

THE VENERABLE W.



OFFICIAL SELECTION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES
séance spéciale



A FILM BY
BARBET SCHROEDER

LES FILMS DU LOSANGE and BANDE À PART FILMS present



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A FILM BY
BARBET SCHROEDER

France, Switzerland • 1h40 • Color • 1.85 • Sound 5.1

*Photos and press pack can be downloaded at
www.filmsdulosange.fr*

CREDITS

Director of photography **VICTORIA CLAY MENDOZA**

Editing **NELLY QUETTIER**

Music **JORGE ARRIAGADA**

Small Buddhist voice **BULLE OGIER**

Mix **FLORIAN EIDENBENZ**

Produced by **MARGARET MENEGOZ (Paris)**

and **LIONEL BAIER (Lausanne)**

A Swiss-French coproduction **LES FILMS DU LOSANGE ET BANDE À PART FILMS**

In coproduction with **ARTE FRANCE CINEMA, RTS – RADIO TÉLÉVISION
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A Buddhist monk in orange robes is walking through a classroom. He is barefoot and has his hands clasped in front of him. The classroom is filled with other monks sitting at desks, some of whom are writing. The room has green walls and fluorescent lighting.

SYNOPSIS

In Burma, the “Venerable Wirathu” is a highly respected and influential Buddhist monk. Meeting him amounts to traveling to the heart of everyday racism and observing how Islamophobia and hate speech lead to violence and destruction. Yet this is a country in which 90% of the population has adopted Buddhism as a faith: a religion based on a peaceful, tolerant and non-violent way of life.



BARBET SCHROEDER

(In conversation with Emilie Bickerton)



THE ORIGIN OF THE FILM.

For me, Buddhism is an atheist religion, without a God, and which allows for pessimism. This idea has always fascinated me, so much so that in 1961 when I was 21, I went on a long trip to the historic locations of the Buddha, all the way to Sri Lanka. Everything changes constantly: this is one of the founding ideas of the Buddhist vision of the world. The Buddha himself during his lifetime declared the end of his own doctrine—he estimated that in 5,000 years there would be nothing of it left. No religious leader has had the courage to say such a thing, and perhaps this is why I have always thought of Buddhism as one of the most precious treasures of humanity.

The idea for the film came out of my rereading, about two years ago, of the extraordinary and indispensable *The Historical Buddha* by Hans Wolfgang Schumann, and then by chance the Yale University Law School's report that very publicly called on the United Nations to intervene in Myanmar. The paper listed all the signs that indicated there was the beginnings of a genocide in the country against the Rohingyas, a Muslim minority, and it specifically highlighted the role played by an extremist Buddhist movement. I wanted to find out more.

And so, I went to see for myself, to Mandalay: the most Buddhist city in the world where there are more than 300,000 monks in a population of one million. These monks are spread out in hundreds of monasteries across the city and all follow the Theravada tradition, the school that comes the closest to the origins of Buddhism. I am not the only one who thinks Buddhism is one of the last bastions of the West, and for me probably the last of its illusions. It is the only religion that has, so far, avoided

lurches into fanaticism and extremism. In fact, Buddhist beliefs and ideas have touched Western minds since a few philosophers in the middle of the nineteenth century read its key texts, such as Schopenhauer, who was one of the first to discover them, in 1814, during his time staying with Goethe and his friends in Weimar. The reputation of Buddhism grew across Europe, rising to the point of delirium in the twentieth century, in North America and the Western world.

THE «TRILOGY OF EVIL».

I see *The Venerable W.* as the last instalment of a "Trilogy of Evil", which began in 1974 with *General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait*, on the Ugandan dictator, and followed by *Terror's Advocate* on Jacques Vergès in 2007.

Both of these projects has the same point of departure: to meet the characters and let them speak without judging them, and in this process evil can emerge under many different forms, and the horror or the truth comes out progressively, all by itself.

