

ONEIRA PICTURES INTERNATIONAL  
presents

# MURDER | IN ROCK | ISLAND

a BASHAR SHBIB film



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## “MURDER IN ROCK ISLAND”

α BASHAR SHBIB film

Starring KRISSY LONGTIN · DUSTIN RUCK ·  
ANDREW HOPPS · BASHAR SHBIB

Art Director GEOFF KLEIN Sound ROGER ORCAU  
Editor GEOFF KLEIN

Director of Photography GEOFF KLEIN

Associate Producer MAÏA NADON-CHBIB

Written, Produced, and Directed by BASHAR SHBIB

### SYNOPSIS

Jean (Krissy Longtin) and Kelly (Dustin Ruck) are two young lovers who are living through difficult times in their relationship. The trouble begins when, against her wishes, an old friend of Kelly's named Lawson (Andrew Hopps) joins them in house-sitting for Jean's mother. The adventure ends in death as the ghosts of Jean's father and her former lovers intervene in the couple's life; murder ensues in the little town of Rock Island, Canada.

# STORY OUTLINE

The movie opens with Jean (Krissy Longtin) and Kelly (Dustin Ruck), a young couple, and Kelly's old friend Lawson (Andrew Hopps), on their way to Krissy's mother's house to housesit for the weekend. As they arrive and settle in Jean confesses to Kelly that she doesn't like Lawson very much. Kelly shrugs it off as Lawson is an old friend.

Jean takes them on a tour of the grounds, but won't let them into the last room of the house, almost pleading with them not to go in. She then leads them to the snowy backyard for a snowball fight where Jean, once again, gets extremely nervous when Kelly and Lawson suggest going into the back woods. The tension further increases over dinner where, in response to Lawson's sexist attitude and snide comments, Jean half-heartedly threatens to kill him. That night in bed Kelly asks Jean about her father but she refuses to discuss it. After all, he died years ago. As they make love a fuzzy figure can be seen watching over them from the doorway. It soon becomes obvious that Lawson is attracted to Kelly and that these two have a past together, but Kelly is in love with Jean. He tries to confess his love to her by asking her to marry him, but she doesn't hear. She's in the tub at the time having nightmare. Disappointed by her apparent coldness, he goes in search of Lawson.

Before they go, Kelly calls his mother and, as he does so the figure of a man appears, watching him. Lawson and Kelly then break into the locked room to find an apparently normal children's room, but for an ashtray full of cigarette butts by the child's bed. Puzzled, they abandon the room to go get drunk in the shed out back. That night Kelly leaves a passed out Lawson sleeping in the cold shed. He stumbles over to Jean and, with Jean refusing his sexual advances, quickly falls asleep. Later that night Jean awakes from another nightmare, rushes to the bathroom and vomits. As she is sprawled by the toilet on the bathroom floor, her father's ghost – the hazy figure from earlier - appears to her. He orders her to go see Lawson in the shed. Jean gets up, and after grabbing a sweater and a knife out of her drawer, heads out to see Lawson.

Once there, she wakes up Lawson, who drunkenly tries to seduce her. Feigning off his advances, she stabs him and drags his body to his car. The next morning, Kelly goes to wake Lawson but finds the room empty and his car gone. Oddly, he immediately suspects something and confronts Jean about killing his best friend. It seem like no surprise to him when she grudgingly admits what she has done. Rather upset that she killed his friend, he storms off. Jean's father shows up again, this time telling Jean to kill Kelly, but she is fond of him and refuses. Meanwhile, obviously traumatized, Kelly imagines that Lawson's spirit took the form of the fly on the wall. He admits to the Lawson fly that he still loves Jean.



In an effort to clear the tension between them, Kelly confesses to Jean about entering the room, but instead of calming her down it backfires. Furious, she runs outside to the woods and yells to her father to leave her alone.

Upset about Jean's strange behaviour, Kelly goes to the local video store and runs into an old friend, Jeff (Geoff Klein) whom he invites over to the house to help cheer up Jean when he's done work.

Later on that night, Jean's father appears to Kelly. He wants Kelly to leave the house and threatens the young man. Kelly however remains unfazed by the ghost's presence and kindly invites him to watch the movie.

As Kelly was hoping, Jeff shows up that night and ends up in bed with Kelly and an annoyed Jean. Upset, she calls her father, who comes to her aid with reinforcements in the form of the ghosts of two of her ex-boyfriends, Daimler (Jon Deitcher) and Sean (Lorne Hiltser).



The next morning Sean and Daimler try to get Jean to make a decision about Kelly, telling her that they are trapped in the house until she finds the one that she loves. When Kelly comes in later that day Jean surprises him and tries to kill him, but Kelly, expecting something, disarms her and chases her through the house. She grabs a knife and turns the chase on Kelly, chasing her to her old room, the room that was they weren't allowed into. When Kelly drags her into the room Jean snaps out of it, as if from a trance, having no recollection of how she got there or why she has a knife in her hand. Apparently the ghost of her father had possessed her, but now the spell seems to be broken.

