

Andrea Occhipinti
Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne
stellen voor

LA PRIMA LINEA

een film van RENATO DE MARIA

RICCARDO SCAMARCIO GIOVANNA MEZZOGIORNO

Italië - 35mm - 1:1;85 - Dolby SRD – 1u40

Venetië, 3 januari 1982. Sergio is opgepakt en wordt vervoerd naar de gevangenis van Rovigo. In gedachten keert hij terug naar de begindagen van zijn clandestiene bestaan. Hij wordt een van de leiders van de links-extremistische groepering La Prima Linea en ontmoet er Susanna, zijn grote liefde, met wie hij dezelfde ideeën deelt. De organisatie schuwt geen enkele vorm van geweld om de staat omver te werpen. Maar na verloop van tijd keert Sergio zich af van het extreme geweld. Susanna wordt gevangen genomen en hij doet nog één keer beroep op de militaire methoden van de groepering en zijn kameraden. Eén van de gewelddadigste en spectaculairste ontsnappingen uit de woelige jaren '80 in Italië.

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“Le Nuove” Prison, Turin, November 1989. In the semidarkness of a cell, a man of 35 is telling his story. It is Sergio Segio, one of the founders of the armed left-wing group Prima Linea (Front Line), who went underground in the mid-1970s, convinced that the use of violence was a necessary choice for the “revolutionary dream”.

After being sentenced to many years in prison, Sergio recalls the time of his arrest and, prior to that, a day in particular: 3 January 1982. We see him in an anonymous apartment in Venice, where he has gathered together a group of militants with whom he is preparing to carry out an “impossible” action: springing four female inmates from Rovigo prison, including Susanna Ronconi, the woman he loves and with whom he hopes to start a new life; the woman with whom he has shared ideas and political choices, and committed tragic mistakes.

As the “day of the escape” proceeds, Sergio “relives” the most significant moments of his life: the first time he met Susanna, their love in “wartime”, their choosing to go underground together, their rejection of a “normal” life in which they were no longer able to believe. And also their difficult relationship with their parents, whom they love but cannot frequent, and Sergio’s painful clash with Piero, the lifelong friend who shared the dreams of his youth but who refused to join the armed struggle. The memories come back one after the other, culminating in the most atrocious one.

Meanwhile, the day of January the third is reaching a climax. The group led by Sergio is approaching Rovigo prison. Inside, Susanna and the others are getting more and more anxious as zero hour approaches.

Finally, the long-awaited moment arrives: an explosion blasts an enormous hole in the prison wall. Tense, frenetic moments, inside and outside. Susanna and Sergio are reunited, the escape has succeeded, the cars are racing away, the young couple experience the emotion of being together again, the hope of a new beginning: a few hours that go by in minutes.

Their destination – Venice – is in sight, when they hear that the explosion has caused the death of a passerby, an old age pensioner. The news hits them hard; they also take it as a sign that Fate is against them.

In a few months, Susanna will be arrested, and Sergio will meet the same fate less than a year later.

CHRONOLOGY

The phenomenon of Italian terrorism, both right-wing and left-wing, spanned about two decades of life in Italy, from the end of the Sixties to the end of the Eighties. Twenty thousand people were investigated for armed struggle incidents, 4,200 were sent to prison, hundreds were given life sentences, and over 50,000 years of imprisonment have been served to date.

From 1969 to 1973, 95% of terrorist attacks and acts of political violence were perpetrated by the fascist right. Between 1976 and 1980, 2,055 attacks were claimed by left-wing groups, compared with 388 claimed by right-wing organizations.

There were 47 left-wing armed groups, which claimed 128 victims, and 68 of their militants died. 923 militants belonging to Prima Linea – the second largest armed organization after the Red Brigades – were sent to trial, 201 of them women. Prima Linea killed 23 people. Five of its militants died in shoot-outs.

1969

12 December. A bomb planted in the Banca dell'Agricoltura in Piazza Fontana, Milan, kills 17 and wounds eighty-eight.

1970

7 December. Junio Valerio Borghese attempts a coup d'état in Italy, backed by the Radical Right.

1971

25 January. Terrorist activities “officially” begin. The RED BRIGADES’ five-point red star makes its first appearance.

1972

3 March. The founder of the right-wing Ordine Nuovo (New Order), Pino Rauti, is arrested with a warrant issued by the Public Prosecutor of Treviso, on a charge of reforming the Fascist Party – implicated in the Piazza Fontana massacre.

