

# **The Conspiracy**

Written and directed by Christopher MacBride

Starring: Aaron Poole, Jim Gilbert

*Running Time: 84:37, Exhibition Format: HD*

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## **The Film**

### **Logline:**

A conspiracy documentary. A secret society. A missing filmmaker. Connect the dots.

### **Synopsis:**

When two young filmmakers select a crazed conspiracy theorist as the subject of their new work the task seems simple enough: Befriend him, gain his trust, and let his theories speak for themselves. But things prove more complicated than that. Despite his street preaching their subject proves to be an articulate and intelligent man. One prone to seeing patterns others do not, yes, but hardly the expected lunatic. Listen long enough and his arguments even start to make a certain sort of sense. It's enough to make you wonder if maybe, somewhere, there's some basis to what he's saying.

And then he simply disappears. No word. No trace. Just gone.

While one of the filmmaking duo is prepared to walk away the other becomes obsessed. This should not be possible. People do not just disappear. Not unless someone wants them to. What if he was correct? What if he was on the verge of exposing some greater scheme? And what if he was taken? And so begins an obsessive effort to reconstruct his work, an effort that points the duo to a high powered retreat and networking organization for the political and business elite.

A meticulously researched and cannily constructed bit of work THE CONSPIRACY systematically blurs the lines between fact and fiction, deconstructing the distinction between facts and news, news and propaganda. THE CONSPIRACY is more than just entertainment. It is a sly commentary of a world in which the medium really has become the message, a world in which the most important question is not "What happened?" but "Who is telling us?"

## Inspiration

“I know a film that will change the way you look at everything.”

A friend of writer/director Christopher MacBride said this to him years ago, trying to get him to watch a “conspiracy theory film” he downloaded off the Internet. MacBride was sceptical to say the least, but he watched it. The film looked like it had been made for fifty dollars. The resolution was terrible. The cuts were jumpy and clumsy. But all that made it feel more authentic. Like a dirty, dangerous secret he was being let in on. The film showed footage of high-ranking government officials participating in strange rituals. It presented suspicious evidence that the attacks of 9/11 were not what they appeared. It painted a very different picture of history, where secret societies and men behind the scenes had been manipulating world events. “Like many people I was aware these conspiracy theories were out there, but I had no idea how huge this counter culture was,” MacBride says. “There are literally thousands of videos, films, websites, chat rooms, radio programs, etc. I was fascinated to discover this is much more than some fringe subculture. It’s a *movement*.”

Though he hadn’t become fully convinced of the insidious worldview these conspiracy theorists shared, MacBride became fascinated by the world they inhabited. A world that existed primarily online. “The internet has really allowed conspiracy theorists to form a community in a way they never could before. It’s a sort of fascinating by product of globalization that now people from all over the world can connect with each other and share these ideas and that sort of validates their theories when they hear so many others believing the same things. Which is an amazing irony considering the dangers of globalization is one of the main concerns of conspiracy theorists.”

Still having no idea what he was exploring would eventually turn into a feature film, MacBride immersed himself in the world of conspiracy theorists. Devouring every bit of conspiracy information he could get his hands on, out of what he called “simple curiosity and boredom”.

“The more you watch and read that stuff, the more it starts to penetrate your everyday life,” MacBride says. “You start to see evidence of conspiracies everywhere. I distinctly remember one day I was sitting in a café and CNN was on the TV. They were interviewing one of their “regular contributors”. A guy who’d held high-ranking positions in multiple administrations. I realized that just 12 hours earlier I had seen hidden camera footage of this EXACT SAME GUY participating in a bizarre pagan ritual in an online conspiracy film. And here he was on CNN talking to millions of people, telling them how they should interpret some policy decision that just came out of the White House. It was just creepy. It’s moments like that where even the most sceptical person can’t help but wonder... Are these people (conspiracy theorists) actually on to something? Is there really this whole secret world under the surface of what we’re shown in the mainstream media?”

Though initially not knowing whether these people were “on to something” or not, drove MacBride crazy, it was this grey area of where the truth lies that ultimately was the inspiration for creating a feature film on the subject. “I think if I was a full fledged believer in conspiracy theories or if I was firmly on the other side of the fence and a sceptic or debunker, then it wouldn’t have been an interesting enough subject to make a film about” MacBride says. “As we say in the film, you can’t really ever prove or disprove these theories. And that’s sort of what keeps driving these ideas, and keeps it endlessly fascinating. If conspiracy theorists are correct and there’s massive secrets that aren’t being reported to the general public, then that’s obviously interesting. And if they’re all just paranoids sharing common delusions, then that’s an incredible societal phenomenon and equally as interesting to me. Either way, I was hooked, and I knew I wanted to set a story in that world.”

