

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

Elevation Pictures Presents in Association with Neon International  
an Alcina Pictures / Shut Up & Colour Pictures / Workhorse Pictures / Kobalt Films Production

# SHARP CORNER

A Film by Jason Buxton

Produced with the participation of Telefilm Canada and Crave with the support of the Canada Media Fund  
Produced with the participation of the Screen Nova Scotia Content Creator Fund in association with  
Fis Éireann/Screen Ireland Produced with the participation of Ontario Creates Produced with the  
assistance of the Government Of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Film & Television Production Incentive Fund

**Sharp Corner** was filmed on location in Nova Scotia and Ontario, Canada  
**Sharp Corner** is distributed by Elevation Pictures in Canada  
International and US rights to **Sharp Corner** are represented by Neon International

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>CREDITS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SHARP CORNER OVERVIEW</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SYNOPSIS – SHORT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SYNOPSIS – LONG</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>DIRECTORS’ STATEMENT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PRODUCTION NOTES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>POPULATING THE SHARP CORNER</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CAST BIOGRAPHIES</b>	<b>14</b>

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

**CREDITS**

**WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY**

Jason Buxton

**CAST**

Ben Foster

Cobie Smulders

Gavin Drea

and introducing William Kosovic

**PRODUCED BY**

Paul Barkin, p.g.a.

Marc Tereault, p.g.a.

Jason Levangie

Jason Buxton, p.g.a.

**PRODUCER**

Susan Mullen

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**

Cameron MacLaren

Robert Munroe

Adrian Love  
Noah Segal  
Laurie May  
Kristen Figeroid  
Marc Schaberg  
Peter Graham  
Stephen Hays

Brandon Fidanque  
Donald Johnston  
Leah Johnston  
Sheila Johnston  
Ken Dhaliwal  
Rob Cotterill  
Walter Josten

Patrick Josten  
Jordan Wagner  
Kristin Harris  
Peter Jarowey  
Rich Goldberg  
Niamh Fagan

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

Guy Godfree, CSC

**EDITOR**

Jorge Weisz, CCE

**COSTUME DESIGNER**

Sarah Haydon Roy & Angela Bateman

**PRODUCTION DESIGNER**

Jennifer Stewart

**CASTING BY**

Eyde Belasco, CSA

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

**ADDITIONAL CASTING BY**

Jesse Griffiths, CSA, CSC  
Erin Hennessey, CSA

**COMPOSER**

Stephen McKeon

**SUPERVISING SOUND EDITORS**

David McCallum  
Ian Wilson

**SHARP CORNER OVERVIEW**

The psychological thriller, ***Sharp Corner***, starring Ben Foster (*Hell or High Water, Leave No Trace, Lone Survivor*), Cobie Smulders (*How I Met Your Mother, Avengers, Jack Reacher*), Gavin Drea (*Daisy Jones & The Six, Wedding Season, Vikings: Valhalla*), and is the second feature from writer/director Jason Buxton (*Blackbird*). It is based on a script by Buxton adapted from the Scotiabank Giller Prize nominated short story by Russell Wangersky.

***Sharp Corner***, a Canada-Ireland co-production, is produced with the participation of Telefilm Canada, Crave, and with the support of The Canada Media Fund, Screen Nova Scotia Content Creator Fund, Ontario Creates, in association with Fis Éireann/Screen Ireland.

Producers are Paul Barkin (*Night Raiders, The Colony*) for Alcina Pictures, Marc Tetreault & Jason Levangie (*Queen of My Dreams, Kids vs. Aliens*) for Shut Up & Colour Pictures, Susan Mullen (*Maudie, Brooklyn*) for Kobalt Films, and Buxton for Workhorse Pictures. Cameron MacLaren and Robert Munroe also serve as Executive Producers.

Elevation Pictures distributes in Canada with Noah Segal, Adrian Love and Laurie May serve as Executive Producers.

Kristen Figeroid of Neon International is handling US and International Sales and serves as an Executive Producer.

Oliver Wheeler and Jessica Lacey of Range Media Partners are jointly handling US rights with Neon International.

***Sharp Corner*** will mark its WORLD PREMIERE as a SPECIAL PRESENTATION at the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival.

**SYNOPSIS – SHORT**

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

**Sharp Corner** is the story of a man's spiral as he tries to find greater purpose in his life. It follows Josh, a hapless family man who is drawn into saving the lives of the car crash victims at the sharp corner in front of his house. As Josh's obsession takes hold, he places his wife and son in jeopardy, setting in motion a series of events that threaten to break his family apart.

