



SHAWN
CHRISTENSEN

FATIMA
PTACEK

EMMY
ROSSUM

PAUL
WESLEY

RON
PERLMAN

BEFORE I DISAPPEAR



SYNOPSIS

The movie takes place over the course of one sweltering night in New York City. The journey begins with Richie (Shawn Christensen), a seemingly hopeless introvert, who has decided he has had enough with life. But as he is attempting to end it all, he gets a phone call from his estranged sister, Maggie (Emmy Rossum). Though they haven't spoken in years, Maggie has found herself in a sticky situation and needs Richie to pick up her daughter from school.

Richie reluctantly cancels his dark plans and goes to pick up his precocious niece, Sophia (Fatima Ptacek), and escorts her home. But when Maggie doesn't return as scheduled, Richie is forced to take care of Sophia for the night. As the night progresses, Richie finds himself caught in a battle between his two bosses Bill (Ron Perlman) and Gideon (Paul Wesley) and soon figures out that baby-sitting is the least of his problems.



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The idea for *Before I Disappear* was born a few years ago, when director Shawn Christensen met a prodigal young girl who lived next door to his best friend. He was immediately blown away by her youthful vigor and intelligence, a seemingly stark contrast to his own shortcomings and he decided he'd like to explore this dynamic in a film. In a few short weeks he wrote a draft that would later become the 2013 Academy Award® winning short film, *Curfew*.

Very early on, long before the Oscar, when *Curfew* was making the rounds on the festival circuit, it became very clear to us that the film had an effect on people. We had imagined it only as a short film, but time after time the comment we kept hearing was, "I wish it was longer." The path to turning a short film into a feature was no easy feat. Shawn enlisted the help of his Producers, Paul Wesley and Damon Russell, during development.

A number of wildly different directions were discussed before the final story was settled upon. Ultimately, Shawn decided to focus on the core of the story about a family, Richie, Maggie & Sophia, who've been splintered by time and circumstances and are forced to reunite when Maggie finds herself in a bind. Using this as the backbone, he expands the world to show more of Richie's absurd life and the colorful characters that populate it. The result is a darkly funny, sometimes sad, but charming adventure that takes place over the course of a single night in New York City.

We finally got the script together in December 2012. We soon joined forces with UK producer Lucan Toh and his company Wigwam Films to put the finishing touches on the script. Together we began looking for financing. In January, *Curfew* received the nomination for Best Live Action Short Film and went on to win the Academy Award®. Shortly after, we were able to finally raise funding for the feature version of the film.



Assembling the right team was key, we wanted to keep the intimate setting and indie spirit we had while shooting *Curfew*. As much as we could we hired friends and people we had worked with on the short like Cinematographer Dan Katz. One of the new key components was bringing on LA / NYC based producer, Terry Leonard. Once we had assembled a team, we went into pre-production in May of 2013.

Shooting a film in New York City is a challenge on many levels; locations, casting, crew, and not least cost. But it was important to Shawn and everyone involved for the feature to truly capture the city. Special attention was paid to securing the most authentic and picturesque locations. Our ace Production Designer, Scott Kuzio and his team made sure the look and feel of late night New York City made it onto the screen.

When it came time to edit, Shawn decided to edit the film with two of the Producers from the short, Andrew Napier and Damon Russell. The process was long and intensive but slowly as the film began to take shape we knew we had something special.

When it came time to put the cast together, we knew we wanted to support our two main characters, played by Shawn and the brilliant Fatima Ptacek, with the best cast possible. We were lucky enough to land one of the titans of the industry, Avy Kaufman as our Casting Director.

