

SCREAM THERAPY

World Premiere | 2023 Dances With Films Festival



Directed by
Cassie Keet

Written by
Cassie Keet

Produced by

Benjamin Dunn, Brian Flaccus, Cassie Keet, Claire Dellamar, Chadwick Hopson, Mandie Cheung

Starring

Brian Flaccus, Claire Dellamar, Geri Courney-Austin, Harley Bronwyn, Mandie Cheung, Rochelle Anderson, Skyler Bible

Festival Screenings:

Dances With Films World Premiere Screening – Friday, June 23rd, 2023 at 9:15pm PST at TCL Chinese 6 Theaters

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SYNOPSIS

After AVERY (Harley Bronwyn) breaks up with her boyfriend of seven years when he expresses no plans for marriage in the future, her best friends NORA (Claire Dellamar), DYLAN (Mandie Cheung), MARYBETH (Geri Courtney-Austein), and GILLIAN (Rochelle Anderson) whisk her away to the Wonder Valley desert for a weekend of drinking, drugs, and restorative scream therapy. Their vacation takes a sharp turn when they cross paths with JEREMIAH (Brian Flaccus) and ZACHARIAH (Skyler Bible), demon-worshiping incels who are on a very pressing human sacrifice deadline. When the ritual goes horribly wrong (for the incels), the ladies are left with two choices: find sacrifices of their own, or have their souls ripped out when the sun rises. With only hours to complete an impossible task, the best friends will have to defeat desert psychos, conspiracy theorist lunatics, and the incel cult leader THE SOVEREIGN (David St. James) to survive.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have always loved movies. The two websites I visited when we first got the internet at my childhood home in Little Rock, Arkansas were IMDB and RogerEbert.com. The third website I visited was a geocities website about the real-life Amityville Murders, so it should come as no surprise to anyone reading this that I love horror films in particular. Supernatural horror, slashers, monster movies, horror comedies— I have a special place in my heart for all things genre. While I started my writing career as a playwright, I knew I wanted to eventually transition into writing for the screen so I could see my own genre film dreams turned into a reality. Taking that into perspective, it makes a strange sort of sense that the world had to end for me to realize that I wanted to *make* a movie.

Let me explain.

In more than a decade of living in Los Angeles, I had worn many production hats: writing, acting, casting, and producing projects that I worked on. (I got a BA in theatre from FSU, so I knew how to make my own projects with zero money.) But in all of that time, I had never really directed a project in a serious capacity. I had co-directed a short for Whoa Man!, a sketch team that I am a founding member of, but other than that, I had no real experience. It wasn't that I didn't want to step behind the camera— it's that the thought had literally never occurred to me. I was a writer and an actor; directors were people who went to film school and said mysterious things like "let's get tighter on her face." Sure, I had been told my action lines in scripts were directorial (said more than once in a negative way) but I didn't consider actually directing a possibility. It felt beyond my scope. I was content doing the work I was used to doing. No one likes change.

Then, March 2020 happened. Change had come, whether I liked it or not. (I think I can speak for the global population when I say we did NOT like it.) I was trapped inside during a pandemic, thousands of miles from my family, writing grief articles for a cemetery to make extra money. Two things kept me sane during this time: watching weekly trashy movies over zoom with friends (a tradition we had started pre-pandemic) and Flashlight Chats. Flashlight Chats was a weekly zoom meeting of people gathering to tell spooky stories. One of the short stories I wrote, *He Knows*, turned into my first

short film as a director. I'm forever grateful to my incredible production partners Claire, Mandie, and the TKY boys (Brian, Chadwick, and Ben) for encouraging me and supporting me during this production.