## **SYNOPSIS – LONG**

Based on the short story from Russell Wangersky's Giller Prize-nominated collection "Whirl Away," **Sharp Corner** is a psychological thriller that follows Josh McCall, a dedicated family man who becomes obsessed with saving the lives of the car accident victims at the sharp corner in front of his house.

IT project manager Josh and his wife Rachel, a therapist, escape the city for an idyllic country home – the perfect setting to raise their six-year-old son, Max. But on their first night, a fatal car accident on the sharp corner in front of the house disrupts their plans. Rachel would rather erase the event from her memory, but Josh finds himself drawn to the tragedy and researches the victims and their families.

A month later a second fatal accident at the corner convinces Josh that he's the true "First Responder," and he secretly starts CPR training in anticipation for the next accident. Rachel on the other hand is ready to pack up and sell, and her case is made stronger by Max's escalating OCD. Josh argues that Max needs closer supervision and offers to spend the afternoons with him. Rachel agrees to a trial run, unaware Josh's real intention is to wait at home for another accident and the chance to be a hero.

But the third accident occurs just before Josh and Max arrive at home, behind the paramedics and firefighters. Josh desperately tries to insinuate himself in the rescue efforts and in doing so neglects Max, leaving him to wander onto the crash site and witness the carnage firsthand. Rachel is livid. She puts Max in therapy and the house on the market. Josh soon concocts a plan to sabotage a prospective sale of the house. When Rachel finds out, it is the final straw. She files divorce papers and seeks sole custody of Max.

On his final night at the house, as he's loading his family's possessions into a moving van, a winter storm begins. Josh sits in the dark and watches the cars, but as the freezing rain turns into ice pellets, the drivers start to take the corner with more caution. Josh ventures out with his chainsaw and takes down the sharp corner sign before passing out on the couch. He awakens to an explosive crash, and stumbles out to witness a crumpled, overturned car on his lawn. Josh frees a woman from the wreckage and performs CPR on her, saving her life. As the paramedics arrive, Josh stands back and smiles with pride and purpose.

## **DIRECTORS' STATEMENT**

**Sharp Corner** plunges you into the unraveling life of Josh McCall, a seemingly ordinary man whose quest for purpose leads him down a perilous path. As a devoted family man, Josh should be living the dream—loving wife, young son, and a stable job. Yet, he's haunted by an unshakable sense of emptiness, a gnawing feeling that something is missing.

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

When a series of car accidents occur at the treacherous bend in front of his house, Josh seizes upon the chance to make a difference. He becomes obsessed with saving the victims, convinced that he can be their savior. But as his well-intentioned efforts falter, Josh's mission twists into a dangerous fixation. His once-noble desire to help morphs into a desperate need to play the hero, even if it means risking everything—including the very family he's sworn to protect.

Josh's descent is both disturbing and captivating, drawing parallels to Dante's journey through a dark and confusing wood. He's a man who did everything by the book—college, career, marriage—but now finds himself lost, adrift in a world that no longer makes sense. His quiet desperation, masked by a facade of normalcy, slowly gives way to a darker force within him. The audience is pulled into his spiraling obsession, watching as Josh's moral compass deteriorates and his once-good intentions become a sinister drive for recognition. The film builds tension with every scene, each car accident a ticking time bomb that could explode at any moment. The camera's steady, probing gaze mirrors the audience's curiosity, searching for answers in Josh's unraveling psyche. Is he merely a victim of his circumstances, or is there something more sinister at play? The suspense is palpable, keeping viewers on edge as they anticipate the next twist in Josh's dangerous journey.

***Sharp Corner*** is not just a psychological thriller; it's a dark satire that subtly critiques the fragile nature of contemporary masculinity. In a world where success is often measured by control and power, Josh's story serves as a cautionary tale. His transformation from humble family man to cunning narcissist is both tragic and unsettling, reflecting the deep-seated societal pressures that push men to the brink.

The film's visual language, inspired by films such as *Parasite*, *Nightcrawler*, and *Joker*, creates a world that feels both familiar and disturbingly off-kilter. As with my previous film, *Blackbird*, the viewer is placed uncomfortably close to the protagonist, forced to grapple with the uncomfortable truths of his journey. But in ***Sharp Corner***, the absurdist undertones take the narrative to a whole new level, creating a tension that keeps the audience guessing until the very end.

Based on a story from the Giller-shortlisted collection *Whirl Away* by Russell Wangersky, ***Sharp Corner*** delves into the heart of what it means to be a man in an evolving society. It questions the very nature of heroism and asks whether Josh is an aberration of his environment or a product of it. There's no moral judgment here—only a stark portrayal of a man's slow, inexorable collapse.

