



THE MOST ICONIC INSTRUMENT OF DEATH

GUILLOTINE

DIRECTED BY RAY IZAD-MEHR

DR. JOSEPH-IGNACE GUILLOTIN

“THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER WAY”

SYNOPSIS



THE GUILLOTINE was built on the ideals of The Enlightenment, an attempt to instill grace to an otherwise brutal expression of justice. Told through the lens of 5 true tales, we explore the Guillotine's role in history, from The French Revolution to the Fall of Saddam Hussein. At times humorous and ironic, poignant and thoughtful, these stories also reflect the morality of their times, tracing the philosophical attitudes about capital punishment, and the power structure that allows it to be. From a necessary evil to cold-blooded amusement, the blade falls with no less detachment.

AN ANACHRONISTIC COSTUME DRAMA




BILAL AUSTIN, CIA
“IT SHOULD BE IN A
MUSEUM SOMEWHERE.”

CREATIVE VISION

- RAY IZAD-MEHR: DIRECTOR, PRODUCER & SCREENWRITER



"GUILLOTINE is the culmination of my cinematic influences, an opportunity to showcase my love of history, comedy and yes, fascination with the Guillotine. Told over the course of five vignettes, Guillotine is a chamber piece. Each chapter was designed with a specific, complimentary aesthetic and with a stylistically diverse filmmaking style in mind. We challenged ourselves to never compromise the craft, instead striving to make an engaging, entertaining and thought provoking film that also makes a compelling social commentary."

A low-angle, close-up shot of a woman wearing a headscarf, looking upwards with a somber expression. She is positioned within the wooden frame of a guillotine, which dominates the foreground and background. The sky is overcast and grey.

I witnessed a public execution when I was six years old in Iran. Shortly after, my father took me to see the film *Papillon*, a story of men held in captivity, all professing their innocence. The infamous Guillotine execution scene was forever etched in my mind's eye. What is it in us that forgives unbridled violence on another human, if the killer's arm is veiled in the cloth of a bureaucrat?

-RAY IZAD-MEHR. DIRECTOR/PRODUCER/SCREENWRITER

"The challenge of doing not one, but several period stories all swirling around the central theme is what ultimately drew me to *GUILLOTINE*"

-*URIAH HERR, PRODUCER*



"With *GUILLOTINE* we wanted to create a film about the futility of man's attempts to control life and death in the form of capital punishment."

-*SARA VAHABI, PRODUCER & SCREENWRITER*



WORSHIPFUL MASTER

“LET THE BROTHER RECEIVE THE LIGHT”



"The Guillotine is one of the most recognizable, distinguishable, and menacing tools ever created by mankind and yet it is not represented in the media or film with the respect it perhaps deserves. The Guillotine needed to be the star in each chapter and in terms of approaching the material, Ray already had a really great sense of where he wanted each story to go and did a lot of his research. How we got to those points in the story was more open and he was very receptive to some of the creative choices taken in the script."

-NABOR CABANILLAS, CO-SCREENWRITER CHAPTERS 3&4&5



YASMINE ALHAQIDA
“I KNEW WHAT WOULD
HAPPEN IF I TALKED.”

SCRIPT



16.

DR. ANTOINE LOUIS
How dare you suggest naming such a
deadly machine after our King?!

I quite agree with his Majesty -
Guillotine - so French, so propos!

KING LOUIS XVI
I love it! THE GUILLOTINE!!

Dr. Guillotine, looking pained and defeated.

DR. GUILLOTINE
As you wish your Majesty. Guillotine
it is.

KING LOUIS XVI
Now, as for who gets the Guillotine
first...

Dr. Guillotine winces every time his name is used as the name
of the new invention.

DR. GUILLOTINE
This pile, (placing his hand on the
largest pile) murderers and cut
throats, the lowest rank of humanity.

Chef Jean-Luc bobs his head indifferently.

KING LOUIS XVI (O.S.)
Sounds like poor people, not a good
time for that.

DR. GUILLOTINE
This pile, (his hand hovers over the
middle pile) tax evaders and political
dissidents.

Chef Jean-Luc continues his disapproving look.

KING LOUIS XVI (O.S.)
Ugh...more poor people... We need
someone everyone will love to hate.

Dr. Guillotine moves his hand over to the last pile.

DR. GUILLOTINE
And then we have the case of Nicolas
Jacques Pelletier, a highway man...

"My first approach was to research the historical characters and everything I could find out about them. Then, I began to play with it to see what I could find that wasn't available in history. That's where I took some creative license."

