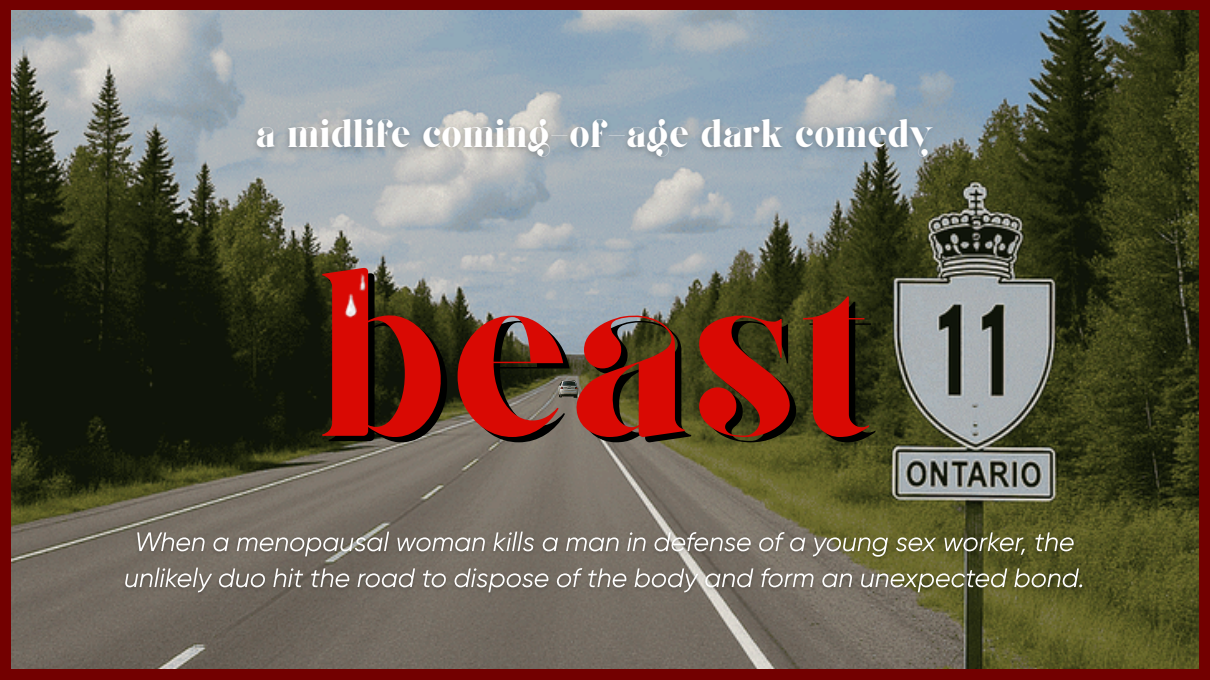

a midlife coming of age dark comedy
beast
11
ONTARIO
When a menopausal woman kills a man in defense of a young sex worker, the unlikely duo hit the road to dispose of the body and form an unexpected bond.

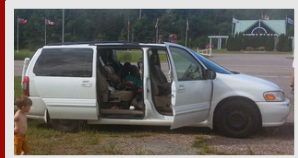
the story

Rhonda Clarke, 47, is a woman on the edge; juggling family, insecurities, and the chaos of menopause. Once a month, she isolates at a motel to keep her family safe from the “beast” (i.e. perimenopausal rage). Here, she collides with Dylan, a young sex worker trapped in a violent and abusive situation. When Rhonda’s beast takes over, she kills the john and the two women are thrust together on a **bloody**, **absurd**, and **oddly liberating road trip**.

With a hapless mortician in tow, Rhonda and Dylan navigate dangerous detours, dark humor, and unexpected moments of connection. Their journey leads to Rhonda’s family farm — and her domineering mother, Martha — where old wounds erupt into a showdown that forces Rhonda to finally claim her own power.

By the end, Rhonda has shed a lifetime of shame, reconnected with her daughter, and discovered that even in rage and ruin, there can be redemption. Equal parts pitch-black comedy, female-driven road movie, and generational reckoning, this is a story about the monster society tells women to suppress... and what happens when she refuses to stay hidden.