Josh's story is both repulsive and exhilarating, a mirror held up to society's darkest impulses. As the audience, we are forced to confront our own complicity in his downfall, left to wonder: what does our fascination with his moral decay say about us?

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

Producer Paul Barkin's journey with ***Sharp Corner*** began in 2018 with a pivotal introduction to Jason Buxton by a colleague who had read his latest draft screenplay and aware of Paul's

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

affinity for compelling writer-director driven stories. Paul had long admired Buxton's work in *Blackbird* and was eager to meet and discuss his vision for the film.

Having an affinity for complex and empathetic characters, the story about a man struggling to find his place in life and set in a familiar yet unique setting resonated with Barkin. After a conversation about the film's exploration of identity and the common struggles faced by middle-aged individuals, combined with Buxton's desire to make something morally complex, atmospheric, moody and tense, Barkin was curious and ready to put the project into motion and pull together the financing and distribution. "Buxton's script was very special. His exploration into the short story had a very unique point of view on the Hero Complex, in terms of saving oneself from their mid-life crisis" says Barkin "The film plays on the thin edge of morality. But I thought that's what would make it special, and would it attract a great actor to play the role of Josh".

As the project gained momentum, Nova Scotia emerged as the perfect setting. Buxton, who is local to the region and lived in rural Nova Scotia for much of his life, felt a deep sense of honour bringing ***Sharp Corner*** to production there.

New production incentives made Nova Scotia a clear choice for production. Barkin and Buxton partnered with Marc Tetreault & Jason Levangie of Halifax-based Shut Up & Colour whose expertise and local knowledge would be invaluable. Their collaboration added the perfect blend of creative vision and practical know-how. The team was set, and together the producers embarked on bringing ***Sharp Corner*** to life – and which would become the first Telefilm National project produced in Nova Scotia in nearly a decade.

Finding the perfect location proved challenging. The team scouted extensively, often using Google Earth in 2020 to explore Nova Scotia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Buxton had a very specific visual approach with the relationship between Josh's house and the sharp corner. Given that 75% of the film set at 'the house' we soon realized that it was the 'sharp corner' which needed to be found as the 'the hero location' rather than an existing house on a corner. We found this awesome corner adjacent to scrub land, leased it, cleared it and built it as if it was a 'model home', with a functioning exterior and interior but no mechanical guts. It ended up being a far better creative and practical approach than finding an existing house, on a corner, and likely building sets in a studio to fit the director's vision."

The location, a 30-minute drive from Halifax in the fishing community of Terence Bay, NS was on a sharp corner nestled in a dense forest. The roadway was perfect, a tight 90 degree turn that led to a small community of homes. The adjacent scrub land was secured from the Nova Scotia Ministry of Natural Resources – says Tetreault "the province and several ministries and departments really came together to make it happen for us".

Production designer Jennifer Stewart knew from the start that the house in ***Sharp Corner*** had to be more than just a backdrop—it needed to be a central, yet subtle presence in the story. From the beginning, Stewart knew the set had to be a custom build—one that audiences would find instantly captivating. This couldn't just be any house -- it wasn't haunted, but it needed to carry an almost eerie presence, always there, quietly observing.

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

Stewart pitched two designs to director Jason Buxton: a charming, traditional home and a sleek mid-century modern design. The latter, with its clean lines and large floor-to-ceiling window, was chosen because it created a visual connection between the house and the sharp corner outside—a relationship that hinted at shared secrets between the two.

Over a ten-week period in the spring of 2023, a crew of 40 cleared the land, built and fully dressed the house to be ready to shoot. But the eventual SAG-AFTRA strike resulted in us having to quickly pivot the schedule. Filming would be pushed to the Fall. Yet, despite the delay the extra time allowed Buxton and cinematographer Guy Godfree to meticulously plan their shots which would have been otherwise rushed. “Standing down because of the Strike allowed us to take advantage of time, and we ended up with an amazing crew for a fall shoot which wouldn’t have been otherwise possible if we went as planned in late spring” – says Levangie. The fall shoot not only served the story but became an integral part of the film’s atmosphere.

Buxton, along with award-winning cinematographer Guy Godfree, plotted out the pacing to create maximum discomfort. “Because we know that an accident can happen at any moment, the audience anticipates that, and if you stay on something a little bit longer, there is a built-in tension. Another thing we did was to allow the audience to anticipate Josh’s behavior by keeping the camera on certain behaviors or to stay on an object that Josh is then going to come in and manipulate. It invites the audience to be one step ahead of even Josh having the thought for himself. The camera moved independent of the movement of the actors,” stated Buxton. “There was also a reliance on the soundscape because this is a quiet corner on a country road - until it’s not. So, we played with that as much as possible.”

