

THE SPIRIT BECAME FLESH



DIRECTOR JESSE AULTMAN

PRODUCERS ROBIN WANG | BRYCE FERENDO | ANGUS YATES



SHORT SYNOPSIS

In idyllic, middle-of-nowhere Alabama, Sam Summers returns to his deeply religious hometown to visit his sister, Lilah. To his horror, Sam discovers that his old community has turned into a fanatic cult that worships a sinister monster residing in their woods. Through their disturbing rituals and unnerving sacrifices, Sam is cornered by his townspeople as they attempt to induct him into their faith. He realizes he must find out what this being is and how to tell his sister of its true nature.

LOGLINE

An unbeliever returns to his deeply religious hometown only to find that they have fallen prey to a sinister monster that they believe is the Holy Spirit of God.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I fell in love with the horror genre through campfire stories. Growing up in Alabama, I always heard my grandparents and great-grandparents talk about certain myths and urban legends that were passed down to them as kids. These stories were like a common language; a set of beliefs that an entire community shared, and it's what I consider part of the beauty of the south. There is a certain mysticism and magic that exists in rural America; a wonder that hasn't been completely choked out by modernization.

I find myself drawn to this, drawn to the myths and legends our country once clung to; however, whenever I return home, I am reminded of belief's dark underbelly. There

persists a cultishness and fanaticism in the south that is unmatched anywhere else in the country. Fundamentalism looms large and has even seemed to push back as modernization knocks on rural America's door.

Yet, even in the Bible Belt, things are changing. When I was a kid, my home church had easily over four-hundred members. Now they're lucky to hit over two-hundred on a Sunday morning. My friends in the youth group have moved all over - dappling in less conservative denominations, more irregular attendance, or leaving altogether. The world has gotten smaller and, as a result, my generation has been pulled away from our home.

In the Spirit Became Flesh, we see a young man return to his hometown for his sister, but this is not a story of their reunion. Instead, it's about what separates them. No matter the love they have for the other, they'll never be able to overcome the inherent divide of their worldviews.

Ultimately, that's what I think this film is about: that separation, that loss. It's about the pain of losing your faith, your home, and how scary that journey can really be. Still, your home draws you back, beckons to you, gnaws at you, like you've been stitched together with soil and blood.

CAST BIO



CHRISTOPHER DIETRICK

Christopher Dietrick traded steel-toe boots and a hard-hat for Shakespeare. Born in Indiana, he is the eldest son of Julia and Chris Dietrick Sr., and is a graduate of the Stella Adler NY/Art of Acting LA Professional Conservatory. He stars in the upcoming TV series Limited Edition, and was an NCAA Track & Field National Championships runner and a Nike High School All-American.

SAM

CHLOE BALDWIN

Chloe Baldwin is a LA-based professional actor who began her career in Chicago. After graduating from conservatory training at The Theatre School at DePaul (Sarah Siddons Society Scholarship), she hit the ground running in Chicago, as Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* at Goodman Theater, titular *Woman in Black* in the first U.S. National Tour of the West End hit *The Woman In Black*, and on screen in Steve McQueen's film *Widows* and Amazon Studios' series *Utopia* and *Shining Girls*. She plays the lead in the upcoming comedy thriller "Maybe People Aren't As Bad As We Think" and is part of the Jeff-Nominated ensemble of Mary Zimmerman's *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*. She is also a fight choreographer, producer, and drag king.

LILAH





ANTHONY GAETA

Anthony Gaeta is best known for the feature films “Love Without Hairs” and “Would You Like to Dine With Me?” Anthony loves bringing humanity, truth and vulnerability to what most consider dark and unsympathetic characters.

A Meisner-trained actor, Anthony has been performing improv comedy on Los Angeles stages for over 30 years, with another 22 years of experience practicing mindfulness meditation. Anthony believes that his daily meditation practice brings calm and clarity to his life and work.

Anthony is excited for his next film “Even More Reasons to Love You” — set to start production January 2023.