During a conversation one day with the playwright Patrick Marber, he asked me out of the blue: "We're in the twenty-first century now. What do you think is the most important theme for a playwright to explore?". I remember I answered him without hesitation: Evil. He was slightly disappointed by my answer. He wondered if Shakespeare hadn't already covered this ground extensively. But for me every epoch generates its own demons and that is why the theme remains inexhaustible and inseparable from humanity—in particular for the twentieth century and even more so now, where hatred and lying seem to be everywhere.



I had long been obsessed with the idea of providing a third part to this Trilogy of Evil. As soon as I finished shooting *Idi Amin Dada*, two new projects got off the ground and were so advanced they were nearly made. The first was on the Khmer Rouge and the dictatorship of utopia there, which contrasted with the more traditional form of dictatorship I had just seen in Uganda. Those who remained loyal to the Khmer Rouge were besieged by the Vietnamese, close to being killed and very often bombed. My idea was to go and meet all the Khmer Rouge leaders still around Pol Pot and ask them for interviews. Through middlemen I was assured they had all agreed to speak to me because I had promised to never talk to them about their years in power and only discuss their time at university in Paris, their influences, their anti-colonial dreams, their coffees in the Latin Quarter, and so on. The film was even going to be shot and spoken completely in French.

It was never made, even though I had found a rich Englishman to finance half the film. I never managed to convince French television and it was only when the Vietnamese won that I finally abandoned a project that

meant so much to me.

The other project was on Lopez Rega, the wizard, magician and head of the death squads in Argentina. He was Isabel Peron's accomplice and both had given me the green light. What I had in mind was actually a documentary with four characters and in which the two living ones projected a caricatured echo of the two others: Juan and Evita Peron, who were evoked through the incredible images from the news and their time in power that had filled my own childhood in Colombia. The film would have looked at how evil used the myths of Evita and witchcraft to inspire the death squads.

Of course, *The Venerable W.* was a different proposition. At issue here was potentially the first genocide of the twenty-first century so I could not follow my usual tendency to leave it to the spectator to discover Wirathu's hidden excesses and calculations. It was also impossible not to show the point of view of the Rohingyas, which the incredible modern archives gave me access to. I also needed to include another Buddhist voice, through two monks from Wirathu's generation, but who were ideologically opposed to him.



HOW THE FILM WAS MADE.

After more than six months of intense research in absolute secrecy we got tourist visas, bought budget air tickets and boarded a flight to Mandalay. Once we were there, with our base in a cheap hotel, I managed to meet with Wirathu and propose making the film with him. He wanted to know why I was doing it and I told him that Marine Le Pen shared many of his ideas and if she was elected in France she would probably push through laws that were a lot like those he had just managed to get passed in his own country. In fact, what I told Wirathu was not far from the truth because I did indeed want to look at the major problems the West was suffering through the prism of this Buddhist character who was actually, above all, a nationalist and populist.

Once on the ground I quickly understood we had much to learn from these Buddhist extremists. The different "Axes of Evil" and populisms have no borders. I wanted to understand how this kind of speech could move people to action, while those who gave the such sermons often also spoke of peace and harmony. All religions have a virtuous side,

preaching peace and goodwill, but Buddhist wisdom is unparalleled in this regard, which only confounds our puzzlement when faced with the extremist monks.

This image of the reddening embers in a fire would become one of the key images in the film and shows how, after hate speech has an incubation period, it takes



just a single spark to provoke riots where entire Muslim neighbourhoods and their mosques are reduced to ash.

This part of the film was made thanks to the footage captured during riots and where we could often make out a military or police presence, but officers did not



intervene. It is hard not to draw analogies here with the “pogroms” in Russia, Poland, Germany and elsewhere. This non-intervention is one of the recurring features in all these pogroms and one has to conclude that those in power, despite their denials, must eventually find an advantage in them.

