

Press Notes

SUNSET EDGE

A Film By Daniel Peddle

Running Time: 87 min

OPENING **May 29th** in NY & LA

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

On a lazy afternoon, two tales intertwine in this meditative portrayal of disaffected youth set in a graveyard of abandoned mobile homes known as *Sunset Edge*. Four suburban teens rummage through the decay completely unaware of the shadowy figure that moves among them - a tormented soul with a horrific past. Day turns to night and people disappear as the secrets of *Sunset Edge* are revealed in a haunting finale.

LONGER SYNOPSIS

Part gothic thriller, part coming-of-age tale, Peddle's fiction feature debut is a Hitchcockian mash-up that upends teenage horror films. On a lazy afternoon, we follow four aimless suburban teenagers as they explore the ruins of an uninhabited trailer park. As the unsuspecting teens find escape and companionship in this ghost town turned amusement park, a lonesome boy lurks amongst them, unearthing clues to his horrific past. Haunting, repressed memories resurface in the form of dreams, flashbacks and epiphanies as the boy attempts to reclaim his childhood home. Meanwhile the thrill-seeking kids get lost in the remnants and shadows of this long forgotten place. Ultimately both stories collide, catapulting all the players to an unforeseen destiny.

Shot entirely on location in North Carolina, the director's Southern roots are the inspiration for this masterful thriller. In setting his story amidst the rural decay of this pastoral landscape, Peddle captures a poignant snapshot of American culture. He manipulates time and linearity to create a gripping, layered story. Using only available natural light, he doesn't rely on special effects or gore to enhance the drama or tension. The sparse dialogue gives his characters a natural quality, permitting the audience the vantage point of unseen observer. The painterly cinematography and hypnotic score merge to elicit an elegiac portrait that is suspenseful and original.

FILM CREW

Director	DANIEL PEDDLE
Writer	DANIEL PEDDLE
Producer	DANIEL PEDDLE
Editor	KARIM LÓPEZ
Cinematographer	KARIM LÓPEZ
Art Director	AMANDA INGLE
Costume Designer	DREW DASENT
Visual Effects	ANDY FOLTZ
Music	IAN HATTON and JAMES CORRIGAN
Casting	DANIEL PEDDLE and JACOB INGLE

CAST

Malachi	GILBERTO PADILLA
Jacob	JACOB INGLE
Haley	HALEY MCKNIGHT
Will	WILLIAM DICKERSON
Blaine	BLAINE PUGH
Jack	JACK HORN
Dora May Moon	LILIANNE GILLENWATER
Young Malachi	ALEX PADILLA-MAYA

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

After making my first two documentary features, *The Aggressives* (2005) and *Trail Angels* (2010) and years of discovering talent as a casting director coupled with a lifetime of painting and art-making, I was yearning to make a narrative feature and utilize all my skills and experiences as a storyteller. When I discovered *Sunset Edge*, an abandoned trailer park in the rural South, I knew right away I had found the "stage for my play". That fated day, I was with my fifteen year old nephew, Jacob and a couple of his life-long buddies, Will and Blaine who skateboarded and poked about. Their frail adolescence against the rotting remains at sunset was so rich with creepy possibility and graphic urgency.

We made this film with a skeleton crew, nearly no budget, and with a cast of locals having no previous professional acting experience. Yet what we were missing in resources, we made up with ingenuity, talent, and what seemed like some sort of magic.

Sunset Edge is a kind of Southern Gothic Graphic Novel preferring symbolic language to dialogue. A twisted plot reveals itself through dreamscapes and memories and lingers in your subconscious. For me the story was disturbingly personal but I feel the film's timely themes of self-discovery amidst destruction and violence will touch many.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

THE LOCATION

The true story of the *Sunset Edge* location and the reasons why the trailer park fell into disrepair became a never-ending source of curiosity for the cast and crew. Every neighbor on the adjacent street offered a different reason for its creepy demise and locating the owners of the abandoned park proved something of a ghost hunt. When we finally made contact with the ornery proprietor, our request seemed nothing short of a "shot in hell". The landowner seemed to doubt our goals, and hoped to derail them by setting a large fee and looming deadline. "Gonna demo the whole place in a matter of months", he told me between spits of tobacco. His terms were ridiculous, and to his shock, we agreed to them on the spot. For us this graveyard of destroyed shelters gleamed like a Hollywood star and she proved to be our wisest investment!