PASTOR JACOB

BRIES VANNON

Bries Vannon is a rural Iowa boy made good. A creature performer and character actor, Bries' extensive training in Butoh, Clown, and Dada performance bring a unique physicality to his work. He's been monsters, demons, aliens, murderous clowns, and plenty of other grotesque figments of your imagination, as seen in the television series version of *The Exorcist*, Rupert Wyatt's alien resistance thriller *Captive State*, and Zack Snyder's Netflix space opera *Rebel Moon*, among others. Bries is represented by Michael Zanuck in Los Angeles and BMG Talent in Chicago.

THE SPIRIT



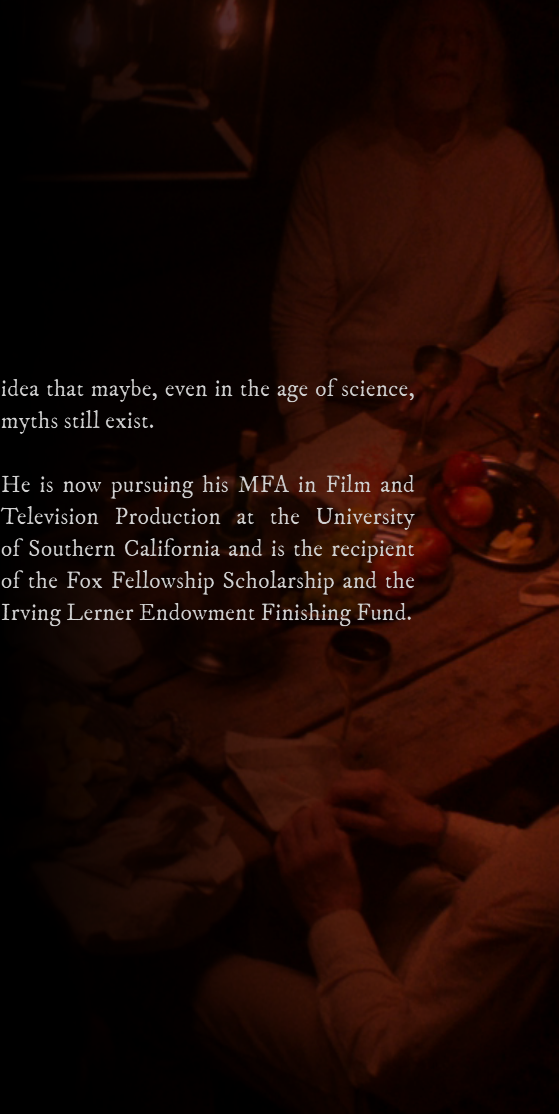
THE TEAM



JESSE AULTMAN

Jesse Aultman is a writer and director interested in exploring ideas about the American south, religion, and mythology. Originally from Alabama, Jesse fell in love with the horror genre through urban legends and campfire stories. For him, these stories fostered a deep childhood fascination in what remains hidden outside of human view - the mystical, unknowable, supernatural.

Through his work, he attempts to create a visual campfire story — an urban legend that compels us to come to terms with the



idea that maybe, even in the age of science, myths still exist.

He is now pursuing his MFA in Film and Television Production at the University of Southern California and is the recipient of the Fox Fellowship Scholarship and the Irving Lerner Endowment Finishing Fund.

DIRECTOR



ROBIN WANG

Zhongyu (Robin) Wang is an award-winning producer, director, and screenwriter. He graduated from Duke University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English (Highest Distinction) and is now an MFA candidate in Film & Television Production at the University of Southern California. As a director and producer, Robin brought his works to over a hundred international film festivals worldwide. Among them, *Mother in the Mist*, the USC Thesis film he produced in 2021, won the 27th DGA Student Film Awards for Best Woman Filmmaker.

The short films he directed at USC have been official selections of Oscar-qualifying film festivals such as LA Outfest, Urbanworld,

deadCenter, and Bronzelens, as well as streaming platforms such as Dekkoo, PBS SolCal, and Amazon Prime. He is the recipient of the Jack Oakie Scholarship in Comedy Directing, the Irvin Kershner Scholarship, and the Alfred P Sloan Foundation Full Production Grant.

In Fall 2021, Robin was selected to direct one of the three USC-sponsored Thesis projects. His new film, *Wei-Lai*, is currently in the festival circuit. As one who wanders on the margin of cultures, he wants to continue to explore the meaning of “home” and “homelessness” against the massive backdrop of Asian diaspora and cultural displacement.

