

SOUTH OF THE RIVER

*Sex, Drugs and
Rock 'N' Roll,
and Candy*



STARRING

ALEX GILLISON

EWEN MACINTOSH

ALEXANDRA METAXA

DAVID SPINX

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JOE WATKINS

PRODUCED BY IAN BEARMONT AND AMELIA HANSSON

 LITTLE DUDE FILMS



In association with Filmmaker at Large and Crixus

Present

SOUTH OF THE RIVER

**A tale of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll...and
cancer**



THE FILMMAKERS

Written/Directed by Joe Watkins □ Produced by Ian Beaumont □ Co-produced by Amelia Hansson
* Executive Producer Tony Rogers □ Cinematography by James Butler □ Editing by Adam El- Sharawy □ A Little Dude Films Production in association with Filmmaker at Large and Crixus

STARRING

Alex Gillison □ Joe Watkins □ Ewen MacIntosh □ David Spinx □ Phil Zimmerman □ Carl Maloney

FORMAT

Running Time: 97 mins □ Production: UK 2017 □ Sound: 5.1 & 7.1 Surround Sound □ Aspect Ratio: 2.39:1 □ Shooting Format: ARRI ALEXA, RED ONE MX, CANON C500 □ Screening Format: 2K DCI DCP □ Language: English

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Rock band front man Aaron has it all. The mates, the band, a girl... and cancer. When he meets someone new, only he can decide whether to rock until he drops or grow up to survive. Life and love; music and mortality. It's all going on, South of the River.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Handsome, charming rocker Aaron is living life to the full. From his dingy apartment in the depths of Brixton, he juggles the usual routine of drink, drugs and gigs with his band The Undefined, as well as his bit on the side, Ainsley.

Aided by his bizarre, sexually confused but well-meaning friend, Jackson, Aaron aspires to be the next big thing. Doctors' appointments fly by, ignored and overlooked by a man who has bigger and better things to distract him than the hassle of throat cancer.

Then Laura comes into the mix, beautiful, alluring and very different from anything Aaron has ever known before. She gradually introduces him to the idea that there is more to life... a life worth living for. Then with the sudden return of Ronnie, his long lost 'ladies' man' dad, Aaron faces the revelation that this tragic man is exactly who he is quickly becoming.

Armed with this new found strength, he chooses to get himself back on track and back to life. He finally begins treatment and gradually severs ties with the only past he has ever known.

Jackson, along with their larger than life band manager Maloney arranges for himself and Aaron to attend a spiritual retreat, where they become convinced of its 'alternative healing potential' with hilarious results. Given the all clear and now a changed man, Aaron begins the final journey..... across the river.

South of the River is an emotionally vivid, uplifting and highly inspiring coming of age tale, that's interwoven with a vibrant soundtrack, a hefty dose of black comedy and a cast and crew that's full of experienced film makers and exciting up and coming young talent.





ALEX GILLISON ASAARON

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have always been fascinated by the romanticism of the rock n' roll attitude, which is a state of mind that requires you to be uncaring and detached from the serious matters in life. However, I've also always wondered if it's an attitude that can be pushed as far as to lose all consideration for your own health, to the point of death? History would have to concur, with a number of famous and non-famous rock musicians dying young. But this rock 'n' roll romanticism with death existed more in the 1960s and 1970s, so I wanted to place this situation in the modern day and in the more impoverished areas of South London where I grew up.

This is not a story about cancer as such. When the film begins, Aaron, our lead character, is already diagnosed with the disease. It's more of a coming of age story, with aspects of a buddy movie. Aaron wants his band to make it big. He sees this as his number 1 priority in life, one that's way more important than fighting cancer. The problem is, his band just isn't very good, and he is getting increasingly ill.

I drew on experiences of friends and family who have fought cancer in the past for this story. But mostly it was based upon my own experience of being diagnosed with a glucose disorder when I was a front man in a rock band. It was easily manageable though diet and generally taking care of myself, but instead I drank a lot, partied a lot and lived the rock 'n' roll lifestyle to the point that I was having a seizure at least once a week.

Some would call this the ultimate ignorance, but it was this attitude that I brought to our main character. My own experience of being in a band also informed the story, including all the ludicrous characters and antics. The buddy aspect of the film was derived from my relationship with my old guitarist and best friend. The film has some very dark points and subjects, but I wanted to put it across in a way in which I have always seen life - with humour and with regular moments of comedy. Joe Watkins, 2017



THE CAST



ALEX GILLISON - AARON

Alex Gillison achieved a first class honours performance arts degree from Brighton University, having been privately trained by the Guildhall School of Music and Drama since the age of eight.

In addition to SOUTH OF THE RIVER, Alex has starred in the Owen Harris film KILL YOUR FRIENDS, alongside Nicholas Hoult and James Corden. He has appeared in TV series The HOLLOW CROWN and UPSTART CROW as well as in a number of feature films including HEART OF THE SEA, THOR and ATLANTIS.

