

Director/Producer:

Jody McVeigh-Schultz 213-291-5703 (cell) echolakefilm@gmail.com

Distributor:

Gravitas Ventures www.gravitasventures.com



Echo Lake

Run Time: 86 Min

www.echolakefilm.com fb.com/echolakemovie twitter.com/echolakefilm instagram.com/echolakefilm













LOGLINE:

Will is a functioning alcoholic, struggling with adulthood. When his estranged father dies, Will inherits a family cabin in the remote Sierras, and is forced to confront his childhood demons and reexamine his crumbling life.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

Echo Lake is a minimalist drama about Will, a 30year old, functioning alcoholic, struggling with adulthood. When his estranged father dies, Will inherits a family cabin in the remote Sierra Mountains, and then promptly gets kicked out of his girlfriend's apartment. He heads up into the Northern California woods in need of a place to crash and intending to sell the cabin, but, upon arrival, realizes that's easier said than done. With the help of an unwanted dog, a nosy neighbor and a possible new romance, Will is forced to reexamine the stories he's told himself about his family and childhood, and decide if he wants to head back to Los Angeles and fix his sabotaged relationships. Echo Lake is a story about the things we inherit, whether we want to or not.









LONG SYNOPSIS:

Will Baxter (Sam Zvibleman), a 30-year old, functioning alcoholic who is struggling with adulthood, just found out that his estranged, abusive father has died and left him the family cabin in the remote Sierra Mountains. After an irresponsible, drunken night out, Will is caught masturbating by his girlfriend Erin (Christine Weatherup) and promptly gets kicked out of her apartment. He heads up into Northern California woods in need of a place to crash and intending to sell the cabin.

Once there, Will meets a nosy fellow cabin owner, Roger (Don Yanan), who immediately saddles him with his father's dog, Otis, who Roger has been looking after. As he begrudgingly bonds with Otis, Will also begins to pore over the detritus of his childhood and his father's life, and, after reading his father's journal, decides to follow in his footsteps on a hike to a strange volcanic formation called the Cinder Cone. During the hike, Will loses Otis and, desperately lost, is rescued by two campers from the local town, siblings Luke and Christie (Chris Mollica and Jillian Leigh), who knew his father.

They help Will search for Otis, and, as he opens up to them about his father and their shared alcoholism, Will is forced to reexamine the stories he's told himself about his family and childhood. After giving up their search for the night, the three head back to the cabin where, in a private moment, Christie comes on to Will. Caught off guard, he has to decide whether or not to give up on his girlfriend, and, more generally, whether or not he can forgive his father and begin to turn his life around.

Echo Lake is a story about the things we inherit, whether we want to or not.



FILMMAKER'S COMMENTS:

I've never been interested in easy stories, stories where you see the ending a mile away, stories the audience knows won't disappoint or disturb them. And yet from 2006 to 2013, I worked almost entirely in crafting such stories as a reality TV editor for shows like Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, Duck Dynasty and TLC's Policewomen franchise. Coming out of USC, I began working as an editor, and the editing jobs were in Reality, pure and

simple. I'd often push the limits of what I could get away with: try to take a quirky Duck Dynasty joke in a weirder, more subversive direction, or highlight a moment that was controversial during a police call, but those attempts usually didn't make it past the editor's cut. In many ways, *Echo Lake*, written while I was helping make Duck Dynasty a national phenomenon, is a response to that experience... the experience of making the most palatable, universally wholesome, inoffensive television possible.

Of course, the truth behind those shows-- the real awfulness of urban policing, the actual story behind the conservative Robertsons of Duck Dynasty, the very real problems with gifting someone a mansion and its mountain of property taxes-- that stuff is infinitely fascinating. But those stories weren't "Reality TV friendly." So with *Echo Lake*, the idea was to dedicate myself to a story I'd never get to tell in my day job, to tell the unadulterated truth about a character and trust that the audience could take it, even if that character seemed unlovable, or even infuriating. Thus, Will, our unlikely protagonist, was born. In many ways, Will is an exaggeration of all my worst qualities balled into one. A great writing teacher once told me to always write the thing that scared me the most, and so I try to do that as much as I can stomach it, to make myself as vulnerable as possible. No, I don't drink like Will does, but there's a version of me that has been there. There's a part of me that wants to smash my tennis racquet, and pout, and ignore every awkward confrontation and dreaded responsibility in my life too. There is a part of that in everybody. Like most people, I've just learned to control those tendencies and behave like an adult. Will has not.

