

NEW YORK. "Claude Lelouch's *The Crook* is a surprisingly satisfying film from this young director who first won popularity here with *A Man and a Woman*. Lelouch fell from grace thereafter with the befuddlement and pretension of *Live for Life* and *Life Love Death*. His last film, *Love Is a Funny Thing*, a beguiling 'bittersweet' adult love story was just a year ahead of its (and our) sentimental time. With *The Crook* the 32-year-old French director has retained his chic and discarded the schmaltz in favor of a pleasantly cynical sophistication; he's also got back his leading man of *A Man and a Woman*, Jean-Louis Trintignant. And for the whipped cream, he once again has a Francis Lai score to underline the pleasures of the plotting. . . . And plotting — complex and complexly set forth in an interlocking chain of linked flashbacks — is the core of the tale. By starting in the middle, working his way back just a bit, picking up the present and then flashing back to how it all began, Lelouch manages to keep the sharpest crime buff guessing. For every move there is a reason, for every turn the required twist. The plot that is finally unraveled is nothing short of brilliant — and believable. . . . Trintignant is the focus of credibility. Far from the all-brain-brawn-and-supercool of the usual fictional high-class crook, this actor brings an intellectual calm and cogency to his criminal. Simon is a man of sensibility and warmth, gentle and considerate of his women, dispassionate in his relationships, tender with children and with an obvious aversion to violence. And this is, in fact, respected by the police, whose entire approach to Simon is on a gentlemanly level. As Simon says, it's a matter of class — and style. . . . And stylish is the word for this film, from the opening credits that present us with a brilliantly satiric sequence from a gangster-musical, an homage to the *Borsalino* cult and to the endearing idiocies of movie musicals, to a final reprise of the sequence as the flight-film of the moment. Lelouch still has his infatuation with motor cars (excusable since they are the tools of flight, pursuit and even calmer travel) and with reflections in their windshields (inexorable after even the first, let alone fourth, indulgence therein). But this fades in his totally cinematic narration; it is the camera and the scene that tells you the what and where and how. . . . Not one word of the caper will you get from me; the total pleasure of its unfolding must be yours. Suffice it that en route there are performers to complement the skill and appeal of Trintignant. The scenes are finely clipped, the scenery (Paris, Brussels, a touch of Rome) lovely, the suspense first-rate. And though Lelouch does not declare himself on whether crime does ultimately pay or not, you're free to feel, as I do, that *The Crook* deserves the best of everything." Judith Crist (5/17/71).

WASHINGTON POST. "Claude Lelouch's *The Crook* may be the brand of synthetic entertainment some people are looking for, but it's not my brand. . . . The pleasure one wants to derive from the slick, sophisticated crime thriller format turns into annoyance, because the film is as shallowly felt as it is artificially constructed. Lelouch is neither entertainer nor sophisticate enough to gloss over the unattractive, mercenary elements; he seems to copy the *modus operandi* of his hero, who is smugly impervious to the feelings of both accomplices and marks. . . . Jean-Louis Trintignant is the

cool, unemotional movie mastermind, a lawyer-turned-thief (if you can believe it) who engineers a million-dollar kidnapping plan. The victims of the kidnapping are a bank employee and his wife (very well played by Charles Denner and Judith Magre), who have a little boy. The ransom is demanded not of the father himself but of the bank that employs him, the notion being that the directors can't refuse even if they want to, that they'll be over a public relations barrel. They pay, and the plot winds down with a lot of gratuitous double and triple twisting. . . . Ethically speaking, Lelouch seems to have his head screwed on in the wrong direction. The basic crime premise might be intriguing, but Lelouch spoils things by adding certain touches that are meant to be satirical and charming but feel basically insensitive. Perhaps Denner and Magre are at fault for making the parents' distress at losing their child seem authentic, but it is hard to accept the way Lelouch chooses to ridicule them, along with the press and the directors of the bank. In his determination to be tricky and sophisticated, Lelouch miscalculates our ordinary sympathies and just ends up looking rather amoral and dense. While he's kidding the bank for debating the issue, we may be more impressed by the fact that the directors do, indeed, pay the ransom. While the wily crook is getting away with grand larceny, we may be wondering what is supposed to be so bloody amusing or attractive about his sort of criminality. . . . If such reservations don't arise, chances are the mood of the film is congenial to you and it won't be difficult to suspend disbelief or identify with Trintignant. It's been three years since *The Thomas Crown Affair*, and the movies have been pretty remiss in satisfying audience appetites for vicarious glamor, wealth and criminal chutzpah. *The Crook* is peddling a slightly acidic variation of the *Crown* style and glamor, at your need is great enough, this one might get by too." Gary Arnold (10/5/71).

