

SUNSET PICTURES presents

THE Upside

a GABRIEL BROWN film



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"THE UPSIDE"

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Starring XANIA KEANE · STEPHEN TAYLOR
DOMINIQUE REMY-ROOT · SIMON BROWN
NIPSI BELLIAPA · MARLENE EDOYAN
JAMES MURRAY · STEPHEN DE OLIVEIRA

Art Director MATT WEAVER

Director of Photography KALE REUM Music TRIKE

Editors JIMMY BELLEMARE · GABRIEL BROWN

Sound STEPHEN DE OLIVEIRA

Screenplay ROBERT MURRAY

Associate Producers ROBERT MURRAY · DAMON COX

Producers BASHAR SHBIB · MAÏA NADON-CHBIB

Director GABRIEL BROWN



SYNOPSIS

Dee (Stephen Taylor) has moved into his new apartment with his meddling mother Janet (Dominique Remy-Root). Janet takes it upon herself to set him up with their new neighbour, Jamie (Xania Keane), a lonely school teacher living in a camper in the back parking lot. A quirky comedy ensues, in which two eccentric personalities discover the comfort of just being themselves together in a lonesome world.

STORY OUTLINE

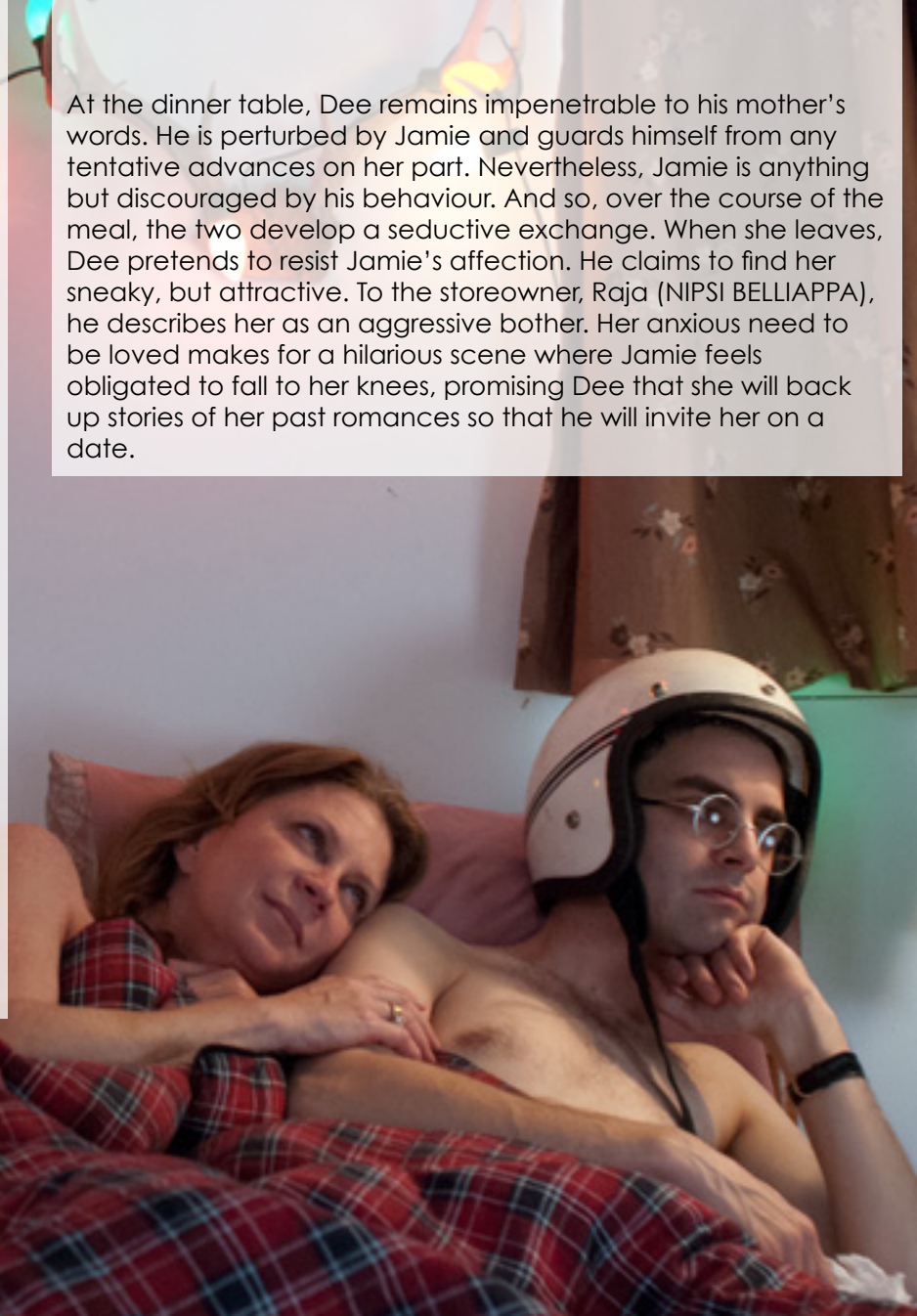
The Upside is a comedic examination of the contemporary human condition. Following the misadventures of two eccentric personalities, Dee (STEPHEN TAYLOR) and Jamie (XANIA KEANE), we watch the story of a romantic comedy unfurl between two well-intentioned individuals who meet and fall clumsily in love.