## **POPULATING THE SHARP CORNER**

### **JOSH**

Ben Foster is one of the great American actors of his generation, known for playing headstrong, determined characters. By casting Foster as Josh McCall, Buxton led him off his beaten path, providing him with an opportunity to play a beta male who dreams of being an alpha: “Josh is the people-pleasing hapless everyman, misguided, and even though he might not be consciously aware of it, someone trying to find his place in the world. We do see the headstrong man later, but these desires that he has taken him a bit by surprise. It’s harder for a character like this to figure out how to achieve what he wants while being somewhat passive and how he arrives at that place is more oblique. Josh’s journey is interesting and watching Ben’s interpretation of this in his performance is unlike anything we’ve seen from him in the past.”

Ben Foster has a crystal-clear view of his character. “Josh is a man who’s been sleeping most of his life, and he’s woken up by the first car accident,” he explained. “He’s a man who’s checked the boxes: house, wife, kid, and yet, something missing. He’s suffering from existential angst. There’s a void and when all hell unleashes upon his new front lawn, it snaps him into either a crisis or a purpose. And I suppose those two balancing acts are what Josh is dangling between. Jason and I had a ball exploring this.”



TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

Foster is not an actor who emotionalizes his roles or intellectualizes them - he mines them. He digs uncommonly deep for purpose. And therein lies the irony because this character is anything but deep: "There's very little self-introspection with Josh. He's not doing a lot of personal investigation. He's trying to be proactive as a modern man. He tucks in his shirt; he says thank you; he shakes hands. That's about as far as his development got."

"When I first read the script, I didn't totally understand it, but I was drawn to it," Foster added. "There's a magnetism to the piece. Jason used a word that really activated me: normalism. It's not realism, it's normalism. The more times I read the script, the clearer the images became. And the most mundane actions, which are very carefully placed architecturally within the script, become all the more devastating in their normalism."

Foster viewed this corner, this sharp corner, in its magnified significance for Josh. "This is his postcard life is right here. And for some reason, everything seems to be coming at him. So, he goes after it. I don't think his instinct is wrong, but in doing so, he then neglects his wife, neglects his son, neglects the house, neglects his job, and then it's all sandcastles. He invites the storm in to meet it. It's Melville. He's meeting the whale; he wants the whale."

## **RACHEL**

The character of Rachel, played by Cobie Smulders, serves as more than a simple counterpoint to Josh. "Our story begins with a family that's very happy, starting fresh, buying a new house, moving out of the city with the intention of spending more quality family time together.

As a parent, Smulders regards Rachel as overprotective, overly cautious and might even be categorized as a helicopter parent. She already has a lot of anxieties about the health and safety of her son. When accidents start happening, that fear gets ramped up and she becomes even more aggressively protective. At the same time, she feels trapped. The idea of selling the house comes with a moral issue. "Do you say to the next person coming in, yeah, we're moving because all these people have died on our property because of this corner? You have to disclose that to prospective buyers. That would be the right thing to do. So she feels stuck, and it's a horrific place to be. It creates depression and anxiety, and I don't know if a normal functioning couple could withstand that."

Rachel's situation is exacerbated by how Josh is handling things. "Rachel is confused about what Josh wants because he is good at covering his feelings in front of her and presenting a version of himself that he knows others will like," Smulders explained. "We see that erode throughout the film. But because she's a therapist, she understands the human psyche. At the beginning, certainly she sees him trying to be the hero which gives him a sense of purpose and an excitement that worries her. I don't think she anticipated him falling so deep into this idea of being a hero and going as far as to hurt people to get that sense of empowerment for himself and prioritizing this over his family."

"Rachel's able to call Josh out on his bullshit," Buxton attested. "She's able to intuit what Josh's ulterior motives are, something her husband doesn't grasp because he doesn't understand himself on a deeper level. Ultimately, Josh becomes someone Rachel doesn't recognize. The man she married, the man she loves who is supposed to be a protector to their son, is now acting in ways that are in direct contrast to being a protective figure," explained Buxton.

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

“Cobie had a real understanding of the character. And Cobie is a direct person, a straight shooter, and she seemed quite comfortable playing Rachel. This actually grounds the character and allows for stronger audience identification because you understand the motivation is she cares about the safety and tranquility of her home and her protective instincts for her child. That's what matters to her. There's a lot of integrity in that. And I'd say Cobie has those qualities. She's also just a gem of a person and a real pro to work with.”