VILLAGE VOICE. "The Crook, the American version of Claude Lelouch's *Le Voleur*, is an excellent film about the kidnapping of a child for ransom. What is amazing is that the film is also remarkably funny when dealing with a subject which universally provokes revulsion. Lelouch's taste and intelligence are the ingredients which make this possible. . . . Jean-Louis Trintignant plays the voyou, Simon the Swiss, so called because of the clockwork precision of his crimes. Trintignant, playing a lawyer gone wrong, manages to be a sympathetic rogue even in his recidivism. Not only does Simon the Swiss get away with the loot, after the temporary inconvenience of jail, he clearly gives the impression he is not going straight. The moral, if one were going to embroider it on a sampler, seems to be that Crime Pays. If You Have Style. . . . Lelouch carries autism to its practical conclusion: he co-authored, directed, and photographed *The Crook*. Two husband-wife teams are involved in the production. Christine Lelouch plays the role of Simon's amorous foil, Yves Robert gives an interesting performance as the poulet (detective) in charge, and his wife Daniele Delorme is the Other Woman. Delorme is quite appealing as a secretary of a certain age who happens to be sitting in the wrong place at the right time. She gets assaulted, manipulated, and comes to love it all. . . . The plot has as many twists as a macramé maxicoat. One of the best is Simon's device to have a cold-blooded corporation

ante up the ransom, rather than the impoverished parents of the child. Lelouch's crook is essentially a con man. There is no real violence in the film and not a drop of blood is shed. (Trintignant works always with an empty pistol.) The authors have correctly reasoned that a con artist's greatest asset is maintaining the psychological advantage, and have structured *The Crook* with this understanding. . . . Lelouch's earlier films have been called impersonal and schmaltzy. Neither criticism strikes me as accurate. If Lelouch is preoccupied with anything it is symmetry. He has carefully composed *The Crook* in sonata form, and when the final credits have rolled, all loose ends have been neatly sutured. Bravo." Tom Costner (7/29/71).

NEWSDAY. "The Crook, we are told by its distributor, had its origins in the mind of a French ex-convict. Claude Lelouch, the French director of *A Man and a Woman*, felt it was a great idea for a crime movie. And so he offered the would-be kidnaper a sizable sum for the rights to the outline of the crime. The only thing not too clear in the transaction is why the criminal did not sell Lelouch the Eiffel Tower as part of the deal. Because once you've seen *The Crook*, you'll realize that the kidnapping scheme has so many loopholes it might never have worked. If the story about the ex-con is true, then it's obvious that he's no kidnaper. He's a flim-flam man. . . . *The Crook* is a hokey crime melodrama that is somewhat redeemed by the *savoir faire* of Jean-Louis Trintignant. He's one of the finest movie stars of Europe. His first venture with Lelouch, *A Man and a Woman*, was a glossy soap opera. Much of the film was improvised, and Trintignant had the personal charm and warmth and technical ability to carry the mushy moments and his insipid partner, Anouk Aimee, on his own strength. Anyone who has seen Trintignant in *Z* or in *The Conformist*, recognizes instantly his astonishing versatility. So it is not surprising that as the crook in Lelouch's new film, Trintignant makes a far-fetched caper more exciting and sophisticated than it would have been if another actor had played the lead. . . . Lelouch models the plot by telling the story of the crime in flashback, quite suddenly, and without adequate transition. It takes some time before we understand that we are seeing a flashback. And then, later, it becomes obvious that it was merely a gratuitous gimmick for introducing some suspense. Worse, the kidnap plot itself is drawn out endlessly and is hammed up with a stage show featuring a popular French singer, Sacha Distel, who appears in the film to sell a few more tickets in Paris. . . . Save your money, stay home, read a book, and prevent a burglary." Joseph Gelmis (6/21/71).

