



**MUSIC
BOX
FILMS**

Presents

SHEPARD & DARK

A DOCUMENTARY BY TREVA WURMFELD

92 min., U.S., 2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION – 2012 TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION – 2013 CANNES CLASSICS – CANNES FILM FESTIVAL
WINNER BEST DOC FEATURE – 2012 WOODSTOCK FILM FESTIVAL

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<http://www.musicboxfilms.com/shepard---dark-movies-71.php>

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SUMMARY

Sam Shepard and Johnny Dark met in Greenwich Village in the early 1960s and, despite leading very different lives, remained close friends ever since. Shepard became a Pulitzer Prize winning playwright (*Buried Child*) and an Academy Award-nominated actor (THE RIGHT STUFF), while Dark was a homebody who supported himself with odd jobs. Through the decades, they stayed bonded by family ties. Dark married an older woman named Scarlett and Shepard married her daughter. For years, the two couples lived together, until Shepard broke away for a relationship with Jessica Lange in 1983, leaving Johnny to help father his first son. Nevertheless, he and Dark continued writing to each other, amassing hundreds of letters.

Director Treva Wurmfeld began filming the two friends in 2010 during a period of transition and reflection for Shepard. At the time, he had quietly ended his relationship with Lange and agreed to publish his correspondence with Dark. The task required them to meet and sift through years of their shared history, stirring memories both good and bad. Wurmfeld observes the two men over a period of 18 months and captures an indelible portrait of a complex male friendship rarely depicted on screen.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Adapted from an article by director Treva Wurmfeld in the *Wall Street Journal*
September 11th, 2012

Hey Mr. Old Guy, your time has passed Time for a new generation to supplant you Mr.
Ham on rye, your lunch is done Time for some new kids to sit at the counter Colored
kids, girls too Girls with trousers, what are you gonna do?

Hey Mr. Old Guy, there's a new song ringing Sounds like freedom to me, that's what it
sounds like Mr. Needs to lie, open up your eyes There's something going on, maybe
your kids can explain it.

-John C. Reilly

More like a lullaby than a campaign song or an anthem, John C. Reilly's "Hey Mr. Old
Guy", from his epic soundtrack to WALK HARD, kept me consoled for the two years that
I worked on SHEPARD AND DARK.

SHEPARD AND DARK focuses on legendary playwright/actor Sam Shepard and his
complex relationship with long-term friend Johnny Dark – a writer and archivist who
lives in Deming, New Mexico and works behind a deli counter. The film unfolds in
earnest; capturing an honest, and often comedic, portrait of two male friends with a rich
history, now close to the border of decade number seven.

Sam and Johnny both have a strong aversion to modern technology and seem to resist
anything that might come along *with* the modern era. In general, they cling to a Beatnik
spirit of adventure that one associates with teenagers reeling to break free from the
confines of authority. Sam still uses a typewriter, and has a collection of Scorpion-
themed paperweights. Johnny prefers an 80's word processor and drives a 1970 Chevy
Nova. Neither of course have email. Both avoid airplanes. And they bicker like nobody's
business about Bing Crosby vs. Tony Bennett and what time they should eat dinner.

Making a film about these two men posed some unique challenges, almost a comedy of
errors if you will. Between the novelty of my video camera, and my age/gender – which
neither seemed to associate with any semblance of serious professionalism - I was
never quite sure if they understood me, or what I was doing there. At one point they
even started referring to me as an alien.

At times, I ironically felt like the Euro-centric anthropologist attempting to "study" the
non-western people. How could I leave my modern ways behind and assimilate into
their culture? In reality I'm a feminist filmmaker and I pride myself on my independence
not to mention my tech-savvy ways - but here I was attempting to document these
luddites and well... let's just say, not quite feminist men.

