

PRESS KIT

BIOS

Michael Bonomo, Director/Writer

With ten short films, and two music videos, under his belt, Michael recently completed work on his directorial debut. The feature film, Assassins was born out of a short film, by the same name. His love of film started way back at the tender age of four. He was left alone to channel surf, when he stumbled across the horror flick, Zombie Lake. From there he was off and running. After years of watching as many movies as he could, Michael left the East Coast and moved to Los Angeles to pursue the craft of film-making and expand his film knowledge.

Dave Grant, Writer

David Grant has spent the better part of his life watching films. An avid cineaste since childhood, David has written about films for many years, launching his own website in 2009, www.filmsthatwitnessmadness.com., where he reviews films covering multiple genres. He is currently at work on his first non-fiction book, Death Stalked the Cinema: the Evolution of the Italian Giallo Film. ASSASSINS is his first produced screenplay.

Ann T Nguyen, Producer

Ann Nguyen is a Los Angeles-based interactive media expert producing online content since 2008. Ann has produced narrative projects including several web series, shorts and independent music videos. An Applied Mathematics graduate from the University of California at Berkeley, Ann's versatile expertise in both the business and the creative realm are amplified by her experience in interactive media.

Jonathan Lee Smith, Producer

Jonathan Lee Smith (Jon Smith) has enjoyed his work in the entertainment industry for over 14 years. With a background in live production he started producing TV and Film in 2005, further developing his passion and skill set with each project. Working on multiple unscripted shows on over 4 continents, he has since gone onto become a Showrunner and is the founder of HopLite Entertainment based in West Hollywood CA.

Working on unscripted, animated, narrative, and feature content, Smith is known for being very hands on with an aggressive approach to story telling.

He has also produced or directed various music videos and commercials, both domestically and internationally.

Married to actress Jane Park Smith, they currently reside in CA with their dog Rocky (who also works in the entertainment industry).

David Pesta, Lead Actor (Christopher)

David Pesta has been putting on plays in his backyard since he was five when he originated the role of Splinter in his adaptation of TNMT: Beneath These Streets. Much later on he would move to Los Angeles with his pet rat, George Lazenby, to pursue a professional acting career. He has trained at Stella Adler Academy of Acting and the University of Southern California. Recent projects include Tyler Pavey's The Phoenix Project and

Christopher Davis's *Bedlam*. He loves Tennessee Williams and thinks Shakespeare is boring and best forgotten.

Andre Tenerelli, Lead Actor (Simon)

Andre's list of credits include: CBS' "The Bold and the Beautiful," Asylum Films' "Nazis at the Center of the Earth," playing alongside Jake Busey and Dominique Swain, "Echo Dr." and "The Vortex."

Bill Oberst Jr., Lead Actor (Hargraves)

Bill Oberst Jr. (born William Oberst Jr on November 21, 1965) is an American stage, film and television actor of German descent. Known for his work in horror and cult films, his career includes projects in film, television and one-man-show theater performances. He first received recognition for his portrayals of icon and humorist Lewis Grizzard as performed in theatrical tours across the Southern United States. His role as the creepy 'Facebook Stalker' in the online interactive video film *Take This Lollipop*, which uses the Facebook Connect application to bring viewers themselves into the film through use of their own pictures and messages from Facebook, brought him widespread attention after the project received multiple Webby Awards nominations, three awards at SXSW and a 2012 Daytime Emmy Award.

Kristen Baum

Kristen is a Sundance Fellow (Composers Lab) and a classically trained pianist with a master of music in theory and composition. She is an LA-based film composer with two passions: music and movies.

"I am extremely passionate about the music I create and about writing music for film" she says.

Since moving to LA, Kristen has worked closely with film composer Christopher Young. She wrote additional music (source) for *Book of Eli* and orchestrated on *Priest* and *When in Rome*. Kristen wrote the score for the dramedy *As High as the Sky*, which won several audience choice awards on the festival circuit in addition to winning Juror's Choice for Best North American Feature at Sonoma International Film Festival. Her score for *The Things You Lose in the Ocean* was awarded a Gold Metal for Excellence in Original Music.

