

# KINO

INTERNATIONAL



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### **Crew**

Director - Volker Schlöndorff  
Writers - Eberhard Görner and Andreas Pflüger  
Producers - Jürgen Haase, Wolfgang Plehn and Jean-Claude Schlim  
Composer - Alfred Shnitke  
Cinematographer - Tomas Erhart  
Film Editor - Peter R. Adam  
Casting Director - Ulrike Haase  
Production Designer - Ari Hantke  
Production Manager - Ivan Filus, Philip James Morgan and Jan Seidl

### **Cast**

Ulrich Matthes - Abbé Henri Kremer  
August Diehl - Untersturmführer Gebhardt  
Hilmar Thate - Bischof Philippe  
Bibiana Beglau - Marie Kremer  
Germain Wagner - Roger Kremer  
Jean-Paul Raths - Raymond Schmitt  
Ivan Jirik - Armando Bausch  
Karel Hromadka - Pater Laurant Koltz  
Miroslav Sichmann - Pater Marcel Bour  
Adolf Filip - Professor Klimek (Kraków)  
Vladimir Fiser - Bischof Kozal  
Peter Varga-Józef (Polish Inmate) - Petr Varga  
Petr Janis - Pater Nansen  
Zdenek Pecháček - Lagerführer  
Vaclav Kratky - SS-Man  
Karel Dobry - Rapportführer Bertram  
Götz Burger - Generalvikar Gerard Mersch  
Michael König - Gauleiter Simon

### **THE NINTH DAY**

Der Neunte Tag  
GERMANY / 2004 / 90 MINUTES / COLOR  
In German with English subtitles  
1:1.85 / Dolby Digital / 35 mm



## SYNOPSIS

Without explanation, Father Henri Kremer, a dissident Catholic priest interred at Dachau, is released from the living hell of the Dachau “Priest Block” and returned home to occupied Luxembourg. Reunited with his sister and brother, Kremer learns that his freedom is temporary. Gestapo Untersturmführer Gebhardt, a lapsed seminarian, has arranged a nine day reprieve during which Kremer is expected to persuade the staunchly anti-Nazi Bishop of Luxembourg to capitulate to Nazi occupation and drive a wedge between Luxembourg and the Vatican. As Kremer resists, Gebhardt’s threats turn increasingly pointed. Torn between duty, faith, terror of returning to Dachau and fear for the safety of his sister’s unborn child, in just nine days Father Henri Kremer must find a way to ease his conscience, protect his family and save his soul without giving in to Gebhardt. But as the ninth day draws near, devout priest and zealous Nazi discover they have more in common than they realize...

## LONG SYNOPSIS

Father Henri Kremer, a Catholic priest from Luxembourg, has been interred at the Dachau concentration camp for crimes against the occupying Nazi forces in his homeland. Housed in the “Priest Block”, a barracks of dissident clergy from all over Nazi-occupied Europe, prisoner #25639, as Father Kremer is now known, struggles for physical and spiritual survival in the face of back breaking work details and the capricious torments of virulently anti-papist SS guards. Kremer and his fellow priest prisoners subsist on the meager sustenance they are grudgingly provided and on the secret acts of charity, devotions and mass they perform under the noses of their jailers.

After interceding on behalf of one of his fellow prisoners, Kremer is astonished to find himself not crucified like his less fortunate spiritual brother, but prepared for release and escorted, without explanation, out the camp gates. Upon his return to Luxembourg, Kremer is met by a young SS officer named Gebhardt who tells Kremer where he can find his family and orders him to come to his office the following morning. Kremer’s sister Marie, brother and brother-in-law are shocked at his return. Though relieved to be reunited with his family, Kremer is heartbroken to discover that his mother has died while he was in Dachau.

At Luxembourg Occupation Headquarters the following day, Gebhardt informs Kremer that his release is actually a nine day furlough. If the priest attempts escape, his comrades in the Priest Block in Dachau will be executed. Gebhardt urges Kremer to visit Luxembourg’s Bishop who has cloistered himself in his quarters since the Nazis invaded. Kremer meets with the Bishop’s secretary Father Mersch at the Luxembourg Cathedral. Mersch tells him the Bishop will see no one and has ordered the cathedral bell rung at the same time each day to protest the German occupation. As the bell tolls, Kremer is consumed by images of camp life.