Shawn had already created the role of Gideon for longtime friend Paul Wesley. With Paul and Avy attached, we were able to move quickly to Emmy Rossum. Emmy joined the team for a table read, and within the first few minutes it was clear the role of Maggie was meant for her and she soon signed on. We talked in depth about who would play the role of Bill, a rock club owner from a forgotten age. Whoever it was would need to have an edge, as well as a menacing physical presence. Ron Perlman was on top on our list, and after he had an opportunity to watch the short film and speak with Shawn, he was sold on the role, we had our Bill.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

SHAWN CHRISTENSEN (Director, Producer, Writer, “Richie”)

Christensen graduated from Pratt Institute with a BFA in Illustration and Graphic Design. He is an Oscar winning filmmaker, musician, and painter. In 2002, he formed the indie rock band Stellastarr*, releasing two albums on RCA and a third album independently. While on tour, he wrote and sold several screenplays, including *Sidney Hall* (Fox Searchlight) and *Karma Coalition* (Warner Bros.).

In 2011, Christensen’s short film, *Brink*, was an Official Selection of the Tribeca Film Festival. *Before I Disappear* is based on his short film, *Curfew* which won the Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film at the 2013 Academy Awards.

DAMON RUSSELL (Producer)

Russell attended Georgia State University where he studied Film and Marketing. After graduating, he began working in television and produced a number of shows, including A&E’s *The First 48* and MTV’s *Made*. Damon went on to direct the documentary *The Cage* as well as the hit feature film *Snow on the Bluff*. He has worked as a Producer with Shawn on all of his short films.

LUCAN TOH (Producer)

Lucan began his career in sales and marketing with Procter & Gamble. His training provided a platform for a successful career in venture capital, where Lucan invested primarily in high technology industries. A chance introduction with Producer Elliot Kastner inspired Lucan to follow his passion for film making. As a result, Lucan founded Holland Park Pictures in 2009, where he co-wrote and produced the critically acclaimed short film *Babysitting* and then the feature film, *Having You*. Lucan co-founded Wigwam Films in 2012, raising a development finance fund to acquire and develop unique properties that appeal to specific audiences.



TERRY LEONARD (Producer)

Leonard has produced over 35+ feature films over his 14-year career including *Hounddog*, *Backseat*, *Particles of Truth*, *Allegiance*, *A Case of You*, *The Last International Playboy*, *Revenge for Jolly* and *Stephanie Daley*. He recently wrapped the film *How to be a Man*, and *Match*. He is currently in production on two features *The Man on Carrion Road* and *The Wright Girls*. In theaters this year; *Cold Comes the Night* with Bryan Cranston, *The Moment* with Jennifer Jason Leigh and *The Forgotten Kingdom*. He is currently in post-production on *Sam & Amira* and *Mojave*.

DANIEL KATZ (Director of Photography)

Katz is an Irish born cinematographer and filmmaker based in New York. He grew up in Dublin where he also attended film school. He worked in the Irish film industry for four years as a lighting cameraman. He moved to New York and began working as lighting technician and gaffer, sharing his time between working on studio films including, *I am Legend* and *Funny Games*.

DARREN MORZE (Music)

Morze is a NYC-based composer/sound engineer. He has been touring the world as either a musician or live mixing engineer with artists such as The Killers, Jane's Addiction, Placebo, Easy Star All-Stars, Stellastarr, The Sounds, and Asobi Seksu. During this time, Darren was also running his own recording facility, Philadelphia's Plan B Studios, where he produced, engineered, and collaborated on literally hundreds of recordings with local, national, and international artists.

Over the past three years, Darren has scored about 35 features, shorts, and documentaries, all of varying genre and ranging from independent to studio productions. Darren also frequently collaborates with composer Michael Wall. Together they have scored several internationally-acclaimed and award-winning documentaries such as *Neurotypical* and *Bel Boba Aqui* as well as dozens of modern dance pieces.



ABOUT THE CAST

FATIMA PTACEK (“Sophia”)

Ptacek is an 11-year-old actress who has recently been cast in the films *Anything’s Possible*, *Tio Papi* and *The Miracle of Spanish Harlem*. She is currently the voice of Dora, on *Dora the Explorer*. She has appeared in such TV shows as *SNL*, *Sesame Street* (opposite First Lady Michelle Obama), *A Gifted Man*, *Royal Pains*, *The Beautiful Life*, and *Body of Proof*. Last year, Fátima made her acclaimed stage debut in the Off Broadway production “*Love Divided By / Times Three*.” Fátima is also an accomplished fashion model signed with the renowned New York modeling agency, *Wilhelmina*. Her face has graced magazine covers and billboards around the world.