Alex was a natural choice for the lead role of AARON. He's not only a talented actor, but also a brilliant rock musician, touring internationally with bands Dirty Jaguar and Agit-Pop, as their lead singer and guitarist.



EWEN MACINTOSH - DR. EVANS

Ewen MacIntosh's big break in television came when he was cast as the deadpan accountant Keith Bishop in *THE OFFICE*. Besides *THE OFFICE*, Ewan has also appeared on various TV shows such as *MIRANDA* and *LITTLE BRITAIN* and in films such as *THE LOBSTER* and *SMOKING GUNS*.

Ewen is also part of a comedy double act with Tim FitzHigham and they have performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and elsewhere. In 2009, MacIntosh appeared alongside several other celebrities in a charity music video for the Chris Rea song *Driving Home for Christmas*. In early 2013, he appeared in the new West End show *GEEK: A NEW MUSICAL* at the Tristan Bates Theatre. He has recently completed a TV film, *FOR THE LOVE OF ELLA* for Salopien Films.



DAVID SPINX - RONNIE (AARON'S DAD)

David Spinx, who plays RONNIE, Aaron's Dad, is a very well known British Television actor/British Treasure. He has popped up in all sorts of places over the last 20+ years, including in EASTENDERS, A TOUCH OF FROST, HOLBY CITY, SNOW IN PARADISE, CONSPIRACY and TWICE UPON YESTERDAY.

Believe it or not, David is also very familiar with the British music scene, having been a roadie in the 60's with the original acid house band, Hawkwind. "A wonderful time," he says. "Sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll? Absolutely! I loved every last minute of it."



PANTAZIS THEOTOKIS - ZIGGI

Pantazis is the co-founder and bassist in the global metal band BEWIZED. Pantazis has toured the UK and Greece with Bewized, who have released two albums, *The Scorch of Rage* and *Undead Legacy*, both now available on iTunes. His long dreadlocks, piercings and musical talent make him an ideal match for the role of ZIGGI, the bassist in *The Undefined*.



DEBBIE AHAKPO - ALICE

Known as the insane bassist from the band FUR COUGH, Debbie Ahakpo also happens to be a natural on drums. Thankfully, she managed to slot in some sneaky filming sessions for her character, ALICE, the drummer with *The Undefined*, before she was about to go on tour with her band yet again.



ALEXANDRA METAXA - LAURA

Alexandra Metaxa is perhaps best known for the TV series *50 WAYS TO KILL YOUR LOVER* and TV drama *SECRET WAR*. Alex originally trained at the Drama School, London as well as at The American Conservatory in California. She has also appeared in numerous TV adverts, music videos for Ed Sheeran and many theatre productions.



CARL MALONEY - MALONEY

Carl Maloney or 'Maloney' as he's affectionally known, is a ridiculously outrageous stand-up comedian from Yorkshire. He's a lovely bloke, who knows how to make a good cup of tea and is supported by a strong team of loyal followers wherever he goes. For the last 12 years, Maloney has featured up and down the country in Sheffield's original Rock 'n' Roll band *SEVEN HILLS*.



PHIL ZIMMERMAN - JOVI

Phil Zimmerman is an incredibly versatile actor and is known for his roles in LES MISERABLES, K and THE SCOPIA EFFECT. Phil is also a stand-up comedian who's perhaps best known for his legendary television appearances on Never Mind the Buzzcocks, which earned him cult status and a whole new army of fans. Phil is currently performing in between shows, fronting several rock bands as a singer, songwriter and trumpet player.



LUCY AARDEN - AINSLEY

Lucy Aarden is a brilliant young actress, who's currently represented by Cole Kitchenn Personal Management, London. Classically trained in theatre, her credits include the Erasmus Theatre's production of ROMEO AND JULIET, Natasha in Victor Sobchak's MASTER AND MARGARITA, Rose in the film THE REAL THING, directed by Neil James, and on TV recent roles in OUR GIRL and THE TRACEY ULLMAN SHOW.



MATT LAW - CHARMING MAN

Matt Law is a model and actor. He currently flits between London and L.A. for jobs, which vary from commercials, fashion shoots and filming. He originally studied with the prestigious Lesly Kahn Company in Los Angeles. South of the River is Matt's feature film debut, as the stunning, charming love interest of JACKSON, played by JOE WATKINS.



JON AND MARK NORRIS - BEN AND LEWIS

The Norris Twins are up-and-coming/much in demand models and actors. They are already represented by some of the biggest model agencies in the world, such as WHYNOT Model Management in Milan, AMCK Model Management in London, Visage Model Management in Zurich and ProMod Model Management in Hamburg. On top of that, they have been seen in SPRING BREAKERS and in the Wachowski siblings' film, JUPITER ASCENDING. They are the perfect addition to South of the River, playing rival band members BEN and LEWIS.



