## Member and Guest Feedback for Souleymane's Story

This was a good story and I think, informative as to the predicament faced by such migrants and with a very touching ending. I would have rated the film Good but for the excessive use of closeup photography. This may have been intended to convey an atmosphere of turmoil but it was too much, therefore, for technical reasons, I have rated the film as OK, whereas, better produced, I would have rated it as Good.

The film really made you see the world through Souleymane's eyes.

A hard watch but superb story telling in a way only film could do. Thank you for selecting it.

This film was excellent, very thought provoking as to the struggles of people seeking asylum anywhere and the variety of struggles people face including no right to work but needing money too. It was sad at the end but really made you realise the reality of waiting for a result.

Beautifully made film about a very believable modern situation for migrants seeking a better life. There were many wonderfully crafted sequences, despite the unrelenting grimness of the story. It feels entirely unlikely that Souleymane's application for asylum will ever be granted…

Beautifully acted and presented film. I found it very moving that he had to go through so much hardship just to survive. It really is humbling to live comfortably and see how difficult it is for others to suffer so much.

Once again, a stark enactment of the life of a refuge seeker. The sudden ending forced us to think deeply. What an actor!

Wonderful acting and a real insight into the life of asylum seekers in the city and his story in particular. Another side to Paris which we would never see and showing humanity at its best and worst.

I found this a deeply moving film bringing home to those of us who have not had to leave permanently our birth country in search of a better life just how awful life can be for those who have. All the characters involved were exceptionally well played. Thank you for choosing this film it was educational and left me counting my blessings.

I liked this film and that it covered quite a lot in the 90 minutes. In fact, I'm not such a fan of this type of film going beyond that. However, I'm also a fan of quality humorous films that don't have to be quite such a tough watch. If we can have a bit more of that next time in the selections, please.

A very good film. I was so moved by Suleyman and his story. Great acting great camera work. I do so hope he got his asylum and so worried he may not get asylum. Thank you for showing us this film.

Harrowing and moving treatment lifting the curtain on a life that many of us know little about. Sensitive central performance and inconclusive ending added to the powerful story-telling and left us with a question for our own conscience.

A harrowing story that could have been anywhere in Europe. Brilliantly shot.

It was a stressful watch. Beautifully acted and filmed, the tension never stopped for fear of the next thing that will inevitably go wrong for Souleymane. A sympathetic and realistic portrayal of the striving and exploitation of refugees. I did however wonder why his phone credit and battery never ran out! The film reminded me of Ken Loach's Sorry We Missed You.

Beautifully told yet shocking at the same time. You really felt for this young man.

It was a heart felt portrayal of the life endured by so many, even all around us. A brilliantly conveyed tale of the never-ending stress, also felt by the whole audience, as we sat on the edge of our seats.

It was a hard watch BUT very thought provoking. It was very interesting to see immigration/asylum seeking from the other side.

Excellent. A sympathetic portrait of a recent illegal immigrant to France. I had not looked on the people jumping the barriers on the Metro with sympathy before but now perhaps I might.

A truly compassionate and often heart-rending film, simply told but of great impact. The frenetic and merciless pace was accentuated by Souleymane's desperate cycling around Paris with his food deliveries, with each new disappointing encounter either abusive or indifferent. The redeeming elements were the encounter with the elderly man in his seventh floor flat, his charming and supportive gang of fellow Guineans and ultimately the sympathetic immigration worker. We are left guessing at what future awaits Souleymane.

Utterly exhausting. We lived every minute with him. Brilliant. The RFS extending our sympathies and enriching us too.

Gripping story which brought home very strongly the hardships faced by asylum seekers.

Exceptional film making. Superb acting. Memorable!

I thought this film was excellent so an "Excellent" from me. It was not an easy watch and I felt exhausted by the end of it but Souleymane was such an engaging character that you were rooting for him all the way through. I think it was the right decision to leave you hanging at the end. I feel his application would have been successful as the interviewer went to some lengths to get him to give his true story and could see how genuine his

emotion was. However, the point is that many are not successful and that behind all the statistics is a tale of genuine need. The French authorities and charities seemed to try to treat the men humanely but it's a huge problem.

A convincing portrayal of the volatile life of an asylum seeker. Brilliant acting by the lead. I love the ambiguity of the film's title in English – "story" as both the tale of his life but also the fictional nature of his initial "story" to the home office official. I don't know if the word "histoire" in French carries the same double meaning.

I found the film engaging at first but quickly became bored at the repetitiveness of it.

I found the film exhausting, in a good way as he raced frenetically round Paris and gave one a totally different view of the city I lived in an know well. I was very sad to see his and the other immigrants' lives, yet their courage to keep going.

The film perfectly portrayed the stress, anxiety, difficulty of living life on a knife edge under the radar as an asylum seeker in France but it's the same in any country, I assume. Brilliant.

A tense film (especially when Souleymane's bike was haring around Paris) and a window into a very troubled world that we never see. The reference to torture and extortion in Libya brought to mind Lo Capitano, the film we screened a couple of years ago. A fine performance from the lead.

Harrowing, intense and thought provoking. Showed the "thin line" between asylum seeker and economic migrant. The story was told with compassion yet avoided being sentimental. Excellent performances.

A moving and powerful depiction of the journey one man makes to improve his and his mother's life. A man who desperately wants to tell the truth and be given a chance but feels obliged to lie in order to move forward. We don't know how lucky we are.

Makes you appreciate what you have.

Great film. Felt like it picked up from where the film Lo Capitano, that you screened last year, left off.

