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DISORDER  
a film by Alice Winocour

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# SCREENDAILY

## 'Disorder' ('Maryland'): Review

16 May, 2015 | By Jonathan Romney



Director: Alice Winocour. France-Belgium 2015. 101 mins

**French writer-director Alice Winocour takes a surprise detour into genre territory for second feature Disorder (Maryland), a tough, nuanced suspense that couldn't be more different from her very art-house debut, 2012's period piece Augustine. Eminently exportable, Disorder should be a hot festival item too - not least thanks to a compelling performance from Mathias Schoenaerts, who after some uneasy turns in costumers such as A Little Chaos and Far From The Madding Crowd really lets his star quality shine here.**

Disorder is a film about haves and have-nots, about the psychological effects of war, and about the abuse of women as chattels.

As in the films that made his name - Bullhead and Rust and Bone - Schoenaerts plays a troubled muscleman. Vincent is a soldier freshly returned from Afghanistan, where he's acquired some psychological and physical problems that may see him invalided out of the army. Meanwhile, he takes a job with the security corps at a swanky party taking place in Maryland, the opulent estate of Whalid (Percy Kemp), a Lebanese businessman.

Vincent's eye is caught by Whalid's beautiful wife Jessie (Diane Kruger) and shortly after, he's hired to look after her and her young son Ali. Nerves permanently cracking as if he's still in a battle zone, Vincent saves his charges from violent attack. But back at Maryland (which is also the film's French title), it becomes clear that Jessie's expensively cushioned world has fallen apart, as a result of skullduggery in high places - which Vincent,



considerably smarter than people assume, has sniffed out at the party.

The final act, elegantly executed in the best action/suspense tradition, has Vincent attempting to repel intruders into Jessie's palace-turned-prison.

Winocour doesn't overstate her subtexts, but they're there - Disorder is a film about haves and have-nots, about the psychological effects of war, and about the abuse of women as chattels. A TV clip about women and Islamic State carries parallels with Jessie's own position, and reminds us that the capitalist West is hardly blameless when it comes to disempowering women. It's a pity that Kruger's role as Jessie is somewhat underdeveloped, although it's part of the film's logic that she's often observed from afar, before her and Vincent's rapport begins to open up.

Both leads are on great form, though, and the slow-burn approach to their relationship pays off beautifully as things get ever tighter in the drama's final stretch. Textured sound design also takes us right into Vincent's head, ramping up the tension no end.

Production companies: Dharamsala, Darius Films, Mars Films, France 3 Cinéma, Scope Pictures

International sales: Indie Sales, sales@indiesales.eu

Producers: Isabelle Madelaine, Emilie Tisné

Screenplay: Alice Winocour, Jean-Stéphane Bron

Cinematography: George Lechaptois

Editor: Julien Lacheray

Production design: Samuel Deshors

Music: Gesaffelstein

Main cast: Matthias Schoenaerts, Diane Kruger, Paul Hamy, Zaïd Errougui-Demonsant

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## Cannes Film Review: 'Disorder'



MAY 16, 2015 | 02:41PM PT

COURTESY OF CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

**Matthias Schoenaerts and Diane Kruger headline a sharp, sleek dive into genre territory for sophomore Alice Winocour.**

**Guy Lodge** (<http://variety.com/author/guy-lodge/>)

Film Critic

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"**Maryland** (<http://variety.com/t/maryland/>)" is the original title of "**Disorder** (<http://variety.com/t/disorder/>)," the second feature by Parisian writer-director **Alice Winocour** (<http://variety.com/t/alice-winocour/>), and while not one minute of it takes place in the American state of the same name, it's a film that hints at bright transatlantic possibilities for its helmer. **A fine-cut tension exercise** that eventually ignites into a full-blown home-invasion thriller, "Disorder" reps about the last step one might have expected Winocour to take after debuting with 2012's porcelain-textured costumer "Augustine." It's a sharp, sleek change of pace, however, given human backbone by **Matthias Schoenaerts** (<http://variety.com/t/matthias-schoenaerts/>)' tightly

wound performance as a PTSD-afflicted ex-soldier hired to protect Diane Kruger (<http://variety.com/t/diane-kruger/>)'s corporate (<http://variety411.com/us/new-york/corporate-video-production-companies/>) trophy wife. Schoenaerts' current international ubiquity lends added commercial appeal to a genre pic that already doesn't want for exportable elements; arthouse distribs should form an orderly (or disorderly) queue.

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For Belgian thesp Schoenaerts, now coming off a triple-shot of English-lingo period romances — “Far From the Madding Crowd,” “Suite française” and “A Little Chaos” — “Disorder” marks a crackling return to the sensitive-thug persona with which he made his name in “Bullhead” and “Rust and Bone.” Hulkingly built, buzz-cut and stamped with stark tattoos, he cuts a more baleful figure than the average buffed-up leading man, which suits Winocour's purposes just fine: As Vincent, an Afghanistan veteran prone to volatile paranoid episodes, he's a hero who nonetheless seems capable of turning on his charges (and, by extension, the audience) at any given moment. Post-traumatic stress disorder has been a heavily worked character condition in recent cinema, but Schoenaerts enacts it with bracing spareness, his nerve ends prickling through even in benign domestic exchanges.

