

PLATOVISION PICTURES

HANDBOOK OF PRODUCTION INFORMATION



strugglers

PlatoVision Pictures
presents

stragglers

106 Minutes

Not yet rated

PLATOVISION
P I C T U R E S

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DEDICATED TO THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN
OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

" MISSING " REPORT

While helping his girlfriend, Michelle, take pictures for her portfolio in the north Georgia mountains, Booth tries to speed up the process by whining and complaining. Booth becomes increasingly annoyed when it begins to get dark and they still haven't made it back to their cabin. Things only get worse when Michelle discovers a cave and insists that they take pictures inside of it. Booth reluctantly complies.

Back at the cabin, Their friends Mark, Drake, Valerie and Heather party and play cards. They soon begin to worry about Booth and Michelle and wonder why they haven't returned. They shrug it off and continue having fun until Booth returns, covered in blood. He hysterically tells them something in the woods killed Michelle.

Meanwhile, Dr. Elaine Krauss, a genetic Scientist, receives reports about disappearances and disturbances in the North Georgia area. Acting on her own behalf, she solicits a skeleton crew of doctors and mercenaries to investigate the phenomenon. When they arrive at the cabin, they find it empty except for various possessions belonging to the previous occupants. They immediately begin searching for clues. The stakes become higher when they discover bodies in the surrounding woods.

Dr. Krauss and her team locate the entrance of the cave. They prepare to enter, but before they do, they spot another body a few yards away. After closer examination, they find that the person is still alive. They bring the survivor, Mark Locke, back to the cabin in hopes of pin pointing the cause of the disturbance. But once he is awake, he cannot remember anything about what happened to his friends.

In order to unravel the mystery, the doctors place him under hypnosis. They gradually receive new information as Mark is forced to relive the traumatic days preceding their arrival.

As the hypnosis continues, the past begins to mirror the present and it soon becomes apparent that whatever has suppressed Mark's memory is now doing the same thing to them.

It becomes a fight for survival as they race desperately against the clock to recover the critical information locked inside Mark's memory.

NOTICE OF DISTURBANCE

"When *Stragglers* first came to me, I wanted to write a horror movie centered less on gore and special effects and more on suspense, story and characters," says writer/director Dave R. Watkins. "I toyed with the script off and on for a period of about three years."

After working on a few shorts and the public access television show *Witch Hunters Extraordinaire*, which he also writes and directs, Dave and producers Eric Bomba-Ire and Michael D Friedman decided to shoot a feature. All three of them had scripts of their own but they ended up producing *Stragglers* for a number of reasons.

"Production costs mainly. The script called for a small amount of locations and a small cast," observes Dave. "We already knew actors who could fit most of the parts. Marketability was another main factor, we figured it would be easier to sell an independent horror movie than one from another genre."

Their plan was to shoot the principal photography in about a week. They made arrangements to film the week of Thanksgiving of 2002. The main location was found, a cabin, at a resort in Dahlenega, GA.

"It was an ambitious plan, but it seemed like we could make it work," Dave recounts.

After casting for the main parts, they started rehearsing regularly, two months prior to the shoot.

"Halfway through the rehearsals, a decision was made to shoot the flashback scenes, which made up about half of the script, hand held and continuous to create a real time effect." Dave remembers.

"Some of them were about twelve pages long, with a lot of movement, and non-stop dialogue," adds Eric Bomba-Ire, who was also the director of photography. "I knew we were raising the bar higher, but most of the actors came from a theater background and that wasn't an issue. The main problem we saw was blocking the scenes with the camera movements."

After discussions between producers, rehearsals were focused mainly

on the continuous scenes... conducting them similar to that of a stage production with the presence of Eric moving alongside with the actors.

"That gave us an idea of how to work the scenes," Eric explains. "It was hard in the beginning but as we progressed, I ended up knowing the actors lines and it made blocking easier. I was right there between the actors at all times, to the point that towards the end of rehearsals I was already feeling like part of the cast."

"I'd never gone through that much rehearsal for a film shoot in my life," notes producer/actor Michael D Friedman. "I wasn't sure I was going to be able to keep all the dialogue in my head, but we eventually got the scenes nailed and the cast started clicking."

Trouble began when a few weeks before shooting when an actress playing one of the supporting characters, Heather, dropped out of the cast.

