

Beat: News

Twenty Years of Silence: The Dutroux Case

That Still Haunts Belgium

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USPA NEWS - Twenty years after one of Belgium's darkest criminal trials, the Dutroux case continues to cast a long shadow. Despite a high-profile conviction, unanswered questions linger about potential networks, judicial oversights, and the haunting possibility of accomplices who were never brought to justice. With the release of *Maldoror*, a film that blurs the lines between fact and fiction, the debate is reignited: Is Belgium ready to confront the truths it may have buried? This investigation delves into the case's unresolved mysteries, the legal barriers to reopening the file, and the lingering trauma of a nation still seeking closure.

Chapter 1: The Bitter Taste of Incompletion

Twenty years after Marc Dutroux's trial, a sense of injustice still hangs over Belgium. Michel Bourlet, former prosecutor, recalls: "The secondary case file was supposed to address the gray areas, but we couldn't see it through." This file, intended to uncover unexplored connections, was closed without providing answers. The hair samples found in Dutroux's hideout? Inconclusive. Suspects never tried? Forgotten. A partial truth that leaves a void.

Chapter 2: Dutroux's Silence

Marc Dutroux himself has never admitted to some of the most heinous crimes attributed to him. He denies abducting Julie Lejeune and Mélissa Russo, as well as murdering An Marchal and Eefje Lambrecks. These denials are not mere legal tactics; they fuel suspicions of a broader network beyond a lone perpetrator. The shadow of Michel Nihoul still looms, a murky figure from a trial that hinted at deeper connections without fully exploring them.

Chapter 3: Maldoror, a Film as a Catalyst

In this climate of unspoken truths, Fabrice Du Welz's film *Maldoror* stirs the waters. More than fiction, it holds up a mirror to a Belgium that sometimes prefers to forget. "This isn't about conspiracy theories," says Du Welz. "I've delved into tangible facts, and it's clear there are still dark areas." The film reignites a debate thought to be buried: the existence of an organized criminal network.

Chapter 4: Can the Investigation Be Reopened?

Legally, the answer is simple: only the discovery of new, decisive evidence could justify reopening the case. Marc Dutroux's lawyer, Bruno Dayez, speculates: "If someone confessed to abducting Julie and Mélissa on Nihoul's orders, the investigation would be relaunched." But facts are stubborn. No decisive witness has come forward. The case remains stuck in a frustrating judicial stalemate.

Chapter 5: Is Belgium Ready to Face the Truth?

The Dutroux case is not just a crime. It's a national trauma, a distorted mirror reflecting institutional failures and complicit silences. Is the truth too heavy to bear? Perhaps. But as long as questions remain unanswered, the Dutroux case will never truly be closed. The real question isn't: "Can the investigation be reopened?" but rather: "Do we have the courage to do so?"

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