I can't tell you how many times
I've been given the note to make
Will more likable. That said, I
hope that people see the
humanity in Will, a character who
needs more than anything to be
able to grieve (for his father, but
even more for his lost childhood,
his lost sense of family). And yet,
grieving is something Will has no
idea how to do. He doesn't even





know how to tell the woman he loves that his father is dead. He's that terrified of dealing with the baggage. He's buried it that deep. I hope audiences will come to empathize and root for him, because that experience of not knowing how to grieve is a universal one.

Along those same lines, I promised myself that I would treat the audience as

smart, alert viewers, who deserved to be left in the dark sometimes, to trust that they could find their way without being hand-held at every step. While I was working in reality, the exact opposite was true. A producer once told me that the story had to be clear enough that a viewer could be doing the dishes and still follow it. Every interview bite had to perfectly spell out each new story beat. Every competition challenge had to perfectly set up the eventual reaction at "judges table." I'm not interested in making a film for someone who is washing dishes. I want to challenge an audience and trust that they are smart enough, patient enough to go to tough places with the film.

Certainly, as a first film, there are plenty of things I would do different. Not every single moment is as understated and authentic as I'd like it to be, but that's the nature of making a film. I do know, however, that I made the type of story I could be passionate about, a story about a character and an experience that could never end up on a reality show, or even a mainstream film, and I hope that resonates with people.



PRODUCTION HISTORY:

Echo Lake began as many personal artistic endeavors do... out of a place of anxiety. I was about to turn 30, had worked my way into a lucrative career editing Reality TV, and was terrified of what my life might look like in 20 years if I didn't change my career path. I'd never cared about making money per se, but here I was making it, and it was hard to stop wanting that paycheck, wanting that next gig at an even better

show in a genre I didn't give a shit about. So I made a deal with myself that the only way I could justify working in reality was if I spent the money on making a feature film.

I'd always been a fan of small, intimate movies. Kenneth Lonergan's You Can Count on Me with Laura Linney and Mark Ruffalo was an early favorite, and as micro-budget and mumble-core began to have it's moment in the '00s, I started to see the types of films I wanted to make popping up in the form of Duplass Brothers and Joe Swanberg indies. Then in 2010, I saw a film called Wah Do Dem that won the LA Film Festival. Filmmakers Sam Fleischner and Ben Chace had made it guerilla-style, on a cruise ship for which they'd won free tickets and while staying in Jamaican youth hostels. It was an inspiration. To a fault, I wanted to make an equally authentic character film that doubled as filmmaking adventure.

So, in 2012 I began scripting a story in homage to the National Park and family cabin where I'd spent childhood summers with extended family. The idea was to tell an intimate story about a 30 year old, city-dwelling, fuck-up forced to inhabit this remote world, where things that felt so much a part of my being: the cabin, the lake, and the epic Cinder Cone would feel like characters in their own right. What we lacked in production value, we would make up with the uniqueness and beauty of the landscape. We would enhance authenticity by using naturally lived-in interiors and props. We would use the diversity of California, spanning urban to remote, LA to the Sierras, as a meaningful backdrop that didn't require a soundstage.

We filmed 21 long days of principle photography with a skeleton crew, including a 10-mile hike to capture the Cinder Cone in all its glory. With the hardest part behind us we soldiered on, transitioning to more manageable locations in Mt. Baldy, Big Bear, and finally, Los Angeles.

Throughout the making of *Echo Lake* the goal always stayed the same: make a film that feels authentic, find



real moments and strip away the rest. In the edit, we cut down ferociously (from a 130 minute rough to 86 minutes locked), not allowing extensive exposition, an over-dramatic camera move or a too clever callback to ruin the realism we were trying to establish. What's left, I hope, is a quiet but poignant film, about a guy who is learning that the stories he's told himself about his family and childhood, the stories than define his sense of self, are not as clear cut as he thought.



JODY MCVEIGH-SCHULTZ WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

Jody grew up near Philadelphia and attended USC for film production. In the past, he has worked in film and TV as an editor on everything from breakout reality hit *Duck Dynasty* to social justice documentaries to horror films, most recently editing Comedy Central's *Drunk History* and the Netflix Original Doc series *Last Chance U. Echo Lake* is his directorial debut, self-funded and shot on trails he hiked as a child. He is currently writing a film about police violence told through the lens of a faux reality TV show.