## **The Story**

The film starts out with our protagonists, Aaron and Jim, making a documentary film about conspiracy theorists. The focus of their film is not the conspiracy theories themselves, but profiling the people who believe them. “I wanted Aaron and Jim’s film within a film to mirror my own journey into this world. It starts out more interested in the phenomenon of conspiracy theory belief rather than whether the theories themselves

have any validity. This is how I started exploring the world and I thought it would be a good way for the audience to start the journey as well. Especially for those people who really think this is all B.S. Our protagonists don't fully buy this stuff either, so it allows the sceptics watching to participate and sort of mirror's their own doubts and misgivings about the subject matter when the story starts."

The main conspiracy theorist Aaron and Jim profile in their documentary is a man named "Terrance". He's a full-fledged conspiracy theory believer and stages "street actions" where he shouts his ideas through a megaphone on the street at the unsuspecting public. "Street actions are a pretty common tactic employed by conspiracy theorists" MacBride says. "There's a spectrum from the crazier guys yelling about aliens to very organized people with specific information they feel like they have no other recourse to communicate their ideas other than directly on the street."

The event that sets off the dramatic action in the story is the sudden and unexplained disappearance of Terrance. It's then that the differences between our protagonists start to become clear. Jim, the more sceptical who believes that Terrance was a mentally unbalanced man and his disappearance should be no surprise to anyone. And Aaron, who suspects there's something nefarious in Terrance's disappearance and starts to become obsessed with piecing together what Terrance was investigating when he vanished. "Even though Aaron starts out looking at this stuff objectively, he can't help becoming more and more like Terrance as the story progresses. I think that's exactly what happens to a lot of people when they start looking into this stuff. It's definitely what happened to me. It's kind of like Pandora's Box. No matter how careful (sceptical) you are when you start to peek inside, it has a way of insidiously getting into your system whether you want it to or not."

Aaron eventually pieces together the fact that Terrance was investigating an ultra powerful organization called The Tarsus Club. Part secret society, part elite gentleman's club, it's membership includes some of the most powerful men in the world and seemingly has had it's hand in shaping the course of global financial markets, government policy, even so-called "random events" going back hundreds of years. "The Tarsus Club is fictional creation but it's based on actual organizations that do exist, like the Bilderberg Group or Bohemian Club. These are very press shy, highly secret

organizations that are common knowledge in conspiracy theory circles but are largely unknown to the wider public.”

MacBride blurred the line between fact and fiction even further by linking the Tarsus Club to actual real life conspiracy theories. “It was important to me to intertwine the fictional elements I made up with the real life conspiracy issues. There’s a section in the film where the 9/11 conspiracy is discussed and all that stuff is exactly what you find in conspiracy theory films and chat rooms. The sinking of the Lusitania. The Gulf of Tonkin. The so-called “New World Order” agenda to create a one-world government. Chem Trails which are supposedly government tests where planes release chemicals into the atmosphere to test their effects on the population. These are the real conspiracies that people are talking about so hopefully when you see the film you can’t really tell what’s real and what’s not. The reason that’s important to me is because that’s exactly what the experience of venturing into the conspiracy theory world is like. You can’t tell if you’re getting let in on a hidden truth or you’re being told an overly imaginative fiction. I wanted the film to also create that experience for the audience.”

The more Aaron and Jim investigate the Tarsus Club, the more they begin to feel that they themselves are now being watched. Mysterious contacts met online, a black SUV that seems to be tailing them, and even a break in to one of their homes, all serve to raise the stakes as well as the filmmaker’s paranoia as they fall deeper down the rabbit hole. The film’s climax is an epic, tension filled third act where Aaron and Jim infiltrate a meeting of the Tarsus Club with hidden cameras. As they venture into the belly of the beast Aaron and Jim start to question whether they have truly ventured behind the curtain of their own free will, or whether they are just rats in maze, having been manipulated and lured to this secret meeting for a nefarious reason they realize only after it’s too late.

“A device used in fiction which I’ve always loved is the concept of the unreliable narrator. The entire film is presented as if we are watching Aaron and Jim’s documentary. But in the final moments of the film, without giving too much away, I really wanted the audience to question, ‘who is it exactly that’s been telling us this story? Who’s been editing this movie within a movie? Is this really Aaron and Jim telling us this story or is it someone else and can I trust what they are telling me?’ The unreliable narrator device is used

often in literature but rarely in films, so it can sometimes be confusing for film audiences I think. People aren't used to the very film they are watching lying to them. But it was important for me to include that ambiguity at the end because again... That's what it's like when you start getting into conspiracy theory. You're never quite sure you can trust the source of the information you're being given. Hopefully these are the same feelings the audience has when the film cuts to black at the end."

