

Alice Jacobs is Dead

PRODUCTION NOTES

PRESS CONTACT:

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FILM INFO:

Origin: USA
Filming Location: Los Angeles, CA
Format: Red Camera (4K), Color
Runtime: 21 minutes
Website: <http://www.strange-case.com>



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SYNOPSIS

Dr. Ben Jacobs saved the world. The drug he created allowed mankind to fight back against the Z-virus, which nearly destroyed civilization as we know it. Now, in the aftermath of the crisis, he's trying to cure the last victims of the virus. But what will happen when he brings his mysterious work home?

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

In 2007, New York filmmaker Alex Horwitz found the MySpace page of one of his cult heroes, John La Zar, star of *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*. On a whim, Horwitz invited La Zar to lunch during a trip to LA, and La Zar accepted. Soon after, Horwitz wrote *Alice Jacobs is Dead* with La Zar in mind for the lead role of Dr. Ben Jacobs. Looking for inspiration for the titular character, Horwitz thought of one of his favorite leading ladies of genre fare, Adrienne Barbeau. "I never thought she'd do it," says Horwitz, "But I wrote for her, and I couldn't have been more thrilled when she actually said, 'Yes.'"

The role of George was tailored for rising TV star, Peter Cambor, who had played a cloned Jesus Christ in Horwitz's short mockumentary, *The J2 Project*. "I'm incredibly lucky," Horwitz claims, "I wrote this film for three specific actors, and I got all three to do the film. That's rare."

Originally conceived as a mad scientist-cum-zombie film, the tone of the piece changed once the cast was in place. "What started as a campy, twisted tale about a doctor keeping his zombie wife chained up in his house became a more somber take on a loving, aging couple coming to terms with degenerative illness. Our illness just happens to be zombism," says Horwitz.

Enlisting Jacob Robinson and Ariana Mufson as producers, the production prepped for a summer 2008 shoot in LA. The producers assembled a talented team of old colleagues, professional recommendations, and even some Craigslist hires. In all, twelve members of the production are alumni of Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT, including Horwitz, Robinson, Mufson, Cambor, cinematographer Andreas Burgess, editor Jen Lame, production designer Sarah Krainin, and Tony and Grammy Award-winning composer Bill Sherman. The producing team was rounded out by Jacob Cohen as Associate Producer and Brian Schwartz as Producer and 1st Assistant Director. Horwitz serves as Executive Producer.

The film was shot in four days, a difficult schedule for the twenty-page script. Set in two primary locations, a dilapidated hospital and a cozy cottage home, the team decided to get the hard part done first. "Our first shoot was a long, overtime day at Linda Vista, a decommissioned hospital used in a lot of films, and long-considered to be haunted. We had little dressing to do; the place already looks like a horror film," says Horwitz.

The next three days made for a comparatively comfortable shoot at a private home in Topanga Canyon. But the logistics of makeup FX became complicated. The schedule required the cast to go back and forth to the makeup trailer, shooting the film's few moments of zombie gore out of sequence from the quieter, relationship-driven scenes. Barbeau, in particular, had to contend with a lot of fake blood, fake vomit, contact lenses, and even raw beef (she's a vegetarian). Horwitz claims, "She will forever be my hero for her grace and patience through all the yucky stuff."

But the finished product is a film that Horwitz hopes will defy the familiar, gore-driven tropes of many contemporary horror films. He admits that he was inspired by the graphic work of *Night of the Living Dead* creator George A. Romero (alert viewers will catch a "St. Romero Memorial Hospital" sign), but he also turned in large part to the works of 1930's and 40's horror masters James Whale (*Frankenstein*), Tod Browning (*Dracula*, *Freaks*), and Val Lewton (*Cat People*). "They come from an era when horror films were a little more innocent, a little more romantic," explains Horwitz, "And they were masters at implying nasty things without showing them. That's a dying art." It's no accident that the image of Bela Lugosi makes a cameo appearance in the film. *Alice Jacobs is Dead* has moments of modern, bloody horror to satisfy the contemporary audience, but the bulk of the film is spent in calm anticipation of the grim horror that awaits. Ultimately, the film is a bittersweet love story – the tale of a man so in love with his wife that he endangers everyone – including himself.

ABOUT THE CAST

Dr. Ben Jacobs - JOHN LA ZAR

John La Zar has made a career bringing a classical actor's sensibilities to outlandish genre pictures. Best known as the infamous Ronnie "Z-Man" Barzell in Russ Meyers' *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970), John has influenced a generation of misfits, movie buffs, and filmmakers. Born in San Francisco and raised, as he says, "by bishops and bookies," John went on to study at the prestigious American Conservatory Theatre and with Uta Hagen. In recent years, John has received honors from UCLA and Cal Arts. He is also a martial artist and has been known to choreograph his own fight sequences, a skill that serves him well in his roles ranging from samurai to Shakespeare. John lives in Los Angeles.