Right after *He Knows* wrapped, I sat down with the same creative team and pitched them *Scream Therapy*, a fever dream of a movie I had cooked up while in isolation and on Twitter way too much. My feed was constantly being updated with news of alt-right incel trolls threatening our democracy and women's rights essentially being put through a shredder. I was furious and terrified and missing my closest female friends, and *Scream Therapy* was a direct result of these feelings. I wanted to write a script that showed the strength and resiliency of female friendship and how it can survive anything, from breakups to abduction by an incel cult. Too many movies "about women" end up being retreads of misogynistic ideas: petty arguing, tearing each other down, and an inevitable Act Three Fight when everyone turns on each other. That's never really rang true to me. Sure, women disagree all the time, but if you've ever been in a bar bathroom late at night, you know that women are each other's biggest cheerleaders. I've been blessed with incredible female friendships, and I wanted the script to reflect that love and care. *Scream Therapy* is, at its heart, a celebration of women and their support for each other. That, and sacrificing people to demons. It is also very much about that.

The turn around for this feature was stupidly short. Our first table read was on August 4th, with our first day of on-set production October 12th. That's insane. And yet somehow, two months of pre-production handled by six lunatics resulted in this bizarre indie gem that we couldn't be more proud of. We were on a shoestring budget: the money we were able to get from investors and our own pockets went into location costs (go say hi to Kevin Bone at Palms Restaurant in 29 Palms!) and crafty. The rest of the budget was made up of our hopes and dreams. You'd think that would have limited us creatively, but instead we were able to work with the kind of like-minded passionate creators who were just as ready to go on an adventure as we were. It turned into summer camp film school with a dozen weirdos running around Wonder Valley, a desert destination so deep in the desert that most people haven't heard of it. The closest town was thirty miles away; we were screaming at the full moon in the middle of the Mojave. It was glorious. We were able to forget about the pandemic for those two weeks. It was just us and a script and a skeleton crew and some of the most talented actors in all of Christendom (lookin' at you, Claire, Mandie, Rochelle, Geri, Harley, Brian, and Skyler)!

So there you have it. The world ended, and as a result I wrote and directed an insane genre blend of comedy, supernatural horror, feminism, and Nicolas Cage adulation. (I even got to say "get tighter on her face!" Directing is fun!) *Scream Therapy* is the kind of movie I love watching with my friends (Trashy Tuesday for life). It's a movie that I would have scoured geocities for behind the scenes stories about (oh, there are so many stories to tell). I hope that it brings you as much joy watching it as we experienced filming it.

Much love,
Cassie Keet

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

CASSIE KEET (Director, Writer, Producer, Acid Knife)

Cassie Keet's writing career started in early AOL chat rooms when, at the age of twelve, she role-played as Willow from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Since then, her award-winning work has been performed in Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Seattle, and London. Short films she's written (*We Die Alone*, *Mine*, and *Worst Case Scenario*) have been screened in festivals around the world. *He Knows*, the horror short she wrote and directed, premiered at Telluride Horror festival and won the audience award at HorrorHaus Film Festival. Her first narrative podcast *The Doctor is In* will star Alison Pill, with management company Mosaic helping produce. When she's not writing screenplays, pilots, short films, plays, and the occasional tasteless haiku, you can find her acting with JFC Productions, as well as appearing on your small screen (*Ray Donovan*, *The Fosters*, *Mixology*, *Jane the Virgin*, *Grand Crew*). A supernatural genre nerd at heart, Cassie is obsessed with telling the complicated stories of complicated women.

CLAIRE DELLAMAR (Producer, Nora)

Claire Dellamar is an actress, writer and producer. She has written and produced several short films, a web series and many comedic digital shorts. Her short film *Jezebel* enjoyed a robust festival run, during which it took home multiple awards including the *Best Actress* award at Fright Fest and *Best Short Film* at LA Thriller Fest. It premiered on the horror short film platform ALTER and has amassed over 3 million views.

She is also one of the founding members of the sketch comedy groups *Whoa Man* and *Such Great Friends*.

Most recently Claire starred in and produced the short film *He Knows*, which is currently on its festival run, premiering at the *Telluride Horror Fest*.

Claire has been featured in multiple national commercial campaigns, including *Discover Card*, *Think Thin*, *Verizon* and most recently *Butterfinger*, and can be seen in the new Peacock series *Ted*, written and directed by Seth Macfarlane.

