

Strand Releasing presents

THE TRANSFIGURATION

A FILM BY MICHAEL O'SHEA

Starring Eric Ruffin and Chloe Levine

PRELIMINARY PRESS NOTES

*Official Selection:
Cannes Film Festival
SXSW Film Festival*

Country of Origin: USA
Format: DCP/2.39/Color
Sound Format: 5.1 Dolby Digital
Running Time: 97 minutes
Genre: Drama/Horror
Not Rated
In English

National Press Contact:
Jenna Martin / Marcus Hu
Strand Releasing
Phone: 310.836.7500
jenna@strandreleasing.com
marcus@strandreleasing.com

Please download photos from our website:
<http://www.strandreleasing.com/films/the-transfiguration/>

LOGLINE

This atmospheric New York tale about love, loss, and vampires follows Milo, a 14-year-old boy with a dark secret. The surprise of the Cannes Film Festival 2016.

SYNOPSIS

An official selection at the Cannes Film Festival, writer/director Michael O'Shea's debut feature *The Transfiguration* follows troubled teen Milo who hides behind his fascination with vampire lore. When he meets the equally alienated Sophie, the two form a bond that begins to challenge Milo's dark obsession, blurring his fantasy into reality. A chilling portrait of violence, *The Transfiguration* is an atmospheric thriller set against the grit of New York City.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

INSPIRATION – ORIGINS

I was watching a very sensitive, sweet film about growing up as an outsider. It had cruelty in it but in the end was hopeful about humanity and who we are. While watching, I felt that my experience of life is a lot less kind. I thought it would be interesting to make something with the opposite point of view, more nihilistic. I started thinking about what that would be.

So I think that was the start. I had just been struggling to get a bigger script off the ground, and I wanted an idea that I could make as low budget as possible and direct myself.

I also have a friend of a friend whose kid loves vampires, drew vampires all the time, and the kids at school were teasing and bullying him over it. Which I connected to emotionally from my own childhood. So that was the next big piece, to use that.

From there I started thinking about race, class, and setting. I was thinking about places where there was a lot of poverty next to places with great wealth. At first I was looking at the lower Ninth Ward next to the French Quarter after Katrina. This area essentially looked like a bomb hit it, but then there was the rebuilt French Quarter and all the joy and craziness going on there. But then Hurricane Sandy hit Rockaway and I realized my hometown in comparison to the "new" New York City worked even better. I had roots, connection and understanding of Rockaway and NYC, visually and socioeconomically.

So then I began watching a lot of vampire movies. Most watching a second or third or fourth or fifth time, because I already love horror movies. I watched Park Chan-wook's *THIRST* a lot. I have a digital photo frame, and I programmed it to play *THIRST* over and over on the wall behind my computer monitor. It's pretty awe-inspiring to me that he is screening at the festival. So I would take notes about what I was connecting with in each movie, and how I could riff on it.

I then began reading two books. Bram Stoker's *DRACULA* and Ernest Becker's *THE DENIAL OF DEATH*. I was attracted to Becker's idea of how our society and culture is problematically built around death denial and thought about how vampire myths may exist to try to teach the lesson that death is natural, and how that lesson may be lost in the modern world.

From *DRACULA* by Stoker I was very interested in Renfield's fascination with the food chain. That led to a lot, like Milo's obsession with animal videos but also how a vampire is the highest point on a food chain. How capitalist society creates similar predatory relationships, and how someone living in the lowest rung of the economic food chain could try to place themselves on top. The relationship between class and "survival of the fittest"—that was big to me.

Ok I can keep going, but I think I already have written too much.

But by the way, the little boy I just told you about that drew vampires - you can see his drawings from that time throughout the film in Milo's room. I'm very happy about that.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

So many. In terms of style, I am influenced very much by I guess you could call the new neo-realists like Aza Jacobs or Kelly Reichardt or the Safdie brothers, or Ramin Bahrani. And god do I love Lars von Trier. I think I may idolize that guy. And Gaspar Noe is great. But obviously, I also love low budget horror and exploitation movies.

Like all the wide shots of Milo walking and looking in these landscapes... I think that at least in part comes from my love of Jean Rollin and specifically *REQUIEM FOR A VAMPIRE*. But use of location and using the location to influence the overall feeling of the film and using NYC for that especially - I think I got that most from Larry Cohen's *GOD TOLD ME TO*. There's a great tradition of NYC independent, low budget genre cinema that I hope my film belongs to and speaks with, which is why I was so happy to have NYC filmmakers like Lloyd Kaufman who made *THE TOXIC AVENGER* and Larry Fessenden who made *HABIT* in our movie.