A few days after we wrapped the production, bulldozers arrived en masse. Now the only thing left on the road, are the weeds in its cracks.

DISCOVERING DORA

After an exhaustive casting process for Dora May Moon, the white-haired vixen and fabled “Last Tenant of Sunset Edge”, the character was to be axed from the script. It seems I had forgotten Southern women of a certain age prefer a coiffure of the lavender variety. The night before commencing to shoot I was heading home to write Dora out of the story and stopped at a grocery store in my home town, a place I had not set foot in since I was ten years old. Lo and behold, in front of me on line at the cash register was a woman with silky silver hair reaching down her back! Trying to contain my excitement, I introduced myself to this complete stranger. As fate would dictate, Ms. Liliane Gillenwater was a French woman in her seventies who had lived in Winston-Salem, NC for many years since marrying an American soldier. Having often worked in Paris myself, we quickly enjoyed common ground and soon I had talked Liliane into taking on the role! The next morning the shoot proceeded as planned with Liliane playing Dora, the mysterious matriarch of the abandoned trailer park. Liliane was anything but frail. We traipsed her through the woods in icy weather, perched her in broken windows eager to slice, and even had her hovering over the smelly remains of a very dead cat. She had to scream, sing, be spooky and “hold perfectly still”. She never once winced or even complained. Near the end of the shoot she finally asked, “Am I going to be the scary old witch?” “No!” I assured her; “you will be on film what you are in person, beautiful!”

THE OWL

Coincidence is a recurring theme in Southern Gothic stories and such was also the case while filming *Sunset Edge*.

An Owl appears in the script as a threshold sound marker when the characters pass from the eerie abandoned trailer park into its surrounding woods just as the gloaming descends. Considering our budget, we realized we would not be able to hire an owl and its accompanying animal wrangler. Yet after apparently watching the cast and crew from the surrounding woods, a wild Owl decided to audition and revealed itself by flying over the set and landing right in our shot! This happened several times while shooting and since we were utilizing “run and gun” techniques, our crew would stop whatever we were doing to “shoot the Owl”. The resulting cameos remind me of the strange uncanny magic that descended upon our little production. It felt as if the universe itself was conspiring to help us make this movie!

MALACHI'S METAMORPHOSIS

The character of "Malachi" was originally conceived to be a "white blonde boy ala *Children of The Corn*". However, when I met Gilberto Padilla, a local Latino drama student, at a high school audition for the role, I liked Gilberto so much I decided to rework the screenplay. The effort gave the script a new dimension and transformed Malachi's character to something far more timely than a referential villain. *Sunset Edge* comments on loss of heritage and self against an increasingly alienating culture with a fresh and memorable cast. Our brooding soulful lead actor, Gilberto Padilla is certainly one to watch.

About The Filmmaker DANIEL PEDDLE

Artist Daniel Peddle spent his childhood in rural North Carolina. He graduated with honors in Anthropology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and attended graduate film school at New York University. While a student at NYU, Daniel cast his student films by “street scouting” undiscovered talent. This nontraditional means of casting soon evolved into a full-service casting company with an international clientele such as Comme des Garçons, Phillip Lim and Givenchy. His discoveries include Academy Award winner Jennifer Lawrence, who he discovered near Union Square when she was thirteen-years-old.

It was through street casting that Daniel first encountered the subjects of his debut feature documentary film *The Aggressives* (2005) about a world of butch lesbians of color passing as men. An influential work on modern gender identity, the film was awarded the Kinsey Honor from the Kinsey Institute and numerous “Best of” awards at documentary film festivals worldwide. Powerhouse Books published Daniel’s written exposé on the Aggressives’ subculture in the book *Transculturalism* © 2005. *Trail Angels* (2011), Daniel’s second documentary feature is also a portrait of a subculture. Here a community based on kindness emerges from the backwoods of America. The film follows four unsung heroes, who make it their quest to help the seasonal thru-hikers of the Appalachian Trail, a pilgrimage of five million footsteps. The film debuted on The Documentary Channel in 2011 and was released October 2014 on iTunes and Netflix.

