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*a Michael Reed M<sup>c</sup>Laughlin film*

# *Of Love & Betrayal*

## The Director's Cut

## PRESS NOTES

color  
English  
116 minutes  
2.35:1 Cinemascope  
action/romance  
Unrated

Official Website:

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[www.mrmproductions.com/OfLoveAndBetrayal](http://www.mrmproductions.com/OfLoveAndBetrayal)

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## Of Love & Betrayal: The Director's Cut

Shot on a beautiful 76' schooner in the exotic Bahamas, *Of Love & Betrayal* was filmed in dazzling 35mm Cinemascope. This action/romance feature, shot in 1996 but not completed until 2010, is available for the first time in a final director's cut by Student Emmy™ award-winning filmmaker Michael Reed M'Laughlin. It stars **Kevin Rahm** ("Desperate Housewives," "Judging Amy," and "Jesse") in his first lead role, along with **Amy Caudill**, and **Tamara Jefferies**.

### Tagline

A cross between *National Treasure* and *White Squall*.

### Pitch

An adventure on the high seas discovering sunken treasure, buried desire, and lost hope.

### Logline

Three young adventurers on a 76' schooner search for sunken treasure as they explore the uncharted waters of their own hearts.

### Brief Synopsis

When Jack O'Conner finds a clue to sunken pirate treasure, he sees it as the answer to his financial worries. All that is missing are the remaining clues held by Portia Pennington and Sandy Sequoia — two young women with their own dark secrets. The three misfit adventurers must learn to work together to sail their 76' schooner through Hurricane Andrew, in defiance of a pirate's curse, if they want to recover his gold doubloons and escape with their lives — a breeze compared to opening up their hearts and learning to trust one another.

### Full Synopsis (with spoiler)

When charter-boat skipper Jack O'Conner finds a gold piece of eight off the Florida Keys, he decides to go in search of a legendary hoard of Spanish doubloons sunk during the "Hundred Years Storm" of 1783. For, as Jack's friend Cap'n Billau reveals, the coin bears a clue to the treasure's whereabouts — one of four islands etched by the infamous pirate, Jacques Un-Oeil upon the original

doubloon. At Billau's urging, Jack tracks down the two beautiful women who unknowingly hold the remaining clues.

Streetwise Sandy Sequoia's piece of eight came from her murdered drug dealer boyfriend in Miami. And lonely-heart Portia Pennington inherited her coin from her merchant tycoon grandfather, who died at sea in the "Hundred Years Storm" of 1893, while hunting for the lost gold.

Jack convinces the girls to go in search of the pirate treasure with him. But first, the two must learn to crew his 76' schooner; and then, all three adventurers must learn to trust one another, if they expect to navigate the treacheries of love and the unpredictable Caribbean.

As Jack introduces the girls to life at sea, he starts to fall in love with Sandy. All seems to be going well, until Jack discovers Sandy with drugs on his boat — a kilo of her dead boyfriend's cocaine (which she has steadily been using since coming aboard). He has Portia dump the coke overboard; and while Sandy wrestles to overcome her addiction, Jack turns his attentions to Portia.

When Sandy and Portia realize that Jack has seduced each of them in turn and convinced each to reveal to him the name of the island on her coin, they turn on him. Feeling betrayed and realizing that they no longer need Jack in order to sail the boat or find they gold, they maroon him on a small island and go after the sunken treasure themselves.

Jack is rescued by a local fisherman whose radio alerts him of Hurricane Andrew. The building gale is expected to be an infamous once-in-a-hundred-years storm. And it is headed straight toward the girls. Jack and the fisherman catch up with Sandy and Portia. But they refuse to abandon their sailboat, so Jack joins them. He soon learns why — the girls were able to recover the gold, and it is still in the inflatable dinghy tied to the stern of the schooner. The problem is, the dinghy has sunk, with the gold still in it; and it is preventing them from sailing anywhere.

Jack tells Portia and Sandy about Hurricane Andrew and insists they must choose reason over greed, if they want to outrun the storm. The only way they can hope to survive, is to cut the dinghy loose and sail out of the path of the approaching storm. They reluctantly agree to cut the priceless dinghy loose and run with the wind for their lives.