THE FUTURE

Even though this is my first film, I am not young, so I arrive with a lot of ideas and scripts that the attention from the festival may hopefully help bring to fruition. While I play with vampires in *THE TRANSFIGURATION*, I like to play with other genres as well. I have a slasher film. A sort of cross country crime film. A ghost film. A possession film. A murder mystery. I even have a musical. Lately I've been thinking a lot about this strange micro-genre of late-seventies/early eighties films that examined subculture with aliens. Like *REPO MAN*, *LIQUID SKY* and maybe also *STREET TRASH* and *THE STUFF*. I think I'd like to make a micro-budget film that riffs on those films.

CAST AND CREW BIOGRAPHIES

CAST

ERIC RUFFIN – Milo

Introducing Eric Ruffin in his debut feature lead role. Eric is best known for his recurring role on ***THE GOOD WIFE*** as Dylan Bishop, the son of powerful drug lord Lemond Bishop (Mike Colter). The New York native has also appeared on acclaimed series such as ***PERSON OF INTEREST***, ***30 ROCK***, ***A GIFTED MAN***, and ***BROAD CITY***. He can also be seen in Feature Films ***THE GRIEF OF OTHERS*** and ***NATURE CALLS***. Eric is 17 years old.

CHLOE LEVINE – Sophie

Awarding winning filmmaker and actress, Chloe made her film debut as Sunday Wilson in Hilary Brougher's thriller ***INNOCENCE***. She co-stars in ***THE TRANSFIGURATION*** (2016 Cannes Film Festival Un Certain Regard Official Selection). Upcoming films include: ***SAVAGE YOUTH*** (Michael Curtis Johnson, director) ***NO ALTERNATIVE*** (William Dickerson, director), ***KING JACK*** (Winner Audience Award 2015 Tribeca Film Festival/Spirit Award), ***AWOL***, ***GOOD BONES***, and ***SUGAR***. She starred in the critically acclaimed Gender/Bender Short ***LOOP PLANES*** written & directed by Robin Wilby, produced by Massify/Killer Films. TV Roles include: ***THE OA***/Netflix, ***THE DEUCE***/HBO, ***GROUP THERAPY***/Netflix, ***HIGHSTON***/Amazon, ***HOUSE OF CARDS***, ***THE MYSTERIES OF LAURA***. Chloe won the 2014 Tribeca Film Institute OUR CITY, MY STORY Award for Best Experimental Short for her film ***DRAGON***.

AARON MOTEN – Lewis

Aaron Moten is currently shooting a series regular role on Netflix's ***DISJOINTED***. He can most recently be seen recurring on Amazon's award-winning show ***MOZART IN THE JUNGLE***, and opposite Meryl Streep in the feature film ***RICKI AND THE FLASH***. He also starred in the production of the critically acclaimed play *The Flick* at The Barrow Street Theatre. A Juilliard alum, Aaron's wide range of theatrical credits include the Young Caller in *A Streetcar Named Desire* on Broadway, Regan in *King Lear* directed by Ed Iskandar; Henry V in *The Life of King Henry the Fifth* directed by Nigel Smith; *The Seagull* directed by Richard Feldman and *A Raisin in the Sun* directed by Jade King Carroll (The Juilliard School). Regional: *Much Ado About Nothing* (as Claudio), *Sweeney Todd* (at Texas Long Center).

CREW

MICHAEL O'SHEA – Writer / Director

Michael O'Shea grew up in the Rockaways in Queens, New York, where ***THE TRANSFIGURATION*** is set. He studied film at the SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Theater Arts & Film. His first feature ***THE TRANSFIGURATION*** premiered in Un Certain Regard at Cannes 2016. His next film ***A SPECTACLE*** was selected for Rotterdam Cinemart 2017.

SUSAN LEBER – Producer

Named one of Variety's Producers to Watch, Susan Leber is a NYC based independent producer. She recently produced Michael O'Shea's ***THE TRANSFIGURATION*** which premiered at Un Certain Regard Cannes 2016. Previous credits include Sundance premieres Ilya Chaiken's acclaimed ***MARGARITA HAPPY HOUR***, teen drama ***TOE TO TOE***, and Debra Granik's award winning ***DOWN TO THE BONE***. She was supervising producer on Gillian Robespierre's hit ***OBVIOUS CHILD*** and served as co-producer on her follow up ***LANDLINE*** (Sundance 2017). Leber also produced cult horror ***THE ROOST*** by Ti West and co-produced ***HELLO I MUST BE GOING***, starring Melanie Lynskey. Leber line produced JC Chandor's Oscar Nominated ***MARGIN CALL***, Naomi Foner's ***VERY GOOD GIRLS*** starring Dakota Fanning; Mitchell Lichtenstein's period horror ***ANGELICA*** (Berlin 2015), and co-produced ***LEARNING TO DRIVE*** starring Ben Kingsley. She is currently in post on Brian Shoaf's ***AARDVARK***, starring Zachary Quinto, Jenny Slate and Jon Hamm.

