

RAINING STONES

by Ken LOACH

FICHE TECHNIQUE

Pays (country) : GB

Durée (running time) : 1h30

Année (year) : 1993

Genre : Comédie dramatique

Scénario (screenplay) : Jim ALLEN

Directeur de la photographie : Barry ACKROYD

Décors : Martin JOHNSON

Montage : Jonathan MORRIS

Musique : Stewart COPELAND

Coproduction : Parallax Pictures Ltd. / Channel Four Films

Distribution : Diaphana

Interprètes (cast) : Bruce JONES (Bob Williams), Julie BROWN (Anne Williams), Ricky TOMLINSON (Tommy), Tom HICKEY (le prêtre Barry), Gemma PHOENIX (Coleen Williams)

SYNOPSIS

Bob (Bruce Jones) and his family are barely making ends meet before two events upset the careful balance. First, Bob's van is stolen, then he learns that the outfit for the First Communion of his daughter, Coleen (Gemma Phoenix), is going to cost more than 100 pounds. His wife, Anne (Julie Brown), and pastor (Tom Hickey) advise him to take a less expensive route, such as renting a dress, but Bob will have none of that. Nothing but the best for his daughter on this special occasion. The problem is, since he's on the dole, money is hard to come by, and odd jobs don't pay much.

Simplicity, sincerity, and realism are the hallmarks of Ken Loach's *Raining Stones*. With an uncompromising look at England's lowest class, this film explores the facets of living hand-to-mouth in a society where work is scarce and a pint at the pub offers life's sole release.

Bob a bien du mal à joindre les deux bouts pour faire vivre sa famille (sa femme et sa fille Coleen), quand deux événements vont venir bouleverser cet équilibre déjà bien précaire. Tout d'abord, Bob se fait voler son camion, puis apprend que la robe de communion de sa fille va lui coûter bien plus de cent livres (150 €). Sa femme et le prêtre de la paroisse lui conseillent de trouver une robe moins chère ou bien d'en louer une pour la cérémonie, mais c'est oublier la volonté sans faille de Bob de préserver sa dignité. Coleen aura ce qui se fait de mieux pour l'occasion. Mais Bob est au chômage et l'argent se fait rare d'autant que les petits boulots d'appoint ne rapportent pas beaucoup. Pour les classes sociales défavorisées, il pleut des pierres sept jours sur sept. Bob ne trouve d'autre solution que d'emprunter, mais les usuriers rôdent.

Simplicité, sincérité et réalisme sont les aspects marquants du film de Ken Loach, Raining Stones. Sans aucun compromis sur la vie des plus défavorisés, le film explore les différentes facettes de la débrouille pour survivre dans une société où le travail se fait rare et où un simple verre de bière est l'un des seuls moments pour échapper à la misère.

AUTOUR DU FILM

Après *Riff-Raff* et avant *My Name is Joe* et *The Navigators*, Loach nous plonge avec *Raining Stones* dans l'Angleterre « d'en bas », celles des victimes de la « Thatcher revolution ». On y retrouve les ingrédients chers à Loach qui ont fait école dans le cinéma anglais (*Les Virtuoses* de Mark Herman, *The Full Monty* de Peter Cattaneo, *Billy Elliot* de Stephen Daldry) ; à savoir de l'émotion et de l'humour pour nous décrire la vie difficile de la « working class » de la banlieue de Manchester. Loach nous décrit la vraie vie avec des vrais personnages (accent authentique parfois difficile à comprendre pour les anglophones non Britanniques), des vrais problèmes sans misérabilisme et le message politique passe d'autant mieux qu'il n'est pas didactique. Il suffit d'observer et d'écouter. Bob parlant au prêtre : « Je suis un bosseur, tous les jours je me lève pour chercher du boulot partout où il

peut y en avoir, je suis un bon catholique, je vais à l'église, je prie aussi mais ça ne met pas de nourriture sur la table. » Il y a bien un léger appel à la révolution, mais l'ami de Bob (extraordinaire Ricky Tomlison), ivre, lance cette menace plus par dépit que par réelle conviction. Les personnages manient l'humour pour survivre et préserver leur dignité symbolisée aussi par l'obstination de Bob à offrir la plus belle robe de communion à sa fille Coleen. Ces moments de comédie sont autant de répit pour le spectateur qui en a bien besoin. Ken Loach dérogera à ce mélange de drame et comédie dans son bouleversant *Sweet Sixteen* où à aucun moment il n'offre de répit aux spectateurs. En bref *Raining Stones*, c'est du Ken Loach, du très grand Ken Loach.

Interview de Ken Loach

Sundance Channel: Can you explain the title?

Ken Loach: It's just us saying that when you're poor it's raining stones seven days a week.

SC: No matter what happens, Bob hangs in there. But why?

KL: Because people hang on to their dignity. It's a film about dignity really, and self-respect. And he will keep his self-respect if he can just buy the Communion dress for his little girl.

SC: The priest is the conscience of the film. And the movie says a lot about religion.

KL: It's not a religious film I hope. I mean the priest is in that position in that society because in the area of Manchester, it's a largely Catholic population. A lot of people have Irish antecedents and Italian antecedents and so Catholicism is the principal religion just in that one area. And so the priest is someone who's quite important. And Bob being a good Catholic goes along with the priest. But the priest's intervention is not divine. He's responding as a fellow human being. So it doesn't endorse religion. It just endorses him being a good guy.

SC: Now, Bob's wife at the end says, "It's funny how we start out with these big ideas and you realize things aren't going to change." Bob on the other hand is very optimistic. Are you optimistic?

