



Conspicuous Pictures and Verax Films
In Association with Dark Ash Films Present

CRUEL HEARTS

“Find what you love. Let it kill you.”

Release Date: VOD, BluRay & Select Theaters 2.11.20
Distributed by Gravitass Ventures

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Synopsis	3
Director's Statement	4
Cast & Crew	5
Performer Biographies	6
Filmmakers Biographies	10

SYNOPSIS

From Conspicuous Pictures and Verax Films comes *CRUEL HEARTS*, a suspenseful crime drama about loyalty, power, betrayal and love, all steeped in the elements of classic *Film Noir*.

Low-level mob boss BURT WALKER operates a small bar through which he launders the illegal earnings of a criminal outfit known only as *The Organization*.

Enter GUY, a young man who's discovered that the woman he's been sleeping with is not only married, but is actually Burt's wife, TERI WALKER. Rather than risk Burt finding out on his own and exacting revenge, Guy decides to be up front with him, confess the affair and beg for forgiveness.

Accepting that Guy didn't know who Teri was when they began their fling, Burt spares him and the two form an unusual bond, having both been duped by the same woman. Together they begin to investigate Teri's other extracurricular activities, which may involve more sinister, treasonous acts than just a few sexual liaisons.

CRUEL HEARTS is told from three separate points of view - "The Husband", "The Stranger" and "The Wife" - each act unraveling another layer of the story and hurtling the characters toward a dangerous, violent conclusion.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I grew up on the cinema of the 70's, when the old studio system faded away and for a brief time artists were able to break ground and tell unusual, genre-defying character-driven stories thru the mechanism of mainstream Hollywood. These were movies that leaned into the personal, embraced an emotional realism and explored new narrative forms and ideas. And, as an adult, these became the kinds of films I wanted to make.

CRUEL HEARTS is, on its surface, a crime thriller, but the genre trappings are used to explore the frailties of marriage. Leaning on film noir as a device to dissect loyalty, communication and fidelity, we take these universal issues every romantic couple faces and march them one step away from the harsh light of reality, safely creating enough distance to keep them personal without making viewers feel directly vulnerable. The gangster's spouse is having an affair, after all, not ours. By not hitting quite so close to home, we can show the audience something significant and cut a little deeper.

CRUEL HEARTS isn't propelled by flash; it's intricately plotted and character driven, made possible by a creative freedom that now seems nearly the exclusive domain of independent films. We didn't set out to make a movie that competes with what the studios are releasing today. Rather, we wanted to create something different, something that satisfies the itch left unscratched by the mid-budget dramas that are no longer getting made. CGI and other digital workflows have made it possible for Hollywood to realize any visual it can dream up, but there are no technical innovations that shortcut good writing and acting. To me, that's where the best movies live, and that's where we've put our efforts.

CRUEL HEARTS is what today's independent cinema is all about.

Paul Osborne
Director, CRUEL HEARTS

CAST & CREW

Burt Walker.....Patrick Day
Guy.....Alev Aydin
Teri Walker.....Bonnie Root
Grace.....Melora Hardin
Grimmer.....Eddie Jemison
Adele.....Marion Kerr
Sal.....Dawn Brodey
Jack.....Sean Russel Herman
Stu.....Jack Gogreve
Cathy.....Leslie Wimmer Osborne
Darci.....Melanie Starks
Michelle.....Lucie Beeby
Drunk.....Jon Huck

Paul Osborne.....Director/Writer/Editor
Jonathan Brown.....Producer
Joe Pezzula.....Producer
Bill Eikost.....Executive Producer
Robert Hornak.....Executive Producer
Leslie Wimmer Osborne.....Executive Producer
Mark Relyea.....Executive Producer
Joe Kraemer.....Composer
John Massari.....Composer
Ian Arber.....Composer
Joseph Fiorillo.....Sound Mixer
Alina Torrens.....Costume Designer
Christopher Sharpe.....Gaffer
Jon Schiefer.....Best Boy
Stuart Ferreyra.....Colorist
Michael Benish.....Re-Recording Sound Mixer
Troy Daniel Smith.....Casting
Roger Andrews.....Casting
Paul DeNigris.....Senior Visual Effects Artist
Abigail Bradley.....Ms. Hardin's Makeup and Hair
Stephen Bowman.....Ms. Root's Makeup and Hair

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

PATRICK DAY (Burt Walker) – Patrick Day plays the notorious Burt Walker, a career criminal faced with his wife’s infidelity, in the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

