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Friday October 2nd, 7.30pm
Human Capital (15)

dir: *Paolo Virzi*

starring: **Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi, Fabrizio Bentivoglio,
Valeria Golino**

sponsor: **Paul and Helen Hancocks**

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Relaxing in a white robe after a game of tennis at the villa of hedge-fund manager Giovanni Bernaschi (Fabrizio Gifuni), estate agent Dino Ossola (Fabrizio Bentivoglio) tells a group of fellow investors that his father used to have a saying - that society can never be without two things: houses and coffins. It seems like a throwaway line, but the words themselves, and how and where they are delivered, cut to the very heart of Paolo Virzi's icy, Chabrolian drama, winner of several prizes at the 2014 David di Donatello awards (the Italian Oscars). Virzi and fellow screenwriters Francesco Bruni and Francesco Piccolo loosely adapt Stephen Amidon's 2004 source novel and move the action from Connecticut to the Lombardy region of Italy, the setting for another recent tale of the Italian bourgeoisie, Luca Guadagnino's *I Am Love* (2009 - shown by LFS in 2011).

Human Capital revolves around a hit-and-run accident, and the narrative - recalling Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Amores Perros* (2000) in terms of structure - is broken down into four chapters. The first three focus on individual characters (Dino, his daughter Serena, Giovanni's wife Carla), while a final chapter acts as a more objective postscript. The title refers to insurance companies' monetary assessment of a human life, based, as the film says, on "life expectancy, money-making potential and quality and quantity of emotional ties." In the case of the hit-and-run victim, a waiter named Fabrizio Lupi (Gianluca Di Lauro) the sum is given very precisely as €218,976. It might seem odd that Virzi doesn't dedicate a chapter to Fabrizio's story, but the character's sidelining serves to bolster the critique of the monied classes.

The film features a strong ensemble cast anchored by superb performances from female leads Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi (Carla) and newcomer Matilde Gioli (Serena). The Asian-tinged score from the director's younger brother and regular collaborator Carlo Virzi includes instruments such as the koshi chime and shakuhachi flute. Allied to DP Jérôme Alméras's



Synopsis: Brianza, Italy, 2010. a cyclist is knocked down in a hit-and-run accident after finishing a waiting shift at a school prize-giving. The events surrounding the accident are retold from the perspectives of Dino Ossola, Carla Bernaschi and Dino's teenage daughter Serena.

Dino invests money in the hedge fund of Carla's wealthy husband Giovanni. Carla persuades her husband to invest in the restoration of a local theatre. At a meeting to discuss the restoration, she meets teacher Donato Russomanno, with whom she later has a fling. When Giovanni gets into financial trouble, Dino loses his investment and Carla's restoration plans are abandoned. The police suspect the Bernaschi's teenage son Massimiliano of being involved in the hit-and-run.

Serena has split up with Massimiliano but the two remain friends. She meets Luca, an artistically gifted young man from a far less privileged background, and falls passionately for him, though she is still called on to support Massimiliano at the prize-giving. As soon as the ceremony is over, she races to be with Luca but is then summoned to help a drunk Massimiliano get home from a party. She drives Massimiliano home; Luca drives Massimiliano's SUV back to the Bernaschis but on the way knocks down the cyclist. Tormented by guilt, he attempts suicide. Dino sees an email written by his daughter to Luca, in which she reassures him that she will never reveal the truth. Dino makes a deal with Carla: he will pass Serena's email to the authorities, exonerating Massimiliano, in exchange for the return of his investment.

Some months later, Luca is visited in prison by Serena. He will be released the following autumn. The family of the cyclist - who has died from his injuries - receives a six-figure payout from Massimiliano's car insurer.

Credits (selected)

Carla: Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi

Dino: Fabrizio Bentivoglio

Roberta: Valeria Golino

Giovanni: Fabrizio Gifuni

Donato Russomanno: Luigi Lo Cascio

Luca: Giovanni Anzaldo

Serena: Matilde Gioli

Massimiliano: Guglielmo Pinelli

Waiter: Gianluca Di Lauro

Director: Paolo Virzi

Screenplay: Francesco Bruni, Francesco Piccolo, Paolo Virzi (from the novel by Stephen Amidon);

DoP: Jérôme Alméras **Editor:** Cecilia Zanuso

Music: Carlo Virzi

Italy/France 2013: 110 mins

crisp, widescreen images, it powerfully evokes a world of glacial, "I'm all right, Jack" capitalism.

