



USA, 85 MINUTES, 2012

Website – <http://www.saturdaymorningmassacre.com>

Still Photos - <http://www.saturdaymorningmassacre.com/documents/SMMstills.zip>

Trailer - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk9vaTz7J-A>

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Synopsis

Log Line

A crew of young paranormal investigators and their dog struggle for cash until they land a job getting to the bottom of a series of gruesome deaths in an abandoned schoolhouse.

Synopsis

A team of amateur paranormal investigators struggle to make ends meet by debunking reports of supernatural incidents. With the group on the verge of bankruptcy, Nancy takes on a case involving rumors of suspicious disappearances and violent deaths linked with the abandoned Kyser schoolhouse. Discounting stories of satanic practices, the team proceeds, desperately chasing cash and the opportunity to encounter their lives' mission – to catch a real ghost.

On a tour guided by the local sheriff, the team learns of the schoolhouse's gruesome past. Despite the sheriff's advice to spend the night in a hotel, they decide to stay, set up their gear and prepare for nightfall. When the sun goes down, the truth comes out: the Kyser house might actually be haunted by sadistic spirits – or something even worse. *Saturday Morning Massacre* is a bloody parody of mystery cartoons and the consequences of meddling with the supernatural.

Key Production Credits

Directed by:

Spencer Parsons

Executive Produced by:

Alan Berg, Kristin Johansen-Berg, Clark Lyda

Produced by:

Jesse Lyda, Jason Wehling, Jonny Mars

Associate Producer/UPM:

Adam Donaghey

Director of Photography

Drew Daniels:

Edited by:

Spencer Parsons, Don Swaynos

Primary Cast

Ashley Rae Spillers – *Nancy*

Josephine Decker – *Gwen*

Adam Tate – *Chad*

Jonny Mars – *Floyd*

Paul Gordon – *Officer Lance*

Q & A with Director Spencer Parsons

Q: What was appealing to you about parodying Scooby-Doo?

SP: I think a lot of kids grew up wondering what would happen if it ever turned out that the ghosts were real or if the owner of the haunted amusement park was a psychopath who'd chop them all up and then do really nasty things with the pieces. I think for a lot of horror fans, those cartoons were like the baby pool of the horror genre, and some of the ghosts and monsters were actually pretty creepy, so the kids who really enjoyed being a little bit scared would want to go deeper. Plus of course, by the time they hit middle school, I think everyone wondered what Shaggy might be smoking in the Mystery Machine, or what Fred and Daphne were really getting up to when the gang would split up.

Q: So then you consider yourself a hard-core Scooby-Doo fan?

SP: Well, truth be known, I'm more of a *Buford Files* type of guy, probably because that one also ripped off the Jackie Gleason character from *Smokey and the Bandit*. You know, '70s TV barfed up a ton of cartoons about ghost-chasers-with-dogs-or-shmoos, and they all got run endlessly in syndication, even the ones that barely eked out a whole season. And I watched them all when I was little. When YouTube came along, I could finally prove to people that I hadn't just hallucinated *Goober and the Ghost Chasers* or *Clue Club* by actually bringing up the clips. So when [producer] Jason Wehling approached me with the idea of a Scooby-gone-wrong horror flick, I knew he had my number, because I'd kinda been doing the research since childhood.

Q: One thing that's interesting is that the gang in Saturday Morning Massacre seems to have gotten together with the idea of explicitly imitating those cartoons. Why did you do that instead of having them just be ghost-chasers with a dog?

SP: Well of course, "life imitates Hanna-Barbera" instantly struck me as a deeply philosophical theme. Actually, I think when we were all hashing out the idea together, it seemed much more interesting to us to use the premise to get at how chasing one's childhood dreams can be really, suicidally stupid. And you know, as independent filmmakers, we could really identify with that.

Q: Is that why the characters get nastier deaths than one might expect in a movie riffing on cartoons?