1974

28 May. A bomb goes off during a trade union demonstration in Piazza della Loggia, Brescia, claiming 8 victims. The slaughter – attributed to the extreme right – will remain unpunished.

4 August. Another bomb explodes on the Rome-Munich Italicus express train, killing twelve. The people behind the massacre – attributed to fascist plotters – will never be identified.

1976

29 April. A Prima Linea armed group kills Enrico Pedenovi, a city councillor belonging to the MSI (Italian Social Movement).

10 October. Prima Linea launches an attack on the Christian Democrat headquarters in Turin.

30 November. Leading exponents of Prima Linea burst into the offices of the Fiat management in Turin, seize what money there is, and spraypaint the words “Prima Linea” on the wall. This is the first time the group leaves its “trademark”.

1977

12 March. Prima Linea murders Giuseppe Ciotta, a Turin police officer with the DIGOS (Division of Special Investigations and Organized Crime). The action was a reprisal against the police, whom the group held responsible for the death of the student Francesco Lorusso.

April. Prima Linea Founding Congress is held.

2 December. A Prima Linea commando wounds in the legs Giorgio Coda, accusing him of torturing patients in the Collegno mental hospital.

1978

16 March. The Red Brigades kidnap Christian Democrat president Aldo Moro in Via Mario Fani. Two *carabinieri*, Domenico Ricci and Oreste Leonardi, and three police officers in the escort car, Raffaele Jozzino, Giulio Rivera and Francesco Zizzi, are killed in the ambush.

9 May. At 1.30 pm, Aldo Moro's dead body is found in a red Renault 4 parked in Via Caetani in Rome, halfway between the national headquarters of the Italian Communist Party and that of the Christian Democrats.

11 October. Alfredo Paoella, consultant to the Ministry of Justice, is murdered in Naples. It is the first killing for which Prima Linea officially claims responsibility.

1979

19 January. A Prima Linea commando kills prison guard Giuseppe Lorusso in Turin.

29 January. Deputy Public Prosecutor Emilio Alessandrini is shot dead by Prima Linea in Milan. In the past, he had steered the investigation of the Piazza Fontana massacre towards the fascists who, covered by the intelligence services, were considered responsible. Then he went on to deal with financial crimes and to investigate armed left-wing organizations.

28 February. Two Prima Linea militants, Barbara Azzaroni and Matteo Caggegi, are killed by the police in a shoot-out.

6 March. Two thousand people attend Barbara Azzaroni's funeral in Bologna.

11 December. Two Prima Linea squads burst into the Turin Business School and wound 5 professors and 5 students in the legs.

1980

5 February. In Monza, a Prima Linea commando murders the engineer Paolo Paletti, considering him among those responsible for the environmental disaster that struck Seveso, in northern Italy, on 10 July 1976.

7 February. A Prima Linea commando kills one of their own militants, William Vaccher, accusing him of having collaborated with the investigating magistrates.

In 1980, many militants from Prima Linea and other armed organizations are arrested.

August: Sergio Segio and various other activists leave the organization, in the belief that the armed struggle has outlived its use. Susanna Ronconi stays with Prima Linea.

3 December. Susanna Ronconi is arrested.

1981

17 December. The American general Lee Dozier is kidnapped by the Red Brigades in Verona.

1982

3 January. An armed group led by Sergio Segio attacks Rovigo prison and frees four female detainees, including Susanna Ronconi.

28 October. Susanna Ronconi is arrested again.

1983

15 January. Sergio Segio is also arrested.

June. Prima Linea is officially disbanded.

2004

Release of Sergio Segio.



CAST

Riccardo Scamarcio Sergio Segio
Giovanna Mezzogiorno Susanna Ronconi

with:

Fabrizio Rongione, Dario Aita, Michele Alhaique, Jacopo Maria Bicocchi, Angelo Campolo, Piero Cardano, Claudia Coli, Francesca Cuttica, Franco Demaestri, Marco Iermanò, Anita Kravos, Lucia Mascino, Cristina Pasino, Umberto Petranga, Ugo Piva, Maurizio Pompella, Gilda Postiglione Turco, Giorgio Sangati

Special appearance by Duccio Camerini

With Lino Guanciale as Piero

SERGIO SEGIO

Born into a working-class family in Sesto San Giovanni, a factory town in northern Italy, where he grew up, Sergio Segio joined the far-left organization Lotta Continua when he was in his late teens. In 1981, when many Prima Linea militants were arrested – thanks also to information revealed by turncoats – Segio managed to evade capture. In actual fact, he had already left the organization by then, after going through a lengthy crisis over core issues.