Jamie and her friend Arnold (STEPHEN DE OLIVEIRA) teach at an elementary school. Arnold is a pragmatic and laid-back kind of guy. On the other hand, Jamie's naturally pleasant character operates from more of a spiritual disposition. Nevertheless, they are lost in a world exhausted by fears. It gets to the point where Jamie must withdraw into herself in order to recoup a sense of self-assuredness.

Jamie's insular world changes when Dee moves into the apartment close to where she keeps her trailer. The son of a desperate mother, Dee is tall and seductive. He is more timid and uncertain than Jamie. At the age of 30, Dee is finally moved to find someone for himself, with the obvious help of his mother, Janet (DOMINIQUE REMY-ROOT). When they are faced with their first meeting, the strange and secret world of Jamie becomes engaged with a more extravagant reality.

Dee's relationship with his mother falls into complete dysfunction. Dee wants to be independent, but we are unsure as to whether he will be able to survive without her. For this reason, when Janet informs her son that she has invited Jamie to dinner, Dee complains that she is trying to entangle Jamie into her maternal umbilical cord, along with himself.

At the dinner table, Dee remains impenetrable to his mother's words. He is perturbed by Jamie and guards himself from any tentative advances on her part. Nevertheless, Jamie is anything but discouraged by his behaviour. And so, over the course of the meal, the two develop a seductive exchange. When she leaves, Dee pretends to resist Jamie's affection. He claims to find her sneaky, but attractive. To the storeowner, Raja (NIPSI BELLIAPPA), he describes her as an aggressive bother. Her anxious need to be loved makes for a hilarious scene where Jamie feels obligated to fall to her knees, promising Dee that she will back up stories of her past romances so that he will invite her on a date.



PRODUCTION NOTES

The Upside is a humanist approach to the timeless themes of loneliness, love, and desperation. It is sweet and awkward, sometimes painful to watch, but is constantly mindful of the beauty present in all things.

The Upside began in Stanstead, Québec, where retired schoolteacher and local screenwriter Robert Murray approached independent film producers Bashar Shbib and his daughter Maïa Nadon-Chbib, with an unusual script. Nadon-Chbib, attuned to the absurd and offbeat, realized that she had what would be the perfect template for a character film, where the director and actors could somehow flesh out and bring dimension and soul to the script. At the helm of this project is 26-year-old Gabriel Brown, directing his first feature. Brown saw the project as a challenge and an experiment.

Thus, Producer and Director set in motion the unthinkable task to take The Upside and give it cinematic life. The two had Mr. Murray revise his script eleven times before approving a final draft and trimming off the excess. Murray and Brown, working together, realized that the film is about the small things, the details which occur between the beats between one breath and another. Brown says: "We're taking a microcosm and magnifying that and having a look at the many little moments in a life, the things which actually make up most of one's life, but which we rarely step back and examine."

