

The logo for ZDF.enterprises, featuring the text 'ZDF.enterprises' in white with a red dot on the 'Z', set against a dark background.

ZDF.enterprises

A SERIES ABOUT LOVE.
AND THE PRICE THAT
IT COMES WITH.

CHAUSSEE D'AMOUR

10 x 50'

ZDFE.drama

General Synopsis and Production Information

The “Highway of Love” centers on the Chaussée d’Amour, an infamous Belgian thoroughfare lined with houses of ill repute. When Sylvia Carlier unexpectedly inherits one of these brothels following the untimely death of her father, she must make the best of a situation that seemingly can’t get any worse.

Fleeing with her two children from a crumbling marriage, this suburban housewife is left with little choice but to master the world’s oldest profession – or die trying. And just when Sylvia begins to accept her new role as Lady of the House, officer Ludo Beets comes knocking with a grim new development: a body has been unearthed beneath the highway, and all fin-gers point to foul play.

Murder, intrigue, and more than a little bit of loving all collide on the “Highway of Love”, and when the dust clears, you won’t believe who’s left standing.

The
**most ever
watched
SVOD series
in Belgium**



Original title: Chaussée d'Amour
International title: Highway of Love
Genre: drama series about love and the price that comes with it
Format: 10 x 50'
Network: Telenet
Produced by: deMENSEN

Scriptwriters: Pieter Peyls, Jan Pepermans & Stefanie Vanhecke
Directors: Pieter Van Hees (Left Bank, Dirty Mind, Waste Land), Nathalie Basteyns (Jes, Clan) & Frank Devos
Line Producer: Saskia Verboven
Release: 2016

Nathalie Basteyns

Creative Director

When we came up with the idea for *Highway of Love* we knew right away we wanted to create a profound character drama with a raw and dark side to it. The sex, the murder, the drama...it is all part of that. But the central part to this show for me, are the women. Women who lead very different lives, women who struggle but learn how to be strong, how to stand up for themselves and -more importantly- how to stand up for each other. That is what makes this show great: strong women who would give their lives for each other. In my opinion our directors, Pieter Van Hees and Frank Devos, have done a wonderful job portraying the profoundness of the female characters' individual personality as well as their complex relationship to each other.

**“Our central characters:
Strong women
who would die
for each other.”**

Nathalie Basteyns



Pieter Van Hees

Director

With *Chaussée d'Amour*, the intention is not to make a documentary, nor to give a 100% accurate portrayal of the world of prostitution. Despite our dedicated research and un-garnished descriptions of the excesses and violence, our series does not revolve around the exploitation of women who make a living in this hard as nails sector, nor do we wish it to become a misplaced plea for or against paid love. This is pure television fiction, an edgy drama in heart and soul, about women who in spite of all they have to endure, seek to try to make the best of things. Women who switch to survival mode and fight as lionesses, when they feel that their lair is under threat. And women who, even in their struggle, find more than enough time to appreciate the little things in life, to laugh at foolishness, and to drink a toast to a better outcome.



A close-up photograph of a man with a beard and a green cap, looking intently at a person whose arm is raised in a black jacket. The man is wearing a light blue shirt with a palm tree pattern. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**„Chaussée d’Amour is
an edgy drama
in heart and soul.“**



Frank Devos

Director

The series will combine kitschy pop culture and foreign mafia bling with that salt of the earth common sense innate to the small business owners that are part of the Chaussée d'Amour, together with a generous dose of subtle humour and a well-fitting schizophrenic visual style. The murky greyness and sterility of the outside world out there on the Chaussée d'Amour form a stark contrast with the artificial 'Alice in Wonderland' feeling inside Sylvia's bar. The clients become those proverbial children who escape from the grim reality of life and enter their favourite sweet shop. And there, in the midst of it all, the women of Chaussée d'Amour run their business with a combination of wit and a sharp business acumen, letting the viewer in on the oddities and occasional hilarity that ensues from their encounters.

**„The series combines
pop culture,
mafia bling and
common sense.“**

Episodic Synopsis

Episode 1

Sylvia Carlier, a suburban housewife and mother of two adolescent teens, finds out her father has died and visits the town where she grew up to deal with his belongings. Her father left her a house on the infamous Highway of Love, a thoroughfare in St. Trude, Belgium, where a prostitution business is run. The house is run as a brothel – named the Cats – by her father’s friend Willy. Although Willy doesn’t want the house to be sold, Sylvia considers the offer she gets for the house from another pimp in the area, Alek. Afterwards, while Sylvia and her husband Daniel throw a party for their friends to celebrate their newly decorated house, Daniel is arrested for allegedly assaulting a female patient of his at his gynecology practice. Although Daniel claims the accusations are false, Sylvia flees with their children Sep (15) and Eva (17) to the brothel her father left her. They are surprised to learn about their grandfather, since Sylvia had always told them her parents died a long time ago. Sylvia decides to move into the apartment above the brothel, much to Daniel’s (and Eva’s) disgust. Meanwhile, a body is discovered during construction work in the main street, close to Sylvia’s brothel.