## **MAX**

Finding a young actor to play the role of six-year-old Max, son of Josh and Rachel, required casting a much wider net than would be required for filling adult roles. As opposed to this character being merely an adorable accessory, fleshing out the picture of the young family moving into a new home, Max is much more crucial to the plot. “This is a kid at the precipice of having some mental health challenges and these are exacerbated by the anxiety generated by these car accidents happening right in front of the house. Max is the object of his parents' affection, but they differ on the best way to parent him,” said Buxton.

“Will Kosovic, the young actor, has a remarkable number of acting credits for only being six years old. And he truly enjoys being on set. We looked locally in Halifax and in Toronto and then across Canada. The key was to find an actor who would respond to what the other person in the scene is saying. So, I tested him by giving him his lines out of order,” said Buxton. “It forced him into a position of listening. I didn't know if it would work for somebody who's only six years old, but he quickly caught on and was listening to know how to respond. The result was incredibly natural. And it gave him ownership over the lines, but also an intention behind the lines. With somebody that age, you're casting more for their personality than anything else. You want somebody who's open, unafraid and doesn't tighten up in front of the camera.”

## **ERIKSON**

The character of Erikson, played by Gavin Drea, offers critical perspective of Josh's life outside of the home. Josh, being an IT project manager, had trained Erickson two years prior to when this story takes place. When it came time for a promotion, Erikson won the post, leaving Josh behind. “As Josh would describe, at a dinner party, Erickson is a go-getter A type, which really says more about Josh than it says about Erickson. As the story progresses, Josh becomes more focused on his obsession and less focused on his work, which becomes a liability at the office. Erickson feels compelled to get Josh in line.”

“Erikson is experiencing the growing pains of his new position, to step up and take a leadership role with somebody who not that long ago his boss. Gavin gave real dimension to a role that could easily be handed in a very two-dimensional way. He really brought a lot of life and nuance to the character,” noted Buxton.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**JASON BUXTON (Writer, Director, Producer)** Born in England and raised in Nova Scotia, Jason Buxton studied film at Simon Fraser University and has a BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design. Buxton's feature debut, *Blackbird* premiered at TIFF '12 to critical

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

acclaim winning the prize for Best Canadian First Feature. In 2013 BLACKBIRD earned Buxton the prestigious Claude Jutra Award for Best Feature Film Debut at the Canadian Screen Awards, and later that year was the Grand Prix winner at Cannes Écrans Junior.

Selected Filmography:

BLACKBIRD (2012)

2013 Cannes Cinephiles, Grand Prix, Cannes Écrans Junior  
2013 Melbourne International Film Festival, Official Selection  
2013 Taipei International Film Festival, Official Selection  
2013 Canadian Screen Awards, Claude Jutra Award, Best Feature Film Debut  
2013 Seattle International Film Festival, Futurewave Special Jury Award  
2012 Warsaw International Film Festival, Official Selection (International Premiere)  
2012 Atlantic Film Festival, Best Writer, Best Director, Best Atlantic Feature  
2012 TIFF (Discovery), Best Canadian First Feature Film

Short Films:

2004 THE DRAWING (short) - Atlantic Film Festival  
2003 THE GARDEN (short) - Toronto International Film Festival  
2001 A FRESH START (short) - Toronto International Film Festival

**PAUL BARKIN (Producer)** Paul Barkin is a producer and founder of Alcina Pictures, the banner he has been producing under since 1998. A champion of director-driven and often first-time filmmakers, Paul has produced an array of critically acclaimed and commercially successful films over the last 25 years. Selected credits include Cherien Dabis' Sundance and Cannes entry *Amreeka* nominated for three Independent Spirit Awards including Best Picture, Bruce McDonald's award-winning *The Tracey Fragments*, Su Rynard's Alfred P. Sloan Prize winner *Kardia*, Jeff Renfroe's ice-age apocalypse *The Colony* starring Laurence Fishburne and Bill Paxton, the Nordic revenge thriller *Hevn* by Kjersti Steinsbø, and Jasmin Mozaffari's 2018 breakout debut *Firecrackers*. In 2021, Barkin produced Danis Goulet's Indigenous sci-fi debut *Night Raiders*, executive produced by Taika Waititi. *Night Raiders* premiered at Berlin and TIFF, and was nominated for eleven Canadian Screen Awards including Best Picture.