- LISA MOLENDIA, SCREENWRITER CHAPTER 2

FATHER JEAN
Honestly I don't even believe in this shit. Sure life has its great moments, just look at us right now. Driving along this beautiful country, you, me, (takes a swig) booze. But compared to where we were just a few minutes ago? This is the facade. People come up to me, questioning their faith, and I got to sit there with a straight face and tell them "God has a plan." Hitler had a plan, the French had a plan, the fucking National Liberation Front has a plan. God has nothing to do with this. (stares out the window into the countryside)

Fernand looks over. It was perhaps the first honest moment he's had with Father Jean, at least for a while.

FERNAND
There's nothing wrong with wishing for a better life. Isn't that what we all want?

FATHER JEAN
Clearly it's what you want.

FERNAND
I never had a choice. There's me, my father, my father's father and his father. A thankless job, passed down the generations.

FATHER JEAN
I think some people are thankful for men like you. Especially now, you're the last of your kind really.

FERNAND
But it's not what I wanted. It's not what I want for Eric. I never had a choice. I was sixteen, Jean, my first time. Who else is doing that kind of shit at sixteen?

FATHER JEAN
Mosart.

Fernand shoots Father Jean a look.



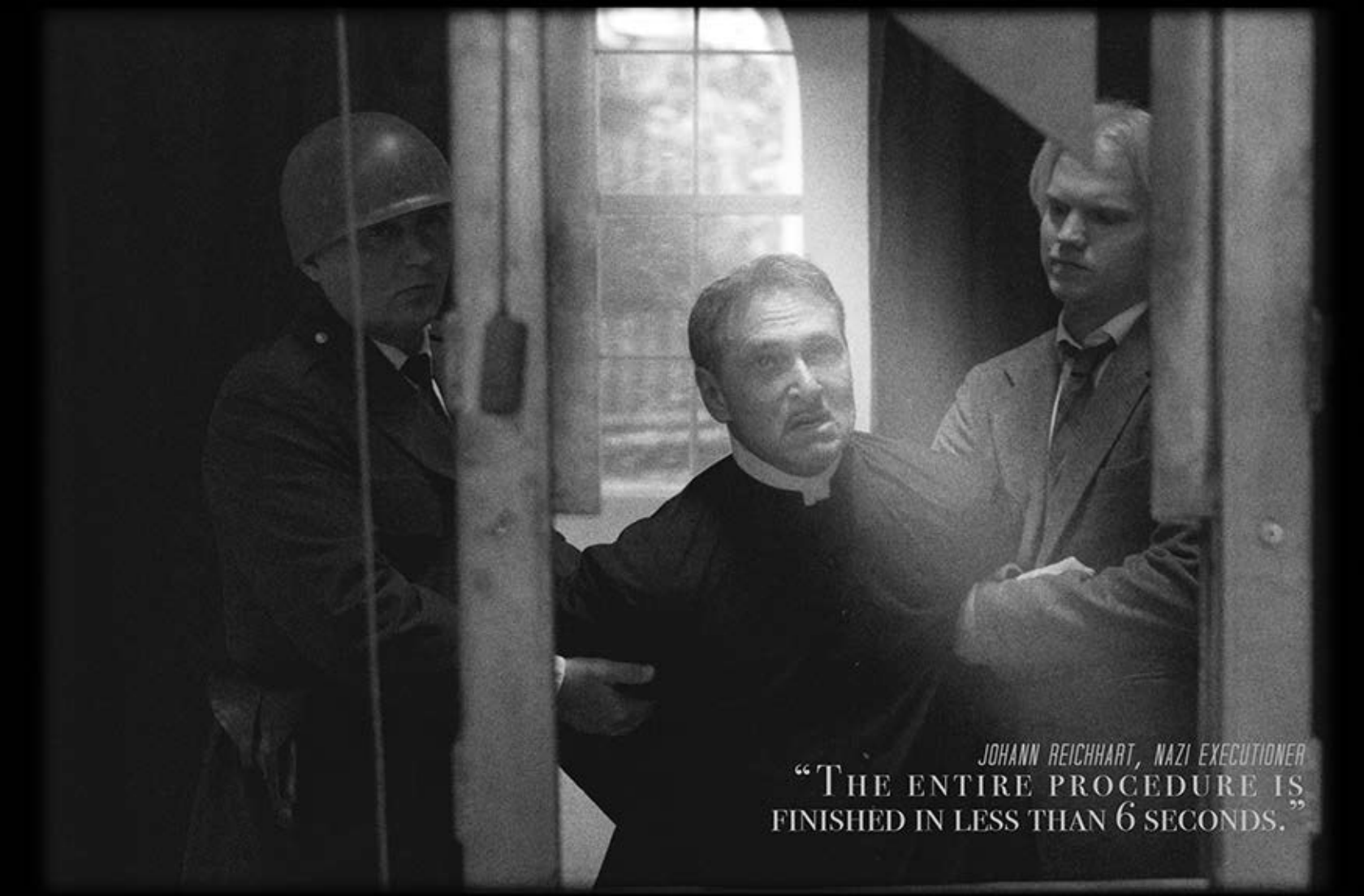
"The challenge for me was ramping up the stories quickly, and yet finding those little details that endeared the characters to the audience. You have to care about their plight, otherwise all is lost."

