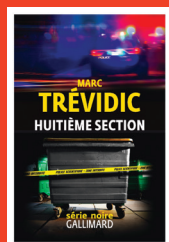


POLAR EN SÉRIES SCSELF AWARD 2025



**QUAIS
DU POLAR**
FESTIVAL
INTERNATIONAL
LYON

SCELF,



POLAR EN SÉRIES

SCELF

Quais du Polar and its professional program, Polar Connection, are committed to building and strengthening connections across the various fields that engage with crime fiction. The Polar en Séries Award was created from this commitment in 2015.

11TH EDITION IN 2025!

This award highlights and honours a literary work for its intrinsic qualities and its potential for adaptation into a audiovisual series.

The Quais du Polar festival would like to thank the publishers who submitted their entries and all the partners who support and contribute to the development of this project: SCELF, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Cinéma, Silence&Conversation (formerly Initiative Film), CinéFabrique, Écran Total, and the jury members who have supported this experience.



**QUAIS
DU POLAR**
FESTIVAL
INTERNATIONAL
LYON

SCELF, A LONGSTANDING PARTNER OF QUAIS DU POLAR

Since 2014, SCELf (Société Civile des Éditeurs de Langue Française) has been a key partner of Quais du Polar, working to support the publishing industry. Its mission is twofold: to collect and distribute adaptation rights and to promote literary works for adaptation into films, series, theater productions, and radio creations.

In collaboration with Quais du Polar, the 11th edition of the “Polar en Séries – SCELf” Award will once again take place as part of the Polar Connection program in Lyon. The award ceremony will be held on Friday, April 4, 2025, after the publishers present the nominated works.

Since its creation, this award has become a real stepping stone for audiovisual adaptation. Many winning works have attracted the interest of producers, directors, and screenwriters, strengthening the connection between publishing and audiovisual creation.

Each year, the selection is based on the expertise of a jury of industry professionals, whose commitment helps highlight literary works and support publishers in the adaptation process.

A dedicated B2B networking space also facilitates exchanges between publishers, producers, broadcasters, and streaming platforms, reinforcing a dynamic ecosystem centred on crime fiction.

The 2025 edition promises an even more diverse and ambitious selection, reflecting the richness and vitality of French-language crime fiction. At the heart of this initiative remains the dialogue between authors, publishers, and film and television professionals, with the ongoing goal of encouraging new adaptations and supporting talent throughout the creative process.

SCELF,

AN UNMISSABLE EVENT

Polar en Séries was born in 2015 from a collaboration orchestrated by Marie Le Gac of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Cinéma, bringing together the team behind Quais du Polar, which has made Lyon the iconic capital of crime literature, and Initiative Film, which has been behind numerous events and training programs focused on adaptations. The idea of creating a professional event aimed at drawing attention to a selection of recent works with strong potential for adaptation into television series quickly caught the attention of SCELf (Société Civile des Éditeurs de Langue Française), which became a partner in the initiative that led to the creation of the Polar en Séries Award.

Since the creation of this annual event, the significance of series production has grown so much that this approach has proven to be particularly relevant. The rise of streaming platforms and the ongoing popularity of the genre have helped elevate the award's profile.

At the heart of Polar Connection, Polar en Séries serves as a lasting bridge between the literary world and the audiovisual world through the medium of the series, regardless of its format. The concept of genre is broadly interpreted here, encompassing everything from noir literature and classic crime fiction to thrillers, as well as sci-fi and fantasy.

POLAR EN SÉRIES, A WELL-OILED PROCESS:

Each year, SCELf issues a call for submissions from publishers. Publishers can propose two titles: a new release and an older book, should they choose, as there is no expiration date in the adaptation field, and the publishers' catalogues are full of great potential.

Year after year, the pool of publishers aiming for selection has grown, reflecting a desire to create a space for both renowned publishing houses and groups, as well as for younger, national, or even regional houses.

A pre-selection committee, this year made up of members from Quais du Polar, Initiative Film (now Silence&Conversation), and alumni screenwriters from CinéFabrique, reviewed the 69 works submitted by publishing houses to establish a shortlist of six books in the running for the award. This pre-selection aims to represent the diversity of the crime genre, regularly including a graphic novel and often a young adult book.

The six shortlisted books are read by the jury members, who render their verdict in March during the traditional deliberation dinner—an exchange of passionate and lively discussions in a friendly atmosphere.

The winning book is revealed at the now iconic pitch session of the selected books in Lyon during the festival.

This booklet also provides an update on books selected or awarded in previous years, systematically updating the status of the rights for each title. Are they still available, under option, or already acquired, potentially becoming a film or a series? These questions are answered here.

To all, enjoy the festival, great encounters, and happy reading!



With the aim of fostering discussions on renewing the tools that support the creation and circulation of talent, Silence&Conversation, a pioneering company founded in January 2025 and led by Isabelle Fauvel, assisted by Gabrielle Gonçalves, has merged with Initiative Film, a company created 32 years earlier and exclusively dedicated to cinema and audiovisual development activities.

The collaboration started by Initiative Film with the Quais du Polar team since the first edition of Polar en Séries continues today.