## LONG SYNOPSIS

--CONTINUED--

The following day Gebhardt explains why Kremer is temporarily free. If Kremer can convince the Bishop to sign a communiqué aligning Luxembourg's Catholics with the Nazis, Kremer will not have to return to Dachau. Though Gebhardt reasons with Kremer intellectually and tries to elicit Kremer's sympathy, he finally dismisses Kremer with a veiled threat to Marie's unborn baby. Kremer continues to be haunted by memories of camp life. At night he begins writing a confessional letter to his late mother.

Kremer's brother Roger unsuccessfully tries to influence Gebhardt on Kremer's behalf. Kremer leaves another threatening meeting with Gebhardt only to be intercepted by Roger. The brothers quarrel when Kremer rejects Roger's plan to help him escape. The Gestapo, fearing Kremer has fled, arrests Marie and her husband. Kremer arrives home just in time to prevent their imprisonment.

Kremer finishes the letter to his mother. In it he confesses to having hidden water he found while on work detail at Dachau from a fellow prisoner. He blames himself for the man's subsequent suicide.

The Bishop continues to refuse Kremer an audience and Kremer realizes Mersch is aligned with Gebhardt. Kremer collapses while confronting Gebhardt and the SS officer explains that he chose to join the SS just two days before what would have been his own ordination as a priest. Gebhardt makes Kremer a new offer. If Kremer will swear allegiance to the Nazis in writing, he will remain free. Each one of Kremer's fellow Priest Block prisoners who follow suit will also go free.

Early the following day, Mersch summons Kremer for an audience with the Bishop. Kremer begs the Bishop for advice and questions the Pope's silence about the Nazi genocide. The Bishop, though sympathetic, offers little comfort. Neither man even considers capitulation to Gebhardt and the Nazis. Later, Mersch tells Kremer that Gebhardt himself was briefly interred in a work camp.

After spending the day with Marie, Kremer arrives at SS headquarters with a sealed letter. Gebhardt opens the envelope and, finding it blank, puts a pistol to Kremer's head. But Gebhardt cannot pull the trigger.

On the ninth day Kremer arrives back at Dachau. Rejoining his comrades in the Priest Block, Kremer divides up food he's smuggled into the camp. By resisting Gebhardt and forgiving himself as he would any other sinner, Father Kremer has regained the faith and the will to live that the ordeal of Dachau had nearly erased.



## Volker Schlöndorff's Biography

*"I'm a director, not a stylist. I don't try to force my style on the material. It's a much longer process. You find the style as you work. It's the result of all the decisions you make while shooting as well as working on the script, casting the characters, selecting the crew, the cameraman, the intonation of every line, every gesture, every camera angle – the sum of all these decisions, that's the style." - Volker Schlöndorff*

With a career spanning five decades, Volker Schlöndorff is a true journeyman of International cinema and a bridge linking the French New Wave of the 60's to the New German Cinema of the 70's. Born in 1939, Schlöndorff grew up in Wiesbaden before relocating to Brittany at aged fifteen where he was educated in a Catholic boarding school by Jesuits priests. "These men," he remembers, "were very cheerful, very worldly, very interested in everything, not just theology. Through them I learned to take my desire to be a filmmaker seriously."

Schlöndorff continued his education in Paris where he studied economics and political science and enrolled in the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinematographique (IDHEC). He worked as an assistant to Louis Malle and Alan Resnais and in especially close collaboration with Jean Pierre Melville, whose *Le Doulos* and *Leon Morin, Priest*, Schlöndorff briefly appears in. Schlöndorff also shot television documentary footage in Vietnam and Algiers before returning to his native Germany in the mid-sixties.