Sailing out of the path of the "Hundred Years Storm" and its deadly winds and

waves, Jack and the girls manage to avoid the brunt of Andrew's wrath.

Adrift in a dead calm after the terrible blow, the three weary shipmates are rescued by Jack's old buddy, Cap'n Billau. But their "rescuer" turns into their enemy when he demands, at gunpoint, that Jack turn over the gold. Jack tells Billau that they abandoned the treasure in order to outrun the storm. But Billau doesn't believe him. They struggle over a flare gun, and the treacherous Billau is killed.

Portia and Sandy move to South Beach to start a new life together, believing the gold, and Jack, to be lost from their lives forever. But Jack had secretly marked the gold's location on a military GPS, and he goes back for the treasure on his own. But with the hard-won pirate hoard finally in hand, Jack realizes that it is worthless to him without the two women he fell in love with while searching for it.

To prove his love to the women he earlier betrayed, Jack surprises them with a gift of the gold they had thought was once more lost to the sea. The three sail off into the sunset together — wealthier, a little wiser, and with a chance, perhaps, for happiness together.

### **Director's Note by Michael Reed McLaughlin**

I knew I'd be able to shoot something when I graduated, but I didn't expect it to snowball into a 35mm feature that I'd be lucky enough to shoot in the Caribbean. I also didn't know that such a production would entail dealing with five tropical storms, two hurricanes, D.E.A. agents, drug dealers, and two murders. But then, no shoot goes without a few hiccups, in this crazy business.

All in all, things went relatively smoothly, though. We had a micro-budget and an equally small crew — myself, another producer, a cameraman and his assistant, a sound guy, one gaffer/grip and the cast of three principal actors. That was it. Everyone chipped in to hold the bounce boards, boom the shots, or haul the equipment. We lived, worked, ate, and slept together on our set — the lovely schooner *Keewatin*, helmed Captain Ron Turner and his wonder wife, Alita.

Shooting a film this way, in such close quarters, I knew we'd either end up killing one another or we'd have to come together and do something really special; and I'm glad to report that the latter is just what happened. A crew and cast comprised exclusively of first-timers were able to capture a bit of magic on film.

## Q&A with director Michael Reed McLaughlin

*You shot this film before you'd actually even graduated from film school. Tell me about that.*

Well, I'd shot a short at school that won a rather prestigious award, and I hoped to parlay that into an opportunity to do something a little more ambitious once I'd graduated. But I'm not very good at selling myself, so I knew I probably have to do everything on my own. I'd been working on an idea in my head about three young people who have to learn to trust one another enough to find a sunken treasure that they each have one critical clue to. I knew Kevin from film school and really like his work, so I thought we'd come out to LA over the summer before my last quarter and shoot something on my own little sail boat.

Then I met Ysreen [Ysreen Braun, producer *OL&B*]. She came in to audition for the part of Portia. But when she read the script, she said that she loved the project so much she wanted to help produce it instead of acting in the movie. She'd been wanting to move into producing for a while and promised to bring in enough money to bump the project up from a little 16mm film to a real 35mm feature.

The next stroke of luck I had was in finding the *Keewatin*, a gorgeous 76' wooden schooner, and her owner/operators Ron and Aleta Turner. They were amazing. They gave me this incredible deal of letting us not only shoot aboard the ship but also stay aboard her and they'd feed us, to boot. The only down side was, we'd be shooting in the "off season" and that meant "hurricane season."

*I heard that you had a little trouble with the weather down there.*

Not really. The eye of a hurricane passed directly over the little harbor where we were just two weeks before we arrived. But Ron and Aleta had managed to get the *Keewatin* to safety before the storm hit and were back in port right on time for us to begin shooting in August. We shot in Eleuthera, Bahamas, and it was beautiful. There were, at any given moment, up to five tropical storm systems developing in and around the Caribbean the whole time we were shooting. And a second hurricane passed over the island the day we flew out. We barely made it out of Miami airport before they had to close it down. But the biggest problem was trying to figure out what I was going to shoot on any given day. I didn't have anything like a script supervisor or an A.D. [assistant director].