"It seemed like it wouldn't be a major issue to recast an actor who only would have to shoot for two days," Dave recalls, "but even after two auditions and countless phone calls, the part remained open."

Further complications surfaced when the cabin location was lost about a week before shooting.

"There was a possibility that we might be able to get the location the following week, so we made arrangements to do that," he explains.

In the meantime, the producers decided to go ahead and shoot the scenes that didn't take place at the cabin.

"The first shoot, the lab scenes, went relatively well but we were not able to get into the location until about 9 p.m. and wrapped about 3 a.m.," Dave says. "Most of the people involved, including myself, had to be at work the following morning."

A cave was needed for the second scene. When co-producer Ron McLellen went to scout it out, a couple of forest rangers told him they could not shoot there.

"So we ended up making our own cave in a creek bed in the back of Ron's yard in Lula, GA," notes Dave. "It looked surprisingly realistic."

Later that night, a minor incident occurred while shooting the cave scene.

"We had run stingers from Ron's house and we were about four hundred feet into the woods," Dave continues. "We had the scene lit, but everything around us was dark. We were shooting a scene where two actors walked off camera and screamed to indicate that they were being slaughtered. During the last take we suddenly heard a voice yell out, 'You might be able to scream better if I sick my dogs on you!' We stopped, looked around, and didn't think much about it until we began to hear noises in the woods around us. We turned the light and shined them into the woods, but could not see anything. Fearing a possible *Deliverance* reenactment, we packed up the equipment and got out of there."

After that, things only got worse. The third shoot they ran into the greatest tribulation of all.

The scene: EXT. RIVER - DAY. The scene also included a girl in a bikini and a gun. Unbeknownst to them, the location chosen was part of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, a national park. In the scene, Michael D Friedman, playing the character of Booth, was the unfortunate actor holding the gun.

"The location was off the path of some hiking trails that were advertised as part of my apartment complex. We assumed we were still on private property," recalls Michael.

"The location seemed secure," notes Dave. "We were deep in the woods and no one else was around so it was shocking when after the second take, we were suddenly surrounded by police officers and park rangers with guns pointed. They yelled for Mike to put down the gun and he quickly complied; yelling that it was a prop gun as he placed it on the ground. The cops immediately secured the area, checked the gun and discovered that it was in fact, a prop gun. The cops laughed lightly about it and left.

"It seemed like the incident was over when suddenly a park ranger stepped out of the woods holding a ridiculously huge gun and told us all to stay where we were. He then began recounting a story over and over about how he came really close to shooting Mike. Pointing out the specific times in which he almost opened fire.

"Since the incident happened so suddenly, Eric did not have time to secure the camera. We looked over and saw that it had fallen over and was close to falling into the river. I told the forest ranger about it and as I walked toward the camera, he lifted his gun and said, 'Tough.' I looked at him and noticed for the first time that he was not quite all there. He seemed a little too trigger-happy and too eager to display his gun. So I sat back down and waited anxiously for the outcome."

Eric adds, "At that point, I kept looking at the camera which co-producer Muta'Ali Muhammad had just recently purchased and I thought what a pile mess have we gotten ourselves into."

"The Park Rangers took the next few hours, searching us and interrogating us concerning themselves mostly with the African American members of the crew," Dave continues. "The on-edge park ranger continued telling the story about how he almost fired at Mike, until eventually it became surrealistic. Finally they allowed us to pack up our equipment and leave. They cited Mike with disorderly conduct and took the blank gun, which belonged to actor Chris Burns. Luckily Chris was able to get his gun back later."

"When we got back to Mike's apartment, Mike told us that as he was getting the ticket, the park ranger with the huge gun leaned over and said, 'you can tell us now, it's all over, you were making a porno right?' This statement infuriated me. I believe that they could have revealed themselves and told us to stop what we were doing at any time, but they waited until the actress in the scene, who was wearing a bikini, began to put her clothes back on before doing so. By trying to bust us for shooting a porno, they inadvertently put Mike's life in danger."

This was in many ways the turning point in the production. The production seemed cursed.

"I believe that both Mike and I were ready to abandon the project after the incident," Dave remembers. "I have for many years been working on independent movies and productions and I, as everyone else who works with me, have made many sacrifices, but then the question came to me after Mike was almost shot by a forest ranger, is it worth it?"

"It didn't hit me until after I was safely back home, the sheer gravity of the moment," notes Michael. "I really didn't feel like it was worth it to continue."