Schlöndorff's feature debut, *Young Torless*, took the International Film Critics Prize at the 1966 Cannes Film Festival and heralded the rebirth of West German cinema. Throughout the 70's Volker Schlöndorff created films, like 1972's *Summer Lightning* and 1975's *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* (both made in collaboration with Margarethe von Trotta), that were politically charged, cinematically dexterous and emotionally detailed dramas examining German identity. 1979's *The Tin Drum* was a world wide art-house hit that propelled Schlöndorff into the front ranks of international cinema and, subsequently, into controversy when it was briefly declared obscene by the Oklahoma City district attorney's office in 1997.

A prolific adapter of literature to screen, Schlöndorff has directed films based upon novels by authors as diverse as Gunter Grass (*The Tin Drum*), Ernest J. Gaines (*A Gathering of Old Men*), Michel Tournier (*The Ogre*), Max Frisch (*Voyager*), Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale*), Nicolas Born (*Circle Of Deceit*), Marcel Proust (*Swann In Love*), Heinrich Boll (*The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*) and James Hadley Chase (*Palmetto*).



### **Volker Schlöndorff's Biography**

**--Continued--**

In 1990 Volker Schlöndorff served as the first chief executive of Studio Babelsberg GmbH, the long dormant home of the legendary UFA Studios, when it was renovated and reopened in Potsdam after German reunification. He has also directed live opera in France and Germany and a three part series of interviews with Billy Wilder for German television as well as an adaptation of Arthur Miller's *Death of A Salesman* starring Dustin Hoffman for American TV.

The Ninth Day is Schlöndorff first full length feature since 2000's critically acclaimed *The Legend Of Rita* and his first film since receiving the title of Officier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur (Knight in the National Order of the Legion of Honor) from the French ambassador in Berlin in 2002. Volker Schlöndorff is currently preparing to film *Who Is Anna Walentynowcz?* based upon Sylke Rene Meyer's biography of the Polish Solidarity co-founder.

#### **FILMOGRAPHY**

**--DIRECTOR--**

**Who Is Anna Walentynowcz? (2005)**  
**The Ninth Day (2004)**  
**Ten Minutes Older: The Cello (2002)**  
**Legend of Rita (2000)**  
**Palmetto (1998)**  
**The Ogre (1996)**  
**The Michael Nyman Songbook (1992)**  
**Billy How Did You Do It? (1992)**  
**Voyager (1991)**  
**The Handmaid's Tale (1990)**  
**A Gathering of Old Men (1987)**  
**Death of a Salesman (1985)**  
**Swann in Love (1984)**  
**War and Peace (1982)**  
**Circle of Deceit (1981)**  
**The Candidate (1980)**

#### **FILMOGRAPHY**

**--DIRECTOR (continued)--**

**The Tin Drum (1979)**  
**Germany in Autumn (1978)**  
**Valeska Gert (1977)**  
**Coup de grâce (1976)**  
**The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum (1975)**  
**A Free Woman (1972)**  
**Morals of Ruth Halbfass (1972)**  
**The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach (1971)**  
**BAAL (1970)**  
**Man on Horseback (1969)**  
**Degree of Murder (1967)**  
**Young Torless (1967)**



## **August Diehl**

### **--BIOGRAPHY--**

*"Gebhardt is seductive, a tempter, a devil. I think a tempter has to have convincing arguments, has to burn with idealism – he can't be the stereotype SS officer. August Diehl is the young actor who plays the Gestapo officer so convincingly".*

*-- Volker Schlöndorff*

The Ninth Day's Untersturmführer Gebhardt, an SS officer with a surprising past, is played by August Diehl. Born in 1976, Diehl is the son of an actor and a costume designer, and followed his parents' professional fortunes from Vienna to Hamburg, Paris and Düsseldorf. Diehl decided to pursue acting after playing Franz Mohr in a school production of Die Rauber and after graduation he attended the renowned German acting Academy Hochschule für Schauspielkunst Ernst Busch in Berlin. Diehl's screen work includes Karl Koch's computer hacker drama 23 and Robert Schwentke's grisly police thriller Tattoo. He also appeared with Adrien Brody and Pam Grier in Peter Sehr's 2001 crime romance Love the Hard Way, distributed by Kino International. Named one of European films 'Shooting Stars' by European Film Promotion, August Diehl makes his home in Berlin and is an avid guitarist.

