

Jimmy, Terence and Kathy Tontlewicz

Press and documents



Icy Water of Lake Credited With Recovery : Boy Near Normal Now After ‘Drowning’

BY SHARON COHEN
JAN. 20, 1985 12 AM PT
ASSOCIATED PRESS
CHICAGO —

The first signs were dismal. No heartbeat. No pulse. After 20 minutes under water in an icy lake, the boy was technically dead.

But now, one year after nearly drowning in a sledding accident, Jimmy Tontlewicz has made giant strides on the road to recovery.

He attends kindergarten. He has taken swimming lessons. And he is undergoing therapy for a speech problem that resulted from his near tragedy.

Today, Jimmy Tontlewicz, whose struggle for survival captivated the nation, is an active--in fact, a little too active--5 1/2-year-old.

Watching over Jimmy is “like taking care of five kids,” said his 30-year-old mother, Kathy.

In many ways, Jimmy’s progress since Jan. 15, 1984--the day he was pulled unconscious from the 32-degree waters of Lake Michigan--is nothing short of miraculous.

“It’s like God had him in his hands,” said his father, Terrence, who was with Jimmy on the sledding outing and made a futile attempt to rescue him. “People wanted a miracle and it happened.”

Indeed, Jimmy’s plight touched people all over America. Many sent flowers, gifts, even bubble gum. Some lit candles. Others donated money.

Of \$200,000 raised in funds set up by the Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Tribune, about \$175,000 was spent on medical bills, said Kenneth Ditkowsky, an attorney for Jimmy’s mother.

“People have really laid out their heart to this kid,” Ditkowsky said.

But in other ways, the last year has been troubled for Jimmy and his parents, who were separated at the time of the accident and are now getting divorced.

Jimmy’s mother is on welfare, and she says it has been “real rough” making ends meet and coping with hours of uncertainty, weeks of hospital vigils and months of therapy.

“He had to learn how to do everything over again,” she said. “He had to learn how to eat . . . to talk . . . and walk. He was like a baby.”

Jimmy has made a complete physical recovery, doctors say, but he is hyperactive and has learning disabilities, although it’s not clear whether those problems are related to the accident. The doctors “are certainly satisfied with his recovery and they’re hopeful with the appropriate environment to learn in, he’ll overcome his learning disabilities,” said Jane Crowley, a spokeswoman at Children’s Memorial Hospital, where the boy has been treated.

And the hard work needed to reach that goal has begun. His mother says Jimmy will be entering classes for those with learning disabilities.

Jimmy’s mother said that at times, Jimmy has a very short attention span and cannot sit still long enough to finish dinner, which she must help him with.

But at other times, she said, Jimmy “runs through the house like a normal kid. He gets into trouble like a normal kid. And he plays like a normal kid.”

Jimmy’s brush with death, his mother added, has not made him fearful of water and he took swimming lessons last year.

Jimmy’s nightmare began on a Sunday afternoon when he fell into the ice-covered lake while trying to retrieve a sled that had slipped down an embankment.

His father jumped in to rescue him but blacked out. The last words he heard were, “Save me, Dad.” Tontlewicz was pulled from the water by firefighters and citizens, including a television crew working nearby.

When Jimmy was plucked from the lake after being submerged 20 minutes, he had no heartbeat or pulse. Technically, he was dead.

But Jimmy had a lot working in his favor--particularly, the cold water, which may have given him a second chance at life.

Scientists say a biological phenomenon called the mammalian diving reflex, triggered by the shock of cold water, enables humans--like whales and seals--to live without breathing for longer than normal.

When he was first hospitalized, doctors placed Jimmy in a drug-induced coma to control his brain activity.

Slowly, he came around. Within days he moved his arms and legs. Then he awoke. He began talking. And after three months of hospitalization and therapy, he went home.

“He’s a tough guy,” his 36-year-old father said. “I taught him to be tough. That had a lot to do with saving his life.”



whiteblood (54) dans **#life** •

<https://steemit.com/life/@whiteblood/a-true-living-history-from-chicago>

Since it is February in Chicago, and winter is far from over, here is another story from 34 years ago, many of you may know.....A Strong Little Boy.....Chicago, Illinois, is next to a big, beautiful lake, Lake Michigan. In the summer Lake Michigan is warm and blue. People lie on the beaches and swim in the water. In the winter Lake Michigan is cold and gray. Snow covers the beaches, and ice covers the water.

On a cold January day, in 1984, a little boy and his father were playing in the snow on a Chicago beach. The boy was Jimmy Tontlewicz. He was four years old.

Jimmy was playing with a sled. He pushed the sled down a small hill. The sled went onto the ice of Lake Michigan. Jimmy ran after the sled. He ran onto the ice. Suddenly the ice broke, and Jimmy fell into the cold water. Jimmy's father jumped into the water. He couldn't find Jimmy. Minutes went by. He still couldn't find Jimmy. "My kid is dead! My kid is dead!", he screamed.

Men from the Chicago Fire Department arrived. Twenty minutes later they found Jimmy and pulled him out of the water. Jimmy was not breathing, and his heart was not beating. He was dead.

At the beach paramedics worked on Jimmy for one hour. He began to breathe, and his heart began to beat again. The paramedics rushed Jimmy to the hospital.

Doctors at the hospital put Jimmy in bed. They put him on a cold mattress because they wanted his body to warm up slowly. They gave him some medicine because they wanted him to sleep.

After eight days in the hospital, Jimmy woke up, but he couldn't walk or talk. He stayed in the hospital for six weeks. Every day he got better. Then he went to another hospital. He stayed there for seven weeks. He began to walk, talk, and play again.

Jimmy was in the water for over 20 minutes. He couldn't breathe in the water. He couldn't get any oxygen. But today he is alive and healthy. How is it possible?

Jimmy is alive because the water was ice cold. Usually the brain needs a lot of oxygen. But when it's very cold, the brain slows down. It does not need much oxygen. So the ice cold water saved Jimmy.

Jimmy's father has another reason. He says, "Jimmy is alive today because he is a fighter. He is a strong little boy." The first photo is Jimmy being pulled from the icy waters of Lake Michigan, after being submerged for 20 minutes. The second photo is Jimmy and his mother, Kathy, at Children's Memorial Hospital, in Chicago.



Jimmy's lifeless body is pulled from Lake Michigan, after being submerged for 20 minutes.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1986-03-31-8601230695-story.html>

TONTLEWICZ FATHER CHARGED AFTER RAID

By John Kass

Chicago Tribune

March 31, 1986

The father of 6-year-old Jimmy Tontlewicz--the boy who survived after being submerged for 20 minutes in icy Lake Michigan two years ago--was being held Sunday on drug, explosives and weapons charges, police said.

Terrence Tontlewicz, 38, of 3818 W. Montrose Ave., was charged with possession of cocaine, marijuana, explosives and 18 unregistered guns after police raided his home and adjoining motorcycle shop Saturday.

Tontlewicz, reputed to be a ranking member of a motorcycle gang, was being held pending a Monday bond hearing, police said. He is scheduled to appear in court April 24. Tontlewicz, who is divorced, is involved in a custody fight with his former wife, Kathy, over their son.

Sgt. John Loughnane, a street gang specialist, said the weapons found at the home included handguns, shotguns and a .45 caliber semiautomatic rifle.

Loughnane said the raid was conducted after police received information that explosives and narcotics were kept in Tontlewicz's Competition Customs motorcycle shop. Loughnane said that the guns had previously been registered but that the permits had expired.

Police also found a quantity of blasting caps in Tontlewicz's home.

Jimmy Tontlewicz attracted national media attention when he fell through ice on Lake Michigan while sledding with his father on Jan. 15, 1984. Tontlewicz was pulling his son on a sled when it slipped onto the ice-covered lake in Lincoln Park. When Tontlewicz jumped on the ice to save his son, the ice cracked and both plunged into the water.

Fire department divers pulled Jimmy from the water a few feet from where a WGN-TV (Channel 9) camera crew rescued his father.

Physicians at Children's Memorial Hospital placed Jimmy into a drug-induced coma for five days to minimize brain damage caused by a lack of oxygen. He eventually recovered and is in his mother's custody.

"What ever happened to ... "

By By Angela Rozas

Nov 23, 2011 at 9:40 AM

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-behind-the-chicago-tribunes-updates-on-stories-from-the-1980s-20111123-story.html>



The idea behind our newsmakers series came from Mark Jacob, a fellow metro editor and history buff with an excellent memory -- especially for all things Chicago.

Wednesday's installment was written by Metro reporter Cynthia Dizikes and features updates on **Walter Polovchak, "Spider Dan" Goodwin, Jimmy Tontlewicz and Dread Scott.**

The **before and after photo gallery** is fascinating, too.

We wanted to look at the three most recent decades and try to find stories that, while not necessarily the biggest stories of those decades, still reside in the collective memory of most Chicagoans.

We also wanted to try to find stories that still had open questions or unresolved issues. All the stories began with this question: "Whatever happened to...?"

To update the stories, reporters combed through newspaper archives, historical records and tracked down relatives (some across the country) and acquaintances of the subjects, among other pieces of the puzzles.

What they found were fascinating stories on a variety of subjects, from homicide cases to political theater to a skyscraper-climbing daredevil. We hope readers enjoy our glance back at small pieces of Chicago history.

-- **Angela Rozas**, Chicago Bureau Chief

Le Monde

[HTTPS://WWW.LEMONDE.FR/ARCHIVES/ARTICLE/1984/01/31/L-ENFANT-QUI-REVIENT-DU-FROID_3002234_1819218.HTML](https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1984/01/31/L-ENFANT-QUI-REVIENT-DU-FROID_3002234_1819218.HTML)

The child who returns from the cold

By JEAN-YVES NAU

Published on January 31, 1984 at 00h00 - Updated on January 31, 1984 at 00h00 Reading time 2 min.

Article reserved for subscribers

Four-year-old Jimmy Tontlewicz has come a long way. From the icy waters of Lake Michigan. Almost from beyond.

It's cold in Chicago at the beginning of the year. So cold that the surface of Lake Michigan is beginning to freeze over. On January 15, Jimmy is having fun on a dike with his father. The child wants to put his sled on the lake at all costs. He succeeded.

Suddenly, it is the drama. Jimmy and his father fall into the water. Mr. Tontlewicz manages to stay afloat at all costs. He is fished out. Jimmy, him, is at the bottom of the lake, drowned. It took twenty minutes for the firemen to get his body out of the water. Obviously, his heart stopped beating. No resuscitation was attempted at the scene.

Jimmy was transported to Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago. The child's temperature dropped to 26.6 C. He was livid, "dead."

A few years ago, the story would have ended there. Today, almost saved, Jimmy is alive again, drinking orange juice, smiling at his mother. Because accidents of this type are frequent on the shores of Lake Michigan, we have learned to perform miracles.

Jimmy owes his survival to those who, over the past few years, have developed sophisticated techniques to "resuscitate" organisms placed in hypothermia and "clinically dead" (1).

While it has long been known that cold can protect living cells and tissues, it has been necessary to learn to control the conditions under which "rewarming" must be carried out in order to keep the properties of frozen organs intact. Thus, we can use the phenomenon of hibernation in therapy. In cardiac surgery, for example.

Today, several medical teams (Chamonix, Bern, Chicago) are going even further. They are trying to resuscitate organisms accidentally placed in hypothermia and are using extracorporeal circulation techniques.

"The greatest chances of success," explains Dr. François Salon (department of Dr. Jacques Foray - Chamonix Hospital), "are in accidents where hypothermia preceded 'death'. Or when the two events were synchronous. If the hypothermia appeared afterwards (muscular

exhaustion, asphyxia by avalanche), medical complications are, on the contrary, very frequent. "

In this field, the Chamonix team has international expertise, as evidenced by the fact that an important scientific congress will soon be held in Chamonix, which will be attended by specialists from Chicago.

As for Jimmy, he seems to be out of the critical phase. Fifteen days after his accident, he is no longer in a coma. His health is improving, and a CT scan showed no brain damage.

According to his doctor, such survival is initially due to a reflex mechanism that, when placed in an icy environment, the human organism immediately switches off its brain. The cerebral metabolism is thus decreased, as well as the energy needs of the central nervous system. A "conservation reflex" of sorts. A physiological adaptation, explain the specialists, similar to what happens in whales or seals.

L'enfant qui revient du froid

Par JEAN-YVES NAU

Publié le 31 janvier 1984 à 00h00 - Mis à jour le 31 janvier 1984 à 00h00
Temps de Lecture 2 min.

Article réservé aux abonnés

Jimmy Tontlewicz, quatre ans, revient de loin. Des eaux glacées du lac Michigan. Presque de l'au-delà.

Il fait froid à Chicago en ce début d'année. Si froid que la surface du lac Michigan commence à être prise par les glaces. Le 15 janvier dernier, Jimmy s'amuse sur une digue en compagnie de son père. L'enfant veut à tout prix mettre sa luge sur le lac. Il y parvient.

Soudain, c'est le drame. Jimmy et son père tombent à l'eau. M. Tontlewicz parvient coûte que coûte à se maintenir à la surface. Il est repêché. Jimmy, lui, est au fond du lac, noyé. Il faudra vingt minutes pour que les pompiers parviennent à sortir le corps de l'eau. Bien évidemment, son cœur a cessé de battre. Aucune réanimation n'est tentée sur place.

On transporte Jimmy au Children's Memorial Hospital de Chicago. La température de l'enfant est descendue à 26,6 C. Il est livide, " mort ".

Il y a quelques années, l'histoire se serait arrêtée là. Aujourd'hui, quasiment sauvé, Jimmy a retrouvé la vie, boit du jus d'orange, sourit à sa mère. Parce que les accidents de ce type sont fréquents sur les rives du lac Michigan, on a appris à réaliser des miracles.

Jimmy doit sa survie à ceux qui, depuis quelques années, ont mis au point des techniques sophistiquées qui permettent de " réanimer " des organismes placés en hypothermie et " cliniquement morts " (1).

Si l'on sait depuis longtemps que le froid peut protéger des cellules et des tissus vivants, il a fallu, en revanche, apprendre à maîtriser les conditions dans lesquelles on doit pratiquer le " réchauffement " pour conserver intactes les propriétés des organes gelés. Ainsi, on peut utiliser le phénomène de l'hibernation en thérapeutique. En chirurgie cardiaque, par exemple.

Aujourd'hui, plusieurs équipes médicales (Chamonix, Berne, Chicago) vont plus loin encore. Elles tentent de réanimer des organismes placés accidentellement en hypothermie et font pour cela notamment appel aux techniques de circulation extracorporelle.

" Les plus grandes chances de succès, explique le docteur François Salon (service du docteur Jacques Foray - hôpital de Chamonix), concernent les accidents où l'hypothermie a précédé le " décès ". Ou encore lorsque les deux événements ont été synchrones. Si l'hypothermie est apparue après (épuisement musculaire, asphyxie par avalanche), les complications médicales sont, au contraire, très fréquentes. "

Dans ce domaine, l'équipe de Chamonix dispose d'une compétence internationale, comme en témoigne la tenue prochaine dans cette ville d'un important congrès scientifique, auquel assisteront des spécialistes de Chicago.

Jimmy, lui, semble être sorti de la phase critique. Quinze jours après son accident, il n'est plus dans le coma. Son état de santé s'améliore, et un examen scanographique n'a montré aucune lésion cérébrale.

Pour son médecin, de telles survies sont dues au départ à un mécanisme-réflexe qui fait que, placé dans un milieu glacé, l'organisme humain met immédiatement son cerveau " hors circuit ". Le métabolisme cérébral est ainsi diminué, tout comme les besoins énergétiques du système nerveux central. Un " réflexe de conservation " en quelque sorte. Une adaptation physiologique, expliquent les spécialistes, analogue à ce qui se passe chez la baleine ou le phoque.





The Motorcycle Desert Doctor of Escalante

July 13, 2013 by [Richard Markosian](#) [2 Comments](#)



Looking around the town of Escalante we see old pioneer homes. Other homes have watchdogs and barbed wire with all sorts of junk in the front yard. Driving past the Desert Doctor's abode we find a motorcycle hospital far removed from any medical plan imaginable.

The Good Doctor's operating room is just off Main Street. It's impossible to miss with its hand-painted tires listing countries of the world from where his customers originate. His shop is packed floor to ceiling with parts and tools, all well organized. The Doctor, who prefers anonymity, is a metal sculptor and bike mechanic who is steeped in biker culture where freedom and the open road rule. Something tells me if everything in our world wound up being the Mad Max movie, this guy would be just fine. So how did he end up in Escalante?

"I broke down here 25 years ago and I'd never found a more unfriendly place.

I found the closest motorcycle mechanic was 200 miles away in Las Vegas. Nobody in town wanted to give me change to make a phone call."

Tattoos, leather and a ponytail shouldn't make a person an outcast. But for the Doctor, the locals weren't quite ready to accept his slightly less than farm friendly attire. He spent a month hitchhiking back and forth from Vegas to get the right part for his motorcycle.

But two unlikely partners can fall in love, and over the next 15 years the Doctor and Escalante started to see the best in each other. He was also steadily growing more disenchanted with his home city of Chicago. "You can't carry a gun in Chicago and here you can. A lot of people are fed up with Chicago. It's become

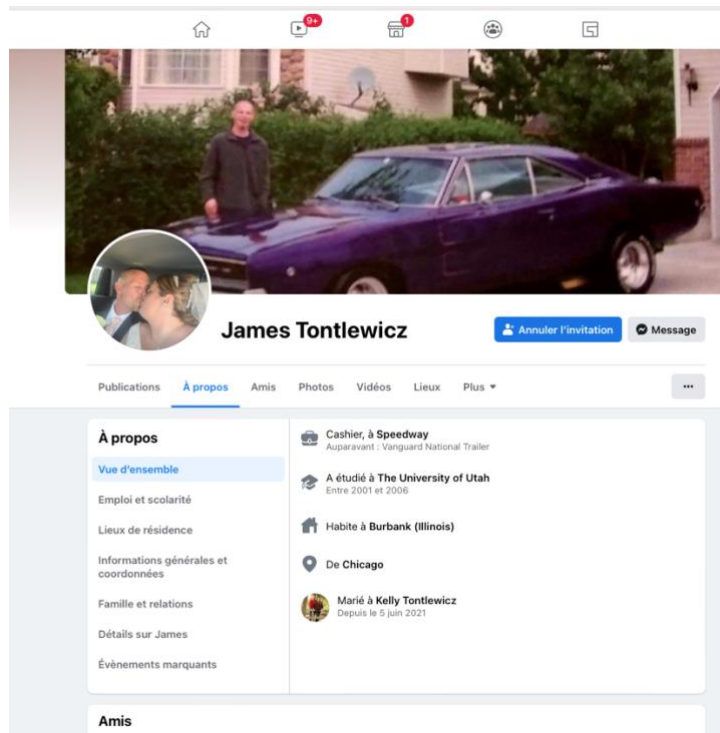
overrun by gangs and violence, and they want to put too many restrictions on law-abiding citizens.”



Slowly the town of Escalante is becoming much more friendly to outsiders since it now has a burgeoning tourist industry. Besides the Doctor, there are four other residents in the town also from Chicago. The excellent Circle D Restaurant and Hotel are operated by a Chicagoan. Serving on the Escalante Chamber of Commerce and The Highway 12 Preservation Committee, the Doctor and other Easterners are beginning to have an impact on this small town. It's still amazing that big city folk could enjoy a place full of cows and vistas but not much else. My question for the Doctor was: So what do you like about this place?

“I like the weather, the heat. I like the mountains. I like the red dirt. A lot of people said life ends when you leave Chicago. For us life has just begun. Route 12 is one of the most magnificent places to go.” The Doctor had his opinion comparing Route 66 to Highway 12.

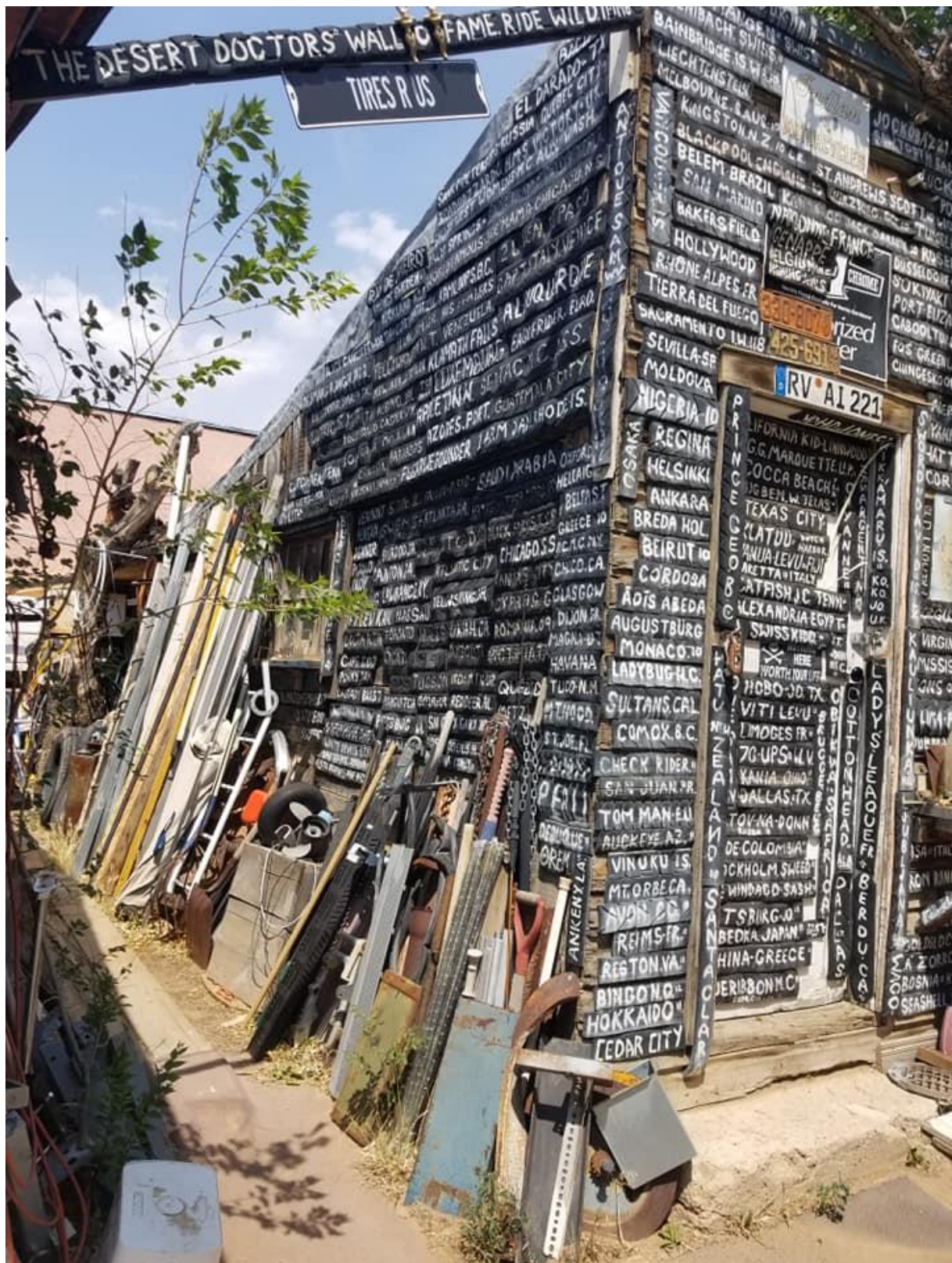
“A lot of people are abandoning Route 66 because it's become unfriendly and so expensive. A hotel or motel room on Route 66 is around \$300.” In the town of Escalante we stay in a bed and breakfast for \$70 and camp one night for \$4 off the Burr Trail. It's still an undiscovered treasure.”

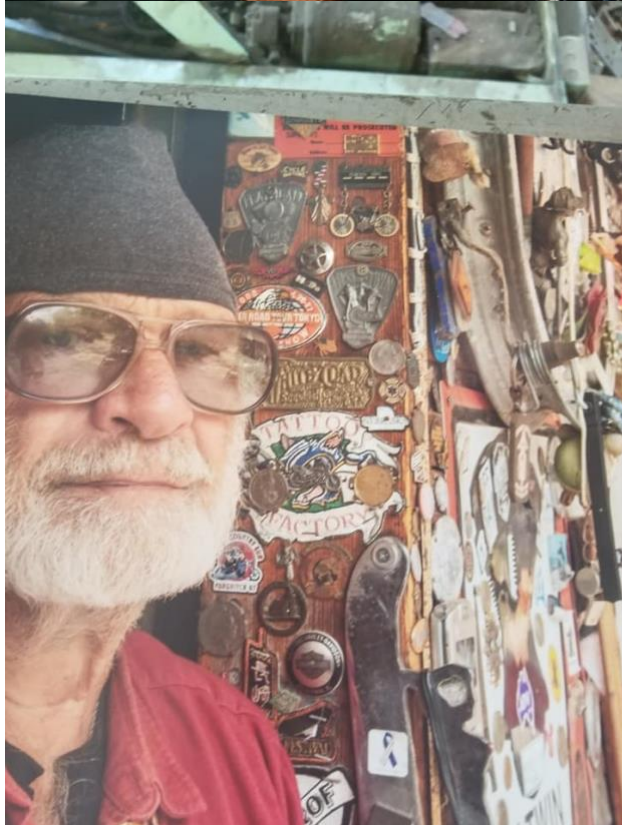


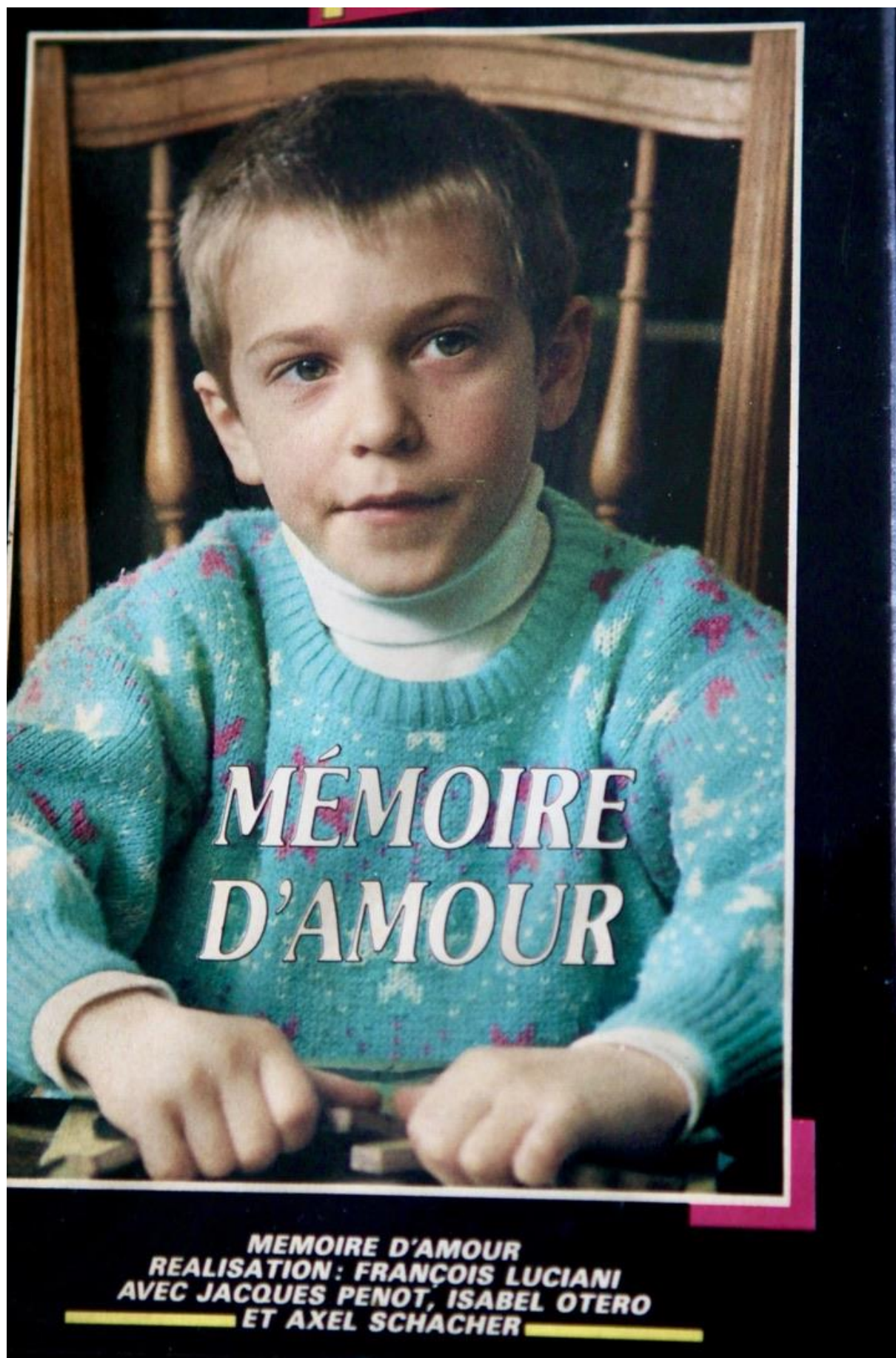












Le Monde

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 MEMORY OF LOVE: A 2, 8:35 pm

Autopsy of a Resurrection

After an accident, a child is gradually reborn under the gaze of his parents. Inspired by a true story, François Luciani's first film does not avoid sentimental clichés, but it contains real emotional power.

On January 15, 1984, in the United States, a four-year-old boy, Jimmy Tontlewicz, was having fun sledding on Lake Michigan. The ice broke and the little boy fell into the water. He was immediately transported to Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago. The heart stopped beating, the body was placed in hypothermia and appeared clinically dead. However, thanks to sophisticated rewarming techniques (which must be applied at all costs to keep the properties of the frozen organs intact), the body revives, and Jimmy, little by little, is reborn. The cold has protected the tissues and cells. On the other hand, the child lost his memory. Only the work, the patience of the parents and the doctors will succeed after many months to give life back to the brain.

François Luciani was inspired by this true story to make his first film, *Mémoire d'amour*. He added a romantic story, the story of a couple torn apart.

Separated from his wife Anne (Isabel Otero), Pierre Clavel (Jacques Penot) has custody of their seven-year-old son Thomas (Axel Schacher) every other weekend. When the story begins, father and son are sledding and laughing. A moment of inattention, and the happiness changes. Thomas has let himself slide down to the frozen lake. He sank. After an interminable half hour, the rescuers succeeded in getting the little drowned body out. Pierre will not give up. He takes the child to the hospital, where he is placed under artificial respiration...