Alice Jacobs - ADRIENNE BARBEAU

Television, film, and Broadway star Adrienne Barbeau began performing at age 16. Film fans know her best from *The Fog*, *Escape From New York*, *Creepshow*, *Swamp Thing*, *Cannonball Run*, and *Back to School*. She starred as Bea Arthur's daughter in the hit series *Maude* and as Ruthie, the Snake Dancer in HBO's *Carnivale*. On Broadway, she was Tevye's daughter Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof* and was nominated for a Tony for her portrayal of Rizzo in *Grease*. Her bestselling memoir, *There Are Worse Things I Could Do*, was published in 2006. Her first novel, *Vampyres of Hollywood*, hit shelves in 2008. Currently, she has several films awaiting release and she is hard at work on her second novel.

George - PETER CAMBOR

Peter Cambor starred opposite Jennifer Westfeldt in the ABC sitcom *Notes From the Underbelly*. He was cast by director Barry Levinson after being seen at the Mark Taper Forum in a 2006 production of *The Cherry Orchard* with Annette Bening and Alfred Molina. Peter received an MFA in Acting from the American Repertory Theatre's Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University and studied at the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia. Other credits include ABC's *Pushing Daisies*, CBS's *Numb3rs* and the short film, *The J2 Project*, in which he plays a clone of Jesus Christ. Peter costars with LL Cool J and Chris O'Donnell on the hit new CBS series, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, playing Navy psychologist Nate Getz.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Writer/Director - ALEX HORWITZ

New York City native Alex Horwitz has worked on film productions such as *Across the Universe*, *Spider-Man 3*, and Martin Scorsese's Rolling Stones documentary, *Shine a Light*. Alex recently completed the script for a sci-fi adaptation of Oedipus Rex. He also collaborated with Tony-winning Broadway composer/star Lin-Manuel Miranda (*In the Heights*) on a feature-length screenplay, *Basket Case*, a musical about a school shooting set to hit songs of the 90's. More recently, he co-produced *House of Satisfaction*, an independent feature making festival rounds. Alex's short film, *The J2 Project*, explores the cloning of Jesus Christ. Ain't it Cool News called J2 "brilliant," and it has been released worldwide on Troma DVD. Alex grew up inspired by his father, a Broadway writer/director and former Ringling Bros. clown, and his mother, a classically-trained mezzo soprano. An avowed devotee of all things geek, Alex writes Bite Me Fanblog (<http://www.bitemefanblog.blogspot.com>) whenever the Muse takes him.

Alex's email: alex@strange-case.com

Producer - JACOB ROBINSON

Jacob Robinson is the CEO/Founder of Brooklyn Abridged Films, a New York-based production company and filmmakers collective. In addition to producing *Alice Jacobs is Dead*, Jacob has produced two films currently on the festival circuit: a feature, *The Distance Between the Apple and the Tree*, and a short, *Painting Abby Long*. He has also directed award-winning branded content for a Fortune 500 company. Jacob is currently pursuing his MBA/MFA in Film Producing at NYU's Stern School of Business and Tisch School of the Arts. Prior to working in film, Jacob worked for several years in management consulting, focusing primarily on strategy and marketing for financial services firms. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University.

Jacob's e-mail: jacob@brooklynabridged.com

Website: <http://www.brooklynabridged.com>

Producer – ARIANA MUFSON

Ariana Mufson, a Boston native, studied English and Film at Wesleyan University. She has worked in television development and production in London, Boston, and Los Angeles, and currently serves as Manager of Development and Production at Russell Simmons' company Simmons/Lathan Media Group. She got her start in television casting, where she helped cast USA's hit show *Psych*. Before joining SLMG, she worked for Infinity Media, Inc. as their Creative Executive in pre-production and development.

Ariana's email: ariana.mufson@gmail.com

Director of Photography – ANDREAS BURGESS

A Wisconsin native who now splits time between Los Angeles and New York, Andreas' feature credits include 2006 Independent Spirit Award-Winner *Conventioners* (directed by Mora Stephens) and most recently the underground spy thriller *subterraNYa*, directed by Philip Farha. His non-fiction subjects range from bicycle-powered ferris wheels to electric shock survivors to one man's nine-year project to memorize John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In addition to music videos for Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, The Flesh, and others, he has shot numerous short films, including Austin Alward's *Louis & Anne* and Peter Glanz's *A Relationship in 4 Days*, which recently screened at Sundance and at Cannes. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University, a lifelong fan of the Milwaukee Brewers, and an avid barbecuer of marinated meats.