Thank you for screening this film, reminding us how lucky we are to have been born where we were.

I thought that the film was moving, excellently acted and very thought provoking. I liked the style of following Souleymane on his bicycle and the tension was kept up throughout. You really got to understand Souleymane's vulnerability throughout his life. A tough watch, so pleased that it wasn't too long as the tension would have been too much!

Very good. Edge of seat. Waiting for all the dreadful things to happen, e.g. being cheated of his earnings, and of his “documents”, etc. There were flashes of truth (rare) and humanity, e.g. the chap in the next bed, the bike crash and the interview itself. Loved the ending.

Really powerful and well-acted even though quite unsettling to watch, particularly the scenes on the bike. I am in favour of any film that shows the plight of people seeking a better life in Europe and treats them as people, with respect and kindness.

Very insightful into migrant experience. Souleymane was very convincing, and the Paris traffic was terrifying. An abrupt ending to leave you thinking.

My stomach was clenched throughout the film witnessing the depiction of immigrant struggles. The actor who played Souleymane was superb even more so because he had no acting experience. Riding through Paris on that delivery bike was scary to watch especially for the cameraman following! The exploitation of these immigrants was really upsetting too.

Despite the fact that Souleymane was in reality an economic migrant, as we discovered when he revealed in a very moving way the real reasons why he left Guinea for France, I found him a very likeable guy, very hard working and resourceful. There are so many like him in so-called developed countries.

Really interesting film. Full of humanity. I enjoyed it very much.

The issues raised by this film were uncomfortably relevant. It is so easy to dehumanise, and even demonise, the "invasion" of people seeking a better life in Europe. It was impossible to dismiss the real suffering of an individual like Souleymane. His days were impossibly frenetic and frustrating, despite his best efforts. The fact that fellow Africans were exploiting him in Paris added nuance to his plight.

My experience in getting to Tuesday’s film through cold rain, late public transport and the AGM palled to insignificance in the knowledge of the terrible difficulties that Souleymane and the numerous likeminded people around Europe and beyond, experience daily. Excellently acted, shot and directed, this film made me painfully aware of suffering humanity, especially those not comfortably living in Richmond and Britain.

I really enjoyed the film as it told a very human story. The actor was marvellous.

I found it long and only in the last 10 minutes did it engage. It was cleverly filmed to help us understand the life of a refugee but it needed editing, too many repetitions of Souleymane's day to day story.

An amazing performance by Abou Sangaré, which reflects his own real-life experience. It was a very very moving depiction of the difficult story of undocumented migrants and how hard their lives are and how easily they can be exploited. The horror of his true

migration story as recounted (eventually) during his asylum interview was very affecting. I am delighted to read that the actor received his residency permit following the release of this film.

The film beautifully illustrated the difficult murky world asylum seekers are often forced to live in. Without being allowed to work and with very little money from the government, Souleymane had to play the system in order to send money to his vulnerable mother in Guinea. His plight mirrored that of the zero hours delivery driver in Ken Loach's *Sorry We Missed You*. I chose to believe Soulaymane's story had a more hopeful outcome.

Uncomfortable viewing but convincing and thought-provoking.

Carefully observed grind of daily lives. The asylum interview was excellent. Reminded me a bit of Ken Loach.

Souleymane won our hearts, loved the enigmatic ending. A revelation that there are "trainers" out there prepping you for the examination. A couple of narrative things that worried me: What did he do with his bike when he went off to the hostel in the suburbs? Would he really have spent so much time in cafes? Covered similar ground to *Lucky Lu* but this film was about a Chinese man in New York working to bring his family over but it all goes very wrong.

A very sensitive account of this young man's efforts to survive in today's desperate world. I expected a different (happier) ending but in fact it was more effective by just stopping suddenly.

What a distressing story! Really brings it home to you how many people dream of being as lucky as we are and how that dream is being taken advantage of by unscrupulous people, in all sorts of ways. Very clever to leave the ending open. And excellent acting!

A kind of successor to Io Capitano a couple of seasons back and brilliant at times, (and I don't just mean the harrowing bike rides), this film is particularly raw and brutal and doesn't hold its punches when portraying how abjectly people treat each other. Abou Sangare's performance as Souleymane is mesmerising and this is another warts and all look into the underside of European capitalism, system gaming and exploitation. The irony of course is that life here even under these circumstances must be infinitely better than the countries the immigrants are escaping from. Occasionally, some tenderness is portrayed, as in the scenes with Souleymane's girlfriend back home he says goodbye to and the old man to whom he delivers a pizza. But overall, I am not sure what I am supposed to feel or what the director is trying to say. The scene at the immigration centre is depressing in every way imaginable and none of it seems that surprising. I am only pleased that I have never ordered a takeaway in my life but can't say the same for e-Bay deliveries. A good choice.

Abou Sangaré is excellent as the severely harassed Souleymane, who is constantly struggling to keep up with his food delivery targets while trying to learn a story supplied by a fellow Guinean, for which he is paying, to help him pass his asylum interview. There

were some very alarming cycling scenes through the streets of Paris, where Souleymane always seems to be running late. This film felt like a continuation of the story in *Io Capitano*, which was shown during Season 61, where the two teenaged boys thought their struggles were over when they arrived in Italy, when in fact I have no doubt, more were just beginning, having experienced a very traumatic journey from Senegal. It was apparent that Souleymane had a similar journey from Guinea, as he recounted the terrible treatment he experienced in Libya, which sounded very similar to that received by the teenagers from Senegal. I assume that Souleymane was not granted asylum in France, based on his interview.