While Kristen is passionate about fantasy film scores, she is frequently called on to create scores for dramas, thrillers and stories with supernatural elements. Her recently-scored project, *Assassins*, a sleek noir/thriller for director Michael Bonomo's feature debut is now on the festival circuit.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This passion project stemmed from the award winning short film with the same name, *ASSASSINS*. We found that the short film leant itself to a much bigger story. The story seemed to come together with ease while working together with co-writer Dave Grant. We're both huge noir fans and love the rich anti-heroes, cinematography, atmosphere, twists and turns. We also wanted to take the opportunity to explore flipping classic noir tropes on their head.

One of the most interesting parts of the whole process is that when an actor is auditioning using your words, you know that they're right for the role when you hear it and see it. Each cast member brought the pages to life and gave the characters their own unique twist.

Beyond the cast, the crew was crucial to the creation of the film; notably, Noel Maitland's eye, and Kristen Baum's ear. Noel, the cinematographer, introduced unique blends of art house styles and traditional noir visuals. That allowed the cinematography to become its own character. Kristen, the composer, mixed haunting electronic elements with jazz notes that are core components of noir films.

Once the pieces started coming together, it made all the sleepless nights and long days worth it. I was lucky enough to work with a very talented group of people. Over the course of creating the film we became more than just co-workers, we became friends.

END CREDITS

See separate file "EndCredits.docx"

LONG AND SHORT SYNOPSIS

Long:

Life changed for Chris that Thursday evening.

The brutal murder of his ex-girlfriend Erin has left him shaken. Chris is haunted by the face of a man he doesn't know, just a stranger he saw walking down the street moments before he opened the door to his ex-girlfriend's apartment

A week later, Chris finds himself faced with yet another stranger, a bounty hunter. The bounty hunter's name is Simon and the information he shares chills Chris to the bone. The murderer is a contract killer named Hargraves. The fact that Chris has seen his face can only mean one thing: he will be coming to make sure Chris doesn't share what he knows

Simon offers Chris protection. Fearing for his life, Chris accepts Simon's offer. As the cat and mouse game between a determined bounty hunter and a cold blooded killer intensifies, Chris begins to realize that he isn't just a man caught in a terrifying situation. He's nothing more than bait for a killer.

Short:

Following the brutal murder of his girlfriend, a timid young man finds himself the unwilling pawn in a bloody power struggle between a dangerous bounty hunter and a ruthless assassin.

TAGLINE/COPY

Two men. One target. Each other.

TECHNICAL SPECS FOR BOTH VISUAL AND AUDIO

ProRes 4444; Stereo

AWARDS

2014 Los Angeles Thriller Film Fest - 1st Place Feature Film

FESTIVALS

2014 Los Angeles Thriller Film Fest - 1st Place Feature Film

2014 NYC Chain Film Festival - Official selection

2014 Long Beach International Film Festival - Official selection

2014 Temecula Valley International Film & Music Festival - Official selection

REVIEWS

MatchFlick

Movie Review by [Mike Thomas](#) 

June 2nd, 2014



The Enemy Of My Enemy Is My Enemy?

Favorite Movie Quote: "Right now, you are the most dangerous man in the world to the most dangerous man in the world!"

A quiet kitchen. A man walks in, pours himself a glass of water, and sits down, away from the gun now pointed at the back of his head. What follows is the most tense game of cat-and-mouse-and-cat-and-mouse in a game where there will be only one winner.

Roll Credits.

The one thing that director Michael Bonomo can do, is tell the story, and tell the story well. Working from a script co-written by Dave Grant and Bonomo, ASSASSINS is the story of Chris Collins (David Pesta), and his being in the wrong place at the wrong time. After walking in on a crime scene, namely, the lifeless bodies from the aftermath of the sloppy assassination of his girlfriend at the hands of a novice killer (Stephen Katz), his world is turned upside down on a crazy train, totally out of his control.