In addition to *Sharp Corner*, Barkin is currently in development on *Tasting Freedom*, an inspirational story about the Edmonton Indian Residential School uprising with Producer/Writer Eva Thomas and See Jane Fight about a young woman's tumultuous rise to become a championship MMA fighter, being directed by Nimisha Mukurji and written by Kathleen Hepburn.

**MARC TETREAU (Producer)** Marc Tetreault is an independent producer and co-owner of Shut Up & Colour Pictures, a boutique production company in Halifax, NS, Canada. With over a decade of experience, he has produced several acclaimed films and TV shows that have gained international recognition.

His first feature, *Saudade*, premiered in 2013 and was acquired by Starz in the US. In 2014, Marc's career gained momentum with his participation in the Canadian Film Centre's prestigious

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

Producer's Lab, leading to the creation of *Suck It Up* by Jordan Canning, which premiered at the Slamdance Film Festival. In 2016, he co-produced the critically acclaimed *Weirdos*, directed by Bruce McDonald, which premiered at TIFF and Berlin and won multiple Canadian Screen Awards.

Other selected credits include *Spinster*, starring Chelsea Peretti, the noir-western *A Fire in the Cold Season* by Justin Oakey, *Night Blooms* starring Nick Stahl and Jessica Clement, genre film *Kids vs Aliens*, which had a formidable festival run, including screenings at Fantastic Fest and Sitges, and Fawzia Mirza's feature debut, *The Queen of My Dreams*, which premiered at TIFF and SXSW. The film was released theatrically in over 30 cinemas across Canada in March 2024, and was nominated for six Canadian Screen Awards. Marc has also produced two seasons of the CBC comedy *Moonshine* for eOne and Six Eleven Media.

Currently, Marc is producing *Skite'kmujuekati'k (Place of Ghosts)*, by Bretten Hannam, a project with VVS in Canada and Magnify handling international sales.

**JASON LEVANGIE (Producer)** is an independent Creative Producer and co-owner of Shut Up & Colour Pictures. He has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film Production from NSCAD University. Jason has produced 7 feature films at S&C, and works as the company's creative director, as well as writing and overseeing the company's IP development. In 2010 he produced the ultra-low budget feature *Light Is the Day* for less than \$100K. Aside from passionately developing the S&C slate, Jason works as a director, and previously as a TV cinematographer.

**GUY GODFREE, CSC (Director of Photography)** is an award-winning cinematographer whose recent work includes *Brother* (TIFF 2022) for Clement Virgo; the two-spirit indigenous indie feature *Wildhood* (TIFF 2021) directed by Bretten Hannam; Director Nyla Innuksuk's debut feature *Slash/Back* (SXSW 2022) filmed entirely in the Hamlet of Pangnirtung on Baffin Island. Other notable credits include the multiple Canadian Screen Award-winning film *Maudie* (Telluride, TIFF and Berlinale 2016) for which Guy was awarded Best Feature Cinematography at the Canadian Society of Cinematographers Awards; he also was awarded the CSC award for his work on the Focus Features' film *Let Him Go*, starring Kevin Costner and Diane Lane. His most recent episodic work can be seen on the Netflix limited series *Maid* (Netflix) and the upcoming *Little Bird* (Crave). Guy is an alum of the AFI Conservatory and he is originally from Nova Scotia, Canada which he recognizes as Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

**JORGE WEISZ, CCE (Editor)** was born and raised in Mexico City and is currently based in Toronto, Canada. He has collaborated with renowned directors and producers such as Vincenzo Natali, Lorenzo Vigas, Jason Blum, Charles Officer, Christian Sparkes and Lindsay Mackay, among others. Jorge has worked on award-winning films such as Peter Stebbings' *Empire of Dirt*, which premiered at TIFF 2013, *Las Hijas De Abril* (April's Daughter), which won the Un Certain Regard's Jury Prize at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, with acclaimed director Michel Franco, and Danis Goulet's *Night Raiders*, which premiered at the 2021 Berlin International Film Festival under the Panorama section and had its North American premiere as a Gala at TIFF. Recently, he worked on the series *Cross* for Paramount/Amazon and Jason Buxton's feature *Sharp Corner*.

Currently, Jorge is editing *Steal Away* directed by Clement Virgo.

