

## CRITIQUES

*Les chambres rouges* (film)

**Elisabeth Locas**

Dans le rôle Francine Beaulieu

*Screen Anarchy*

« Karlovy Vary 2023 Review: RED ROOMS »

By Martin Kudlac

<https://screenanarchy.com/2023/07/karlovy-vary-2023-review-red-rooms-unsettling-snuff-cyber-thriller-revamps-serial-killer-genre-throu.html>

*“The director, much like his protagonist, cleverly exploits the gray areas within the arthouse thriller genre. This manipulation is made evident through the character of a bereaved mother, Francine Beaulieu, powerfully portrayed by Elisabeth Locas. Her raw, intense performance is deeply rooted in social drama, further blurring the line between horror and drama.”*

« Le réalisateur, tout comme son protagoniste, exploite intelligemment les zones grises du genre thriller d'auteur. Cette manipulation est mise en évidence à travers le personnage d'une mère endeuillée, Francine Beaulieu, incarné avec force par Elisabeth Locas. Sa performance brute et intense est profondément enracinée dans le drame social, brouillant davantage la frontière entre l'horreur et le drame. »

*Jo Blo*

“Red Rooms (Fantasia) Review”

By Tyler Nichols

<https://www.joblo.com/red-rooms-fantasia-review/>

*“But it’s not just the two leads that impress, every single person that shows up here is great. Francine Beaulieu [played by Elisabeth Locas] plays the grieving mother of one of the victims and gives a powerful speech that chilled me to the bone.”*

« Mais ce ne sont pas seulement les deux protagonistes qui impressionnent, chaque personne qui se présente ici est géniale. Francine Beaulieu [jouée par Elisabeth Locas] joue la mère éplorée d'une des victimes et tient un discours puissant qui m'a glacé jusqu'aux os. »

July 18, 10:02 am

## Karlovy Vary 2023 Review: RED ROOMS, Unsettling Snuff Cyber Thriller Revamps Serial Killer Genre Through Female Lens

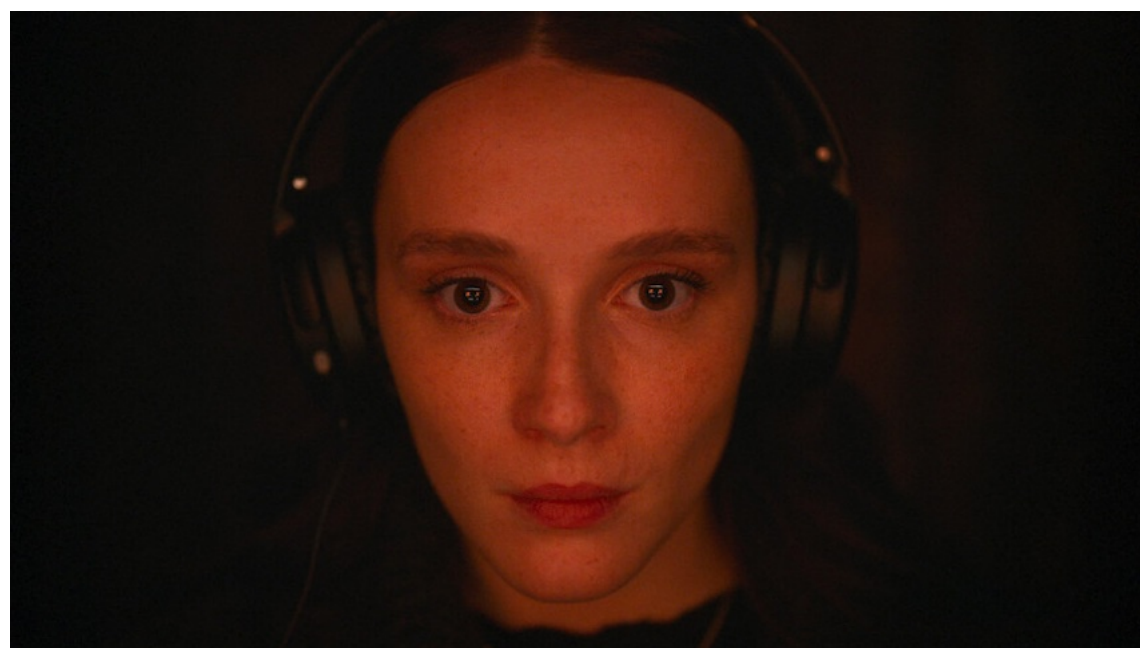
*Quebec's own Pascal Plante directs a genre-blurring cyber thriller that unflinchingly delves into the dark world of morbid fascination, surveillance capitalism, and voyeurism.*