"For some reason Eric seemed unaffected by the events and determined to finish the rest of the movie," recalls Dave. "So we took his lead and moved on."

"After that ordeal, everything that was being said was doing nothing but breaking our morale," Eric adds. "Yes, we have been having problems since we got into this project; yes, Mike almost got shot, but the most important thing is that the situation didn't escalate to that tragic probability. But what would have become of this project if we had packed up the equipment and let those unfortunate events shut us down and end what we've been working on for months?"

Things got slightly worse before they got better, however. The cabin location was lost again and it became clear that they had to find another location quick or *Stragglers* would never get shot. The crew began calling cabin resorts in Georgia and surrounding states, most were already booked up.

"Then Eric had the ingenious idea that we should use Ron McClellan's house as the cabin," remembers Dave. "I couldn't believe I hadn't thought of that myself, Ron's house was dressed remarkably like a cabin, and it even had animal heads on the walls. When we approached Ron, who was also part of the cast, he was open to the idea. There was of course the issue of his dog-sicking neighbor, but Ron cleared up the misunderstanding when he talked to his neighbors and they reported to him that it was their daughter's drunken boyfriend. They said that there would be no further trouble from him and there wasn't."

Few shoots were done during the first few weeks of December, but since they had to reschedule a lot of them, many of the actor's schedules had changed dramatically. Then came the weather and soon the Christmas holidays. Most of the shoots were pushed back to January.

"When we were shooting the main scenes during the latter part of January, I felt as though a huge weight had been lifted off my chest. It was then I realized that we were going to finish the movie," Dave remembers.

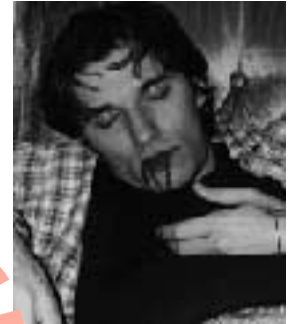
Ron was able to find an actress, Katy Sulhoff, whom Dave had had worked with before in Ron's movie, *"The Middle of Nowhere,"* to play the part of Heather -- the role they had trouble casting in November and December. "She fits the character perfectly and I was glad to have her as part of the cast," Dave says.

Even though production started on shaky ground, *Stragglers* took off little by little. Now, with a finished film which took longer than it was scheduled and which breaks the rules of conventional horror flicks, is Dave concerned about *Stragglers* being accessible to the general audiences and striking a cord between the usual Horror film fans?

"We did not shoot the movie in the small amount of time in which we had hopped," he says, "but I am thrilled with the way the movie turned out, it is a good-looking, well-acted product and I feel audiences will react positively to it. Despite all of the stuff we went through, except Mike almost getting shot, the journey was worth it and I would do it all again."

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WERE REPORTED MISSING BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

CHRIS BURNS
AS
DRAKE CRISPEN

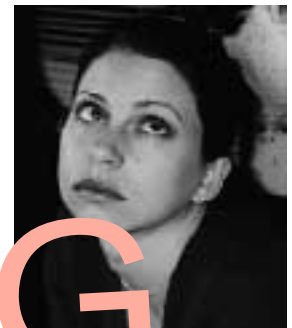


An Atlanta Actor best known for his recent slew of national commercials for Comcast and regional commercials for the Georgia Lottery. He takes a slightly serious turn in Stragglers while keeping a comic edge.

Chris has acted in four previous PlatoVision Productions; Witch Hunters Extraordinaire as the bumbling Witch Hunter Wilfred Montgomery, Invisible Kitchen as the naive chef Raphael, The Final Play as the method actor Randal, and in Exclusive as an inept thug.

He has recently acted in many Atlanta based features including; Chosen, the Other Side and the Last Goodbye.

CHERI CHRISTIAN
AS
VALERIE



After graduating from the University of Georgia with a BA in Theatre Performance, Cheri has spent the last 5 years working as a professional actress out of Atlanta, GA. Cheri was lucky enough to gain experience working in some of Atlanta's most reputable theatre's such as, The Alliance Theatre Company, The Horizon, and Georgia Ensemble Theatre.

Most recently her focus has been drawn toward Film and TV.

She also appeared in over 15 radio and television commercials in the last two years.

