



— HEADS OR FAILS

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FANTASTIC
★ 20 FEST 24 ★

A Film by Lenny and Harpo Guit

PRESSKIT



86 MIN

BELGIUM, FRANCE

2024

1.5

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FRENCH

SCREENINGS IN FANTASTIC FEST
SUN. SEPT 22nd, 2:30 PM @ THEATER 6
(WORLD PREMIERE)

— HEADS OR FAILS

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— SYNOPSIS

Armande Pigeon is the queen of shenanigans. In Brussels, she struggles to make ends meet because she can't stop gambling on everything, always ending up on the wrong side of luck. When she teams up with Ronnie one night, everything changes – they win it all. And when you hit a winning streak, you have to know when to stop.



A CONVERSATION WITH LENNY AND HARPO GUIT



How did you come up with the idea for *Heads or Fails*?

We've always had a fascination with resourceful people, schemers, bluffers. And since we're kind of the opposite of that, we thought we'd make a movie about those people. It was our way of getting closer to that world. Then, of course, things took a bit of a different turn, and the character of Armande became a mix between this grandiose vision of scams and the very realistic side of the little troubles we experience. We tried to blend all this together to tell a story that was close to us, to our concerns, and to what we go through emotionally. But it's mostly our projections on the story of a girl who, despite everything that happens in her life, all the misfortunes, always lands on her feet. During the writing process, we discovered two films by chance, *Girlfriends* by Claudia Weill and *Smithereens* by Susan Seidelman, which we loved, and made us want to join this family of films.

***Heads or Fails* follows up on the success of your cult debut feature *Mother Schmuckers* (Sundance 2021) and expands your own Guit Brothers cinematic universe. Can you tell us more about how this film builds on your past work?**

We were thrilled to have had the chance to make a first film, but a second one, it's just crazy. At the premise of *Heads or Fails*, there is necessarily the experience of *Mother Schmuckers*, we wanted to write something a little different, still a comedy but maybe a bit less gag-driven while continuing to tell the story of people who struggle and fight in life. Now, seeing the result, we realize there are many similarities with *Mother Schmuckers*. Probably because our primary drive is comedy, that's what motivates us daily in making a film, what makes us laugh? Why does it make us laugh? And trying to dig deeper to invent new stories that can accommodate new jokes.

The film navigates between different genres. What films, genres, and media influenced you most?

Comedy in all its forms inspires us a lot, and we like to dig deep to discover new stuff all the time. At the moment, there's a whole wave of American comedy playing on the ambiguity between fiction and documentary, it is both funny and very touching, and it speaks to us a lot, particularly Nathan Fielder, John Wilson, Tim Heidecker and Gregg Turkington. And of course, this leads us into other fields that are no longer necessarily pure comedy, but documentary, such as Agnès Varda's *The Gleaners and I* or Gaspard Hirschi and Emmanuel Lautreamont's *Bienvenue la chance*, and again and again the Belgium TV program *Strip-tease*, in which we find pure comedy! Otherwise, we love YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok, where there's always something crazy going on. We even wrote a scene inspired by a real snap where Kingsley Coman races against a guy in the projects. It's maybe on those media that we discover the craziest stories.

***Heads or Fails* features a female character as the lead. Was that a deliberate choice? How did you do the casting for Armande Pigeon?**

Yes, we had already done a short film about the trajectory of a girl who is alone against the world (*Nathalie F*** You All*), and it's true that it's something that interests us, telling a story that isn't ours, changing perspective to tell another experience, putting ourselves somewhat in danger to create new types of narratives. We are well aware that we are necessarily limited both in our legitimacy and even in our ability to tell a woman's experience, and that's why during the writing process we wanted to include Maria Cavailier Bazan, the actress playing Armande Pigeon, to get her point of view, her feedback, and allow for constant rewriting based on our exchanges throughout the film's conception. We wanted Armande Pigeon to become a mix of what we had written and what Maria brought to the

character. We also like the idea of representing a female character who is both funny, an anti-hero, larger than life, with whom you'd want to be friends. We organized castings where we met several actresses, and when Maria arrived, it was somewhat obvious; she even did things that the character does in the film without knowing it. For us, it was clear: Maria was Armande. And Armande Pigeon wouldn't exist without Maria.

Armande Pigeon always ends up on the wrong side of luck. What does she represent for you and how did you develop her as a character?

Chico Buarque, a Brazilian singer we love, talks about the concept of *malandro*: "The *malandro* dances and walks, simulates and dissimulates, on the border between good and evil, legality and illegality. Bluffer, provocateur, he is a social dribbler." For us, Armande is a *malandra*. We like this idea, that like a soccer player, she dribbles the people she meets, whether friends, enemies, or strangers, to get out of situations. To Armande, every moment in life is a game, whether in business or love. She represents a bit of everything we dare not be in real life. With Armande, we allow ourselves to live the crazy adventures we'd like to live.

Like your previous films, you filmed *Heads or Fails* in Brussels. What does the Belgian capital mean for you, and how has it changed since making *Mother Schmuckers*?

