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WORDS NEVER SPOKEN... STORIES NEVER TOLD

ESTHER'S DIARY

Narrative Feature
75 minutes

Esther's Diary is a deep and fascinating film exposing the internal conflicts among Jewish and Christian survivors of the holocaust in Poland. It penetrates the veil of secrecy, anger, and shame that continues to permeate the Polish collective memory, haunting both survivors and their descendants alike – wherever they may be.

Juli Erickson (*Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*) plays the role of Apollonia, an elderly Polish mother forced to reveal her family's darkest secrets in the winter of her years. Shelley Calene-Black plays daughter Maria, who is unexpectedly faced with her family's tragic and horrific legacy. Sydney Barrosse ("Friday Night Lights") plays Sarah, the grieving daughter of a Jewish woman who, upon her death, left behind a diary that for the first time details in words, the justification of her decades-long silence. Esther's final attempt to reach out to her daughter after her death opens an opportunity for forgiveness and understanding between the Polish-American families.

Esther's Diary is the 2009 director's re-cut of *Forgiveness*, initially released in 2008.

PRODUCTION PERSONNEL:

Director	MARIUSZ KOTOWSKI
Writer	ALLAN KNEE
Story	MARIUSZ KOTOWSKI
Executive Producer	HEIDI HUTTER
Producer(s)	MARIUSZ KOTOWSKI GILDA LONGORIA
Associate Producer	LEA ROSA GARCIA
Director of Photography	JAMES RODRIGUEZ
Editor	BRIAN BURROWES
Casting	VICKY BOONE
Art Director	JASON PASCHALL
Music	MARK CHAIT

CAST:

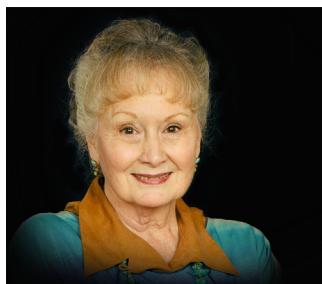
Maria	SHELLY CALENE-BLACK
Apollonia	JULI ERICKSON
Sarah	SYDNEY BARROSSE



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Biographies for Esther's Diary



Juli Erickson was born in San Bernardino, California. She began her performance career as a dancer at Disneyland, which led to a film start in Disney movies such as *Beach Blanket Bingo*. After raising her family, Juli continued work in film and on the stage where she is often joined in her work by her husband, actor Grant James. Ms. Erickson has appeared in numerous films such as *Heaven's Gate* and *Love Hurts* and has had many guest appearances on television in shows such as "Matlock" and "Walker, Texas Ranger." Some of her recent work includes *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*, starring Michael Douglas, and *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*.



Shelley Calene-Black was born and raised in Texas. She studied acting at the University of Houston School of Theatre and spent a few years studying and working on stage in New York City. After returning to Houston in the late 1990s, she helped co-found Infernal Bridegroom Productions. She performed in numerous productions in regional theatre including Houston's prestigious Alley Theatre and Stages Repertory Theatre. Shelley has appeared in numerous films, commercials, industrials and has built a substantial body of work in voice-over, including well over 100 titles of Japanese anime and foreign live action films.



Sydney Barrosse was born in New Orleans, she became involved in music at a very early age; singing in bands throughout high school and college. She then moved to Los Angeles where she continued to pursue her music and acting career. One of her songs was placed in an Oliver Stone production. Sydney has done voiceover work, national commercials and played roles in television shows such as "Friday Night Lights," as well as roles in various feature films.





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Allan Knee has written for the stage and film. His play, *The Man Who Was Peter Pan*, was released by Miramax Films as *Finding Neverland* in October 2004, which costars Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet, and Dustin Hoffman. His play, *Syncopation*, won an American Critics Theater Award after premiering at the Long Warf Theater and George Street Playhouse. His musical version of *Little Women* won a Richard Rogers Musical Theater Award. Among his other works are *Shmulnik's Waltz* (music by David Shire), *Santa Anita '42*, *The Minister's Black Veil*, *St. Valentine's Day Massacre*, and *Sholem Aleichem Lives*, which toured nationally for TheaterWorks/USA. For PBS he wrote the four-part adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter*. Allan is a graduate of the Yale Drama School and a founding member of the Workshop Theater Company.