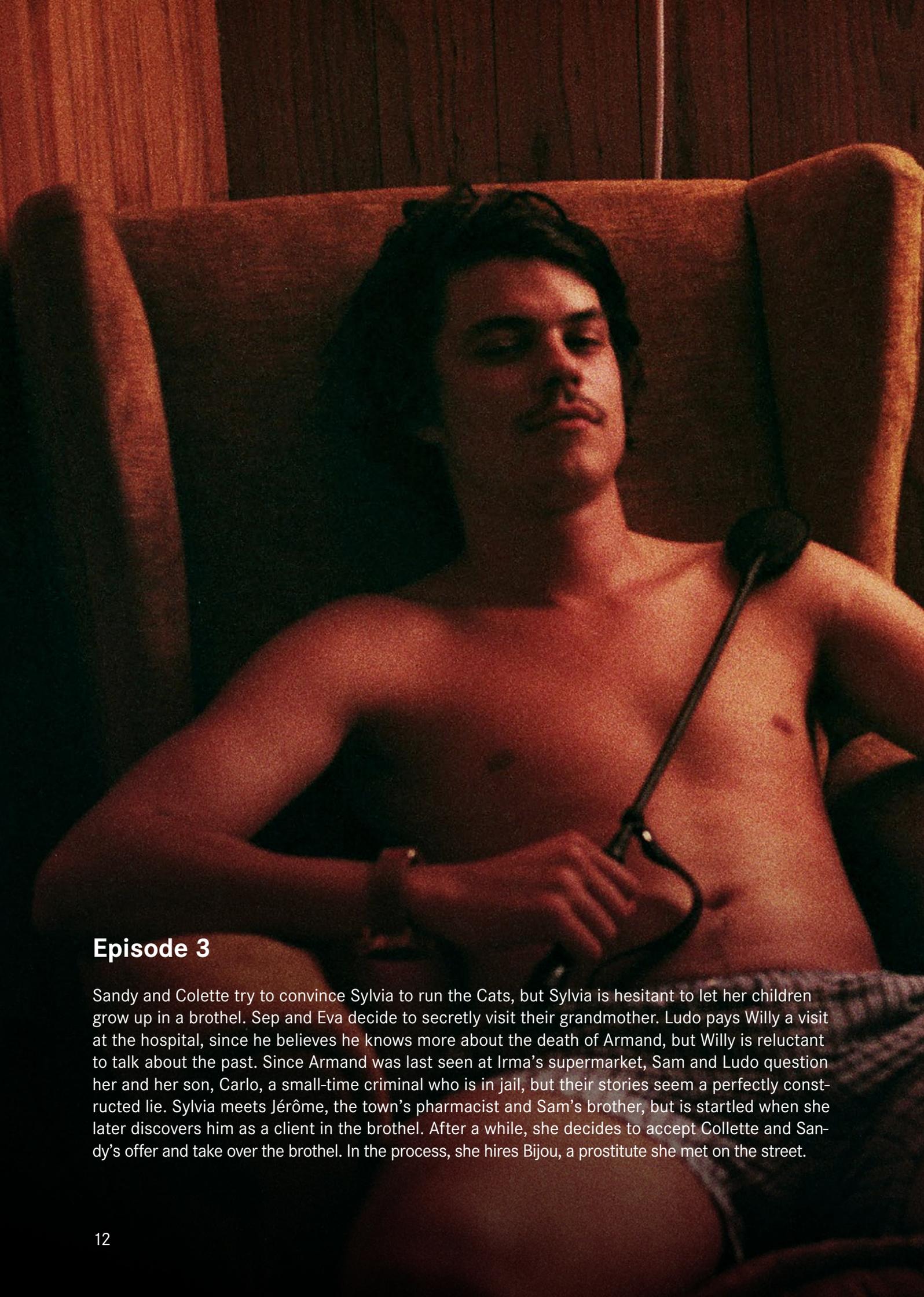


**„Chaussée d'Amour
helped us discovering
our own Flemish
Meryl Streep,
Tiny Bertels“**

VRT

Episode 2

The body turns out to be Armand Allaire, an old client of the Cats. Police officer Ludo Beets failed to solve his murder case twenty years ago. Pushed by the urge to prove himself, he reopens the case, now determined to find Armand's killer. During the investigation, he works with local police officer Sam Fonteyne, ever so cheerful and far along in her pregnancy. Willy and Sylvia have a fierce discussion about whether or not Sylvia wants to keep renting her father's house to Willy, when he has a heart attack and ends up in the hospital. Sandy, a prostitute who works at the Cats, is having an affair with Nicolas, one of her clients. She believes what she feels for him is mutual, until she is confronted with his wife and their child in the fitting rooms of a clothing store. She breaks down and confides in Sep, who is mesmerized by her beauty. Sep wants to avenge her by stealing one of Nicolas' horses, but is caught by Nicolas. The chase results in Nicolas' horse getting killed, and he confronts Sylvia with her son's actions, demanding a refund for the expensive horse. Eva and Sep find out their grandmother, Sylvia's mother, is still alive when she shows up at the Cats. Sylvia tells her mother to go, and never come back.



Episode 3

Sandy and Colette try to convince Sylvia to run the Cats, but Sylvia is hesitant to let her children grow up in a brothel. Sep and Eva decide to secretly visit their grandmother. Ludo pays Willy a visit at the hospital, since he believes he knows more about the death of Armand, but Willy is reluctant to talk about the past. Since Armand was last seen at Irma's supermarket, Sam and Ludo question her and her son, Carlo, a small-time criminal who is in jail, but their