## **Aesthetic**

Even though the story is presented as if we are watching a documentary film being shot by our protagonists, MacBride didn't want it to feel like other found footage films with the "shaky camera aesthetic" throughout. "My visual references were less so the Blair Witch and Paranormal Activity type films and much more actual documentaries like Catfish, The Cove or Exit Through the Gift Shop," MacBride says. "I wanted the film to feel more like a documentary in the vein of 'Death of a President' or 'Interview with the Assassin'. I wanted it to feel a bit more polished and professionally edited. That's not a knock on the current craze over the 'Cloverfield' type of found footage aesthetic, I just wanted it to feel like a different take on the found footage/mock doc aesthetic. Also narratively it was important to the story that you get a sense that someone has pieced this film together. Especially when the film starts to shift it's focus to the documentarians themselves, it's important that the audience start to wonder who it is that's in control of this film I'm watching and why are they presenting the information to me in the way that they are?"

The performance style had to be hyper realistic and to that end the actors were encouraged to improvise as much as possible. To veer off the script and put the scenes into their own words to try and achieve natural and organic performances that didn't feel staged for the camera.

"Ian Anderson (DOP) was the perfect match for this film as he is someone who's past work I had admired. What he has been able to accomplish in the micro-budget world was a style of work that I wanted to embrace for *The Conspiracy*", says MacBride.

"We were always planning to shoot the film digitally, but because there were multiple looks we needed to create - documentary versus hidden camera versus grainy Internet videos - we needed to look closely at our options. We didn't want to make the film look too 'expensive' but at the same time this isn't Mumblecore", says MacBride.

The filmmakers used 2 sets of cameras: the Red camera for most of the film while the Canon 7D was used for the entire third act where the documentarians infiltrate a secret society ritual. Shooting the ritual was one of the most fun and most difficult planning tasks for MacBride and Anderson. Wanting to shy away from any of the shaky-cam feel of "The Blair Witch Project" led to countless numbers of camera tests trying to establish a balance between the footage feeling like it really came from a hidden camera without making people want to vomit. Finally, the filmmakers landed on the Canon 7D and was shot with the assistance of a handcrafted steady-cam mount strapped to Anderson's body. And since the camera takes on the POV of Aaron and Jim throughout the ritual, Anderson had to "play the role" of each of them. In post-production, a hidden cam style was applied by bevelling the corner edges of the frame and degrading the picture quality. The final result is a very believable and unsettlingly visceral experience as the audience is literally in the protagonist's shoes.

## **The Real Conspiracy Theories Behind the Film**

While conspiracy theories have probably been around for as long as human societies have, there's no denying that they are enjoying a kind of "renaissance period" today. This has most likely been brought about by numerous factors but perhaps the most relevant is the rise of the Internet. Millions of people from disparate parts of the world who previously would never be able to share their ideas on such a wide scale can now communicate their ideas to one another with the click of a button. "I definitely wanted the Internet and how crucial it is to modern conspiracy theories to be an integral part of the film," MacBride says. "From the multiple scenes in the virtual chat room, to the viral videos we feature, to the Google search that leads Aaron to Tarsus, to the initial YouTube clip of Terrance that starts the whole story. Online communities and how they've changed social interaction is a key aspect to the story."



Two of the most famous and prominent online conspiracy theory films are “Loose Change” and “Zeitgeist” which outline (among other things) how Jesus Christ is a myth based on much older religions, the federal reserve banking system in the US is essentially a shadow government that controls elected officials, and that the official story of the 9/11 attacks is a lie. These two films are said to be the #1 and #2 most downloaded films in the history of Google video. Alex Jones, the most prominent conspiracy theorist in the world, has a radio program heard by over 2 million listeners weekly. His two conspiracy theory websites infowars.com and prisonplanet.com draw 4 million unique users. (More than Rush Limbaugh’s site.) “The internet has really allowed these fringe ideas to seep into the mainstream,” MacBride says. “I don’t think they’re going away anytime soon.”

Here are some of the actual conspiracy theories that influenced the film’s story.

### **Bohemian Club**

The Bohemian Club is a private gentleman’s club located in the San Francisco Bay area. Originally founded as regular meeting of journalists and artists in 1872, it eventually expanded to except businessmen, global politicians and military commanders. The group meets annually at a camp named the Bohemian Grove. Numerous pagan rituals are performed at these annual meetings including the “Cremation of Care” ritual where robed figures burn a figure in effigy in front of the statue of a giant owl. Documented members of the Bohemian Club include George HW Bush, George W Bush, Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, Dwight Eisenhower, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Ford, Colin Powell, Walter Cronkite, Donald Rumsfeld, William Randolph Hearst and David Rockefeller Sr. to name just a fraction.