## **FILMOGRAPHY**

### **- ACTOR-**

**The Ninth Day (2004)**  
**Love in Thoughts (2004)**  
**Mouth to Mouth (2004)**  
**The Birch-Tree Meadow (2003)**  
**Distant Lights (2003)**  
**Anatomy 2 (2003)**  
**Tattoo(2002)**  
**Love the Hard Way (2001)**  
**Cold Is the Evening Breeze (2000)**  
**Atemkünstler, Der (2000)**  
**Hilflos (2000)**  
**Braut, Die (1999)**  
**Entering Reality (1999)**  
**23 - Nichts ist so wie es scheint (1998)**  
**Poppen (1998)**



# KINO

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

## Ulrich Matthes

### --BIOGRAPHY--

*"This is all about a lone hero. Everything depends on him. The character can only be believable if he is portrayed as a man with a sense of irony for the grotesqueness of the situation. Ulrich Matthes embodies this profound humanity without a lot of pathos."* – Volker Schlöndorff

Father Henri Kremer, The Ninth Day's fragile yet unyielding moral center is played by Ulrich Matthes. Like most of contemporary Germany's leading actors, Ulrich Matthes is as devoted to theater as he is to film work. Born in 1959, since the 80's Matthes has worked on stage in Munich, Berlin and Vienna. On television and screen Matthes has enjoyed a variety of roles, appearing alongside Ulrich Tukur in Frank Beyer's popular reunification drama Nikolaikirche and as Rene, the lead role in Tom Tykwer's (Run Lola Run) directorial debut Wintersleepers. Matthes provided the voice for the audio tape edition the late Thomas Bernhard's 1970 novel The Lime-Works and his voice is used to dub Kenneth Branagh in German language versions of Branagh's films. Immediately after playing Father Henri Kremer, the conscience wracked anti-Nazi hero of The Ninth Day, Ulrich Matthes was cast as Joseph Goebbels opposite Bruno Ganz as Adolf Hitler in Oliver Hirschbiegel's startling Downfall.

## FILMOGRAPHY

### --ACTOR--

Downfall (2004)  
The Ninth Day (2004)  
Traffic Affairs (2004)  
The Farewell (2000)  
Hahn ist tot, Der (2000)  
Framed (1999)  
Aimée & Jaguar (1999)  
Fire Rider (1998)  
Abgehauen (1998)  
Polizeiruf 110 (1997)  
Wintersleepers (1997)  
Falscher Schritt, Ein (1995)  
Mörder und sein Kind, Der (1995)  
Herr Ober! (1992)  
Wesenacks, Die (1970)



# KINO

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

## **Bibiana Beglau**

### **--BIOGRAPHY--**

*"Bibiana Beglau plays the priest's sister with great intensity. She wants her brother to survive and they're so close she would sacrifice herself for him." - Volker Schlöndorff*

A veteran of two previous films with Volker Schlöndorff, in *The Ninth Day* Bibiana Beglau plays Marie Kremer, Henri Kremer's devoted sister. Born in 1971 in Helmstadt, then DDR, Bibi Beglau originally trained as a sculptor before turning to acting and enrolling in the Hochschule für Musik und Theater (College of Music and Theater) in Hamburg. Since 1995 she has taken full advantage of Germany's thriving theater scene, receiving accolades for her work with Einar Schleff in *Salome* and with Hamburg director and playwright Falk Richter amongst many others. Beglau was already a highly experienced stage and television actress when Volker Schlöndorff saw her in Thomas Ostermeier's *Disco Pigs* in Berlin, and cast her as the lead in 2000's *The Legend of Rita*, her feature film debut. She has since appeared in Schlöndorff's segment of the anthology film *Ten Minutes Older: The Cello* as well as such films as Hendrik Holzmann's *Off Beat* and Mona Lenz' *Der Grosse Schlaf*.