On 3 January 1982, he launched an attack on Rovigo prison with the help of a group of ex-militants, freeing his partner Susanna Ronconi – also one of the leaders of Prima Linea – and three other female militants of the armed struggle.

Sergio Segio was arrested on 15 January 1983, in Milan. He was the last of the former Prima Linea militants to be released from jail, and finished serving his sentence in 2004.

For many years now he has been engaged in voluntary work and involved with associations, occupying himself mainly with problems related to prison, drug addiction, poverty and social exclusion.

From the time he was first granted semi-custody, Segio has worked with Don Luigi Ciotti's Gruppo Abele, concerned with assisting the socially disadvantaged, where he has been in charge of communication and prison projects.

From 1997 to 2001, he edited the various editions of the *Annuario Sociale* (Social Yearbook) published by Feltrinelli. As head of the *Associazione Società INformazione*, in 2003 he devised the *Rapporto sui diritti globali* (Report on Global Rights) published by Ediesse, which he has compiled and edited from the very beginning. The report is a yearly study on globalization, promoted by the CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Labour) and supported by various socially-orientated groups like ActionAid, Antigone, Arci, Coordinamento Nazionale delle Comunità di Accoglienza, Forum Ambientalista, Gruppo Abele and Legambiente.

He has promoted and edited the magazines *Narcomafie* and *Fuoriluogo*.

In 2005, his book *Miccia corta* was published (*DeriveApprodi*), followed by *Una vita in Prima Linea* (Rizzoli) in 2006. He contributes to various dailies and manages the two websites www.micciacorta.it and www.dirittiglobali.it

SUSANNA RONCONI

She was raised in a middle-class family in Padua. After various experiences in the student protest movement of the late 1960s, she joined the newly formed Red Brigades when she was in her early twenties, which she left for Prima Linea. While participating in the activities of this new militant

group she fell in love with Sergio, managing to live this relationship despite the tremendous pressure of their underground existence. When Sergio went through a profound crisis and decided to leave Prima Linea, convinced that the armed struggle's days were numbered and it no longer had a meaning, Susanna chose to stay with the organization. She was arrested for the first time, along with 300 other militants, and sent to Rovigo prison. After escaping from Rovigo, she was arrested again on 28 October 1982, in Milan. She finished serving her sentence in 1998. Ronconi has also been granted semi-custody, and has worked with the Gruppo Abele for a long time, together with Sergio, where she has been head of the Study Centre. She is presently engaged in research and concerned with training, supervision and evaluation in the fields of social policies, personal services and cooperation with local communities.

She also conducts social research using the autobiographical method, and is an expert member of the Free University of Autobiography in Anghiari.

She collaborates with Sergio on compiling and editing the yearly *Rapporto sui diritti globali*. Extremely active in the social field, she has been on the editorial committee of the monthly *Fuoriluogo* since 1996, and is also president of the association Forum Droghe.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Exactly 30 years ago, in 1978, the phenomenon of Italian terrorism culminated in the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro, only to die out a few years later but not without leaving more dead, more innocent blood spilled in its wake. A collective trauma experienced by the whole nation.

Understandably, Italian cinema has focused on recounting that incident, and on the Red Brigades, the organization responsible for it. Nearly all the Italian films about home-grown terrorism centre on those dramatic days. Enough to mention *Good Morning, Night* by Marco Bellocchio.

However, Italian terrorism was a vast phenomenon, unique in Europe. It involved the majority of an entire generation of young people who grew up in the 1970s.

It is worth quoting a few significant figures:

After creeping in at the beginning of the 1970s, terrorism in Italy exploded in the second half of the "long decade of the short century". In 1976 there were around 1,000 terrorists and 10,000 sympathizers. Later, there would be many more.

From 1976 to 1980, 9,673 episodes of political violence and attacks were carried out, at a daunting average of five per day. A total of 14,591 acts of political violence caused 419 deaths and injured 1,181, including massacres for which the culprits have still not been identified. 128 people were killed by left-leaning organizations, 74 by the Red Brigades, 20 by Prima Linea, 34 by 19 other groups. 20,000 people in all were investigated for armed struggle incidents. 4,200 were imprisoned for armed conspiracy.