Though the Bohemian Club boasts some of the most powerful men in politics and commerce, it claims no business is discussed within the camp and the group has no overall agenda. Conspiracy theorists would of course tell you otherwise and will point out numerous suspicious shifts in foreign policy and global monetary trends, which seem to coincide with the key players involved in these events attending a meeting of the Bohemian Club. Whatever you believe, what is undeniably interesting is the almost complete lack of media coverage on groups such as the Bohemian Club. As conspiracy

theorists are keen to point out, if 100 of the worlds most famous actors or athletes met and performed a pagan ritual in the woods, every journalist in the world would be reporting on it. Yet the men who actually possess the real power in the world do this, and other than a handful of articles, there's barely a whisper of it in the mainstream press.

Further Information:

Time Magazine Reports on the Bohemian Club

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,871313,00.html>

Vanity Fair Reports on the Bohemian Club

<http://www.vanityfair.com/style/features/2009/05/bohemian-grove200905>

Presidential Adviser David Gergen speaks to Alex Jones about the Bohemian Club

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NOjmuO972Y>

Alex jones sneaks into the Bohemian Club with a hidden camera

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzLjFfSmpuo>

## **Bilderberg Group**

The Bilderberg Group is an annual invitation only conference that centers on the main geo political issues facing the western world. Bilderberg meetings are closed to the public and are made up of a who's who of power players from business and politics. This has made it one of, if not the biggest target of conspiracy theorists that believe secret agendas are being formulated in these highly secretive meetings. The group is named after the Hotel de Bilderberg, which was the location of their first meeting in the Netherlands in 1954. Heads of state, including Juan Carlos I of Spain and Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and many prominent politicians from North America and Europe have attended past meetings. In recent years, board members from many large publicly traded corporations have attended, including IBM, Xerox, Royal Dutch Shell, Nokia and Daimler.

Further Information:

CNN Report on the Bilderberg Group

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l3sqpRtKUA&feature=results\\_video&playnext=1&list=PL205B1538CF729368](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l3sqpRtKUA&feature=results_video&playnext=1&list=PL205B1538CF729368)

Canadian News reports on the Bilderberg meeting in Ottawa

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWOLJmi5Efw>

## **New World Order**

New World Order (NWO) is the term conspiracy theorists believe refers to the agenda of the secretive power elite to create a one-world government. Conspiracy theorists believe that the ultimate goal of secret organizations like the Bohemian Club and Bilderberg Group, as well as prominent think tank organizations such as the Council on Foreign Relations and Trilateral Commission, is to eventually rule the world through an authoritarian world government, which would replace sovereign nation-states. Though used throughout history in different ways, the term New World Order gained prominence in recent years after George H.W. Bush began to use it frequently when referring to the post Soviet era of a one super power world. The theory is that with the cold war ended, the power elite were able to fast track their agenda to incrementally centralize power in the world through the creation of international oversight bodies such as the IMF and World Bank, which could enforce laws globally across borders. Also key to the centralization of power was the creation of multi country unions such as the European union, African Unions and eventually the North American Union.

Sceptics of the NOW conspiracy theory believe that the term New World Order has been used by countless people for over a hundred years with no connection to one another. Each of them having a different intention behind the term that has nothing to do with a one-world government. They believe the NOW theory is simply a paranoia of the world's march towards globalization and the loss of individual sovereignty.

## **Further Information**

Lou Dobbs CNN Report on the creation of a North American Union

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3E4s4JTzsY>

CNBC Report on the North American Union currency “The Amero”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYXx1ZL28UE&feature=related>

## **Mithraism**

In the film, the fictional secret society known as the Tarsus Club centers around the worship of an ancient pagan god named Mithras. Though the secret society is fictional, Mithraism itself was a very real mystery religion practised in the Roman Empire from the 1st to 4th centuries AD. Worshippers of Mithras had a complex system of seven grades of initiation which were performed largely in underground caves called mithraeum. Because they were underground many of the mithraeum have survived intact and been discovered all across the former Roman Empire stretching from Scotland to the heart of India. The Mithraic cult was a vast and entirely secret society made up of primarily Roman soldiers.

Though it's a point of debate among Mithraic scholars, many believe that the Roman deity Mithras is actually the same deity as the Persian god Mithra who was worshipped over 2,000 years before the Roman incarnation. The Persian deity was said to have been born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, died and was resurrected three days later. Again, Mithraic scholars differ greatly on this aspect, but many theories have been put forth suggesting this is in fact the true genesis of the story of Jesus Christ.

## **Further Information**

Mithraism discussed on the Stephen Fry program

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0j1dnLS8fuM>

Essay on Mithraism by David Ulansey

<http://www.mysterium.com/mithras.html>

## **The "Documentarians"**

**Aaron Poole** (playing himself)

Consistent with MacBride's realistic approach to filmmaking, he wanted his casting choices to reflect those that one would see in any documentary.