Each night after a usually pretty grueling shooting schedule, while everyone else went to the local bar, I would try and make a shot list for each of the five possible scenarios we would have to deal with the next day: fair winds and fair weather meant we could get sailing shots; fair winds but cloudy weather, we would shoot interior night shots on the boat; fair winds but rainy weather meant we couldn't even shoot below because of the sound of the rain on the decks; fair weather but no wind, we could shoot above decks but nothing that required sailing; foul weather but not too foul, we could get stormy sea shots but not on the schooner; really foul weather meant we would have to shoot something like the interior bar scene.

*How much of the film was shot in the Bahamas?*

We had 18 days in Eleuthera on the *Keewatin* and then we shot for a couple of days here in L.A. Then, years later I did one day of pickup shots out in the desert where I got the close-ups for the scene in Sandy's Miami Apartment where things get shot up a bit with machine guns.

*You said you shot some of the film "years later;" I know the movie sat on a shelf for some time. Tell me about that.*

Well, it's complicated. Unfortunately, I wasn't happy with what happened in post. I lost control of the movie, didn't have final cut, and ended up spending more time with lawyers fighting for the film than I had spent with actors making it. I'd never sold the story or rights to the project, so I shelved it. By the time I'd finally worked things out so that I had undisputed copyright and ownership of the movie once again, I was too... burned out to do anything with it.

So it sat for a long time. I made sure the negatives were well stored and went back to writing novels. Time and technology crept slowly along until one day I realized that for a few thousand dollars I could put together my own Final Cut Pro editing suite and recut the picture in my bedroom. So that's just what I did; I had an HD transfer done and started cutting again from scratch.

*That's the amazing thing about the technology these days. For less than the studios typically pay for a rap party you can buy a decent camera, go out and shoot your movie, and even afford a pro level editing suite.*

Yeah. It's amazing. When we first cut the movie we couldn't afford to rent a traditional Avid suite. So I made a deal with a guy who owned one, where I would buy him two three-gig hard drives in exchange for three weeks of letting us cut there after hours. What I've got on my laptop at home would be the equivalent of \$1,000,000 worth of editing software and hardware, back then.

*So, what **was** your budget?*

Well, I'm not at liberty to say right now, but I guarantee that it was less than the lowest amount you would guess.

*But it looks **great!** Every nickle must have ended up on the screen.*

Every penny did. Everyone worked for differed pay and points. We shot on 35mm, but we shot all short ends. There was a great company back then call Dr. Rawstock. They did us right. They said that they took a few feet off of each end of every roll and processed it to make sure the stock was top quality. And we were lucky, because we didn't have a budget to FedEx dailies back to L.A. or Miami to have it processed. I just had to trust that I was getting everything I needed in the can and that the short ends were okay.

*So you didn't have dailies to look at? Did you have video assist, at least?*

Nope. Not in the budget. And I didn't see the first frame of what we'd shot until we were back in the States. I was just very lucky. I'd shot a lot of shorts in school and I'd learned to trust my gut. I had to. But I also had to trust the crew. It was the first time working on a feature for every single one of us, from the executive producers right down to the sound guy. If you look on IMDb, you'll see guys who have done tons of work, and *Of Love & Betrayal* is their first feature credit, including the lead, Kevin Rahm, who's done a lot since then.

*In the press kit it says you had to deal with “five tropical storms, two hurricanes, D.E.A. agents, drug dealers, and two murders.” Do you want to talk about that for a bit?*

Sure, although I’ll have to change the names to protect the innocent. [Laughs.] And here we were, a bunch of college kids flying briefly into and then out of the Bahamas with sixty mysterious crates, supposedly “making a movie.” The drug dealers knew we weren’t a threat, but at one point I guess the Miami D.E.A. thought they’d better send someone over to check us out. When the owner of one of the boats we were filming on suddenly “left the country,” I was left with shots that I had no way of getting. But of course, he knew the D.E.A. were coming long before they ever arrive and wasn’t about to stick around to show them how helpful he was being in making our movie.

