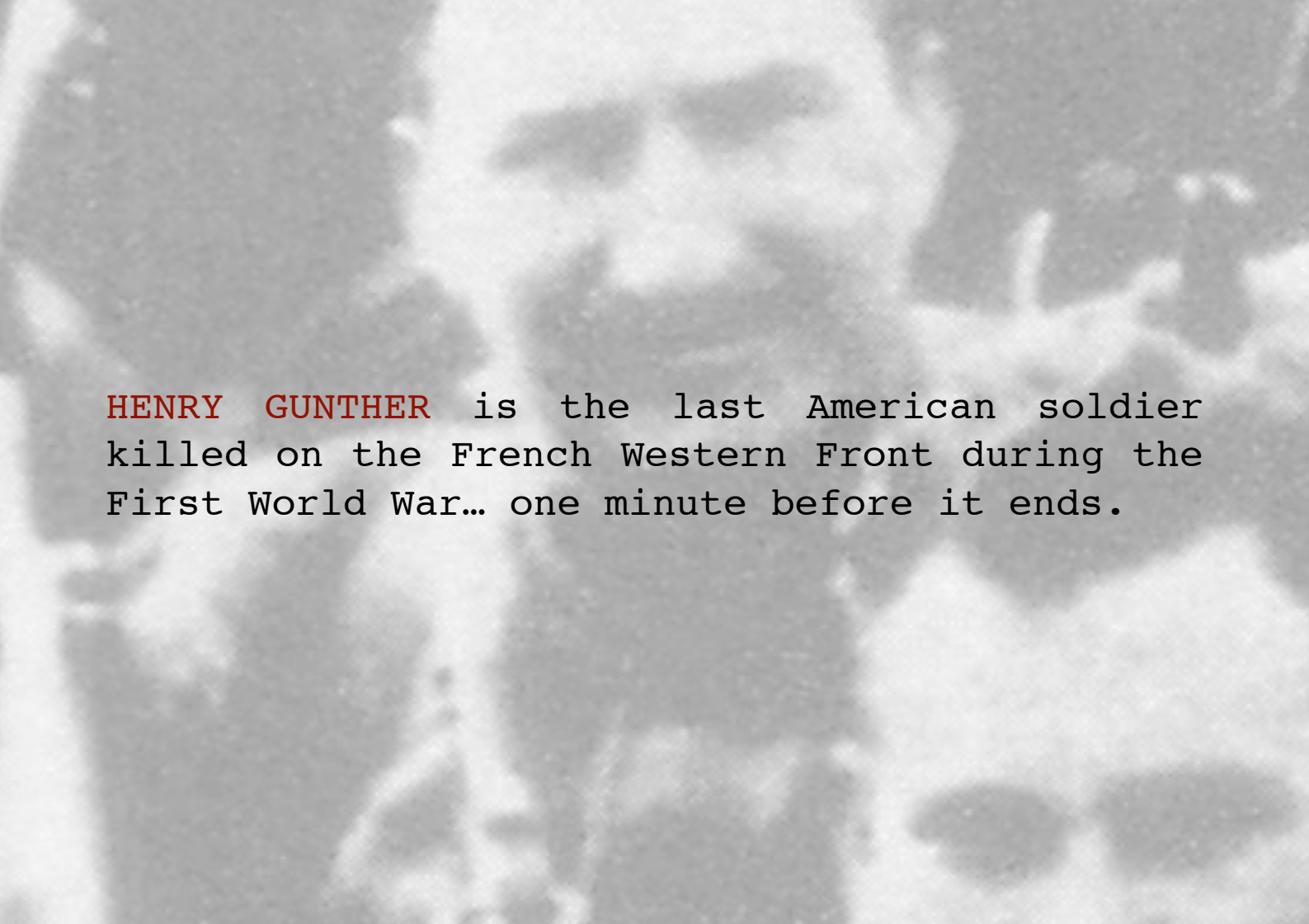


Le Studio d'Imagination  
presents

10:59

Adapted from the novel written by Roger Faindt



**HENRY GUNTHER** is the last American soldier  
killed on the French Western Front during the  
First World War... one minute before it ends.

# Pitch

France, November 1918. Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

HENRY GUNTHER, a 23 year old American of German descent, develops a friendship with a French soldier. In the middle of the battle the two men come together in a trench and save the life of a German soldier who happens to be Henry's half-brother. The three German speaking men begin to fraternize despite the war around them.