Brown admits that he was moved to make the The Upside a priority after watching the recent blockbusters. He says: "People want bigger, better, faster and more to-the-point where they miss the fine and beautiful details, and it breeds ignorance and lack of compassion. Basically, we become reflections of our desires, slaves chained to the very monstrosities that we've created to amuse ourselves. I have the urge to take back what Hollywood has considered the negative space in life and re-examine it. I see a lot in people, maybe more, when they're silent. Sometimes it's little gestures that give it all away."



There are plenty of little gestures and mundane actions in the The Upside; but the director has also made allowances that plain absurdity is included. "Definitely there are some bizarre occurrences, but that's life. A lot of people are going to ask me why in the Hell would I choose to add these certain over-the-top elements to my film; and I don't feel the need to explain that, not out of pretension, just that, simply put, why does anything happen? When you see a dog get hit by a red sports car in the rain, does a god come down, tap you on the shoulder and explain the reasons?"

Aside from a few bizarre instances, which are bound to attract fans of "Spanking the Monkey" and "Napoleon Dynamite," there is a striking visual flair to the film -- Director of Photography Kale Reum (schooled in film at Trebas Institute in Montréal) shows a keen sense of lighting, as well as camera work and framing.

So much has he invested in the project that he spent two weeks working day and night, building an original Steadicam device specifically for The Upside.



"We've got a fairly obvious difference in height with our two lead actors. Rather than look at this as a negative logistics issue, Gabe and I decided that it works well in a sort of physical comedy sense. We knew that we didn't want to be raising or lowering certain characters to make it easier on ourselves for filming, and I didn't exactly have the budget to go out and buy a Steadicam so I set to work on my own design. It has worked quite well, actually; it's got great maneuverability and range. People get a laugh out of the way I look wearing it, though— I often get called "Robocop"."

The producer assembled a highly competent crew, most of which she had worked with in previous projects. Sound man Stephen de Oliveira and his significant other Marlene Edoyan, (in makeup and costumes), brought to the production a further visual panache with an assortment of rare vintage clothing. Art Director Matthew Weaver took full advantage of thousands of square feet packed to the ceiling with all sorts of materials, odds & ends to put together quirky and colorful sets.

After a rigorous casting call, Brown realized he had his leads in two very unlikely people. One is an Irish dancer, fiddle player and wannabe rapper; the other a music composer/rock star (from the Dutch-Canadian band Trike). Brown says, "They were friends before they arrived. The second day, I watched them interact. They were mucking about, childishy prancing and dancing when they were supposed to be working. They had to be my leads. It was like the gods were smiling on us." Method actor Stephen Taylor (Dee) had acted in numerous shorts he had directed while attending AKI in Holland. Standing 6 foot 6, gaunt and lanky with piercing blue eyes, Taylor brings a striking presence to the screen and a devoted professionalism to the set, remaining in character for the entirety of the shoot. Xania Keane, a Concordia Communications major (and another unknown), grew vastly in character and spirit, urged on by her director and the rest of the crew who were blown away by the glowing energy that she emanated on set.

ABOUT THE CAST

Stephen Taylor (Dee)

No stranger to the film and theater world, Stephen hails from beautiful British Columbia, but has also lived, studied and exhibited his work in Holland. "He had some indefinable quality that Maïa and I were immediately attracted to" Brown says. "He has presence" Nadon-Chbib echoed. Stephen has focused mostly on music in the last few years, but studied film and media for four years, eventually attaining his BFA. His band Trike has also been quite successful in the last year and a half since its inception. Nadon-Chbib is convinced Stephen has a future in acting. Stephen is reluctant to agree to this, but enjoyed the project immensely.

Xania Keane (Jamie)

Xania was also an unknown just perfect for the role, tackling it with a rare sort of gusto. Xania blossomed, creating a character that was larger than life. Xania has a Communications, Journalism and a Photography degree, and plays fiddle in Trike.