INTERNATIONAL CINEMA

184 JKB - Sept. 21-23, 1972

Thursday	"The Crook"	4:30 & 8:50
	Cantinflas "El Profe"	6:40
Friday	Cantinflas "El Profe"	4:30 & 9:10
	"The Crook"	6:50
Saturday	"The Crook"	4:30 & 9:10
	Cantinflas "El Profe"	6:50

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CANTINFLAS



EL PROFE

MARGA LOPEZ

ARTURO DE CORDOVA

ANITA M. BRIGADO JACQUES UFFMAN LARREL P. CAHORA

Sept 21-23 1972 ✓

THE CROOK

FRENCH ITALIAN (1970). Original French Title: *LE VOYOU* (The Hoodlum). A FILM BY CLAUDE LÉLOUCH. A Co-Production of LES FILMS ARIANE FILMS 13/LFS PRODUCTIONS ARTISTES ASSOCIÉS (Paris) and P.F.A. (PRODUZIONI EUROPEE ASSOCIATI) FILMS (Rome). Released in the U.S. thru UNITED ARTISTS. Producer: ALEXANDRE MNOUCHKINE. Director: CLAUDE LÉLOUCH. Screenplay: CLAUDE LÉLOUCH, PIERRE UYTENDIEVEN and CLAUDE PINOTEAU. Photography: CLAUDE LÉLOUCH and JEAN COLLOMB. Music Composed and Conducted by FRANCIS LAI. Editor: MARIE-CLAUDE LACAMBRE. Art Direction: ALBERT VOLFF. Choreography: VICTOR UPSHAW. Sound: JEAN-LOUIS DUCARME. Production Manager: PIERRE PARON. Asst. Director: CLAUDE PINOTEAU. Location scenes filmed near Paris and in Brussels. Eastman Color. English Subtitles. 120 Mins. [G].

Simon the Swiss . . . JEAN-LOUIS TRINTIGNANT
Janine . . . DANILLE DELORME
Monsieur Gallois . . . CHARLES DENNER
Martine . . . CHRISTINE LÉLOUCH
Bill . . . AMIDOU
Martine's Husband . . . PIERRE ZIMMER
Charles . . . CHARLES GERARD
Madame Gallois . . . JUDITH MAGRE
The Inspector . . . YVES ROBERT
Daniel Gallois . . . VINCENT ROZIERE
Banker . . . JACQUES DONIOL-VALCROZE
Himself . . . SACHA DISTEL
PAUL LE PERSON . . . GABRIELLA GIORGELLI
LUCIANO PIGOZZI . . . ALDO MACCIONE
MIMMO PALMARA . . . GERARD SIRE
CAROLINE GALLI

Synopsis

After serving five years of a twenty-year prison sentence, an ex-lawyer turned criminal called Simon the Swiss (because of the meticulous precision of his crimes) breaks out of jail, heads for Paris, and hides out in the apartment of Janine, a secretary who eventually succumbs to her unexpected house-guest's charm. Risking capture by the police, Simon arranges a meeting in the park with his ex-wife Martine and their daughter, who was born during his imprisonment. Although Martine has remained a wealthy yogurt manufacturer, she is still in love with Simon and agrees to help him . . . Five years earlier, Simon — assisted by Martine and an old friend, Charles — had pulled off a brilliant million-dollar theft. Duping a young bank clerk named Gallois and his wife into believing they had won a brand new automobile, Simon had posed as a public relations man and persuaded the couple to leave their son Daniel in his care while they collected their prize. Taking Daniel to a country hideout, Simon then demanded that Gallois' employer pay a million-dollar ransom. Because of the resulting public outcry, the bank was compelled to pay, Daniel (convinced that he had merely been taken on a holiday) was returned to his parents, and Simon hid the money in his apartment. But when Gallois, who actually had been in on the plot from the start, demanded his share of the loot, Simon informed him that they had to wait six months before dividing up the money. Suspecting Simon of a double-cross, Gallois had anonymously tipped off the police, thereby causing Simon's arrest and imprisonment . . . Now determined to have both his revenge and the money, Simon forces Gallois to sign a confession, retrieves the money from its hiding place, and, after informing both Janine and Martine (and probably the police, who are tapping their phones) that he is flying to Montreal, meets Charles on a plane bound for New York. But as the jet approaches North America, the two crooks are jolted out of their complacency by the pilot's announcement that due to heavy fog over New York, the plane will instead land in Montreal.