stories seem a perfectly constructed lie. Sylvia meets Jérôme, the town's pharmacist and Sam's brother, but is startled when she later discovers him as a client in the brothel. After a while, she decides to accept Collette and Sandy's offer and take over the brothel. In the process, she hires Bijou, a prostitute she met on the street.

Episode 4

Eva starts dating Mathieu, the son of the local garage owner. Sylvia tries to attract new customers for the grand re-opening of her brothel, much to the frustration of Alek. He runs a brothel across the street and employs Valentina, Carlo's wife and a dominatrix where Willy is often a client. Since Alek wants to own the entire Highway of Love, Valentina tries to persuade Willy to sell the brothel he owns to Alek, but Willy refuses. Meanwhile, Sam and Ludo discover someone beat up Colette at the Cats the night of Armand's murder. At the time, Colette claims it was Willy who did this to her. It turns out garage owner Jos, Willy and Collette share a secret, though Ludo cannot seem to figure out what. He tries to poison Carlo, who rethinks Ludo's offer of a reduced sentence in exchange for cooperation with the investigation. He tells Ludo he's willing to talk.

A photograph of a table in a dimly lit room. On the table, there is a dark bottle, a white pump dispenser, a pink fuzzy hat, a white egg, and a glass. A person's arm is visible on the left side of the frame.

**„Characters
and dialogues
you want to eat
like candy.“**

De Standaard

Episode 5

After Collette tells Sylvia Jérôme visits her because he's still mourning the death of his wife, Sylvia agrees to a date at his place, during which they kiss. Things also heat up between Eva and Mathieu, but he tells her he cannot have sex with her. Eva feels rejected. Willy agrees to sell to Alek, but he demands that he lets Valentina be the brothel's madam.