THE JURY

JURY MEMBERS

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Michel ABOUCHAHLA

President of Écran Total

Mathieu DONCK

Director and Screenwriter

Notable works: Co-creator, co-screenwriter,
and director of *La Trêve* (seasons 1 and 2), *Des gens bien...*

Fanny FROMENTAL

Literary Adaptations Executive, Studiocanal Stories

Aurélié INIESTA

Producer, Gaumont Television

Notable works: *Le Signal*

Carole LE BERRE

Programme Advisor, Fiction Unit, France Télévisions

Xavier LEHERPEUR

Journalist, film and series critic (France Inter),

Lamara LEPRÊTRE-HABIB

Screenwriter

Notable works: *D'argent et de sang*, *Dans l'ombre* (TV series),
Diamant Brut (feature film)...

Véra PELTEKIAN

Vice President in charge of French original productions,
Max, Warner Media International

SELECTED WORKS

LIST OF WORKS

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF AUTHORS

POKER (VOLUMES 1 AND 2)

Jean-Christophe Derrien and Simon Van Liemt,
Le Lombard, 2009/2011

BLEUS, BLANCS, ROUGES

Benjamin Dierstein,
Flammarion, 2025

UN PAYS SANS CHEMIN

Eric Goffin,
Le Rouergue, 2025

LES ÂMES FRAGMENTÉES

Charlotte Monsarrat,
Anne Carrière, 2023

LES BONS SENTIMENTS

Karine Sulpice,
Liana Levi, 2025

HUITIÈME SECTION

Marc Trévidic,
Gallimard, 2024

THE JURY'S VERDICT

THE 2025 SELECTION

From high-stakes poker tournaments to glimpses into the daily lives of the Paris Public Prosecutor's Office's "eighth section," from a man wrongly accused in Provence caught in a web of local power struggles to a dystopia of manufactured memories, and a gripping hostage situation—this 2025 edition showcased the full breadth of the genre.

THE 2025 WINNER

After a long and fascinating discussion about an eclectic selection of books, our jury chose *Bleus, Blancs, Rouges*, Benjamin Dierstein's dense and prolific novel.

Through the trajectories of four characters connected to the intelligence world, the author delivers a gripping dive into the murky depths of the late 1970s—police rivalries, power struggles within the underworld, the restructuring of the radical left, political corruption, and state scandals.

This crime novel, with its ambition and style, is unmistakably reminiscent of James Ellroy. It's a sweeping narrative—but one told from the shadows, through backrooms and the underbelly of society.

The writing is immersive, the structure keeps readers on edge, intertwining a long-running investigation with the intimate stakes of its characters.

The jury sees in this sprawling narrative a reflection of a tumultuous era that still resonates in France today. The book offers a missing piece to help illuminate the present.

A television adaptation worthy of this novel would have to be highly ambitious. Our choice aims to inspire and support that ambition.

BLEUS, BLANCS, ROUGES

BENJAMIN DIERSTEIN,
FLAMMARION, 2025

→ IF IT WERE A SERIES:

1992/1993/1994

by Alessandro Fabbri,
Ludovica Rampoldi, and Stefano Sardo

TOKYO VICE

by J. T. Rogers

CARLOS

by Olivier Assayas

→ IF IT WERE A FILM:

THE CONNECTION

by Cédric Jimenez

L.A CONFIDENTIAL

by Curtis Hanson

FORMAT: MULTI-SEASON SERIES



Brigadier Jean-Louis Gourvennec, who left his native Brittany for Paris with no greater ambition than to keep a low profile, finds himself, by chance, at the heart of the May '68 turmoil—an experience that will leave an indelible mark on him.

A decade later.

At the police academy, two ambitious young inspectors with nothing in common—Marco Paolini and Jacquie Lienard—cross his path while hunting Geronimo, a gunrunner trained by Cubans and Libyans. Jacquie recruits Gourvennec to infiltrate a group linked to Action Directe, while mercenary Robert Vauthier, a Françafrique operative back in Paris to run a nightclub and orchestrate human trafficking to Sub-Saharan Africa, soon sets his sights on the same criminal.

Four lives entwined in the turmoil of the Years of Lead, political backstabbing, and the aftershocks of decolonization. The first volume of a historical saga blending political satire, noir fiction, and high-society tragedy—featuring secondary characters drawn from real-life figures still renowned today.

A FICTIONAL PORTRAIT OF A TUMULTUOUS ERA?

Though the narrative starts in 1968, the story truly unfolds against the backdrop of the late 1970s, specifically 1978/79... and what a time it was! These years under Giscard, marked by scandal, though history will likely only remember the infamous Bokassa diamond affair. France, still grappling with the fallout of the 1973 oil crisis, was caught in a whirlwind of political unrest. Across Europe, radical groups were making headlines with bombings and kidnappings: the Baader-Meinhof Group, the Red Army Fraction, the Red Brigades, the FLP, and in France, Action Directe. On the other side, the SAC had its own far-reaching influence, even within the Police.

It was a booming period for organized crime, with the Zémour brothers on one side and the Zampa clan on the other. The plot is intricately woven with both historical facts and fiction, to the point where it's sometimes hard to separate the two, offering an insightful and unique look into our past.

FOUR INSEPARABLE DESTINIES...

Marco Paolini and Jackie Lienard are two young detectives whose backgrounds couldn't be more different, even from their days at the Police Academy. Jackie, an intelligent young woman, is on track to finish top of her class, but Marco, who's close behind, accuses her of skipping out at night to steal his spot and secure the posting of her choice. Marco will end up in the Criminal Brigade, while Jackie is assigned to the Intelligence Unit (RG). Jackie has a dangerous card up her sleeve: she is the god-daughter of the big boss, Marcel Lebrun, which earns her the nickname "kiss-up," while Marco, a Corsican, is ironically called "Pasolini" — despite his extreme-right, reactionary, and misogynistic views.

