



# MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE

**Thursday January 21<sup>st</sup>, 9 pm**  
**Doc Zone on CBC**

Produced with the participation of the



created by the Government of Canada  
and the Canadian Cable Industry





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CBC-TV's Doc Zone Presents  
The World Broadcast Premiere  
of  
**MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE**  
on  
Thursday, January 21 at 9:00 pm (9:30 NT)

Given unprecedented access to the RCMP during its darkest days, filmmaker Helen Slinger and Bountiful Films reveal a flawed force in the throes of painful self-examination.

**MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE**, premiering on CBC Television's Doc Zone on Thursday, January 21 at 9 pm (9:30 NT), is a gripping journey into the heart of the RCMP during a period of profound crisis. Notorious for closing ranks, the Mounties open up to documentary cameras, revealing a painfully flawed organization fighting for its life.

It's been a most difficult decade for Canada's national police force. Faith in the RCMP has been shaken – by Maher Arar's betrayal, the pension scandal, harassment cases, and too many deaths on duty. And especially by the captured-on-video taser death of Robert Dziekanski at Vancouver International Airport, and the Braidwood Inquiry into that death. A 2009 Canadian Press Harris-Decima poll found over 60 per cent of Canadians don't buy the RCMP version of the events at Vancouver airport that lead to Mr. Dziekanski's death. That number jumps to 71 per cent in BC, where it happened.

Woven into the big picture - and sometimes colliding with it – are the very human stories of young recruits still willing to step into a force under heavy fire. During some of the RCMP's darkest days last winter, documentary filmmaker Helen Slinger and Bountiful Films were granted unprecedented access to Depot, the fabled RCMP training academy in Regina. There, Slinger followed a troop of idealistic new recruits during their six months of basic training. **MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE** profiles: Alex Rouhani, from Gatineau, Quebec, by way of Paris and Tehran; Emily Schmidt, from Cranbrook, British Columbia; and Steffan Manuel, from Grand Bank, Newfoundland. Will these three recruits survive the challenges, and the culture of Depot, to become Mounties?



The camera's remarkable access doesn't end at Depot. From top brass to beat cop, Bountiful Films captures a force in the throes of painful self-examination, struggling to get back to its core values.

Filmmaker Slinger was struck by the frankness with which senior RCMP responded to the film. "When commenting on the intimate view of the force that resulted from the open access we were able to negotiate, one senior Mountie said it all: 'Riveting, but it hurts.'"

Bountiful Films was formed in 2001 by Helen Slinger and Maureen Palmer, to produce *Leaving Bountiful*, the story of one woman's courageous flight from the fundamentalist Mormon polygamous colony of Bountiful, British Columbia. Since then, Bountiful Films has specialized in documentaries which capture compelling characters as they confront contemporary challenges. Recent titles include *How to Divorce & Not Wreck the Kids* for CBC's Doc Zone, *the Bully's Mark*, *Polygamy's Lost Boys* and *Alexandra's Echo*, for Global Television. In 2010 Bountiful will deliver two new films. With rare and exclusive access to hours of videotaped therapy sessions, *When the Devil Knocks* for CBC's *The Passionate Eye* promises to be a spellbinding journey into one of psychiatry's most intriguing conditions, Dissociative Identity Disorder, formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder. *Cat Craze* for Doc Zone explores our fascination for cats, and the crisis created by that obsession.

**MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE** is written and directed by Helen Slinger, and produced by Slinger, Maureen Palmer and Sue Ridout. Narrator is Ann-Marie MacDonald. Director of Photography is Steve Rendall; Editor is Tim Wanlin; Music by Michael Friedman and Edward Henderson; Sound Design by Larry Baker and Location Sound by Ed Seneshen. For CBC's Independent Documentary Unit: Linda Laughlin, Senior Producer; Michael Claydon, Area Executive Producer. Mark Starowicz is Executive Director, Documentary Programming.

**MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE** is produced by Bountiful Films in association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, with the participation of the Canadian Television Fund created by the Government of Canada and the Canadian cable industry, the Province of British Columbia Film Incentive BC, and the Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit Program.