Dominique Remy-Root (Janet)

Dominique is en-route to becoming an established actress. After raising her children, she decided that acting was her life. Dominique is no stranger to the role of the sexually desirable single mother that *The Upside* required of her. While taking acting lessons, she acted in a number of productions, including the feature film "Misbehaviour" (produced and directed by Michel Zgarka) and "Stryker," amongst others.

Marlene Edoyan (Anastasia)

Marlene is from Lebanon. She was hired as Makeup and Wardrobe, but when Nadon-Chbib and Brown approached her to play the role of Anastasia, the gym teacher, she was thrilled. Eager to bring to the film her unique approach, she learned all the nuances of her character, a sexually-charged lesbian with aerobic moves. This role was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream and Marlene, with her limited experience, has nevertheless transformed the film with her subtle and potent presence.



**Simon Brown (Jerome)**

Diminutive in stature but gargantuan in personality, Simon is a rare find in a world of mediocrity. Gabriel Brown was once quoted as saying "that kid needs Ritalin." Simon has boundless energy and heart, and brought a goofiness to Jerome that was desperately needed. "Jerome is more than an unforgettable stereotype," Simon announced. "He has a passion for cleaning, a passion for women and a passion for being a womanizing prick... but at least he's honest about it." Simon speaks both French and English and lives in Montréal.

Nipsi Belliappa (Raja)

Despite some initial qualms about the stereotypical nature of the role, discussions with the director made her realize that by performing in a certain way, she could really detonate any assumptions about the character, exaggerating the stereotype by downplaying it, and creating a role that was more a commentary on stereotypes and a commentary on the superficial nature of North American society, media and Hollywood. Nipsi studied at McGill and aspires to make documentary films.

Stephen De Oliveira (Arnold)

A musician from Montreal and sound man on numerous other productions, Stephen brings a very wry humour and performing style to The Upside as the disgruntled school teacher and friend of Jamie, Arnold. It was his presence and delivery that made him so appealing to Gabe Brown and developed Arnold into another colorful eccentricity.

James Murray (Charlie)

Familiar with Nadon-Chbib it was only natural for James Murray to take on the role of Charlie, a friend from the local pizzeria. James has worked on previous productions with Nadon-Chbib, both starring and as a secondary actor. He is also the son of the screenwriter, Robert Murray.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Gabriel Brown (Director)

This is Gabe's first foray into feature filmmaking. Gabe was attracted to the script's naivety, convinced that through the acting and direction, he could really turn the project on its head and create a movie with real humanity in his own idiosyncratic way. Gabe has desired to be a filmmaker since he was a child and, with *The Upside*, he is making headway into his dream. He is also a painter and a writer. He now lives and directs in Hollywood.