Soon enough, Marco joins the SAC (civilian anti-terrorist unit), while Jackie, studious and idealistic, protected by her influential cop godfather, will align with the socialist faction of the police force. Marco lives with a Corsican woman who moved to Paris to live the high life that her man can't provide, while Jackie is dating Christian, the handsome guy from her class assigned to the Vice Squad. The various police divisions to which they belong struggle to collaborate, often undermining each other in their competition for major cases that are shaking the country. Jean-Louis Gourvennec, a key witness to a tragic event during May 1968, is called in ten years later to infiltrate the extreme left. At the same time, he tells his anti-Franco Spanish wife that he's infiltrating the extreme right. As his infiltration, supervised by Jackie, progresses, he becomes captivated by Katharina Schwartzmann, a figure on the extreme left for whom he begins to develop certain sympathies.

While the targets are many and Mesrine occupies everyone's thoughts, it's a mysterious figure known as Geronimo who will become the bane of the authorities. But the rivalry between Jackie and Marco also mirrors that between police departments, who struggle to cooperate when everyone's main focus is capturing Mesrine and identifying the elusive Geronimo — an obsession for law enforcement as much as the public enemy number one.

Among the criminals, rivalries also run deep: Parisians versus Marseillais, the Zémour clan

versus the Zampa clan, and rival gangs where the mercenary Robert Vauthier plays the role of the troublemaker.

Back in France, Vauthier hopes to carve out a place for himself in the sun. His goal is to take control of the capital's nightlife, starting with a nightclub on the Champs-Élysées. However, he owes favors to the Republic and is asked to leave again to set a trap for Khadafi, while his mind is occupied with thoughts of the woman who manages his clubs and captures his attention.

...AND THOSE WHO GRAVITATE AROUND THEM

Whether it's the spouses of the four main characters, whose everyday lives and rivalries are subtly explored, or figures who have left their mark on history, such as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Pierre Goldman, Jacques Mesrine, Robert Broussard, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, Alain Delon, Tany Zampa, or Omar Bongo, all these personalities cross paths in the sultry Paris nightlife. The figures of show business mix with criminals, criminals with politicians, and the police are not shy about playing a double game — some are upright, others are corrupt. In this den of vipers, Alain Delon feels just as comfortable with the gangsters as he does with the cops.

On the trail of Geronimo, we delve into the labyrinth of post-1968 French politics: its spies, criminals, glittering show business, and its ties to *Françafrique*, alongside colorful and often disreputable characters.

INFILTRATION AS A TOOL OF ACTION

During this period, the police still had the right to rely on informants and did so regularly, often recruiting from the working class. The social mix between showbiz stars and informants is striking. While the far right and far left dominate the political landscape, the police don't hesitate to send undercover agents: Jean-Louis Gourvennec, known as Gouv', becomes involved in the hunt by infiltrating a left-wing group linked to Action directe. Both Action directe and the SAC are the police's worst nightmares. On one side, kidnappings and commando training in Libya; on the other, summary executions and the dream of regaining political control through mercenaries. Gouv' becomes Jackie's in-

formant, increasingly difficult to manage as Marco, through the SAC, plays with fire.

POLITICAL SCANDALS SWEEPED UNDER THE RUG

As Vauthier is on the brink of becoming the king of Paris and its nightlife, the highest levels of government assign him the task of sending prostitutes to the banana republics he knows well, in order to track down Geronimo and his network. This strategy proves effective, as no one suspects these women. Vauthier, who would have preferred to live a peaceful life in Paris, is ordered to embark on a mission to settle the score with Khadafi, France's adversary in Africa, at the same time Bokassa threatens to expose the diamond scandal involving Giscard, the president's unlikely hunting trips, and his sons' interests on the African continent. The pressure mounts on the government, which in turn exerts pressure on shady figures—mercenaries and adventurers tied to organized crime.

WHEN NOSTALGIA TAKES HOLD...

Amidst the noise of trafficking and murder, and the secrecy of extremist movements and the entertainment industry, music and the intricate details of daily life revive the late 1970s: fashion, cars, TV shows, advertisements, the fight against waste—those infamous years of wealth are remembered with a sense of lightness and optimism. Yet beneath the glitter, reality is far more complex and dark. However, the joy found in the meticulously gathered details of the story does its work, as the narrative is infused with the era's obliviousness, despite the underlying violence it grapples with.

Not only does the book end with a cliffhanger that leaves you hungry for the upcoming volumes, but it also offers perspectives on themes that have the potential to unfold across multiple seasons.

THE AUTHOR IN A FEW LINES

Born in 1983 in Côtes d'Armor, Benjamin Dierstein grew up in Brittany. After a diverse career path, he now works in Rennes within the electronic music scene as a musician's agent and the director of the *Tripalium Corp* label. He gained recognition with his first highly acclaimed crime trilogy set in France during the 2011-2013 period: *La Sirène qui fume*, *La Défaite des idoles*, and *La Cour des mirages*. *Bleus, blancs, rouges* is his fourth novel and the first installment in a new trilogy, with the upcoming volumes set to be released in September 2025 and January 2026.

