

TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL 2022



**YOU CAN
LIVE FOREVER**

FACT SHEET

Writer/Directors

Sarah Watts
Mark Slutsky

Producer

Robert Vroom

Executive Producer

John Christou

Production Company

Prospector Films

Starring

Anwen O'Driscoll
June Laporte
Liane Balaban
Deragh Campbell
Tim Campbell
Antoine Yared
Hasani Freeman

Runtime

96 minutes

Logline

When closeted lesbian teen Jaime is sent to live in a Jehovah's Witness community in the Gaspé, she falls hard for a devout Witness girl and the two embark on an intense affair with consequences that will reshape the rest of their lives.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In the early '90s, gay teen Jaime is sent to live with her devout Jehovah's Witness relatives after the death of her father. Jaime makes an unexpected connection with Marike, daughter of a prominent Witness Elder. The two are instantly drawn to each other, and begin a secret, unspoken romance. But when their attraction becomes too obvious to hide, the community moves to separate the two, forcing them each to make a terrible choice between faith and love.

LONG SYNOPSIS

1992. Jaime, 16 years old and growing up in the Thunder Bay, loves sci-fi, The Cure, and getting high. And unbeknownst to anyone around her, she's gay. When her father dies and her mother suffers a breakdown, she's sent to the Saguenay region to live with her aunt and uncle, both members of the town's tight-knit, devoutly faithful Jehovah's Witness community.

Jaime feels like an outcast. But at a religious service she's dragged along to, Jaime meets Marike, an exemplary Witness girl and daughter of a prominent community elder. The two instantly strike up a deep friendship, and Jaime finds herself falling hard for Marike.

As the two grow closer, Jaime finds herself drawn deeper into the Witness theology, which promises an eternal life in God's promised kingdom —what they call “the new system of things”— after the world ends. The two disappear into their own little world, and for a moment, are happy.

But when the community notices how close they've become, it closes in to keep them apart, only allowing Jaime and Marike to see each other under tight supervision. But the separation doesn't have the effect the elders want; it just forces them closer together, into an intense, but clandestine affair.

And when their recklessness leads to them being caught and outed by Jaime's uncle, the results are drastic. With the threat of expulsion both from her family and the entire worldview she's been raised with, Marike agrees to marry Marc-Olivier, a local boy. That way, if Jaime plays along, they'll both make it to the new system and the hope of some sort of happiness in the far-away paradise they've been promised.

Jaime wants to run away together, but she realizes with horror that they've always lived in two separate worlds, and that Marike is unable to let go of the beliefs she's been raised with. Jaime must decide whether she's able to live apart from Marike in the real world, or sacrifice her own beliefs to be closer to the girl she loves, waiting endlessly for a paradise that will never come.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



I grew up gay in a Jehovah's Witness community in a small northern town. As a teenager, I was eager to see a story with a character who even remotely resembled me on the movie screen. But I was always disappointed. When there were lesbian characters they were inevitably used as plot points and usually died tragic deaths. I was so desperate for representation that I spent all the money I'd been saving for a trip to Europe to fly to Vancouver so I could see *Bound* on the big screen. When I met Mark and explained my upbringing to him, he immediately understood my point of view. For years, we worked together to create a film that could honor my own background and the experiences of other young people in a similar predicament. *You Can Live Forever* is the movie I always wanted to see as a teenager.



- SARAH WATTS

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

“When Sarah told me about her upbringing as Jehovah's Witness over drinks at a Montreal dive bar, I was riveted. I could see the images in my head like I was watching an intense film. I knew that we had the material to create something really special. We worked side-by-side for years building a screenplay that conveys the reality of the remarkable, fragile relationship at the heart of Jaime's story. The punishment for homosexuality in the Jehovah's Witness community is “disfellowship,” in which the sinner is cast out of the community, unable to ever see their friends and loved ones –the only people they have ever known– again, less they repent and make amends. It is a harrowing, unthinkable punishment. And because of that looming threat, the love affair between Jaime and Marike is multi-layered and complex, playing out beneath the surface in glances, touches, and often wordless communication. Having grown up in the Jehovah's Witnesses, Sarah has a true insider's perspective to a community that is little-known and even less understood. Their beliefs, their rituals and their unique apocalyptic worldview are some of the most compelling elements of Jaime's story and the backdrop to which this love affair plays out– and ultimately the reason why it is so heartbreaking. *You Can Live Forever* is a powerful story about being a stranger in a strange land, about first love, about blind faith, and about how far we are willing to go to find happiness.”

