



CHIEN BLANC (WHITE DOG)

Based on Romain Gary's novel, published at
Éditions Gallimard, 1970

Press Kit

A film by
Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette

A production by
Nicole Robert

A script by
Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette et Valérie Beaugrand-Champagne

SYNOPSIS

1968. The United States is on the verge of imploding. Martin Luther King is assassinated, and race hatred plunges the country into flames and violence.

Romain Gary, who lives in Los Angeles with his wife, actress Jean Seberg, takes in a stray dog. That dog is soon a fixture in the house, charming the couple's only son, Diego. The dog is affectionate with everyone - except Black people. The white dog has been trained to attack African American demonstrators.

For Seberg, who is a committed ally of the Black Panthers, keeping the dog is unthinkable. For Gary, putting it down is equally unthinkable.

Gary becomes fixated on the animal. He can't abandon it. He takes it to a kennel, hoping to cure it of the hatred that was instilled in it by humans. He entrusts the dog to Keys, a Black dog trainer, who promises to reform it. Keys, gripped by his own tragedy, does the job - and then some.

A Word from Co-writer and Director Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette

About the Genesis

Having travelled widely, filmed extensively, and been touched by the pain of others, I've often asked myself: to what extent can a conflict, a war, a hurt - which doesn't belong to us - become ours? That's one of the questions raised by **Chien Blanc (White Dog)**. Beyond that, the plot examines the thin line between good and evil, between social commitment and family loyalty, while confronting head-on the complex dynamics of human beings.

A few years ago, I lost a grandmother I had never known. She had abandoned my mother when my mother was four years old. When I went to empty her apartment, seeking links between our identities, I searched eagerly for clues to the woman she had been. What had she bequeathed to me? After a few hours, I learned that my maternal grandmother had lived in New York and that she had been linked to the African American struggle in the late 1960s. I wrote a novel about her, inspired by her unusual life story (**La Femme qui fuit**, published in France by Livre de Poche and translated into fifteen languages; published in English as **Suzanne**).

I lived and struggled alongside the Palestinian people. My mother lived and struggled alongside Canada's indigenous peoples. My grandmother lived and struggled alongside African Americans - and surely became acquainted with Jean Seberg...

This was my inheritance, this ardent desire to encounter other cultures, to become close and to take up their struggles. All the while facing the eternal question: to what extent can a conflict, a war, a hurt - which doesn't belong to us - become ours? Is it even possible? Or desirable?

"When I say I, it is of all of you that I speak."
Romain Gary, in **Chien Blanc (White Dog)**.

About the Shoot

Chien Blanc (White Dog) presents one chapter of a great love story - that of Gary and Seberg. But above all, it asks a resolutely contemporary question: is it possible to take part in a struggle that doesn't belong to us? Is it even desirable? And if so, in what way? At what cost?

In the aftermath of the essential advent of Black Lives Matter, the quest for interracial dialogue is more urgent than ever. How can one be a White ally without falling into the complex of the White Savior? How can one combine an anti-racist heart with anti-racist ideals and anti-racist actions? **Chien Blanc (White Dog)** tackles these questions head-on.

In that sense, our **Chien Blanc (White Dog)** places itself singularly and emotionally in the present day. It questions the position of White people in the struggle against racism. Our collaborators of African heritage affirm that we need this film. It's necessary.

In our intention to make form fit with substance, and in our concrete desire to break open a frozen system, we've put together a team for this shoot combining artists of African heritage with White artists, so that within each department (sets, costumes, production, direction, postproduction), conversations about content can arise, leading to profound debates and genuine connection.

Building these bridges isn't easy, since we habitually move in parallel, within our respective networks, and it's up to us to create cracks so that the light comes in.

To that end, we've worked with two consultants of African heritage, Maryse Legagneur and Will Prosper, discussing all aspects of the film with them, from dialogue to props. Every department has also been able to rely on input from craftspeople of African heritage, who could communicate their sensitivities in light of the elements being assembled.

In creating this permanent dialogue, we've turned White Dog into a meeting place and a place of learning. I'm convinced that the film is more profound as a result - and so is a small corner of the world.