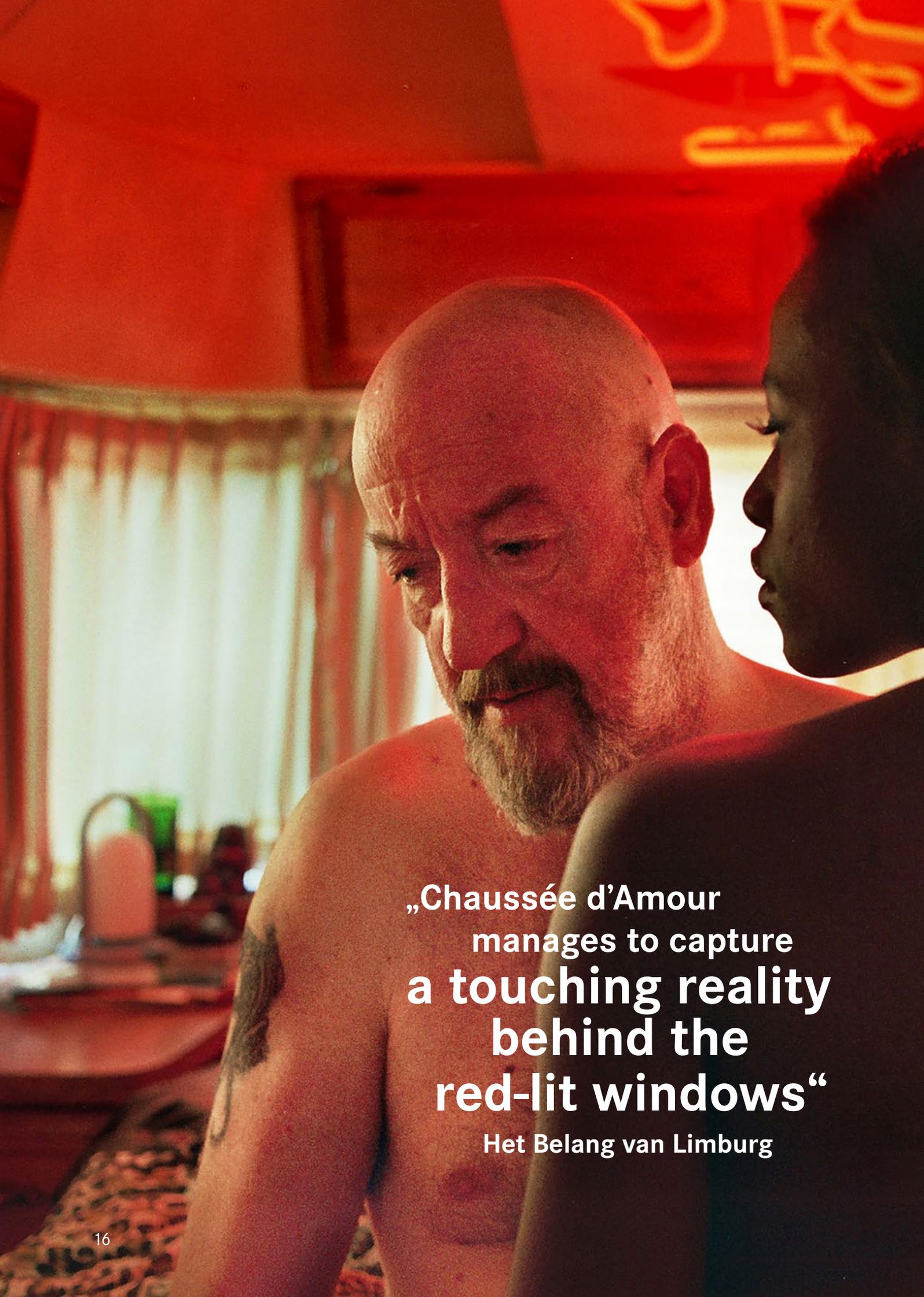


Episode 6

Joelle, a transgender who works at the Cats, is threatened by Davy and Gaetan, two boys from the neighborhood. Ludo comes to her aid. Ludo and Sam go over Valentina's statement from the night of the murder. She was tripping on LSD at the time, and describes a black horse in the night, a giant and a clown. Ludo believes she's describing Collette and someone else carrying a body. Things run smooth between Jérôme and Sylvia, but Daniel suddenly shows up and tells her the charges against him have been dropped. Sylvia doesn't know what to think and a frustrated Jérôme takes off.

Episode 7

Sylvia tells Daniel she wants a divorce. Meanwhile, she keeps thinking back about the night when she ran away from home as a young girl. Ludo meets up with magistrate John for advice, who happens to be an old flame of his. Carlo is released from prison and is happy to be reunited with Valentina. Willy wants to start up an escort business with Joelle, and hires Carlo as a driver. But in his inattention, Joelle is beat up by Davy and Gaetan, who sought revenge after being humiliated by Ludo. They're accompanied by a reluctant Mathieu, who finally convinces them to stop and let Joelle go. Sylvia is furious at Carlo when she sees a beat up Joelle arrive at the Cats. Valentina, furious as well at Willy, agrees to let herself be hypnotized, in order to try and relive the night of the murder and tell Ludo what happened. In her trance, she recognizes Willy carrying the body of Armand.



**„Chaussée d'Amour
manages to capture
a touching reality
behind the
red-lit windows“**

Het Belang van Limburg

Episode 8

Sylvia and her girls decide to take revenge on Gaetan and Davy for beating up Joelle. Davy's father, the notary, threatens Sylvia when he learns she's after his son's humiliation. Joelle hasn't told anyone that Mathieu was present during the beating. Although his father cannot hide his disgust for the transgender, Mathieu feels strangely drawn to Joelle. Daniel tells Jérôme to stay away from his wife. Fed up with her life as a prostitute, Sandy decides to cut loose.