- MARK SLUTSKY

ANWEN O'DRISCOLL

Jaime

Anwen O'Driscoll is a Canadian actress known for playing Taylor Matheson from 2017 to 2021 on *Burden of Truth*. She also portrayed the eccentric Cathy MacDonald in *October Faction* in 2020, based on the cult comic by Steve Niles and Damien Worm. In 2021 she starred as Ashley Reeves in the biopic *Left for Dead: The Ashley Reeves Story*, and in *The Good Father: The Martin MacNeill Story* as Alexis MacNeill with Tom Everett Scott. Other credits include guest starring in *American Gods* (2021), and in *Flint* (2017) with Queen Latifah.



JUNE LAPORTE

Marika

June Laporte (she/they) is an actor based in Vancouver B.C. Some of her credits include *The Dropout* (Hulu), *Freaky Friday* (Disney+), Lifetime's *Web of Dreams* (Leo award winner 2020 – Best female lead in a television movie), among numerous indie film projects. They are the writer/creator of the Telus Storyhive-funded web series pilot *SIGMA*, and work to uplift queer and female-driven stories while firmly believing that everyone should be able to see themselves represented on screen.



LIANE BALABAN

Beth

Liane Balaban created a major splash with her debut in the lead role of Alan Moyle's *NEW WATERFORD GIRL*. For her performance, she received a Special Jury Citation at the 24th annual Toronto International Film Festival. *Variety* described her performance opposite Kevin Pollak in Gary Yates' critically acclaimed *SEVEN TIMES LUCKY* as "unforgettable". Recent films include *MIDNIGHT AT THE PARADISE* directed by Vanessa Matsui for Alcina, *YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER* for Prospector Films, *LULLABY* directed by John Leonetti for Alcon and Mina Shum's *MEDITATION PARK*. She has also starred in the romantic comedies *THE GRAND SEDUCTION* with Taylor Kitsch and *FINDING JOY* opposite Josh Cooke. Along with Joel Hopkins' *LAST CHANCE HARVEY* with Dustin Hoffman, *COACH* with Hugh Dancy, Michael McGowan's *ONE WEEK* opposite Joshua Jackson, *DEFINITELY MAYBE* written and directed by Adam Brooks for Universal Pictures, John L'Ecuyer's *SAINT JUDE*, Jeremy Podeswa's *AFTER THE HARVEST*, Bart Freundlich's *WORLD TRAVELER* opposite Billy Crudup and Michael Almereyda's *HAPPY HERE AND NOW*. Television credits include guest star appearances on the shows *MAN SEEKING WOMAN* with Jay Baruchel for FX, *REPUBLIC OF DOYLE* for CBC, *PLAYED*, *MOTIVE* and *SAVING HOPE* for CTV, *NCIS: LA* for CBS and recurring roles on *SUPERNATURAL* for The CW, *ALPHAS* for Syfy, and *COVERT AFFAIRS* for USA. As well as the mini-series *ABOVE & BEYOND* directed by Sturla Gunnarson and co-starring Richard E. Grant, *ST. URBAIN'S HORSEMAN* based on the novel by Mordecai Richler, and the television movie/pilot *ABROAD* for CBC. On stage she has performed in the adaptation of Michael Ondaatje's *DIVISIDARO* for Necessary Angel and Film Farm. And as a writer/ creator had her own series *MAGGIE MCKILL* in development with Temple Street.



ANTOINE YARED

Jean-Francois

Antoine is an award-winning actor, who was born in Lebanon and raised in Montreal, which he now calls home. Antoine is most well known for his leading performances on stages across Canada and the United States. Most recently appeared in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* at Arena Stage in Washington DC and *Cipher* at Vertigo Theatre in Calgary. Other notable favourites include *Indecent* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre, *A Christmas Carol* at Soupepper and *The Last Wife* at the Centaur Theatre. Other career highlights include Romeo in *Romeo & Juliet* at the Stratford Festival where he spent five seasons appearing in over 15 productions. Antoine has also appeared on television shows such as *Nurses* (Global), *Frankie Drake* (CBC), *Portrait-Robot* (Pluto), and *Un Lien Familial*.