There were thousands of terrorists and tens of thousands of supporters. The majority, over 65% in fact, were well under thirty, many were not even twenty. An enormous number of young men and women opted for armed struggle in the name of a revolution they thought was imminent – which seems even more incredible today. They chose to shoot, to wound and then to kill, swept away by a never-ending wave of violence. Francesco Cossiga, then Minister for the Interior, said in an interview by Italian journalist Gian Antonio Stella in the daily *Corriere della Sera*: "I think the phenomenon as a whole, I am obviously not talking only about the armed movements, must have involved a million people."

How was all that tragedy, all that suffering possible?

And how is it possible that no one has yet given us the complete picture?

Renato De Maria

FILMOGRAPHY

RENATO DE MARIA Director

CINEMA

2009 *La Prima Linea*
2005 *Amatemi*
2002 *Paz!*
1996 *Hotel Paura*

TELEVISION

2008 *Medicina Generale* (9 episodes)
2004 *Maigret: L'ombra cinese*
Maigret: La trappola
2003 *Doppio Agguato*
2000 *Distretto di polizia* (25 episodes)

RICCARDO SCAMARCIO

CINEMA

2009 *L'uomo nero* by Sergio Rubini
La prima linea by Renato De Maria
2008 *Verso l'Eden* by Constantin Costa-Gavras
Il grande sogno by Michele Placido
Italians by Giovanni Veronesi
2007 *Colpo d'occhio* by Sergio Rubini
Mio fratello è figlio unico by Daniele Luchetti
2006 *Ho voglia di te* by Luis Prieto
Manuale d'amore 2 by Giovanni Veronesi
2005 *Texas* by Fausto Paravidino
Romanzo criminale by Michele Placido
L'uomo perfetto by Luca Lucini
2003 *Tre metri sopra il cielo* by Luca Lucini
Globo d'Oro Award 2004 – Best Acting Debut
2002 *La meglio gioventù* by Marco Tullio Giordana
Un Certain Regard Award – Cannes Film Festival 2003
2002 *Non è vero – padri* by Daniele Basilio

THEATRE

2004 *I tre moschettieri* by Attilio Corsini
2003 *Non essere* – mise en espace by Leonardo Petrillo
starring Gianni Musy and Samia Kassir
Miseria e nobiltà by Edoardo Scarpetta
Comedy in vernacular at the Teatro Comunale, Andria

TELEVISION

2006 *La freccia nera* by Fabrizio Costa
2001 *Io ti salverò* by Mario Caiano
Compagni di scuola by T. Aristarco and C. Norza
2000 *Ama il tuo nemico 2* by Damiano Damiani

AWARDS

- 2008- Flaiano Award – Actor of the Year
2005 - Biraghi Award – Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists
2005 - Giffoni Film Festival Award
2005 - ANEC Award - Giornate Professionali del Cinema
2004 - Globo d'Oro – Best Acting Debut for *Tre metri sopra il cielo*

GIOVANNA MEZZOGIORNO

CINEMA

- 2009 ***La prima linea*** by Renato De Maria
2008 ***Negli occhi*** by Daniele Anzellotti and Francesco Del Grosso
(documentary on her father Vittorio, which she co-produced and narrated)
Vincere by Marco Bellocchio
Nastro d'Argento and Globo d'Oro for Best Actress
2007 ***Lezioni di volo*** by Francesca Archibugi
Nocturno bus by Davide Marengo
Love in the Time of Cholera by Mike Newell
L'amore non basta by Stefano Chiantini
Palermo Shooting by Wim Wenders
2005 ***La bestia nel cuore*** by Cristina Comencini
Venice Film Festival: Coppa Volpi for Best Actress
Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film
2003 ***L'amore ritorna*** by Sergio Rubini
Nastro d'Argento for Best Actress
2002 ***Ilaria Alpi – Il più crudele dei giorni*** by Ferdinando Vicentini Orgnani
Nastro d'Argento for Best Actress
La finestra di fronte by Ferzan Ozpetek
Her many awards include a David di Donatello, Nastro d'Argento, Globo d'Oro,
Karlov Vary Award for Best Actress
2000 ***Tutta la conoscenza del mondo*** by Eros Puglielli
L'ultimo bacio by Gabriele Muccino
Flaiano International Award for Best Actress
1999 ***Asini*** by Antonello Grimaldi
Un uomo per bene by Maurizio Zaccaro
1998 ***Del perduto amore*** by Michele Placido
Nastro d'Argento, Ciak d'Oro and Pasinetti Award for Best Actress
1997 ***Il viaggio della sposa*** by Sergio Rubini
Grolle d'Oro: Silver Plaque "Nuovi talenti del cinema italiano"
Globo d'Oro awarded by Foreign Press Association for Best Actress
Flaiano International Award for Best Actress 1997-1998