**Martin Kudlac**

CONTRIBUTOR; SLOVAKIA (@MARTYKUDLAC)

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Quebec filmmaker Pascal Plante, known for **Fake Tattoos** and the critically hailed **Nadia, Butterfly**, shifts his creative gaze to darker territories in his latest offering, **Red Rooms**. Debuting in the Crystal Globe competition at Karlovy Vary, **Red Rooms** provides an intriguing spin on the ubiquitous serial killer genre.

The story orbits around tech-savvy Kelly-Anne (Juliette Gariépy), a seemingly successful woman with a semi-professional modeling career and a knack for online poker. Yet, her societal image is marred by her unwavering fascination with serial killer Ludovic Chevalier (Maxwell McCabe-Lokos), aka the Demon of Rosemont. Kelly-Anne's obsession appears to verge on pathological, as she attends his court proceedings with keen interest.

The film introduces Chevalier not as an active player but a fringe element, his gruesome deeds serving as the narrative fulcrum. Kelly-Anne has become a serial killer groupie, unhealthy in her fascination with the perpetrator and the crimes, which include abductions, torture, sexual abuse and murder of underage girls for anonymous, wealthy, sadistic spectators.

And her kink throws her carefully orgnaized life into a downward spiral on the verge of psychosis. Meanwhile Chevalier, portrayed as a pitiful caricature by McCabe-Lokos, remains more as a backdrop for the real drama unfolding between Kelly-Anne and the victims' families.



Plante bucks genre expectations from the get-go, commencing with a drawn-out courtroom scene where Vincent Biron's camera pans around the room, capturing the reactions of all parties involved, from the prosecution to the shocked families. In doing so, Plante ensures the film begins not as a crime thriller but as a psychological drama. The narrative then subtly transitions from the courtroom to Kelly-Anne's personal life, revealing a protagonist adept in online poker and dark web exploits.

The director subverts conventional expectations by dedicating the film's first act to building a courtroom case against the child killer. This unique storytelling approach eschews typical genre structures, steering the narrative towards a psychological drama. The narrative focus shifts, concentrating on the reactions and mental states of Kelly-Anne and the surviving family members.

Plante relegates Chevalier to the periphery, allowing his horrific crimes to communicate his character and act as emotional triggers for both the protagonist and the victims' families, who must endure repeated recounting of the atrocities inflicted on their daughters. A mounting psychological tension becomes evident between Kelly-Anne and the mother of one victim, with Kelly-Anne evolving into an emotional tormentor.

In fact, the film partly delves into Michael Haneke's social horror realm, staging a collision between two starkly contrasting worlds. It presents two female perspectives that, by virtue of motherhood and empathy, should align, but instead exhibit a stark and even perverse contrast.

In the film's second act, Plante delves deeper into Kelly-Anne's enigmatic private life. The tech-savvy protagonist, adept at online poker and navigating the dark web, encounters a new character, the naive Clementine (a doe-eyed Laurie Babin), another groupie, penned by Plante himself. Despite originating from the same sphere, their worlds collide, highlighting the distinct boundaries within



Kelly-Anne's character soon reveals a darker truth – she's not merely a fan, but a sociopath. Plante seamlessly transitions from the courtroom drama to a surveillance thriller, depicting the protagonist's deft exploitation of online vulnerabilities. This allows her to encroach upon the lives of the victims' families, breaching yet another layer of psychological and social boundaries.