It turned out that the harbor we were in was in the middle of a drug war. They were fighting for control of what went through there. The harbor master was murdered a few days before we got there. I know that at one point a cigarette boat and three thousand pounds of marijuana were confiscated from a local drug runner. After that he’d race one of his other cigarette boats up and down the harbor four about two hours every morning just to say: “You’re never going to stop me. You can take one of my boats away from me and you can take some of my drugs; but I’ll just get another boat and another load of drugs.” He wasn’t out of commission even for 24 hours; but we had to shut down production for two hours every day until he felt he’d made his point.

*You said “two murders.”*

Yes. We shot six days a week, but on Sundays some of us would go diving at different places around the island. There was an inland saltwater lake with tubes that led to the sea, which was supposed to have great diving. So one Sunday we loaded up a pickup truck with a few of us and our dive gear. We had to drive down a dirt road through this field, I think it was a sugar cane field, to get to the lake. Me and someone else (I won’t say who) were in the back of the pickup on the way back. Just off the road down in the canes was this little beige car that hadn’t been there on the way in. The windows were all sprayed with blood so that you couldn’t see inside. I looked at the person sitting next to me and neither one of us said anything. I don’t think anyone in the cab of the truck saw it. I was going to make an anonymous call when we got back, but then I remembered that it was understood that the only phone on that part of the island was

bugged because of the harbor master's murder. I didn't want to go to the police because as I saw it there were only two possibilities: One they weren't in on it, but that would be the end of shooting while there was an investigation; and two, they were in on it. Well, I've said too much, already.

*Quite and adventure. What was the one lesson you took away from this project? (other than to never shoot in the middle of a drug war, especially in the middle of hurricane season).*

I tell you, I learned a lot making this film. I made a lot of mistakes, but I also did a lot of things right. I guess the most important thing I learned as a director was to never let the elements out of your hands. In independent cinema, once you've lost control of the negatives you've lost control of the film. It doesn't matter what it says in the contracts; unless you want to spend more money on attorneys than you might stand to make off the movie, you're not going to be the one making the final decisions.

*What are you doing next?*

I've got several scripts that I've written that I'm excited about. One's a film noir murder mystery, another's kind of magical realism piece set in the pop music scene, here in Hollywood. And right now I'm working on true crime drama based on a murder that was covered up back in the golden era of Hollywood that's never been done before. And now, for the first time, I've got a film that I'm really proud of, which I can show to potential producers and financiers and say: "Look at this. Here's what I can do with eight guys and a craft services-budget. Imagine what I can do with a full crew and enough money to pay everyone!"

## Filmmaker Biographies

### **Michael Reed McLaughlin (writer/producer/editor/director)**

Michael was born in 1964 and grew up in New Mexico. He currently resides in Hollywood, CA.

After a near death experience in his late twenties, when his sports car skidded off a cliff on Mulholland Highway, he decided to quit what he was doing and go to film school. While a student, his first short film, *The Fourth Trimester* — set in a not-too-distant future in which the Constitution has redefined the right to life as beginning 20 years after conception— won him a Student Emmy™ for the best dramatic short for his region.

Just before graduating, he took a small crew to the Bahamas to make his first feature, *Of Love & Betrayal*, which was shot on a 76' schooner and filmed in 35mm Cinemascope. The project was tied up with legal problems and then shelved until 2010, when he was finally able to release a director's cut that he was happy with.

Michael is also the author of several high fantasy novels, including the Hero Sagas trilogy penned under the *nom de plume* of Sterling Drake.

### **Ysreen Braun (producer)**

Ysreen's first film was *Of Love & Betrayal*. Two years later she produced *No Small Ways*.

## Cast Biographies

### **Kevin Rahm (Captain Jack O'Conner)**

Born in Mineral Wells, Texas in 1971 and raised in Bossier City, Louisiana, Kevin enrolled in the Brigham Young University theater program in 1994. There he won the Irene Ryan Award for best college actor and garnered the attention of film school director Michael Reed McLaughlin.

*Of Love & Betrayal* was his first film roll, and he soon dropped out of studying pre-law to pursue acting full-time. He has since acted in over 15 films and hundreds of television episodes, including 20 episodes on *Jesse*, 66 episodes on *Judging Amy*, and is currently starring as Lee McDermott on *Desperate Housewives* (27 episodes to date).