### **FILMOGRAPHY**

#### **--ACTRESS--**

**Ricordare Anna (2005)**  
**Grosse Schlaf, Der (2005)**  
**Off Beat (2004)**  
**Nachtangst (2004)**  
**The Ninth Day (2004)**  
**Tatort - Sechs zum Essen (2004)**  
**Tatort - Gefährliches Schweigen (2004)**  
**Belmondo (2003)**  
**Tatort - Mietsache (2003)**  
**Ten Minutes Older: The Cello (2002)**  
**Scene of the Crime: Betrayal (2002)**  
**Liebesschuld (2001)**  
**Birthday - Mit 30 ist Schluss! (2001)**

### **FILMOGRAPHY**

#### **--ACTRESS(continued)--**

**Legend of Rita (2000)**  
**Briefbomber, Der (2000)**  
**Doppelpass (2000)**  
**No Sex (1999)**  
**Frank (1999)**  
**Gegen den Strom (1997)**  
**Mörderischer wohnen - Der Tod des letzten Mieters (1997)**  
**2 1/2 Minuten (1996)**  
**Absprung (1995)**  
**Mörder und sein Kind, Der (1995)**  
**Neulich am Deich (1995)**



## HISTORICAL INFO

### Nazis and Catholicism

German Catholic clergy spoke out against the Nazis from the National Socialist Party's beginning. Envious of the church's organized youth culture and clear moral authority, Hitler created the Hitler Youth specifically to compete with, and ultimately to replace, the Catholic Youth groups then flourishing in Germany. Catholic opposition to Hitler became increasingly vehement once the Third Reich assumed power in 1933.

Determined to prevail over the German Catholic community, the Nazis began to seize church offices and newspapers as soon as they took full control of the German government. With less immediate family ties than most citizens, celibate Catholic clergy were in a position to take substantial personal risks as activists and opponents of Hitler's nationalist and racist agenda. Priests first in Germany and then throughout the countries targeted by Hitler's ambition, excoriated Nazi policy and atrocities from the pulpit, harbored and aided state enemies and issued false baptismal certificates to Jews facing deportation to labor camps. As the thirties wore on, German priests were arrested, interrogated, tortured, executed or interred by the score. Two prominent Berlin Catholic clergymen were imprisoned merely for failing to return the Hitler salute to Hermann Goering in a Berlin restaurant. After the invasion of Poland in 1939, Polish priests came under particularly virulent attack. By the end of 1939 over 80% of the Polish clergy had been sent to concentration camps.

### Luxembourg

Though declared neutral, autonomous and independent by the 1867 Treaty of London, Luxembourg's strategic proximity to its neighbors Germany, Belgium and France, had led to German occupation in WWI. It again proved logistically irresistible to Germany when the Nazis undertook their Western campaign into Europe in May of 1940. With no standing army, Luxembourg quickly fell to the Nazis and the Duchess of Luxembourg and the Luxembourg Royal Family fled to the United Kingdom to set up a government in exile.

Luxembourgers ignored a Nazi occupation declaration naming them ethnic Aryans and resisted the deportation of Jews (mostly Eastern European refugees) that soon followed. The Nazi occupation government was infuriated when a German referendum designed to entice Luxembourgers to accept German citizenship and adoption of the racist Nuremberg Laws was rejected by 98% of the country.

Luxembourg's resistance movement worked closely with the French underground and many Luxembourg nationals escaped their occupied homeland to fight in British-led freedom fighter brigades made up of exiles from various occupied European countries. Armed resistance to the Nazi occupation in Luxembourg increased after the Allied invasion in June 1944. Though liberated in late 1944, Luxembourg hung in the balance during the Battle of the Bulge, the final German offensive of WWII in early 1945. Tragically, by war's end 1,945 of the 3,500 Jews in Luxembourg before the war had perished in the Third Reich's genocide.



## HISTORICAL INFO

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### Dachau and The Priest Block

In December of 1940 interred priests from all of the Third Reich's concentration camps and prisons were gathered into three barracks at KZ Dachau near Munich. Separated from the rest of the camp by their own barbed wire perimeter, buildings 26, 28 and 30 were dubbed "The Priest Block." In all, 2,579 Catholic, 109 Protestant, 30 Orthodox and two Moslem clergymen from 24 nations wound up imprisoned there. One thousand would die there. By the time of the liberation in 1945, The Dachau Priest Block had become the largest religious community in the world.