Andreas' Website: <http://www.andreasburgess.com>

Production Designer – SARAH KRAININ

Sarah is a scenic designer, production designer, puppet artist, and object artist who works in New York and Los Angeles. Previous projects include three plays with director Richard Foreman, scenic design for *Beyond the Horizon*, directed by Chi-wang Yang, and collaborations with directors Maureen Towey and Bajir Cannon. Sarah recently assisted designer Susan Zeeman Rogers on Rachel Dickstein's *Fire Throws*, presented at 3LD. Her current projects include a series of installations involving tiny models of the Grand Canyon, a graphic score for object theater, and scenic design in a synagogue for Los Angeles site-specific dance company, Collage Dance Theater, directed by Heidi Duckler. Sarah is a graduate of Wesleyan University, and recently received her MFA in Scenic Design from CalArts.

Sarah's Website: <http://www.sarahkrainin.com>

Original Music – BILL SHERMAN

Bill won the 2008 Tony Award for Best Orchestrations for *In the Heights*. He earned a Grammy as the co-producer of the *In The Heights* Original Broadway Cast Album. He earned a Drama Desk nomination for *In the Heights* Off-Broadway. He was also the composer for the second season of MTV's *Gamekillers* as well as Nike's *Kobe Mentu*. Bill is a proud member of NY's premier hip-hop, improv and comedy group, Freestyle Love Supreme, which traveled to the Aspen, Edinburgh, Melbourne, and Montreal comedy festivals.

Costume Designer – SARAH TROST

Sarah is a product of generations of filmmakers. She studied at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising as a Fashion Design major, with a Costume Design focus. Sarah excelled in every program, graduating Magna Cum Laude. During college she began her design career with student directors from several film schools designing short films. These films eventually lead into creatively interesting independent films, in which Sarah took full advantage of opportunities to successfully apply intricate design concepts. Sarah has contributed her costume design skills to numerous films; including *He Was a Quiet Man*, starring William H. Macy and Christian Slater, *Weather Girl*, starring Mark Harmon, and *The Salon*, starring Terrance Howard and Vivica A. Fox. She most recently created the gang war universe of the upcoming dance epic, *The F.P.*

Special Makeup FX/Key Makeup – SYNAPSE FX

Synapse FX is a full service studio specializing in a wide array of special effects. Contributing to the film were Corinne Dutra (Key Makeup Artist/Co-Owner) and Josh Foster (Special Makeup FX Coordinator/Co-Founder). Josh and business partner Joe Cornell grew up in Southern California with a great love for horror. At the ages of 16 and 17 respectively, Josh and Joe made their way into the FX industry, working on films such as *Carnasour* and *Revenge of the Red Baron*. As their knowledge grew, so did the idea for Synapse FX, founded in 1999; the shop doors officially opened in 2007 after the film *Transmorphers*. On the set of that film they met Northern California native, Corinne Dutra. With a background and education in cosmetology, makeup, and special FX, Corinne joined the team to create the ultimate "one-stop-shop." Offering everything from beauty to special FX makeup, pyrotechnics, and mechanics, the Synapse FX team proudly offers all the answers to your practical and visual FX needs.

Synapse FX's Website: <http://synapsefx.com>

STRANGE CASE
presents

Alice Jacobs is Dead

CAST

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|--------------|------------------|
| Ben Jacobs | JOHN LA ZAR |
| Alice Jacobs | ADRIENNE BARBEAU |
| George | PETER CAMBOR |

PRODUCTION TEAM

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|-------------------------|---|
| Written and Directed by | ALEX HORWITZ |
| Produced by | JACOB ROBINSON ARIANA MUFSON BRIAN SCHWARTZ |
| Director of Photography | ANDREAS BURGESS |
| Editor | JEN LAME |
| Original Music | BILL SHERMAN |
| Production Designer | SARAH KRAININ |
| Costume Designer | SARAH TROST |
| Special Makeup Effects | SYNAPSE FX |

PRODUCTION STILLS:



Dr. Ben Jacobs works in an abandoned hospital (JOHN LA ZAR).



Alice carries a horrifying virus (ADRIENNE BARBEAU).



George confronts Ben about his research (PETER CAMBOR, JOHN LA ZAR).



Alice asks Ben for a strange promise (ADRIENNE BARBEAU, JOHN LA ZAR).

John La Zar

Adrienne Barbeau

Alice Jacobs is Dead



a love story



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CASE**

STRANGE CASE IN ASSOCIATION WITH BROOKLYN ABRIDGED FILMS PRESENTS
JOHN LA ZAR ADRIENNE BARBEAU "ALICE JACOBS IS DEAD" WITH PETER CAMBOR
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREAS BURGESS EDITED BY JEN LAME ORIGINAL MUSIC BY BILL SHERMAN PRODUCTION DESIGNER SARAH KRAININ
CASTING BY STEPHANIE KLAPPER COSTUME DESIGNER SARAH TROST SPECIAL MAKE UP SYNAPSE FX VISUAL EFFECTS BY COLIN THEYS
PRODUCED BY JACOB ROBINSON ARIANA MUFSON BRIAN SCHWARTZ WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ALEX HORWITZ



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