THEATRE

- 2004 ***4.48 Psicosi*** by Piero Maccarinelli
1995 ***Qui est là*** (based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*) by Peter Brook
Coppola-Prati Award 1996 (Jury president, Franco Quadri)

TELEVISION

- 2004 ***Virginia*** by Alberto Sironi
2002 ***Il mistero di Thomas*** by Giacomo Battiato
2000 ***I Miserabili*** by Josée Dayan
1998 ***Più leggero non basta*** by Elisabetta Lodoli

FABRIZIO RONGIONE

CINEMA

- 2008 *Le Silence de Lorna* by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne
2007 *La légende de Jean l'inversé* by Philippe Lamensch
Passe-Passe by Tonie Marshall
2006 *Le dernier gang* by Ariel Zeitoun
Voix de garage by Samuel Tilman
2005 *Ca rend heureux* by Joachim Lafosse
2004 *L'enfant* by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne
T'es le fils de qui toi? by Fabrizio Rongione
Tartarughe sul dorso by Stefano Pasetto
2003 *Una domenica* (short) by Stefano Toni
La radio by Davide Sordella
Bye Bye Blackbird by Robinson Savary
Ne fais pas ça by Luc Bondy
La roue tourne (short) by Joanna Grundzinska
2002 *Inviati speciali* by Giancarlo Bocchi
2001 *La storia chiusa* (short) by Emiliano Corapi
Dans l'ordre (short) by Thomas Keukens
2000 *Le 3ème œil* by Christophe Fraipont
Le parole di mio padre by Francesca Comencini
Tenir ma route (short) by Olivier Meys
Rosetta by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne
Foudres (short) by Véronique Van Meerbeeck
1997 *Vous permettez, Hugo?* (short) by Olivier Musenfarth

THEATRE

- 2008 *L'assassin habite au 21* by Claude Enuset
2007 *Une Rencontre* by Claude Enuset
Un pour la route by Marcel Gonzales
2005/07 *Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard* (Marivaux) by Dominique Serron
Papiers d'Arménie by Caroline Safarian
La Princesse de Babylone by José Besprosvany
2002/03 *C'était Bonaparte* by Robert Hossein
2002 *A Genoux* (one-man show) by Samuel Tilman and Marcel Gonzalez
2001 *Couple ouvert à deux battants* (Dario Fo) by Daniela Bisconti
2000 *John and the Wonderful's* by Samuel Tilman and Fabrizio Rongione
1999 *Ferdynurke* (Witold Gombrovich) by Elvire Brison
Egmont (Goethe) by Jean-Claude Idée
Le Rouge et le Noir (Stendhal, adaptation by Jacques De Decker) by Michel Wright
Bent (Martin Sherman) by Derek Goldby
1998 *Les Fléaux* by Samuel Tilman and Fabrizio Rongione
1997 *Le piège* by Serenella Morelli

TELEVISION

- 2008 *Un Village Français* by Philippe Triboit
2007 *Mafiosa 2* by Eric Rochant
2006 *Mafiosa* by Louis Choquette

CREW

Directed by Renato De Maria
Story by Sandro Petraglia, Ivan Cotroneo, Fidel Signorile, Renato De Maria
Screenplay by Sandro Petraglia, Ivan Cotroneo, Fidel Signorile
Freely adapted from *Miccia Corta* by Sergio Segio (Edizioni DeriveApprodi)

Production Manager Michela Rossi
Original music Max Richter (Edizioni Musicali CAM)
Film Editor Marco Spoletini (A.M.C.)
Director of Photography Gian Filippo Corticelli
Production Designers Alessandra Mura, Igor Gabriel
Costume Designer Nicoletta Taranta
Sound Mario Iaquone
Sound Editors Marta Billingsley, Marc Bastien
Assistant Director Gianluca Mazzella
Casting Francesco Vedovati

Producers Andrea Occhipinti, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne
Executive Producers Gianluca Arcopinto, Delphine Tomson
Coproducer Arlette Zylberberg
Associate Producers Stefano Massenzi, Carl Clifton, The Works 2

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