



press notes

A MOVIE BY NATHAN SILVER
72 minutes - 2009 - USA - Color

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LONG SYNOPSIS:

The Blind is the portrait of a relationship gone bad that keeps on going.

Marcus, an architect, languishes beneath the burden of an endless string of soulless, underfunded projects. His young girlfriend, Kate, a model of traditional wifely values, labors to make their new house into a home. She cooks, she cleans, and does whatever is necessary to give Marcus what he silently demands.

In his directorial debut, Nathan Silver elegantly moves his camera through the static lives of the couple, providing the level of remove necessary for the audience to see the beauty hidden beneath the banality.

Silver layers harsh humor throughout the story, allowing absurd caricatures of life to dance in and out of the couple's lives. Raymond, Marcus' office assistant, talks incessantly but says nothing. Herman, the geriatric neighbor with whom Kate strikes up a relationship, is too feeble in his old age to act on his perverse thoughts.

Appropriating the conventions of traditional romance, Silver twists *The Blind* into a horror movie of everyday life. Like an overloaded freight train barreling toward the end of its tracks, the story careens to an inevitable, yet shocking conclusion.

The Blind was shot in Fall River, Massachusetts in only twelve-and-a-half days. The movie's three production designers, last minute set changes, and emergency casting sessions are invisible to the viewer. In fact, despite the mad rush of production, cinematographer Rain Li (*Paranoid Park*, *Paris Je T'aime*, *The Limits of Control*) considers the footage the best she has ever shot. The filmmakers agree.

MEDIUM SYNOPSIS:

The Blind is a vision of everyday life captured through the disfiguring lens of first-time director, Nathan Silver.

Marcus, an architect, and his young girlfriend, Kate, are a couple not unlike many others. Marcus goes to his office to work on his dreary designs; Kate maintains their new home in a neighborhood of prefabricated houses.

When Marcus is offered the chance to exercise his strangled creativity by designing a church, he throws himself headlong into the job. As Marcus dedicates more and more time to the project, Kate devotes her energy to taking care of Herman, the ailing old man that lives across the street.

When the church project falls through and Herman dies, Marcus and Kate are forced into a confrontation that binds them for life.

While the filmmakers were at a meeting with a potential financier at the Z Bar in Providence, RI, another of the bar's patrons overheard their conversation. The eavesdropper, Riley Newman, a former pirate and professional fisherman, ended up financing nearly the entire project.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

The Blind is the portrait of a relationship gone bad that keeps on going. Marcus, a failure of an architect, takes out his frustration on Kate, his young girlfriend, twisting what should be a romance film into a horror movie of everyday life.

Co-writers Nathan Silver and Ben Bostick met in a French film school in October of 2007. In September of 2008, they completed production on *The Blind*, their first feature film.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

To make a movie with the intention of keeping the audience at arm's length is not a good idea, especially when the story has all the ingredients of a romance film. But here, with *The Blind*, I give you an electric eel of a picture. So take it for what you will.

I'm not a particularly candid person, nor are my movies. Rather than to lead the audience to identify with the characters, my aim is to challenge them to sympathize with the foibles of a self-loathing prick, a rambling nimrod, a dying pervert, and an aggressively passive housewife-to-be. I asked the actors to repress their reactions. I asked them to live their roles in the passive tense. The characters' emotions are undergone; the characters' lives are lived without the characters' knowledge.

As the tension accrues over the course of the story, the movie falls over the viewer. Stealthy and inevitable, like the night. I have crafted this movie to be like the end of a dreadful day, but in that day's end there is the promise of another day to come. And perhaps that hopeless promise of the coming day—not the day itself—is worth all the days one undergoes.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

Nathan Silver (writer & director) – Born in Chickentown, Massachusetts in 1983, Nathan Silver, cut his teeth on poetry and drawing before taking up moviemaking. Since graduating from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts with a degree in screenwriting in 2005, he has written and directed four short films. Nathan’s last short, “Anecdote”, premiered at Slamdance Film Festival 2008. *The Blind* is his first feature, but certainly not his last.

Ben Bostick (writer & producer) – Born in 1983, Ben Bostick grew up in the Carolinas and Minnesota. After graduating with a literature degree from New York University in 2005, Ben worked as a cowboy in Nevada and a journalist in Seattle before embarking on a career in moviemaking. He worked in Los Angeles for a year-and-a-half in various on-set capacities before deciding to attend film school in Paris to refocus his energies on the creative aspect of moviemaking. On orientation day he met Nathan Silver. Weeks later, Ben and Nathan dropped out of school to begin work on the project that would become *The Blind*.