Another view: Anne-Katrin Titze (Eye for Film)

Valeria Bruni Tedeschi, who won Best Actress in a Narrative Feature Film at the Tribeca Film Festival as Carla and Valeria Golino as Roberta in Paolo Virzi's *Human Capital (Il Capitale Umano)* give brilliant performances entangled in a web of what is perhaps the most revolting selection of male characters in a film I have seen at least this year. Fabrizio Gifuni plays Giovanni and Fabrizio Bentivoglio is Dino. The respective husbands are corrupt each in their own way. The former a hedge fund finance power player, the latter a middle-class real estate agent who would like to be like the other, corruption and all.

On an evening right before Christmas in Northern Italy, a waiter at a school function is run over on his bicycle riding home in the snow. This hit and run tragedy links a number of people from different social backgrounds as Virzi's delicate and bewildering tale jumps back and forth from a summer past to the fateful winter night.

Two families are tied together by an accident and their children. Serena (Matilde Gioli) and Massimiliano (Guglielmo Pinelli) have very little in common outside of school, and their relationship crumbles. Carla, Massimiliano's mother, is a woman who has great financial privileges and no emotional stability. Her life of manicures, massages and antiques shopping makes her feel increasingly worthless. This is reinforced by her husband, Giovanni, who communicates nothing of importance to her.

In an attempt to add some internal beauty for herself and the community - a small fictional town near Milan - Carla buys a run-down theatre in ruins she wants to renovate, and instead ends up falling into her familiar trap of meaningless seduction. A trenchant scene depicts a meeting of the newly formed theatre board and Virzi has great fun savoring the characters' whopping fixations while they discuss a possible repertoire. Anybody who has ever been to a board meeting will recognise someone here.

Roberta, on the other hand, a psychologist working at the public clinic, decides to be completely ignorant about the crumbling world of her family, especially the dealings of husband Dino, who wants to move up in the world.

Virzi, who told me at the Tribeca Film Festival that *Human Capital* was the first of the dozen films he made which did not classify as comedy, keeps a light touch with his heavy subject matter. The different perspectives are woven into a rich tapestry of the present world. Greed and unconsidered, reckless desires are by no means an Italian phenomenon.

Three perspectives, given one chapter each, illuminate disasters far greater and perhaps much smaller than the accident at hand and tell us about the nature of human capital. How much is a person worth? The script is based on a novel by American author Stephen Amidon which is set in Connecticut. The film takes place in a fictional town near Milan and was shot in Como and surroundings.

Paolo Virzi's study of capitalism in crisis gives the audience all it covets. Voyeurism is taken care of as we peek into the hearts

and home of the stylish wealthy. Their life is actually hellish, we discover to our great relief. It is crumbling and causing the literal and metaphorical quakes we all feel. A class lower, the annoying guy with the garish orange watch and the "creative" facial hair and glasses is indeed a dope who doesn't communicate with his pregnant wife. Virzi confirms the worst.

Human Capital is a tale of people trapped in the wheels of money, prestige and unfulfilled longings, disguised as a thriller. Some create the wheels, some spin them and others run in them.

Our next film: October 9th, 7.30pm

Still Life (UK 2012. Cert 12a)

Council worker John May (Eddie Marsan) discovers that his position has been eliminated while seeking a deceased alcoholic's next of kin, and requests an extension in order to complete his assignment. Later, John locates the man's estranged daughter, and forges an unexpected bond with her while breaking free of the suffocating life patterns he had learned to accept

Also showing (as part of the Magna Carta season)

Gladiator (15) - The Venue, October 7th, 7.30pm. Details and tickets available from www.thevenueincoln.co.uk

A Man for all Seasons (U): LPAC, October 20th, 6.30pm. Details at www.lpac.co.uk

Testament of Youth (12a): Lincoln Drill Hall - talk at 12 noon, film at 2pm. Details at www.lincolndrillhall.com