Patrick has appeared in countless films over his three-decade-long career, including starring roles in the acclaimed *FAVOR, CUT TO THE CHASE*, *CALICO QUEENS* (with Danny Trejo), *WAITING FOR OPHELIA* (with Yearley Smith), *HUCKLEBERRY FINN* (as Huck opposite legendary actors Geraldine Page, Frederick Forrest and Lillian Gish) and cult favorite *ERNEST GOES TO CAMP*. His extensive TV work includes the pilot for FX’s *THE BRIDGE*, his turn as a regular on the Fox series *TRIBES* and guest-star appearances on shows including *CRIMINAL MINDS*, *JAG*, *DEAR JOHN*, and *DESIGNING WOMEN*.

A founding member of L.A.-based comedy group The Mock-Notz, Patrick has directed over 100 plays, including *BELOW THE BELT* and *CYNICS*, which received both *L.A. Weekly’s* "Pick of the Week" and "L.A Times Recommends". He also directed every episode of the digital series *H.O.A.R.S.*

An accomplished acting teacher, Patrick is the director of L.A.'s Young Actors Space, an artistic director of the YAS Theatre, and has been a coach for PBS' American Playhouse, the Pasadena Playhouse, and Barbizon International.

ALEV AYDIN (Guy) – Alev Aydin plays Guy, a young man caught in a dangerous situation, in the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

New York-bred and LA-based, Alev previously starred in the award-winning indie feature *LONELY BOY*, which he also wrote and produced, and has appeared on several TV series including *GENERAL HOSPITAL*. Better known as a screenwriter, he recently penned the one-hour drama pilot *TRUETT AVE.* (in development with Shawn Levy's *21 Laps*), the features *CONTROLLER* for 20th Century Fox, the *UNTITLED ANONYMOUS HACKER PROJECT* for Macro Entertainment and *SON OF SHAOLIN* for Sony Pictures, the latter two to be directed by Rick Famuyiwa. Alev also created the Netflix series *SMALL SHOTS* for Fox Digital Studios.

Allen Iverson is his favorite basketball player of all time, even though that detail has nothing to do with what we're talking about here.

BONNIE ROOT (Teri Walker) - Bonnie Root plays Teri Walker, a mob wife with her fair share of secrets, in the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

An actress, writer, director and producer, Bonnie has guest starred and recurred in more than 40 television shows, including *BLUE BLOODS*, *CRIMINAL MINDS*, *JUSTIFIED*, *WICKED CITY*, *CSI*, *BONES*, *COLD CASE*, *WITHOUT A TRACE* and *THE MENTALIST*. She's worked extensively in film as well, with lead roles in the romantic comedy *COMING SOON* (with Mia Farrow and Ryan Reynolds), the Miramax indie *IN THE WEEDS* (opposite Ellen Pompeo, Molly Ringwald and Joshua Leonard), the Showtime original movie *THE RANCH* (with Amy Madigan) and indie drama *RAILS AND TIES*, directed by Alison Eastwood and starring Kevin Bacon and Marcia Gay Harden.

In 2009 she produced and starred in the live theater production of the Edward Allan Baker-penned *DOLORES* at the Lounge Theater, which received multiple Garland awards for acting and directing. Two years later Bonnie wrote, produced and directed the short *SISSY*, which received awards including Best Film at the Downtown Los Angeles Film Festival and the London Bootleg Festival, an Excellence in Filmmaking award from Indie Fest and a Special Jury Prize for Best Ensemble at the Amsterdam International Film Festival.

Bonnie was born and raised in Portland, Oregon and moved to Los Angeles in 1997. Upon arriving she was immediately cast as the lead in the movie *EDEN* opposite Dylan Walsh and Sean Patrick Flannery, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. The following year she received a Prism award for her starring role in the TV film *THE ACCIDENT: A MOMENT OF TRUTH* and was a series regular in NBC's *TRINITY* alongside Bobby Cannavale, Tate Donovan and Jill Clayburgh.

MELORA HARDIN (Grace) – Melora Hardin plays the quirky and pivotal character Grace in the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

Melora can currently be seen on both the hit Freeform series *THE BOLD TYPE* and ABC's critically acclaimed *A MILLION LITTLE THINGS*. She was nominated for an Emmy for her portrayal of Tammy Cashman on Amazon's ground-breaking *TRANSPARENT* and is recognized worldwide as Jan Levinson from NBC's *THE OFFICE*. Additionally, Melora recently made history with her acclaimed lead performance in *GOLDEN VANITY*, the first one-woman feature film.