We love Brussels; we've been living there for about ten years now, and our love for this city keeps on growing. We wanted to imagine the city as if it were a large, open-air board game where Armande would live in real size. Each setting, each street, each apartment embodies a new space, a new stage in Armande's adventure, where she tries to win something, or at least not lose too much. We also liked the idea that Armande, as a great resourceful person, knows the city like the back of her hand. She enjoys

navigating all over Brussels, knowing every nook and cranny. We wanted to make a film where you move from one place to another with a lot of fluidity with two or three very sharp, very quick shots. As if Armande shared her knowledge of shortcuts with the viewer, like in the scene where she cheats in the subway or when she charges her phone at an electric terminal. Armande feels comfortable in Brussels, and she enjoys playing the game of life there. Unlike *Mother Schmuckers*, where the heroes keep bumping into other characters as if Brussels were a village, here in *Heads or Fails*, Brussels is a big city where you need to take public transportations, the car, etc. We wanted the viewer to feel that Armande has it tough and needs to move a lot.

Many scenes seem to be filmed with a hidden camera or a phone, especially the scene in the casino. It sometimes has the quality of an early YouTube video. Why did you make this stylistic choice?

Yes, indeed, in the casino scene, we wanted to get that stolen footage effect. When we were scouting locations for the film, we asked ourselves how to best film this setting. Then we thought that to best capture the adrenaline of the game, the sensation of something forbidden, the best thing was to make it look like we were making a pirate film, that we had inserted fiction into reality. So, we mixed form and content. Using a documentary style hopefully serves the narrative and, above all, the emotion of the scene. It's as if we could only shoot the scene once and that Armande and Ronnie were really playing. And we also liked the idea of filming in the most expensive setting of the film with really crappy phones. This general aesthetic is also a way for us to adapt all this culture of YouTube, Snapchat, and TikTok to cinema, how better to translate it to the big screen than by bringing this slightly disgusting image we're particularly fond of.

You manage to bring some big names on

board, like Melvil Poupaud and Catherine Ringer. You even had Mathieu Amalric in *Mother Schmuckers*. How did you come to work with these actors and what did they think of the script when you first presented it to them? How was it working with these actors?

With Catherine, it was a gamble. We sent her the script, and she agreed to meet us right away. We couldn't believe it since she has acted very little in her career, but when we met her, she was already on board. She had seen *Mother Schmuckers*, which she'd liked, and she'd loved the script too. She asked us if she could make funny faces in the film, we were so happy, we love funny faces. It was an incredible and fantastic experience working with this legend. With Melvil, our father Graham Guit had worked with him in the '90s, and then we were lucky that he saw

our first film *Mother Schmuckers* and liked it. We love it when Melvil does comedy, so we offered him this super crazy villain role, and we were thrilled that he accepted. We are very happy to have had the chance to work with Melvil and Catherine, who were so kind, motivated, and generous on the set.

Both games of chance and the search for love play a big part in the film. How do you think these two are connected?

You have to enjoy losing to accept playing the game of love.

What is your favorite game of chance?

None, we're out of luck.





— BIOGRAPHY LENNY AND HARPO GUIT



Like the Lumière brothers, the Dalton brothers and the Grimm brothers, Lenny and Harpo Guit are brothers. Born in Paris in the 90s, they founded Clubb Guitos with their sister Lulma Guit in 2000. In the 2010s, they went to university in Belgium and made a number of self-produced short films, including "Nathalie F*** You All" (2016), "La semaine est encore longue" (2016) and "Radio Kiff" (2018). In the 2020s, Lenny and Harpo made their first feature film, "Mother Schmuckers" produced by Roue Libre Production. The film had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in 2021.

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FILMOGRAPHY

LENNY AND HARPO GUIT

2021 *Mother Schmuckers* — Sundance Midnight

2018 *Radio Kiff* — Short Film

2016 *Nathalie F*** You All* — Short Film



CAST

Armande Pigeon	Maria Cavalier Bazan
Ronnie	Axel Perin
Schlock	Michael Zindel
Giorgio	Maxi Delmelle
Delphine	Catherine Ringer
Lazare	Melvil Poupaud
Béatrice	Claire Bodson
Zoé	Gwladys Lefevre
Yvette	Sophie Senecaut
Frederic	Tom Adjibi
Djibril	Habib Ben Tanfous

CREW

Directors	Lenny and Harpo Guit
Screenplay	Lenny and Harpo Guit
Director of Photography	Kinan Massarani
Production Design	Margot Clavel
1st Assistant Director	Angel Adhera
Production Manager	Alice Leclercq
Costume Design	Justine Struye
Makeup Design	Céline Yetter
Editing	Guillaume Lion
Sound	Armance Durix, Virgile Jans, Sebastien Lheureux
Original Music	Simon Hanes
Color Grading	Lucien Keller
Production	Roue Libre Production, Fair Play Production, Clubb Guitos
Producers	David Borgeaud, Gaétane Rieusset
Countries	Belgium, France
French Distributor	UFO Distribution
Belgium Distributor	Galleries Distribution
International Sales	Best Friend Forever

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