THE NOVEL IN A FEW WORDS

"– Maybe it's an issue for you reprimand on Jacqueline Lienard because she's the goddaughter of Commissioner Marcel Lebrun.

The deputy director reddened slightly and took a few steps before regaining his composure.

– It's important to be well-regarded by the higher-ups, Paolini. But the most important thing is to be well-regarded by your own. They're going to hate you, you know that?

Marco shot him a cold look.

– That doesn't scare me."

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POKER (VOLUMES 1 AND 2)

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE DERRIEN
ET SIMON VAN LIEMT
LE LOMBARD, 2009/2011

→ IF IT WERE A SERIES:

THE PLAYER by John Rogers

THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT by Scott Frank
and Allan Scott

POKER FACE by Rian Johnson

→ IF IT WERE A FILM:

THE LARGO WINCH SAGA

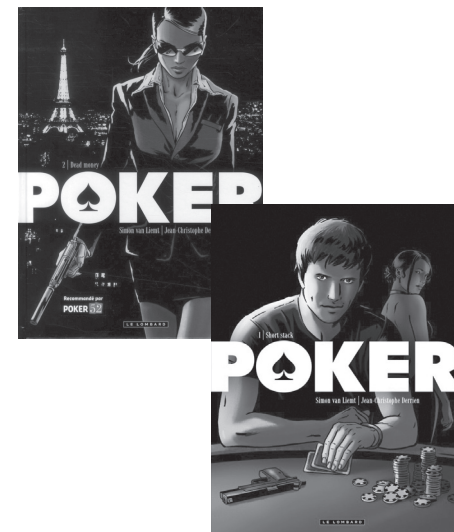
THE CARD COUNTER by Paul Schrader

FORMAT : SERIES

La Ciotat, 2009. Mark Middleton, a young poker player, doesn't just take tourists' money in the casinos of the French Riviera. Since his parents were murdered in cold blood, he has been relentlessly but discreetly tracking their killers. His investigation has led him to a mysterious group of men and women with limitless power, «The Circle,» to which his parents' assassins seem to belong.

As he is about to kill one of its members, a certain Delguedre, in an underground parking lot, he has a chance encounter with a man who claims to know him and wants to help him execute his revenge. This man is named Tom Felhmann, and as proof of his good faith, he reveals that it was he, anonymously, who put Mark on Delguedre's trail. Tom tells him that killing Delguedre now would only raise the suspicion of the other members of The Circle and ruin his chances of making them pay. But there might be a more clever way to approach them.

A mutual trust builds between Mark and Tom as they work toward a common goal: to make Mark one of the best poker players in the world to lure their prey and finally savor his revenge. With Tom as his mentor, Mark travels from casino to casino. The duo is soon joined by a young Italian woman, Gia, whom Tom has fallen for. But one night, Delguedre is assassinated. However, when Tom confronts



him, Mark shouts his innocence... As Mark climbs the ranks, tournament after tournament, casino after casino—from La Ciotat to Las Vegas, passing through Monaco and Paris—it seems that someone else is also on the trail of The Circle...

A SERIES OF BLUFFS: AN UNCOMMON ARENA

Whether you're familiar with the world of poker or not, the casino offers a dynamic stage that continues to captivate. From the game rooms of La Ciotat and Antibes to the glamour of Monaco, Paris, and, of course, the iconic Las Vegas, the setting provides a perfect cinematic backdrop where extravagant wealth collides with eccentric players. It's a world of opulence, but also one of stark contrasts and hidden realities.

Mark is a born player. From the arcade halls of his youth—where he spent countless hours honing his skills before his parents were killed—to the poker tables of his adulthood, it's been a natural progression. But while undeniably talented, Mark still needs to master Texas Hold'em, the no-limit poker variant, to make it to the biggest tournaments, where the stakes go beyond just money—they offer him the chance to confront those responsible for his parents' deaths.

VENDETTAS ON RED CARPETS

Mark Middleton would surely be lost if it weren't for poker, which he clings to, and the obsession that drives him to seek revenge against those who murdered his parents, Millie and Stuart. They died in a particularly horrific and suspicious plane crash when Mark was still a teenager.

While not exactly crafty, Mark possesses a survival instinct and an unshakable resourcefulness, fueled by his thirst for vengeance and his need to uncover why his parents were targeted. But though Mark has a knack for reading his opponents' moves around a poker table, he will need to learn to read the people around him—especially his own allies. For Gia, whose real name is Giulietta Roccaforte, is far from as innocent as she seems, and even Tom Fehlmann might know more than he's letting on. In the game of revenge, Mark is not alone... and as is often the case, one antagonist can conceal an even more dangerous one.

REVENGE IS A DISH BEST SERVED COLD

A tightly crafted thriller set against a backdrop of conspiracy, *Poker* unfolds over four volumes with a fast-paced plot, each character revealing their cards as the game progresses. Like a real poker game, the story, gripping and tense, alternates between moments of rising tension and brief respites, explosive twists, and unexpected turns. Beginning with Mark's personal tragedy, the series taps into the conspiracy theory of the New World Order, subtly questioning the power of the elite and the ultra-wealthy—two spheres that often collide.

THE AUTHOR IN A FEW LINES

Born in 1971, Jean-Christophe Derrien studied cinema and audiovisual writing in the south of France before transitioning to writing comic book scripts. He is the author of several one-shots and series. In addition to his work as a writer, he teaches scriptwriting at art and film schools.