Born in Houston, Texas, Melora's extensive big-screen credits include *17 AGAIN*, *SELF/LESS*, *HANNAH MONTANA: THE MOVIE*, *27 DRESSES*, *THANK YOU FOR SMOKING*, *THE HOT CHICK*, *ABSOLUTE POWER* and *YOU* (which she also directed). She has appeared in TV series such as *THE BLACKLIST*, *FALLING SKIES*, *SCANDAL*, *MONK*, *GILMORE GIRLS*, *CSI* and *FRIENDS*. Her

stage credits include *CHICAGO* on Broadway, *LES MISERABLES* at The Hollywood Bowl, and *RICHARD II* and *APPROPRIATE* at the Mark Taper Forum.

Melora lives in Los Angeles with her husband Gildart Jackson and their two children.

EDDIE JEMISON (Grimmer) – Eddie Jemison plays the hapless mob operative Grimmer in the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

A New Orleans native, Eddie is a veteran character actor with credits in a vast number of movies and TV shows. Best known for his iconic role as Livingston Dell in *OCEANS 11, 12* and *13*, he's currently recurring on both NBC's *CHICAGO MED* and the CW's *iZOMBIE*, appeared in the films *WAR DOGS*, *WAITRESS*, *THE PUNISHER*, *BRUCE ALMIGHTY* and *VERONICA MARS*, and was a regular on the HBO series *HUNG*.

A frequent collaborator of Steven Soderberg's, Eddie recently wrote, directed and acted in his own award-winning indie feature *KING OF HERRINGS*, which is currently available on all major VOD platforms and streaming on Prime. You can also hear Eddie's band The Lightjackets, whose songs are featured in *CRUEL HEARTS*, on iTunes and Amazon.

MARION KERR (Adele) – Marion Kerr portrays the frustrated mob fixer Adele in the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

An actress, writer and director, Marion's extensive credits include episodes of the TV series *JANE THE VIRGIN*, *NASHVILLE*, *HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER*, *CRIMINAL MINDS*, *GAME SHAKERS*, and *THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL* as well as pilots for ABC and Bravo. She played lead roles for Sabi Pictures in their feature *HEART OF NOW* and their award-winning shorts *LUCID* and *I F*CKING HATE YOU*, and had a supporting role opposite Keri Russell in Blumhouse's *DARK SKIES*. Commercially, she has done spots for Toyota, Hartford Insurance, Heineken, Gevalia Coffee, Amazon Fire and more.

Marion studied filmmaking at the New York Film Academy and made her writing and directing debut with the award-winning feature *GOLDEN EARRINGS*, which screened at festivals across the U.S. She is also the host of *WHAT IS REALITY?*, a Cosmos-like science documentary that explores string theory, quasi-crystals and a new theory of everything.

She received her B.A. from UC Irvine, studied theatre in London and currently lives in Los Angeles.

DAWN BRODEY (Sal) – Dawn Brodey portrays Sal, a bartender and assistant to a criminal boss, in the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

A Wisconsin native, Dawn has starred in a variety of independent films including *I WAS A TEENAGE WERESKUNK*, *CRUSH IT*, *STRANGE DEAL* and *INTO THE VOID*, and has appeared on TV shows including *PRETTY LITTLE LIARS* and *SAME SEX*. She is also an accomplished standup comedian and the producer and host of the acclaimed *TRAILER TRASH TALENT REVUE*.

Dawn attended the University of Minnesota and graduated with a BA in Theater and History. She worked steadily in the Twin Cities theater community for 15 years, racking up over 40 professional stage credits, including a 2-year run in the hit interactive comedy *TONY N TINA'S WEDDING*. Dawn also wrote 4 commissioned and produced plays and hosted a long-running live variety show.

She currently lives in Los Angeles with her husband, filmmaker Andrew Melby, and their daughter.

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

PAUL OSBORNE (Writer/Director/Editor) – Paul is the writer, director and editor of the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

Paul previously wrote and directed the award-winning feature *FAVOR*, which was a smash hit on the iTunes charts, as well as the acclaimed documentary about film festivals, *OFFICIAL REJECTION*. He also wrote and produced the indie thriller *TEN 'TIL NOON* and is co-president of production company Conspicuous Pictures.