**Red Rooms** seamlessly weaves together elements from a spectrum of genres, including home invasion, but Plante intriguingly never ventures into the eponymous red room. Instead, he leans towards the arthouse style, substituting gore for psychological and social horror.

The director, much like his protagonist, cleverly exploits the gray areas within the arthouse thriller genre. This manipulation is made evident through the character of a bereaved mother, Francine Beaulieu, powerfully portrayed by Elisabeth Locas. Her raw, intense performance is deeply rooted in social drama, further blurring the line between horror and drama.

Plante's film serves as a riveting fusion of arthouse thriller that resonates in an era marked by morbid voyeurism and surveillance capitalism. The narrative begins with a dissection of the serial killer trope, evolving into a women-centric psychodrama. It challenges gender norms while adeptly channeling the essence of chamber social horror, all executed with a distinct flair.

*The film [enjoyed its world premiere at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival](#).*



Fantasia's opening night film is an examination of someone obsessed with a serial killer on trial. You aren't going to want to miss this!

BY **TYLER NICHOLS** 3 DAYS AGO

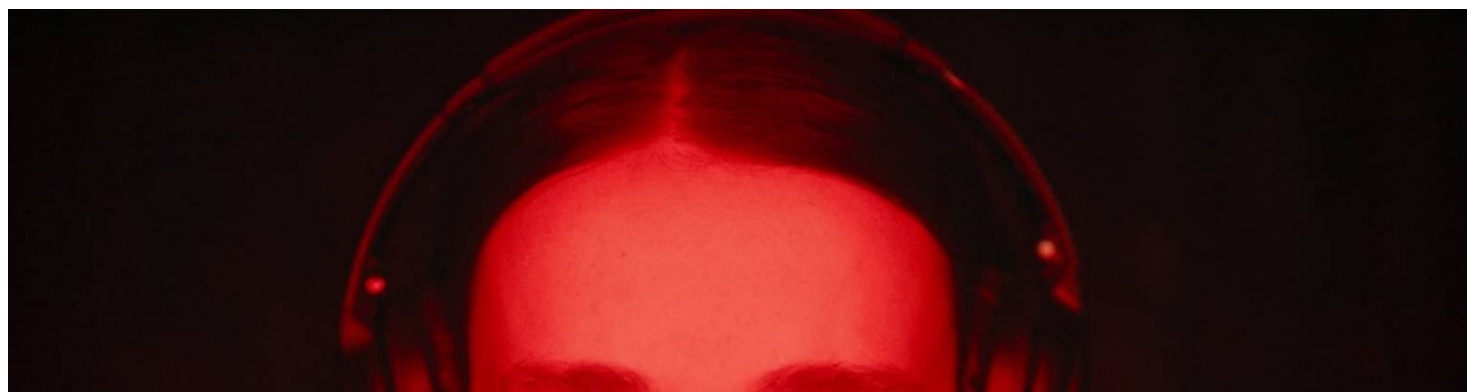


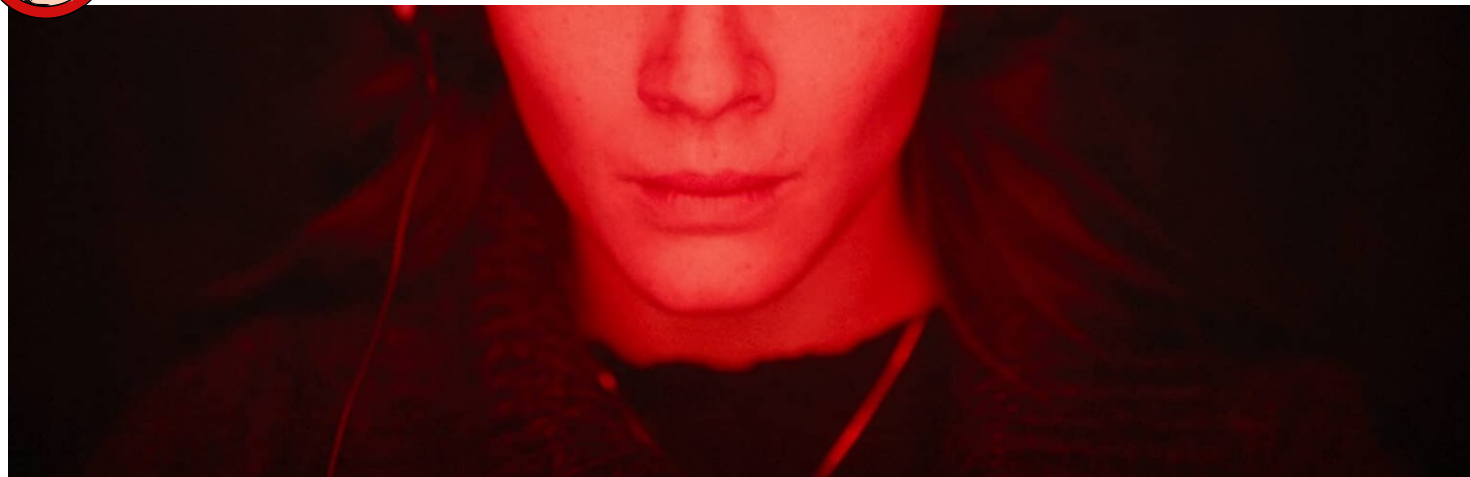
**PLOT:** The high-profile case of serial killer Ludovic Chevalier has just gone to trial, and Kelly-Anne is obsessed. When



**REVIEW:** There's a certain level of expectation present when Fantasia selects the opening film for their festival. It sets the tone for the rest of the lineup of films so my hopes for *Red Rooms* were very high. Add to that the fact that the French (even of the Canadian variety) know how to do horror like no other, and I was very excited. *Red Rooms* hits a nerve almost immediately, diving deep into the trial of serial killer, Ludovic Chevalier. They set up the evidence in such a disturbing way, all without showing you anything. There are some absolutely beautiful long takes during the court scene that really make you feel right in the middle of the trial. They set up the tone of the film perfectly.