PRODUCER



BRYCE FERENDO

Bryce Ferendo is an LA-based filmmaker and editor, born and raised in Indianapolis. After graduating from Indiana University with a degree in Media and Spanish Literature, he ventured to LA in pursuit of a career in film, where he was later accepted into the USC School of Cinematic Arts MFA program. He has directed multiple short films, including a 2019 film, *In the Paint*, which was officially selected for a number of film festivals in the United States, but eventually found a strong calling to post-production.

In 2020 he co-edited an award-winning short documentary, *Spokespeople*, that received critical acclaim and has been selected in over 20 film festivals. Recently, Bryce earned

his editing credit on the feature length documentary, *Beyond Ed Buck*, which was released on AMC's streaming service Allblek in 2022.

With a background in literature, Bryce is drawn towards stories that generate empathy and aims to craft narratives that truly push audiences to connect with even the most discordant perspectives. With his versatile experiences in film, Bryce seeks to heighten projects with his unique voice and passion at every stage, serving as a producer on a number of short films in recent years while editing and directing on the side.

PRODUCER



ANGUS YATES

Angus Yates grew up in a world of travelers, journalists and filmmakers. As a child, he lived in incredibly exotic and remote locations in various parts of the world. From the glaciers of New Zealand and the western edge of the Sahara Desert to the dense rainforest jungles of Far North Queensland, Australia, he was able to gain first hand exposure to the world. These travels stemmed from his father's position as Director of Special Projects for Discovery Channel. Living abroad fostered a love for culture, nature and the art of filmmaking. His early experiences helped shape his world views and a yearning for new adventure.

Since his graduation from the University of Vermont, Angus went on to work for a number of reputable organizations. He

worked multiple freelance jobs for the ABC News Network, specifically assisting in the field for coverage of the 2016 Presidential election. These jobs included coverage of the RNC, election night and the presidential inauguration. In addition, he spent time crewing on season five of the hit survival series *Alone* for ITV America where he spent four months in the Mongolian wilderness assisting the crew. Keeping in step with the same genre, Angus later worked multiple freelance jobs for the casting company Metal Flowers Media assisting with casting for the series *Naked* and *Afraid*. He is currently seeking higher learning within the world of filmmaking at the University of Southern California's MFA program.

PRODUCER



JONATHAN McCORMACK

Jonathan McCormack is a Cinematographer based in Los Angeles working in a variety of independent film, music videos, and commercials. While growing up in rural Missouri, Jonathan developed a strong connection as a place where his imagination runs free. Film has always been a big part of his life and gave him a lens to view the world outside the isolation of a small town. Jonathan uses his imagery to explore characters and all the nuances of the world in ways that words cannot express.

Jonathan received his Bachelors in Film Studies from University of Missouri in 2016 where he first learned the art of

cinematography. He has since gone on to work on a variety of projects receiving accolades for both cinematography and directing. His feature documentary Only the Educated Are Free: The Journey of Michael A. Middleton, which chronicles a man's life-long battle for civil rights, played in festivals across the country winning multiple awards. Jonathan is currently pursuing his MFA in Film and Television Production from the University of Southern California and is the recipient of the Edward Thomas Troutner Endowed Scholarship in Cinematography.

CINEMATOGRAPHER



JOY TAN

Joy Tan is a USC film production MFA student, who directed and production designed a 15 minutes short film *Carpool* (2019), after that she fell in love with production design. In USC, she production designed two thesis films, *Wei-Lai* and *The Code of Family*, in 2021. In 2022, she production designed for an independent short film, *The Story of This Life*, exploring the tragic family aftermath of the Covid pandemic. She is also the writer and editor of *Sino-screen*, an independent film media subsidiary from Chinese in Entertainment.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER





ZANDER PADGET

Zander Padget is a filmmaker interested in showing intimacy inside of vibrant films that greatly entertain an audience. After studying dance and art history in college, Zander's first films were site specific dance films that focused on the power of space, movement and rhythm. Eventually, the want to share specific ideas and emotions lead him to narrative films where he has since fallen in love with the power of story.