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[www.cbc.ca/imagegallery/](http://www.cbc.ca/imagegallery/)

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## LOG LINE

Notorious for closing ranks, in **MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE** the RCMP opens up to documentary cameras for the first time, revealing a painfully flawed organization fighting for its life.



## SHORT SYNOPSIS

**MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE** is a journey into the heart of the RCMP during a period of profound crisis for Canada's national police force. Woven into the big picture, and sometimes colliding with it, are the very human stories of three young recruits still willing to step into a force under heavy fire. During some of the RCMP's darkest days, documentary filmmaker Helen Slinger was granted unprecedented access to Depot, the fabled RCMP training academy in Regina, Saskatchewan. She follows a troop of idealistic new recruits during their six months of training. And the camera's remarkable access doesn't end at Depot. From top brass, to beat cop, **Mounties Under Fire** captures a force in the throes of painful self-examination, fighting to get back to its core values...and fighting for its life.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

**MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE** is a thought-provoking journey into the heart of the RCMP during its darkest days. Woven into the big picture – and sometimes colliding with it – are the very human stories of three young recruits, still willing to step into a force under heavy fire.

It's been a most difficult decade for Canada's national police force. Faith in the RCMP has been shaken – by Maher Arar's betrayal, the pension scandal, harassment cases, and too many deaths on duty; by the captured-on-video taser death of Robert Dziekanski at Vancouver International Airport, and the Braidwood Inquiry into that incident. A 2009 Canadian Press Harris-Decima poll found over 60% of Canadians don't buy the RCMP's version of events at Vancouver Airport. That number jumps to 71% in British Columbia, where it happened.

Against this backdrop, the Mounties face the greatest recruitment challenge in their history. Experienced Mounties are flooding out the door with the baby boom, leaving unfilled vacancies and overworked policemen. As of 2010, 34% of the force will have less than five years' experience. But within this challenge lies great opportunity - to build a better RCMP from the wave of idealistic new recruits, untainted by scandal.



During this time of profound crisis, documentary filmmaker Helen Slinger negotiated unprecedented access to Depot, the fabled RCMP training centre in Regina, Saskatchewan. Bountiful Films' cameras followed the cadets in Troop 35 during their six months of intense training. **MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE** profiles Alex Rouhani, from Gatineau, Quebec by way of Paris and Tehran; Emily Schmidt, from Cranbrook, British Columbia; and Steffan Manuel, from Grand Bank, Newfoundland.

The camera's access doesn't end at Depot. From top brass, to beat cop, Slinger captures a force in the throes of painful self-examination, struggling to get back to its core values.

Brought to crisis, the RCMP is now responding, striving towards profound institutional change while managing a sizeable rearguard action, as mistakes from the past make headlines today. Notorious for closing ranks, in **MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE** the RCMP opens up, revealing a flawed organization fighting for its life.

## STORYLINES/PRODUCTION NOTES

During the past decade, the iconic Mountie has all but been knocked off his horse. Canadians' faith in the RCMP has been shaken – by Arar, by Bush and Dziekanski, by the pension scandal, harassment cases, and too many deaths on duty. But perhaps the most damaging blow of all to Canada's faith in her beloved Mounties has been the force's perceived reaction to crisis, the sense of cover-up implicit in decades of internal reviews.

Against this stormy backdrop stand young men and women who read the headlines and see beyond them – young Canadians who've come of age during this turbulent time and still want to become Mounties, still yearn to wear the red serge with pride.

This dichotomy provides the core dramatic tension/conflict in **MOUNTIES UNDER FIRE**. With morale at an all-time low and Canadians' trust in the fabled organization wobbly, can the RCMP re-build itself and regain that trust?

It took many months for Bountiful Films to negotiate access to Depot, the RCMP Training Academy in Regina, Saskatchewan, as well as access to RCMP top management and to the deep cultural review that is underway inside the force. We promised only to be fair. And we delivered on that promise. Senior RCMP who have seen the result say the documentary is "fair, but it hurts."



The film interweaves storylines, including:

The personal challenges faced by recruits as they embark on six months' basic training at the RCMP Academy in Regina.

The big picture – the struggle to revitalize the RCMP is akin to turning a super-tanker at sea. Includes interviews with top brass.