Terry Leonard (producer) – Terry Leonard’s success as a feature film producer started with *Virgin* (Robin Wright-Penn), which was nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards, and *Particles of Truth*. In more recent years, Terry produced a feature film adaptation of the award-winning novel *Dream Boy*, which premiered at the 2008 Berlin International Film Festival and won best screenplay at the 2008 L.A. Outfest. He has also enjoyed film festival success with Sundance picks *Stephanie Daley* (Amber Tamblyn, Tilda Swinton, Timothy Hutton) and *Hounddog* (Dakota Fanning). In addition to *The Blind*, Terry is in post-production for *Sordid Things* (Piper Perabo).

Rain Li (cinematographer) – Born in 1983, Rain has shot six features, 25 short films, numerous commercials, music videos, and fine art video installations. Rain has worked with some of today’s most respected directors, including Jim Jarmusch, Mike Figgis, and Gus Van Sant. Since 2005, she has been a frequent collaborator of cinematographer/director Christopher Doyle (*In the Mood for Love*, *Hero*, *Lady in the Water*). Her recent collaboration with Doyle and Van Sant, *Paranoid Park*, received the 60th Anniversary Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 2007. Also in 2007, *Variety* named Rain one of the “10 Cinematographers to Watch.”

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Jonas Ball (Marcus) – Born in Roseville, CA in 1975, Jonas Ball has starred in three feature films. Prior to the *The Blind*, he played a CIA agent sent to investigate paranormal activities in Afghanistan in *The Objective* (2008). He first garnered attention for his portrayal of John Lennon assassin, Mark David Chapman in Andrew Piddington’s *The Killing of John Lennon* (2006), giving what *Variety* called a “fearless, commanding lead performance.” Jonas lives in Los Angeles.

Josette Barchilon (Kate) – The daughter of two psychoanalysts, Josette Barchilon was born and raised in New York City. Nathan Silver met her one evening in Paris and cast her later that night. *The Blind* is her feature film debut.

Jacob Reynolds (Raymond) – Jacob made his acting debut in a Ritz crackers commercial when he was four-years-old. He went on to play roles in *The Road to Wellville*, *For Love of the Game*, and *Loren Cass*. But he is perhaps best known for his controversial role as Solomon in Harmony Korine’s *Gummo*. In addition to acting, Jacob is a partner in the film production company, Cinematik.

10 FAQs FOR NATHAN SILVER

Q: Have you ever been married? Is the relationship in the film based on your experiences?

A: I've never been married. Sure, this is based on a relationship of mine. A future one, though. I'll be Kate.

Q: Who are your biggest influences as a director?

A: I don't know anymore. In the past I had a long list of my favorite directors. But I lost it on the way here.

Q: Do you have another project in the works?

A: *Milk Mirror*. A Russian novel of a movie. It's about a 1950's housewife whose only concern is freedom. I don't really want to get into it. It's too early to start trying to sell it. All I'll say is this: it doesn't end very well.

Q: Do you see yourself as part of any new independent film movement?

A: I hope so. Mumblecore? Melodrama? I don't really know of any "film movements" that would have me as a member.

Q: Isn't it impossible to shoot a feature film in twelve-and-a-half days? Did you feel your vision was compromised due to your short shooting schedule?

A: The tight shooting schedule made for a wonderfully chaotic and unbearably tense production. I don't think there was one smile during the whole production on anyone's face except for mine.

Q: What was it like working with Rain Li?

A: She called me her American brother, because we're very close in age—I'm a day older in fact. It was like working with a sibling.

Q: Why did you shoot the movie in Fall River, Massachusetts?

A: Defunct factories and subdivisions. It's truly a miracle of the industrial revolution. Plus our executive producer/location scout suggested it.

Q: How did you decide on the title, *The Blind*?

A: Watch the movie and you'll see. It couldn't be called anything else.

Q: How did you decide on the production company name, Chickentown Productions?

A: That's where I was born. Chickentown, Massachusetts.

Q: Do you see yourself as an independent filmmaker for life? Or would you consider directing studio pictures?

A: This is like asking a young lady if she plans to ever get married.