MANDIE CHEUNG (Producer, Dylan)

Mandie is an actress, writer, and producer originally from Minnesota. Her short film *Other* has won several awards including the Building Bridges award from Fascinasian Film Festival and Best Drama Short at the San Diego Movie Awards. She also is one of the founding members of the sketch comedy groups *Whoa Man* and *Such Great Friends*.

BENJAMIN DUNN (Producer)

Benjamin Dunn is a producer of multiple award-winning short films including, "*The Forgotten Place*" (30 Film Festival Awards from around the world and Oscar Qualifying), "*These Final Hours*" (NAACP Award Nomination and Oscar Qualifier) and "*Merit x Zoe*" (Currently being adapted into a feature film starring Ed Harris, Sonequa Martin-Green and Natalie Morales). Benjamin has also worked on such TV Shows as, "*Jury Duty*" and "*Curb Your Enthusiasm*".

BRIAN FLACCUS (Executive Producer, Jeremiah)

Brian Flaccus is a writer, actor, and filmmaker in Los Angeles. After graduating with a BA in linguistics, he has taken his love of language to the page by writing and producing four award-winning feature films including HOW WE MET and ALEX & JAIME. He co-founded The Knights Young Productions, and produced two Oscar qualifying short films in 2022 and garnered an NAACP Image Award Nomination for writing the short film THESE FINAL HOURS. Since 2020 he produced two new features; GURUS and SCREAM THERAPY, to be released in 2023. Brian's acting credits include TV roles on NBC's HARRY'S LAW, CBS's THREE RIVERS, and Disney's WIZARDS OF WAVERLY PLACE, as well as appearing in the Farrelly Brothers' MOVIE 43, and the Key and Peele film, KEANU.

CHADWICK HOPSON (Executive Producer)

Chadwick Hopson is a graduate of Daemen College in Buffalo, NY. He is a filmmaker and co-founder of The Knights Young Productions, along with his childhood friend and collaborator Brian Flaccus. He's written and produced four award-winning feature films, including HOW WE MET, ALEX & JAIME, and THE CABIN STAY; and over 15 short films, including two Oscar-qualifying short films in 2022 and was recently honored with The *Graduate of the Last Decade* from his alma mater.

ADDITIONAL CAST

HARLEY BRONWYN (Avery)

Harley Bronwyn is an award winning actor, artist, and self proclaimed "Scream Queen." Originally from New York, she received her BFA from University of Washington and has studied at multiple renowned acting schools. You can catch her in national commercials for brands such as Plan B, Sofi, and Las Vegas, on Lifetime's *Mistletoe in Montana* with Melissa Joan Hart, and in the upcoming horror-comedy, *Glass Casa*.

GERI COURTNEY-AUSTEIN (Marybeth)

Geri Courtney-Austein is an actor, director, voiceover artist and passionate storyteller. She can be seen on hit TV shows like *Better Call Saul* (AMC), *Atypical* (Netflix), *This Close* (Sundance Now) and *Scream Queens* (Fox) to name a few. She starred alongside Michael Dorman and Sophia Bush in the feature *Hard Luck Love Song* and voiced the lead in the Internationally released animated feature, *The Little Sorcerer*. She is the host and producer of the hit monthly variety comedy show, *Twin Flames*, the creator of the sex positive podcast, *Finding My Yum*, and the producer and director of the digital action comedy series, *James Blondes*.

ROCHELLE ANDERSON (Gillian)

Rochelle Anderson is an actress and singer originally hailing from the Pacific Northwest, although she has been fortunate to call several places (and continents) home. She received her B.A. in Theatre Arts and Drama from Washington State University, studied acting and film at Richmond University in London, and currently trains as a part of Anthony Meindl's Actor's Workshop Masterclass. Most recently Rochelle continued her true love of horror by starring in the *Scream* fan film, *Scream: The Fan Favorite*, which is in post-production. She has been

featured in several commercials in recent years, including promotions for Aflac, Hulu, Samsung, and Netflix's *6 Underground* with Ryan Reynolds.