Episode 9

Colette confesses to Sylvia her father and her had an affair. A shocked Sylvia threatens to fire Colette. Sylvia and Jérôme about Jérôme's lingering feelings for his wife. Daniel and Sandy sleep together, and Sandy tells him about Eva's encounter with one of the Cats' clients: Sylvia walked in just in time when Eva took the client with her to a back room. While Sylvia's mother teaches Sep how to drive, they get into an accident. Mathieu tries to tell his parents about him and Joelle, but his father won't hear any of it. Willy confesses to the murder of Armand. Right afterwards, he hangs himself in the bathroom at the police station.

Episode 10

While the Highway of Love mourns Willy's death, Ludo has serious doubts about his confession. He tells Sylvia that he thinks Willy took the blame for what Sylvia's father did that night. Sylvia visits her mother Magda, who confesses to her what happened the night of the murder. In a flashback, we see how Magda begs her husband Staaf not to leave her for Colette. When Colette calls him panicked about a customer having beaten her, he rushes to the Cats, with Magda chasing him. He gets into a fight with Armand, which results in Magda killing Armand. With Willy's help, Staaf buries the body at Jos' garage. They pay him off to keep him quiet about what happened. Back home, Staaf tells Magda he can't live with a crime like this and that he wants to end their lives, and that of Sylvia too. Sylvia overhears them and runs off. Back to the present. Sylvia and Ludo decide to tell Armand's mother who killed her son, but not anyone else. Bijou gets a visit from the man she left. Sylvia and Jérôme have a romantic reunion. Later on, when Jérôme and Sam have to leave for Willy's funeral, Sam goes into labour. Sylvia is furious at Sandy for telling Daniel about Eva's encounter with the client at the Cats, and tells her she's fired. While driving back from the funeral, Colette suddenly decides to take a different route from everyone else. When everyone arrives back at the Highway of Love, the Cats is going up in flames.

Cast and Characters



Tiny Bertels is Sylvia Carlier

Sylvia Carlier is the main character of the show. She is married to Daniël Munter and has two children, Sep and Eva. After her husband is accused of molesting his female patients, she leaves him and moves into the apartment above the Cats, the brothel she inherited from her estranged father, Staaf. Having trouble making ends meet, she decides to take over the business and become a madam. Slowly Sylvia grows into her roll and tries to stand up for herself in a world dominated by men. During her stay at the Cats she discovers that the secret she has been living with most of her life, the reason she distanced herself from her parents, has a lot more to it than she thought.



Josse De Pauw is Willy Knappen

Willy Knappen is the one and only 'Emperor of the Highway'. A notorious figure and former owner of the Cats. But things aren't going well for Willy: he is growing old, has problems with chronic alcoholism and is a suspect in the murder Sylvia witnessed as a teenager. Realizing he won't be around for much longer, he does everything in his power to help Sylvia out.



Dirk Roofthoof is Ludo Beets

Ludo Beets is a homicide detective with the Federal Police. He is a raging Pitbull who has been obsessed with a 20-year-old disappearance that took place on the Highway. Ludo has always been convinced a murder took place and Willy Knapen was involved, but never had proof. When after all this time the body of his missing person is recovered at the Highway, he comes back to open a murder investigation and haunt everyone who might be involved, including Willy and Sylvia.



Kadèr Gübrüz is Valentina

Valentina works as a Dominatrix at Cats' neighboring bar, Pin-Up Girls. She has her mind set on taking over both Pin-Up Girls and the Cats and is thus a rival of Sylvia. Although she profiles herself as a tough woman who criticizes everything and anything, she also has a softer side, especially when it comes to her little boy, Raf.



Geert Van Rampelberg is Jérôme Fontaine

Jérôme Fontaine, pharmacist and widower, is Sylvia's listening ear and shoulder to cry on. He's a sweet and kind man who develops feelings for Sylvia.



Ruth Becquart and **Renée Fokker** are Sandy and Colette

For years **Sandy** and **Colette** have been working girls at the Cats. Although Sandy has known misfortune all her life, especially when it comes to love, she is still a happy and positive woman looking for Prince Charming. A naïve and clever girl at the same time, she always finds a way to put a smile on people's faces. Fifty-year-old Colette is the mother figure, a warm personality with a heart of gold. She helps Sylvia out both financially and mentally. She turns out to be at the heart of the secret Sylvia and Willy have been keeping.

Further Characters

Romy Luise Lauwers is Eva Carlier
Thomas De Smet is Sep Carlier
Reinhilde Declier is Magda
Günthere Lesage is Daniel Munter
Evelien Bosmans is Sam Fonteyne
Frank Focketyn is Jos Vanden Eynde



Impressions of the Show



Explore the Program on our Website www.zdf-enterprises.de





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