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I HIRED A CONTRACT KILLER

"Henri Boulanger wants to die, for reasons too personal to be explained here. Since his helpless attempts to end his days go down the drain, he ends up hiring a contract killer to send him to happier rubber-stamping grounds. While waiting for the killer to do his job, however, Henri makes the mistake of sipping, for the first time in his life, a whisky, and finds the courage to encounter the opposite sex eye to eye, also for the first time. Everything would be ready for setting up a family. Unfortunately, the killer's contract cannot be canceled. The film moves from everyday realism through melodrama towards a surprise ending with a cinematic structure swinging between Dreyer and Melville without touching

either of them in any way." So speaks the *enfant terrible* of Finland, Aki Kaurismäki (*Ariel*, SFIFF 1990; *The Match Factory Girl*, pg. 33), of his latest ironic rumination on the human condition, written especially for Jean-Pierre Léaud, the actor who made *angst* a French word. In his first film in English, Kaurismäki once again transforms the cruelty of fate into something gentle and bittersweet.

Preceded by Theory of Achievement (Hal Hartley, USA, 17 min.)

FINLAND, 1990 80 min. In English

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER/SCREENPLAY/EDITOR: Aki Kaurismäki
CAMERA: Timo Salminen **CAST:** Jean-Pierre Léaud, Margo Clarke
 Kenneth Colley **PRINT SOURCE:** Finnish Film Foundation