"It was important to me to create a cast that was real," he says. "I didn't want to fall into obvious traps of casting people who were too outwardly perfect for the roles - archetypes were not welcome. It was absolutely necessary to cast people who could conceivably do a documentary on conspiracy theories."

MacBride only had to look inside his inner circle to find an actor and creative collaborator to inhabit one of the "documentarian" roles. Aaron Poole whom MacBride had a longstanding friendship with, was an obvious choice.

Poole has established himself as one of the finest actors in the country but has also been involved as a producer on many projects. MacBride comments, "Aaron is a filmmaking double threat. Not only is he a remarkable actor, he knows story and understands the creative process, both from a writer and actor's perspective. He has successfully worn many hats, as a producer, story editor and actor. It was a no-brainer for me to approach him with the material."

Poole stepped into the role lead actor and creative producer. (He is credited as the executive producer). He adds, "Chris and I have been collaborating on a few of his projects. When he approached me with this, it only took one read of the script for me to jump on-board." It didn't hurt that he was already familiar with some of MacBride's references and had an interest with the world of conspiracy theories. "The rising fascination online and in mainstream media with alternate stories of world events and the communities that have formed around competing stories is what originally compelled me to make the film," says Poole. Moreover, he found working on the film an "educational and entertaining" way to capture the balance between mainstream media and fiction. And in answering the question of how important the issues of today are

(Occupy protests, truth movements), he points out, "I think to question the legitimacy of any democracy is one of the most important civil duties of a human. How real is our freedom? How much direct influence does every citizen exert? The Occupy movement at its core is about remembering the importance of accountability. Any protest should be about 'rounding out' the given perspective." And this film serves to accomplish that."

### **About Aaron Poole...**

A graduate of George Brown Theatre School, with training in the Strasberg and Meisner techniques, Aaron sizzled in his defining performance as Johnny, a cracked-out street hustler, in Ed Gass-Donnelly's "This Beautiful City".

Following its premiere at the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival, Aaron's performance met rave reviews. His daring portrayal of the recovering addict, garnered him a Canadian Academy Award (Genie) nomination for Best Actor, a category he shared with Canadian icon Paul Gross and the legendary Christopher Plummer. Poole won the Best Actor ACTRA Award that same year for the role.

Since "This Beautiful City", Aaron has played a recurring role on TMN's "Z.O.S.: Zone of Separation" and was featured in Atom Egoyan's "Adoration". The next year he again worked with Egoyan when they traveled to Armenia for an experimental film project.

After coming home from another exotic location in Lebanon where he was filming the missing third act (!) of 2011 Sundance Audience Choice award-winning feature, "Circumstance", Poole teamed up with Ed Gass-Donnelly and producer Lee Kim once again for their indie hit, "Small Town Murder Songs", also starring Peter Stormare, Martha Plimpton, and Jill Hennessy.

Watch for Aaron in the Samuel L. Jackson film, "The Samaritan"; his star-turn in Rue Morgue Cinema's first feature "The Last Will and Testament of Rosalind Leigh"; and as Robert Cobb Kennedy in the BBC America series "Copper".

## **Jim Gilbert (playing himself)**

For the role of Jim, Aaron's best friend and fellow documentarian, MacBride had originally envisioned someone who could provide a counter-point to Aaron's volatile character. An everyday man - a grounded, more settled person - who perhaps could serve as the audience's point-of-view.

"Finding the right Jim was crucial to the film. Aaron's character is the one who would eventually get drawn into the world of conspiracy theory and it was necessary for me to find that right actor who could play the sceptic without coming off as some kind of jerk archetype. The Scully to Aaron's Mulder", says MacBride.

Gilbert's introduction to the project came from Poole, who had met Jim at an audition. "Jim introduced himself to me and had some extremely generous words about some of the projects I had been involved with, both as an actor and producer. I found it extremely humble of him, especially considering he had a lot of success as a working actor. And he did it such a humble, honest and likeable manner. He embodied the energy that the character Jim should have," recalls Poole. And after a meeting between MacBride and Gilbert, the choice was obvious and Gilbert was cast.

What intrigued Gilbert most about this role was the opportunity to be involved with a project that blended a documentary approach to filmmaking in a dramatic manner. He immediately immersed himself into the world of conspiracy theories. "I watched a ridiculous amount of docs. Those that dealt with conspiracies and those that didn't. I really wanted to observe and absorb how people act when being interviewed, when they're the subject. I was looking for behaviour: pauses, stutters, where eyes darted when confronted with an unexpected question etc. Stuff to contemplate, maybe use. I tried to balance my viewing and reading. The conventional, accepted 'truth' on an issue - then the counter, 'conspiracy' argument. I dove into websites of varying intensity; let my mind swell with the different theories. It was fascinating, alarming at times," says Gilbert.