A Word from Co-writer Valérie Beaugrand-Champagne

In deep admiration of Romain Gary's thinking, it is with humility that I have undertaken, with Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette, to write the film adaptation of **Chien Blanc (White Dog)**. I was a teenager the first time I read the book. I've since reread it many times, making it my most faithful literary companion. I'm always struck, among other things, by the book's reflection on all forms of tunnel vision, of absolute truth, of the imposed hierarchies of life values that emanate from the book. "A life is a life! Why would his life be less important than yours?" Romain exclaims to his wife Jean Seberg when she orders him to kill his dog.

During the writing process, we've had to take some liberties with the novel, but we've chosen to respect the era in which the story unfolds, because that era echoes our own. But above all, we've chosen to give the film an intimate perspective: the slow implosion of a loving couple, Romain Gary and Jean Seberg, who, blinded by their opposed absolute truths, twist and betray the love that united them.

Chien Blanc (White Dog) is a disturbing book, and we've embraced the idea of making a disturbing film. Disturbing because it provides no answers, but seeks, rather, to illuminate the shadowy zones where nothing is black or white, and where one must move forward like a tightrope walker on the slender cord of morality. It is, in sum, a humble reminder, to our own human selves, of the importance of loving. Loving that which unites us and that which distinguishes us. As Romain says at the end of the film: "The greatest and most beautiful risk is loving."

A word from the producer - Nicole Robert

When Anaïs Barbeau Lavalette asked me to produce **Chien Blanc (White Dog)**, I enthusiastically agreed. But then came the questioning. Are those events, which happened in 1968 Los Angeles, still relevant?

Unfortunately, George Floyd's death and the Black Lives Matter movement testify to the fact that "the life of this world", of which Robert Kennedy spoke when he announced Martin Luther King's assassination, is still to be "made gentle", more than 50 years later, as Afro-descendants must, to this day, endure racism.

Chien Blanc (White Dog) is a powerful, and disturbing, book, and I chose to enable those who wanted to bring this story on the big screen.

I fully endorse this magnificent attempt to tell a tale that we, as Whites, cannot own, but, as Humans, compels us to assume our responsibilities, regardless of our race, language, or culture. The essence of a creator's work lies in his freedom of expression and I, as a producer, wish this prerogative to endure, want to make movies whose subject matter I embrace, claim the right to tell someone else's story.

I wholeheartedly support this eminent fighter whose name is Anaïs Barbeau Lavalette.

*"To all battles lost
To all future victories"*
Romain Gary, Chien blanc (White Dog)

A word from Dany Laferrière, Member of the Académie française, on the adaptation of *White Dog*:

Dear Anaïs,

Chien Blanc (White Dog) is one of my favorite novels by Romain Gary.

It's powerful and fragile - like the movement.

It takes a deft touch.

Especially these days.

I know you're capable of this subtlety. Do it!

Wholeheartedly: that's the only way to approach the passionate Gary.

You've been in the front line since the beginning.

I remember our bus trip to New York, when you were making a film about Haitians in the two cities: Montreal and New York. Ever since then, I've been waiting for you to come to this destination.

To come to this film on the perspective of a great writer about a situation in which violence alternates with tenderness. The lynched heart. You've always headed in that direction: near to those who are broken, who are fragile, who are the soil of the earth. I believe that is the only legitimacy that matters. That moral rigor. And you have it, incontestably.

You can rely on me to explain to anyone that passion and delicacy must be allowed to speak in this troubled and troubling time. But then, I've never known a time that wasn't troubled...

This novel by Romain Gary is one of its brilliant metaphors.

Affectionately,

Dany Laferrière

**A word from Denis Villeneuve (Creative Advisor
Throughout the Shooting Process on Chien Blanc (White
Dog))**

I have had the privilege of reading the adaptation of **Chien Blanc (White Dog)** written by Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette and Valérie Beaugrand-Champagne. The script is one of the strongest I've read in a long time. These two writers have succeeded in turning the profound lucidity and power of Romain Gary's novel into a true act of cinema. This is a film project that fits naturally into the trajectory of an absolutely remarkable artist. In my humble opinion, **Chien Blanc (White Dog)** is a necessity.