Critique

SUMMARY. Released in France as *Le Voyou* (The Hoodlum), in England as *Simon the Swiss*, and in the U.S. as *The Crook*, Claude Lelouch's tongue-in-cheek crime caper reunited the young French director with both the star (Jean-Louis Trintignant) and the musical composer (Francis Lai) of his trend-setting *A Man and a Woman* (FF '66). And the cinematic results pleased the bulk of the critics: "Amusing, suspenseful and often charming entertainment" (the San Francisco Chronicle's Paine Knickerbocker); "Clever, light and amusing" (the Saturday Review's Hollis Alpert). "The film has style, is interesting and entertains . . . What more can you ask for?" (the N.Y. Daily News' Ann Guarino). Both Newsweek's Paul D. Zimmerman and the Los Angeles Times' Charles Champlin particularly admired the movie's "romantic" and "fairy tale" qualities. Maintaining that "Claude Lelouch is one of the few contemporary directors who appears eager and able to generate a romantic aura on the screen," Champlin asserted that "he has done it here, disarmingly," and then went on to describe Trintignant as "a Bogartian hero figure — Like Bogart, Trintignant gives us joy while being a surprisingly contained character himself." Equally impressed with both the director and the star, Zimmerman contended that this "pretty," "engaging" and "wildly romantic" film marked a distinct improvement over Lelouch's previous movies because "he no longer shows off with snazzy lenses and he tells his story with great verve and economy." In addition, Zimmerman wrote that Trintignant (who "offers that rare combination of Gallic prettiness and strong character") "has assimilated the techniques of his craft so thoroughly that he seems to have no special style at all — yet every moment is right." According to the New Yorker's Penelope Gilliatt, in fact, it was Trintignant who redeemed the film. Although Miss Gilliatt conceded that she found the picture "smooth, gifted, and impossible to stop watching," she nevertheless claimed that it was "not very admirable" because of the basic "cruelty" and "sadism" of its premise — the kidnapping of a child. Accordingly, Miss Gilliatt mused that if *The Crook* "were not played by Jean-Louis Trintignant, who has quietly become the Bogart of his generation, I doubt whether his ambitious omniscience would be so likable." Rather than the kidnapping theme, the N.Y. Times' Roger Greenspun objected to Lelouch's "self-indulgence, misdirected visual rhetoric and inexpressive stylistic excesses." While admitting that he "especially liked" the performance of the director's wife Christine Lelouch (as did all the reviewers), Greenspun thought the film itself so "unnecessarily complex," "fancy" and "fussy," and so filled with "through-the-windshield photography (a Lelouch specialty)," that it all added up to "eyewash." In complete agreement, Variety's "Mosk" (reporting from Paris in 1970) called the "repetitive" and "garish" movie "too convoluted, pretty and full of technique for its own sake." But such demurrals were overshadowed by the appreciative majority, including Cue's William Wolf, who declared that Lelouch had made a "good-looking" and "fun" film that, above all, illustrated why "Jean-Louis Trintignant is one of the most successful and worthy performers on the French scene today."

Critical Consensus: 7 favorable, 2 mixed, 4 negative.