With the worst apparently behind them, a puzzled Jean exits the room, but her murderous persona takes over again. She once again attacks Kelly, strangling him to the ground. Her father appears and takes over for her, letting Jean step back and observe. While watching the ghost strangle her boyfriend, she realizes that she does love Kelly and makes her father stop, confessing her love and thus letting her father's spirit finally move on.

# PRODUCTION NOTES

Shot entirely on location in Stanstead, MURDER IN ROCK ISLAND was totally improvised – going from initial concept to production very quickly.

There was no script for the shoot, with scenes added regularly on the fly, and as such the actors at first felt it was hard to know what to do. By the end however they all felt very comfortable improvising and agree that they got some stuff that never would have happened on paper.

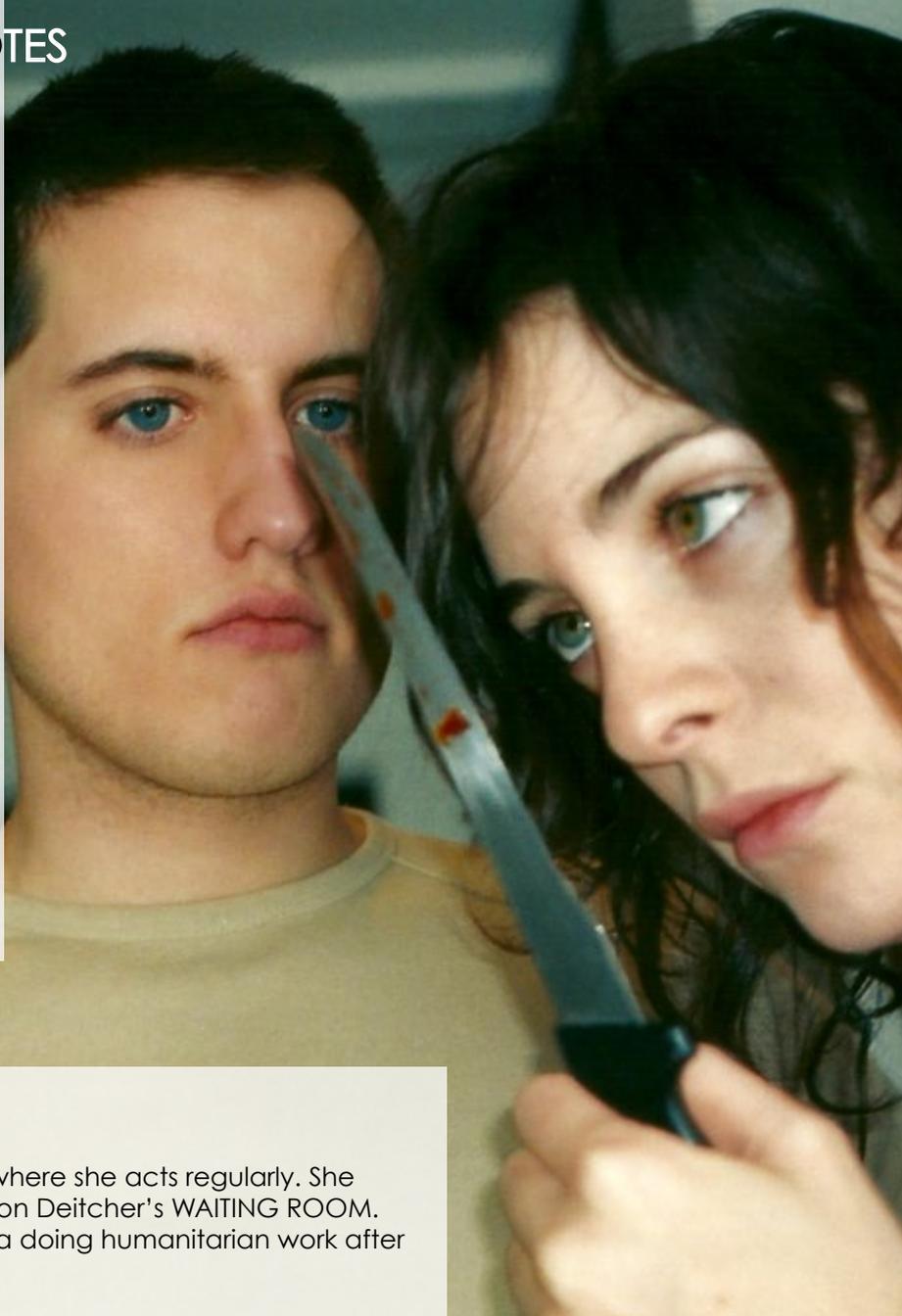
They shot in winter, again in the spring, and then again in the summer after editing all the footage together. While this is not the traditional way of making films, this experiment yielded an entertaining film unlike any seen before.