10:59 is a film centered on the human spirit that reaches far beyond nationalistic patriotic lines.

HENRY GUNTHER is the last American soldier killed on the French Western Front during the First World War... one minute before it ends.

# Synopsis

November 1918. HENRY GUNTHER, a 23 year old American from a German immigrant family is sent to the French territorial Western front. His unit takes position in Chaumont-devant-Damvillers, a small village in the department of The Meuse, stationed next to the French Regiment of the 6th Colonial.

During a moment of rest and recuperation organized behind the lines before an important offensive, Henry encounters FLAVIEN, a French soldier from the Alsace region. Speaking fluent German, Henry sees in him an ally and a new found friend. Flavien opens Henry to knowing more about his German heritage and its linkage to his American nationality.

On the other side of the lines, on the last fortified rampart protecting the German army from invasion, EUGEN sits at the back of a trench awaiting the coming allied offensive. Eugen is Henry's half brother. Brothers in

arms, each unaware of the presence of the other.

Henry, Flavien and Eugen share the same vision of humanity and the same hope to see the war end. During the last attack of the Franco-American forces, the three men accidentally meet in a destroyed trench.

Henry, Flavien and Eugen are from different nationalities, yet are all German speaking. A common language that will have them share an intense moment of fraternity just before war parts them again.

# About the Author



Roger Faindt is the author of 3 historical novels\* about World War II.

He has a strong knowledge of the subject of historical war and in particular, the psychology of a soldier of the time. Additionally, he has studied the socio-cultural and professional environment of the main

character.

The current work of Roger Faindt was made possible due to his detailed research on the Great War. With the help of Pierre Lenhard, historian and discoverer of unusual stories, the story of the tragic destiny of Henry was revealed.


During his research, Roger Faindt spent time visiting the actual battlefield and the locations

where the incredible story of Henry took place more than 60 years ago.

\*«**La lettre de Charlotte**» (**Charlotte's letter**), Éditions du Sekoya in 2006, 1<sup>st</sup> prize Louis Pergaud Award, 1<sup>st</sup> prize City of Neuf-Brisach Award, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize of the Grande Houssière with the support of the General Council of the Vosges,

«**Le silence des Roses un été 44**» (**Silence of the Roses, Summer of 44**), Éditions du Sekoya 1<sup>st</sup> prize of Paris loves Books Award 2007

«**Ils ont cru aux larmes des femmes**» (**They believed in the tears of the women**), Éditions du Sekoya. (Selected for the Marcel Aymé Award 2007)

A black and white photograph showing several soldiers in a trench. They are wearing helmets and military uniforms. The trench is dug into the ground, and there are sandbags or similar objects along the back edge. The lighting is bright, creating strong shadows and highlights on the soldiers' faces and the ground.

**«10:59» will be a confronting movie,  
powerful, determined, that will leave  
a mark and leave no one unharmed.  
Director Christian Duguay**

# About the Director



Canadian director Christian Duguay is highly respected in Hollywood. He made his debut with the early 1980s television series' including The Hitchhiker and William Tell before being drawn to the American blockbuster studios.

While living in the United States, Christian Duguay directed films such as The Assignment; a Sony Picture Entertainment production starring Ben Kingsley, Aidan Quinn and Donald Sutherland, and Screamers; an adaptation of the novel by P.K. Dick, released by Columbia Pictures.

However, his reputation would be founded by his work on a series; his spectacular version of the life of Joan of Arc, starring Leelee Sobieski in the lead role and Peter O'Toole in a supporting role. It was an enormous

success with 13 Emmy Award nominations including Outstanding Directing for a Mini-Series or Movie, Outstanding Mini-Series and 4 nominations at the Golden Globe Awards.

Christian Duguay has continued to make high caliber films for television featuring big name stars throughout his movie career, collecting prestigious recognition along the way and winning the Gemini Award for Best Direction for " Million Dollar Babies" in 1994.

Duguay's talent would be highlighted with the release of The Art of War, a feature film with a \$30 million budget starring Wesley Snipes and released by Warner Bros. It became a box-office smash in the United States and was the highest grossing film in Canada for 2000.

Duguay enjoys his Hollywood success, but never at the expense of his artistic integrity. After declining to participate in action oriented projects (including Terminator 3), Duguay decided to give his career a more challenging orientation. He went on to direct the now critically acclaimed mini-series Hitler, The Rise of Evil. Starring Robert Carlyle, the mini-series was nominated for 7 Emmy Awards including best mini-series.