Mark Chait (also known as Marc Chait) has performed worldwide for audiences as diverse as the King of Swaziland and Hillary Clinton. Born in South Africa, he is a classically trained pianist and violinist and earned the prestigious Australian Music Examinations Board (A.M.E.B.) scholarship in Sydney, Australia. After living in New York City, Mark started writing film music and has now become an internationally recognized composer/songwriter known for his haunting melodies and sweeping orchestrations. His song, "The Power of One," sung by Donna Summer was a Billboard hit for eight weeks on the charts. Some of Mark's other credits include: "Contact" with Brad Pitt, "Stories of my childhood" produced by Baryshnikov and the Audrey Hepburn foundation starring the late Gregory Hines and Cathy Moriarity, "Schemes," "Pelicans of the Ghost Laes", "Cynara" and "Allie and Me."

What people have to say about Esther's Diary

A bond between two adult, self-confident women has rarely been portrayed as effectively, but it is the hate-love relationship between Maria and her mother (Juli Erickson in a heart-wrenching performance) that gives the film its powerful emotional impact.

- Tom Turgend, *The Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*

It was a moving experience for me to be able to work on such a deep, complicated story that many of us can relate to in some way....

- Sydney Barrosse, *Polish Film Festival of Los Angeles, April 2008*

Allan Knee's writing is emotionally powerful and real...

- Wes Shephard, whodoyouknowhere.com

A fresh perspective on a provocative, interesting and sensitive topic.

- Doug Whipple, *New Hope Film Festival*



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ESTHER'S DIARY

DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

Film director / producer **Mariusz Kotowski**, (pronounced “Ma-roosh Kot-ov-ski”), was born in Olsztyn, Poland on the same date as his idol: legendary Hollywood director Billy Wilder (also a native of the Polish region). Growing up, he was greatly influenced by works of the great Polish directors (Andre Wajda, Krzysztof Kieslowski, and Roman Polanski); yet, he also found the same love in legendary Hollywood movies (such as the larger-than-life classics of Wilder, Alfred Hitchcock, and Orson Welles). With no film training available in the small town of Olsztyn, Mariusz chose to use the region’s greatest artistic resource, dance, as his creative outlet. Choreography and dance would prove to be his ticket to the world.

Mariusz choreographed, performed, and competed in dance throughout Europe. His success as a choreographer eventually landed him in New York where Mariusz would meet and marry his wife. It was also in New York that Mariusz embraced his life-long dream to direct full-length feature films. He trained and choreographed for film and Broadway by day and immersed himself in the study of film direction at New York University by night. After graduating from NYU Film School, Mariusz established Bright Shining City Productions in Austin, TX. Since his move to Austin, Mariusz has completed three films in three years and has several projects in development.

His first film project, *Pola Negri: Life Is a Dream in Cinema*, premiered to two packed screenings at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City and went on to win several independent film awards. This enlightening documentary presents the life and work of legendary Polish actress Pola Negri, once the most famous silent film star in the world. It features commentaries from Academy Award-winner Hayley Mills and veteran actor Eli Wallach.

Esther's Diary, a dramatic feature, explores the internal conflicts that haunt survivors and descendants (both Jewish and Christian) of the Polish holocaust.

Deeper and Deeper, meanwhile, is Mariusz’s first feature film exploring the psychological-thriller genre (an area made popular by one of his heroes, Alfred Hitchcock).





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EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Heidi Hutter has served as Executive Producer on all films from Bright Shining City Productions. Her strong, professional background in the business sector has helped add a unique dimension to the company. Heidi's experience has been an integral part in helping Bright Shining City Productions reach their ultimate goal: to tell compelling stories which both entertain and inform.

Aside from her role with Bright Shining City Productions, Heidi has over 25 years of experience in property/casualty reinsurance. She began her career in 1979 with Swiss Reinsurance Company in New York. From 1993 to 1995, she was Project Director for the Equitas project at Lloyd's of London, which became the largest run-off reinsurer in the world. She served as CEO for Swiss Re America from 1996 to 1999 and was also a member of the Executive Board of Swiss Re in Zurich at that time. In 2001, she participated with management in the buyout and restructuring of Talbot Underwriting at Lloyd's. She served on the Talbot board of directors until the sale of Talbot to Validus Re in July 2007. In 2005, Ms. Hutter and her partners Jose Montemayor and Jay Novik formed Black Diamond Capital Partners, a private equity fund specializing in insurance.

Heidi is a Fellow of the Casualty Actuarial Society, a member of the American Academy of Actuaries and a member of the Board of Overseers of The School of Risk Management at St. John's University. She is a Director of Aspen Insurance Holdings Ltd. (NYSE: AHL), Aquila, Inc. (NYSE: ILA), and Chairman and member of the board of Amerilife Group Holdings.

