SUMMERBREW FILMS PRESENTS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH ICON THEATRE COMPANY AND REAL MEDIA PRODUCTIONS A SUMMERBREW FILMS PRODUTION

BOB KUNKEL ★ JACKSON WILLIAMSON ★ SEAN MANN "FREELANCE" TIM HENSLEY WITH NICHOLE HARRISON AND LES SMITH
DIRECTED BY DREW SAWYER WRITTEN BY SEAN MANN ★ PRODUCTION DESIGNER JASON CLAIRY ★ DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BOB MALLIN ★ EDITED BY DREW SAWYER
SOUND DESIGN BY ROY CLEMENTS ★ EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CHRIS KUNKEL ★ JASON FORDHAM ★ JASON CLAIRY ★ PRODUCED BY SUMMERBREW FILMS

ABOUT PRODUCTION

Making *FreeLance* With Misfits & Misdemeanors

Touting misfits and misdemeanors, Drew Sawyer's directorial debut FreeLance developed out of struggles against the amateur and the technically limited. Shot over a period of eight days in Sawyer's childhood hometown Rome, GA and produced for less than $3,000, the absurdist feature film delves into the world of hopeless, aspiring journalist Elliot Guillespse. As his attempts to scoop stories in his suburban neighborhood progressively fail and his home life moves from mundane to bleak, Elliot, under the guise of alter-ego Lance Windchaser, falls prey to his own desire for fame and consequently mixes himself into a murder controversy of newsworthy proportions. It's a humorous film without delusions of grandeur and in such keeps itself light-hearted and silly. Yet, the production stories are all ones of hard work, forethought and pre-planning and are little tempered by the light-hearted air of its film's narrative.

Crafting the Script

College buddies, screenwriters Sean Mann and Joe Coleman brainstormed the original concept for FreeLance at random moments or in free time. The original premise was simply to watch a character fail even as he fought against insurmountable odds.

In crafting the story though, Mann, who took on the responsibility as full-time writer, didn't want to fall into character clichés, specifically not in writing Elliot. "He's not somebody that anybody sympathizes with. He's pathetic and unlikable at the same time," Mann admits.

Elliot's arc, moreover, adds Mann, is not one of the typical morality play comedy: "When I first started writing, I kept thinking about these Adam Sandler movies, about how they are so generic, how they kind of had the same (structure) where there's this character that came along and then there's this moral that was being told, "Hey, now I'm a better guy." I kept thinking of Big Daddy where it's like, "I'm kind of a bum, and then I had this kid. Now because of this I'm a better person," at the end. I thought it would be funny to have this character who is building towards that, and (the film) makes you think he'll change, but really it's set in stone."

The initial drafts of the film were at best rough, in fact borderline awful, Mann says. As he began to think more in-depth about character and pulled director Drew Sawyer into the scripting process, Mann felt the feature focus, pulling energy from collaboration.

"I really like having someone to bounce ideas off of—whether it's every bit my words or not. That to me helps me be creative, especially with comedy. I find it's very hard to find something funny when you're sitting by yourself in front of a computer in the middle of the night. You might find it funny then later look at it and say, "Woah, what was I thinking?" It made it much better to have Drew read over it and bounce it back," Mann says.

In what Mann describes as a process of "functional cooperation," the screenplay locked in Summer 2006 after which the production process gears immediately turned.

On Set

"I don't even want to relive this," Sawyer says as he sits on the back porch of his Atlanta home. Sitting next to Mann, who is now one of his housemates, Sawyer smokes a cigarette and relates his memory of the eight days in Rome.

"Since it was such a small production, we had to train the crew a week in advance on how to actually run cables, teach them the jargon, "When I call for this, grab this." Nobody had any experience running a set. So I was just trying to teach them little bit by little bit so that they could function on set when I called for things frantically," Sawyer says. "Every day one of our crew members went to jail, and we never got them back. We had the ne'er-do-well crowd of Rome, the misfits of Rome who didn't have jobs, who just wanted to show up, do something cool for free food, free coffee."

With only six permanent crew at a time and several complicated scenes to shoot in multiple locations around the city, the production days stretched out from dawn to twilight. Beyond the technical pressure of each day, Sawyer also contended with lead actor Bob Kunkel's propensity toward improvisation and distraction, both qualities that enhanced the Elliot character—if only, that is, they focused for the time the camera rolled.

"It was like trying to harness almost a hurricane in some ways," Mann says. "He'd be too big, or he'd miss lines, and the humor was in those."

For Sawyer, the challenge was not so much directing Kunkel but rather just controlling him. Keeping Kunkel from the Rome nightlife was one in the list of challenges. At the same time though, as a director Sawyer had to let Kunkel fall apart, a necessary method acting quirk that could reflect onto the Elliot character. "We'd get (Bob) drunk, keep him up, and the more drunk and less sleep he got, the better of an actor he'd be," Sawyer explains.