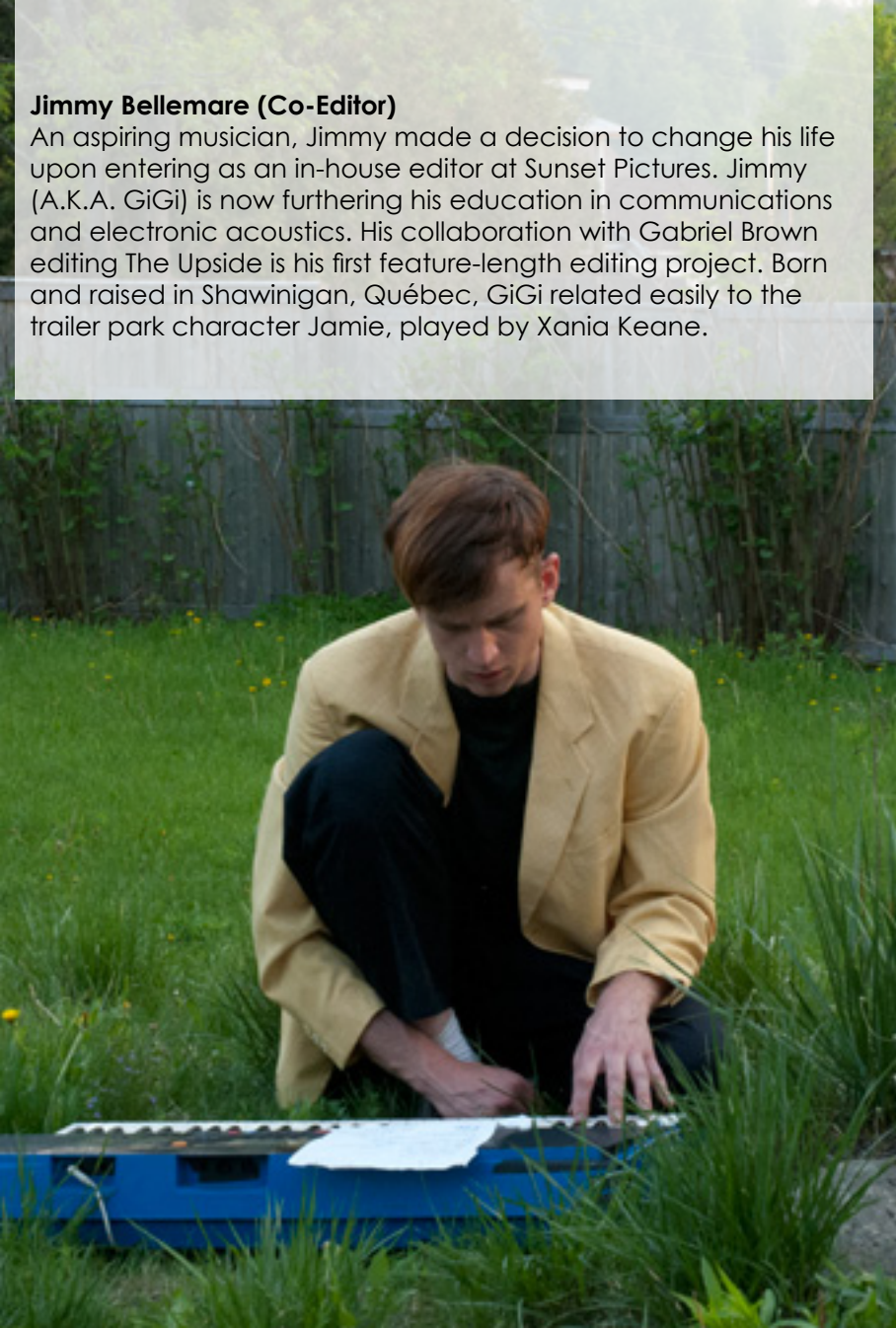
ABOUT THE CREW

Maïa Nadon-Chbib (Producer)

Maïa attended Concordia University majoring in Communications. She has recently completed an eight-part, half-hour miniseries called "Granite Forks," and a 35-mm feature titled "Frauds in Love." Maïa believes *The Upside* will be an entertaining venue for international television and hopes it will generate interest in her other projects. Maïa also runs Oneira Pictures www.oneira.com.


Robert Murray (Writer)

Robert Murray is a retired school teacher and the author of the book "The Stars Still Shine." When writing the screenplay *The Upside*, he worked very closely with Gabriel Brown, crafting *The Upside* into a work of cinematic art. He loved writing the adventures of the less-than-perfect duo of Dee & Jamie. Bob has a wry -- some would say strange -- sense of humor that translates into some very funny lines and scenes in the movie. Oh yes, Bob wants it mentioned that he is an all around good guy.



Jimmy Bellemare (Co-Editor)

An aspiring musician, Jimmy made a decision to change his life upon entering as an in-house editor at Sunset Pictures. Jimmy (A.K.A. GiGi) is now furthering his education in communications and electronic acoustics. His collaboration with Gabriel Brown editing *The Upside* is his first feature-length editing project. Born and raised in Shawinigan, Québec, GiGi related easily to the trailer park character Jamie, played by Xania Keane.