The further I went in this project the more I began to feel like a hare caught in the crossed fire of multiple hunting parties, simultaneous and antagonistic one another. Each one had very good reason to want to prevent the film from being made:

- Firstly, there were those in power, shared between two groups: the military, who Wirathu had campaigned on behalf of, and his mortal enemy Aung San Suu Kyi, who was quickly overtaken by events and finally, after 9 October 2016, openly defended the excesses by the military and going so far as to make “Fake Rape” claims to describe their systematic use of rape as a weapon, which nevertheless had been analysed in very detailed reports back in 2002 by the Shan Women Action Networks and in 2017 by very serious journalists.

- There were also the Buddhist extremists themselves who continued to mobilize their Ma Ba Tha movement for

them and Wirathu to try, perhaps with help from the military, to become the referee in the country's political chessboard.

The situation eventually became impossible when we realized Aung San Suu Kyi's calming influence had disappeared and once again all the decisions were being made by the military, and they intended to take a serious interest in our own movements, as we found out about a file containing photos of our secret shoots in all the Muslim areas we'd visited. The military were also aware of our frequent meetings with Wirathu.

We left the country in extremis. But we had not really gauged the full gravity of the situation. We were convinced we would be able to return in a few months' time, after acquiring journalist visas. We were so sure of ourselves we left behind two metal chests full of items we would need for the second shoot. But we had to stop dreaming: an order from the very top, Aung San Suu Kyi's spokesperson, banned us from entering the country until further notice. To finish the film, which was already well advanced, we had to arrange a second shoot in neighbouring Thailand instead. We still needed to interview a dozen or so people, so we brought them to Bangkok, or we met them in barren border regions.

The editing was just as exciting because every day

we were confronted with an extreme, ever-changing situation. Every day we had to repeat to ourselves the mantra of staying focused so as to not lose our way and our concentration in the maelstrom of current news coming out of Myanmar. One line we were pursuing was the convincing and irrefutable evidence of collusion between the military and Wirathu. Andrew Marshall for Reuters had been the only person who'd managed to find evidence of this, following his discovery of Kyaw Lwin, the inventor of the 969 concept. But unfortunately, Kyaw Lwin had rarely met with Wirathu, perhaps just once in 1992 before Lwin left his position as head of religious affairs barely a year after he was appointed by the military. We had to abandon this line of inquiry, as with many others, after months of work.

One of the potential pitfalls of this film was to turn it into one about the Rohingyas. Given the gravity of the situation it was more or less impossible to avoid this but I always wanted to reframe the problem as within a more generalized hatred of the Muslim world and the dangers that this could represent in any country, not just Myanmar. I also had to find an end to the story, which advanced so quickly. The end of Aung San Suu Kyi and

the intervention by the Muslim world into the Rohingya crisis seemed to me an interesting way to conclude.

THE FORM.

I had incredible help from my collaborator and editor Nelly Quettier. We had already had a great adventure together, with *Terror's Advocate*. Fifteen years later, *The Venerable W.* benefited from innumerable and extraordinary technological progress, starting with the small Sony AS7 4k camera, which can shoot with a resolution two times higher than the quality of a film made for cinema. For me, this camera produces beautiful images by allowing one to shoot everything in natural light, even if it is the moonlight!

The majority of the action of the film takes place from 2012 onwards, which is also the time when iPhones became sophisticated enough to shoot footage that could be compatible with a projection on big screens. So, we were able to include material shot on mobile phones by amateurs during the riots of that period. In 2003 by contrast there were next to zero images for the first major riot in which Wirathu played an important part, occurring in his birth town Kyaukse and





for which he was jailed until 2012. We decided early to integrate many different types of material in the film, even if the quality was bad, including clips available on YouTube and Facebook. The real challenge came with our not knowing the written or spoken language that all of this material was in, and I had to depend on a network of interpreters in many countries to make sense of what was being said in hundreds of hours of material that we had access to via multiple sources. We also had to understand the complexities of a country that we had only just discovered. It was all completely fascinating but after nine months of editing it barely felt like we had had enough time.

THE DOCUMENTARY.

For me, documentary has always been intimately linked to cinema. All my fiction films are “documented” and I always explore the dramatic resources in the narrative and characters in my documentaries. I cannot conceive of a fiction film without having an initial documentary impression of it, to sustain me. As a result, I’m incapable of imaging myself directing a costume drama.

