



THE LAST BEYOND

A FILM BY GRAHAM DUBOSE



SYNOPSIS

A meditation on death, rebirth and the loss of identity for two American icons: the cowboy and the American Indian. Starring Noah Watts (SKINS, THE SLAUGHTER RULE) as Joe Running Elk and Pend d'Oreille elder Stephen Small Salmon as Flying Bear, this 30s era western drama takes us on a journey that reveals our connection to the world beyond. One of only two films to highlight Pend d'Oreille Salish, a critically endangered language.

USA | 2019 | Color | 88 min | 2:39:1 | English & Pend d'Oreille Salish



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Death is never final for the living. Memories and dreams of the dead follow us. The space where those memories and dreams live, both the living and the dead inhabit; that space is *The Last Beyond*.

In my first feature, I wanted to explore that space.

Growing up on a South Carolina farm, at an early age I started pondering death, as well as birth. Neither was ever sanitized or sugarcoated, and I realized death makes room for new life, an inflection point in a cycle rather than an ending.

The story takes place during the Great Depression, with America at its own inflection point. At the beginning of the twentieth century, almost fifty percent of Americans lived or worked on farms; today it is closer to one percent. That massive transition happened almost overnight, during the early years of the Great Depression.

Much like today, it was a time of intense volatility, restlessness, anger and despair. Then, as now, people grappled with who we are as Americans. *THE LAST BEYOND* addresses a loss of identity for two American icons: the American Indian and the cowboy.

Both were defined by self-sufficiency but mostly by their deep connection to the land. When they lose property, they forego all that they are. In our story, the American Indian and cowboy – in a desperate bid to restore themselves – undertake an enterprise that renders them fugitives from twentieth century America.

In *THE LAST BEYOND* we lead audiences on a quest to rekindle the identity of these two icons, and explore a love story that extends beyond the edge of death.

GRAHAM DUBOSE



FILMMAKER BIOS

Writer-Director

GRAHAM DUBOSE is a painter-turned-filmmaker who grew up on a cattle farm in rural South Carolina.

He studied at the Savannah College of Art and Design. While there he made SAMSON, a Southern Gothic short which premiered at the Director's Fortnight of the Cannes Film Festival.

THE LAST BEYOND is his first feature.

Producer and Editor

S.K. DUBOSE is a writer-producer and entrepreneur.

After honing her writing discipline at the University of Oxford, she founded NuNuMi, an online film and television network based in Los Angeles.

She was a production manager in commercials, a below-the-line manager in indie film and television, and producer of short films including HOPE TO DIE (nominee, Best Short Film, Deauville Film Festival) before joining Graham in making their first feature, THE LAST BEYOND.



CAST BIOS



Chris Snyder



Jolene Andersen



Noah Watts



Stephen Small Salmon

CHRIS SNYDER, a former minor league pitcher from South Carolina, plays Stratton Eiseley in *THE LAST BEYOND*. Chris has appeared in *THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER*, *BELLFLOWER*, *Entourage*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Dawson's Creek*. Chris recently wrote a screenplay that focuses on the forced removal of the Cherokee from the Southeast during the Trail of Tears.

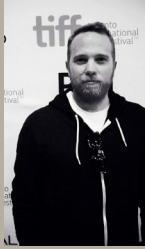
JOLENE ANDERSEN got her start as a fashion model and made her acting debut as Gracie Loren in *THE LAST BEYOND*. She has starred in *PRODIGY* (2016), *DRONE WARS* (2017), had a guest role on *Queen of the South* (2016), a recurring role on *The Nine Lives of Chloe King* and starred in the hit video game *Resident Evil 2*.

NOAH WATTS plays Joe Running Elk in *THE LAST BEYOND*. A member of the Crow and Blackfeet tribes, Noah Watts grew up in Bozeman, Montana and got involved in acting at a young age. He has appeared in *THE SLAUGHTER RULE* with Ryan Gosling, *SKINS* directed by Chris Eyre, and *THE DOME OF HEAVEN* with Wes Studi. He also stars as the lead character Connor Kenway in the hit video game *Assassin's Creed III*.

A Pend d'Oreille elder on the Salish-Kootenai reservation, STEPHEN SMALL SALMON, portrays Joe's grandfather Flying Bear in *THE LAST BEYOND*. Stephen is a storyteller, singer, and traditional dancer. He is one of the last living speakers of Pend d'Oreille Salish, a critically endangered Native language spoken onscreen throughout *THE LAST BEYOND*. Most days you will find Stephen teaching children at the N'kwusm Salish Language Immersion School. Now eighty years old, he remains committed to passing on his language and culture on to future generations.



CREW BIOS



Lyn Moncrief



Katy Boc



Gordy Haab



Adam Sanborne

Cinematographer

LYN MONCRIEF is an American cinematographer based in Los Angeles. He holds an MFA in Cinematography from the AFI Conservatory and is a member of the International Cinematographers Guild. His work as a Director of Photography has taken him around the world, shooting in Europe, Asia, and North America. He has compiled an eclectic body of work, including over 50 narrative feature films, documentaries, music videos and short films. Lyn has earned over a dozen awards for his work including the coveted Kodak Visions of Light Award.

Composers

KATY BOC NICKERSON is a classically trained violinist and folk singer who studied with world-renowned violin pedagogue Kato Havas in Oxford, England before receiving a BM in viola performance from UT Austin. This is Katy's first composition for film.