For him personally, he found the issues covered in the script as being very relevant and important to the world today. He states, "I like to see citizen engagement. Governments need to know that their citizenry is fierce and informed. They need to be held to account.

Abuse of power is a symptom of voter apathy or pacification. OWS for me really represents that. I think their objectives and message needs to be clearer and more focused but they're an essential voice in the conversation. 'The Truthers' pose questions we need answers to about Geo-politics and the military industrial complex in the U.S. Again, I think their outrage is better directed at political incompetence and corruption more than a grand conspiracy. The world seems like it's on fire. The atmosphere is volatile. We seem to be on some sort of precipice, the dialogue becoming more extreme. I think people are rightly concerned. The approach of 'The Conspiracy' asked that I do the same. Confront, realize, disclose. I was interested in that challenge and felt that I needed to do it as an actor."

#### **About Jim Gilbert...**

Jim (professionally known as James) is best known for his role as William Brereton in the Showtime historical drama series, "The Tudors". James has most recently starred in the remake of "Moby Dick" (2011), along with William Hurt, Ethan Hawke and Eddie Marsan and the suspense thriller "The Corridor", which was filmed in Nova Scotia. He has also appeared in numerous television shows such as "Nikita", "Rookie Blue", "Flashpoint", and "The Border". Other film credits include "American Soldiers", "Saw VI", and "The Cry of the Owl" with Julia Stiles and Paddy Considine. Jim is a graduate of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, Scotland.

James was born and raised in Nova Scotia. He now splits his time between Toronto and Los Angeles



## **The Crew**

**Christopher MacBride** (Writer/Director)

A self-described 'Lynchian' (in reference to his love of the acclaimed filmmaker David Lynch), MacBride's creative instincts have always brought him back to stories that uncover hidden truths behind the curtain.

MacBride brings an eclectic background to his film work, having begun his career in the digital online television world, before making his first shorts and now feature film. It could be argued that MacBride's roots in the online world helped open his eyes for a film about conspiracy theories, since the Internet has become a haven for all things conspiracy related.

And despite this being a difficult subject matter to tackle and it being his first feature, MacBride's ease at dealing with actors and crew on set was akin to it being his tenth film. Producer Lee Kim says, "Chris has an uncanny ability to gain the trust and respect of his actors in a very short period of time. He has the ability to disarm the people he works with. The same respect one has for an older sibling is kind of like how people work with Chris. On set, everyone is his contemporary, everyone has a say. But when it comes down to it, Chris knows exactly what he wants and knows what buttons to push to get there. You have to admire his vision and relentlessness. I don't know if I've ever worked with anyone so diligent and prepared. It's a little unsettling come to think of it", he says with a smile.

Actor Aaron Poole was well equipped to comment on working with MacBride, since the two have been friends since high school. "Chris' intelligence is off-the-charts. He's always been that way. No matter what subject matter you are dealing with, he always has something smart to say about it. And if he doesn't know, he'll go and research it to death. The thought of him not knowing something drives him crazy."

After winning a screenwriting award from the IFA (Independent Filmmakers Alliance) for his very first screenplay, the comedic short "Movie Talkers: Scum of Humanity", Christopher went on to write for the Canwest television series "Inside the Box". He has

written and directed four successful short films, “Secrets”, “Chaos”, “Smoke Break” and “Sleep Lab”, which have played at film festivals across Canada, the United States and overseas.

MacBride currently has two of his feature screenplays optioned and in development; “Grown Up Suzanne”, the sexually charged revenge drama (optioned by Rue Morgue Cinema) and “The Education of Fredrick Fitzell” (optioned by Three Legged Dog Films) a surreal time travelling thriller. He was also recently nominated for the “Emerging Filmmaker Award” at the Yorkton Film Festival. For several years prior to his entree into the feature film world, MacBride ran the interactive division at Sinking Ship Entertainment. He has made a career out of creating projects that successfully extend film and television properties into the online world.

#### **Lee Kim** (Producer)

Lee has been actively involved in the entertainment industry as a producer, director, actor and musician for over 10 years. His foray into producing began in 2006 with the feature film “This Beautiful City” which was nominated for four Genies at the 29th Genie Awards in 2009. His second film "Small Town Murder Songs" premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2010 and was a prize winner at the Torino International Film Festival, Whistler Film Festival and Phoenix Film Festival. The film also catapulted director Ed Gass-Donnelly into Hollywood's up-and-coming list, following his inclusion in Variety's Top 10 Directors to Watch list.