The performances from both Juliette Gariépy's Kelly-Anne and Laurie Babin's Clementine are phenomenal. Their obsession with Chevalier is intriguing and constantly has you questioning why they would be into something so messed up. As more details are revealed, it makes their obsession even more disturbing. Their interactions just leave you wondering why these two would possibly find themselves in this situation. **But it's not just the two leads that impress, every single person that shows up here is great. Francine Beaulieu plays the grieving mother of one of the victims and gives a powerful speech that chilled me to the bone.** And Natalie Tannous's Maître Chedid - Couronne starts the film off perfectly with her opening statement. I could have just watched her talk about the trial for the entire movie; it was so captivating.





An element of the film I found most intriguing were the various people who were defending Chevalier. Whether it's the very misguided Clementine, or even his defense lawyer, its uncomfortable to hear people supporting someone who so obviously did the crime. Yet there are people out there like this, so I think its nice to spotlight them. There were a ton of parallels between Clem in particular, as the Manson followers who stood outside his trial. So there's a bit of catharsis that reveals itself as both Clem and Kelly-Anne are forced to reckon with their feelings as more evidence is unveiled.

Another disturbing element is just how accessible your information is online. Kelly-Anne isn't doing anything "hacker-level" yet she's able to get retrieve so much information, all with tools readily accessible to all of us. In fact, all of the dark web stuff being true to life is what makes it all so scary. While this film may be fictional, these types of things are going on and combating them feels like a near impossible task. *Red Rooms* manages to be very grounded, while dealing with content that can easily be turned unbelievable (see [Unfriended: Dark Web](#)).

*Red Rooms* is an extremely uncomfortable watch but in the day and age of so many people glorifying serial killers, it feels very relevant. And I should state outright that, despite the very disturbing content, there's not much that's shown. So don't go into this expecting some kind of new wave French horror that goes hog wild. This is a much more subtle character piece that relies on its performances and splendid camerawork to really make this standout.

*Red Rooms* will be on the [Festival Circuit](#) this fall.

