

I Will Wait for you

The history behind...

Arès, a small town in south west France is home to the official “UFO Landing site.” Envisioned 35 years ago by Robert Cotten, an electronics engineer and space enthusiast, its founder claims, “if we haven’t seen very many UFO landings, it’s probably because we haven’t done much to welcome them.” On August 15, 1976 his dream became a reality and the world’s first “UFO landing site”, equipped with landing lights, opened for use. The site’s opening made worldwide news as journalists rushed to cover the story, whose articles brought diverse reactions and strong opinions. Among the 15,000 to 20,000 tourists each year, many of them come just to see the monument which reads,

ARES UFO LANDING SITE: 15 AUGUST 1976
THIS SITE HAS BEEN RESERVED, BY DECISION OF THE MAYOR, CHRISTIAN
RAYMOND, AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL TO WELCOME SPACE
TRAVELERS TO OUR PLANET.

QUE VOS ATENDEM TOTJORN
(WE ARE ALWAYS WAITING FOR YOU)

INTERVIEW WITH CLEMENT RIERE

What were the origins of this project?

Six years ago I learned about the ‘UFO landing site’ in Arès. I found this story fascinating and thought about doing a documentary – The project was never realized, but I kept the idea in my mind, and promised myself to go back to it with a different approach. Then, the region of Aquitaine and TV7 Bordeaux were interested in producing a project named ‘Histoires d’Aquitaine’ (Stories of Aquitaine). The project was a collection of seven films about an astonishing place in Aquitaine. It was the perfect occasion to return to the ‘UFO Landing Site,’ but this time with the idea of shooting a fictional short film. Luckily, my screenplay was among those selected and my film was quickly produced. The film is undoubtedly my most personal, and the work that resembles me the most. As a kid, I dreamed about becoming an astronaut. I grew up with a real fascination for movies such as, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *The Right Stuff*, and *2001: Space Odyssey*.

Can you tell us about your relationship with the story, “inspired by real events”?

I wanted the film to be anchored in the truth, and not simply to propose a story of extraterrestrial abductions. That type of film would have been more difficult to make credible because of our lack of means and film format. Therefore, I ventured into a mixture of genres: a little bit of fiction, a little documentary, a little mystery. Three-fourths of the film is based on facts. The ‘UFO Landing Site’ does exist, the government sponsored website Geipan exists and the life of Jean-Philippe is inspired by details corresponding to my own childhood. Even so, the film is undoubtedly fiction. However, I want to emphasize that this is not a “fake” documentary like many others. I’m not lying to the viewer. The idea is more to confront the doubt, exactly like Carl, the main character. Photos reappear that were taken 15 years earlier which will deeply

disturb and plant doubt inside him. Can we reconsider everything based on a single image, a single document? I hope the film will elicit that feeling in the viewer. Do I really want to believe in it? That's the real theme of the film, doubt and belief.

What were your most important decisions while directing?

In order to make my desire a reality, I immediately wanted to use family archives and home videos. I find it a magical support. An old photo, some Super8 film, or a VHS cassette has a palpable evocative force. And I always liked the plasticity of images, their texture, their defects, and their graininess. We decided to commit to the concept and to use vintage equipment to avoid using any visible special effects. Finally, the film was shot on Super8, Hi8, and also in HD, notably with a camera (a Panasonic GH2) and a RedOne. The objective was to tell a story solely with archived photos and images of Carl. And I really like to have a constant voice-over narration present. I love voice-over. It's a very powerful narrative tool, especially for short films. It was also something obvious; it needed to be Carl who told the story.