184 JKB

Thur Fri Sat

INTERNATIONAL CINEMA

PRESENTS:

Last Year at Marienbad

The Cranes are flying

"Be prepared for an experience such as you've never had from watching a film."

SHOWTIME:

"Exciting experience... With the exception of Sergei Eisenstein's IVAN THE TERRIBLE, it is probably the best Russian movie seen in the U.S. since World War II."

184 JKB - Sept. 28-30, 1972

Thursday "Last Year at Marienbad" 4:30 & 8:00
"Cranes are flying" 6:15

Friday "Cranes are flying" 5:00 & 9:00
"Last Year at Marienbad" 7:00

Saturday "Last Year at Marienbad" 5:00 & 9:00
"Cranes are flying" 7:00

IN

french

IN

russian

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The Confession

FROM
THE MAN WHO
GAVE US "Z"

"ONE OF THE YEAR'S
TEN BEST!"

Stewart Klein, WNEW-TV William Wolf, Cue Joseph Gelinis, Thursday

"THE CONFESSION' IS VASTLY MORE
INTERESTING THAN 'Z'! MUCH MORE
COMPLEX, MUCH MORE HUMAN!
Costa-Gavras is a movie master."

Vincent Canby, N.Y. Times

"THE CONFESSION' IS BONE CHILLING!
A REAL LIFE HORROR STORY, DONE
IN THE STACCATO STYLE OF 'Z'!"

Kathleen Carroll, N.Y. Daily News

October 26-28 1972, JKB 184

Thursday	The Confession	4:30 & 8:55
	Black Orpheus	7:00
Friday	Black Orpheus	4:30 & 9:10
	The Confession	6:30
Saturday	The Confession	4:30 & 9:10
	Black Orpheus	7:10

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in french

(with English subtitles)

THE CONFESSION and INVESTIGATION OF A CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION

ROBERT HATCH

Quite far along in the fabrication of his confession, Artur London's interrogator explains to him that for the moment they are just putting together the objective facts; later, they can move on to the subjective considerations. Of course, they never do, and much the same thing may be said of Costa-Gavras' *The Confession*, in which Yves Montand enacts the horrifying experiences of London, a man high in the Czechoslovak Communist bureaucracy who was one of the defendants in the 1951 Slansky trials.

It is an exquisite film, constructed with a sensitivity to the texture of the jerry-built hell in which the victims of Stalin's death throes are confined. It never falters as to light or sound or the appalling detail that make this nightmare inescapably credible. I cite one example: London and his codefendants are kept, when they are not being questioned, in rough wooden cells that resemble cattle pens in a slaughter yard. But the building in which they are held was evidently once a palace or elegant residence, and here and there the carpenters have taken advantage of the original walls. The contrast between fragments of elegantly wallpapered salon and the rough pine boards chills the heart with the realization that this is something remembered; that it is unlikely to have been invented.

And so with the process of preparing the confession, London is a tough and experienced Communist bureaucrat with a history of important party activity dating to the Spanish Civil War. He is also utterly innocent of any crime against the state. Yet he signs, memorizes, and recites in court a confession of "treachery" that stretches back for years. It doesn't seem possible until one sees the method, and then it seems inevitable.

London's inquisitors do not use torture, if by that one means racks and thumb screws and the later electrical refinements. They need a seemingly intact London to display eventually at the show trial, and in any case such devices are not necessary. They half-starve the man, deprive him of sleep, exhaust him with enforced pacing of his cell. But these are done less to cause him direct pain than to confuse his mind and weaken his resolution. The process starts even before he is seized. For days, cars full of political police ostentatiously follow wherever he goes. This naturally alarms him, causes him to scurry about for conferences with colleagues (who are also marked for investigation). Such actions can later be cited as symptoms of guilt; more important, they make London feel guilty, though of what he cannot say.