Stragglers marks Cheri's fourth collaboration with PlatoVision. She starred in the "Witch Hunters Extraordinaire" as the witch Capsella, and as "detective McClusky" in PlatoVision's 2002 entry in the Atlanta 48 Hour Film Project, *The Final Play*, which won the best acting award for the cast and in the 2003 entry *Exclusive*.

MICHAEL D FRIEDMAN
AS
BOOTH



Michael's first caught the acting bug with the play "The 22 Miseries of the Lives and Loves of the Heterosexual Buffoon Class." The showcase for playwright Rich Etchison was featured at the Discovery Playhouse in Decatur, GA in 2000.

From there, Michael earned small parts in several locally produced features and shorts, including *Kat*, *Shaun & Oz*, *eDate*, and the *Getting* series, produced by the Atlanta Screenwriters Group.

Michael first broke into a lead role with the mockumentary short, *Boy@nt!*, where he played a member of a fictitious boy band. The role required singing and dancing, but luckily bad singing and dancing, as he can do neither very well.

After hooking up with PlatoVision pictures Michael was added to the cast of the series "Witch Hunters Extraordinaire," playing two characters, Willie the Bum and the Russian Bee.

Michael also starred as the "play director" in PlatoVision's 2002 entry in the Atlanta 48 Hour Film Project, *The Final Play*, which won the best acting award for the cast. Michael also starred in the 2003 entry, *Exclusive* as a detective.

Stragglers marks the first lead feature role for Michael.

JOEL HUNTER
AS
Dr. HAROLD BAINS

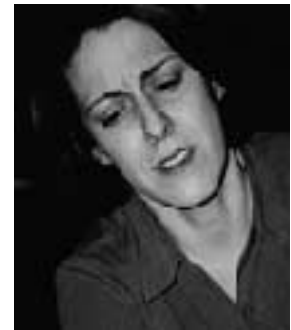


Joel has always aspired to be an actor. Taking his dream in his own hands, he started by taking acting classes at the Alliance Theater and other places around Atlanta; including private monologue coaching.

Stragglers is his first feature film but prior to that, Joel appeared in 2002 48 hour film festival in *The Final Play* as the mad "yo-yo killer" and in "Witch Hunters Extraordinaire" as the Weasely Reverend Falic. He has also worked for other Production Companies in Georgia including Southlan studios short *Stranded* and just finished appearing in the feature *Chosen*.

He has also appeared in stage productions of "It's a Wonderful Life," "The Odd Couple." and "Book of Days."

AMY HOLT
AS
Dr. ELAINE KRAUSS



After completing her degree in Theatre & Mass Communications from the University of Montevallo in Alabama, Amy worked for a number of theatres around the country performing in musicals and comedies. Somewhere along the way, Amy decided it was time to find someplace to call home and explore new artistic avenues. That place was Atlanta, Georgia. Amy found a community of artists who have allowed her to continue working on stage, exploring more dramatic works.

Additionally, she began studying acting for the camera and has appeared in several commercials, industrials, and independent films.

Stragglers is Amy's first venture into the realm of horror/suspense films. She is a self described "chicken" and would not usually attend films of this genre because they "creep her out." But, Amy does admit that making this film was a great challenge and lots of fun.

RON MCLELLEN

AS
GRIFFIN

MISSING

While most of Ron's work has been from behind the camera, directing such films as *The Middle of Nowhere* and *Night of the Hungry Dead* for his production company Southlan-Studios, Ron has started to branch into acting.



Stragglers marks Ron's first major feature role, but he's also made his mark in smaller roles, such as Bama in "Witch Hunters Extraordinaire" and the sheriff in his short film *From Above*.

Ron also co-starred with Dave R. Watkins in the short film *The Unconscious Mind*, where he played a German psychologist, Dr. Rutledge.

SPENCER G. STEPHENS

AS
KEVIN

Spencer is a native of Kings Mountain, NC, where his unusual personality began to develop thanks to his laugh-a-minute family.

With degrees in accounting and finance, Spencer's acting bug started taking shape as an undergrad at North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC where he became a fixture in the theatre department.

After graduation and some time in corporate finance, he got his first paying acting job in 1997 and has been performing non-stop ever since.

In 1999, he moved to Atlanta to try out his acting chops in a larger theatre community and again he has been working non-stop in theatre, while adding film projects to his resume. He's now a full-time actor/singer/dancer/puppeteer in Atlanta and loving life.

Stragglers is his first feature film.