Kale Reum (Cinematographer)

Kale is from Alberta. He studied at the Trebas Institute in Montreal. This is his first film as D.O.P, but he has, in his brief 23 years, worked on several features and a number of shorts, in various capacities. He has a keen eye for composition and a serious attitude towards life. Kale was also a foreman of a sawmill in Alberta, where he almost lost his arm, but thankfully, did not, or else he would have had a tricky time being camera operator for *The Upside*.

Stephen de Oliveira (Sound Artist)

Stephen has a thick french accent. "I am the Inspector Clouseau of Québec," he says. He has done the musical soundtrack for several films and sound on many others. He also has musical projects on the side. Stephen has not only done sound on quite a few movies, but he has acted in several productions, playing "Arnold" in *The Upside*.

Matt Weaver (Art Director)

Matt is a Concordia graduate in film and English Literature. He is originally from Bristol England. He initially desired to work as DOP, but is challenged by the task of Art Director, admitting he has a God-given talent for color matching. "I like colors," Matt observes, "a lot." Matt is a writer and a poet.

CAST AND CREW CREDITS

Director
GABRIEL BROWN

Producers
BASHAR SHBIB
MAÏA NADON-CHBIB

Executive Producer
ROBERT MURRAY

Associate Producer
DAMON COX

Screenplay by
ROBERT MURRAY

Director of Photography
KALE REUM

Art Director
MATT WEAVER

Assistant Art Director
DEVIN GUGLIETTA

Editors
JIMMY BELLEMARE
GABRIEL BROWN

Assistant Editors
BENOIT CHAUSSÉ
STEPHEN TAYLOR

Sound
STEPHEN de OLIVEIRA

Original Music by
TRIKE



CAST

Jamie
XANIA KEANE

Dee
STEPHEN TAYLOR

Janet
DOMINIQUE RÉMY-ROOT

Jerome
SIMON BROWN

Arnold
STEPHEN de OLIVEIRA

Charlie
JAMES MURRAY

Anastasia
MARLENE EDOYAN

Ms. Raja
NIPSI BELLIAPPA

Priestess
KIM PRANGLEY

PRODUCTION CREW

Production Coordinator
NIPSI BELLIAPPA

Production Assistants
MARGARET HAINES
STEPHEN DESORMEAUX



1st Camera Assistant
VINCENT LAFRANCE

Second Unit Camera
SIMON BROWN

Still Photographer
VINCENT LAFRANCE

Art Direction
MATTHEW WEAVER

Costumes
MARLENE EDOYAN

Make-up & Hair
MARLENE EDOYAN

Sound Recordist
STEPHEN DE OLIVEIRA


2nd Unit Sound
MATT WEAVER

SOUNDTRACK

"Body Like Mine"
Written by Stephen Taylor
Performed by Trike

"Gotta Lot"
Written by Stephen Taylor
Performed by Trike

"Stuart Derdeyn"
Written by Stephen Taylor
Performed by Trike



"Castles"
Written by Stephen Taylor
Performed by Trike

"All the Lights Sink Alone"
Written by Stephen Taylor
Performed by Trike

"The Banana Bike Song"
Written by Stephen Taylor
Performed by Trike

"Got Room To Shag"
Written by Stephen Taylor & Xania
Keane
Performed by Trike

"I Don't Care Anymore"
Written by Stephen Taylor
Performed by Trike

"Love is a Temperature Thing"
Written by Stephen Taylor
Performed by Trike

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Municipality of Magog

Claire Nadon

Diane Murray

Robert Murray

Farouk Chebib

Ned Phaneuf

Glenna Munroe

Armin & Ursula Ruf

Martin Allaire

Vincent Lafrance

Devin Guglietta

Margaret Haines

Matt Weaver

Johanne Brouillet

Marc Todoroff

Tansy Rudnicki



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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Title: THE UPSIDE
Genre: Feature length Comedy
Running Time: 76min 40sec.
Format: Color Digital HD Video
Aspect Ratio: 16:9
Release Date: January 2012
Original Language: English
Production Company: Sunset Pictures
Producers: Bashar Shbib · Maia Nadon-Chbib
Director: Gabriel Brown

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