HASANI FREEMAN

Nathan

Born in Montreal, Canada, Hasani Freeman is a 20 year old up-and-coming actor starting to make waves in the Canadian scene. After catching the eye of a renowned talent agent, the late Susan Glenn, Hasani has been a constant presence in the Canadian film and television world. He currently has several projects in the works, including the lead in full-length feature film "The Draft" and a supporting role in the feature "You Can Live Forever" which will be premiering at the Tribeca film festival as an official selection in June. He can also be seen in the season premiere of NBC's "Transplant" this fall. Like many Canadian kids, Hasani's first love was hockey. He began playing at age four and by thirteen was playing at an elite level. At age 11, while still playing competitive hockey, Hasani caught the acting bug. He joined a local Montreal theatre group (Teen Tour Theatre) and was discovered. It didn't take long for him to be working consistently, booking roles on television series like "19-2", YTV's "Game On", and the CW's "Republic of Sarah". Hasani has since worked on many other projects including Netflix's "Single All The Way", the feature films "La Bronca" and "The Saver" and Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette's upcoming "Chien Blanc". He has also worked with Academy Award nominee Meryam Joobeur in her short film "Born In The Maelstrom." When not on set, Hasani continues to hone his acting skills through various workshops, private coaching, and conservatories in New York and Toronto; including The Tom Todoroff Conservatory (New York), The William Esper Conservatory and The Actors Imagination Studio in Toronto to name a few. With the promise he has shown thus far, it's clear to most that the sky's the limit for this young thespian. His innate talent, ambition and dogged work ethic will undoubtedly serve him well in the future.



DERAGH CAMPBELL

Amanda

Deragh Campbell was born in Toronto, Canada and raised in Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. Hailing from a large theatre family, Deragh's exposure to the world of show business started at a very young age. It wasn't until she met director Matt Porterfield who cast her in his 2013 Sundance Festival film *I USED TO BE DARKER*, that she decided to pursue acting as a full-time career. Since then, Deragh has appeared in several notable indie films including *FAIL TO APPEAR*, *STINKINGHEAVEN*, *THE OTHER HALF*, *NEVER EAT ALONE*, *THE INTESTINE*, *PERSON TO PERSON*, and *SELF-CRITICISM OF A BOURGEOIS DOG*, among others. In addition to acting, Deragh has writing credits on several of her acting projects and was awarded a MacDowell Colony Fellowship for screenwriting. Most recently, she co-directed a feature with filmmaker Sofia Bohdanowicz, *MS SLAVIC 7* which premiered at the 2019 Berlinale and played New Directors/New Films. In 2015, she was selected by the Toronto Intentional Film Festival as one of their Rising Stars, which showcases new Canadian acting talent placing the emphasis on the next generation poised for international success. In 2018, she was selected for the Artist Academy by the New York Film Festival, which offers an immersive creative experience for filmmakers early in their career. In 2019, Deragh starred as Anne in the highly anticipated feature *ANNE AT 13,000 FT* directed by Kazik Radwanski, which earned her a Canadian Screen Award nomination for Best Actress. She also appeared in Brandon Cronenberg's short *PLEASE SPEAK CONTINUOUSLY AND DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCES AS THEY COME TO YOU*. Both films premiered at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival. Outside of acting, Deragh enjoys watching films, reading, and visiting art galleries.



TIM CAMPBELL

Frank

Tim Campbell is an award-winning actor who began his career at the Stratford Festival of Canada, where he has subsequently appeared in over thirty-five productions, most recently as John Proctor in *THE CRUCIBLE*. He has starred in plays all over North America, and has worked extensively in film and television as well. Recent credits include *UNDER THE BANNER OF HEAVEN* (Hulu), *MAYOR OF KINGSTOWN* (Paramount), *V/H/S/94* (Shudder), *Y: THE LAST MAN* (FX), and *THE EXPANSE* (Syfy).



SARAH WATTS

Writer/Director

Sarah Watts is a writer/director from Montreal. Her previous work has shown at Slamdance. When not making films, she works as a sports writer and editor.



MARK SLUTSKY

Writer/Director

Mark Slutsky is an award-winning writer and director based in Montreal. His shorts *Never Happened* (2015) and *Sorry, Rabbi* (2011) both premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, with the former making its international premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival 2016. His short films have been featured as Vimeo Staff Picks three times. In 2013 he co-directed and produced the animated short *I'm One, Too!* for the 44th season of Sesame Street. He also writes for video games, winning the 2021 Canadian Screen Award for Best Video Game Narrative for his work on Compulsion Games' *We Happy Few*. *You Can Live Forever* (2022), co-written and co-directed with Sarah Watts, is his first feature.



ROB VROOM

Producer

Rob Vroom is a filmmaker with over 20 years of experience. After graduating from the American Film Institute, he worked on such popular shows as *Funny or Die Presents* (HBO), *Tim & Eric Awesome Show* (Cartoon Network), *Jon Benjamin Has A Van* (Comedy Central), *The Eric Andre Show* (Adult Swim), and *The Business 2* (IFC). Rob founded Vroom Productions in 2012 to focus on producing independent film. In 2019, Rob became managing partner at Prospector Films where he continues to grow the company's slate of film and tv projects.

Rob strives to collaborate with innovative, distinct and creative storytellers. His films have received critical acclaim and have been official selections at top tier festivals including, TIFF, Tribeca, SITGES, Busan, Slamdance, Whistler, Beijing, among others. Worldwide distribution includes Netflix, Shudder, Sony Pictures, Elevation Pictures, Myriad Pictures, eOne Entertainment, Vertical Entertainment, XYZ Films.