ANDY RYDZEWSKI **DP/PRODUCER**

Andy is a cinematographer based in Los Angeles, but can usually be found taking off for some other place. Most recently he shot feature *The Wine of Summer* in Barcelona, worked on Alexander Payne's *The Descendants* in Hawaii and has been DP on TV series Beats per Mnet and The Walsh Bros. Great and Secret Comedy Show for Comedy Central.



SAM ZVIBLEMAN WILL BAXTER

Sam Zvibleman is an award-winning writer and director from St. Louis, MO. Since graduating from the USC School of Cinematic Arts, Sam has made several films which have screened in festivals across the country, including "The Sound & The Shadow," a feature film that he co-wrote and co-produced. He co-created and is Executive Producer on the half-hour comedy television show "Pen15," which he is currently developing with the Lonely Island team. Most recently, he directed and edited the upcoming web show, "Little Things", starring Comedy Central's Jon Bass. "Echo Lake" marks Sam's acting debut.



CHRISTINE WEATHERUP **ERIN**

Christine most recently starred in the indie romantic comedy *Bread and Butter*, opposite SNL's Bobby Moynihan and Lauren Lapkus. *Bread and Butter* was named "Best Feature" at the Big Apple Film Festival and is continuing to play at festivals nationwide, including Cleveland and Phoenix. She has also appeared extensively in television including *Mad Men, CSI: Cyber, Grey's Anatomy* and *General Hospital*. In addition to working in front of the camera, Christine has produced a number of projects including the award winning webseries *Squaresville*.



JILLIAN LEIGH CHRISTIE

An indie film darling, Leigh has had critically acclaimed performances in the award winning flicks *City Baby*, *A Big Love Story* and *The Badger Game*, for which she most recently won 'Best Supporting Actress,' and rave reviews from indieWIRE. Also a stage actress, Leigh most recently starred in a run of 'The Pride' at The Sherry Theater in Los Angeles. Leigh's break-through as writer and director happened this past year with a run of her hit play 'Pie' at The Robert Moss Theater in New York City. Her newest play 'Hooked,' went up as part of The LA Theater

Festival this past spring. Leigh is represented by HRI and is currently residing in Los Angeles.



CHRIS MOLLICA LUKE

Chris is an ambitious multi-hyphanate. In addition to Echo Lake, he can be seen in the upcoming films Boned, The Wedding Invitation and The Mix, the first feature by Chris's In the Garage Productions. He multi-hyphenated the crap out of that film. When not appearing in commercials, TV or various sized mobile devices, he can be found gardening or riding a bike with his amazing girlfriend. Chris is represented by DPN Talent and Liberation Management.



DON YANAN ROGER

Don is a film and TV veteran whose many credits most recently include films *The Muppets*, *White Knuckles* and *A Better Place*. He's also appeared in TV series *Cold Case*, *Sponge Bob Square Pants*, and *Masked Rider*. He portrays William Randolph Hearst in the IMAX film "Hearst Castle: Building the Dream" at the National Geographic Theatre at Hearst Castle.

JOSEPH MINADEO COMPOSER

Joe is an award-winning composer whose most recent credits include documentaries *One Day on Earth* and *Blood Brother*, which won the Audience Award and Grand Jury Prize at Sundance. He also heads label and music production company PatternBased and where he curates, records and collaborates under various pseudonyms.

ELAINE CAREY PRODUCTION DESIGN

Elie's credits include The Sound and The Shadow and A Leading Man, TV series: The Onion News Network and Michael and Michael Have Issues, as well as web series: Squaresville and Racquetball with Kevin Nealon. She also performs in music duo Telecaves.

LILLIAN KINGERY PRODUCTION DESIGN

Lillian's credits include Captain America: The Winter Soldier, TV series The Newsroom and Face Off as well as web series Squaresville.

KEVIN ROSEN-QUAN PRODUCTION SOUND/AD

A native of Los Angeles, Kevin went to USC for Cinema and has done production and post sound for a wide variety of films since. His credits include films *The Sound & the Shadow, Bio-Dead, 5 Pilgrims, The Night Crew, House Harker,* and most recently SxSW premiering *Night Owls.* He also produced short *Stranger's Kiss* and web series *Mountain Man.* When not on set, Kevin DJs around Los Angeles.