In addition to "The Conspiracy", which will have its world premiere at Fantastic Fest 2012, Lee recently wrapped production on “I'll Follow You Down”, written and directed by Richie Mehta (“Amal”), starring Haley Joel Osment, Gillian Anderson, Rufus Sewell, and Victor Garber. He is also in development on a number of other film / TV projects, including "The Blow-Up Dolls" written by Jonathan Sobol ("Beginner's Guide to Endings") and "The Valley Dark", a 12-episode cable series with writer/director Ed Gass-Donnelly.

**Ian Anderson** (Director of Photography)

Anderson's ten years of industry experience include a variety of long and short format film productions and commercial projects. His focus on long format story telling has resulted in his most recent collaboration with director Chris MacBride, "The Conspiracy". This marks Ian's third feature film credit as Cinematographer.

Ian's feature length cinematography debut, the critically acclaimed "Only" (Ingrid Veninger/Simon Reynolds), premiered at TIFF '08. The following year Ian worked with Veninger again, this time on location in Slovakia to shoot the film "Modra". This film saw its world premier at TIFF '10 and has since been selected as one of Canada's Top Ten Features of that year.

In addition to his feature credits, Ian has sought out a variety of other projects, including Dennis Heaton's 2010 Gemini Award nominated series "My Pal Satan" and Genie Award nominee director Jim Donovan's dramatic short, "She Said Lenny", which was also nominated for a DGC Award. Ian's commercial clients include The Royal Bank of Canada, Rogers, Cineplex Odeon and Blackberry to name a few.

One of Ian's strengths outside of his technical capability as a cinematographer is his interpretation of a director's vision and bringing that to life. His passion for collaborating with directors on visual storytelling has seen him shoot a wide variety of narratives and artistic projects. With his dual citizenship to the United Kingdom, Ian is currently exploring co-production potential and foreign possibilities, not to mention his slate of projects in development for 2012.

For More Information: [www.ian-anderson.net](http://www.ian-anderson.net)

**Brian Garvey** (Production Designer)

Brian Garvey was raised outside of Boston, Massachusetts and currently resides in Toronto where he works as a freelance Art Director for film and television.

In 2004, Garvey earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Multimedia Design from the

University of New Brunswick. After living in Japan for a year as well as completing a bare bones, North American road trip, Garvey made the move to Toronto.

In Toronto, Garvey worked as a Bartender before receiving a certificate in film production from the Toronto Film School. His degree in Design, coupled with a certificate in Film production, quickly ushered Garvey into the world of Production Design. In his relatively young career in film, Garvey has designed award winning, independent Canadian feature films, countless commercial spots, music videos and short films.

## **Production Notes**

Shooting Format:	Red Camera
Delivery Format:	HD
Original Aspect Ratio:	16:9
Running Time:	85 minutes
Origin:	Canada
Production Companies:	Resolute Films and Entertainment Dreampool Picture Corp Agency 71 Productions Inc.
Writer/Director:	Christopher MacBride
Producer:	Lee Kim
Executive Producer:	Aaron Poole
Cinematographer:	Ian Anderson
Editors:	Adam Locke-Norton, Christopher MacBride
Production Designer:	Brian Garvey
Sound:	Nelson Ferreira
Music Composer:	Darren Baker
Principal Cast:	Aaron Poole, Jim Gilbert

## **Complete Cast and Crew List**

### Cast (in alphabetical order)

Ian Anderson	Himself
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Peter Apostolopolus	Jim's Friend
Roger Beck	Himself
Angela Besharah	Dame
Gordon Bolan	Police Officer
Andy Boorman	Camera Store Clerk
Bruce Clayton	Mark Tucker
Pablo Coffey	Protestor / Interviewee
Shane Daly	Angry Man
Laura DeCarteret	Nicole Higgins
Rob Faust	Mithras
Gavin Fox	Security at Protest
Alex Furber	Initiate
Kat Germain	Protestor
Jim Gilbert	Himself
Darrell Hicks	Security at Protest
Ron Kennell	Ron - Truth Seeker
Alina Lee	Landlady
Danny MacDonald	Initiate
Ian Matthews	Harvey (Ohio Militia Man)
Brenhan McKibben	Tim
Phil Nessel	Bartender
Grant Nickalls	Detective
Douglas Nyback	Initiate
Dennis O'Connor	Robert Williams
Alan Peterson	Terrance
Aaron Poole	Himself
RD Reid	William Jensen
Simon Reynolds	Drunk Man
Phillip Riccio	Kevin
Julian Richings	Green Man
Lina Rossler	Tracy
Melanie Scrofano	Sarah Lalonde
Jonathan Seinen	Initiate
Serge Shapkovsky	Interviewee

Leah Simone Bowen	Protestor / Interviewee
Marcel St. Pierre	Protestor / Interviewee
Roy Swanson	Murray Chance
David Tompa	Bob
Patrick Whyte	Himself