But it gets worse. He meets Simon (Andre Tenerelli), a deceptively smiling figure, who has a major boner for the mastermind of the twin murders (indie horror icon Bill Oberst Jr.), whom he has been pursuing for nearly a decade. As more bad luck would have it, Chris is the only person alive who has seen Hargraves (Oberst), and that makes him very valuable to Simon and very dangerous to Hargraves. As Chris is forced to "work" with Simon, Chris questions who presents the most danger to him.

Story-wise, writer Grant must take the lion's share of the story credit, and proves to be quite the master story-teller. He takes the aspects of THE USUAL SUSPECTS, CLUE, SAW, and TEN LITTLE INDIANS, and keeps the questions going until the very, very end. Oberst and Tenerelli are two sides of the same coin; Oberst, the businessman assassin Hargraves, and Tenerelli, Simon, the wild card. Pesta has the unfortunate task of being

between a crazy rock and a hard psycho, watching his world spiral faster and faster down this bloody rabbit hole. The chase, rather, the chess game, goes on and on, with the pawns falling by the wayside as callously and as faceless as an actual game of chess. The climax is a guaranteed head snapper, as the last man standing is revealed.

Production-wise, Bonomo is minimalist in scenery and music. There was nothing to distract from the story. One of the first casualties in an independent film is the cutting of a fight choreographer, as it is considered a "luxury" as fights can be fudged due to budgetary constraints. Luckily, Bonomo enlisted the services of Jonathan Lee Smith, one of the film's producers, for the crucial fight scene at the climax of the film. The two protagonists put on a very convincing display, credited to some specialized choreography and some deft editing. There were some minor sound issues in the beginning of the film; but if that was the only flaw this reviewer found in this crime drama, this reviewer would call this film pristine.

On my personal rating scale of with "5" being drop everything and see the video now; if you're female, bear the producers' children and "0" being burn down the theater, murder the staff, and violate their dog, this movie earns a "5," using my Patented Bell Curve for Independent Short films, wishing this reviewer could give it a higher rating. ASSASSINS is the feature-length treatment to its namesake short film produced a few years ago, and is to crime films as INTERVIEW was for dramas. This reviewer loves the two-person drama, and with ASSASSINS, you get a dual two-person drama, both seemingly unrelated to each other until the very, very end.

The film is unrated, but laced with very coarse language, violence, both callously casual and violently vicious, some mild gore, but no sex or nudity. It should play well to intelligent filmgoers, who want more from their entertainment than explosions, CGI, and gore.

ASSASSINS stars Bill Oberst Jr., Dove Meir, Stephen Katz, Bridgette Campbell, Andre Tenerelli, Katie Molinaro, David Pesta, Vincente DiSanti, Tristan James Butler, Stephen Katz. Co-Written by Dave Grant and Michael Bonomo, and directed by Bonomo, the film will be making the rounds very soon.

Link: <http://www.matchflick.com/movie-review/24643-17390>

Cinematic Shocks

MONDAY, 9 JUNE 2014

Assassins (2014)

A couple of years ago I wrote a review of the short film [Assassins](#) written and directed by the young and talented upcoming filmmaker Michael Bonomo and starring the hardest working character actor in independent cinema the extremely versatile Bill Oberst Jr.. Well now, they have teamed up again to collaborate on the full-length version that also marks Bonomo's debut as a feature director which has just been completed and is about to hit the festival circuit. As well as the director's chair, he also returns to writing duties but this time takes more of a secondary role in this department working with first-time produced screenwriter Dave Grant who also serves as an associate producer whose story has grown out from the original short basing the opening scene here on its entirety. Oberst

Jr. reprises his role as hitman Nathan with this time the character credited as his surname Hargraves. He is a cold dead inside hardened veteran in his dangerous field of work; a dark world that is the only life he knows.



Do not let the generic action title fool you as the movie is far from being in the vein of say its 1995 big-budget Hollywood namesake directed by Richard Donner and starring Sylvester Stallone and Antonio Banderas. The screenplay for this low-budget independent production completed in just nine days is written to accommodate the limitations of what can be achieved on screen; the story has been planned around the budget. Because of this, the director has used his modest resources to full effect striving for a stripped down minimalist approach shooting on a tight schedule of just two weeks. He has created an atmospheric, moody, tough neo-noir crime thriller that emphasises on character, hardboiled dialogue, psychological aspects, building suspense and tension and twists and turns in its cat-and-mouse plot. It features a modicum of grounded action with two key set-pieces and two scenes of mean spirited violence that depicts the harsh realities of this ugly world.