Simon van Lient was born in Aix-en-Provence to a Franco-Dutch couple. He studied art in Liège, Belgium, before dedicating himself to comic book drawing. He has frequently collaborated with Jean-Christophe Derrien on the series *Incantations* and *Poker*. In 2015, he took over the successful comic series *Ric Hochet*. He is also a musician and singer in a rock band.

THE COMIC IN A FEW WORDS

"You have to be the best player in the world for them to watch you, admire you, desire you... [...] You know how to play. You just need to learn to control your emotions better..."

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UN PAYS SANS CHEMIN

ERIC GOFFIN

LE ROUERGUE, 2025

→ IF IT WERE A SERIES:

L'AFFAIRE VILLEMIN by Pascal Bonitzer and Raoul Peck

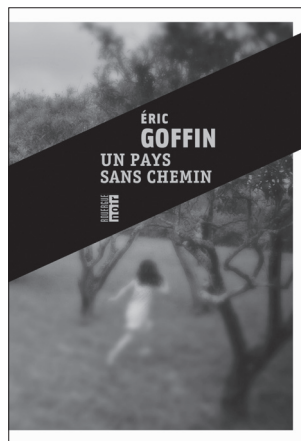
L'AFFAIRE OUTREAU by Olivier Ayache-Vidalandt and Agnès Pizzini

→ IF IT WERE A FILM:

THE BUTCHER by Claude Chabrol

THE RAVEN by Henri-Georges Clouzot

FORMAT: SERIES



Cairn, a small Provençal village, late 1980s. 8-year-old Natacha, is on vacation there with her mother Christiane, 28, who works at the bar, the heart of village life. But one evening, Natacha disappears. After a night of frantic searching and mounting fear, the village wakes to find itself broken: the little girl's body is found by the river. Her skull was with a rock after she was raped.

Quickly, two individuals come under suspicion: Pierre Rabel, a local man who was the last to see the child before she disappeared, and Sylvain Coulon, a young, eccentric leader of an unconventional community. The latter particularly attracts attention. A newcomer to the region, this well-educated Parisian lives like a hippie in a crumbling farmhouse higher up on the plateau, La Dauphine, which he inherited. People are wary of those he welcomes there—of their free sexuality, drug use, and overall rebelliousness.

Then politics gets involved: Senator Jean-Pierre Colombani, in the midst of his municipal election campaign, wants to resolve the case quickly, fearing it could lead to bad press and be exploited politically by the far-right. This is already the third disturbing case of its kind to surface in the area... Léon Lecoq, the local police chief, is under pressure to wrap things up fast. Like many villagers, he's taken an immediate dislike to the eccentric, and enraged by the suffering of little Natacha, he sees him as the perfect

culprit—despite evidence pointing to Rabel as the true perpetrator. After a brutal and humiliating police interrogation, Coulon, who continues to claim his innocence, eventually confesses under pressure... only to retract his confession, but it's too late.

Despite a judge's dismissal of the case due to lack of solid evidence, and driven by public outrage, Coulon is swiftly re-incarcerated. The upcoming trial will be his only chance to prove the truth—and his innocence.

A MICROCOSM IN TURMOIL: THE NOISE AND THE FURY

Far from the clichés of crime novels, the small village of Cairn, nestled in the Alpes de Haute-Provence, offers a picturesque and sunny backdrop, contrasting sharply with the drama that grips the place one bright July day and the sordid events that follow. Strongly inspired by a real-life case from 1988, which culminated in a trial in 1992, the story takes place in a context where lifestyles and mentalities differ greatly between urban and rural areas. A peaceful, almost insular place, the crime will plunge Cairn into turmoil, exposing it abruptly to the outside world... a theme crystallized by the trial, for which Coulon's lawyer managed to have it held 200 kilometres away to avoid potential bias among jurors, thus uprooting the residents and witnesses of Cairn.

THE PORTRAIT OF A SCAPEGOAT

The Didier Gentil / Richard Roman case, a famous news story from the late 1980s, serves as inspiration for the narrative, which is less about an investigation to expose the truth or identify a culprit, and more about the creation of a scapegoat. This is a choice embraced by some, but less consciously recognized by others. Even after Rabel confesses to his crime, everyone persists in blaming Coulon. Because Rabel is a local man, a neighbour, a friend, while the village needs an outsider to match the gravity of the crime committed.

Sylvain Coulon, with his unconventional lifestyle and status as an outsider, his education, his affiliation with a libertarian left and financially privileged background, embodies the fears and prejudices that underline the social fractures and the isolation of the village. Thus, the narrative reveals how fear of the outsider is a powerful vehicle for hatred and injustice, a theme that undeniably resonates with contemporary issues.

SOCIOLOGY OF A TRAGEDY: TRUTH VERSUS TRUTHS

While Natacha, Coulon, and Rabel remain “silent,” their fates are mapped out chronologically through a true polyphony: police officers, the prosecutor, the investigating judge, journalists, those close to the victim, and simple villagers who witnessed the events... The viewpoints alternately adopted reveal the repercussions of the crime: a village in the spotlight, the intrusion of the press in search of sensationalism, the workings of justice, political exploitation...

