

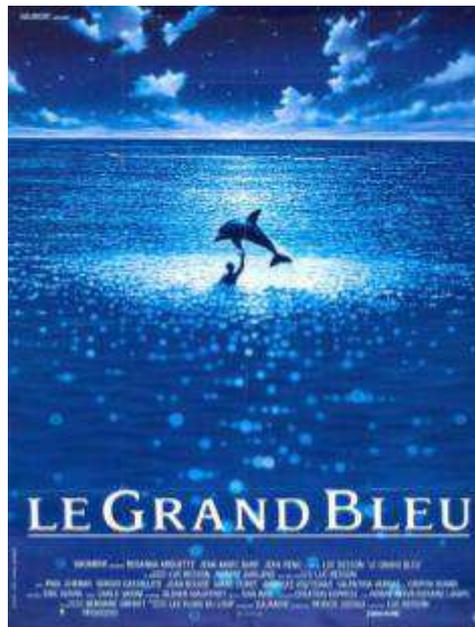
## Nikos Giannopoulos Eng Speech

*15th International YPERIA Convention on Culture and Tourism and 8th Amorgos Film Festival.*

Dear friends, colleagues and co-workers,

Since 1987, when we filmed the 'Big Blue' in Amorgos, now it is the first time I have visited the island again. The reason is that few days before leaving for Los, where we would continue shooting, a very unfortunate accident happened. For three days in Katapola, there was absolute silence. Radios, televisions, etc. were all closed. There was a funeral that took place with a closed coffin. That was something that caused me a lot of sorrow. That's why I thank Mr. Antonis Kioukas and Mrs. Giannakopoulos for the invitation. They gave me the opportunity to deal with my personal demons 30 years after.

I'm sorry I do not have to any photographic material from filming. Gaumont forbade us to take photos. Actually, two Greek assistants got fired for this reason. Thus, until the spring of 1988 in Greece, there are no interviews or photographs of the 'Big Blue' on press or the Greek television.



The 'Big Blue' was the most ambitious and the most costly film production in Europe for 1987 and probably in the nineties. It was filmed into 7 different countries, Peru, Virgin Islands, Bahamas, New York, Sicily, France and Greece.

The majority of the shoots, however, took place in Greece where filming lasted 5 months. Almost half of the film was shot in Amorgos and in Los and 3 days in Santorini. However, Los did not take as much credit as Amorgos took from the 'Big Blue' since the shooting was not outdoors but in a large hotel complex, in Manganari.

The cost of production exceeded half a million euros, 200 million drachmas at a time when the basic salary in Greece was 60,000 drachmas. One third of this money was spent in Greece over a 5-month period.

The film was a great success. It exceeded 11,000,000 only in Europe and was sold to the Americans at a rate higher than its cost of production. If we add the sales to TV channels, DVDs, CDs and of gadgets, the film has earned 4 or 5 more times the money than it cost, and

I learned a bit later that the film saved Gaumont economically, which was facing financial problems at that time.



**Jacques Mayol**

The story of the film is portrayed in a fictional way two fellow legends, French Jacques Mayol and Enzo Molinary, based on the book "Homme Dolphin". In fact, no one is passing away, as shown in the film. Mayol passed away in 2001 and Molinary in 2016. Jacques Mayol participated in the writing of the script and was a technical advisor to the film. He was with us on Ios.



Luc's (Besson) father was a diver and a worker in Santorini where they were repairing ships in the water. He taught Luc who was a great swimmer. Besson himself did the underwater filming of the actors in Greece. The film is dedicated to his daughter, who was born while filming in Ios. The mother is the actress Anne Parillaud then starring in 'Nikita'.



## Andreas Voutsinas

Voutsinas, actor and theater director (he was also the coach of Jane Fonda in the USA) settles in Paris and opens an "Actors Studio". His reputation is great and many well-known French passed from his school, among them Jean Reno and Mark Nyre, who impersonates Renno's brother in the film.

In 1983, Besson participated in the 'San Sebastian' festival and with his first film "Le dernier combat," Voutsinas is the president of the jury where he put great effort for his film to be awarded. As a result, Besson puts Voutsinas to play the priest who gives the young Jacques a coin similar to what Enzo has grabbed from him. This coin symbolizes the encouragement and the challenge for life.



Although Europe was in love with Jean Mark Bar, after the 'Big Blue', the one who benefited most is Jean Reno, who has not accepted any role without consulting Besson.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that in the film I was with:

1. Tzeni Panoutsopoulou as my assistant, who later became an executive producer of "Captain Corelli" and "Mamma Mia", among other American mainly films.
2. Antonis Spanolios as my assistant, who later became a television producer at Skai and Star channel, ran a number of TV series.
3. Mark Gastin as an assistant director who has lived in Greece for 40 years and is one of the most important documentaries in the "Cinema Du Reel" category.

Many thanks again to the artistic director of the Festival and friend Mr. Andonis Kioukas and Mrs. Irene Giannakopoulos, without her initiative and offer, there wouldn't be this important convention, for the invitation, the excellent hospitality and the fact that you included me among other valued colleagues.

I wish the best for every year and even better.

**Nikos Giannopoulos / Producer - Mob Director. 6978676905**

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0947961/?ref =nv sr 1>

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