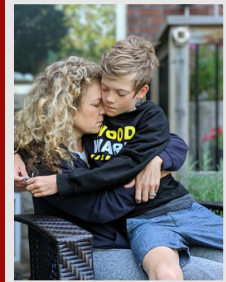


the vision

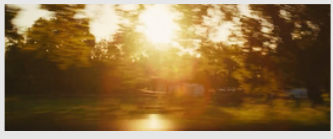




















how the "beast" was born

Juno Rinaldi approached me two years ago with this idea she had for Rhonda, a woman who wanted to light a match to her house and walk away from her life. I got it immediately. But, I didn't know what to do with it until now 'cause menopause is having a moment. Whether it's Naomi Watts hawking a wellness line (Stripes Beauty, tagline: Vag of Honour) or Halle Berry leading a masterclass called The Magic of Menopause, we're finally talking about the "change of life". It is a bizarre time that women often don't know they're going through and most people don't even know about. There are moments of unchecked rage, helplessness and even psychosis. But, it is also a time of change and growth and becoming a better vintage.

Beast is a road trip movie about transformation and redemption which just happens to have a perimenopausal woman who kills a man with her bare hands. To me it screams heat. Heat is rage, discomfort, and danger which brings on the beast. And, the beast is our deepest insecurities lashing out when we feel the most vulnerable.

The driving force behind this story are the characters. They are underdogs with so many flaws, anxieties and insecurities. They are in way over their heads and yet they keep fighting, for themselves and each other. What I loved about Juno's idea was the detail of Rhonda stripping down in a walk in cooler to cool down at work. It's absurd and hilarious but deeply human. Rhonda isn't just an angry woman but a person who is struggling. So is Dylan. So is Conor. Yet, they show up for each other and handle each situation with honesty, resilience and humour. We love them for that and will climb into that minivan with Rhonda, Dylan, and Conor to help them dispose of the dead body.

LOGLINE: *When a menopausal woman kills a man in defense of a young sex worker, the unlikely duo hit the road to dispose of the body and form an unexpected bond.*

style & visuals

We will play with lenses, filters and flares to create the heat on screen. We will shoot at optimal times of the day to take advantage of the sunlight and capture its essence. The colour palette will be warm and saturated to add layers like an oppressive blanket.

I want the audience to feel as though they are right there with us in Rhonda's minivan.









Night will be eerie and cold. The minivan will feel like the only vehicle on the planet as its headlights pierce through the thick darkness and hurtles toward the unknown.

locations

Southern Ontario as a backdrop is a gift. Shooting anamorphic would allow us to take advantage of the scenery to capture the stretches of highway, fields of farmland, light streaming through the trees, green rolling hills, spectacular sunrises and magic hour to give the environment a cinematic scope.





The expanse of land portrays the characters' feelings of isolation and being lost internally and externally. The minivan is their safe little world as they drive along the endless highway.

the team



Shelly J. Hong
Writer/director

Shelly is an award-winning Korean-Canadian filmmaker with over 25 years in the industry. Her short Ed & Alfie is screening worldwide, winning Best Director at the Chameleon Film Festival and Best Short Film at the Toronto Independent Film Festival. Her feature script ***Beast*** was selected for the 2025 Whistler Film Festival Screenwriters Lab, and she is an alumna of Women in the Director's Chair.



JoAnne Fishburn
Producer

JoAnne has over 20 years of experience in film and media. She worked in the UK as a co-production executive on acclaimed projects including the Oscar-nominated La Bestia nel Cuore and produced the feature documentary Fezeka's Voice, now on Netflix Europe.

In 2015, she founded Good Influence Films, with projects including ***Beast***, a 360° immersive collaboration with Yeşim Tabak, and the series As Long As The Rivers Flow, supported by the Canada Media Fund.

the team



Christina Vegas
Producer

Christina is an accomplished arts leader with 30+ years of experience in creative production and community-driven storytelling. She's an award-winning writer, director and producer with films having successful runs at nine International Film Festivals. She's had five script properties optioned and produced. Most recently, she wrote and co-produced a psychological/thriller entitled She Came Back starring Colm Feore (Umbrella Academy) and Amybeth McNulty (Anne with an E, Stranger Things) directed by Megan Follows.