#### Crew

Production Manager	Peter Harvey
Production Coordinator	Zack Tucker Gangnes
Production Office Assistant	John Baker
Casting Consultant	Millie Tom, CDC
Casting Associate	Erin Brandenburg
Production Accountant	Doug Gillespie
Production Assistants	Joey Monahan
	Nancy Mamais
Director's Assistant	Peter Pasyk
Visual Researcher	Erin Chisholm

Editors	Christopher MacBride
	Adam Locke-Norton
Assistant Editor	Kelly McCarthy

Original Score and Music Composer	Darren Baker
Additional Score	Adam Locke-Norton

Director of Photography	Ian Anderson
1st Assistant Camera	Brian White
2nd Assistant Camera	Dan White
DMT	Craig Jewell

Script Supervisor	Sarah Warren
Still Photographers	Ed Gass-Donnelly
	Shaun Benson

Production Designer	Brian Garvey
Art Directors	Jeannette Nguyen
Property Master	Gustavo Franco
Assistant Property Masters	Nicole Holland
	Mike Ward
Daily Art PA's	Jen LeBoutte
	Elizabeth Mills
Graphic Design - Agency 71 Inc.	Chad Maker
	Darryl Spreen
	Kirk Comrie
Visual and Graphic Arts Created by	Roberto Amenta
Mask Concept Design	Michael D. Nelson
Mask Designer	Gabrielle Houle
Mask Manufacturer	Carolyn Horley
Costume Designer	Megan Oppenheimer
Assistant Costume Designer	Julianna Clarke
Daily Wardrobe	Olivia Sementsova
1st Assistant Directors	Matthew Gorman
	Dale MacLean
2nd Assistant Director	Kristina Small
3rd Assistant Director	Jeremy Doiron
Hair and Make-Up	Kristin Wayne
Assistant Make-Up Artist	Lauren Fisher
Daily Make-Up	Brandi Boulet
Hair Stylist for Nicole Higgins provided by Jie Matar, Toronto	
Daily Hair Stylist	Jenn Beam
Location Manager	Lisa Bonfield
Assistant Location Manager	Patricia Philipoulos
Location Assistants	John Baker
	Jennifer McKinley

	Brian Hughes
	Giancarlo Curtosi
	Joelle Leboutte
Daily Location Assistant	Chris Hatcher
Key Grip	TJ Richardson
Best Boy Grip / Gaffer	Igor Alves
Gaffer	Alex Lawrence
Daily Grips / Electricians / Swings	Adam Alvarez
	Bryan Brooks
	Bryan Hughes
	Corey Valentini
	Fraser Brown
	Rob Trench
	Sam Wong
	Todd Thompson
Package Truck Driver	Richard Pryce
Locations Sound by	Midcoast Productions
Location Mixer and Sound Recordist	David Ottier
Boom Operator	Chuck Kraft
Daily Mixer and Sound Recordist	Alex Van der Muelen
	Derek Oxley
Transportation Coordinator	Mark Dellotinvile
Drivers	Jack Wudarzewski
	Ivan Stefanac
Daily PA	Adam Palkovits
	D. Zatzman
	Jenny Moulson
Stunt Coordinators	James Binkley
	Steve Wilsher
Craft Services	Iry Junsey
Sound Editing and Design by	Sound Dogs Toronto
Sound Designer	Nelson Ferreira
Sound Effects Editor	J.R. Fountain
Assistant Sound Editor	Tyler Whitham



For Deluxe

Vice President, Sales Diane Cuthbert

Manager of Operations Gary Brown

Digital Intermediate Colourist Chris Wallace

Digital Intermediate Producer Peter Armstrong

Digital Intermediate Project Manager Mike Paterson

Digital Intermediate Editors Pietro Gallo

Eric Myles

Digital Intermediate Assistant Editor Dave Muscat

Digital Opticals Pietro Gallo

Eric Myles

Sound Re-Recording Mixers Andrew Tay

Jason Perreira

Foley Artist Steve Baine

Foley Recordists Peter Persaud

Foley Assistant Gina Wark

Project Manager, Re-Recording Operations Scott Loane

For Movie Central Julie DiCresce

For The Movie Network Kathleen Meek

Legal Services Gigi Morin, Duncan Morin LLP

David Shivak, Ross & McBride, LLP

Accountant Kay and Warburton, CA

Catering Rancho Relaxo

Craft Services Aristocaterers

Clearances Eastern Script Services Inc.

Insurers Front Row Insurance Brokers Inc.

Payroll Services EP Canada Film Services Inc.

Completion Guarantors Film Finances Canada Inc.

Interim Financing Aver Media

ACTRA Steward Erin Phillips

Production Vehicles Express Car Rentals

