

ONLY THROUGH AGONY WILL MERCY GROW

SWEET MERCY

A FILM BY MICHELE ATKINS



GenieBird Films & Laureate Society
present

SWEET MERCY

Michele Atkins
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Synopsis

Fuzzy, a young man with Down syndrome, accompanies his brother Harold for their annual visit to their mother's on her birthday. Fuzzy must watch out for Harold's criminal, addict ways or else be taken once again by his love for his brother who can't get straight.

Duration 14 minutes
Completed March 2018
Shooting Format Red
Screening Format DCP
Sound 5.1
Aspect Ratio 1:1:85
Language English

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

For many years I volunteered at a dance for persons with physical and/or mental challenges. There was a freedom felt in the dancehall; one of expression and natural joy that surrounded all whom participated. There was no positioning or posing... it was pure.

This film is not about that experience, but inspired by it. In "Sweet Mercy" I wanted to highlight the lead character's ability to express love and acknowledge memories from childhood for his addict brother, even during the most dire circumstances.

Addiction is a terrible demon. We have heard countless stories about people who act like animals when in the throes of their disease. It seems nothing will stop it... but what about the purity of mercy?

I wanted to explore the consistent hope that one sibling has for another and show the pride of an addict in the most immersive way possible. The action of mercy is able to consume the addict's pride, leaving Harold helpless with a clear understanding of the true depravity of his actions. And only in agony can he understand the depths of his insanity and perhaps find it within him to start anew.





LAUREN SIMPSON/PRODUCER

Lauren is a Los Angeles based producer and writer. Though best known for her work on 2012's viral, award-winning short "Dame Factory," her producing credits span music video, commercial, narrative and virtual reality formats.

In 2016 Lauren joined Google's then principal filmmaker for VR, Jessica Brillhart, and produced "Beethoven's Fifth," a VR collaboration with the Philharmonia Orchestra of London and NASA JPL that won Best Music VR Experience at Raindance Film Festival 2017 and screened at the SXSW Conference 2018.

Lauren was recruited by Amazon, in late 2017, where she currently produces bonus content experiences for Prime Original series and movies. She happily consults on independent film projects in her spare time.

MICHELE ATKINS/ WRITER & DIRECTOR

Michele grew up in Buffalo, New York and Johnson City, Tennessee. During and after graduating college--she worked at the local Buffalo television station in camera and lighting on news and public access shows.

She moved to Los Angeles and carved out a career in commercial production, climbing up from PA to Producing to finally directing and writing.

In 2016 she won the Academy of Motion Picture Nicholl Fellowship for her screenplay "Talking About The Sky."

She currently is writing a novel adaptation into a screenplay for Caviar Productions.

BILL MOLDT/CINEMATOGRAPHER

Bill is based in Los Angeles, CA. Originally from central New York, he began shooting music videos for Brooklyn based bands Hurricane Bells, Scout, and Longwave.

Bill has also worked on several narrative shorts, most notably a film titled "Off Day" which screened at AFI Fest 2012 as part of the "Levi's Show Us The Way" competition, putting him in the company of fellow filmmaker and "Sweet Mercy" director Michele Atkins whose film was also in competition.

Bill went on to study cinematography at the Vancouver Film School. His thesis project "Voskhod" won Best Student Film at the Montreal Film Festival in 2015.

CAST/CASTING

We searched far and wide for our Fuzzy... we went to improvisational classes, put out casting calls, and contacted the group (s) that put on the volunteer dance that inspired this film. When we finally met Nic it was due to his two amazing grandparents - Patti and Norm, who drove him from Sacramento area to Los Angeles, again and again. They painstakingly went over the script and helped Nic memorize it! We wish we had a Patti and Norm on every job!

Jesse did a fabulous job in the audition and when our lead actor dropped out the week before, Jesse stepped in. He and Nic got along famously and Jesse was able to fine tune his performance and work wonderfully with improving lines. A true genius.

The very day we started the search for a casting director we found Ayelette Robinson - she posted on a production group's site that she was looking for more experience! Bingo! She did a fabulous job, she was committed and knowledgeable.

Production company: GenieBird Films
Email: geniebirdfilms@gmail.com

CONTACT

Director: Michele Atkins
Phone: 323.314.7964
Email: eloisethefirst@gmail.com

CAST AND CREW

Fuzzy
Nicolas Allen

Director, Writer
Michele Atkins

1st Assistant Camera
Paul Zurcher

Colorist
David Joshua Smith

Harold
Jesse Howland

Producer
Lauren Simpson

2nd Assistant Camera
Arthur Castellano

Supervising Sound Editor
Bryan Parker

Young Fuzzy
Danny Mansfield

Cinematographer
Bill Moldt

DIT
Gilly Rudolf

Re-Recording Mixer
Tim Hoogenakker

Young Harold
Nickolas Pichardo

Production Designer
Petra Vasvari

Gaffer
Jeff Reyes

Assistant Sound Editor
Pernall Salinas

Woman On The
Bus
Brooke
Burgstahler

Editor
Gene Ivery

Key Grip
Alex Yoo

Original Music
Suniel Fox

Mini-Mart Owner
Nima Ghomesi

Casting Director
Ayelette Robinson

Grip & Electric Swing
Jordan Driskill

Music Supervisor
Joe Paganelli
Bianca Valencia

Trigger
Victor Herminio

Costume Designer
Brittany Ann Cormack

Sound Mixer
Lauren Kleeman

Music By
Fleet Foxes

Bus Driver
Patrick Burch

Art Director
Edward DeLeon

Boom Operator
Andrea Millard

Graphic Artist
Julia Michal Stibal

Tent City Runner
Shoshanna Green

1st Assistant Director
Nikita Belomestnykh

Make-up & Hair
Camille Dupin

Bus Riders
Howard Casner
Anthony Dupin
Majorie Leary
John Livingstone
Jarus Lorenzen
Sandy Parten
Norman White
Patti White

2nd Assistant Director
Kristen Kiertzner

Production Assistants
Ricardo Sapienza
Jay Mejia
Jamie Pinon
Lucio Michel

Script Supervisor
Eszter Zakarias