- MELINDA MOLEND, SCREENWRITER CHAPTER 2



ANTOINE WIERTZ

“DEATH IS NOT THE END.”



JOHANN REICHHART, NAZI EXECUTIONER
"THE ENTIRE PROCEDURE IS
FINISHED IN LESS THAN 6 SECONDS."

CINEMATOGRAPHY



"I love the way we used light to help tell the story and support its themes. We spent a lot of time talking about the lighting process for each chapter because that would affect us in different ways.

It was an extremely conscious choice to make this film look different than the films of today. Everything from the camera and lenses that we chose, to the framing and the way we moved the camera - it was designed so that we would feel more immersed in the time period."

- *MOHVARI REYES-TALEBZADEH, CINEMATOGRAPHER*



MUSIC





"We cross time and space in **GUILLOTINE** and I wanted to match that sonically. This meant taking an anachronistic approach to the music in order to align with the varying themes and timelines.

I found the subject matter and the thought process of the director interesting and was intrigued and inspired to create something that would convey that vision. It was, at times, a history lesson of cultural capital punishment and at times the emotional fallout of the use of the guillotine that inspired the score. Using a string quartet for chapters two and four was one of those moments that felt it captured that emotional tonality."

-MIKAEL SANDGREN, COMPOSER





JEAN PAUL MARAT

“HELP ME, MY DEAR FRIEND.”



JEAN-JACQUES HAUER

“I HAVE MADE MARAT’S LIST.”

PRODUCTION DESIGN



"The film is a period piece and we leaned on existing locations whose décor had been practically preserved in amber for the last half century. Our sets were often very intimate, because of the space in the castles and dungeons. It made the room very authentic, and I think that helped the performances."

-JOHN MARSHALL, PRODUCTION DESIGNER



"The notion that humanity can be so cruel to its own kind throughout the centuries and the hope that we can learn from these lessons inspired me to look at the art direction in a way that felt both realistic yet anchored in the old paintings of the past."


-VIKA TEPLINSKAYA, ART DIRECTOR

SOUND



"We conducted numerous experiments to refine the sound design for Guillotine. Our primary objective was to create a distinctive and fitting sound for every element, particularly the actual guillotine sound which needed to be truly unique."

- *BESO KACHARAVA, SOUND DESIGNER - POSTRED AUDIO*



"I was moved by the humanity and humor of the film. It takes a special vantage point to place these events in such a way so as to ignite the imagination, and entertain without being preachy."

- SEAN YOUNG, NARRATOR



FERNAND MEYSSONNIER, LAST FRENCH EXECUTIONER
“MY FATHER WAS AN EXECUTIONER
AND HIS FATHER, AND HIS FATHER.”



CHARLOTTE CORDAY

“I HAVE KILLED ONE MAN TO SAVE
ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND.”



SPECIAL EFFECTS

"I had to fabricate two guillotines from two different periods. The first time I pulled the blade in position, a curious feeling came over me.

I then released the blade which slid down the guide rails the force was so intimidating.

It was a functional Guillotine and it scared the hell out of me!"

**-NELSON COOPER,
SFX ARTIST**



Creating compelling and realistic creations is always challenging, and to get an opportunity on a film like this, like we did on *The Last Of Mohicans* & *Letters Of Iwo Jima*, where we get to create beautifully visceral moments through our art, is one where I get a special satisfaction from.

-VINCENT GUASTINI, SFX MAKE-UP ARTIST



VISUAL EFFECTS

The script called for scenes that required visual effects both stylized and sophisticated.



Utilizing practical photography, we created this beautiful abstract image of the protagonist floating to the surface of a lake, each shot integrated seamlessly.



This Magic Mushroom sequence involved enhancing the sense of waking hallucinations, bringing the viewer into the mind-set of the characters.



We shot at historical locations that required de-modernizing to match the period.



Much effort was placed on the details of each execution. Face replacements, 3D modeling and digitally altered images were used to deliver big on the promise.



There were a few instances where subtle elements like fire and water had to be fused to dislodge the viewer from reality yet stay believable and natural.



ARTICULATING DECAPITATED HEAD Actress wore a chroma suit, keyed out with matching background plate; neck wound tissue added.

BUILDING ALTERATION Matching one location for another; took out window, added Nazi guards with period accurate attire, insignia; aged with lens aberration.