SP: Right! Maybe we were punishing the characters for our own sins. In a way, that's part of the joke of the movie to mix real nastiness into a cartoon. But there's a tradition of great horror-comedies that don't skimp on the violence and gore, like the original *Dawn of the Dead* or *Reanimator*. And personally, I laugh my ass off watching movies like *Hostel* or the original *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* that a lot of people don't think are funny at all. In a way, we didn't really push the violence as far as we might have, if we'd had more time or money or both. Left to our own devices, we might have tried to pull a *Piranha 3D*. But we did our best to make what we did as credible as we could within such a tight schedule—not just for the shoot, but for planning as well. We did catch some nice breaks working with an amazing effects team, like when we wanted to have a character cut in half, and they were able to bring these silicone intestines left over from Robert Rodriguez's *Machete*. That made me so happy I can't even tell you.

But the violence was really important to us not just because it's "unexpected," or only because we're a bunch of trolls who like to see that stuff (and we are), but because it's part of the parody to have things go too far, and more importantly, to insert serious stakes and visceral consequences into a cartoon universe makes it more human. And then it's nice when the cartoon gives license to go a little over-the-top.

Q: You mention the tight schedule. How quickly was this put together?

SP: Principal shooting was just 10-and-a-half days, and that was after a little more than three weeks of prep—including screenwriting—because the whole idea for the thing came from an opportunity to shoot in this amazing house before serious renovation would begin. Location came first and then story, so it was a real, old-fashioned Roger Corman-type situation, like when he

pulled together the original *Little Shop of Horrors* to take advantage of sets from another movie that hadn't been torn down yet. And it really required everyone involved to step up with that kind of ingenuity if it wasn't going to be just unwatchable.

Q: So was the screenplay being rewritten pretty heavily during the shoot?

SP: It would be something more like the screenplay was being written *by* shooting the movie. What's great about this is that it was a total group effort. Everyone on the crew really was constantly involved in the storytelling (sometimes whether they liked it or not!), and the screenwriters were always totally involved in a hands-on way with planning and executing every story choice throughout the shoot.

So we shot almost exclusively in sequence because it really would have been some higher math that none of us could have handled if we'd had to keep track of totally different parts of the movie, all out of order, while having to improvise. And, you know, working in that low-budget exploitation tradition, we kept the actual story really simple and straightforward, but loaded in a few jack-in-the-box surprises and reveals to keep it exciting.

Q: So then the actors improvised?

SP: Yeah, the cast members were all really involved in creating their characters moment-by-moment and improvising the vast majority of the dialogue and incidental behavior. For me, a great thing about that was that they'd just suddenly say or do stuff in a take that would change my idea of the characters and their relationships in totally unexpected ways, sort of complicating this really simple plot. It gets at the way that people can reveal totally crazy stuff about themselves when they're put in bad situations (and I think that goes for either the characters, or the actors put through the stress of making a movie this way).

I would never call it realism, but it's maybe an element of reality that I think is often captured in fast and cheap exploitation films, one of those things that makes their pleasures distinct from more well-groomed Hollywood productions or art films. The conditions of making the film sort of force you into discovering things you wouldn't have thought of otherwise.

Q: Does that mean that the movie is kind of deliberately campy?

SP: I don't know. I kind of think camp is more for the audience to decide than for the filmmakers, but if the people enjoy it that way, that's great. We really did have fun with it, but we tried to keep it in that pre-ironic Roger Corman spirit, where we know the basic story is kind of absurd and what it's really supposed to deliver is laughs and sex and violence rather than big emotions and important themes, so there's no point in treating it overly seriously or trying to be too tasteful.

And if you're riffing on those old cartoons, you've even got to contend with the "Scooby-Doo ending," which has come to stand for a whole idea of narrative absurdity and incompetence that maybe even outstrips the old *deus ex machina*. But in this case, if you don't wholeheartedly go for that, then you're kind of just being prissy, and more importantly, you're disappointing the audience. Then again, it's a major thing that storytellers train themselves to avoid if they want to be any good, because as narrative FUBARs go, it's probably the worst.

So to help me to embrace it and to support the actors who'd have to play it, I really looked to Dario Argento's films like *Profundo Rosso* or *Tenebre*, which have total *Scooby-Doo* endings (not to mention their crazy beginnings and middles). Those movies are just totally delirious and really fun, but with a conviction behind the absurdity, even when they're making jokes.

So in the end, we tried to take the story and characters seriously on their own terms, but you know, *Hamlet* it ain't.

Q: Is that why the dog in the movie is named Hamlet?

SP: Well, no that's actually his name in real life! But in the movie, maybe he sees a ghost. So pretty neat how that worked out!