Fortunately, working with the other actors was not nearly as difficult, though unexpectedly the post-production process would be.

Post-Post-Post & Then More Post

The first rough cut of FreeLance was lost when Sawyer's hard drive was stolen. The second working cut wasn't funny. The third cut got close to hitting Sawyer's intended vision but without taking professional sound design into consideration. Now, the fourth and last major cut works with all the elements: the humor and the technical combined.

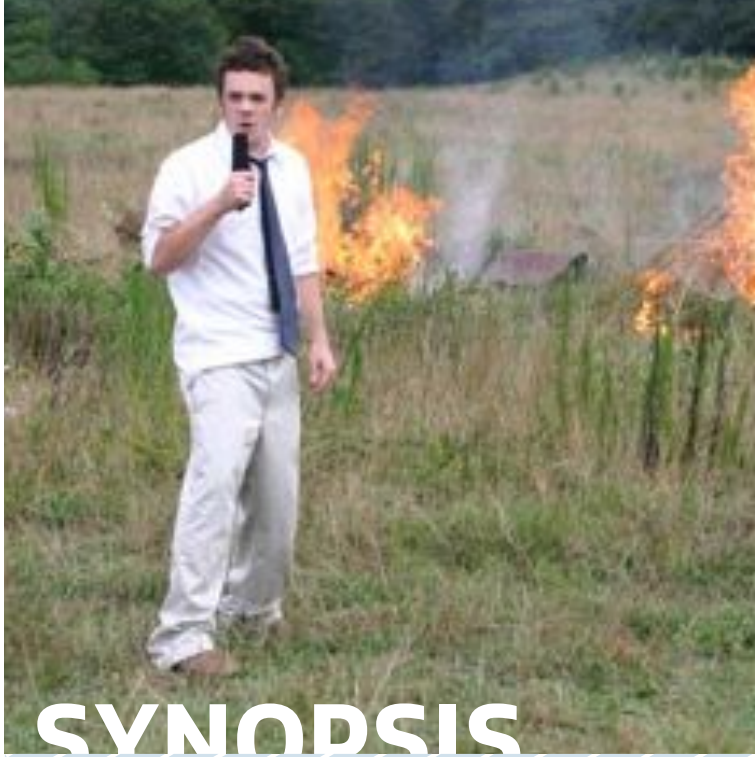
"We sat down on the world's tiniest laptop and edited in Sean's kitchen—with no air, it was very hot, and we opened the windows," Sawyer says of the initial editing process. The two would run scenes by the rest of their housemates, waiting for the laugh that would tell them the cut was working. Many times the laugh simply didn't sound out.

In a March 2007 Atlanta screening of the film at the Landmark Theater, however, FreeLance began to come into its own, playing for a packed audience. "Sean and I sat down in the seats right next to each other, magically people started to laugh and we were okay," Sawyer says. "We'd seen the movie so many times that we'd forgotten it was a comedy. When (the audience) started laughing, we didn't know what was going on. People found things funny that we didn't even know were funny."

After the screening, however, comments, both positive and critical poured in, and since then the filmmaking duo has gone back to trim and re-cut sequences. Moving into a picture lock, FreeLance is finally on its last revisions for the film festival circuit, and it will find there, Sawyer hopes, a larger audience to share in its humor.

For more information on the film, visit

www.freelancemovie.com



SYNOPSIS

Elliot Guillespsie dreams of being the world's greatest investigative reporter, a la his idol Rod Reel--a daunting task considering he is both cameraman and reporter, can't drive, and still lives in his mother's basement. Further complicating matters is Roy Henry who, as Elliot's childhood bully, tortured the boy and is now a born again Christian/recovering alcoholic seeking forgiveness.

Elliot escapes an unacceptable home life in the guise of Lance Windchaser, his journalistic alter-ego. He enlists Toby, a suburban taxi driver, to be his cameraman which in turn Toby accepts in an attempt to escape his own hellacious home life. The two become unlikely friends and patrol the streets of their suburban home in search of the big scoop.

Problem is, news in the little city is just hard to come by. This does not dissuade Elliot's enthusiasm, and he finds great joy in reporting the most mundane of stories. His home life continues to deteriorate as his commitment to the news supercedes all of his other responsibilities. When he receives a letter from his idol ridiculing his efforts, Elliot snaps, falling into a psychotic vandalism and reporting spree with consequences that may very well allow Elliot to truly MAKE the news.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS AND CAST

FREELANCE

Drew Sawyer

Director/Producer/Editor/Co-Cinematographer

Drew has been involved in dramatic productions for nearly his entire life. An award winning actor early in high school, it wasn't long before Drew discovered that his true calling lay behind the camera after producing several shorts. A self taught editor and cinematographer, Drew has tried to master all aspects of production, seeking guidance from experts and making their skills his own. Forming Summer Brew Films with college buddy Sean Mann, they set about bringing Freelance to life. Drew's dedication and work ethic are nearly Herculean in scope, goading the production along by sheer force of will. Drew also slices a mean watermelon. FreeLance is Drew's first full length feature.