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

**JENNIFER STEWART (Production Designer)** is a production designer with experience in both film and television. Originally from Prince Edward Island, she grew up intending to become a ballerina and is a graduate of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. Changing direction, she obtained a degree in biology and then earned a Master of Architecture degree from Dalhousie University, and practiced architecture in Halifax Nova Scotia before finding her way into the film and television industry. Jennifer made her debut as production designer with the feature film, *Scotland, P.A.*, which was selected as a Sundance competitor. She designed the Emmy-nominated television movie, *Homeless To Harvard: The Liz Murray Story*, and won the DGC award for outstanding production design for the television series, *Snakes & Ladders*, and also for the 8-part, dramatic mini-series, *October 1970*. Jennifer was nominated for both Gemini and DGC awards for outstanding production design for the mini-series, *Trudeau: Maverick In The Making*. Jennifer has been fortunate to design many different genres of projects from children's live action *You & Me* (CBC), the series *Haven* (SyFy), *Pure* (WGN America and CBC), *Burden of Truth* and *Diggstown* (CBC)

**SARAH HAYDON ROY (Costume Designer)** is a Costume Designer and Visual Artist based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Collaborating with performers to develop characters through wardrobe is a core element to Sarah's process as a designer. Her film credits include Jason Buxton's *Sharp Corner* (2025) (Ben Foster, Cobie Smulders), Stephanie Joline's *Night Blooms* (2022), Seth Smith's *Tin Can* (2020) and Andrea Dorfman's *Spinster* (2019) (Chelsea Peretti). She also designed three seasons of *Moonshine* for CBC Television, receiving a 2024 CSA nomination for her work in Season 3. Sarah works across an array of other mediums including Production Designing Jordan Canning's feature film *Suck It Up* (2017) and designing costume and stage elements for music video, live performance, editorial and puppetry.

**ANGELA BATEMAN (Costume Designer)** has been working in costumes since she was twenty years old. Her experience spans Costume Design, Assistant Costume Design, Star Costumer and Key Costumer to name a few. Designing costumes comes from a place of story and character for Angela, she loves to explore the why when developing the looks for each project. Her costume design credits include *Sharp Corner* (2025) (Ben Foster, Cobie Smulders) and Jordan Canning's award-winning *Suck It Up* (2017). Other costume credits include *The Good House* (2021) (Sigourney Weaver, Kevin Kline) *Spinster* (2018) (Chelsea Peretti) and Bruce MacDonald's *Weirdos* (2016). She has acquired an array of television credits over the years including *Moonshine* (2020-22), *Cavendish* (2018) and *The Lizzie Borden Chronicles* (2015).

**STEPHEN McKEON (Composer)** has been composing music for film and television for over 34 years. A highly versatile multi-instrumentalist, he has scored over 100 feature films and numerous award-winning international television drama series and documentaries including *Black Mirror* (15 Million Merits) and eight feature length *Poirot* films. He has been nominated for several international awards and is the recipient of three Irish Film & Television Academy awards for Best Original Score; *Pilgrimage* (Starring Jon Bernthal & Tom Holland) in 2018 and in 2006 and 2015 for his scores for legendary director John Boorman's "THE TIGER'S TAIL & Queen & Country, the follow up to *Hope & Glory*. He has recently completed the scores for the TV crime drama series *Kin* (BRON Studios/AMC), *Evil Dead Rise* for Warner Brothers/New Line (produced by Sam Raimi, Rob Tapert & Bruce Campbell), folk horror series *The Red King* for UK television, *The Damned* which recently premiered at Tribeca and *Sharp Corner* which will premiere at The Toronto International Film Festival in September 2024.

## **CAST BIOGRAPHIES**

**BEN FOSTER (Josh McCall)** Foster will next be seen in Brian Helgeland's *Finestkind* opposite Jenna Ortega and Tommy Lee Jones. The film, in which two brothers are pulled into a deal with an organized crime syndicate in Boston will make its world premiere at the 2023 Toronto International Film Festival and is set for a November release on Paramount+. Later this year, he will star alongside Jessica Lange and Ed Harris in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. The Jonathan Kent production follows a married couple Mary (Lange) and James Tyrone (Harris), and their two sons, Jamie (Foster) and Edmund (Colin Morgan), over the course of a day as they grapple with Mary's morphine addiction and confront each other over the past in a series of emotionally tense and volatile exchanges. Currently Foster is in production on John Swab's *King Ivory* as George 'Smiley' Greene. Based on extensive research involving law enforcement and gang members, a never-before-seen, authentic look inside the underworld of fentanyl trafficking from gangs inside the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester a.k.a. "Big Mac." It was also announced that he will be seen in Tim Sutton's *Floodplain* opposite Katherine Waterston, Maria Bakalova and Justice Smith. Last year, Foster starred in Antoine Fuqua's feature for Apple, *Emancipation*, opposite Will Smith and was seen opposite Adam Sandler and Queen Latifah in Jeremiah Zagar's film, *Hustle*, for Netflix.