1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



MARIE LESSEL

Marie Lessel is an editor from Copenhagen, Denmark, and an MFA candidate at the Film and Television Production Program at USC School of Cinematic Arts. She earned her BA in Film and Media Studies from The University of Copenhagen, after which she spent time working as an Assistant Editor on *Masterchef Denmark*. She has a huge passion for genre films - both the good and bad ones - and aims to pursue fantastical and horrific stories that touch on the human experience in its many forms.

EDITOR





BUNTHOEUN REAL

Bunthoeun Real is a Cambodian American filmmaker who has developed a proficiency in storytelling through Sound at USC, learning from award winning sound faculty members. He was awarded the prestigious Annenberg Graduate Fellowship for his work. He likes making grounded realistic family dramas and loves science fiction and martial arts films.

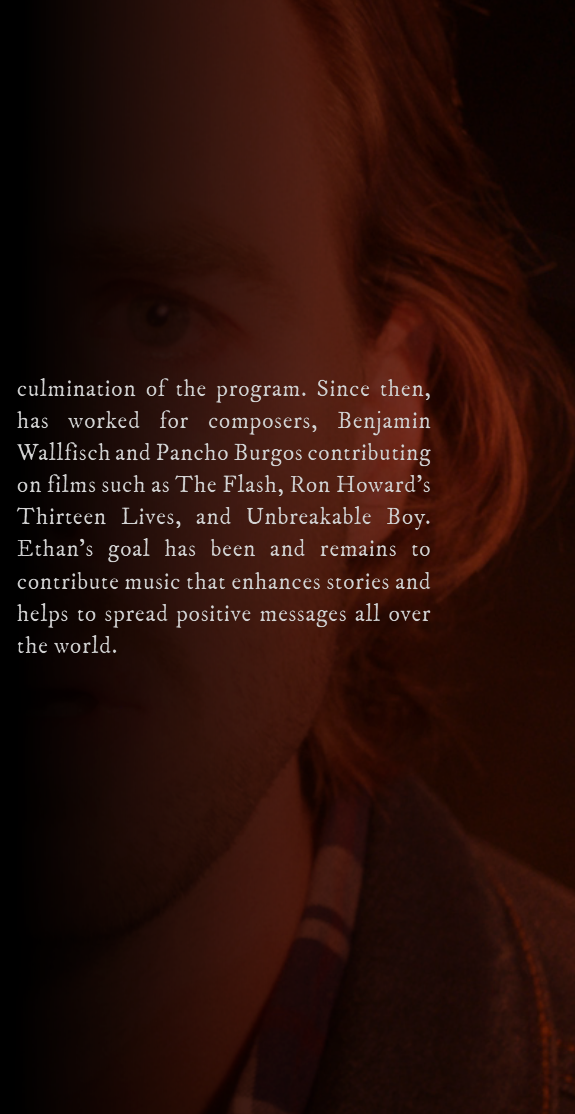


SOUND



ETHAN HARBOUR

Ethan is a composer based in Los Angeles, where he was born and raised by a family of musicians. This love for music would develop into a love of film scoring and eventually lead him to become a graduate of the prestigious Screen Scoring masters program at the University of Southern California. At USC, he was the recipient of The Sandra & Alan Silvestri Scholarship for being the top ranked applicant to the program, and was selected by the faculty to receive the Joe and Alice Harnell Scholar for Screen Scoring award at the



culmination of the program. Since then, has worked for composers, Benjamin Wallfisch and Pancho Burgos contributing on films such as The Flash, Ron Howard's Thirteen Lives, and Unbreakable Boy. Ethan's goal has been and remains to contribute music that enhances stories and helps to spread positive messages all over the world.