His enemies were greatly assisted by the fact that London was (and as far as I know still is) a faithful Communist. He persists in thinking some terrible error has been made and that, between them, he and his tormentors can set it straight. He can even swallow the notion that he should confess because the party needs his confession. Of course, by then he is not thinking very clearly—he has reached the point of signing fragments of statements in exchange for a moment's sleep or a mouthful of food, such statements are "factually" true but they will be put together into paragraphs that are utterly false. But even years later, when he is free and resting among friends somewhere on the French Mediterranean, London still looks back on the horror as something done by bad men in a bad time. It is not just that he still believes in the theories of communism; he still adheres to the practice of totalitarianism, and cannot wait to get back to Prague to be reunited with the good totalitarians who have "corrected the situation." He arrives on the day when the Soviet tanks roll into the city, and the picture ends with Montand's face in close up, frozen against a montage of the people's despondent but impotent resistance to a further "correction of the situation." Does he finally realize that his months of torment corrected an earlier situation and that under totalitarianism such correction will always be the procedure? The film doesn't say, but a fair guess is that London is a "believer," and such men do not learn.

I submit that Yves Montand is not the actor to play that man. He says the words of blind dedication, but coming from his lips

they have no reality. He cannot look like a "believer"; he looks, moves, speaks like a sophisticated Frenchman of independent mind, logical acuity, and quick humor. That a man of that sort could have been forced into a confession is believable (indeed, it is obvious, since the method will work with any man); but that he could have been a loyal functionary of the regime for years both before and even after his ordeal passes belief.

This, it may be said, is a mere matter of personal style; but style is what a man principally tells you about himself. All through *The Confession* the audience identifies with the person Montand so powerfully projects, but at the end it is forced to admit that that was not the person about whom the story was being told. It is the same with London's wife. I suppose it is true that, after the trial, she wrote a letter to the authorities denouncing her husband; but if so, she is not the woman whom Simone Signoret plays throughout the film. The objective facts are all there; but the subjective meaning—which is what matters—is blank.

Much the same thing happened with *Z*, in which Costa-Gavras also directed Montand. I don't think it is entirely an accident. The purpose of these films is to supply the public with cat-and-mouse adventures that offer the added filip of historical documentation. For that to work, the audience must identify strongly with the protagonist, and it isn't easy for most Western audiences to identify with underlings who go along for years not realizing that their state is a trap, who fall eventually into its jaws, and who escape without ever realizing what nature of trap it was. So the solution is to cast Yves Montand in the role, and never mind that it makes no sense. There were others in the cast, among the codefendants, who looked exactly like "true believers"; unfortunately, one would need to be drugged to identify with them. If one could show how such men come to be, and what sustains them, it would be a revealing tragedy. But *The Confession* is not that; it is a romance that in the closing footage papers over the discrepancy between character and event with newsreel clips of a people's heroic defeat.

Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion reads like one of those titles that intend to call attention to the product by their very awkwardness. But Elio Petri, the director, was probably only stating the subject literally when he named his picture: he has cre-

1834. JKB

Thur Fri Sat

INTERNATIONAL CINEMA

PRESENTS:



THE SWORDSMAN
OF
ALL SWORDSMEN

in CHINESE
with English subtitles



November 9-11, 1972, 184 JKB

Thursday	Aida	4:30 & 8:00
	King of Swordsmen	6:15
Friday	Aida	6:50
	King of Swordsmen	5:00 & 8:40
Saturday	Aida	5:00 & 8:30
	King of Swordsmen	6:50

in ITALIAN
with connecting English script

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184 JKB

Thur Fri Sat

INTERNATIONAL CINEMA

PRESENTS:

DIARY OF A COUNTRY PRIEST

Ordet

November 16-18, 1972, 184 JKB

IN

french

WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

Thursday	Diary of a Country Priest	4:30 & 9:00
	Ordet	6:40
Friday	Ordet	4:30 & 9:15
	Diary of a Country Priest	7:00
Saturday	Diary of a Country Priest	4:30 & 9:05
	Ordet	6:45

ADMISSION: 75¢ at door or 50¢ through purchase of IC program card (6 admissions for \$3.00) available through all foreign language departments, the Department of Humanities, and the Honors Program.

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IN

danish

WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES