

SYNOPSIS :

## BURNED LIVES

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This report on severe burns follow a double questioning of both intimate and societal. Intimate because I shared the life of a large burned very closely. On 29 August 1981, I was a year old. My mother was a victim of a domestic accident : the pot of wax to ignite fenced. I was a tragedy. Then followed a long therapy which is organized around family life. For my mother this will be a long journey : a number of building operations, years of daily massages and stays annual spa. Until the day in 2003, she tells me: *"It's over ! Quit operations, my mourning is done."*

I have few memories of that time, except those revived by relatives. Like this time when I entered her hospital room, I asked : "Where's Mommy ?". The truth comes out of the innocence of children, says the common saying. But this truth would refer you to the hard reality of events. In February 2005, I began a story on the burn, *Burned lives* or therapeutic path of the fire victims to try to answer many questions. What did my mother go through ? What was she doing at the spa in Saint-Gervais? What were her bandages hiding ? What could have been her suffering voluntarily faced?

In growing up, I saw the ingratitude of the burn, both physically and morally. The fear of the other one's look, the desire to be attractive mortgaged forever and the impossible desire to go back in time are all as many moral sufferings that severe burns have to defy. An enormous effort of self-acceptance must be done. Surgery is not cosmetic but restorative. What has been defeated can not be rebuilt.

My story is also about the hospital department. I chose to show what I could not imagine myself : the bloodiest surgery in general hospital and the teamwork it requires. Abandoned by young doctors, the practice of medicine for fire victims brings together people who have experienced very often difficult moments in their own lives. These men and women are put through the wringer. They must confront the horror of burn but also hold up during endless surgical operations. The burn is complex. Varied skills must be mastered by every member of the medical team : surgery, anesthesia, physiotherapy... Accompanying patients imposes unwavering strength of character to fight against discouragement facing the long road that requires care, the inconvenience of habits of restraint which are actual torture in the summer.

During these two years of reporting, I have seen great humanity emerge from the people facing the burn. They are learning to live under a new identity in a society where the image is dominant. Some choose to claim their new body, others live in the shadow of their burden. All persons photographed in this report have chosen to testify, sometimes as a challenge to their own image, sometimes as a desire to discover that other one they have become. *Burned lies* tells the story of people burned, their arrival at the hospital until their return home, to show how a harmless accident can transform the human being in his relation to physical integrity... and this report also aims to transform the viewer as well.