Chambre 12 Hôtel de Suède

Claude Ventura interviewing Cécile Decugis (at 42 :10)

https://www.cinematheque.fr/henri/film/109290-chambre-12-hotel-de-suede-claude-ventura-1993/

Claude Ventura: The film had a pretty bad reputation; the people doing the post-synchronization found it scandalous, awful...

Cécile Decugis: What people doing the post-synchronization? We were there at the post-synchronization...

CV: I don't know who...

CD: It did have a very bad reputation, that was the rumor going around Paris: "It's the worst film of the year," "It will be *unreleasable.*" That was the hatred that surrounded them in a way. All of them, especially him, perhaps. The shooting conditions were so revolutionary that it exasperated a good part of the production world.

CV: Was it a serious hatred? How did it manifest itself?

CD: I didn't really feel it that much. Well, one day we did feel it. We were here (in Joinville), we would usually have lunch nearby. One day, we went to have lunch at the Saint-Maurice studio, which is a little further away. I don't know who was shooting there. The assistant was Liliane Herman, who, at the time, was Jean Herman's wife. The three of us arrived... (laughs) There was something... People were watching us, making comments. I said to Godard, "People are whispering as we walk by." He said, "Yeah." (laughs).

CV: Do you think that this kind of reaction affected him? Did he have any second thoughts?

CD: No, he didn't have any second thoughts. The people at the *Cahiers* have no second thoughts. Or if they do, they don't show them in front of others. They keep them to themselves. But they would never... One is not sentimental! Not at all. You have to master the subject, master the material.

CV: Is that how the *Cahiers* people made you feel?

CD: Yes, we were intimidated. Because they were young, we were all the same age, and they were extremely smart. It was obvious they were very talented. Yes, they were remarkable. We could sense that they were remarkable.

CV: Did you ever get the impression that he was anxious about what his friends at the *Cahiers* would think of *Breathless*?

CD: No, no... I don't know... Yes, once, Rivette said, "It's brilliant." Then I ran into him a few days later... Godard was having coffee at the Drugstore Publicis at the top of the Champs-Élysées. I told him, "Rivette thinks *Breathless* is brilliant." He replied, I remember it very well, "Oh, it's not *Citizen Kane*, after all." That's all.

CV: But the editing style was quite revolutionary...

CD in voiceover: When I mention the editing style, she bursts out laughing, then adds: "Oh, that's Godard." As we try to find the room where *Breathless* was edited, she tells me how, after a screening where everything seemed terribly slow to him, Godard decided to cut right in the middle of the shots to give the film its rhythm. As I leave Cécile, the inevitable happens. By imagining things, I end up seeing them.

--*translation by Massoumeh Lahidji, 2025*