REVIEWS & PRESS:

Way Too Indie (http://waytooindie.com/review/movie/echo-lake-dances-with-films-review/) - "I loved this movie, and I don't often say that so explicitly in a review. The script captures the humanity of an imperfect character...Zvibleman never pushes too hard at Will's emotional baggage and hits the subtle comedic notes on point...Both [McVeigh-Schultz and Zvibleman] ease into their roles as if the story is their own. McVeigh-Schultz also supplies the script, and it's a winner. The film has a way with dialogue...Echo Lake succeeds in large part thanks to its relatability and willingness not to indulge in storybook endings...For a film about moments, not gigantic belts of emotion, first-time director McVeigh-Schultz should be proud for hitting many of them right on the mark."

Watch This Space Film Magazine (http://www.watchthisspacefilmmagazine.co.uk/2015/11/04/echo-lake-2015/) - "One of the strongest dramas of the year... Writer/director Jody McVeigh-Schultz's film has a haunting edge and a narrative that, while we've covered such ground before, feels fresh and original. It's a film about relationships, but has the guts to treat the material with a maturity and sensitivity... The landscapes of California play a large part in the film's ability to contain a personal drama within an epic canvas, beautifully captured by cinematographer Andrew Rydzewski... Also refreshing is Christine Weatherup as Erin, a wonderfully rounded portrait of a woman who is strong and intelligent, her faith in Will both her biggest flaw and her greatest quality... Such parts are rare for females in films these days and Weatherup capitalises on this brilliantly.... It's an almost film stealing performance, were it not for Sam Zvibleman. As Will, Zvibleman...brings a quiet empathy, deceptively restrained at first, yet, paying off big time by the film's final scenes. And it's this quiet resolution, as satisfying as it is ambiguous, that is Echo Lake's trump card. No grandiose speeches, no declarations of love, no rush to the airport. As in life itself, the real drama happens in small rooms, on cell phones, or through the simple notion of acceptance of one's own shortcomings. This is a film for an audience interested in character and story. A truthful portrait of how redundant our grudges from the past can be. Stick with the film and you'll cry like a baby. A triumph."

Burbank Examiner (http://www.examiner.com/review/echo-lake-a-beautiful-place-to-hear-your-reflections-1) - "A poetic love song to...loss and grief...played with perfect empathy by first time actor, Sam Zvibleman. Jody McVeigh-Schultz leaves contemplative room within his editing to celebrate the wonder, stillness and beauty of nature. We watch how nature cradles us, often without our awareness...The richness of McVeigh-Schultz's film and the effects the wilderness had on his artistry are palpable...Echo Lake has many gifts within it to warm and enlighten the psyche. McVeigh-Schultz asks subtle questions that make Echo Lake ripple responses of unexpected treasures.... Fresh, extraordinary and beautifully executed." (******)

Off to the Films (http://offtothefilms.com/sedona-film-festival-review-echo-lake/) - "A pleasurable redemption story... Echo Lake is beautifully shot, with scenery choices and cinematography that simply blow you away. The acting is impeccable, with an incredibly strong lead and humorous, charming supporting roles to round it out. The screenplay is captivating and truly forces you to have a connection with the characters, which are developed extremely well. Film Festival screenplays have a tendency to be narrow and one dimensional, however this narrative has an intriguing plot line, and ties a few different angles together quite nicely. This film is able to communicate the impact that one can feel when they find themselves and open their heart to acceptance, and more importantly, forgiveness.

Calgary Herald (http://calgaryherald.com/entertainment/movies/ciff-american-filmmaker-explores-grief-and-maturity-with-subtle-indie-comedy-drama-echo-lake) - "A quiet, funny and occasionally sad take on love, grief and growing up... Echo Lake unfolds with a breezy, improvisational style. It eschews melodrama for a naturalistic tone and subtle comedy that recalls the early mumblecore work of Mark and Jay Duplass."

OneFilmFan.com (http://onefilmfan.com/indie-film-review-echo-lake/) - "McVeigh-Schultz does himself proud on all counts, successfully authoring a character-driven dramedy with finesse and obvious skill. The realistic, albeit irreverent and crude at times, dialogue flows from each character... a testament to the directing of the cast. Gorgeous cinematography, fluidly leading the viewer from scene to scene, is seamless and the shots at the lake and surrounding areas are breathtakingly beautiful and serene. Add in the perfect musical score from composer Joseph Minadeo, and the circle is complete. Zvibleman is excellent as Will, giving us a perfect storm of both profane indifference and suddenly awakened realization... The emotional realities of everything coming at him in pieces over the course of the film are wonderfully emoted by this talented actor."

