his straightforward and no-nonsense style. He rose to prominence with **PLAN B**, his first short film about the drug scene in Antwerp and its effects on its residents. The film won the award for best short at the Leuven Film Festival in 2008, as well as the Public's Choice award. Having quickly made a name for himself, his next film, **INJURY TIME**, about football hooliganism starring **BULLHEAD** actors Matthias Schoenaerts and Jeroen Perceval, received high critical praise. **INJURY TIME** was Pront's graduate film from the Sint-Lukas Academy in Brussels in 2010. It was selected for several national and international festivals and won prizes in Brussels and Ghent.

### Filmography

PLAN B – 20 min (2008) Cast: Jeroen Perceval, Manou Kersting, Maarten Westra Hoekzema, Eric Kloeck, Jehon Gorani

- Jury Prize at the Leuven International Short Film Festival, 2008
- Public Prize at the Leuven International Short Film Festival, 2008

INJURY TIME – 15 min (2010) Cast: Jeroen Perceval, Matthias Schoenaerts, Mario van Dyck, Olivier Bony

- Winner Best Short Film Brussels Film Festival
- Winner Best Short Film CinePublic Ghent



### BART VAN LANGENDONCK — Producer, Savage Film

Savage Film is an independent production company founded in 2007 by Bart Van Langendonck and operating from Brussels in an association with Eyeworks. The company established itself internationally with Michaël R. Roskam's award-winning film **BULLHEAD**, a box office hit in Belgium in 2011, as well as a César and Oscar nominee for Best Foreign Language Film in 2012.

## **THE ARDENNES - SELECTED FESTIVALS**

- Toronto International Film Festival
- International Film Festival Rotterdam
- Chicago International Film Festival
- São Paulo International Film Festival
- Film Fest Gent
- Cleveland International Film Festival
- Glasgow Film Festival
- Goteborg Film Festival
- Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival
- 33<sup>rd</sup> Jerusalem Int'l Film Festival
- Palm Springs International Film Festival

## **THE ARDENNES - AWARDS**

- 7 Ensor Awards (Flemish Film Awards)
  1. Best Film
  2. Best Script -Jeroen Perceval and Robin Pront
  3. Best Actor - Kevin Janssens
  4. Best Supporting Actor - Jan Bijvoet
  5. Best Cinematography - Robrecht Heyvaert
  6. Best Art Direction - Geert Paredis
  7. Best Costume Designer - Catherine Van Bree
- Magritte Award for Best Flemish Film & Best Flemish Co-Production
- Vertigo Award – Best Flemish Film

## **ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT**

Launched in 2002, Film Movement is a North American distributor of award-winning independent and foreign films based in New York City. Film Movement has released more than 250 feature films and shorts culled from prestigious film festivals worldwide, and this year it had its first Academy Award-nominated film, THEEB. Film Movement's theatrical distribution strategy has evolved to include promising American independent films, documentaries, and an even stronger slate of foreign art house titles. In 2015, Film Movement launched its reissue label Film Movement Classics, featuring new restorations released theatrically as well as on Blu-ray and DVD, including films by such noted directors as Eric Rohmer, Peter Greenaway, Bille August, Marleen Gorris, Takeshi Kitano and Ettore Scola. For more information, please visit [www.filmmovement.com](http://www.filmmovement.com).