

FRIENDLY CRIME

Les Polarophiles Tranquilles

Yet again, the proverb "no man is a prophet in his own country" is right!

Native from Cannes, assistant pharmacist in Cannes la Bocca, I moved to Petreto-Bicchisano (Southern Corsica) and became very involved in local life, I jointly founded the "**Association Solidaire d'aide aux victimes du terrorisme**" (association in aid of victims of terrorism) in Corsica in 1984. I was acting vice-president when the association's president, Jean-Paul Lafay, veterinary surgeon and my friend, was murdered in Ajaccio in June 1987 on television company FR3's car park where he had just taken part in a live programme. This barbaric act remains totally unpunished.



Thierry Cazon (on the right) carrying Jean-Paul Lafay's coffin

Shocked, I came back to my hometown, Cannes, in 1990 leaving many friends and a village which regretfully saw me leave Corsica.

Once home, I became highly active in the town's literary life and was elected president of "**Amis des Bibliothèques de Cannes**" (ABC) (Cannes' Library friends).

A detective story lover I created an event named **POLAR EN FETE** (Detective novel fiesta) in 2002.

The present council decided to take over this successful event, I was then dismissed from A.B.C.

A few "strong arm" episodes followed.

I decided to assert my rights and register the name of the event I had created, "Polar en Fête", with the I.N.P.I (National institute for industrial propriety). On the very day that I went to register, I ran into the Culture department's "missi dominici" (literally the Lord's missionaries) who themselves had decided to appropriate the name. It is this adventure that brought Cannes' Mayor to be given the prestigious title "Ravi du plâtre" (the "ravi" is a character from the nativity scene in Provence, he is known to be naïve and perhaps a little bit simple), in an article in the "Ravi", then used again in the "Cannois Déchainé" n°.

On a different occasion whilst on my way to the council's event, where they were now using my ideas, I was victim to intimidation by a guard, who turned out to be an eminent member of the Culture department, aiming towards refusing me access. He was out of luck as the public was not on his side that day and I gained access to what turned out to be a pale imitation of "Polar en Fête".

Whether from lack of conviction or competence, this poor copy then disappeared into Cannes' cultural background.

A new association was founded, I still preside it today; "Les Polarophiles Tranquilles". It is devoted to detective stories and has been publishing free pamphlets twice a year for eight years. It is available in public libraries and media libraries in the region and in Paris. These pamphlets as well as other works and their translations in different languages (English, Russian, Chinese, Italian, German) are available on the following website www.polarophile.com

The association is naturally ignored by Cannes' cultural management.

Without the council's help, I have always personally financed the association's activities to avoid being financially asphyxiated as was hoped. But the pamphlet edited by ABC has ceased to be published.

If the "Polarophiles Tranquilles" association has been denigrated since its creation and malicious underground actions carried against it, of which there is no doubt as to the origin, it receives support from the DRAC PACA (Regional board of cultural affairs in Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur) and the Alpes Maritimes Conseil Général (regional council).

It is this constant harassment that convinced me of the necessity to react.

For several years, I have also assumed the role of vice-president for the "association cinéphiles Ciné-Croisette" (Cinema-Croisette film lover association) which, despite its dynamism, appears to disturb the hegemonic aims of a council which boasts about being capable in all matters.

Ciné-Croisette with its 450 members lights up the town's cinemas by hosting meetings between spectators, professional film directors and actors.

In order to help, Cannes, in its infinite generosity, grants it a subsidy of 600 €. The "other Association", Cannes Cinéma, which has no members and of which the administrating board is composed of elected councillors and their relatives, receives the sum of 496 584€.

Try and work it out...

In supporting these actions, the Mayor disqualifies himself.

Having to put up with contempt about one's competence by Cannes' willing cultural actors, some people would give up and go and see if the grass is greener elsewhere.

This is not our case.

It is possible to be tranquil, love one's town and look towards dignity.

Thierry Cazon.