The men of the Priest Block were housed in overcrowded, nightmarishly unsanitary facilities intended for less than a third of their number. Vehemently anti-papist SS guards and criminal "trusties" took unspeakable pleasure in tormenting the priests. Catholic clergymen were beaten and tortured, subjected to brutal work details and denied food and medical care on virtually any pretext. Corpses of those who died overnight or in work details were expected to be dragged to morning and evening roll call and counted alongside the living. German Reverend Andreas Reiser was forced by SS guards to fashion a barbed wire crown of thorns for himself which was then driven into his head. Other priests were beaten to death or hung from crosses where they slowly perished.

In Dachau's medical labs SS doctors conducted appallingly cruel freezing and oxygen deprivation "experiments" and injected malaria, typhus and gangrenous pus into healthy prisoners. The men of the Priest Block were often condemned to these barbaric practices. Once during a camp visit Heinrich Himmler himself personally selected 20 young Polish priests for Dachau's abjectly sadistic medical program.

Able to communicate with one another in Latin despite their varied citizenship, the Dachau priests banded together to preserve their spiritual lives in spite of the unrelenting ordeal of camp life. The Priest Block had its own chapel and within it the Dachau priests conducted mass and performed their devotions. In 1944, after a French bishop was interred in Dachau, they were even able to hold a covert ordination of a German theologian among their number.

Priest Block volunteers helped fight two particularly catastrophic typhus outbreaks at Dachau late in the war. Disregarding their own health, the priests entered, emptied and disinfected quarantined barracks choked with corpses. Well-educated and scholarly, the Dachau priests were often pressed into service by the SS to maintain and support the camp's bureaucracy. The priests used these assignments to wage a covert war of resistance against their captors. They were instrumental in delaying construction work on the camp's crematoria and in engineering redistribution of food and Red Cross aid throughout the camp.



## HISTORICAL INFO

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### Father Jean Bernard

Jean Bernard was born in Luxembourg in 1907 and was ordained after receiving a doctorate in philosophy from Luxembourg Seminary. A filmmaker and a theologian, Father Bernard became head of the International Catholic Film Organization in 1933. He ran afoul of the Nazi occupation forces in Luxembourg due to vocal opposition to Nazi doctrine and his work with French resistance forces on the Luxembourg border. In May of 1941 Father Bernard was arrested and sent to KZ Dachau. As prisoner #25487 in Dachau's Priest Block, Father Bernard kept a detailed diary of his 20 months of camp life.

An episode from Father Bernard's diary became the basis for *The Ninth Day*. In February of 1942 he was briefly returned to Luxembourg and pressured by the SS to persuade Luxembourg's Bishop to cooperate with the Nazi occupation government. Father Bernard refused and was sent back to Dachau after nine days.

After liberation Jean Bernard became editor of *The Daily Word*, Luxembourg's largest circulation daily newspaper. His Priest Block diary was serialized in the paper before it was published as *Pfarrerblock 25487*. Though not available in an English translation, *Priest Block 25487* (ISBN 2-87963-286-2) is part of Harvard University's Holocaust bibliography and is in the collection of the Dachau Memorial Archive and the Holocaust Research Project.

Father Bernard's diary is often quoted in evidence supporting Pope Pius XII's controversially measured response to the holocaust. In it, Father Bernard describes the reprisals that followed any criticism of the Third Reich from the Vatican.

"The detained priests trembled every time news reached us of some protest by a religious authority, but particularly by the Vatican. We all had the impression that our warders made us atone heavily for the fury these protests evoked. Whenever the way we were treated became more brutal, the Protestant pastors among the prisoners used to vent their indignation on the Catholic priests: 'Again your big naive Pope and those simpletons, your bishops, are shooting their mouths off. Why don't they get the idea once and for all, and shut up? They play the heroes and we have to pay the bill.' "

Jean Bernard was made Bishop of Luxembourg in 1955. He resumed leadership of the ICFO (now SIGNIS) in 1947 and remained its head, working to communicate in the world media on behalf of Catholic charities, until 1972. Father Bernard died in on September 1st, 1994 in Luxembourg and was deeply mourned by both the nation and the church that he had served.