Nor can I prevent myself from seeing all the elements of a documentary under the aegis of drama and

narrative, as with a succession of shots that also offer elements of surprise or suspense. Cinema remains for me a dramatic art, be it documentary or otherwise.

THE MUSIC .

I worked with my friend Jorge Arriagada, who composed the original score for *Terror’s Advocate*, *Our Lady of the Assassins* and *Inju*. We took a similar approach here to the one we employed with fiction films, by trying to bring to the surface associations and ideas that are not directly expressed. For example, the music underscores the link there could be between a child looking at the terrifying posters Wirathu puts up at the entry to his offices, and the lessons he gives to groups of children. Or how the memory of a rape Wirathu witnessed when he was 11 could subsequently become, through the music, one of the possible explanations for his later obsessions. On several occasions, we also used two upbeat songs that are propaganda theme tunes for the extremist movements. It is only at the very end of the film that we reveal the shocking meaning of their lyrics, in complete contrast with the Metta Sutta, Theravada Buddhism’s essential chant and its lyrics in Pali that recur throughout the film:

**« Ye keci pâna-bhûtatthi, tasâ vâ thâvarâ vanavasesâ;
dîghâ vâ ye va mahantâ,majjhimâ rassakâ anuka thûlâ.**

*Whatever beings may exist,
weak or strong, tall or stout, medium or short, small or fat*

**Ditthâ vâ ye va aditthâ, ye va dûre vasanti avidûre;
bhûtâ va sambhavesi va, sabba-satta bhavantu sukhitattâ.**

*Visible or invisible, near or far, born or unborn;
may they all be, without exception, happy in heart.*

**Na paro param nikubbetha, nâtimaññetha kатthaci na kiñci;
byârosanâ patighasaññânâ ññama-ññassa dukkhamiccheyya.**

*Let no one deceive or despise anyone anywhere.
Let no one wish harm to another in anger or ill will.*

**Mâtâ yathâ niyam puttam, âyusâ ekaputta-manurakkhe;
evampi sabbabhûtesu; mânasam bhâvaye aparimânam.**

*Like a mother protects her only child with her own life,
let us cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.*

**Mettañca sabbalokasmi, mânasam bhâvaye aparimânam;
uddham adho ca tiriyañca, asambâdham averamasapattam.**

*May these thoughts of boundless love radiate on the entire world,
above, below and across, unhindered, without hate nor enmity.*

**Tittham caram nisinno va, sayâno yâvatâssa vitamiddho;
etam satim adhittheyya, brahmametam vihâra-midhamâhu.**

*Whether one is standing, walking, sitting or lying, as long as he is awake,
one should develop a mind full of benevolent love. This is the most noble state*

**Ditthiñca anupaggamma, sîlavâ dassanena sampanno;
kâmesu vineyya gedham, na hi jâtuggabbhaseyya puna-reti ti.**

*Having no false beliefs, being virtuous, endowed with penetrating vision,
and having abandoned the attachment to the pleasures of the senses,
one will never again be reborn in this world*

Mettâ-suttam nitthitam. »

Here ends the Metta Sutta



CHRONOLOGY



❖ **JANUARY 1948** : Myanmar becomes an independent nation after more than sixty years of British colonial rule. A parliamentary democracy is created.

❖ **2 MARCH 1962** : Military coup d'état. General Ne Win becomes the country's leader and a military junta is established.

❖ **10 JULY 1968** : Wiseitta Biwuntha (Ashin Wirathu) is born in Kyaukse, in the region of Mandalay.

❖ **6 FEBRUARY 1978** : Beginning of Operation Dragon in the village of Sakkipara in Rakhine state. Muslims arrests on a massive scale, followed by tortures, rapes and executions.

In the space of three months more than 200,000 Rohingyas have fled the country for neighbouring Bangladesh.

❖ **1979** : Following a complaint made by Muslim countries to the United Nations, and in particular Bangladesh, the High Commission for Refugees launches Operation "Golden Bird" that forces the Burmese government to accept the repatriation of refugees.