But also, the collusion between law enforcement, justice, and the media, caught between the desire for impartiality and the need to calm public outrage. Each seeks not to reveal the truth, but their own version of it... The stakes and biases of the protagonists and the institutions they belong to are meticulously encapsulated through a gallery of nuanced, well-rounded, and complex characters. A Country Without a Path is not the story of a man's martyrdom, but rather a study with an almost sociological focus on human behavior and the defense mechanisms that unfold in the face of tragedy.

THE AUTHOR IN A FEW LINES

Born in 1960 in Düsseldorf, Germany, Eric Goffin splits his time between the south of France and Berlin. He works as an author, judicial columnist, and translator for various organizations and investigative websites. He is the author of two books in German. *Un pays sans chemin* (Rouergue, 2025) is his first novel written in French.

THE NOVEL IN A FEW WORDS

“Recently, and especially today, as he opened the newspaper, he couldn’t help but think about the consequences if the story turned out to be different after all. Personally, he had never fully believed the popular version, but now it seemed as if the question of Coulon’s guilt or innocence was putting everyone’s honour on the line.”

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LES ÂMES FRAGMENTÉES

CHARLOTTE MONSARRAT

ANNE CARRIÈRE, 2023

→ IF IT WERE A SERIES:

BLACK MIRROR by Charlie Brooker

VORTEX by Franck Thilliez, Camille Couasse
and Sarah Farkas

→ IF IT WERE A FILM:

MINORITY REPORT by Steven Spielberg

SHUTTER ISLAND by Martin Scorsese

FORMAT: MINI-SERIES



In a near future, food is rationed, and payment is made in carbon units. The population is impoverished, birth rates are plummeting, and climate refugees are everywhere. Filmmaking has been banned. However, a futuristic process invented by scientist Joachim Beckett allows the extraction of memories from deceased people. This material can be viewed, archived, and edited like film footage. Veronica, a director of «memory films,» struggles to regain her inspiration and, on the advice of her partner and producer, Rémi, has started restoring her past successes to make a living.

One day, while Veronica is editing the memories of a memory trafficker, Joachim Beckett, who recently committed suicide, she discovers that she had a long romantic relationship with him, a relationship she has no memory of, as if it had never existed. This is particularly unsettling since Beckett had been exposed before his death for illegally extracting memories from living subjects, which is strictly forbidden. Could Veronica have been his accomplice? And if so, why? Disturbed by this forgotten memory, Veronica uncovers that she had worked for Beckett and the Arescience laboratory, which extracts memories. With the help of Rémi and her eccentric mother, Ava, Veronica embarks on her own investigation into the traces of her past, seeking out key witnesses. Slowly, a picture of a happy past with Beckett emerges, shattered by a tragedy from which one cannot recover. But what

began as an intimate investigation soon uncovers dark truths, and Veronica finds herself targeted by a powerful enemy who has a vested interest in preventing her from revealing her findings. A chase begins, but Veronica, unwillingly turned into an outlaw, is determined to shed light on forgotten tragedies, no matter the cost.

A WORLD IN CRISIS, A NOT-SO-DISTANT FUTURE?

Veronica, the protagonist, lives in a world teetering on the edge of collapse, where governments struggle to keep things going by offering more temporary fixes than real solutions, facing a climate in turmoil and widespread poverty. The cost of living is soaring, and food is both scarce and expensive. Sterility has become the norm, and healthy children are so rare that parenthood has become a marketable service. There's even an app that allows childless couples to spend time with children—at a price—in their desperate search for offspring. At the same time, children are taken from the poor, presumed to be mistreated by their parents.

The majority of the population is living in poverty, and the divide between the rich and poor is greater than ever. Yet, life carries on. The dystopian world presented here isn't some extreme, distant future. Rather, it offers a grim yet plausible vision of what's to come—a world shaped by systemic inequality and environmental collapse.

WHEN TECHNOLOGY MAKES THE DEAD SPEAK: THE (RE)BIRTH OF AN ART

Like a form of futuristic organ donation, people can now bequeath their memories, which are extracted and stored on a kind of external hard drive in the shape of a golden orb. The material stored in these «memospheres» is nothing less than rushes captured from the perspective of the deceased, projected as holograms. Since the entirety of their memory is extracted, the memories can be sweet, uninhibited, or even criminal. In short, an inexhaustible resource that Veronica views, selects, and edits to create films. Despite the everyday poverty, life stories—real-life events—are highly sought after, to the detriment of traditional cinema, which, with its actors, has been banned for being too polluting. This technology is also used by law enforcement, and soon Veronica will find herself in their sights, having uncovered the abuses committed by a police commissioner.

AN INTIMATE NARRATIVE: MEMORY AS A VECTOR OF IDENTITY

Set against a backdrop of plausible anticipation, through the metaphorical lens of lost memory, revealing buried psychological trauma, the story delves into the management of trauma. Despite the ban on extracting memories from living individuals, Veronica and Beckett erased the memories of victims whose suffering had become unbearable. What began with a compassionate intention, however, proves to be complex and imperfect.

The book raises the question: what are humans without their memories, no matter how terrible they may be? Would it truly be a good thing to erase them, or would we lose a part of our identity in the process? These questions hit Veronica hard as she gradually uncovers the threads of her past, ultimately forcing her to confront the grief of her newborn daughter—whom she had chosen to forget.

THE AUTHOR IN A FEW LINES

Born in Paris in 1983, Charlotte Monsarrat is a producer. Starting as a production assistant, she climbed the ranks to executive producer, working in documentary films, cinema, and now animation. *Les âmes fragmentées* (*The Fragmented Souls*) is her first novel. She also writes for the children's magazine *Pomme d'Api*. She has been living in Creuse for several years.