Yours truly,

Denis Villeneuve

CREW

Director	Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette
Producer	Nicole Robert
Screenwriters	Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette Valérie Beaugrand-Champagne
Director of photography	Jonathan Decoste
Production designer	Emmanuel Fréchette
Casting	Catherine Didelot
Costumes	Sophie Lefebvre
Editing	Richard Comeau
Sound	Claude La Haye Pablo Villegas Sylvain Bellemare Stéphane Bergeron Bernard Gariépy Strobl
Make-up artist	Kathryn Casault
Hairdresser	Martin Lapointe
Music	Mathieu Charbonneau Ralph Joseph « Waahli » Christophe Lamarche Ledoux Maxime Veilleux
Consultants	Maryse Legagneur Will Prosper
Associate Producer	Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette
Executive Producer	Bruno Dubé

CAST



Romain Gary
Denis Ménochet
[IMDB](#)



Jean Seberg
Kacey Rohl
[IMDB](#)



Keys
K.C Collins
[IMDB](#)



Red
Peter Bryant
[IMDB](#)



Ballard Jones
Jhaleil Swaby
[IMDB](#)



Jack Carruthers
Chip Chuipka
[IMDB](#)



Diego
Laurent Lemaire
[IMDB](#)



Jamie
Michaëna Benoit



Karim
Pascal Tshilambo



Nicole
Melissa Toussaint
[IMDB](#)



Celia
Véronique Verhoeven



Chien blanc
Bowie et Zuko

ANAÏS BARBEAU-LAVALLETTE

Director-Screenwriter-Author

<https://www.agencegaillard.com/anaisblavalette.html>

Named *Artiste pour la Paix* (Artist for Peace) in 2012, Anaïs Barbeau Lavalette has directed several prizewinning documentary features, including **Les Petits princes des bidonvilles (Little Slum Princes)** (2000), **Si j'avais un chapeau (If I Had a Hat)** (2006), **Les Petits Géants (The Little Giants)** (2010, winner of a Géméaux Award) and **Se souvenir des cendres (Remembering the Ashes)** (2010), which chronicled the adventure of the film *Incendies*, directed by Denis Villeneuve, and which won the Géméaux Award for Best Documentary; and **Le plancher des vaches (The Cow Floor)** (2014).

She has also directed four scripted features: **Le Ring** (2008 - selected for the Toronto and Berlin Film Festivals), **Inch'allah** (2012, selected for the Toronto and Berlin Film Festivals - winner of the Fipresci International Critics' Prize, and the Ecumenical Jury Prize in Berlin), and **La déesse des mouches à feu (Goddess of the Fireflies)** (selected for the Berlin Film Festival). In the spring of 2021, she directed the feature film **Chien Blanc (White Dog)**, adapted from the novel of the same name by Romain Gary.

In the spring of 2016, with Émile Proulx Cloutier, she presented the documentary play **Pôle Sud** at the Théâtre Espace libre. Their most recent creation, **Pas Perdus**, was presented at the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui in the spring of 2022.

She is a cofounder of the Mères au Front (Mothers at the Front) environmental movement (@mèresaufront.org).

She is the author of the travel book **Embrasser Yasser Arafat (Kissing Yasser Arafat)** (2011), the children's book **Nos héroïnes (Our Heroines)**, (2018) and the novels **Je voudrais qu'on m'efface (Neighbourhood Watch)** (2010) and **La femme qui fuit (Suzanne)** (winner of the Quebec Booksellers' Prize, The City of Montreal Grand Prize, The France-Quebec Prize, and voted Bestseller of the Decade, 2010-2020), which was a critical and commercial success. Her most recent novel, **Femme Forêt (Forest Woman)**, was published in November 2021.

Nicole Robert

Producer

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0730694/>

Nicole Robert has produced 34 feature films. Nine of her films have earned over a million dollars at the Quebec box office. All have distinguished themselves on the international stage, appearing in over a hundred festivals and winning many prestigious awards. Her first feature, **La guerre des tuques (The Dog Who Stopped the War)**, was released in 1982, and her 34th, **Chien Blanc (White Dog)**, adapted from Romain Gary's novel by Valérie Beaugrand Champagne and Anaïs Barbeau Lavalette, directed by Anaïs Barbeau Lavalette, will be released in 2022. She also produced, in association with Cirrus, the TV series **LA VIE, la vie (Life, Life)**, which is now being rebroadcast on the ici-ARTV network.

Nicole Robert founded Go Films in 2000, and in 2018 Go became part of the Sphere Media group.