In high school, Paul won Denver's Gates Planetarium statewide science fiction contest where his short script, *THE FINAL EXAM*, was produced and played to the public for four straight weeks. Paul went on to attend the University of Miami, majoring in both screenwriting and English, where each of two of the shorts he wrote and directed won best picture awards at the university's "Canes" film festival. He subsequently graduated Cum Laude.

Paul has also worked as a film editor and written articles for several media outlets including MovieMaker, Film Threat, Hope For Film and SAG Indie. He lives with his wife and business partner, *CRUEL HEARTS* executive producer Leslie Wimmer Osborne, and their three children in Burbank, California.

JONATHAN BROWN (Producer) – Jonathan "J" Brown is the producer of the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

J has been a location scout manager in the entertainment industry for over 20 years, working primarily in commercials and reality television. His notable credits include *PUNK'D*, *AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL*, *MASTER CHEF*, *BIGGEST LOSER*, and *AMERICAN NINJA WARRIOR*. He's traveled across North America, searching for locations to accommodate small and large productions alike.

J is also an avid photographer, his work published in the book *EVERY MONDAY MATTERS* and in print media for the band Virgil. An Air Force brat, he was born in Lakenheath, England, but additionally has called Athens, Greece, North Carolina, Texas, Nebraska, and Oregon home. *CRUEL HEARTS* is Jonathan's first foray as a producer into the independent film world.

He currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife and daughter.

JOE PEZZULA (Producer) – Joe Pezzula is the producer of the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

Joe has written and directed several short films, including the upcoming *ROSE' DRUNK*, and frequently works as a production manager and location accounting manager for various TV and film productions, including *THE ACADEMY AWARDS*, *PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS*, *KIDS CHOICE AWARDS*, and *PICKLER AND BEN*, a daily talk show based in Nashville.

In addition to his production experience, Joe has written several published graphic novels including *WHERE THE WITCHES LURK* and *INSANITY, AZ. TWO HUNDREDS*, his book of short stories, was released in 2018.

Originally from upstate New York, Joe has a BA in English from SUNY Albany as well as an MFA in Screenwriting from Chapman University. He currently lives in Nashville, Tennessee.

BILL EIKOST (Executive Producer) – Bill Eikost is one of the executive producers of the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

The president of 7 Toes Productions and 7 Toes Media, Bill is also the executive producer of the feature films *THE BLACK GLOVES*, *THE WHITE ORCHID* and the animated short *CUSTODIAN*. He's the co-producer of the thriller *THIS LAST LONELY PLACE*, and is a partner in the newly formed Hex Studios in Fife, Scotland. Bill is a producer on Hex's first feature, the horror film *AUTOMATA*.

Born and raised in Evanston, Illinois, Bill spent more than a decade traveling the world as a music journalist during the 80s and 90s covering artists that include Ozzy Osborne, Ringo Starr, Angry Anderson (Rose Tattoo), Jethro Tull, and Stevie Ray Vaughn.

Bill currently resides in Phoenix, Arizona with his wife and son.

ROBERT HORNAK (Executive Producer) – Robert Hornak is one of the executive producers of the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

Robert is the founder and president of Verax Films, which produces documentaries, narrative features and shorts. Their recent titles include *ELSTREE 1976*, which premiered at the London Film Festival in 2015, *GHOSTHEADS*, a Tribeca Film Festival 2016 official selection, and the acclaimed wrestling documentary *A SHOT IN THE DARK*. Verax is also developing an as-of-now untitled baseball documentary with Robert set to direct.

A native of Milwaukee, Robert grew up in Charleston, South Carolina and first began his foray into making movies as a kid with an 8mm *STAR WARS* fan film. He graduated from The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, and detailed his experiences there in the co-authored screenplay *KNOB YEAR*. He's worked as a featured extra, most notably in several scenes opposite Randy Quaid and Charlie Sheen in *MAJOR LEAGUE II*, and over the years ascended from production intern to producer on a variety of films.

Robert currently resides in Birmingham, Alabama with his wife Bentley and their three children.

LESLIE WIMMER OSBORNE (Executive Producer) – Leslie Wimmer Osborne is one of the executive producers of the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

Leslie previously produced the hit indie feature *FAVOR* as well as the critically acclaimed documentary *OFFICIAL REJECTION*, and is currently directing another documentary, *ROAR: FIERCE FEMALE VOICES*.

A graduate of the USC School of Theater, Leslie worked as an actor in Hollywood before turning her attention to a career behind the camera. She's held positions at several studios, including Sony and Disney, before landing her current post in Theatrical Creative Content at Paramount Pictures.

