

Io CAPITANO

Italy/Belgium/France (2023) 121 minutes

Director: Matteo Garrone

Cast: Seydou Sarr (Seydou)
Moustapha Fall (Moussa)



Screening 22nd January 2025 at Swindon Arts Centre

Synopsis

Two Senegalese teenage cousins take the perilous journey from Dakar in an attempt to find a better life in Italy. They encounter people-smugglers, bandits, corrupt police, imprisonment and torture, they witness death among fellow would-be migrants, are separated but find each other. The final leg of their gruelling journey finds Seydou having to be the helmsman (Capitano) of a ruinous ex-fishing boat crammed with people, trying to reach Europe.

Reviews



A 16-year-old boy wakes to morning light. The setting is Dakar, but the story will shortly move on. It is a portrait of economic migration, unfolding in microcosm through two teenagers: the boisterous Moussa and cousin Seydou. Neither are refugees. They plan to send money back home, and as 16-year-olds will, find fame. Leaving without telling their families, their first bus ride is a jaunt. In Agadez, Niger, brokers tout photos of the gleaming boats they say carry migrants to Italy. By the Sahara, an industrial process of predation begins. The weak and unlucky meet their fate first. The film makes brilliant if often harrowing cinema.

Danny Leigh, Financial Times

Stark social drama meets 'boy's own' adventure in this strikingly photographed African-set, Oscar-nominated adventure. Matteo Garrone frames the sorrows and struggles of two African kids as they slog across the continent with steel and sensitivity. It's wildly exciting in places, horrifying in others, without ever feeling exploitative of a real-world crisis that is claiming the lives of boys just like them. Seydou is what the western media would call 'an economic migrant'. With his cousin Moussa, he sets off from Dakar on an African odyssey that points hopefully for Italy, with dreams of a better life and money to send home, but only the vaguest notion of how he'll achieve it. The feeling that Seydou and Moussa have made a fatal error hangs over their journey across the Sahara. It comes into horrific focus when a fellow traveller falls off their pick-up and the people smugglers drive on with supreme indifference. Just when things seem bleakest, as when a woman who reminds Seydou of his mum dies under the baking Saharan sun, Garrone throws in an extraordinary grace note: the woman floats into the air and Seydou guides her onwards, as if carrying a balloon. Seydou's reverie is quickly banished as the pair endure cavity searches at border crossings, constant shakedowns, and even torture at a mafia-run prison. Like wounded animals circled by vultures, *Io Capitano* shows how exploitation stalks them on every step of their journey, long before they get to Europe.

Phil de Semlyen Time Out

Film Facts

- Winner Silver Lion - Venice International Film Festival
- Nomination Best Foreign language Film – Golden Globe Awards
- Nomination Best international Feature Film – Academy Awards

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