Media Detour (http://mediadetour.com/2015/06/echo-lake-review/) - "A genuine tale about becoming a better person...with a real sense of intimacy and purpose. Echo Lake is a story of redemption. It's slow and subtle, but it's organic...handled with finesse. The script is solid...we see profound statements, amusing ponderings and genuine heartfelt and funny moments. [Zvibleman gives] an understated performance that is sure to make him someone to keep an eye on...[McVeigh-Schultz] seems to always know where to put the camera, as well."

<u>Dances with Films Programmers</u> - "Sam Zvibleman gives a stand out performance in Jody McVeigh-Schultz's perfectly understated script and direction. This film will not only make you want to settle unresolved family issues, it will make you want to go camping."

<u>Fanboy Comics</u> (http://fanboycomics.net/index.php/blogs/steven-w-alloway/item/5206) - "Writer/director Jody McVeigh-Schultz has crafted a pretty good film. It's small, quiet, and unusual, but it has heart, which is the key to everything...a film worth watching."

<u>Jesther Entertainment</u> (http://jestherent.blogspot.com/2015/06/dwf-2015-echo-lake.html) - "Quiet and reflective.... A refreshing treat!"

<u>Battleship Pretension</u> (http://battleshippretension.com/dances-with-films-review-echo-lake-by-sarah-brinks/) - "Well-made and well-acted...Very authentic...Stunningly shot. The magnificence of the scenery is used to its full effect"

OTHER PRESS:

Watch This Space Film Mag names Echo Lake one of its <u>Top 10 Indie Films of 2015!</u> (http://www.watchthisspacefilmmagazine.co.uk/2016/01/04/indie-films-of-the-year-2015/)

Watch This Space Film Mag Interview (http://www.watchthisspacefilmmagazine.co.uk/2015/12/09/an-interview-with-echo-lakes-director-jody-mcveigh-schultz/) with writer/director Jody McVeigh-Schultz

NJ Stage Magazine Interview (http://www.newjerseystage.com/articles/getarticle.php?ID=6800) with Jody McVeigh-Schultz

Art of the Guillotine Podcast (http://www.aotg.com/index.php?page=cuttingroom_176) with Jody McVeigh-Schultz

Radio Interview on AM 1480 KPHX (Segment 6)

(http://www.breakradioshow.com/archives/breakthrough-entertainment-airdate-feb-20-2016/) with actress Christine Weatherup and Jody McVeigh-Schultz

Watch This Space Film Mag Interview

<u>Scenester.tv</u> (http://scenester.tv/interview-qa-with-filmmaker-jody-mcveigh-schultz-on-echo-lake/) Q&A with writer/director Jody McVeigh-Schultz

"Talking Pictures" Podcast (http://www.blogtalkradio.com/paulboothmovies/2015/05/28/talking-pictures-discusses-dances-with-films-selection-echo-lake) Film critic Paul Booth interviews Jody about the making of the film.

<u>Examiner</u> (http://www.examiner.com/article/echo-lake-world-premiere-at-dances-with-films) shares filmmaker comments in lead up to World Premiere.

Dances with Films Red Carpet Interviews with <u>Scenester.tv</u> (http://scenester.tv/dances-with-films-interview-with-jody-mcveigh-schultz-and-sam-zvibleman-of-echo-lake/), <u>Latino Review</u> (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Hax7GyslKc) and <u>The "In" Show</u> (https://youtu.be/o-i8QEVmmzk)

Things To Do in LA (http://www.ttdila.com/2015/05/dances-with-film-festival-may-28-june-7.html) recommends our World Premiere.

ECHO LAKE mentioned in <u>Variety</u> (http://variety.com/2015/film/news/dances-with-films-festival-unveils-lineup-1201486345/), indieWIRE (http://www.indiewire.com/article/dances-with-films-festival-announces-2015-competition-lineup-20150504), and MovieMaker (http://www.moviemaker.com/archives/festivals/festival-preview-dances-with-films-2015-sweeps-up-a-storm-in-hollywood/) as one of 16 features selected for competition in Dances with Films.