EMMY ROSSUM (“Maggie”)

After passing an audition at the Metropolitan Opera when she was 7 years old, Emmy performed in more than 20 operas in six different languages at Lincoln Center, alongside such figures as Plácido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti and directors such as Franco Zeffirelli in “*Carmen*.”

Emmy made her feature debut in the film *Songcatcher*, which won the Acting Award at the Sundance Film Festival. Rossum also received an Independent Spirit Award nomination. She played Clint Eastwood’s daughter in *Mystic River*, her first major studio film followed by *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Dragonball: Evolution*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*, the latter of which won her a Young Artist Award, a Film Critics Association Award, and numerous other nominations. She currently stars in the hit television show *Shameless*, for which she has been nominated for a Golden Globe.

RON PERLMAN (“Bill”)

Perlman’s breakthrough came as the lion-man opposite Linda Hamilton in the cult-series *Beauty and the Beast*. This earned him not only a Golden Globe Award, but an underground fan following. Perlman went on to star in *Alien: Resurrection*. He has used his distinctive voice to his advantage in many animated films, series, commercials and video games. It was not until much later that he achieved fame when his good friend Guillermo del Toro helped him star in movie *Hellboy*.



PAUL WESLEY (Producer, “Gideon”)

Before I Disappear marks Paul Wesley’s first credit as producer. As an actor, Wesley currently stars in the CW’s “Vampire Diaries,” which airs in over 24 countries. He recently made his directorial debut with the episode “Resident Evil” (April 17, 2014 premiere).

In addition to *Before I Disappear*, Wesley’s film credits include Agnieszka Holland’s *Shot in the Heart* for HBO, *Peaceful Warrior* opposite Nick Nolte, *Baytown Outlaws* with Billy Bob Thornton and the cult hit *Roll Bounce*. Wesley also stars in Sean Mullin’s forthcoming *Sam & Amira*, an independent drama about a veteran who falls for an Iraqi immigrant.

On television, Wesley starred opposite Bryan Cranston in *Fallen*, the immensely popular ABC mini-series based on the best-selling book series. Wesley also played recurring roles on *Everwood*, *American Dreams*, *8 Simple Rules*, and *24*. He began his career on stage and trained in New York City.

RICHARD SCHIFF (“Bruce”)

Schiff is best known for playing Toby Ziegler on the NBC television drama *The West Wing*, a role for which he received an Emmy Award.

Schiff initially studied directing. He directed several off-Broadway plays, including *Antigone* in 1983 with a just-graduated Angela Bassett. In the mid-1980s Schiff decided to try his hand at acting and landed several TV roles. He was seen by Steven Spielberg in an episode of the TV drama *High Incident* and was cast in *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*.



Written and Directed by Shawn Christensen
Produced by Damon Russell
Lucan Toh
Produced by Shawn Christensen
Paul Wesley
Terry Leonard
Executive Producer Christopher Eoyang
Nick Harbinson
Oliver Roskill
Emily Leo
Directors Of Photography Daniel Katz
Casting by Avy Kaufman, C.S.A.
Line Producer Isaac Wilkins
Music Supervisor Brienne Rose
Music Composed by Darren Morze

Costumes Kaela Wohl
Production Designer Scott Kuzio
Edited by Andrew Napier
Shawn Christensen
Damon Russell
Cedric Vara
First Asst. Director Claire Skowronek
Second Asst. Director Nate Cohen
Production Supervisor Brenden "Bear" Hubbard
Associate Producer Fletcher Chancey
Art Director Nora Mendis
Set Decorator

English / 2014 / 98 mins
aspect ratio: 2.39 / delivery format: 2K and 4K DCP
shooting format: anamorphic ARRIRAW



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