THE CREW



JOE WATKINS - WRITER/DIRECTOR

Director, writer, actor and editor Joe Watkins has been making films since a young age. He gained widespread attention for his historical drama BLOODLUST, before writing and directing SOUTH OF THE RIVER, which is his first feature project.

Joe is also going from strength to strength as an accomplished actor, appearing in PAN, Justin Kurzel's MACBETH and SOUTH OF THE RIVER, in which he plays AARON'S ridiculous best mate and fellow band member, JACKSON.

Joe has also recently worked with SOUTH OF THE RIVER'S producer Ian Beaumont on another project, editing the film of live classical Indian dance show SPECTRUM: DANCE IN A NEW LIGHT.



IAN BEAUMONT -PRODUCER

Ian is a scriptwriter/producer and also the director of film company Little Dude Films, which he established in 2010. Ian has produced and/or executive produced a number of very well received short films. These include DEATHLESS, which he also wrote, BUBBLES, THE JADE HORSE and two Portobello Film Festival award winning films: SHADES OF BEIGE (Best Drama 2012) and DRIFT (Best Drama 2016). Ian also produced and directed the film of the sold-out live classical Indian dance show SPECTRUM: DANCE IN A NEW LIGHT, in 2016.

South of The River is Ian's first feature film made through Little Dude Films. He previously worked on a number of feature projects with acclaimed Slovakian producer Patrik Pass and film company Trigon, including HEAVEN, HELL, EARTH, NICKY'S FAMILY and ENGLISH RHAPSODY.

Before becoming a film producer, Ian sang in rock bands ASHEN GREY and THE OFFERING and worked for a cancer charity for 10 years. Like Joe Watkins, his personal experience of both worlds attracted him to this project and gave him an insight into the film's subject and storyline.



AMELIA HANSSON - CO-PRODUCER

Amelia is one of today most promising up and coming indie producers with experience in commercials and an extensive knowledge of the fashion industry, due to her past career as a high fashion model. Her credits include acclaimed short film SALT and a conceptual visceral short, MILK, which she directed and produced.



JAMES BUTLER - CINEMATOGRAPHER

Starting in TV news and quickly progressing to documentary and narrative work, James's dark cinematic style has earned him credits on commercials, documentaries and feature films made from London to the US and Japan. His passion for storytelling and technical knowledge of lighting digital cinema make him a huge asset for any director or producer. From high budget commercials to run and gun documentaries, James is at home on any set and with any medium, be it Alexa, RED or 35mm.



ADAM EL-SHARAWY - EDITOR

Adam is an artist, director and editor with various awards for his work in Television and Film. He has directed two feature films and specialises in both traditional and digital art forms. Adam is a member of the BAFTA Crew 2017 and has worked for companies such as the British Film Institute, Sky and Pinewood Studios. He also holds two degrees in TV and Film Production.

His most recent work has been directing and editing a six-episode TV series with his production company Filmmaker atLarge.

FILM CREDITS

CAST

Aaron Chapman – Alex Gillison

Jackson Gabb – Joe Watkins

Laura – Alexandra Metaxa

Maloney – Carl Maloney

Dr. Evans – Ewan Macintosh

Ronnie, Aaron's Dad – David Spinx

Ainsley – Lucy Arden

Ziggi – Pantazis Theotokis

Alice – Debbie Ahakpo

Jovi – Ben Zimmerman

Ben – Jon Norris

Lewis – Mark Norris

Charming Man – Matt Law

Young Aaron – Ben Watkins

Jackson's Dad – Charlie Rawes

Bouncer 1 – Anna-Maria Nabirye

Bouncer 2 – Nick Ferreira

Cancer Group Leader – Michael O'Sullivan

Spiritual Therapist – Alison Hodgson

House Party Bloke – Finbar O'Sullivan

FILM CREDITS

CREW (HEADS OF DEPARTMENT)

Writer/Director – Joe Watkins

Producer – Ian Beaumont

Co-Producer – Amelia Hansson

Executive Producer – Tony Rogers

Executive Producer – Alison Hodgson

Executive Producer – John Hodgson

Executive Producer – Ian Millard

Director of Photography – James Butler

Editor – Adam El-Sharawy

PRODUCTION COMPANIES

Little Dude Films

in association with

Crixus

Filmmaker at Large



SOME IMAGES FROM SOUTH OF THE RIVER



ALEX GILLISON AS AARON AND PANTAZIS THEOTOKIS AS ZIGGI



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ALEX GILLISON ASAARON



LUCYAARDEN AS AINSLEY



ALEX GILLISON ASAARON



MATT LAW AS "CHARMING MAN"



ALEX GILLISON AS AARON AND JOE WATKINS AS JACKSON



DAVID SPINX ASRONNIE



ALEX GILLISON ASAARON



ALEX GILLISON AS AARON AND JOE WATKINS AS JACKSON



ALEX GILLISON AS AARON AND JOE WATKINS AS JACKSON

BEHIND THE SCENES ON THE SET OF SOUTH OF THE RIVER



