GORDY HAAB is an award-winning composer and orchestrator whose latest projects have included the scores for two installments in the Star Wars: Battlefront series of video games. In addition to Battlefront II, Haab has scored music for the games Halo Wars 2 (2017), Star Wars: Battlefront (2015) and Star Wars: The Old Republic (2011). Through his work, he's earned five GDC Game Audio Network Guild Awards, including Music of the Year and Best Original Soundtrack, and a BAFTA nomination for Excellence in Audio Achievement.

ADAM SANBORNE has been composing music and sound design extensively in both television and film for more than a decade in Los Angeles. His body of work reveals a highly eclectic array of musical genres and soundscapes. Adam skillfully crafts and blends styles of all shapes and forms including orchestral, rock, dance, electro and the absurd. He has composed for several TV shows including PROJECT RUNWAY (Seasons 7-12), THE SIMPLE LIFE (Seasons 3-5), and cult favorite ROBOT CHICKEN (Seasons 1-4).



DIRECTOR Q&A

What is the film about?

It's an intimate western set in Montana during the Great Depression about death, love, and rebirth. We follow a rancher named Stratton Eiseley who loses his father to illness and his ranch to foreclosure setting him adrift. Shortly after he meets three people and they change each other's lives. Joe Running Elk and his grand father Flying Bear are Pend o'Reille Indians who like Stratton feel like they're living in a world that has left them behind. They become fugitives from twentieth century America and take to the mountains to make whiskey and restore their connection to the land. As Stratton falls in love with a writer named Gracie Loren it seems that their lives are improving, but trouble follows them.

On the one hand it has some superficial aspects of a western: it's set in Montana, there are cowboy hats, guns, grizzly bears, a corrupt sheriff, moonshine... but while we feature the majestic West throughout the film, it ultimately becomes more about an internal spiritual landscape. That is what the title refers to - 'the last beyond' is the space both inside of us and in between us - the space that connects people whose love transcends time and space and even death.

Why is this a personal movie for you?

The two most personal things for me are the love story and Stratton coping with the death of his father and confronting his own mortality. Stratton and Gracie's love story is at least partly based on Sara and I and my feelings about love. When we connect on a deep level there is a feeling of timelessness,

that your love spreads out in all directions into the past and future at the same time.

It is also that way with a parent and child.

When I wrote the opening of the movie where Stratton lays his father to rest, my father was still alive. But in 2014, during the long post production period, I learned that my father had cancer. He passed away less than two months after it was detected. Once I was no longer dealing with the awful practicalities of my father's death, I thought a lot about the effect it had on me. When you lose someone you love that deeply, you realize how much you carry them with you everywhere even after their death, maybe especially after their death. The Last Beyond refers to the space that connects us to people we love beyond time and space and beyond death.

Why the Great Depression? Why tell this story now?

The Great Depression was a time of tremendous upheaval and change that bears quite a bit of resemblance to now and the years since the Great Recession. There was a tremendous wealth disparity, huge technological change, whole segments of the economy disappeared, there was a lot of extremism just like now.

Now in the movie, we really don't delve deep into this stuff, it's really more about the lives of these characters. That's where the meat is to me. I'm very interested in the broad stuff, but it's really about how that environment affects them.

During times of upheaval we discover what's really important. It strips away everything. We find out who we are and who we love apart from time and space.

Two of the four main characters are Native Americans and the story is framed around a Native ceremony and myth. As a white guy from South Carolina, what made you want to write these characters?

I have been interested in Native American culture for as long as I can remember. It's hard to say for sure what drew me to it.

What I can say is as a kid, all I wanted to do was to be outside wandering through the woods and swamps, camping and floating down the river. My own culture didn't make sense to me. The timber business is big where I grew up and I was always very upset when they would log another tract of pine trees. I was drawn to a culture that was completely based around reverence for nature and always seeking a balance between the needs of humans and the needs of ecosystems. So my initial fascination with Native culture is admittedly a romanticized one, but again I was a kid.

As I grew up, the interest evolved. Until I was older, I was like most Americans who are blissfully ignorant about reservation life and the difficulties that have faced Native people throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

In telling this story I wanted to both pay homage to the importance of nature in Indigenous culture, and also tell the story of a people who did not disappear when the frontier ended. They were here in the 1930's and they are here today.

I understand principal photography took place in 2004, why did it take 15 years to finish the film?

That's not an easy one to answer. There is a litany of reasons why the film took so long to finish, some to do with money, some with life, some technical, but the most significant was crippling depression, doubt, and insecurity.

Depression is something I have struggled with my entire adult life and only just now in 2019 that I am finally coming out of it, I realize just how significantly it has affected my life and my work. It seemed like I was in a perpetual feedback loop like Sisyphus endlessly pushing a boulder up a mountain, only to watch it roll back down again. Every step of the way in post-production felt like that kind of monumental task. For many years we were unable to afford to work on the movie continuously for more than a few months at a time, then one or both of us would have to find a job for a while. Whenever we came back to the film after not working on it for an extended period, I would second guess the work we had been doing and very often we would start over; we'd pull it all apart and put it back together again.

It went on like that for years and years. Eventually after numerous rejections, I stopped trying to make the film what I thought other people wanted to see. I was getting older and wondering if this would be the first and last feature film I would ever do, so I realized I just wanted to make it the best film it could be purely for myself. Which of course is what I should have been doing all along, but it is much easier to see that now.

The biggest thing that happened to pull me out of the rut was the combination of my father dying and my children being born all within a few years of each other. There was a succession of massive life events one right after the other and they each gave me a great deal of clarity and grounded me.