#### **Partial Filmography:**

2004: Produced, directed and directed the photography on the MOW “Lies My Mother Told Me”, starring Colm Feore, Joely Richardson and Hayden Pannetierre.

2005: Produced, directed and directed the photography on the Lifetime Networks first Emmy Award/Golden Globe/Gemini nominated mini-series “Human Trafficking”, starring Mira Sorvino, Donald Sutherland, Robert Carlyle, Remy Girard, Isabelle Blais and Celine Bonnier. Mr. Duguay produced, directed and directed the photography on the

feature film “Boot Camp”, which is the story of the unregulated billion-dollar industry of tough love/boot camp rehabilitation centres in the U.S.

2007-2008: Directed and produced the mini-series on the life of fashion legend Coco Chanel, starring Shirley Mac Laine and Malcolm McDowell – to be aired in the fall on Lifetime, Rai-Italy and France 2.

He is presently in development to produce and direct a remake of Ben Hur, as a two-part mini-series.





” In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields. ”

**Canadian Lt-Colonel John McCrae**

# Note from the Director

While I was reading the script, I immediately understood that this project would not be a war movie like others.

This one is very well documented; it allows you to illustrate the whole collection of sets, details, situations, and actions with an accuracy and a truthfulness that will give the movie an originality and a strength that doesn't seem to have been brought forward until now.

«10:59» is a strong subject, involving an historical reference and a truly human depth of character. It is this point of human character that allows the subject to resonate with our current world, as it considers the arbitrary nature of deeming the other as an enemy simply because he is different. A difference that on the face of it allows him to be a target for hatred, contempt, cruelty, injustice and ultimately racism.

«10:59» talks about the 1914-1918 war, the great war, the global war: it is obviously the perfect mold to put Henry in a situation where he must face his contradiction and his dilemma, but also to present a group of men in a situation that can easily become extreme.

Nothing is harmless in times of war. Whether you're waiting or having fun, falling in love or making friends, death can ruin the moment in an instant. There is no future in a trench, only past: some memories, some letters that talk about before, or today, only just to update those with the feelings of someone whose future is at that moment unresolved.

«10:59» talks about the mix of nationalities that stand, either side by side or divided by the accidents of history. Today enemies are literally as well as figuratively tearing each other to pieces, while tomorrow they can be friends or partners in ideologically, economically and sometimes even commercially in war. This juxtaposition strengthens the subject of the ambiguity of friendship where situations can make these moments transient and can even reverse or accentuate the artificial differences once again.

There is a dramatic potential in this scenario that promises many strong and dense scenes of conflict and resolution, and there is a lot of them. The strongest is probably the one that brings Flavien the French soldier, Eugen the German and Henry the American together. This last character then discovers in the midst of the battle and the daily butchery of the war, that Eugen, the German soldier, is in fact his brother. This scene helps Henry to reach his unconscious goal: to know with what blood flows through his heart, literally as well as figuratively.

«10:59» emphasizes the need of a man to find out his identity inside a society that rejects him. The enemy is not always the one we think he is. It goes without saying that the theme of identity is an omnipresent and universal reality within this scenario.

Beyond any doubt, there is, obviously, on such a project, a part of interest that oversteps the simple artistic dimension to join a more direct social one.

The promise made to the spectator is to plunge him in the heart of the trenches, a descent into hell, individually and collectively, on the battlefield, like never before.

«10:59» will be a confronting movie, powerful, determined, that will leave a mark and leave no one unharmed.

**Christian Duguay**

”This war is really the greatest insanity in which white races have ever been engaged ”

**German Admiral von Tirpitz, in a letter to his wife - 1914**



# Note from the Producer

It's always the little stories that make the greatest history and that's why they deserve our attention.

Why would a silent, uncommunicative soldier decide to charge, bayonets blazing on a German position when he knows that the end of the war has been signed. Did he want to redeem himself for criticizing the army he served in? Did he want to return home as a hero?

Roger Faindt, thanks to his origins and his historical knowledge, was the only one able to take the place of Henry Gunther, to try to understand what he could have lived and felt deep in the trenches, lost somewhere in France.