Over the years, Nicole has produced some of the most significant films in the history of Quebec cinema, including **La guerre des tuques (The Dog Who Stopped the War)** (winner of the Golden Reel Award,) and **Requiem pour un beau sans cœur (Requiem for a Handsome Bastard)** (Best Canadian Film at the Toronto Film Festival). Other notable productions include **Québec-Montréal** (opening feature of Quebec Film Week in Paris, Bayard d'or Award for Best Screenplay and Special Jury Prize at the Namur Film Festival, Jutra Award for Best Film), **Sur le seuil (On the Threshold)** (Gérardmer Fantasy Film Festival), **Horloge Biologique (Dodging the Clock)** (TIFF), **Tout est parfait (Everything is Fine)** (Berlinale, Panorama section, Grand Jury Prize at the Seattle International Film Festival, Bayard d'or Award for Best Screenplay at Namur), **1981** (opening feature FFM, Rome Film Festival), **Les 7 jours du Talion (7 Days)** (Sundance), **La peur de l'eau (Fear of Water)** (Best Film Award, Liege Crime Film Festival), **Anna** (Busan International Festival). **King Dave**, directed by Daniel Grou (Podz), was the opening feature of the Fantasia Film Festival in 2016, winning the Audience Award for Best Canadian Film, and the Best Film Award at the We Love Paris Film Festival. **Nelly**, inspired by the life and works of Nelly Arcan, written and directed by Anne Émond, was selected for numerous

festivals and won several prizes, including the Best Film Award at the Sonoma International Film Festival et 4 Iris Awards at the Quebec Cinema Gala.

For **1991**, written and directed by Ricardo Trogi, Nicole Robert won the Golden Screen Award at the 2019 Canadian Screen Awards, and received five Iris Awards, including Best Film and Audience Prize, at the Quebec Cinema Gala. 2019 saw the release of two directors' first features: **Fabuleuses**, directed by Mélanie Charbonneau, winner of the Audience Prize at the 2019 Busan Film Festival and five Iris nominations, including Best Film; and **Sympathie pour le diable (Sympathy for the Devil)**, directed by Guillaume de Fontenay, coproduced by Monkey Pack, winner of a dozen awards at numerous festivals and winner of three Iris Awards, including Best First Film. In August 2020, **Flashwood**, actor Jean-Carl Boucher's first directorial effort, was Quebec's top film at the box office during its first week of release.

In 2005, Nicole Robert was honored at the **Gala for Women in Film, Television and New Media**. She received the **APCQ Tribute Award** in 2013 for the ensemble of her work. In 2013 she received the **Denis Héroux Prize** at the Fantasia Film Festival, honoring her exceptional contribution to the fantasy film genre.

Before founding her first production company, Lux Films - through which she produced five features, including **Karina** and **Requiem for a Handsome Bastard**, which was Robert Morin's first feature and winner of numerous awards, including Best Canadian Film at the 1992 Toronto Film Festival, and was selected for Critics' Week at Cannes 1992 - Nicole Robert was a graphic designer who worked in animated cinema for ten years with **Québec Love Films** and **Animabec**, of which she was the founder and president.

She was also vice-president of Productions La Fête, where she teamed up with Rock Demers in producing the first two Tales for All, **The Dog Who Stopped the War** and **The Peanut Butter Solution**.

Nicole Robert is currently president and producer at LUX FILMS.

Valérie Beaugrand-Champagne

Screenwriter

Valérie Beaugrand-Champagne is a producer, screenwriter and script editor for film and television.

Among the works on which she has collaborated as a screenwriter are Denis Villeneuve's **Incendies** and Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette's **Chien Blanc (White Dog)**. She is currently working with Tanya Lapointe on a screenplay recounting the true story of Chantal Daigle, the young Quebec woman who, in 1989, defended her right to an abortion against an injunction taken by the presumed father.

She has also collaborated closely on numerous scripts, including **Enemy**, by Denis Villeneuve; **Allure**, by the Sanchez brothers, starring Evan Rachel Wood; **Bon Cop, Bad Cop 2**, starring Patrick Huard and Colm Feore; **Inch'Allah**, by Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette, starring Evelyne Brochu; and **En terrains connus** and **Tu dors Nicole** by Stéphane Lafleur.

As a producer, she was behind the hit series **Fire Within** by Lewis Cohen, which won the Prime Time Emmy Award for Best Alternative Series.

Denis Ménochet

Actor - Romain Gary

Following a stint at the Acting International school in Paris and early roles in TV, Denis Ménochet alternated between film roles in France and elsewhere. He played a series of small roles in such films as **La Moustache** by Emmanuel Carrère (2004), **Hannibal Rising** (2006) and **La Môme** by Olivier Dahan (2007).