Ultimately, I filmed Sam and Johnny on and off over an 18 month period, in New
Mexico, California, Kentucky and Texas. Despite the camera always on my arm, over
time, I slowly began to feel drawn into some of their "old man" ways. I started writing

hand-written letters and spending days traveling by car, staying in road-side motels. I would sit at the Denny's counter with Johnny and share an ice-cream sundae. I even started taking harmonica lessons. In effect, rather than channeling the old man in me – it turned out – I just needed to channel the rebellious 50's teenager. What I learnt was that Sam and Johnny had made such an effort to not turn into their fathers that they themselves had never quite grown up.

The final result is a film that I feel captures a human spirit that transcends age or gender. It is both satirical and heartfelt. I am proud of it and I hope you will like it.

**A NOTE ABOUT *TWO PROSPECTORS*,
THE BOOK THAT CHRONICLES SHEPARD & DARK'S CORRESPONDENCE**

Two Prospectors gathers nearly forty years of correspondence and transcribed conversations between Shepard and Dark. In these gripping, sometimes gut-wrenching letters, the men open themselves to each other with amazing honesty. Shepard's letters give us the deepest look we may ever get into his personal philosophy and creative process, while in Dark's letters we discover insights into Shepard's character that only an intimate friend could provide. The writers also reflect on the books and authors that stimulate their thinking, their relationships with women (including Shepard's anguished decision to leave his wife and son—Dark's stepdaughter and grandson—for actress Jessica Lange), personal struggles, and accumulating years. Illustrated with Dark's candid, revealing photographs of Shepard and their mutual family across many years, as well as facsimiles of numerous letters, *Two Prospectors* is a compelling portrait of a complex friendship that has anchored both lives for decades.

The book will be released in October 2013 by University of Texas Press.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

SAM SHEPARD

Born on November 5th, 1943 in Fort Sheridan, Illinois, USA, Sam Shepard has written 45 plays, 11 of which have won Obie Awards, and has appeared as an actor over 40 films. In 1979 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Buried Child*, and in 1984 he gained an Oscar nomination for his performance in *THE RIGHT STUFF*.

His screenplay for *Paris, Texas* won the Golden Palm Award at the 1984 Cannes Film Festival, and he wrote and directed the film *FAR NORTH* in 1988. Other plays by Sam Shepard include *Simpatico*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *True West*, *Fool for Love* and *A Lie of the Mind*.

In 1986 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and in 1992 he received the Gold Medal for Drama from the Academy. In 1994 he was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame.

JOHNNY DARK

Johnny Dark has been a lifeguard, dogcatcher, veterinary assistant, garbage man, bookstore clerk, camera salesman, photographer, piano player, thief, janitor, massage therapist, librarian, deli worker, factory worker, taxi cab driver, and writer.

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES



TREVA WURMFELD / DIRECTOR

Treva Wurfeld has been working in documentary and television since 2005. Her feature debut *SHEPARD AND DARK* made its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2012 and won top awards at the Woodstock, Florida and Cleveland Film Festivals.

Recently Wurfeld was nominated for the Caméra d'Or at Cannes. Previously, she produced for the Emmy Award winning A&E series *Intervention*. In 2008, she wrote, directed and produced the short film *Oyster*. She began her career as a visual effects assistant on Doug Liman's *MR. AND MRS. SMITH* and went on to produce the EPK for Liman's *JUMPER*, *FAIR GAME*, and *ALL YOU NEED TO KILL*. She received her MFA in Video Art from Hunter College in 2006.



AMY HOBBY / PRODUCER

Amy Hobby has been producing award-winning theatrical films for nearly 20 years and has had 7 features and documentaries premiere at the Sundance Film Festival, including jury prize-winner *Secretary*.

Other feature producing credits include *Severed Ways: The Norse Discovery of America*; *Hamlet*; *Sunday* and *Nadja*, executive Produced by David Lynch. Hobby recently had 4 of her films acquired for the permanent collection of MOMA in New York and won a Sloan Foundation Grant for development of a new film project called *Zeroes and Ones*.

In 2012 Hobby completed production on 3 films: *Love, Marilyn*, a documentary directed by Academy Award nominated filmmaker Liz Garbus; low-budget feature *Gayby*; and *Shepard & Dark*.