THE NOVEL IN A FEW WORDS

"There are words that, once spoken, pull on red threads and lead you through labyrinths of images, sounds, and persistent sensations you thought you had forgotten. They're even clearer because they are memories seldom touched. Words have this power of resurrection from the past, and I see behind my mother's eyes the shadows she had no intention of releasing."

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LES BONS SENTIMENTS

KARINE SULPICE
LIANA LEVI, 2025

→ IF IT WERE A SERIES:

DÉRAPAGES by Ziad Doueiri

LE NÉGOCIATEUR by Yaël Berdugo

→ IF IT WERE A FILM:

SKIRT DAY by Jean-Paul Lilienfeld

THE AX by Costa-Gavras

FORMAT : LIMITED SERIES

It's Christmas Eve, cold, and everyone expects to spend it with their family. Watching the commotion and flashing lights from her home, Jessica, driven by curiosity and the feeling that she's stepping into a movie scene, doesn't hesitate to head out into the crowd. She knows it's risky, especially with her little girl, Laila, shivering beside her, but Jessica presses on. Laila doesn't complain—she's just thrilled to finally hold her mother's hand, as if that simple gesture were her greatest Christmas gift.

For Commander Maurane Le Queuvre, the night also means skipping out on the holiday, much to the dismay of her daughters and husband. She's urgently called to the headquarters of an organization to make contact with a suspected hostage-taker. When she arrives, the first thing that catches her eye is the mother, captivated by the chaos the event is stirring in the neighbourhood, seemingly indifferent to the child she's dragging along.

But her focus is quickly taken over by the hostage situation, which is as surprising for its timing as it is for the profile of the kidnapper, who goes by the name Ju. Ju isn't shy about revealing details: he talks about his colleagues, those he holds hostage, his past, and what drove him to take such extreme actions. As he recounts the events, hour by hour, Le Queuvre is drawn into a chillingly detailed account, reliving the tragic sequence of events.

An unforgettable Christmas Eve, one that

sends shockwaves through the neighbourhood, leaving a lasting impact on the lives of the hostages and their captor... and perhaps even those watching from the sidelines.

AN UNUSUAL HOSTAGE-TAKER

Le Queuvre quickly learns that the criminal is none other than an employee of a charitable organization, the Association, which is now holding three of his colleagues hostage at gunpoint. Ju is a member of the Association—a friendly, seemingly model employee—yet here he is, threatening his coworkers and even injuring one, the very person he had no intention of harming. But he never wanted to end up in this situation. He confides to the commander about how he found himself there, and she can't help but be moved by his words. The sincerity in his confession eliminates any possibility of confrontation. Through the immersive dialogue over phone lines, vivid images emerge, illustrating how overwhelming circumstances can push an ordinary man to the edge.

ONE TRAGEDY, TWO CASES SOLVED

While the focus is on the tension created by the hostage situation, this tragedy also indirectly resolves a case of domestic abuse. Laila is a neglected child, mistreated by her mother far beyond this Christmas night spent outside with her. And if her mother is



so entranced by the event unfolding outside their window, it's because she knows the association. She is being followed and helped by its members, which gives her the feeling of being at the heart of the event... She sees this as her moment of glory, an opportunity to attract the attention of journalists. But it's a very different kind of attention the young woman will draw to herself, one that, unexpectedly, will come to Laila's aid, as if the hostage-taker, in condemning himself, has unknowingly given the child a chance to get to safety.

A (FALSE) CLOSED-DOOR DRAMA ON THE EDGE

Le Queuvre knows from experience that it's crucial to be patient when reasoning with a hostage-taker, and that fatigue, exhaustion, and despair can turn the situation into a bloodbath. Avoiding that at all costs is not only her job and duty, but here, the commander is also concerned with preserving Ju, whose vulnerabilities deeply affect and disturb her. She must secure his surrender but ensures she never pressures him.

In a single unit of time and place, this drama, with its closed-door feel, unfolds with multifaceted elements and an atmosphere ripe for a thriller or mini-series. A whole world takes shape. Through the unique dialogue woven between Le Queuvre and Ju, which reconstructs the puzzle of the disappointments and humiliations Ju has suffered, secondary characters emerge, offering multiple avenues to explore: Ju's colleagues, Le Queuvre's team, and of course, Jessica and her young daughter, whose destiny will be forever changed.

THE AUTHOR IN A FEW LINES

After spending six years as a radio journalist, **Karine Sulpice** then became a lawyer, practicing family law and social law for a decade before relocating with her family to Jerusalem. There, she learned Arabic and Hebrew and occasionally returned to journalism. She now lives in Lille, where she works as a biographer and focuses on writing. *Les bons sentiments* is her second novel.

THE NOVEL IN A FEW WORDS

«I felt like a big, loyal dog who's been taught tricks. At first, it obeys for the reward—a pat, a treat. Then it starts doing them without being asked, no need for bait anymore. Just the desire to make the master proud. That's what I've been reduced to: a pathetic mutt. That's it. That's the moment everything changed.»