## ABOUT THE CAST

**Krissy Longtin** lives in Montreal where she acts regularly. She recently completed shooting Jon Deitcher's WAITING ROOM. Krissy has spent time in Romania doing humanitarian work after her University education.

**Dustin Ruck** has done a fair amount of work in theatre and some in small independent film. He enjoys Shbib's style of directing, a style he describes as quite relaxed and which allows for the character's own input to the dialogue creating a more intimate relationship between himself and the role. Past experience includes a role in Shbib's GRANITE FORKS, and GABRIEL'S TRIP. He loves rugby.

**Andrew Hopps** has previously played in Shbib's GRANITE FORKS, and has done some theatre in high school and college. He makes a living out of his acting. He has also acted for the Second City Network. Interested in all media, Hopps has also done promotions for festivals and for numerous Montreal-based radio stations. When asked about his experience on the set, Andrew admits that even though the experience has been rough and somewhat extenuating, he had had a great time and would certainly repeat it.



## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Bashar Shbib (Bachar Chbib) started making films in 1982 at Concordia University with the award winning docudramas OR'D'UR and BETSY. The filmmaker has over 40 feature films and 10 short subjects to his credit. He is currently producing theatrical feature films, television series and documentaries. His films have won more than fourteen awards at select film festivals and competitions to date.

Shbib was born in Damascus in 1959 to a German mother and a Syrian father, and emigrated to Canada with his family at a very early age. Having spent his youth living and working with his family on a Charolais beef ranch in the Eastern Townships (Quebec), he intended to pursue a career in science. However, after graduating from Montreal's McGill University with a degree in Microbiology and Immunology, his passion for film changed his plans and he subsequently attended Montreal's Concordia University and earned his BFA degree in Film Production. He has stated that he has been largely inspired by Paradjanov, Fassbinder, Pasolini, Deren, Tarkovski and Fellini.

Never one to shy away from controversy and prone, in fact, to stirring it up, Shbib felt that independent Canadian filmmakers were not being given their due. He organized a tour in 1986 of ten independent Canadian feature films and ten short films and traveled with them to 60 cities throughout the United States and Europe. He also organized public demonstrations in order to gain funds for indie filmmakers in the 1980's and once even stripped at the Toronto Film Festival to protest on behalf of alternative film financing. Finally, frustrated by the bureaucracy involved in making a film in his homeland, Shbib headed for the sunnier shores of the American west coast where he begun making films in his own inimitable style. After 9/11 his travels were hampered by constant searches at airports, so he moved to Stanstead, (QC) close to his childhood farm. There he opened a film training program and has pursued his doctoral dissertation as a candidate at McGill University in Communications. Shbib has a Masters degree in Communication at McGill University.



Shbib has been a painter of abstract art since 1974 and has sold over 600 works ([www.aliendog.net](http://www.aliendog.net)). In 1999 and 2000, Shbib created and produced one of the first groundbreaking webisodic shows: Aliendog.net. Nominated for a Pixie Award, Aliendog streamed over 200 five-minute dramatic webshows. Shbib is now producing films in Europe and Canada (see [www.oneira.com](http://www.oneira.com) and [www.sunsetpictures.ca](http://www.sunsetpictures.ca)).

Though his past films have been described as a combination of «German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Archie Comics» and «Bertolt Brecht directing 'Risky Business'» Shbib feels that his films are nowhere near as daunting as they first appear. His romantic comedies JULIA HAS TWO LOVERS and LANA IN LOVE, were premiered at the prestigious Berlin Film Festival and received critical acclaim at both the 1991 Montreal Film Festival and the New Orleans Film Festival and were then released worldwide.

Another of his comedies, LOVE \$ GREED, was in competition and one of the highlights at the 1991 Montreal Film Festival. Shbib also released a series of six feature films titled The SENSES, which were extremely well received by moviegoers and also by the press, and have been aired on Radio Canada and several television networks worldwide. Shbib has a penchant for his less commercial works EVIXION, Or D'Ur and CLAIR OBSCUR. He is now preparing for the distribution of STRAWBERRIES AND WINE, LAST CHAPTER and THE WEDDING MURDERS.

His unique directing style both attracts and inspires actors and crew to follow him from project to project. Upon casting his films, Shbib notes: "each actor is well aware before the start of production of what to expect in a small budget production and enjoys to work with actors that master improvisation. It is a challenge to all, but the end result is that I have a unique story and natural performances from the actors". Shbib insists on his independence driven by his passion for film when undertaking a project. At a time when independent filmmakers are scrambling to raise funds for their films, Shbib's prudent shooting schedules enable him to freely direct and produce the modestly budgeted movies that he enjoys making.