Hobby recently formed Tangerine Entertainment, an audacious new company that seeks to produce and provide marketing and outreach for critically acclaimed films with a rigorous focus on female directors and exceptional roles for women.

SANDRA ADAIR, A.C.E / EDITOR

Sandra Adair has been editing independent feature films for over 20 years in Los Angeles and Austin, Texas.

Adair began her long-term collaborative working relationship with Academy Award nominated filmmaker Richard Linklater, "*Dazed and Confused*," and has worked with him on 15 films including "*Before Sunrise*," "*Suburbia*," "*The Newton Boys*," "*Waking Life*," "*Tape*," the hit comedy "*School of Rock*," which gained Adair an Eddie Award nomination for Best Edited Comedy or Musical by American Cinema Editors, "*Before Sunset*," "*Bad News Bears*," "*A Scanner Darkly*," "*Fast Food Nation*," the documentary

“Inning by Inning: A Portrait of a Coach,” the critically acclaimed “Me and Orson Welles,” and most recently, “Bernie,” starring Jack Black and Shirley MacLaine.

In 2009, Ms. Adair teamed with Austin director Mark Hall on the documentary, “Sushi: The Global Catch,” and later in 2010, Adair edited the Will Ferrell drama, “Everything Must Go” for writer/director Dan Rush and Temple Hill Entertainment.

GRAHAM REYNOLDS / COMPOSER

Called “the quintessential modern composer” by the London Independent, Austin-based composer-bandleader Graham Reynolds creates, performs, and records music for film, theater, dance, rock clubs and concert halls with collaborators ranging from Richard Linklater to DJ Spooky to Ballet Austin. His score to the Robert Downey, Jr. feature “A Scanner Darkly” was named Best Soundtrack of the Decade by Cinema Retro magazine. His awards include an Independent Music Award, Lowe Music Theater Award, four Austin Critic’s Table awards, the John Bustin Award, an Amp Award, seven Austin Chronicle Best Composer wins, a B. Iden Payne Award, Meet the Composer and Map grants, as well as support from the National Endowment for the Arts for several projects. Spring 2012 saw the Jack Black-Shirley MacLaine film “Bernie” release in theaters nation-wide with Graham’s score, soon to be followed by his music for the new Richard Linklater’s new HULU TV series “Up To Speed”.

Over the next three years, Graham will be composing an extended commission for Ballroom Marfa called “The Marfa Triptych: Three Portraits of West Texas”, including a suite for western swing big band, a concert of solo layered-piano, and a chamber opera. Adair is a member of American Cinema Editors and a voting member of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She remains active in the local film community in Austin as a mentor and as a member of the Austin Film Society.

EMILY WACHTEL / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Emily Wachtel is a producer/writer who resides in Stamford Connecticut and various friends’ pullout couches all over New York City. A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, she works for several charities including The Hole in The Wall Gang Camps, The 52nd Street project, Giant Steps School for Autism. As a writer she had a long running column called Fairfield Flirtations for The Fairfield County Weekly newspaper based on being single in the suburbs. She is a contributing writer for Westport Magazine interviewing the likes of Julia Roberts and John Mellencamp writing under the name Ellie Klug. She also was the featured voice of IFC’s Out of the Closet film festival with Ellen DeGeneres, KD Lang, Cher, and John Waters.

She is currently producing the narrative feature comedy Lucky Them set to shoot in the Fall of 2012 in Seattle.

SHEPARD & DARK CREDITS

Hobby Films presents
a Vile Bohea Production

SHEPARD & DARK
featuring Sam Shepard & Johnny Dark

Music by Graham Reynolds

Edited by Sandra Adair, A.C.E.