### **Tamara Jefferies (Portia P. Pennington)**

Tamara was cast in the film *Of Love & Betrayal* through an ad in Back Stage West. *OL&B* was her first and only film.

### **Amy Caudill (Sandy Sequoia)**

Amy attended Brigham Young University where she studied theater with Kevin Rahm. There she met Michael Reed McLaughlin, who was studying film. *Of Love & Betrayal* was her first and only film.

### **Moodie Moore (Captain Billau)**

Moodie was a non-actor local cast in Eleuthera, Bahamas. *Of Love & Betrayal* was his first and only film.

### **Hollywood (Local Fisherman)**

Hollywood was a non-actor local cast in Eleuthera, Bahamas. *Of Love & Betrayal* was his first and only film.

### **Nicole McCurdy (Girl in Bar)**

Nicole was a non-actor local cast in Eleuthera, Bahamas. *Of Love & Betrayal* was her first and only film.

### **Joe Hulser (Carlos Nicastro)**

*Of Love & Betrayal* was Joe's first feature performance. He has since appeared in a few TV episodes and two other movies.

## Main Credits

### CAST (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

JACK O'CONNOR KEVIN RAHM  
WOMAN DIVER 1 ALEDA TURNER  
WOMAN DIVER 2 PENNY MARSHALL  
GIRL IN BAR NICOLE M<sup>c</sup>CARDY  
CAPTAIN BILLAU MOODIE MOORE  
CUSTOMER IN CHANDLERY MATTHEW NICOLAY  
PORTIA P. PENNINGTON TAMARA JEFFERIES  
MR. PENNINGTON ED KNIGHT  
MAID AT PENNINGTON ESTATE JENNIFER CRANE  
SANDY SEQUOIA AMY CAUDILL  
CARLOS NACASTRO JOE HULSER  
VHF WEATHER REPORT (VOICE) TERRY FOSTER  
MARINE OPERATOR (VOICE) YSREEN BRAUN  
LOCAL FISHERMAN HOLLYWOOD  
TV WEATHER FORECASTER MICHAEL REED M<sup>c</sup>LAUGHLIN  
MR. SMITTY CAI SVENDSEN  
MAN IN RESTAURANT RALPH GELINAS  
WOMAN IN RESTAURANT GLADYS GELINAS  
DELIVERY MAN KEVIN BROWN

### CREW

PRODUCTION DESIGNER DARIN ANDERSEN  
CAMERA OPERATOR MATTHEW NELSON  
FIRST ASSISTANT CAMERA CHRIS ROBERTSON  
SOUND RECORDIST MATTHEW NICOLAY  
GAFFER/LIGHTING TECHNICIAN TERENCE M<sup>c</sup>NALLY  
CONSTRUCTION MARK DESORNES

MUSIC SYNERXION

POST-PRODUCTION

FOLEY ARTISTS MICHAEL REED M<sup>c</sup>LAUGHLIN

TERRY FOSTER

JOSEPH.N.M<sup>c</sup>LAUGHLIN

POST-PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR, MICHAEL REED M<sup>c</sup>LAUGHLIN

SECOND UNIT CAMERA OPERATOR,

DIGITAL COLORIST,

DIALOGUE AND SOUND EFFECTS EDITOR,

FOLEY MIXER AND EDITOR,

MUSIC AND ADR EDITOR,

PROPMAKER AND PROPERTY MASTER,

SPECIAL & VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR

2<sup>nd</sup> UNIT WEAPONS MASTER SEAN KINNEY

CAMERA EQUIPMENT CLAIRMONT CAMERA

SHORT-ENDS FILM STOCK DR. RAWSTOCK

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AND MICHAEL REED M<sup>c</sup>LAUGHLIN

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THE VON BRAUNS  
THE M<sup>o</sup>LAUGHLINS  
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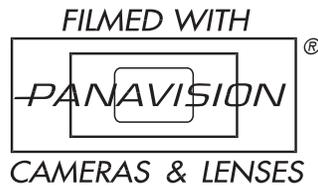
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