Fortunately, the director avoids getting bogged down in anecdotal details and voyeurism. He goes straight to the point thanks to a perfect mastery of the narrative technique. From judicious ellipses (we do not attend, for example, the fishing of the little boy) to recurrent shots (the unbearable vision of the piped body, the obsessive noise of the breathing apparatus), the story plunges us into the depths of the emotion, through urgency. Urgency considered, here, as an ethics. The subject is elsewhere. In the immediacy and the peril of the moment.

The violent reaction of the mother, who closes herself in her pain, too lively to be communicable and shareable, the bad conscience of the father who clings to the hope not to think of the fault of which one accuses it... François Luciani did not let anything escape. He does the autopsy of a resurrection without neglecting the tumult of feelings of which the parents are victims. Anne goes so far as to reject this child who does not recognize her ("What are you waiting for," she shouts to Pierre, "the resurrection of a green plant? "). *Mémoire d'amour* has the frankness to show that suffering and mourning are not only lived in renunciation and more or less reasoned acceptance, but also in the visceral rejection of a reality that leads to injustice.

During all this time, the camera catches the slightest detail _ the flutter of the child's eyelashes, a quiver of his lips, _ signs of life or non-life to which we are hooked and which leave us without rest. When he wakes up, Thomas no longer speaks and has lost the use of his legs. Slowly, day by day, we witness a new and laborious birth.

Then come the first bites of food taken with a spoon, the first steps, the first desires, the looks, until the supreme success, the first words.