The film asks:

How much are the RCMP's challenges rooted in its paramilitary history?

How can recruitment and training change to build better policemen?

Who should police the police?

How do you get a demoralized workforce to buy into change?

## THE RECRUITS

STEFFAN MANUEL, 27, was raised in Grand Bank, Newfoundland. As a very young child, Steffan knew he wanted to be a policeman. He'd dress up in any available police or military-type costume, but his favourite was a pint-sized red serge jacket. Yet by the time he graduated from high school, Steffan was questioning his career choice. He took psychology in college for a couple of years and also earned his small-engine mechanics papers. Now that he's returned to his childhood dream, Steffan is determined to make the grade.

ALEX ROUHANI, 37, was born in Iran and educated in France. He has a degree in business administration, martial arts experience, and speaks four languages. He also has three children who'll stay at home in Gatineau, Quebec during Alex's six months in Regina at the RCMP Training Academy. The separation will be hard but the whole family is looking forward to seeing more of Canada, when Alex is posted around the country.

EMILY SCHMIDT, 24, is from Cranbrook, British Columbia. She has a criminology diploma and experience in security, including working with an explosives detection dog. To start her Mountie training, Emily will have to quit a job as a maintenance worker at an RCMP historic site, Fort Steele, BC. She's looking for a career that offers lots of variety and excitement. Emily's not at all afraid of the physical side of policing, since she's a very competitive hockey player.



## OTHER FEATURED CHARACTERS

**WILLIAM ELLIOTT**, a lawyer by profession, was a career civil servant before becoming the 22<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner of the RCMP on July 16, 2007 in the wake of Guiliano Zaccardelli's resignation. Elliott's appointment as top Mountie was controversial at the time, as he was the first civilian ever to be appointed Commissioner. But Elliott wasn't new to justice issues. His previous two jobs, before the Mounties, were National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister and Associate Deputy Minister of Public Safety. Dealing with the media is not Elliott's favourite part of the job, but he did sit down with Bountiful Films for a surprisingly candid interview.

**KEITH CLARK** is leader of the RCMP Change Management Team. He joined the RCMP in 1980 after studying criminology at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. Clark's policing career has included drug enforcement, the Special Emergency Response Team, senior academic training officer at the RCMP Academy, Strategic Policy and Planning, and Human Resources. For a Mountie, Clark is strikingly open and comfortable with the media – perhaps because his father was a television producer. He's married to a retired RCMP member.

**ROGER BROWN** is the commanding officer at Depot in Regina, where all RCMP take their basic training. Brown joined the RCMP in 1980 and has served as a general duty policeman in small-town Canada as well as spending several years in senior positions at RCMP headquarters in Ottawa. For the documentary, Brown is most interesting because of his background in RCMP training. He was an instructor at the Training Academy 15 years ago and then appointed Commanding Officer at Depot as part of a major shuffle of senior personnel, under Commissioner Elliott. It was after Brown's appointment that Bountiful Films was granted permission to film at Depot. A proud Newfoundlander, Brown has the gift of the gab and is among the "new" RCMP who believe in openness and transparency. He has a son who's also an RCMP member.

**DR. LINDA DUXBURY** is a Carleton University professor at the Sprott School of Business, and one of Canada's leading workplace health researchers. She has influenced government policy-making and significantly advanced the practices and attitudes toward work-life balance, flexible work arrangements, and the development of supportive managers and work environments in Canada. Dr. Duxbury has written a series of outspoken and ground-breaking reports on workplace issues within the RCMP: "In my opinion, the RCMP will struggle with bringing about significant reform unless it deals with the systemic underlying issues."



## THE FILM'S CREATIVE TEAM

**HELEN SLINGER** (writer, director, producer) is a master storyteller who began her career as a reporter in newspapers and then television. She left a senior news management job to pursue her passion for documentaries. Directing credits include *Embracing Bob's Killer* for Doc Zone; *The Bully's Mark*, *Alexandra's Echo* and *Leaving Bountiful* for Global Television.

Next up for Slinger is *When the Devil Knocks* for CBC's *The Passionate Eye*. With rare and exclusive access to hours of videotaped therapy sessions, this film promises to be a riveting journey into one of psychiatry's most intriguing conditions, Dissociative Identity Disorder, formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder.