David Pesta plays Chris Collins whose life is turned upside down by the horrific murder of

his ex-girlfriend Erin. He is haunted in his nightmares by the face of a man a stranger (Bill Oberst Jr.) who he saw only moments before seeing the dead body of his former lover in her apartment with a bullet hole in her head along with the body of the man who shot her. A week after Erin's death another stranger turns up claiming to know who orchestrated her murder. His name is Simon (Andre Tenerelli) an assassin who has been chasing his target the stranger who Chris saw - Hargraves - for several years. Chris is the only person to see this mysterious and very dangerous man alive so Simon uses him for bait as Hargraves will be desperate to tie up loose ends. Despite Simon's promise of protection, Chris begins to question who threatens his life more.



While this plot synopsis promises a multitude of clichés and predictable outcomes, it does not deliver them and you will remain invested throughout. While concentrating on psychological aspects Grant tweaks the plot with twists and turns galore and is anything but predictable with a shocking resolve to the story you will not see coming, Bonomo builds suspense and tension thick and fat in a well-paced affair telling a compelling and gripping story and the performances of all three main players is strong. Oberst Jr. relishes his role with an appetite for destruction chewing up the scenery, spitting it out with venom as he hurtles through each of his scenes with convincing vigour as a powerhouse of malevolence, and delivering the bad attitude laden dialogue written for him with much glee making for a highly memorable frightening screen villain. Pesta does a successful job of drawing our sympathies as a man out of his depth unwillingly caught up in a vendetta between two determined hard men from a world he does not know and does not understand. This is a normal average everyday person like us caught up in a terrifying situation that we would not want to find ourselves in - this is instantly relatable. Tenerelli also holds his own very well with a brooding presence as an embittered professional in his line of work frustrated at always getting so close to his target Hargraves but never making the hit who is not all he seems with a hidden agenda.



The film is darkly lit and slickly and stylishly shot by cinematographer Noel Maitland employing truly inspired extraordinary camera angles capturing perfectly the noirish mood enhanced by the gorgeously subtle musical score by Kristen Baum encapsulating the proceedings in an atmosphere that recalls Michael Mann's greats of the genre his 1981 debut 'Thief' and the more recent 'Collateral' (2004). Maitland and Baum are also returning crew members from the original short version. The two aforementioned action set-pieces are not over the top aiming for a gritty realism, are not tacked on in anyway serving the plot well as devices to move it forward with a natural progression, and are executed with pitch-perfect precision. These entail an intense alleyway shootout and a thrilling crucial showdown in the climax between the two assassins as the man caught in the middle of their war looks on to a tightly choreographed and well-edited (as is the whole movie by Heather Goodwin) street fighting sequence. The two scenes of brutality only phones home the extremity of the characters' situation and again fit naturally into the story moving it forward. Dave Grant is an avid fan of the giallo genre (Italian mystery thrillers) and one such moment of violence a torture via bathtub is reminiscent of and is a possible reference to highlight moments in Mario Bava's 'Blood and Black Lace' (1964) and Umberto Lenzi's 'Seven Blood-Stained Orchids' (1972) itself a homage to the scene in Bava's film.



'Assassins' breaks no new ground in its genre but what it does do it does efficiently well for a low-budget indie production in which its filmmakers knew its limitations and made those drawbacks work in their favour. It might not be perfect but it is an admirable solid effort overall and is testament to what can be achieved on meagre resources with the right talent behind and in front of the camera. It is a confident debut from director Michael Bonomo and screenwriter Dave Grant and given a bigger budget this collaborative team have the potential to go on to greater things.

NOTE: You can also read a [review of the original short film](#), which essentially serves as a description of the opening scene here as it follows the short version very closely. You can watch the original short below the article as well.