His major break came in 2009 with the celebrated opening scene in Quentin Tarantino's **Inglourious Bastards**, in which he excelled in his confrontation with Christophe Waltz. Hollywood took notice, and he was cast in several blockbusters like Ridley Scott's **Robin Hood**.

In 2010, his career in France intensified thanks to Roselyen Bosh's **La Rafle**. He was subsequently cast in Mélanie Laurent's first film, **Les Adoptés**, before playing an elite soldier in **Forces Spéciales**, directed by Stéphane Rybojad. The following year, he was cast in **Je me suis fait tout petit**, directed by Cecilia Rouaud, and the thriller **Dans la Maison**, directed by François Ozon, in which he played opposite Fabrice Lucchini and Kristin Scott Thomas.

In 2014, he starred in the film **Ablations**, directed by Arnold de Parscau, before making his mark in French-British cinema with roles in Stephen Frears's **The Program** and **Spotless**, a series directed by Ed McCardie.

In 2018 and 2019 he had starring roles in **Jusqu'à la garde**, directed by Xavier Legrand, **Seules les Bêtes**, directed by Dominik Moll, **Grâce à dieu**, directed by François Ozon, and Jean-François Richet's **L'Empereur de Paris**.

In 2021 and 2022, Denis Ménochet was once again on the big screen in **The Mauritanian**, directed by Kevin Macdonald, Wes Anderson's **The French Dispatch**, **Chien Blanc (White Dog)**, directed by Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette, **Peter Von Kant**, directed by François Ozon, **Les Survivants**, directed by Guillaume Renusson, and **As Bestas**, directed by Rodrigo Sorogoyen.

Kacey Rohl

Actress - Jean Seberg

Kacey Rohl's first on-screen appearance was in 2010 on ABC's reboot of the series "**V**".

She's best known for her roles as Sterling Fitch in A&E's **The Killing**, Prudence in the 2011 dark fantasy film **Red Riding Hood**, Abigail Hobbs in NBC's **Hannibal**, Kerry Campbell in Fox's **Wayward Pines**, Alena in the CW's **Arrow**, and Marina in SyFy's **The Magicians**.

She was most recently seen in the CBC series **Fortunate Son**, and in the indy hit **White Lie** which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2019.

Filmography

2016-2020	The Magicians (Serie)
2020	Fortunate Son (Serie)
2019	White Lie
2017-2019	Arrow (Serie)
2018	Killer High
2017	Yellow
2017	The Good Doctor (Serie)
2016	Wayward Pines (Serie)
2016	Once Upon a Time (Serie)
2016	iZombie (Serie)
2016	The X-Files (Serie)
2016	My Sweet Audrina
2013-2015	Hannibal (Serie)
2015	Motive (Serie)
2014	Working the Engels (Serie)
2013	Doubt
2013	Played (Serie)
2013	Cracked (Serie)
2012	This American Housewife (Serie)
2011-2012	R.L. Stine's The Haunting Hour (Serie)
2011-2012	The Killing (Serie)
2012	Supernatural (Serie)
2011	Clue (Serie)
2011	Sisters & Brothers
2011	Sunflower Hour
2011	Red Riding Hood

K.C. Collins

Actor - Keys

K.C. Collins' most recent credits include the feature film **Spiral** (Lionsgate) playing the role of Detective Drury alongside Chris Rock and Samuel L. Jackson, season long arcs as Agent Garrett in the CBS TV series **Clarice**, and Det. Len Grierson in **Pretty Hard Cases** starring Adrienne C. Moore (from *Orange is the New Black*).

Select credits include the series regular role of Jamal in Katherine Bigelow's HBO pilot **Mogadishu Minnesota**, the role of Andre Daniels in the MGM feature **Robocop**, starring Gary Oldman, Michael Keaton, and Abbie Cornish, and Guest Starring roles on **Ransom** (CBS), 10 episodes of **The Strain** (FX), and 3 seasons of **Saving Hope** (NBC). K.C. also appeared in the Recurring role of Imam Khaari in the series **Shoot The Messenger** (Global) and as the Series Regular role of Hale in **Lost Girl** (Showcase).

K.C. Collins received the ACTRA Award (2010) for Outstanding Performance Male in the CBC Mini-Series **Guns**. He also received a Gemini Awards nomination (2007) for Best Performance in a Leading Role in a Dramatic Mini-Series for **Doomstown** (2006).