Ruth Atkinson
Story editor

Ruth works one-on-one with writers, directors and producers as a script consultant and script edtor. She has consulted on hundreds of screenplays and read several thousand. In addition to ongoing script consultation for features, shorts and series, she is a screenwriting advisor for Film Independent's signature diversity program Project: Involve as well as Film Independent's Screenwriters Lab and Global Media Makers Program. She is also the facilitator and lead mentor for the Whistler Film Festival Screenwriters Lab.

development plan

Working with script editor, Ruth Atkinson, and with the aim of starting production in Fall of 2026, we've submitted an application to WIDC production fund. After our script polish, we'll engage a line producer and AD to create a preliminary schedule and budget. We will continue to package our film with additional casting attachments, and a robust marketing strategy as we continue to raise financing for our film.

Fall/Winter 2025

- Continue raising production funding
- Applied to WIDC Feature Film Award
- Apply to Canada Council
- Follow up with Elevations Pictures (project currently with them)

November/ December

- Whistler Film Festival (Dec. 3-7)
- Connect with broadcasters, financiers, and distributors

January/ February

- Preliminary boards and budget
- Prospective casting
- Apply to Telefilm Production Fund

March/ April

- Decision from Canada Council
- Decision from Telefilm Production Fund
- Location Scouting
- Apply to Ontario Creates IP Fund

May to August

- Look at specialized media funds or equity investment to close financing, interim financing to cover tax credits
- Decision from Ontario Creates IP Fund

September

- Secure production financing

producer's statement

JoAnne Fishburn

From the moment I heard the premise, I was hooked by Shelly Hong's debut feature ***Beast***. From page 1 of the script, I was utterly engaged by Rhonda's story as she navigated her menopausal rage and by the end was convinced of ***Beast's*** potential as an entertaining feature with significant audience appeal. Shelly and I are both mid-life, mid-career Hamilton-based artists who met through LOFT (Ladies of Film & Television Hamilton) and are committed to helping the Hamilton film industry thrive. To be filmed mostly around Hamilton, this is the perfect vehicle for Shelly to showcase her directing talents and to help foster the local film community.

After two decades honing skills across the industry, I founded Good Influence Films to champion unique stories. Over recent years, I've focused on original content, drawing on my experience in film production, financing, and more recently marketing, and communications after a decade as an impact producer. With the conversation about menopause kicked open by the likes of Halle Barry, Oprah and Naomi Watts the time for this story has arrived.

We've brought on Christina Vegas, with her extensive entertainment experience and leadership from two feature films. As a trans woman, she guides the authentic portrayal of Dylan's identity struggles. She excels in low-budget features with strong cinematic values, raising private equity, and interim financing. We're excited to collaborate as we develop ***Beast*** for the screen.

Christina Vegas

When I first heard the premise of ***Beast***, I too was intrigued and could see an opportunity to explore menopausal issues and create a commercially viable product.

As a mature trans woman, I bring a unique lens to the project - above and beyond my hands-on film production experience. I was recently the co-lead on a white paper on menopause as it relates to the LGBTQ+ community with Diversity Trust in the UK.

Through research and interviews, the goal was to provide an understanding of both the menopause experience and how it can impact the working environment and employer/employee relationships.

As a trans woman on the other side of 50, I too have experienced menopausal symptoms as a result of hormone therapy and gender affirming surgery.

As a seasoned writer with five script properties optioned and produced, I bring creative and practical skills that will help guide the project and ensure a successful pathway to success.

how the "beast" was born



Two years ago when chatting about menopause with my aging female friends and joking about the extremes, an image and character came to mind - Rhonda - a woman ready to burn down her life. Only now it feel urgent, because menopause is finally being talked about by folks like Naomi Watts, Oprah and Halle Barry. It's a strange, often invisible stage marked by rage, confusion, and vulnerability, but also transformation and growth.

Beast is a darkly comedic road trip about that transformation - and the unlikely bond between three flawed underdogs who stumble into chaos, resilience, and connection. At its core, it's about the heat that summons the beast: rage, insecurity, and absurd humanity. **That's why we climb into the minivan with Rhonda, Dylan, and Conor** - not just to get rid of a body, but to root for them as they fight to survive, to grow, and to finally belong.

LOGLINE: *When a menopausal woman kills a man in defense of a young sex worker, the unlikely duo hit the road to dispose of the body and form an unexpected bond.*