## ABOUT THE CREW

**Maïa Nadon-Chbib** produced movies during the summers while finishing her bachelor's degree in Communication Studies at Concordia University in Montreal. She started very young working on her father's movies and has not stopped since. In the last 3 years, she has been producer on many Oneira Pictures International films, including Drinking Games, Strawberries and Wine, The Wedding Murders, Silent Men, A Midsummer's Wake, The Making of ...indie tv?, Life As It Is, Gabriel's Trip, Murder in Rock Island and Life As It Was. Since opening her own film company in the winter of 2005, she has produced two projects that are currently in post-production; an 8-episode television series directed by Bashar Shbib and Jon Deitcher, Granite Forks, and a feature-length film by Adam Howard, Frauds in Love.

**Geoff Klein** wore many hats on this project. Not only was he Director of Photography, he did all the Art Direction and even edited the movie afterwards. Never one to complain, he saw the skeletal crew as more of a challenge than a hindrance. Klein isn't comfortable in front of a camera and has no desire to tackle directing. He would much rather be behind the lens, although he did make a cameo appearance in Murder in Rock Island.



Klein has had no formal training in cinematography; he learned everything on set. « It all began about 5 years ago in a locker room at a golf course. Jon (Deitcher – his partner in crime) happened to be working there too and we were introduced. As we talked we realized we both wanted to do film and we decided to do it together. Endorphin Films was formed and the rest is history. »

When asked if they were able to make a living at this Geoff replied « None of us work at anything else and we manage to get by! » Klein was actually studying Art History at the time but knew it was not really what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. When this opportunity to break into the film business came along he knew he was where he wanted to be.

**Roger Orcau** wasn't just the soundman on MURDER IN ROCK ISLAND, he was so much more; as the only other crew member on set besides the DP, the tasks of set decoration, lighting set-up, and still photography usually fell to him. While he enjoys sound mainly, he is well versed in on-set etiquette and is somewhat of a jack-of-all-trades. Born in Barcelona, Spain, where he grew up and went to film school, Roger came to Montreal to visit a friend and ended up helping out on a variety of Shbib's projects. Recently he volunteered with an NGO in Hebron, Palestine where he supervised the building of a Media Center. He then returned back to Hebron teaching filmmaking in the same center for UNESCO. Henow works in Barcelona.

# CAST AND CREW CREDIT

Writer, Producer And Director  
BASHAR SHBIB

Executive Producer  
MAÍÁ NADON-CHBIB

Associate Producers  
J.-P. FORTIN  
SYLVAIN BROSSET

## CAST

Lawson	ANDREW HOPPS
Jeff	GEOFF KLEIN
Jean	KRISSY LONGTIN
Jean's Mother	KIM PRANGLEY
Kelly	DUSTIN RUCK
Jean's Father	BASHAR SHBIB

## CREW

Production Assistants	ANOUE TRUDEL ANNE FREELAND
Art Director	GEOFF KLEIN
Set Dressers	CARLOS SOUSA ROGER ORCAU
Director of photography	GEOFF KLEIN
Still Photographer	ROGER ORCAU
Sound	ROGER ORCAU
Editor	DANY FOSTER GEOFF KLEIN
Sound Mixer	MARC POLIQUIN
Original Score	DUSTIN RUCK
Accountants	OBADIA ET ASSOCIÉ JACQUES OBADIA FRANCE MARTEL
Legal Consultant	IRMA SIRVINSKAITE

## MUSIC

Film Score by  
XANIA KEANE and ROBERT DONACHIE

Includes three songs from the album XANIA

'2-JEALOUS BOYS'

'HIP OP'

'SCARED OF THE DARK'

Most tracks written, composed, performed and produced  
by XANIA.

Featuring the talent of MEL ROMER (voice), JOHN KEANE  
(composition, guitar, ukulele), LIAM KEANE (beatboxing, bass),  
FRANCIS MCNAMEE (banjo), MARIA KEANE (voice) TEPPEI OZAWA  
aka MISS HAWAII (drum programming), ROBIN SUKROSO (techno  
guitar), DIETER ANNYS (guitar) and  
STEPHAN BLANCHARD (composition).

Recorded in my mom's closet in Montreal with  
JOHN KEANE's equipment.

Engineered by ROBERT DONACHIE (brokencanvas.co.uk)

Executive producer MARU LARA

Mastered by MATTHEW GOLDEN

Album Artwork by NICOLAS J. ROMER

'Le Carnaval Des Animaux : VII. Aquarium'  
Composed by CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1886)  
Performed by THE ATLANTIS ENSEMBLE

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MIKE LEWIN

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MURDER IN ROCK ISLAND



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