❖ **1982** : Rohingyas are stripped of their Burmese citizenship and of their rights.

❖ **1982** : Aged 14, Ashin Wirathu enters the monastery in Kyaukse.

❖ **1988** : Peaceful popular protest movements call for democracy.

❖ **23 JULY 1988** : General Ne Win resigns.

❖ **18 SEPTEMBER 1988** : Military coup d'état installs a new junta, known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In the repression that follows, thousands are killed.

❖ **1989** : Aung San Suu Kyi is put under house arrest.

❖ **27 MAY 1990** : Aung San Suu Kyi's party the National League for Democracy (NLD) wins a landslide victory in legislative elections. The junta cancel the results.

❖ **1990** : Aung San Suu Kyi is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

❖ **1991** : The junta create the office for the promotion and propagation of Sasana, to promote a Buddhist Burmese identity.

❖ **1991** : Ashin Wirathu, aged 23, becomes a monk at Ma Soe Yein monastery in Mandalay.

❖ **JULY 1991** : Government operation "Clean and beautiful nation" is launched, against the Rohingya population.

❖ **1991-1992** : Massive exodus of Rohingyas, fleeing forced labour and summary persecutions and executions. More than 250,000 people flee to Bangladesh where they are held in camps in the southeast of the country.

❖ **APRIL 1992** : After an initial show of solidarity in Bangladesh towards the Rohingyas, the government appeals for help from the UNHCR to organize the repatriation of refugees to Burma.

❖ **FROM SEPTEMBER 1992 TO JANUARY 1993** : 15,000 refugees are forced to return to Burma, without any protection.

❖ **JULY 1995** : Aung San Suu Kyi is granted conditional release.

❖ **1997** : End of mass repatriation of refugees from Bangladesh to Burma.

❖ **1999** : U Kyaw Lwin uses numerology to create the concept of "969", to incarnate Buddhist identity and culture.

❖ **SEPTEMBER 2000** : Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders of the NLD are again put under house arrest.

❖ **2001** : Ashin Wirathu takes up the idea of 969 and creates a movement based on it, and which he designates himself as leader. He begins to give Islamophobic sermons.