SKYLER BIBLE (Zachariah)

Known for his role as 'Fixer' in *Star Wars: The Book of Boba Fett*, Skyler Bible is a Native American actor/stuntman whose varied lovable and distressed characters have been seen around the world at international festivals, streaming, and on the big screen.

Whether it's a begrudging officer starring with actor/director Jim Cummings' in Orion Pictures' horror comedy *The Wolf of Snow Hollow*, or portraying Richard Gordon (*Apollo 12*) next to Ryan Gosling in *Damien Chazelle's First Man*, being on set is like a 2nd home to him.

DAVID ST. JAMES (The Sovereign)

DAVID ST. JAMES has performed roles in more than 130 films and television shows, his TV favorites being a recurring butler on "I Love That for You", a recurring villainous Republican on "The West Wing" and a recurring villainous teacher on "iCarly". Favorite films include "Transformers 3," "SWAT," "Donnie Darko," "Alien Resurrection," "Contact" and "L.A. Confidential." Onstage, David appeared in "The Illusion" at The El Portal, at Theatre Neo in "Why Marry?" and "Shakespeare in Hollywood" as God, in "Beat For Sparrows" at Ivy Substation, and as Howard Hughes in "Howard Hughes In Hel" at Theatre 40. He and his wife Tami own and operate a thriving massage parlor in Koreatown.

JOAN KUBICEK (Billie)

Joan has appeared in ads for Omaze, AudioGo, Midea, and two cannabis companies (A Pot For Pot and Weedmaps), because she probably seems like the sort of broad who needs the stuff. She's also provided voiceover work for NatGeo, Saks+Vogue, and the Truth: Anti-Juul campaign, has popped up in oodles of theater and sketch shows around L.A., and has competed on four game shows (to "don't quit your day job" results). Writing-wise, Joan's ramblings have graced *Vulture*, *Thrillist*, *Collider*, and *the Wildest*. She's delighted to be part of this "Scream Therapy" adventure.

CREDITS

Directed by
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Written by
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Produced by
Cassie Keet
Benjamin Dunn
Claire Dellamar
Mandie Cheung

Brian Flaccus
Chadwick Hopson

Executive Producers

George Goley
Melissa Dunn
Jim Keet
Josh Bangle

DP

Alex Laya

Cast

Harley Bronwyn
Claire Dellamar
Mandie Cheung
Geri Courtney-Austein
Rochelle Anderson
Brian Flaccus
Skyler Bible
Joan Kubicek
David St. James
Shayn Herndon
Benjamin Dunn
Steve Jensen
Jake Ynzunza
Grey Hill
Ben Cichowski
Tyler Hansen
Kevin Bone

SONGS

"Can I Borrow Your Guillotine"

Written and performed by The Sibleys;
Courtesy of Amboy Road Records

"Move On"

Written and performed by Camille Trust;
Courtesy of Trust Records

"Another Wonder Valley Song"

Written and performed by Lindsey Andersen.
Courtesy of Lindsey Andersen

"Puff is Dead (Instrumental)"

Written and performed by The Sibleys;
Courtesy of Amboy Road Records

"I Live Alone (Instrumental)"

Written and performed by The Sibleys;
Courtesy of Amboy Road Records

"A Band Named Dog (Instrumental)"

Written and performed by The Sibleys;
Courtesy of Amboy Road Records"

"Black Kawasaki (Instrumental)"

Written and performed by The Sibleys;
Courtesy of Amboy Road Records

SPECIAL THANKS

Jim & Margaret Keet, Tommy & Susannah Keet, Jake & Stephanie Keet, Chase & Charles, Crocker, Kayla Rosenberg, AMAW, Flashlight Chats, Kevin Bone, Laura Sibley Bone, Ben Vaughn, The Palms Restaurant, Wonder Domes, Chelsea Hayes, The Community of Wonder Valley



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SCREAM THERAPY

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