



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM THE ACADEMY-AWARD® NOMINATED DIRECTOR RACHID BOUCHAREB: LONDON RIVER

Featuring the BAFTA Award Winning actress Brenda Blethyn and a Berlin Silver Bear performance by Sotigui Kouyaté

**PREMIERES *WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 7* in NEW YORK
and *DECEMBER 16* in LOS ANGELES**

LOS ANGELES (November 7, 2011) – Powerful performances by Brenda Blethyn and Sotigui Kouyaté drive this touching film from Rachid Bouchareb, the three-time Academy-Award nominated director of *DAYS OF GLORY* (Indigènes) and *OUTSIDE THE LAW* (Hors La Loi). *LONDON RIVER*, the story of two parents looking for their respective children following the aftermath of the London bus bombings will have its American premiere at NY's Cinema Village on **Wednesday December 7** and at the Laemmle's Royal in Los Angeles on December 16 with a platform release to follow.

Set against the backdrop of the July 7, 2005 terrorist attacks in London, *LONDON RIVER* follows Elizabeth (BAFTA winner, Academy Award® nominee Brenda Blethyn) from a small farming community in Guernsey, as she travels to London in the immediate aftermath of the bombings after failing to hear from her daughter. Elizabeth is disturbed by the confusion of the metropolis and above all by the predominantly Muslim neighborhood where her daughter lived. Her fear and prejudice escalate when she discovers her daughter was converting to Islam and she keeps crossing paths with Ousmane (Silver Bear winner, Sotigui Kouyaté), a West African who has come from France to find his missing son. Although they come from very different backgrounds, Elizabeth and Ousmane share the same hope of finding their children alive. Putting aside their cultural differences, they give each other the strength to continue the search and maintain their faith in humanity.

The film was inspired by the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings in London when a series of co-ordinated suicide attacks, targeting civilians using the public transportation system during the morning rush-hour, disabled the city. Three bombs planted aboard the London Underground and a fourth on a double-decker bus exploded during rush-hour traffic, killing fifty-two people, as well as the four bombers, and wounding over 700 more. Following the explosions, the phone system became overloaded and the transportation systems were shut down, marooning Londoners from their relatives and making communication difficult. As seen in the film, kiosks popped up spontaneously across the city, where people posted "Missing" flyers seeking kin. The city, and world, were held hostage for the next two weeks as additional bomb threats were followed by police raids and large scale evacuations after which two additional bombs were deployed on July 21. To combat the rising tide of Islamophobia, the British government set up a number of initiatives, including the "National Forum against extremism and Islamophobia." There were also plans by the British government to ban incitement to "religious hatred"; however, this failed to get through the House of Commons.

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Bouchareb, who says “all my films are concerned with the subject of meetings between different people, from different countries and different worlds,” shot LONDON RIVER on a small budget in 15 days. He wrote the screenplay specifically for Kouyaté and Blethyn, whom he had seen in Mike Leigh’s SECRETS AND LIES. “The event (7/7) is the starting point. My film is less about the bombings themselves and more about the meeting between these two characters that takes place in its wake. That’s what is important to me, that these two people who meet are united by the same problem, which is their desire to find their children. Events such as the attacks of 7/7 naturally divide people, but at the same time, they also bring them together. They need one another. People have to come together in the face of such crises. It’s an obligation.”

Blethyn has received two Academy Award® nominations, two SAG Award® nominations, two Emmy Award® nominations and three Golden Globe® Award nominations, winning one. She is perhaps best known in the States for her roles in SECRETS AND LIES, for which she won the BAFTA for Best Actress, as well as the big-budget features PRIDE & PREJUDICE (2005) and ATONEMENT (2007). LONDON RIVER was released in the UK in July 2010, where Derek Malcolm of The Evening Standard said her performance was worthy of an “ovation.” The film premiered in 2009 at the Berlin International Film Festival.

French-speaking Kouyaté plays an African Muslim man working in France as an arborist. This was the final performance for Kouyaté who was a theatre legend, and who passed away in April 2010. A former professional footballer from Mali, he started his career on stage as a favor to a friend. He had a long association with UK theatre director Peter Brook and was the founder of the Mandeko Theatre in the Malian capital Bamako. Kouyaté, whose parents came from a long line of *griots*—or traditional storytellers—was also made an Officer of Arts and Letters by the French government at the Cannes Film Festival in 2009. In an interview for the film, Kouyaté said, “It is a film about how we react to things, and this is what interests me. It teaches us that when you meet the other, don’t be scared to look them in the eye; for if you are brave enough to do so, you will finish by seeing yourself more clearly.”

The film also features Roschdy Zem and Sami Bouajila both of whom have starred in DAYS OF GLORY and OUTSIDE THE LAW.

Bouchareb, the Paris-born child of Algerian parents, has built a career making films that touch on issues of ethnicity, religious intolerance, displacement, kinship and community. His first film BATON ROUGE (1985) is the story of three poor Parisians who dream about a better life in America. CHEB, which won a special award after its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in 1991, is the story of a young Algerian expat, educated in Paris, who returns to Algeria to find he is no longer welcomed there. DUST OF LIFE (Poussières De Vie) and LITTLE SENEGAL (both available for the first time on DVD and digital platforms in North America from Cinema Libre Studio) explore, respectively the bastard children of American soldiers in Vietnam and the pilgrimage of a slave museum tour guide from Africa who journeys to the United States in search of his relatives—whose ancestors were taken as slaves, the latter was filmed in the Senegalese community of Harlem in New York City.

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Bouchareb has a long production partnership with producer Jean Bréhat, with whom he founded 3B Productions in 1987, and together they have produced eight films, three of them receiving Oscar® nominations for Best Foreign Film.

ABOUT CINEMA LIBRE: Cinema Libre Studio is a leader in distributing social-issue documentaries and features by passionate filmmakers. Headquartered in Los Angeles, the Cinema Libre team has released over one hundred films including the Sundance Audience Award-Winning FUEL, THE END OF POVERTY?, and Oliver Stone’s SOUTH OF THE BORDER. The studio is developing John Perkins’ best-selling memoirs, CONFESSIONS OF AN ECONOMIC HIT MAN, into a major motion picture. For more information and updates, please visit: www.cinematlibrestudio.com | Updates | Facebook | Twitter

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ADDITIONAL DETAILS:

Additional information including downloadable/embeddable clips and trailer as well as high res images can be found at www.londonriverthefilm.com

Additional updates including show times can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/LondonRiverUS>

LONDON RIVER premieres Wednesday 12/7 (thru at least 12/15) full run at Cinema Village (22 East 12th Street, NYC 10003, www.cinemavillage.com) and on 12/16 at Laemmle's Royal Theatre (11523 Santa Monica Blvd., West LA, 90025, www.laemmle.com)

>> NYC Q&A WITH FILMMAKER on Wednesday 12/7 following prime show

To request a screener or inquire about interview opportunities, please contact respectively:

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