Leslie is co-president of film and television production company Conspicuous Pictures, which develops both scripted and reality programming, and resides in Burbank, California with her husband, *CRUEL HEARTS* writer and director Paul Osborne, and their three children.

MARK RELYEA (Executive Producer) – Mark Relyea is one of the executive producers of the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

Mark is co-president of the newly formed production company Antrobus Media, which is actively developing motion picture, TV and live stage content. His recent projects as Executive Producer include the short films *HENCH*, directed by Ani Simon-Kennedy, *AFFECT: THE SECOND GREAT DEPRESSION*, directed by Kelsey Wilkins and the multi-award winning horror-comedy *GIRL #2*, directed by David Jeffery.

Additionally, Mark is an Emmy-nominated and Golden Reel-winning supervising sound editor, having overseen the sound design for several hit TV shows

including *BLINDSPOT*, *BALLERS*, *THE NEWSROOM*, *CSI:NY*, *SHOOTER*, *GILMORE GIRLS* and *ENTOURAGE*.

A native of Albany, NY, Mark studied Journalism at SUNY Morrisville and Communications (broadcast and film) and Theatre Arts at The College of Saint Rose. He currently resides in Los Angeles, CA.

JOE KRAEMER (Composer) – Joe Kraemer is one of the composers of the score for the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

Joe has created music for over 100 feature films in a variety of genres, including the Tom Cruise blockbusters *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: ROGUE NATION* and *JACK REACHER*, and countless TV movies and series such *COMERADE DETECTIVE* and *CREEPED OUT*. Other credits include *THE MAN WHO KILLED HITLER AND THEN THE BIGFOOT*, *KING COHEN: THE WILD WORLD OF FILMMAKER LARRY COHEN*, *FAVOR*, *WAY OF THE GUN*, *OFFICIAL REJECTION*, *WE RUN SH*T* and *TEN 'TIL NOON*.

Joe has been scoring movies since the age of 15, when he composed the soundtrack for his high school classmate Scott Storm's *THE CHIMING HOUR*, a feature-length film shot on Super 8. After attending Berklee College of Music in Boston to study film composition, he scored the NBC/Warner Brothers pilot *THE UNDERWORLD* with veteran television director Rod Holcomb. Though the series was not picked up, the pilot was ultimately repurposed as a TV movie and has since gained a cult following.

In addition to his composing work, Kraemer frequently teaches Masterclasses in composition for various colleges and organizations, including The Hollywood Music Workshop, ASMAC, Columbia College Chicago, and Media Sound Hamburg.

JOHN MASSARI (Composer) – John Massari is one of the composers of the score for the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

John's musical imprint has been all over film and television for the past 30 years. He's created music for iconic brands such as Disney, HBO, MGM and Sony Pictures, and composed for countless features, TV series and documentaries. Recent credits include the comedic horror movie *CHEROKEE CREEK*, the feature length VR film *JESUS VR: THE STORY OF CHRIST*, and selected music for TV series such as *THE DR. OZ SHOW* and *CRAZY EX-GIRLFRIEND*. But he is perhaps best known for his score for the cult classic *KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE*, which this year has been orchestrally re-recorded and released as an album with an accompanying special live-to-projection concert.

After studying at UCLA, John was mentored by composers David Rose, Jerry Fielding and later Mark Snow. He began creating score for several Hanna-Barbera animated series including *JOHNNY QUEST*, *THE SMURFS*, and *RICHIE RICH*, and later worked for Walt Disney on *THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY*. For almost 10 years he composed music for one of HBO's first original series, *THE RAY BRADBURY THEATER*.

IAN ARBER (Composer) – Ian Arber is one of the composers of the score for the dramatic thriller *CRUEL HEARTS*.

He's also composed music for several features including *MY NAME IS LENNY*, starring John Hurt, *I AM BOLT*, *REDCON -1*, *SCOTT AND SID* and TV's BBC2 comedy *QUACKS*.

Based in the U.K., Ian is a classically trained cello and piano player with a reputation for pushing the boundaries of their use in his film scores. He's collaborated with hip-hop legend Nas and Blur drummer Dave Rowntree, and assisted Joe Kraemer on his score for *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: ROGUE NATION* at Abbey Road Studios in London.

A musical prodigy, Ian began studying the cello at five years old, the piano at ten and the bass guitar when he was fourteen, followed immediately by stints performing in orchestras and producing tracks for rock and jazz bands. Ian subsequently studied music composition and production at the University of Kent in England.