- ❖ **MAY 2002** : Restrictions are lifted on Aung San Suu Kyi's movements and activities.
- ❖ **MAY 2003** : Aung San Suu Kyi is again arrested and put under house arrest.
- ❖ **19 OCTOBER 2003** : In Kyaukse, anti-Muslim riots erupt with scores killed as riots spread to other cities in the country. The junta impose a ceasefire on the Buddhist monks of Kyaukse. Eleven people are killed, two mosques are destroyed, two shops and 26 houses are burnt.
- ❖ **2003** : Ashin Wirathu is soon sentenced to 25 years in prison for inciting religious hatred and conflict.
- ❖ **15 AUGUST 2007** : Government raises the cost of petrol.
- ❖ **19 AUGUST 2007** : The Saffron Revolution begins. The population calls for a drop in prices. Protests break out in Yangon and spread across the country. Monks come out in protest alongside the general public.
- ❖ **26 SEPTEMBER 2007** : Army takes control and intervenes against protesters in Yangon, leading to at least four deaths.
- ❖ **APRIL 2008** : Junta publishes a plan for the Constitution with a view to democratization of the country. It foresees retaining a quarter of seats in parliament for officers it selects, and makes Aung San Suu Kyi ineligible to become president.
- ❖ **7 NOVEMBER 2010** : After 22 years, the junta hold elections and a two-chamber parliament and 14 members are elected.
- ❖ **13 NOVEMBER 2010** : Aung San Suu Kyi is released from house arrest.
- ❖ **4 FEBRUARY 2011** : Thein Sein, from the Union Solidarity and Development Party is elected president of the country and the junta is dissolved.
- ❖ **JANUARY 2012** : Ashin Wirathu is released from prison as part of a general amnesty.
- ❖ **2012** : Ashin Wirathu launches "Gana Wasaka Sangha", the slogan for the 969 movement that is to be spread across the country, along with a high-profile boycott campaign of all Muslim-run shops.
- ❖ **28 MAY 2012** : In Rakhine state, three Muslims rape and murder a young Buddhist Burmese woman.
- ❖ **3 JUNE 2012** : In Rakhine state, following the incident, ten Muslims on a bus to Yangon are killed by Buddhists..
- ❖ **5 JUNE 2012** : Protests are held in front of Yangon mosque, Muslims hold photographs of the ten Muslims who were killed. Aung San Suu Kyi meets the protesters and announces she has calmed tensions.
- ❖ **8 JUNE 2012** : Riots take place outside the mosque in Maungdaw. Several villages are burnt down leaving seven people dead and some 500 houses destroyed.
- ❖ **12 AU 13 JUNE 2012** : Buddhist riots in Sittwe leave 21 people dead. State of emergency is declared in the country.
- ❖ **28 JUNE 2012** : Death toll since the beginning of this wave of violence is 80 dead, 100,000 displaced and 200 houses burnt down.
- ❖ **SEPTEMBER 2012** : Ashin Wirathu and his supporters protest in Mandalay in support of the position taken by President Thein Sein who states Rohingyas are illegal Bengalis and are not the responsibility of the Burmese nation.
- ❖ **OCTOBER 2012** : Second wave of violence in Rakhine state affects the majority of Rakhine state and where the majority of the victims are Rohingyas.
- ❖ **AS OF NOVEMBER 2012** : Wirathu gives speeches across the country at a rate of around fifteen a month filled with anti-Muslim tirades.
- ❖ **20 MARCH 2013** : In Meitkila, a town in central Burma with a population 30 percent Muslim but without Rohingyas, violence lasts three days and leads to 40 dead.
- ❖ **25 MARCH 2013** : Violence spreads to central towns and cities along the road from Meitkila to Yangon, including Othekone, Tatkone and Yamenthin. Some 9,000 people are forced to flee their homes.
- ❖ **30 APRIL 2013** : In Okkan some 400 people set fire to mosques, houses and Muslim shops. Two people are killed and more than a hundred are displaced.

- ❖ **29 MAY 2013** : In Lashio clashes last several days and force the Muslim population to flee.
- ❖ **24 AUGUST 2013** : In Kantbalu houses and shops that apparently belong to Muslims are torched.
- ❖ **SEPTEMBER 2013** : 969 movement is banned. In Mandalay the new Buddhist organization, Ma Ba Tha, is created, set up as the committee for the protection of race and religion.
- ❖ **29 SEPTEMBER TO 2 OCTOBER 2013** : Clashes take place in the villages of Thabyachaing and Linthi. Nine people are killed and more than 500 are displaced.
- ❖ **FEBRUARY 2015** : Anti-Muslim legislation prepared by Ma Ba Tha come under discussion at the heart of the government and in parliament. The four proposed laws are intended to ban polygamy, limit religious conversions, limit inter-religious marriages, and impose birth control.
- ❖ **27 MAY 2015** : Protests of some 300 people in Yangon demanding Burma refuse all responsibility for the Rohingyas, using the slogan: «Boat People are not Myanmar, Stop Blaming Myanmar».
- ❖ **2 OCTOBER 2015** : To celebrate the vote on its four discriminatory laws, Ma Ba Tha organizes a meeting in the sports stadium of Yangon, bringing together some 30,000 people.
- ❖ **8 NOVEMBER 2015** : Landslide win by NLD of legislative election.
- ❖ **15 MARCH 2016** : Htin Kyaw is named president; Aung San Suu Kyi is foreign minister, and also de facto leader of the country.
- ❖ **13 JUNE 2016** : Protest against the use of the term "Rohingya" takes place in Pakkoku. The demonstration is criticized by the regional representative of Ma Ba Ta, who opposes Wirathu for the first time.
- ❖ **12 JULY 2016** : State Sangha Maha Nayaka disowns Ma Ba Tha.
- ❖ **14 JULY 2016** : Religious minister warns Ma Ba Tha's hate speech could lead to religious conflict.
- ❖ **19 SEPTEMBER 2016** : Region government of Rakhine state announces a demolition project of some 3,000 so-called illegal dwellings in Muslim-majority communes.
- ❖ **SEPTEMBER 2016** : Monks including Ashin Wirathu protest against the visit by Kofi Annan, chosen by Aung San Suu Kyi to write a report on Rakhine state that is not intended to deal with the human rights situation but only to propose solutions to the Rohingya problem.
- ❖ **9 OCTOBER 2016** : Police posts at the border with Bangladesh are attacked by members of the "Harakat al-Yaqeen", the Rohingyas resistance army.
- ❖ **10 OCTOBER 2016** : Government launches a repressive operation in northern Rakhine state where access has been completely blocked to any humanitarian aid or media presence.
- ❖ **DÉCEMBRE 2016** : Repression operation continues. The UN, New York Times and Reuters all refer to more than 60,000 refugees and several hundred dead, summary executions, systematic rapes, and several burnt villages.