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HUITIÈME SECTION

MARC TRÉVIDIC,
GALLIMARD, 2024

→ IF IT WERE A SERIES:

ENGRENAGES by Alexandra Clerf

66-5 by Anne Landois

BRAQUO by Olivier Marchal

→ IF IT WERE A FILM:

L.627 by Bertrand Tavernier

LA NUIT DU 12 by Dominik Moll

FORMAT: MULTI-SEASON SERIES

Lucien Autret, deputy public prosecutor, has just arrived from Bordeaux and is settling into his new position in the 8th section, a role that officially commits him for two years. Barely settled in and without having truly gotten to know his colleagues, he is thrust into the daily criminal reality of the capital, playing the role of a policeman when he's not a policeman but a magistrate—alone and unarmed, relying solely on his adrenaline to handle the urgency of the job.

The 8th section of the Paris public prosecutor's office, composed of six magistrates, focuses on the ordinary horrors—almost a nightmare for the Justice system, tasked with handling flagrante delicto crimes and offenses (not to be confused with «flagrante delicto» as a legal term) in immediate court appearances. While it's meant to relieve the police services, it undeniably puts the magistrates under tremendous pressure. Over the months, each one risks burnout, as nights are busier than days for this team that has to maintain vigilance 24/7. They handle all of Paris' misery: drug addicts, disoriented undocumented immigrants, protesters causing trouble in demonstrations, career criminals, violent spouses... and sometimes even serial killers.

As we follow his first eight days on the job, on just his second day, Autret faces his first case when, early in the morning during garbage collection, he discovers a body in a large Paris city trash bin. The murder is clear, but

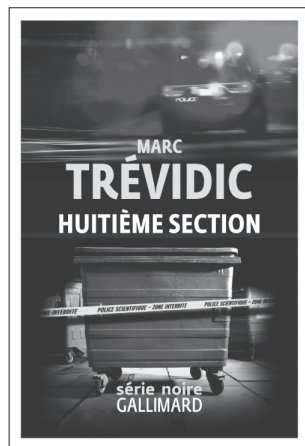
the criminal investigation team can't identify the victim.

Following the lead of this case, Autret takes us through his daily life, the routines of his colleagues in the section, as well as police officers and experts from various fields. From one crime scene to the next, from the defendant's box to an autopsy room or the immediate court hearing chamber, we get a glimpse of a fast-paced criminal justice system that will ultimately unravel the mystery of the trash bin.

CONFRONTED WITH THE BANALITY OF CRIME, A JUDICIAL SYSTEM ON THE EDGE OF EXHAUSTION

Far from the image we have of justice and its magistrates, this hyper-realistic and striking portrait of flagrante delicto, through the members of the 8th section, immerses the reader in their daily lives, where every decision must be made in a rush, balancing adrenaline with exhaustion, hope with discouragement.

The atmosphere of what the team experiences is particularly well portrayed. Like the police, these special magistrates are subjected to a numbers-driven policy, as well as the pressure of an 8-day deadline to resolve a case—8 days during which the 6 members of the team, constantly dealing with everyday offenses, have little space to achieve their goals.



The 8th section is under immense pressure, as its efficiency is crucial to the proper functioning of the judicial system. But here, efficiency comes at the cost of selflessness from its members, and the necessary resources to work in good conditions are lacking. Marc Trévidic is well-positioned to show us his colorful, fast-paced daily life.

After being repeatedly confronted with a frenetic pace, the world's misery, and the worst criminals, the members of the section want nothing more than for it to be dismantled so they can be reassigned elsewhere... yet, when the time comes, they will ultimately welcome its renewal with relief, as one particular case has united the team.

FROM THE MYSTERY OF THE UNIDENTIFIED BODY...

This corpse, stabbed fifty-three times and discovered in a 770-liter wheeled trash bin (a detail not without importance), serves as the central thread of the story, and uncovering the identity of the victim proves just as difficult as identifying the murderer...

Autret perseveres and takes us into his daily life. Despite his fatigue, he becomes deeply invested in this complex case, involving the forensic police, conducting interrogations, and overseeing reconstructions in a kind of race against time where every day counts. The body will eventually reveal an unexpected story, one that has its roots in Morocco.

...TO THE DAILY LIVES OF FOUR YOUNG WOMEN

Like a breath that allows us to step outside the brigade and its routine, the narrative shifts to Morocco a few years earlier, then to Paris, where a family tragedy unfolds. It's a suffocating and disturbing case, involving four young Moroccan women who arrive one by one with the promise of studying and living a better life, only to grow up shattered by an abusive stepfather. Trapped in a mafioso system and a patriarchy orchestrated by this stepfather, who runs a small prostitution ring and heartlessly pimps out his stepdaughters, they will, in a final act of defiance to protect their younger sister who has just arrived, eventually turn against their tormentor.

AUTHOR IN A FEW LINES

A magistrate and writer, Marc Trévidic was born in 1965 in Bordeaux. He traveled early on to the Near and Middle East. Appointed investigating judge in 1991, he has held various positions, including in the eighth section and as an investigating judge in Paris's anti-terrorism unit for over ten years, where he worked on several high-profile terrorism cases. He has published numerous essays and novels around this theme. For several years now, he has been president of the chamber at the Court of Appeal in Versailles.

THE NOVEL IN A FEW WORDS

"Every single one of its members had loved the Eighth for at least one reason, common to all, the most beautiful: team spirit. The Eighth had been a collective sport. The team members had stuck together in adversity. They had tried to humanize and tame the monster, this machine that crushes people and creates judicial errors, to continue seeing every victim and every detainee as a human being."

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