DAVE R. WATKINS
AS
MARK LOCKE



Dave R. Watkins plays dual supporting roles in the series "Witch Hunters Extraordinaire" portraying the neurotic Chesterfield and the mysterious Walter Turnpike.

He has also acted in several plays put on by the Polk Street Players in Marietta, GA. Most recently as the bumbling "lawyer" in their Southeastern premiere of the production, "Getting and Spending."

Other credits include, *The Unconscious Mind*, *The Middle of Nowhere*, *Night of the Hungry Dead*, and *"Stranded"*, for Southlan-Studios in Lula, GA. He also worked two years in a row on the 48-Hour Film Festival acting in the shorts, *The Final Play*, as the hilarious and belligerent Redneck Silas Wiggum, and this year in *Exclusive*, as the powerful and narcissistic businessman Malcolm Anderson.

DAVE R. WATKINS (Director / Producer / Writer) has been a movie buff as far back as he can remember. He began experimenting making amateur movies in high school and continued his passion for motion pictures at the Art institute of Atlanta where he graduated with a degree in a video production.

While at the Art institute, he teamed up with Eric Bomba-Ire, fellow graduate, to form the independent production company PlatoVision Pictures.

Since then, Dave wrote, produced and directed his first feature *Tragic flaws*, and co-wrote, co-produced, co-edited as well as assuming the position of Assistant director in the restaurant movie *Invisible Kitchen*.

In addition, he wrote, produced, directed and co-edited the TV series, "Witch Hunters Extraordinaire." The primary episodes of the series aired originally on People TV, but the show is currently being reedited and will soon find a new home.

He also worked two years in a row on the 48-Hour Film Festival submitting the shorts, *The Final Play*, as writer, director and actor, and *Exclusive*, as writer and actor.

ERIC BOMBA-IRE (Producer / Director of Photography / Editor) Eric knew he wanted to be involved in movie. he aspired to be an actor, but It was while acting in a play in high school that Eric discovered that he enjoyed being on the other side of the stage.

After graduating from high school, Eric went on to earn a baccalaureate in Art, Literature and Philosophy.

Moving to the United States, Eric graduated with a degree in film/video production from the Art Institute of Atlanta, and has since gained over four years of experience in the Atlanta film and video industry.

In addition to directing Music Video for local R&B singer Amanda and Hip hop Group mass Comm, he served on the crew of many independent films.

In 1998, Eric formed his own production company, PlatoVision Pictures.

Under the PlatoVision banner, Eric has served as producer, DP and editor for several productions, including the features *Invisible Kitchen*, *Tragic Flaws*, the local TV series "Witch Hunters Extraordinaire".

Other credits include, the shorts *No clue*, where he assumed the positions of producer, director of photography and editor; and *Burnt Sienna* which is currently in production; *Amora: the inquisition*, in post-production and two shorts for the 48 Hour Film Project, *The Final Play*, in which he was also part of the cast which won the Best Acting award for Atlanta and *Exclusive*

Eric has also worked as a freelance cameraman for NBC's World Series coverage and Disney.

MICHAEL D FRIEDMAN (Producer) is the co-president and a founder of the Atlanta Screenwriters Group (ASG), one of the largest screenwriting groups in the southeast.

Graduating with a degree in English writing from the University of Pittsburgh, Michael first gained an interest in filmmaking through writing, having written six feature-length spec screenplays and many shorts. He moved back to Atlanta in 1997, and soon branched into other aspects of filmmaking, such as directing (the shorts *No Clue* and *Burnt Sienna*, acting (2001 Atlanta Film Festival selection *Boy@nt!*, sound and boom *Behind the Nine*, *The Faith Healer's Manual for the Slightly Inebriated*, producing (2002 WorldFest Houston selection *The Last Day in November*, *Exclusive* and more.

Michael has worked with PlatoVision many times in the past, including the TV series "Witch Hunters Extraordinaire" (camera and acting). NPS Entertainment, a production company founded by Michael and other members of the ASG, worked with PlatoVision and 3 Skull Studios to produce the short *No Clue*. PlatoVision has also worked on two shorts for the 48 Hour Film Project, *The Final Play*, which won the acting award for the 2002 Atlanta competition, and *Exclusive*, which Michael produced, co-wrote and starred in.

Michael's screenplay, "Heaven & Hell, Inc.," was the featured script reading at the 2001 Atlanta Film Festival and finished in the Top 250 of the first Project: Greenlight contest. His short script, "Burnt Sienna," was voted best short for the 2002 ASG Awards.