In 2021, Foster was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Best Actor in a Limited Series for his performance in Barry Levinson's feature *The Survivor*, which he also executive produced. In 2017, he won the Independent Spirit Award in the category of Best Supporting Male Actor and was nominated for the Critics' Choice Award for Best Supporting Actor in David Mackenzie's Oscar-Nominated *Hell or High Water* his work opposite Chris Pine and Jeff Bridges.

In 2015, he starred as disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong in Stephen Frears' *The Program*; Craig Gillespie's *The Finest Hours*; Ron Howard's *Inferno* opposite Tom Hanks; Scott Cooper's *Hostiles* opposite Christian Bale; Duncan Jones' *Warcraft*; and Pete Berg's *Lone Survivor* opposite Mark Wahlberg. Other film credits include John Krokidas' *Kill Your Darlings*, David Lowery's *Ain't Them Bodies Saints* opposite Rooney Mara and Casey Affleck, James Mangold's *3:10 To Yuma* opposite Christian Bale and Russell Crowe, Barry Levinson's *Liberty Heights*, Debra Granik's *Leave No Trace*, Oren Moverman's film debut *The Messenger* opposite Woody Harrelson and reteamed with Moverman for his film *Rampart* as actor and producer. On television, he recurred as "Russell Corwin" in HBO's *Six Feet Under*. On stage, Foster drew rave reviews as "Stanley Kowalski" in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Opposite Gillian Anderson for director Benedict Andrews, at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn and London's Young Vic; he previously made his Broadway debut in a revival of Lyle Kessler's play *Orphans* opposite Alec Baldwin.

**COBIE SMULDERS (Rachel Davis-McCall)** Cobie Smulders is a Canadian-American actress and producer. Within her two decades of industry experience, Smulders has worked in film, television, stage and podcasting bringing emboldened and complex female characters to life. Smulders is most notably known for her starring roles as Robin Scherbatsky in the CBS sitcom *How I Met Your Mother*, as Maria Hill in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and can now

TIFF PRESS NOTES  
(September 5, 2024)

been seen starring as Anne Coulter in FX's critically acclaimed *American Crime: Impeachment* series and as Simone in Clea Duvall's *High School for Amazon Studios*.

**WILLIAM KOSOVIC (Max)** has been a professional actor since the age of four. He comes from a family of performers so one might say it's in his DNA. Notable film and TV roles include Tiny Fredrick on the Netflix miniseries, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the upcoming romantic comedy series *Holidazed* as Matty Manetti-Hanahan, the extremely popular *Virgin River* as Henry and the TV series, *Fire Country*, as Dylan. William is a natural when it comes to acting, he gains insight into building the characters he portrays on set by being active in many sports (basketball being his favorite), creating magic people and places with his Lego and playing dueling Star Wars with lightsabers with all his friends and family...or anyone who will duel with him!

**GAVIN DREA (Erikson)** can most recently be seen in *Surface* for Apple TV+ opposite Gugu Mbatha-Raw and Oliver Jackson-Cohen and in the Amazon series *Daisy Jones And The Six*. Prior to this, Gavin starred opposite Rosa Salazar in the limited series *Wedding Season* for Hulu. Gavin's additional television credits include *Vikings: Valhalla*, *Resistance*, *Origin*, *The Alienist*, *My Mother And Other Strangers*, *Love/Hate* and *Barbarians Rising*. In film, Gavin stars opposite Dakota Fanning and Wunmi Mosaku in *Sweetness In The Belly*, which debuted at TIFF in 2020. Gavin can also be seen in Luc Besson's *Valerian And The City Of A Thousand Planets* and Lenny Abrahamson's *What Richard Did*. His additional film credits include *Break Us*, *We Ourselves*, *Vanilla* and *Cruelty*. On stage, Gavin most recently completed a run of *Tribes* at The Gate Theatre in Dublin. In 2013, he received an Irish Times Theatre Awards nomination for Best Supporting Actor in his performance of *A Whistle In The Dark* at the Druid Theatre in Galway. Gavin's additional theatre credits include *Shakespeare: The History Plays* (Druid Theatre), *Breaking Dad* (Landmark Productions/The Gaiety Theatre), *Philadelphia Here I Come* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast) and *Famine* (Druid Theatre). At University College Dublin, Gavin starred in *Macbeth*, *Alice In Wonderland*, *Hamlet* and *The Night Before Christmas*. At the UCD Drama Awards, he won best supporting actor for his portrayal of 'Edmund' in *King Lear*.