

Le Pélican

("The Pelican")

France : 1974 : dir. Gérard Blain

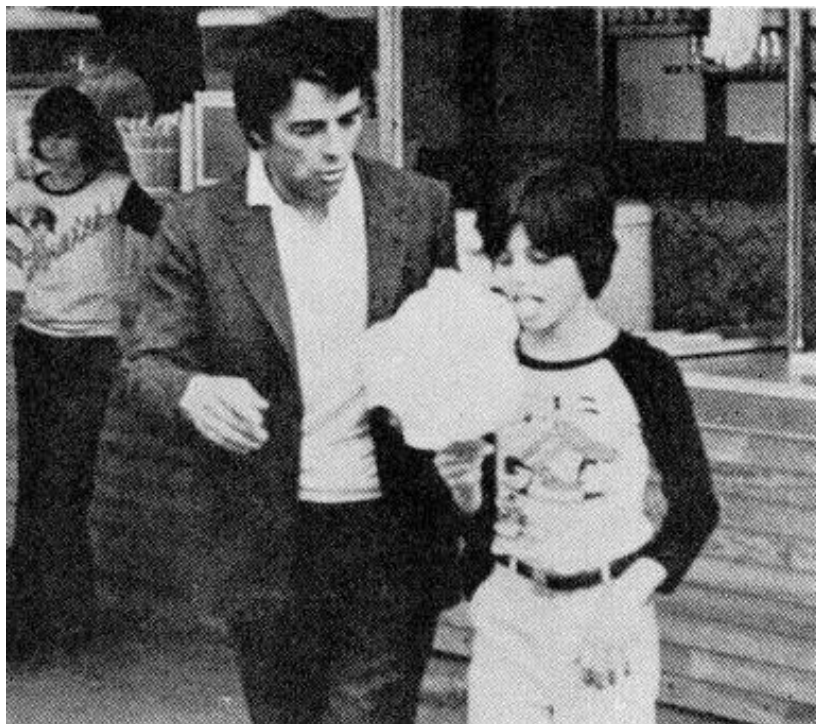
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prod: : scr: Gérard Blain : dir.ph.:

[César Chauveau](#)

Gérard Blain

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The marital property in dispute

Source: NFT bulletin

NFT bulletin – Feb/March 1976 – review:

“Written, directed and. acted by Gérard Blain, this is a strange, obsessive study of an ex-prisoner's attempt to wrest his son from the care of his now re-married wife. Not being allowed into the household, the man is forced to watch his son from afar and it is in these sequences, shot almost without dialogue, that Blain reveals an intriguing directorial personality, showing how the man's plight becomes increasingly desperate.”

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Chauveau:

“After "**LE CLAN DES SICILIENS**", César played the lead in two films directed by Gérard Blain. In "**LE PÉLICAN**" he was obsessively hunted by his father, severed from him by divorce, and in "**UN ENFANT DANS LA FOULE**" he was the child of unloving, often brutal parents. He also appeared in Blain's 1978 film "**UN SECOND SOUFFLE**" (Fr/De).”

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "Film Review 1973-74", "Film Review 1974-75", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. Pretty César Chauveau was about 13. If he did work on French television in addition to the three films cited ('68-'75), Holmstrom does not mention it. As European divorce rates have spiralled (slavishly keeping pace with the US, as in all bad social trends) custody battles have frequently been the food of tabloid stories and TV movies. "**KRAMER vs KRAMER**" lent the genre a degree of chic in 1979, and "**RICH KIDS**" the same year portrayed the children as mature, emotionally stable people watching the histrionics of the adults divorcing around them, but further back we find hand-wringing melodramas such as "**NO PLACE FOR JENNIFER**" (49), which portrayed divorce as a catastrophe children could scarcely survive.

The plot of "**LE PÉLICAN**" has acquired additional currency with contemporary anxieties about "stalking". Since the 1990s, the behaviour of this boy's father – though denied reasonable access to his own son - would be perceived as a form of violence in itself, an implicit threat, and a film sympathetic to his predicament would be unlikely. His status as an ex-convict would clinch the matter. The "family values" of divorce still display a conspicuous gender bias.

See also the 1977 Dutch film "**EEN STILLE LIEFDE**" ("A Silent Love"), and subject index under **DIVORCE / CUSTODY BATTLES** for more.