The interpretation of little Axel Schacher is so remarkable that it surprises us to doubt a role of composition. Each of his gestures is just right! It is a pity that François Luciani did not know how to avoid sentimental clichés. Thomas is going to speak at the precise moment when his parents decide to live together again. We suspected it, hoping for the opposite.

MERCREDI 6 SEPTEMBRE MÉMOIRE D'AMOUR : A 2, 20 h 35 Autopsie d'une résurrection

Après un accident, un enfant renaît peu à peu sous le regard de ses parents. Inspiré d'un fait réel, le premier film de François Luciani n'évite pas les poncifs sentimentaux, mais il contient une vraie puissance émotionnelle.

Le Monde

Publié le 03 septembre 1989 à 00h00 - Mis à jour le 03 septembre 1989 à 00h00
Temps de Lecture 3 min.

Article réservé aux abonnés

LE 15 janvier 1984, aux Etats-Unis, un gamin de quatre ans, Jimmy Tontlewicz, s'amuse à faire de la luge sur le lac Michigan. La glace se brise et le petit garçon tombe dans l'eau. Il est immédiatement transporté au Children's Memorial Hospital de Chicago. Le coeur s'est arrêté de battre, l'organisme, placé en hypothermie, apparaît comme cliniquement mort. Cependant, grâce à des techniques sophistiquées de réchauffement (qui doivent à tout prix s'appliquer à conserver intactes les propriétés des organes gelés), le corps se réanime, et Jimmy, petit à petit, renaît. Le froid a protégé les tissus et les cellules. En revanche, l'enfant a perdu la mémoire. Seuls le travail, la patience des parents et des médecins parviendront après de longs mois à redonner vie au cerveau.

François Luciani s'est inspiré de ce fait vrai pour réaliser son premier film, *Mémoire d'amour*. Il a ajouté une histoire romanesque _ l'histoire d'un couple déchiré.

Séparé de sa femme Anne (Isabel Otero), Pierre Clavel (Jacques Penot) a, un week-end sur deux, la garde de leur fils Thomas (Axel Schacher), sept ans. Quand le récit commence, le père et le fils font de la luge en riant. Un moment d'inattention, et le bonheur bascule. Thomas s'est laissé glisser vers le lac gelé. Il y a sombré. Après une interminable demi-heure, les sauveteurs réussissent à sortir le petit corps noyé. Pierre ne renoncera pas. Il fait mener l'enfant à l'hôpital, où il est placé sous respiration artificielle...

Fort heureusement, le réalisateur a su éviter de s'empêtrer dans les détails anecdotiques et le voyeurisme. Il va tout de suite à l'essentiel grâce à une maîtrise parfaite de la technique narrative. D'ellipses judicieuses (on n'assiste pas, par exemple, au repêchage du petit garçon) en plans récurrents (la vision insoutenable du corps tuyauté, le bruit obsessionnel des appareils respiratoires), le récit nous plonge au plus profond de l'émotion, par urgence. Urgence considérée, ici, comme une éthique. Le sujet est ailleurs. Dans l'immédiateté et le péril de l'instant.

La réaction violente de la mère, qui se mure dans sa douleur, trop vive pour être communicable et partageable, la mauvaise conscience du père qui s'accroche à l'espoir pour ne pas penser à la faute dont on l'accuse... François Luciani n'a rien laissé s'échapper. Il fait l'autopsie d'une résurrection sans négliger le tumulte des sentiments dont sont victimes les parents. Anne va jusqu'à rejeter cet enfant qui ne la reconnaît pas ("Qu'est-ce que tu attends, hurle-t-elle à Pierre, la résurrection d'une plante verte ? "). Mémoire d'amour a la franchise de montrer que la souffrance et le deuil ne se vivent pas seulement dans le renoncement et l'acceptation plus ou moins raisonnée, mais aussi dans le rejet viscéral d'une réalité qui conduit à l'injustice.

Pendant tout ce temps, la caméra accroche le moindre détail _ le battement de cil de l'enfant, un frémissement de ses lèvres, _ signes de vie ou de non-vie auxquels on est accroché et qui nous laissent sans repos. Lorsqu'il se réveille, Thomas ne parle plus et il a perdu l'usage de ses jambes. Lentement, jour après jour, nous assistons à une nouvelle et laborieuse naissance.

Alors viennent les premières bouchées de nourriture prises à la cuillère, les premiers pas, les premières envies, les regards, jusqu'à la réussite suprême, les premiers mots.

L'interprétation du petit Axel Schacher est à ce point remarquable qu'elle nous surprend à douter d'un rôle de composition. Chacun de ses gestes est juste ! Dommage que François Luciani n'ait pas su éviter les poncifs sentimentaux. Thomas va parler au moment précis où ses parents décident de revivre ensemble. On s'en doutait, en espérant le contraire.