

Mimoun

Mimoun (VPRO, Hilversum, Netherlands) is a 26-minute, live-action drama for children ages 7 to 11. The program explores multicultural society. It begins at night with a boy named Mimoun, who is riding his bike when he discovers other boys stealing. Mimoun signals to his older brother Ab who is with the gang, motioning to get away from patrolmen. Mimoun climbs into a getaway van with the boys (cf. illustration 1) and is dropped off at home where he and Ab sneak in through the bedroom window. On the next day, mother tells Mimoun to go straight to school. Mimoun rides his bike through the city accompanied by soulful rap music (cf. illustration 2). On the basketball court at school, he sees a girl he likes. His interaction with her is captured in slow motion with romantic music as he guards the basket, and girl makes the shot. After school, he follows Soraya to the library and flirts with her (cf. illustration 3). Mimoun's brother comes on a motorcycle and Mimoun leaves the library, but not before kissing Soraya on the cheek. The gang meets up (cf. illustration 4), then Mimoun stands guard while they move stolen goods. Later, at a boxing gym, gang members make fun of Mimoun, but Ab defends him (cf. illustration 5). On the way home, Mimoun sees a necklace in a shop window and fantasizes about placing it on Soraya. He is jolted out of his reverie by a slap across the face from his mother. She warns him to stay away from the gang. But then Mimoun visits the jewelry store to get information for the gang, who is planning to rob it. At school, the principal calls him into the office and asks about the recent burglary and Mimoun denies knowing anything about it. At home, Ab and a gang member set up a new television with video games. Mimoun sees that the boy has a gun in his jacket. Mother comes home and disagrees with Ab, who leaves. Mimoun follows and makes eye contact with Ab, but Ab moves on. Next, Mimoun rides his bike by the jewelry store, now a crime scene. Mimoun sees a body on the shop floor (cf. illustration 6). In the schoolyard, he approaches the girl. The gang calls him over to the fence (cf. illustration 7), and they put the gun in his backpack and necklace in his palm, just as police come for them. Mimoun goes into school, but we can see the struggle on his face as he tries to think what to do. Soraya calls him over and tells him to give her the gun, which he does. Police go through his backpack and find nothing. When the bell rings for school dismissal, all students are directed through checkpoints. Soraya is caught. Instantly, Mimoun runs from the principal's office to the girl and takes responsibility for the gun. He is taken away from the school in a police car as Soraya watches. Then Ab is arrested and the two brothers exchange looks in the police car. Mother decides to send Mimoun to Morocco. Before he leaves, Mimoun and Soraya share time at the water's edge, looking out together into an uncertain future (cf. illustration 8).

Mimoun won the Theme Prize and placed third in the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2014 in the 7-11 fiction category.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS' OPINION

International experts shared their opinions about *Mimoun* during the discussion sessions at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2014. Some said it touched them the most. Many experts agreed that using few words in this program was a good choice. Sometimes less dialogue in programs represents a quality improvement. Experts also agreed that the characters in *Mimoun* were quite good, especially the depiction of good and bad and friendship. Much discussion focused on the ending, which was not positive but revealed consequences of choices. Many experts questioned the target age and seemed to think it would be too hard for a seven-year-old to understand. Many agreed that the program is about right for children 10 and 11 years of age. Below are comments.



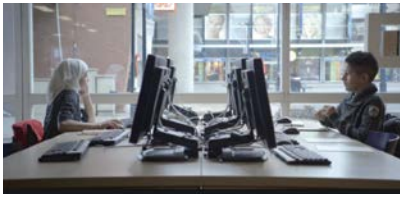
Screenshots from *Mimoun* © VPRO

Ill. 1: Mimoun rides with his brother Ab and others in a van

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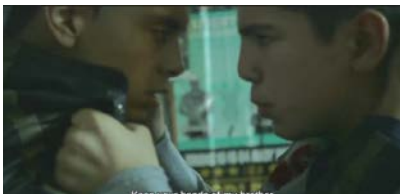
III. 2: Mimoun rides his bike to school



III. 3: After school, Mimoun flirts with Soraya at the library



III. 4: The gang of boys meets up



III. 5: Ab defends Mimoun against a gang member



III. 6: Mimoun witnesses a body at the crime scene at the jewelry shop

"Really impressed. His dilemma was very complex and very clear at the same time. The show was very professional." (male expert, Norway)

"I really like it also. It's an issue and treatment that is really well done." (male expert, Chile)

"It was a universal story with crime around the edges. It was a love story, a story of moral compasses. The relationship with his older brother was interesting." (female expert, United Kingdom)

"I was surprised it was so quiet and there were so few dialogues. You understood exactly what was going on." (male expert, Sweden)

"There was no dialogue but you could feel it on your skin." (male expert, Germany)

"In Colombia we have stories like that and there is not much dialect. The actions talk about the characters. I love it." (female expert, Colombia)

"I thought it was beautifully told." (female expert, Australia)

"You can identify yourself with this little boy and that's amazing." (male expert, Sweden)

"This program had little words but the strength was in the acting." (female expert, Argentina)

"I liked that he had bad behavior and feelings about all these things. It was a very artful film." (male expert, Canada)

"The fight with the older boy and the mom was intense." (female expert, Czech Republic)

"More than the gun, what bothered me was the dead body in the shop." (female expert, Macedonia)

"The only thing that bothered me is those boys really shot the man. I never felt the consequence." (female expert, Germany)

"This has the production values of a high crime drama. I'd watch this with other adults or kids." (female expert, Canada)

"I loved it because they don't make the mistake of making it an original Dutch family. I like it." (male expert, Denmark)

"I think we can make that same kind of story in Norway and it would work very well....and I think someone should." (female expert, Norway)

"You have to be true to the story you want to tell, and it doesn't have to be good or bad, but it's the reality of some children's life. It's good for some children to see the reality of other children's lives." (male expert, United Kingdom)

Elizabeth Spezia, PhD student, Southern Illinois University, USA



III. 8: Mimoun accepts stolen property through the school fence



III. 7: Together for a brief time, Mimoun and Saroya contemplate their futures

Target Audience 7.49

Idea 7.84

Script 8.25

Realization 8.58

Average Score per Category by experts' voters at PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2014