SUNG RAE CHO – Cinematographer

Born to a generational Korean Japanese family in Kyoto, Japan, Sung Rae ("Shoichi") initially moved to the States as a student. In his college days he discovered cinema. Upon graduation, he dove into the thriving independent film scene in NY, and spent the next decade cutting his teeth as a focus puller and camera operator on dozens of feature films and television series. ***THE TRANSFIGURATION*** is his seventh feature as a Director of Photography. DoP credits include the critically acclaimed 2012 thriller ***GRACELAND***.

KATHRYN SCHUBERT – Editor

Kathryn is a NY-based Editor and Assistant Editor who has worked on over 20 feature films. Most notable amongst her editor credits are the critically acclaimed ***EXPERIMENTER***, ***THE STANLEY MILGRAM STORY*** (Michael Almereyda) which premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival, ***THE TRANSFIGURATION*** (Michael O'Shea) which had its world premiere at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival and will have its domestic premiere at the 2017 SXSW Film Festival, and ***MARJORIE PRIME*** (Michael Almereyda) which premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. As an assistant editor, she has collaborated with such notable directors as Jim Jarmusch (***ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE***), Ben Zeitlin (***BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD***) and Todd Solondz (***LIFE DURING WARTIME***, ***DARK HORSE*** and ***WEINER DOG***). Kathryn's latest editing effort, Jason Noto's ***THE AWAKENING***, is currently in post-production.

BILLY MULLIGAN - Co-Producer

Billy began his career managing development and production for over seven years for veteran film and television producer, Jane Startz (Miramax's *ELLA ENCHANTED*, Disney's *TUCK EVERLASTING*). Since 2007, he has been a freelance creative producer, UPM and line producer on such feature films as *YELLING TO THE SKY* (nominated for Golden Bear, 2012 Berlin Film Festival), *1982* (Toronto Film Festival, 2013), *TAKE ME TO THE RIVER* (Sundance Film Festival, 2015), *TALLULAH* (Sundance Film Festival, 2016), *THE TRANSFIGURATION* (Cannes Film Festival, 2016), *LANDLINE* (Sundance Film Festival, 2017) and the upcoming feature film, *JONATHAN*.

MARGARET CHARDIET – Composer

Margaret Chardiet was born and raised in New York City. She has been making power electronics/ death industrial music under the name Pharmakon for several years. As a founding member of the Red Light District collective in Far Rockaway, NY she has been a figurehead in the underground experimental scene since the age of seventeen and has released 2 critically acclaimed albums for Sacred Bones Records. Pharmakon's next album CONTACT is being released this March. *THE TRANSFIGURATION* is Margaret's first film score.

COLL ANDERSON – Sound Designer

Coll Anderson has been working with sound for 24 years. His work includes recording, editing, designing and mixing, and spans indie art house classics to award-winning documentaries and features. From Steve Buscemi's acclaimed *TREES LOUNGE* or Sean Durkin's *MARTHA MARCY MAY MARLENE* to Antonio Campo's *CHRISTINE* to Errol Morris' Oscar winning *THE FOG OF WAR* and Sundance Grand Jury Prize winners *FRAT HOUSE*, *MANDA BALLA* and *RESTREPO*. Coll has helped to sharpen the focus and story of films with the creative use of sound. "Sound is an object's other shadow: it adds weight, palpability and velocity. It is visions sublime partner in defining mass and time."

BRIAN SPEARS & PETER GERNER - Special Makeup Effects Designers

Brian and Pete are special effects make-up artists who have been providing monsters, maiming's and all around gore for well over 15 years to projects up and down the east coast. The duo known as Gerner & Spears have supplied effects to over 80 feature films, TV shows, award winning shorts and countless music videos. They strive to provide quality work to both big and smaller budgeted projects. Rather than make the gig about their FX work they work with production to deliver gags and or makeup that will best tell a story. Credits include *SELL THE DEAD*, *STAKELAND*, *DAREDEVIL*, *HELLBENDERS*, *THE SACRAMENT*, *WE ARE WHAT WE ARE*, *JESSICA JONES*, *ELEMENTARY*, *DARLING* and *LITTLE SISTER*. Brian and Pete relished the opportunity they had working on *THE TRANSFIGURATION* not for the chance to spill some blood but due to the unique story it told. On a personal note Brian was able to have his niece play a small pivotal role in an effect he created and for a guy who kills people for a living it was nice to get to share that with family.

CREDITS

Written and Directed By
Michael O'Shea

Produced By
Susan Leber, p.g.a.

Executive Producers Daniel Hammond Lauren
McCarthy

Co-Producer
Billy Mulligan

Director of Photography
Sung Rae Cho

Production Designer
Danica Pantic

Editor
Kathryn J. Schubert

Costume Designer
Samantha Hawkins

Music By
Margaret Chardiet

Re-Recording Mixer / Supervising Sound Editor
Coll Anderson M.P.S.E.