Slinger's strength is her unique combination of skills. An empathetic director, the subjects of her films trust her completely, revealing deeply intimate aspects of their lives. But it is Slinger's writing and command of the narrative that are remarkable. She artfully weaves together complicated and often conflicting storylines, delivering a nuance that eludes most. A highly-respected story editor and script doctor, she's written a legion of documentaries with and for other directors. Recent writing credits include *Peace Warrior* for CTV and, with Bountiful Films partner Maureen Palmer, *How to Divorce & Not Wreck the Kids* for CBC's Doc Zone. Various projects have won or been nominated for Gemini Awards, as well as named Finalist at the New York Festival, winner of the Platinum Award at Worldfest Houston, won Jury Awards at the Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival, been selected at the Montreal World Film Festival and Vancouver International Film Festival, won a Gracie Allen Award (Foundation of American Women in Radio & TV), RTNDA (Radio & Television News Directors) Awards, and several Columbus International Film & Television Awards including the Edgar Dale Award for excellence in non-fiction screenwriting. Raised in Saskatoon, Helen Slinger has lived in Toronto, Victoria BC, and now North Vancouver.

**MAUREEN PALMER** (producer) worked for the CBC for two decades, in senior producer positions in both radio and television, before leaving in January 2000 to become an independent producer. She formed Bountiful Films with partner Helen Slinger to produce the films *Leaving Bountiful*, *The Bully's Mark*, *Alexandra's Echo* and *Polygamy's Lost Boys*. She has written, directed, story-edited and series-produced for North America's major networks. Maureen produced and directed *How to Divorce & Not Wreck the Kids* for CBC's Doc Zone (January 2009) and is currently directing a documentary about cats, also for Doc Zone.

**SUE RIDOUT** (producer) is a Gemini Award-winning broadcast journalist, director and producer. She started her career at CTV at *Live It Up* and *W5*, then was a producer and executive producer at the CBC in *News & Current Affairs*, and finally became an independent producer in 2001, when she founded Dreamfilm Productions. Since then Sue has produced, written and directed documentaries for CTV, CBC, History Television, and Knowledge. In the fall of 2009 she won the Gemini Award for Best Biography Documentary for her film about the rehabilitation of Capt. Trevor Greene, a Canadian soldier who was badly injured in Afghanistan. Most recently, Sue produced *The Downside of High* for CBC's *The Nature of Things* - exploring the connection between marijuana and mental illness.



# RCMP BY THE NUMBERS



- The RCMP has a **\$4.5** billion budget.
- Between 2000 and 2009, **20** RCMP officers died on duty. There have been a total of **220** RCMP deaths on duty since the inception of the RCMP.
- **155** civilians have died in RCMP-related incidents during the past nine years.
- So far this decade the RCMP has spent **\$124** million defending legal actions over deaths, injuries or misconduct – enough cash to build two Olympic hockey arenas.
- In 2007 the RCMP had to make **900** separate written requests to obtain **\$250** million in funding.
- Since Conducted Energy Weapons were first used by police, in Canada **20** people have died after being shocked with a Taser.
- By 2011, between **34-40** per cent of RCMP members will have fewer than five years of service. At the May 11, 2009 Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, Senior Deputy Commissioner William Sweeney estimated that the numbers in Alberta were closer to **55-60** per cent.
- Crime clearance rates plummeted for the RCMP between 1995-2004. Macleans Magazine said this measure of success fell for RCMP from **80** per cent to **49-61** per cent for some types of crimes.
- **13** per cent of RCMP employees received a performance evaluation during the 2006-2007 year, according to the Brown Report on Governance & Cultural Change in the RCMP.
- From 1984 to 1990 Prime Ministers Mulroney and Chretien reduced the number of police officers in Canada to the point where the United Nations noted Canada ranked **25<sup>th</sup>** among **29** nations surveyed for number of police officers per capita.
- The number of women and visible minorities has steadily risen within the RCMP during the past 10 years. The number of female officers rose from **14.3** per cent in 2000 to **19.9** per cent in 2009. Visible minorities increased from **4.6** per cent to **7.1** per cent during that same time period.