MUTA 'ALI MUHAMMAD (Co-Producer) began his filmmaking career with stop motion animation in 1993. His animated shorts include a peace called *Caesar* and a cinematic interpretation of the famous novel "Farenheight 451"

He created his first short film, entitled *The Bad Guy*, in 1998 at the New York Film Academy. His first musical short was also completed that year.

The following year, he completed work on his first feature length screenplay entitled "Suburban".

Since then he has earned his membership to the Writers Guild of America and completed a re-write of "Purlie's Summer", a feature length movie set to be in production in the spring of 2004 and executive produced by Spike Lee.

Muta'Ali specialized in Interactive Narratives during his studies at the Georgia Institute of Technology and focused his masters thesis on interactive feature length movies. His work at IBM Research focused on the interactive capabilities of a video technology called MPEG-4, which may bring us interactive television.

He has produced and directed his first feature, *Amora: The Inquisition*, which is currently in post production; on which he worked with director of photography, Eric Bomba-Ire.

Through Eric, Muta'Ali was presented the opportunity to be one of the Producers of the short *Burnt Sienna*, which is currently in production.

Muta'Ali acted and was the assistant cameraman for *Exclusive*, a short submitted as part of the annual 48-Hour Film Festival. In addition, he has directed a music video for an Atlanta based rock band Firehazard, for recording company Music's Power, Inc.

RON MCLELLEN (Co-Producer / Music) is the founder of Southlan Studios in Lula, Georgia. He is also the director of the Fright-Fest film festival aka Cinemacabre Film Festival in Gainesville, GA.

Under his production company, Ron has served as writer, director, director of photography and music composer on many shorts and a Feature *The Middle of Nowhere* which was 2002 official selection at the Dalhousie Film Festival.

Coming from rock & roll background and playing the guitar, he has developed a passion for sound for movies.

As a music composer, Ron has scored all of his productions as well as other productions.

His credits as a composer include the local TV series "Witch Hunters Extraordinaire," *The Middle of Nowhere*, *Chosen*, *The Sayer* and *From Above*.

Credits

Cast

(in alphabetical order)

Chris Burns	Drake Crispen
Cheri Christian	Valerie
Michael D Friedman	Booth
Bernadette Fuqua	Michelle
Amy Holt	Dr. Elaine Krauss
Joel Hunter	Dr. Harold Bains
Ron McLellen	Griffin
Spencer G. Stephens	Kevin
Katy Sulhoff	Heather
Dave R. Watkins	Mark Locke

Also starring

Bren Allisson	Murder Victim
Eric Bomba-Ire	Dr. Eric Bomba-Ire
David Chilian	Dr. George Caldwell
Dan Caudill	Dr. Alex Kleinsasser
Nate Hill	Dr. Gabriel Sheinberg

Filmmakers

Dave R. Watkins	Writer / Director
Michael D Friedman	Producers
Eric Bomba-Ire	
Dave R. Watkins	
Muta'Ali Muhammad	Co-Producers
Ron McLellen	
Eric Bomba-Ire	Director of Photography / Editor
Ron McLellen	Music
Chris Burns	Casting
Michael D Friedman	Assistant Director
Hilton Garrett	Gaffer
Nate Hill	Script Consultant
Eric Bomba-Ire	
Michael D Friedman	
Germar Townsend	Sound Mixer
Hilton Garrett	Boom Operators
Muta'Ali Muhammad	
Michael D Friedman	
Propper Source	Props
Chris Burns	
Dave R. Watkins	
Eric Bomba-Ire	

David Chilian Make-Up Artist
Ron McLellen FX Make-Up

Eric Bomba-Ire Badge Design
Michael D Friedman

Ron McLellen Location Manager

Mark Brice Extras
Mitch Yaborough

Little Coffee shop of Horrors Craft Service

Eric Bomba-Ire Foley / Sound FX
Dave R. Watkins
Michael D Friedman
Bren Allison

Van Dorsey Additional Foley
Markleford Friedman
Ron McLellen

SONGS

"Black and White"
performed by Soul Street Misionaries
(c)2002 Soul Street Missionaries

Additional Music by
ZERO MACHINE

SHOT ON LOCATION IN GEORGIA
(Southlan-Studios, Lula, GA)

Camera and Lighting Equipment
provided by

Guerrilla Films, LLC

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