As for Christian Duguay, this choice was obvious. He is a gifted, imaginative director,

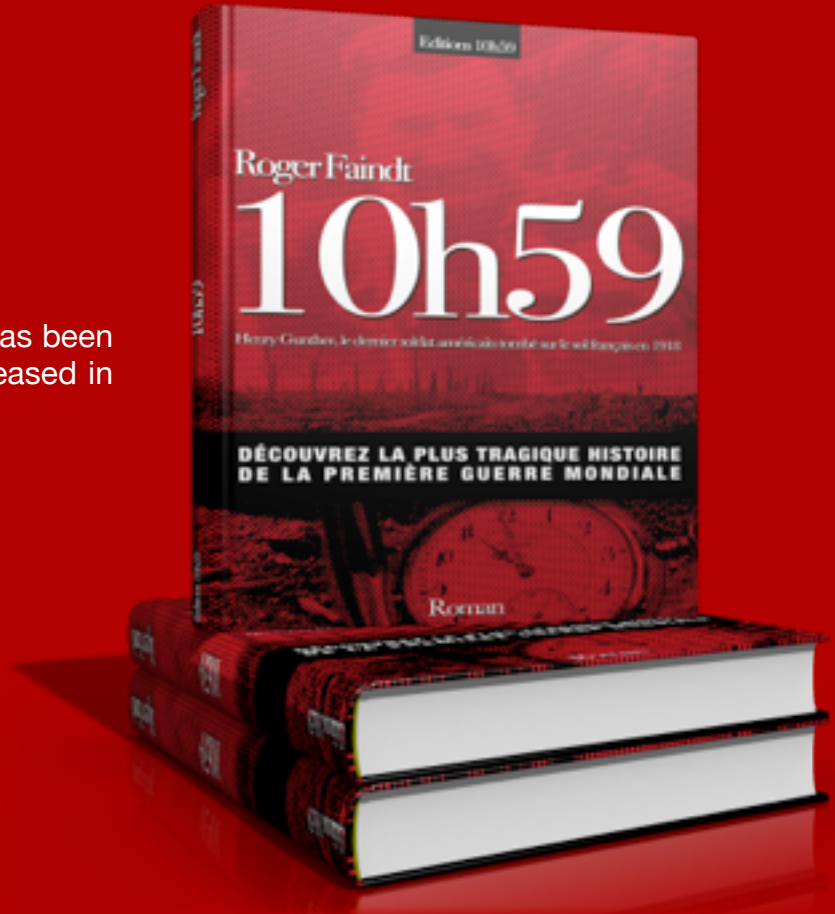
and is as comfortable with action movies as he is with big epic historical stories.

By giving him the production of «10:59», we knew he could plunge the spectators into the heart of the trenches as it has never been done before.

In the aftermath of the memorial day of November 11th, celebrating the end of the First World War's 90th anniversary, as the last surviving "poilu" (French soldier of the First World War) and American soldier of the great war died last year and as we still find armed conflicts at our doors, it is our heavy and important duty to keep these memories alive.

**Olivier Legrand**

The screenplay of the movie “10h59” has been adapted in book. The novel will be released in France on November 2009.



# 10:59 in 4 questions

## **Who is the main character?**

Henry Gunther, the last American soldier killed in action in November 1918

## **What's the main character trying to accomplish?**

*professionally:* Trying to be a good American soldier despite his German origins.

*personally:* Bind his American citizenship with its German origins and more closely: fraternize with German soldiers.

## **Who tries to stop the main character?**

War, the German enemy and the colleagues fighting with him that did not like Henry because he is of German origin.

# 10:59 in 4 archetypes

**Orphan in Act One:** The United States declaration of war on Germany confronts Henry Gunther with the xenophobia of his countrymen. His advocacy and departure to Europe revives the past of his ancestors that he carries within him from his childhood. On the front, his German origins isolate him. His first contact with the enemy and especially when he kills his first German soldier trigger in him a destructive conflict.

**Wanderer / vagrant in the first half of the second act:** Henry befriends a German speaking French soldier and this takes him back to German origins, accentuating his isolation and distrust from his colleagues.

**Fighting in the second half of the second act:** Henry tries to be a good and brave American soldier. He discovers the picture of his mother in the military record of a German soldier who is his half brother. He saves the man with the help of a French soldier.

**Martyr in the third act:** Betrayed by one of his colleagues in the schedule for the end of the war, Henry rushed to the enemy to begin fraternizing. The Germans who are still unaware of the exact time of the end of hostilities panic on seeing Henry approach their camp, gun in hand.

Henry was killed November 11th at 10:59 AM.



## Le Studio d'Imagination

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