LATEST NEWS ON WIRATHU : EVENTS SINCE IMAGE EDITING COMPLETED AND LOCKED, 1 JANUARY 2017



The assassin about to shoot, photo certainly taken by the sponsors of the murder who left right away, abandoning the murderer on the spot. The photo was immediately put on Facebook within the hour.

❖ **29 JANUARY 2017** : U Ko Ni, the prominent Muslim lawyer for Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD party is killed by gunshot at an airport as he held his grandson in his arms. U Ko Ni was in the process of setting out a strategy to modify the constitutional law that gives advantages to the military in the country.

☛ For more information on this death, see:

<http://hlao1980.blogspot.fr/2017/03/buddhist-nationalism-intense-muslim.html>

☛ Link to all documentation consulted for the film:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/whx0vuzg0r5ubux/AACfbFbvSoaeaclExeOD_nxUa?dl=0

❖ **30 JANUARY 2017** : Ashin Wirathu praises the assassination and thanks the arrested suspects. According to the prestigious and courageous journalist Ko Swe Win who is leading the investigation:

- The suspected killer, Lieutenant Lin Zaw Htun was close to Wirathu.
- The “brain” of the operation, Captain Zeya Phyo, was close to Ma Ba Tha.

Friends of Wirathu attack the journalist in the courts and threaten, with what appears to be the support of the military, sentencing him to three years in prison. More than 40,000 signatures are subsequently collected in a petition to file charges against Ko Swe Win.

❖ **10 MARCH 2017** : The official council of monks, the Sanga (governmental organization) bans Wirathu from giving speeches for one year. If he does not obey the ban he will be taken to court.

❖ **11 MARCH 2017** : Wirathu starts giving “silent” sermons in front of hundreds of people where he sits cross-legged with tape across his mouth and one of his old sermons playing on a loudspeaker next to him. A showdown between Wirathu and the NLD is underway.

❖ **1^{er} APRIL 2017** : Aung San Suu Kyi rejects the UN’s report on the Rohingyas.

❖ **2 APRIL 2017** : Frontier Magazine headlines: “**CAN THE GOVERNMENT FACE THE CHALLENGE POSED BY MA BA THA?... A few extreme nationalist monks dream of a situation in which their hate speech against Muslims could create a massive sectarian conflict that would end the transition to democracy in Burma.**”

❖ **4 APRIL 2017** : UN declares “crimes against humanity” for Rohingyas in Rakhine state.

❖ **6 APRIL 2017** : Aung San Suu Kyi denies all ethnic cleansing in Rakhine state and prefers to use the term “hostilities”.



IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE



U. ZANITAR

He is Wirathu's master. Both agree that the Master is completely innocent and that it was Wirathu alone who incited the riots in Kyaukse in 2003, for which both were imprisoned.



KYAW ZAYAR HTUN

Editor of one of the few Burmese investigative magazines. Author of "Wirathu Against the World".