Vincent, a French Special Forces soldier, is freshly out of action at the film's outset, while a medical inspection suggests that his leave from the military may well be permanent. Winocour's no-fat script, written with Jean-Stephane Bron, offers nary a hint of his pre-army life or personality. One brief but resonant shot shows him sitting in his former bedroom in his mother's house, now an absurdly small, boyish space for such a man — it's an image that bespeaks a crucially skipped stage of adulthood.

Along with a number of fellow ex-servicemen, Vincent secures a temporary assignment as a security guard at the plush coastal estate — the eponymous Maryland — of Whalid (Percy Kemp), an obscenely wealthy Lebanese businessman. At a glitzy party hosted by Whalid for a high-powered selection of moguls and politicians, Vincent first catches sight of his employer's glamorous German wife, Jessie (Kruger), and picks up on tight-jawed marital friction between the two. That same night, he also accidentally



eavesdrops on behind-closed-doors dealings, concluding that Whalid is neck-deep in illegal arms trading. Shortly afterward, he's hired again to protect Jessie and the couple's preteen son, Ali (Zaid Errougui-Demonsant), while Whalid is abroad on a shady business trip.

Jessie, seemingly unaware of her husband's criminal activities, is initially vexed by Vincent's presence, whose recent history of paranoia doesn't make him the most reassuring of guardians. Vincent perceives threat at every turn, while Winocour artfully draws out the ambiguity of whether or not Jessie has genuine cause for concern — or whether her jumpy new bodyguard, to whom she feels an inevitably burgeoning attraction, is the most unpredictable intruder in her house.

When the answer comes, it's with a cold-blooded bang. After an hour of slow-creep psychological teasing — affording the viewer ample time to explore Maryland's multiple marble-tiled corridors together with our impassive protagonist — Winocour hurtles into a violent, heart-in-mouth third act rife with look-behind-you peril. It's a silly but robustly effective escalation of the latent suspense already conjured in the impressive, snakily extended party sequence. Winocour has the gift of instilling fear at a range of tempos; it would not be a surprise if genre-inclined producers (<http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/producers/>) in English-speaking territories took notice.

Given fewer notes to play than her redoubtable co-star, Kruger nonetheless registers in angularly elusive fashion as an intelligent woman suspended in a cosseted reality curated entirely by menfolk. Winocour doesn't let this thriller escape without a wily degree of feminist subtext, though interjections of news footage concerning security threats to women in Islamic State territories draw the cultural parallels with slightly too heavy a hand.

A restless, complex soundscape is the third star of "Disorder." Flipping bluntly between disquieting silence and feverishly layered metallic chatter, the tonal contrasts of Gwenno Le Borgne's sound editing take auds in and out of Vincent's head with evocative economy, abetted by the skittering electronic pulse of the score by French techno DJ Gesaffelstein. Georges Lechaptois' snooping, cool-hued cinematography is a valuable asset to



proceedings, and Samuel Deshors' excellent production design gives the suspense sequences a firm geometry, while perceptively serving the contemporary upstairs-downstairs aspect of the narrative.

## Cannes Film Review: 'Disorder'

Reviewed at Cannes Film Festival (Un Certain Regard), May 16, 2015. Running time: **99 MIN.** (Original title: "Maryland")

### Production

(France-Belgium) A Dharamsala, Darius Films presentation and production in co-production with Mars Films, France 3 Cinema, Scope Pictures. (International sales: Indie Sales, Paris.) Produced by Isabelle Madelaine, Emilie Tisne. Co-producer (<http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/producers/>), Genevieve Lemal.

### Crew

Directed by Alice Winocour. Screenplay, Winocour, Jean-Stephane Bron. Camera (<http://variety411.com/us/new-york/camera-sound-equipment/>) (color, HD), Georges Lechaptis; editor (<http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/editors/>), Julien Lacherray; music, Gesaffelstein; production designer, Samuel Deshors; costume designer, Pascaline Chavanne; sound, Pierre Andre; supervising sound editor, Gwennole Le Borgne; re-recording mixer, Marc Doisne; visual effects supervisor, Benjamin Ageorges; stunt coordinator, Gregory Loffredo; assistant director, Nicolas Guilleminot; casting, Aurore Broutin.

### With

Matthias Schoenaerts, Diane Kruger, Paul Hamy, Zaid Errougui-Demonsant, Percy Kemp, Victor Pontecorvo, Mickael Daubert, Franck Torrecillas, Chems Eddine, Philippe Haddad Jean-Louis Coulloc'h. (French dialogue)

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### Cannes Film Review: 'Inside Out'