PRODUCTION STILLS:



Will Baxter (Sam Zvibleman) ponders whether or not to sell the family cabin which he inherited from his estranged father.



Will at the ominous mouth of the Cinder Cone.



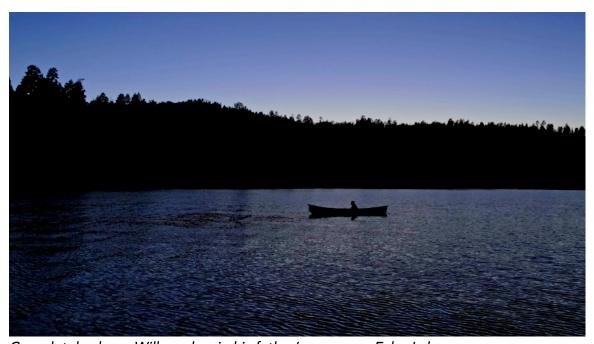
Will and local townie, Christie (Jillian Leigh), share an awkwardly intimate moment.



Will and his girlfriend, Erin (Christine Weatherup).



Will sees Luke and Christie's campfire from his father's canoe.



Completely alone. Will smokes in his father's canoe on Echo Lake.



Will wades into a glassy lake during his hike to the Cinder Cone.

Echo Lake - Full Cast (in order of appearance)

Will Baxter
Tennis Opponent
Terrified Driver
Chewbacca

SAM ZVIBLEMAN
JOEL OKMIN
TARA SAMUEL
BUBBA, the dog

Erin CHRISTINE WEATHERUP

Danny AARON TOMCHIK
Danny's Friend ANDY COHEN
Danny's Girlfriend AMANDA HILL
Party Extras MOLLY KRAUS

JESSICA PAYNE MARK MORGAN KEVIN OESER YUKA SHIRASUNA

MICHAEL HOGAN

CHRISTOPHER HANEKAMP

JAKE BLUNT AARON LOMELI

Soccer Commentator (audio) GARY TAPHOUSE
William Baxter Sr. (picture) JOEL HASWELL
Reel Estate Agent MOLLY KRAUS
Roger Miller DON YANAN

Otis ARROW, the dog
Christie JILLIAN LEIGH
Luke CHRIS MOLLICA

Young Will (audio)
William Sr. (audio)
Will's Mom (audio)
Brendan Baxter
JODY McVEIGH-SCHULTZ
JANE McVEIGH-SCHULTZ
JODY McVEIGH-SCHULTZ

Full Crew

Writer/Director JODY MCVEIGH-SCHULTZ Producers JODY MCVEIGH-SCHULTZ

ANDY RYDZEWSKI

Director of Photography/Cam Op ANDY RYDZEWSKI 2nd Unit DP/Cam Op CHRISTEN FRANK

1st Assistant Camera DONALD BROWNLOW
Grip/Electric CHRISTEN FRANK

DONALD BROWNLOW HEIDI ZIMMERMANN

Still Photographer CLYDE BLUNT

Sound Mixer/Boom Operator KEVIN ROSEN-QUAN

Production Design and Art LILLIAN KINGERY

ELAINE CAREY

Hair Stylist DORIT WRIGHT

Dog Handler DANIEL ROBLES

1st AD (Chester, CA) AARON TOMCHIK 1st AD (Mt. Baldy/Los Angeles) KEVIN ROSEN-QUAN

Associate Producer JOSH McVEIGH-SCHULTZ

Cabin Location Manager CHRIS DWAN
Production Consultant MICHAEL DWYER

Production Assistants JILLIAN LEIGH JESSICA PAYNE MOLLY KRAUS

Camera/Lighting/Grip provided by BIRNS AND SAWYER

Production Boats provided by CAPTAIN JOHN'S FAWN HARBOR

Production Payroll provided by ABS PAYROLL

Production Insurance provided by FRANKEL & ASSOCIATES INSURANCE SERVICES

Editor JODY McVEIGH-SCHULTZ

Original Music Composed by JOSEPH MINADEO

Additional Music by BENJAMIN STANTON

Sound Design/Re-Recording Mixer JUSTIN KRAUSE

Foley Artist/Editor MICHAEL O'CONNOR

Colorist AARON HAYDEN

Additional Color Grading by SEBASTIAN PEREZ-BURCHARD