U. KAYLAR SA

He took part in the 1988 revolution. He was then imprisoned twice. Once released, he was one of the five leaders of the Saffron Revolution in 2007.



MATTHEW SMITH

Before creating and running the human rights organization Fortify Rights, between 2011 and 2013, he wrote important reports about Myanmar for Human Rights Watch. He also writes editorials in The New York Times and various English-language newspapers.



ABDUL RASHEED

Should things have taken their natural course, he'd certainly be among the rare Rohingyas to hold a seat in the National Assembly. But Daw Aung San Suu Kyi saw to it that there'd be no Muslim candidate running for the last elections.



CARLOS SARDIÑA GALACHE

A Spanish journalist, he's been covering the Burmese news closely on site for five years. His work has appeared in various media such as El Diario, Al Jazeera and Vice Magazine.



U. GALONNI

Galonni is a highly-revered monk. He faced the death penalty for supporting land-deprived peasants. He served 20 years in prison, subjected to torture and hard labor.



BARBET SCHROEDER

**CENTRE POMPIDOU 2017 :
COMPLETE RETROSPECTIVE 21 APRIL - 11 JUNE**

**FESTIVAL DE NYON 2015 :
“MAITRE DU RÉEL PRIZE” FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT**

- 1969 **MORE** with Mimsy Farmer, Klaus Grünberg (*Semaine de la Critique - Cannes*)
- 1972 **THE VALLEY, OBSCURED BY CLOUDS** with Bulle Ogier, Jean-Pierre Kalfon (*Official Selection, Venice*)
- 1974 **GENERAL IDI AMIN DADA** (*Quinzaine des Réalisateurs Cannes, New York, Telluride*)
- 1975 **MAÎTRESSE** with Bulle Ogier and Gérard Depardieu
- 1977 **KOKO, A TALKING GORILLA** (*Official Selection Un Certain Regard, Cannes*)
- 1982/84 **THE CHARLES BUKOWSKI TAPES** (*50 videos of 4 minutes*)
- 1984 **CHEATERS** with Bulle Ogier, Jacques Dutronc
- 1987 **BARFLY** with Mickey Rourke, Faye Dunaway (*Official Selection, Cannes*)
- 1990 **REVERSAL OF FORTUNE** with Glenn Close, Ron Silver and Jeremy Irons (*Oscar, Best Actor, Oscar, and Golden Globe Nominations for Best Director*)
- 1992 **SINGLE WHITE FEMALE** with Bridget Fonda, Jennifer Jason Leigh
- 1994 **KISS OF DEATH** with David Caruso, Nicolas Cage, Samuel L. Jackson (*Official Selection, Out of Competition, Cannes*)
- 1995 **BEFORE AND AFTER** with Meryl Streep, Liam Neeson
- 1997 **DESPERATE MESURES** with Andy Garcia, Michael Keaton
- 2001 **OUR LADY OF THE ASSASSINS** with Germán Jaramillo (*Official Selection, Venice*)
- 2002 **MURDER BY NUMBERS** with Sandra Bullock, Ryan Gosling (*Official Selection, Out of Competition, Cannes*)
- 2007 **DEVIL'S ADVOCATE JACQUES VERGES** (*Official Selection, Un Certain Regard-Cannes, César for Best Documentary, Etoile d'Or for Best Documentary, DGA Nomination*)
- 2008 **INJU** with Benoît Magimel (*Official Selection, Venice*)
- 2009 **MAD MEN** – Season 3/Episode 12: THE GROWN-UPS (*KENNEDY ASSASSINATION*)
- 2014 **AMNESIA** with Marthe Keller, Max Riemelt (*Official Selection Séance spéciale, Cannes*)
- 2017 **LE VÉNÉRABLE W.** (*Official Selection Séance spéciale, Cannes*)
- 2017 **OÙ EN ÊTES-VOUS BARBET SCHROEDER ?** Short (*Opening complete retrospective Barbet Schroeder - Centre Pompidou in Paris*)



SMS received during the Shooting

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