COMPOSER

BEHIND THE SCENES



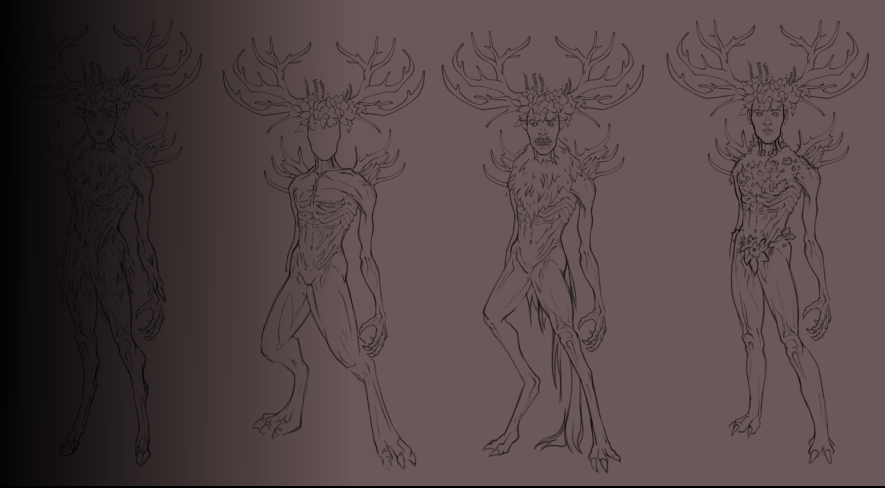


THE SPIRIT

The Spirit monster took six months to design and create. It started with the director, Jesse Aultman, and concept designer, Iva Risek. They started collaborating in January of 2022, looking through mythology, biblical stories and monster movies for inspiration. The key for them was to create something that was scary but also had the power, grace and majesty of a God. This resulted in a creature with an almost human appearance, leaning into the idea that we created in the image of God.

In April 2022, they turned over the design to special effects artist Patrick Bradberry. Patrick and his team spent two and a half months compiling the materials, refining and perfecting every detail of the design.

On the actual day of filming, the monster makeup took six hours to set up and apply. The costume is made up of a variety of prosthetics from RBFX Studio and deer antlers that had to be 3D printed separately. Once ready, the actor, Bries Vannon, had to be driven via ATV to the set due to his limited mobility in the suit.



GENRE

HORROR, MYSTERY

RUNTIME

17 MINUTES 29 SECONDS

COMPLETION DATE

30TH JANUARY 2023

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

USA

LANGUAGE

ENGLISH

SHOOTING FORMAT

DIGITAL

ASPECT RATIO

2.39:1

FILM COLOR

COLOR

AUDIO

5.1 SURROUND SOUND

SCREENING FORMAT

DCP, DNxHD, H.264

SPECIFICATIONS

CAST

SAM - CHRISTOPHER DIETRICK

LILAH - CHLOE BALDWIN

PASTOR JACOB - ANTHONY GAETA

THE SPIRIT - BRIES VANNON

EVE - LYNDA GIBSON

CULT MEMBERS - LENA LARK, CARL

EZOLD, MICHAEL EVANS

KEY CREW

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
JESSE AULTMAN

PRODUCED BY

BRYCE FERENDO, ROBIN WANG, AN-
GUS YATES LINE PRODUCED BY ASLAN
DALGIC, JEFFERY JIANG

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY

JONATHAN E. MCCORMACK

PRODUCTION DESIGN BY

JOY TAN

EDITED BY

MARIE LESSEL

SPECIAL EFFECTS BY

PATRICK BRADBERRY

COSTUME DESIGN BY

MEREDITH HEIKA

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY

ETHAN HARBOUR

SOUND DESIGN BY

BUNTHOEUN REAL

SOUND MIXED BY

YORKSON LIU

1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR -

ZANDER PADGET

2ND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS -

KENT MACIEJCZYK, YAXING LIN

GAFFER - J.ZACHARY THURMAN

ART DIRECTOR - SHAN JIANG

VFX ARTIST - CECILY LO

COLORED BY CHAOCHEN LI

CREDIT LIST



RECIPIENT OF THE FOX FELLOWSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND AND
THE IRVING LERNER ENDOWMENT FUND.



THE SPIRIT BECAME FLESH



Christopher Dietrick, Chloe Baldwin, Anthony Gaeta, Bries Vannon

Music by Elias Hakkar, Production Design by Jay Tan

Special Effects by Patrick Bui-Hoang, Special Design by Donalena Reid

Edited by Marie Louise, Cinematography by Jonathan F. McCormack

Produced by Deyo Torado, Robin Wang, Angus Yates, Written and Directed by Jesse Aultman

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PASSWORD THE SPIRIT

CONTACT INFO