WINDOW/SET EXTENSION Original window tracked, rotoscoped, background landscape added, framing extended, with light emitting through and matched to camera position.

FACE REPLACEMENT ON DOLLY SHOT Actor's face planted onto dummy head, facial abrasions, bloodied mouth with contortion and eye movement.



COSTUME



There is something incredibly exciting and rewarding diving into different worlds and time periods to establish a look and feel through costumes. With *GUILLOTINE* we had an incredible five time periods ranging from revolutionary France in 1789 through war torn Iraq in 2003.

Costume is most successful when it doesn't look like costume. It should look like something the actor has lived in his whole life.

-MATTHEW ADKINS, COSTUME DESIGNER



MARCHE BUZZ

International buyers return to the Croisette, scouting the market for those prime pick-ups. Screen explores some of the hottest titles at various stages of production, that are available at the Marche.

North American sellers

BY JENNIFER KAY

While Paris has returned to its normalcy, the international buyers are still in the market for those prime pick-ups. Screen explores some of the hottest titles at various stages of production, that are available at the Marche.



North American sellers
The Marche is a key market for international buyers, who are still in the market for those prime pick-ups. Screen explores some of the hottest titles at various stages of production, that are available at the Marche.

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SCREEN

TUESDAY, MAY 16 2023

AT CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

DAY 1

For full market coverage and insights go to [Screendaily.com](https://www.screendaily.com)



North American sellers continued

Peter Warren, Vertical Entertainment holds North American rights. *The Exchange* brings documentary *The White Mountain*, about a member who has written to the Mount Blanc, Lake Wilson (*The Log Of Love*) and Gavin Williams (*News of Egypt*) are co-directors and *Exchange* is a co-finance. The *Blue Fox Entertainment* screens with *Microcosm* (a national 20/24 Productions) about a documentary film crew following political rally as he teams up with fellow operative Simon (Dylan O'Brien) to take down a real congressional candidate. David Simon directs and QC Entertainment. *Enacted* and *Mountain Pictures* holds North American rights with *Pacific Overfire* in which transceivers are stranded on an island and serve directly a cast led by Marisol Sosa and Maria Gabriela de Faria and *Presso Film* crane trailer *The Forgotten Killings* (Olivier) directed by 1997 *Wolonia* film and stars Maria Caballero (Tempe Dapkin) and Morgan Binco (Dobson). In post, a completed coming-of-age fantasy set between life and an imaginary way exists, as a 12-year-old girl on a late Carrie Fisher, Rita Ora, Kane Kuhlman and Niki Tere live story. *Vladimir* directed from a screenplay by William Brookfield.

The Crown will start talks on psychological horror film *Not Gone*, set in Los Angeles (Seymour Chwast) and *Shahid* (AghaShahid) (*House of Cards*) and *Fuji*, Nicky Levy, who story about a woman who must but struggle her mother's narrative post and in new herself and two young children. *Viggoe* (Lacoste) and *Threat*

Right Entertainment Secured's *Subplot*

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MARKET BUZZ THE LOWDOWN



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DEADLINE

Barcelona's Love And Hope International Film Festival Opening Film

BY [unreadable]
April 20, 2023

Barcelona's Love And Hope International Film Festival Opening Film

BY [unreadable]
April 20, 2023

EXCLUSIVE: The Love and Hope International Film Festival Opening Film

Trending on Deadline:

- 1/ *Kevin Costner* 18 Screen
- 2/ *Shane Black* 18 Screen
- 3/ *Kevin Costner* 18 Screen
- 4/ *Kevin Costner* 18 Screen

GUILLOTINE

PRODUCED BY TAMAS BIRINYI, URIAH HERR, SARA VAHABI, RAY IZAD-MEHR

RUN TIME: 90 MINUTES

COSTUME DESIGNER
MATTHEW ADKINS

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
JOHN MARSHALL

ART DIRECTOR
VIKA TEPLINSKAYA

SOUND DESIGN
BESO KACHARAVA

MUSIC BY
SHAWN RIVERA

COMPOSER
MIKAEL SANDGREN

SFX MAKE-UP
NELSON COOPER
VINCENT GUASTINI

EDITOR
CHRISTOPHER ADAM HRUBY
CONNOR SHAW

WRITERS
NABOR CABANILLAS
LISA MOLENDI
MELINDA MOLENDI
RAY IZAD-MEHR
SARA VAHABI

ADDITIONAL MUSIC BY
MECCA
GIUSEPPE PATANE
FANNY RISBERG

NARRATOR
SEAN YOUNG

CINEMATOGRAPHER
MORVARID REYES-TALEBZADEH

DIRECTOR
RAY IZAD-MEHR

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“WHAT HAVE I DONE?”
DR. JOSEPH-IGNACE GUILLOTIN