KL: Well, we can't be optimistic in the short-term because if change is dependent on politics, then we have no political leadership here that will instigate change. The two main political parties are committed to private profits. But in the long-term, you have to be optimistic because sooner or later, people say no. People say this is intolerable, we won't live like this any longer and we will have some control over what is produced and how it's produced and we won't tolerate being exploited and we won't tolerate unemployment and all of that. In the long-term, I think, things will change.

When you've found good people to be in the film, you're just taking them through the story when you film it. So that you shoot in order; you shoot so that they need to know what they know when you're doing the scene. But if there's a major surprise it can happen. Then in a way, it's good that they don't know. Because I think the hardest thing to act is surprised.

So in the scene when the loan shark comes on and just terrorizes this poor woman and does terrible things to her, you know, by making her take her wedding rings off to sell, which is a most awful, humiliating, demeaning experience – she didn't know that was going to happen. Until it happened. Then we worked on it a bit and I'd give her the script and that so she gets the lines bit by bit. But the shock of the surprise, she can then live off as an actor for the next few hours.

I think the pressure of film-making really is about steering the performers in a way so that they can give that absolute truest account of what's happening on any particular day. And of course it doesn't always happen but that's what you aim for.

But you should make it so that the actors don't have an alternative really, don't have an excuse. I'd never give an actor a mark or never give an actor a position or anything like that. Because then they've got an excuse: "Oh, where's my mark?" The sound man should never tell the actors to speak up, you know, because then they've got something else to think about. I mean all they should think about is looking the other person in the eye and telling the truth.

PISTES PÉDAGOGIQUES

Extrait du script où Bob se réfugie chez Father Barry

(Bob arrives at the rectory to see Father Barry.)

F.B.: Bob?

Bob: I'm in trouble, Father.

F.B.: How do you mean? Come in! What is it, Bob? What's happened? Sit yourself down. What's up?

Bob: I'm in terrible trouble, Father.

F.B.: What kind of trouble?

Bob: I've been responsible for a man's death.

F.B.: You – You killed someone?

Bob: No. It was an accident, an accident. I didn't mean to. A man named Tansey.

F.B.: The loan shark!

Bob: Yeah.

F.B.: You fought with him?

Bob: Yeah.

F.B.: About what?

Bob: Money.

F.B.: You borrowed from him?

Bob: No. I borrowed from a loan company, but I couldn't keep the payments up and Tansey got hold of the debts. That's what he does. Debts and drugs.

F.B.: So I heard. How much?

Bob: A hundred and fifty pounds.

F.B.: To pay for Coleen's dress?

Bob: Yes. It was the only way.

F.B.: I thought you had more sense. Hold your horses there for a second.

Bob: I took these out of his pocket.

F.B.: What is it?

Bob: It's the book with all the names in. That's the money they all owe. And if they don't pay, he goes round and breaks their legs. That's why they call him "The Collector"... I boil up inside. Sometimes I get angry, but I'm a grafter.

F.B.: I know that.

Bob: I get up every morning and go looking for work, wherever it is. I'm a good Catholic, Father. I go to church. I believe in God. I pray. But it doesn't put food on the table.

F.B.: When did this happen?

Bob: About an hour ago.

F.B.: So he's still lying in the car?

Bob: As far as I know, yeah.

F.B.: Does anyone else know about it?

Bob: No.

F.B.: Just us?

Bob: Yeah.

F.B.: What are you going to do about it, Bob?

Bob: I'm going to the police. What else can I do? But I don't want them going around telling Anne and Coleen. I want you to do that, Father, please. I want you to do it, because I can't.

F.B.: Why should you?

Bob: What?

F.B.: Tell Anne.

Bob: Tansey's dead.

F.B.: F..., Tansey! May God have mercy on his soul. You didn't kill him.

Bob: No. It was an accident!

F.B.: Yes. It was an accident. So why sacrifice your freedom and the happiness of your family? There's lots of good people on this estate who will sleep easier in their beds because of his passing.

Bob: They were feared of him, Father. They were feared of him.

F.B.: You came to me for advice and help?

Bob: Yeah.

F.B.: Then stay away from the police. Go home and pray for Tansey's worthless soul. Say nothing to Anne or to anyone. First thing we do is get rid of this lot.
You're not an evil man, Bob. People like yourself are hungering for justice. In the name of Christ who was Himself the bread of life. You deserve it. Now, I'll hear your confession.

Script from the film *Raining Stones* by Ken LOACH – 1993

Etude de l'extrait

- Basic questions:
 - Place of action
 - Time of action
 - Characters involved
 - The plot
- Si vous disposez de la vidéo, vous pouvez construire un exercice à trous en supprimant les verbes de la première partie (jusqu'à « what is it ? »). Ensuite, simplement en demandant « What did Bob say? » ou « What did Father Barry reply? », vous obligez les élèves à utiliser le style indirect tout en découvrant le texte.
- Through the characters involved (Bob, Father Barry) or mentioned in this passage (Tansey the loan shark) we are given a rather clear description of the Thatcherian or post Thatcherian society. The loan shark reminds us of the poverty described by Dickens in some of his novels. The students also may be asked to find out what these three characters stand for.

After having analysed the character of Bob, it is possible to ask what reasons made him jeopardize the balance of his already precarious financial situation. (His will for dignity and self-respect.)

- Father Barry: what makes him a special priest? (His advice to Bob, his language, etc.)
- Tansey: who's he? What or Who does he symbolize in society?
- Structures at work. Did Bob have other solutions than to borrow money? Cette question permettra de travailler Could have + En et Should have + En.
- Follow-up work. How symbolical is the dress? What is self-respect for you? Do you think religion is worth so many sacrifices?