Independent producing credits include *You Can Live Forever* (Anwen O'Driscoll, Liane Balaban); *Blood Quantum* (Michael Greyeyes, Forrest Goodluck) – most nominated and awarded film at the 2021 CSA awards; *Hatley High* (Rachelle Lefevre, Nic Wright); *The Festival* (IFC series); *Three Night Stand* (Emmanuelle Chriqui, Megan Rath, Sam Huntington); *Another Kind of Wedding* (Kathleen Turner, Wallace Shawn & Jessica Paré).



GAYLE YE

Director of Photography

Toronto-based cinematographer Gayle Ye has well over a decade of experience in narrative and documentary projects. Gayle is an award-winning filmmaker with work that has screened internationally at the Cannes Court Mètrage. She recently lensed the dramatic feature "You Can Live Forever" produced by Prospector Films and CBC / HBO Max's "Detention Adventure".

In 2021, she received the Daytime Emmy for Outstanding Lighting Direction for her work on the PBS hit show Odd Squad. She is the first woman of colour and the youngest person to be nominated and win in this category.



JESSE GRIFFITHS

Casting Director

After over a decade working as an actor in film, tv and theatre, Jesse made a pivot and began his career in casting. He opened Jesse Griffiths Casting (JGC) with the goal of combining his passion for the arts with his knowledge of local talent. His focus is, and will always be, to push for more inclusion and diversity in the casting process. He devotes part of his time to the development of the next generation of artists and has taught at Ryerson University, Sheridan College, Actra Toronto and leads a monthly workshop for Toronto's BIPOC community. He is a mentor at the Canadian Film Centre's Actors Conservatory and serves on the Executive of the Casting Director's Society of Canada. Jesse is a graduate of Ryerson Theatre School with a BFA in Theatre Performance.



KAYLEIGH CHOINIÈRE

Costume Designer

Kayleigh Choiniere is a Montréal-based Costume Designer, Actor, and Activist, or multi-hyphenate human Magazine.

Kayleigh has worked in film, TV, theatre, voice, video games, and music videos for over a decade as both a performer and a designer. Her work is rooted in equitable LGBTQ2S+ representation in front of and behind the camera. While not ferociously working to dismantle the patriarchy, she enjoys throwing queer dance parties.



AMÉLIE LABRÈCHE

Editor

Amélie Labrèche is a Canadian editor living in Montreal, Quebec. After completing a bachelor's degree in Film Production at Concordia University in 2007, she pursued her interest for the art of editing by working on several projects as well as being an assistant editor on numerous films including 4 of Xavier Dolan's. Since 2015, she has edited 11 fiction feature films, including "Nadia Butterfly" by Pascal Plante, selected at the 2020 Cannes Film Festival, and various documentaries, series, short films and music videos.

A film buff, her desire is to deepen the creative process of editing in all spheres and to contribute to profound and innovative works through the narrative and emotional power of editing.

In 2020, she was awarded Best Editing in Feature Film at the Canadian Cinema Editors Awards for "Kuessipan". In 2021, she won Best Editing in Feature Film at the Canadian Cinema Editors Awards for "Le Rire" ("Laughter") and for Best Editing in a Documentary at the Quebec Cinema Gala for "Wandering, a Rohingya Story".



ANDRÉ CHAMBERLAND

Production Designer

André Chamberland is a Canadian production designer, best known for his work on *District 31* (Seasons I, II, III, & IV) and winning Best Production Design in 2014 for his work on *Time Of Death* (2013). He received multiple nominations for best production design for his work on *Séquelles* (2015), *Trauma IV & V* (2012-2014) and *Willed to Kill* (2012). He has recently been production designer on *Passe-Partout* (2019), *Victor Lessard III* (2019), *Ruptures IV & V* (2018-2019) and *Une Manière de Vivre* (2019) and *Christmas Ever After* (2020).



CREDITS

A
PROSPECTOR FILMS
PRODUCTION

STARRING

ANWEN O'DRISCOLL
JUNE LAPORTE
LIANE BALABAN
DERAGH CAMPBELL
ANTOINE YARED
HASANI FREEMAN
TIM CAMPBELL

CASTING BY

JESSE GRIFFITHS, C.D.C.

COSTUME DESIGNER

KAYLEIGH CHOINIÈRE

MUSIC BY

CFCF

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

ANDRÉ CHAMBERLAND

EDITOR

AMÉLIE LABRÈCHE

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

GAYLE YE

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

BARBARA ROSENSTEIN

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

JOHN CHRISTOU

PRODUCER

ROBERT VROOM

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY

SARAH WATTS & MARK SLUTSKY