Sound Mixer
Gillian Arthur

Special Makeup Effects Gerner & Spears Effects Brian
Spears
Pete Gerner

Casting By
Eve Battaglia, CSA Karin Sibrava

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Milo	ERIC RUFFIN
School Psychologist	KARIN CHERCHES
Corey	LUIS SCOTT
Kevin	D'ANGELO BONELLI
Lewis	AARON CLIFTON MOTEN
Andre	CARTER REDWOOD
Troy	JAQWAN KELLY
Malik	TARIKK MUDU
Sophie	CHLOE LEVINE
Teen Five	SAM LEVINE
Hobo	LLOYD KAUFMAN
Mike	DANNY FLAHERTY
Mike's Girlfriend	CHARLOTTE SCHWEIGER
Cop One	FRANK MESSINA
Asher	TYLER ROSSELL
Drunk Man	LARRY FESSENDEN
Stunt Coordinator	MANNY SIVERIO
Assistant Stunt Coordinator	CHRIS COLUMBO
Stunt Doubles	JAY CARRADO
	BRIAN MORVANT
Additional Voices	AMIR DIXON
	CHRISTOPHER MARTINEZ
	ELI TOKASH
	HEIDI K. EKLUND
Additional Footage	CLARE GRANT
	MATTHEW STILLER
	MAYA PARISH
	RACHEL KIMSEY
	ZAK KILBERG

FEATURED BACKGROUND

Bathroom Man	PATRICK DANIELS
Dying Man	RICHARD CALDERON
Milo's Mom	CLARISSE MILLER
Drunk Man's Girlfriend	CARMEN DREYER
Child Murder Victim	HEATHER ROSE SPEARS

CREW

Consulting Producer	JOYCE PIERPOLINE
Associate Producer	RICHARD CALDERON
Line Producer	JAVIER GONZALEZ
First Assistant Director	NIKI JANOWSKI
Additional First AD	YEJIN KIM
Location Manager	EVELYN CHU

1st Assistant Camera	MARGARET SCLAFANI
2nd Assistant Camera	JOSEPH ROBINSON
Add'l First AC	TYLER RIBBLE
	JOHN HENRI COENE
Camera Operators	BRENDAN RUSSELL
	PAUL AGOSTINELLI
	KEN ORTIZ
Set Decorator	AMBER UNKLE
Set Dressers	ERICA BREINER
	TAYLOR DERWIN
	KEPLER AUGUSTE
	CASEY HERZ
	ANDREA FERLA
	WILLIAM FARMER
	JOHN NUNN
Construction Coordinator	BO WANGKEO
Carpenter	SHANE TORRES
Key Grip	PAUL AGOSTINELLI
Gaffer	JACOB C. BEIL
	ALEX CIARAMELLO
	JACKSON EAGAN
	ELIAS MORALES Swing
GE	CHRIS WASHINGTON
	JEREMY SMITH
	STEFAN SKRIPAK
	GENE MALKIN
Boom Operators	TRICIA TORLEY
	KATHLEEN ZHANG
Additional Sound	BRIAN CUSHIN
Script Supervisor	ANNA LOMAKINA
Production Coordinator	KIJA BROOKS
Background Casting Director	PHILLIP JOHNSON
Clearance Coordinator	SCOTT LIMBACHER
Makeup/Hair Department Head	ASHLEY THOMAS
SFX Makeup Fabrication Crew	ASHLEY THOMAS
	BRANDON KNIGHT
	HR SPEARS
Costume PA	MOLLY GLOVER
Special Effects Coordinator	BRIAN SCHULEY
Key Production Assistant	MARK VAN LOON HAYES
Production Assistants	IAN HERMAN
	JOSE GOMEZ
	T. MIKE TANGARO
	RAYNELL JOHNSON
	ZACK RUBIN
	CARLOS RAVE

Interns

Art/Prop Intern

NADEGE PIERRE
DAVID JOHN MAIORANA
JOHN FOLEY
ANDREAS ALLICA
SEBASTIAN MONTJUICH
GABRIELLA MURILLO
BRANDON BARR

POST PRODUCTION

Sound Effects Editor
Dialogue Editor
Title Design by
End Titles created with

MATTHEW SNEDECOR
DUNCAN CLARK
ISIK KAVUZLU
ENDCRAWL.COM

DI and Edit Facility
Colorist
Additional Color
Online Editor
DI Supervisor

NICE DISSOLVE
AHARON ROTHSCHILD
T.J. SEILER
BEN FEDERMAN
PIERCE VAROUS

Additional Color Services
Colorist
Color Producer
Visual Effects Supervisor

COLOR COLLECTIVE
MIKE HOWELL
CLAUDIA GUEVARA
CHRIS HANEY