In 2012, Daniel’s debut solo painting show was named “Critic’s Pick” by NY Magazine and garnered national praise. “At the nexus of a new romanticism...the works share an affinity with the solitary poetics of Whitman and Thoreau, yet with ample contemporary cultural cues. As the virtual world continues to separate us from natural, authentic experience and seeks to quantify all understanding; Peddle’s works maintain that the world is still a place of wonder and intangible mystery.” states NY ARTS MAGAZINE.

As an artist and filmmaker Daniel considers his work in the “limen . . . that is the space betwixt and between” the known genres of documentary studies and the subjective realms of art and fiction. As a profile by Dossier Magazine explains “His craft is the art of refined exploration, of sifting through the human morass and unearthing its coveted delights.” (2013)

Sunset Edge is Daniel’s first narrative feature. A lush mash-up in a Southern Gothic tradition, the film tells the story of recovered identity by modern teen America. Mixing documentary techniques with painterly tableaux of rural life, *Sunset Edge* captures the vivid and sometimes scarily violent deconstruction of traditional meaning-systems in the American South. *Sunset Edge* had its film festival premiere at Museum of The Moving Image in NY in August 2014 as part of the Rural Route Film Festival. CAVU Pictures will theatrically release the film in select U.S. cities including New York and Los Angeles beginning May 29th.

CAST BIOS

GILBERTO PADILLA (“Malachi”)

Gilberto Padilla Gonzalez is 20 years old. He is indigenous to Oaxaca, Mexico. At the age of eight, his family moved to the United States. He was raised in Winston-Salem and discovered his interest in acting in his freshmen year at West Forsyth High School. It was in this class that he was discovered and cast as the lead actor in the independent feature film, *Sunset Edge*.

HALEY MCKNIGHT (“Haley”)

Haley McKnight is a third-year acting and art student at UNC Greensboro. *Sunset Edge* is her first feature film, as well as her first after-school job. She has appeared on the UNCG stage in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. When not in class or onstage, she enjoys singing, sketching, chain-smoking, and slaying dragons as her *Skyrim* alter ego, Matilda.

JACOB INGLE (“Jacob”)

Jacob Kristian Ingle is 18 years old and was born and raised in Winston-Salem, NC. Currently he is a student at Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington, NC. He is biracial and says this allows him “to explore and be accepted by so many different cultures. He collaborated with his Uncle, the director of *Sunset Edge*, by helping brainstorm the story, pick the creepiest locations, find the cast, and assisting in the art department. He also starred in the film along with his two best friends Will & Blaine.

WILLIAM DICKERSON (“Will”)

William Cushman Dickerson was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina on June 20, 1996. Will is a graduate of West Forsyth High School and is currently enrolled at Cape Fear Community College. One of the highlights of *Sunset Edge* is an improvised monologue that Will created in which he explains the vast nature of the cosmos using a handful of gumdrops. Although he had no previous acting experience, Will proved a total natural and now is very interested in following a career in film. He hopes that one day he will make it to another big screen.

BLAINE PUGH (“Blaine”)

Blaine Pugh is a 19 year-old North Carolina native currently pursuing future film and casting opportunities while attending college in Wilmington, NC. Outside of the acting world, Pugh hopes to earn a masters degree in International Relations and become a diplomat for the United States.

CAST BIOS (con't)

LILIANNE GILLENWATER (“Dora May Moon”)

Lilianne Gillenwater is 77 years young, a mother of seven, grandmother of seven, and the great-grandmother of one. She was born in France, three months after WWII started in 1939. She worked in the US army as an international switchboard operator where she met her American husband. She has lived in El Paso, Texas and Santa Monica, California before landing in Winston-Salem, NC to be closer to family.

JACK HORN (“Jack”)

Jack Horn was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and lived there until he moved to a farm in East Bend, NC in 1976. He was employed at R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. until his retirement, after 34 years of service. Jack has been married for 60 years to Lucille Horn and has four children, 10 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren. He is a hobby beekeeper and is the chairman of the Bees and Honey Exhibit at the Dixie Classic Fair in Winston-Salem. It was at this exhibit at the Fair that Jack was discovered by filmmaker Daniel Peddle and cast in *Sunset Edge*.

ALEX PADILLA-MAYA (“Young Malachi”)

Alex Padilla-Maya is 11 years old and is in the 6th grade. He enjoys Martial Arts and wants to be a pediatrician when he grows up. He currently resides with his parents and younger brother in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In *Sunset Edge* he was cast as the young version of Malachi based on his striking similarity to lead actor, Gilberto.