*** out of ****

Dave J. Wilson

Link: http://www.cinematicshocks.com/2014/06/assassins-2014_9.html

DVD Talk

Assassins

[Other](#) // Unrated // December 1, 2014

Review by [Jeremy Biltz](#) | posted June 19, 2014 | [E-mail the Author](#)

The Movie:

An assassin's life can be lonely and difficult, and there are significant barriers to entry, but it seems that the competition is pretty fierce anyway. Who is really the best killer there is? Michael Bonomo's thriller *Assassins* tries to answer that question.

We start with a botched job. Young Walter (Stephen Katz) was supposed to make the

killing look like a robbery gone wrong, but with the head shot and all the random bullet holes, it looks more like a sloppy execution. Walter's boss Hargraves (the excellent Bill Oberst, Jr) does not take kindly to failure, and administers some lethal correction to his employee. When the murder victim's boyfriend Chris (David Pesta) comes home and finds her dead, he's cast adrift. But a pushy police detective (Andre Tenerelli) shows up and claims he's been looking for Hargraves for years, and things get more complicated.

The detective, who may not really be a detective, is named Simon, and he's obsessed with the mysterious killer. He tells Chris that Hargraves will surely kill him if he doesn't accept an offer of protection. Chris reluctantly agrees, and we get to know more about all three men as the film unfolds.

Assassins isn't what you'd described as a roller coaster ride. It has a deliberate pace, and was clearly designed to accommodate a limited budget. While it has some action, some blood and some chilling scenes, it's more of a psychological thriller than anything else. It mostly works, but it's not perfect. The biggest complaint that I had was that the characters talk about doing things much more than they actually do them. In a way, that's a risk that's inherent in any low budget, limited location film. The performances are good enough to carry the viewer through the talky scenes mostly, but it does drag at times.

But there are also a lot of good things to say about the film. The lighting and camera work are moody and evocative. A definite feeling of tension is managed throughout. I had some idea of the twist at the end, but was off by enough that it was a fun and surprising payoff. And, of course, there is the inestimable Bill Oberst, Jr. He's a powerhouse of an actor, and though his part here is restrained and nuanced, Oberst has an impressive screen presence that elevates any film he is in.

To sum up, *Assassins* isn't a perfect movie, but it is a pretty strong effort on a small budget, with good performances and an interesting story. If you are looking for whiz bang action, this isn't a movie to seek out. But if you'd like to see something thoughtful, with some fierce acting turns and still a good fistfight and a murder or two, then this is a good bet. Recommended.

The DVD

Video:

The image is widescreen, and looks good, with thick shadows and good contrast appropriate to its noirish tone. But this review is based on an e-screener, so no comment can be made on the quality of the final product.

Sound:

Audio is stereo, and there are no obvious problems, and some pretty effective sound design is evident. However, again, this review is based on an e-screener, so no comment can be made on the quality of the final product.

Extras:

No comment can be made on the quality or quantity of extras on the final product.

Final Thoughts:

Assassins isn't a perfect movie, but it is a good example of a strong independent offering. This is the kind of introspective story that isn't going to get made by a big studio, but that talented indies can pull off. If you have a special place in your heart for low budget films, as I do, then check it out.

eXPress News & Review

Assassins

Written by [Jessica Kirby](#)

Published August 12, 2014 05:42

Some famous person once said that short films are the poetry of cinema, or something like that. One of cinema's poems was so great that it was made into a full feature length film. *Assassins* Directed by Michael Bonomo Written by Dave Grant and Michael Bonomo Produced by Ann Nguyen and Jonathan Lee Smith Music by Kristin Baum Cinematography by Noel Maitland Cast: Bill Oberst Jr., Andre Tenerelli, David Pesta, Dove Meir, Tristan James Butler, Katie Molinaro, Stephen Katz, Vincente DiSanti, Bridgette Campbell. 84 Minutes Strong language and violence.