Executive producers
Emily Wachtel
Trevia Wurmfeld

Produced by Amy Hobby

Directed by Trevia Wurmfeld

Camera & Sound
Trevia Wurmfeld

Associate Producer
Sandra Adair

Archival Research
Kate Coe

Additional Camera
Amy Hobby

Austin Offline
Detour Filmproduction

L.A. Offline
Runway

Post Production Services by
Final Frame

Digital Colorist
Charlie Rokosny

Online Producer
Caitlin Tartaro

Sound Supervisor & Re-Recording Mixer

Jacob Ribicoff

Sound Services
Sound One

Assistant Editor
Matthew Coleshill

Post Assistants
Hilary McHone
Ashley Akunna
Sharon Lee
Sarah Deuel

Titles by Nuncle

Clearance Counsel
Michael C. Donaldson
Christopher Perez

Legal Services
Gray Krauss Stratford Des Rochers LLP

Archival Super 8 & Video
Courtesy of Johnny Dark

Other Footage Courtesy of
Creative Arts Television
Getty Images
Krishnamurti Foundation of America
NBC Universal Archives

Photos Courtesy of
The Sam Shepard & Johnny Dark Collection
The Wittliff Collections
Texas State University-San Marcos

MUSIC

"Buckets of Rain"
Words and Music by Bob Dylan
Performed by Bob Dylan
Courtesy of Columbia Records
By arrangement with Sony Music Licensing

"He Was a Friend of Mine"
Words and Music by Bob Dylan
Performed by Bob Dylan

Courtesy of Columbia Records
By arrangement with Sony Music Licensing
©Songs of Universal, Inc. (BMI)

"You Ain't Goin' Nowhere"
Words and Music by Bob Dylan
Performed by Johnny Dark

"It's a Long Story, Pt.1"
Written and Performed by Bill Frisell
Under License from Savoy Label Group, LLC/Savoy Jazz
Under License from Friz-Tone Music
By arrangement with Hans Wendl Produktion

SCORE PRODUCER
Graham Reynolds

Music Recording & Mixing
Graham Reynolds
Buzz Moran

Music Recorded at
Red House Studios, Austin Texas

Guitar
Adam Sultan
Kelly Doyle

Saxophone
John Mills

Other Instruments
Graham Reynolds

OTHER MATERIALS

"This So-Called Disaster:
Sam Shepard Directs the Late Henry Moss"
©IFC Productions 2005

"The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills"
©Bravo Media 2010
"Unicef Promotional Video"

©Unicef

OTHER MATERIALS

"Stand by Me"

Written by Ben E. King, Jerry Leiber, and Mike Stoller
Performed by Sam Shepard

“Time is On My Side”
Written by Norman Meade
Performed by Sam Shepard and Johnny Dark

SPECIAL THANKS

Dwight Adair
Michael Almereyda
Brian Beard
Joe Beirne
T-Bone Burnett
Mridu Chandra
Hank Corwin
Kristy Dark
Mark Hall
Chad Hammett
Bill HobbyAnne Hubbell

O-Lan Jones
Callie Khouri
Saar Klein
Doug Liman
Richard Linklater
Terrence Malick
Joe McGinty
Kirsten McMurray
Shaun Miller
Nell Newman
Judith Patterson
Janet Pierson

Bobby Rock
Jeff Rosen
David Rosenblatt
Jay Rubin
Katherine Salzmann
Mike Saenz
Jesse Shepard
Harry Dean Stanton
Gary Ward
Bill Wittliff
Joanne Woodward
Rella S-H Wurmfeld
Sanford Wurmfeld
Cristian Yancey

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The Austin Film Society
Film Forum
Lost Planet
The Santa Fe Institute
The Wittliff Collections

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About Music Box Films

Founded in 2007, Music Box Films has quickly established itself as one of the leading theatrical and home entertainment distributors of foreign language, American independent and documentary films in the US. Past releases include the film adaptations of Stieg Larsson's trilogy of international mega selling novels; the first in the series, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO, with over \$10 million in US box office, was one of the most popular international releases of the decade. 2012 heralded diverse new titles such as Terence Davies' THE DEEP BLUE SEA, starring Rachel Weisz, and Philippe Falardeau's Academy Award nominated MONSIEUR LAZHAR, one of the top grossing foreign language films of the year. 2013 releases include Cate Shortland's LORE and Baran bo Odar's THE SILENCE. Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates The Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premiere venue for independent and foreign films.