Sean Mann

(ROY HENRY RINGOLD)

Writer/Producer/Co-editor/Actor

Screenwriter and co-founder of Summer Brew Films, Sean Mann began work in the arts with high school theater where, fittingly, he studied with actor Bob Kunkel. While completing a degree in Economics from West Georgia, Mann took creative writing classes on the side, hoping one day to make comedies better than the ones he was seeing theatrically released. After man drinking promises, Mann and Sawyer collaborated on FreeLance, Mann's first feature screenplay in which he plays one of the three main ensemble roles. Currently, he teaches high school level economics.

Bobby Mallin

Co-Cinematographer/Camera Operator

Bobby graduated from Berry College in 2006 with a degree in Visual Communication. An accomplished photographer, Bobby worked on several shorts before joining FreeLance as a cinematographer and camera tech. Bobby brought his eye for composition, assisting the director in creating the unique visual feel of FreeLance, as well as the patience to operate a camera twelve hours a day. FreeLance is Bobby's first full-length feature.

(Bobby passed away this winter. He will be missed.)

Bob Kunkel
(ELLIOT GUILLESPIE/LANCE WINDCHASER)

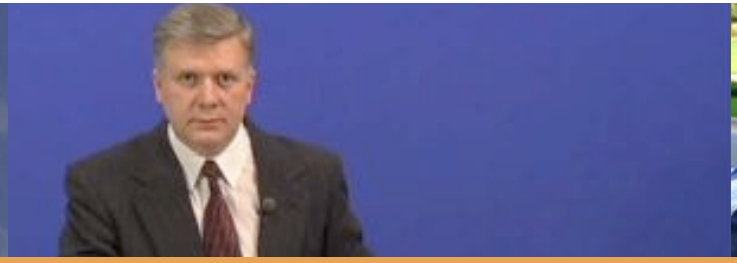
Bob has been around theatre for most of his adult life, though how this led to his degree in sports management is still a hotly debated question among his college friends from the University of West Georgia. Kunkel's gifts for physical comedy have long been known to the writers, who wrote the character of Elliott was with an eye toward Kunkel's unique gifts for improvisational acting. An unwilling method actor, Bob channeled a harrowing regimen of intoxication and sleep deprivation into the manic depravity of FreeLance, his off the cuff dynamism often far exceding the directors expectations. FreeLance is Bob's first full length feature.

Jackson Williamson
(TOBY)

Moving from the stage to the screen, Jackson Williamson makes his film featured role debut as the often-pathetic but endearing Toby in FreeLance. A veteran stage actor who trained at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy and has toured with the Georgia Mountain Theater, Williamson's credits include work on The Secret Affairs of Mildred Wild, The Sound of Music, Guys and Dolls, and The Crucible at the Rome Little Theater. He is extremely proud to have been involved in this film and can't wait to see where it goes.

Jason Fordham
Executive Producer

Arts aficionado Jason Fordham, the executive director of Icon Theatre Company, Inc. and longstanding member of the Board of Directors of the Rome Little Theatre, describes his experience producing FreeLance in a word as "challenging," and, in a sentence, "one of the greatest experiences in working with a gifted team of visionaries..." Fordham has been involved with theatre in the aspects of acting, directing, and producing since 1993 and co-founded Icon Theatre Company in 2005.



Jason Clairy

Production Design/ Sound Monitor/ Executive Producer

Jack-of-all-trades filmmaker Jason Clairy (The Sniper) wore several hats on the FreeLance set, shifting between posts as production designer and executive producer. His previous artistic experience includes 17 theatrical productions, many for which he technically directed and contributed lighting design. His company, Real Media Productions provided most of the primary photography package used on set in addition to his careful production design for the sets of FreeLance.

Roy Clements

Sound Designer

Roy Clements' audio career began in 1982, working in a local radio station, and over the last twenty five years has established himself as one of the leading sound engineers in the South East. From his humble beginnings running sounds boards for his friends bands, Roy has become a master of his art, and has worked on projects as diverse as "In The Heat of the Night" and "Aqua Teen Hunger Force", authoring audio from his swivel chair of power. Roy's clients include Turner Network Television, The Weather Channel, Cartoon Network Television, ABC Television, and MGM television. When not creating audio content for the major players of television, Roy continually tinkers in other sonic endeavors, his limitless enthusiasm keeping him constantly busy. FreeLance is Roy's first full-length feature.

SCREENINGS + CONTACT

For screening information see www.freelancemovie.com or www.myspace.com/freelancemovie

Contact

Drew Sawyer and Sean Mann
freelancemovie@gmail.com

Cast List

Bob Kunkel (ELLIOT)
Jackson Williamson (TOBY)
Sean Mann (ROY HENRY)
Nichole Harrison (ESCORT)
Tim Hensley (ROD REEL)

TRT: 63 min.