The movie begins with a botched hit done by an incompetent hit man. Stephen Katz plays Walter, a hit man hired to kill a young woman named Erin (Katie Molinaro). Unfortunately for Walter another hit man stops by the apartment to make sure he did his job correctly. When Hargraves, (Bill Oberst Jr.), shows up he makes sure the job is done. After telling Walter how worthless he is as a hit man, and probably anything else in life, he gives Walter the opportunity to end his own life. With the job now done correctly Hargraves is planning on leaving and collecting his payment. Things don't go as planned as Erin's boyfriend Christopher, (David Pesta), shows up with flowers and a stunned look on his face. A week later Christopher and his brother Tommy, (Dove Meir), are in an argument about how Chris needs to get his life back together. This is just moments after Erin's funeral; Tommy is kind of an a-hole. As Chris is left to console himself, his day ends up getting worse. He's tricked into letting who he initially thinks is a cop into his apartment to ask him some questions about Erin's murder. Chris suspects the man is not a cop and he's correct, this man is another hit man. Simon, (Andre Tenerelli), is planning on using Chris to get to the man who killed Erin. Not because he wants justice for Erin's murder but because there's a bounty on Hargraves' head and he wants the money. Since Chris is the only living person to have seen Hargraves, Simon needs him to identify him and make sure he kills the correct man. "Right now, you are the most dangerous man in the world to the most dangerous man in the world!"

This is the part in the movie where everything seems straight forward and you're just waiting it out to see who finds who first. Luckily for viewers this is no straight forward kind of movie. There's a huge plot twist that would make Chubby Checker want to write another song based on it.

Not only can Michael Bonomo write and direct, he can answer a few questions too.

≡ *Assassins* started out as a short film and then you made it into a feature length film? Yes. We shot the short film over the course of a single day, and it ended up getting a small burst of attention, and great reviews, that led to Bill asking if we were interested in a feature film. I took the challenge immediately, but brought my co-writer in to flesh out the story and make it more complete. We tried a few different scenarios but none worked, until we took the short film, and used it as an opening sequence to drive the story forward.

≡ The music score is pretty great. Are you a believer in that a good score can really make the difference in a good horror film?

I absolutely believe the score of a film can be a powerful addition to any story. The problem is so many filmmakers either fill their entire film with music to keep the story

moving, or don't use the right music for a particular scene. Kristen is an amazingly talented composer, and someone who puts much thought in to every note that ends up on screen. People like her are a rare find, and even more rare to have such a good friend.

≡ Where and when can people watch *Assassins*?

The film is currently making the festival rounds. We just won "Best Feature Film" at the LA Thriller Film Festival, and by the time this is posted we'll have played the Chain NYC Film Festival. *Assassins* will play the Long Beach Indie Film Festival at the end of August. For any more information, everyone can head over to our site: assassinsthemovie.com

≡ Any future plans for more movies?

I would love to see the day where a filmmaker says, "No." to this question. For me that's not the case. My co-writer and I are currently very deep into a few stories, more than one is heading into the polishing phase, and we're hoping to get some meetings for at least one of them to move forward on. In the meantime I've got a few short films in the pipeline to keep myself busy, and the directing muscles warmed up.

Perhaps on his next film he won't get asked such generic questions?

[vimeo 75455871 100%]

Assassins started out as a short film and grew into something that exceeded a lot of expectations. After watching the original short film you'll be amazed at how this talented team was able to create a more in depth story and continue to develop the characters. With one heck of a fight scene, a proverbial chess game and that plot that no doubt has Chubby Checker singing about, *Assassins* is a good time at the movies.



The next screening for *Assassins* will be at Long Beach Indie International Film Festival on August 30, 2014.

Link: <http://enr.expertcomics.com/categories/movies-tv/2791/assassins>

Special Mark Productions: Final Cut

YouTube Review

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtlgsyE3fb8>

Published on May 20, 2014

On the block is an independent thriller/drama (see I don't just watch horror films :D). Find out if *Assassins* is a target that should be on the top of your to watch list.

Official Site: <http://michaelbonomo.com/assassins-fi...>

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2385003/>

Find us at <http://www.specialmarkproductions.com> and <http://welivefilm.com>

Twitter: @moviemaniac3d

Hear us on the Astro Radio Z <https://www.facebook.com/AstroRadioZ>

Occasionally on the DicksnCider Show <http://www.dicksncidershow.com> and the Bordello
Of Horror<http://www.horrorhost.net>