Fun Saturday Morning Massacre Facts

1. On March 15th, 2011, producer Jesse Lyda sent the following mysterious message to producer Jason Wehling:

“Would you have an hour at most to spare sometime today or tomorrow? Clark and I would like to show you a particular estate in Austin. This is time sensitive, but if you can't meet in the next two days, I think Clark would be able to meet you early next week. I hope you're interested. I promise it will be worth your time. I hope :-)”

The next day, Jesse showed Jason the estate - Austin's historic Perry Mansion - and on April 20th, we wrapped production on the film. It was worth Jason's time.

2. Because of our crazily accelerated production schedule, casting was limited to existing actor friends, except for Adam Tate, who plays the role of Chad. We met him in a bar a week before production started.

3. Sean Ryan – a U.S. Marine who did back to back deployments - haunted the set like he haunts the film. He'd get in character early each evening and find a dark corner of the house to lie in wait. Whenever someone stumbled on him in the black, screams would echo through the house, though they were quickly followed by Sean's crazy laughter.

4. We weren't allowed to drive the van the gang uses in the film, so anywhere you see it being driven, the owner, Arwen, is behind the wheel. She totally channels Adam Tate though, doesn't she?

5. To shoot in ten (and a half) days, we had to make use of multiple units. On the crazy days, we'd have four cameras working in three locations at once. Our UPM, Adam Donaghey, actually operated the jib to get some exteriors...He may also have broken it.

6. We couldn't find an AD for the shoot, so producer/writer/AD Wehling did it until producer/actor/AD Mars' character died and he could take over.

7. Spencer teaches at Northwestern University, and when Jonny and Jason approached him about this project, he'd just completed a class called “The Roger Corman Film School,” which focuses on low-budget exploitation production.

8. Sonny Carl Davis, who, as the lead detective, berates the gang for blowing his child porn sting operation, may deliver the most salient lines in the film. He's a Texas legend for his iconic performance in Eagle Pennell's THE WHOLE SHOOTIN' MATCH, among countless others, but he's recently gone on a b-movie rampage, defiling the screen in a run that includes EVIL BONG, EVIL BONG II, JAVELINA, and BONE BOYS. We're just proud he was willing to add us to the list!

F i l m m a k e r B i o s

DIRECTOR – Spencer Parsons

Spencer Parsons generally makes films in Austin, TX, though he is based in Chicago and teaches media production at Northwestern University. His previous feature, I'LL COME RUNNING premiered at Los Angeles Film Festival in 2008. Formative experience: as a child, his favorite babysitter was one R.A. Mihailoff, who later went on to play Leatherface in TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 3.

PRODUCER – Jesse Lyda

Jesse is originally from Lynchburg, VA where he danced at the Virginia School for the Arts. He moved at age 18 to New York where he attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and later graduated from AADA's Los Angeles campus. He has been involved in a number of productions and short films as an actor, and he directed a full-length documentary called THE LEAST OF THESE that premiered at SXSW 2009. He formed Glass House Productions in 2007 with partner Clark Lyda to produce documentary and narrative films focused on promoting change through informing and entertaining. Jesse splits his time between Austin and New York.

PRODUCER – Jonny Mars

Jonny has worked as a producer, actor, and writer, and he recently had his directing debut - AMERICA'S PARKING LOT – SXSW 2012. Most recently, he starred in the short HELLION (Sundance 2012) and the feature WUSS (SXSW 2011, AFI 2011 Audience Award Winner). Jonny also co-starred, co-produced and helped score the THE HAPPY POET (SXSW 2010, Venice 2010). He's currently in post production on numerous features, including Scott Meyers' THE GIVE AND GO (actor, producer, story by), and Sean Gallagher's GOOD NIGHT (actor, producer). He also produced the "Texas Meets Tillamook" ad campaign for Tillamook Cheese.

PRODUCER – Jason Wehling

Jason's producing credits include: AUGUST EVENING, winner of the 2008 John Cassavetes Award; Kyle Henry's Sundance and Cannes-featured anthology of shorts, FOURPLAY; the PBS doc, A PLACE TO DANCE; Paul Gordon's 2010 SXSW and Venice standout, THE HAPPY POET; Jonny Mars' football documentary, AMERICA'S PARKING LOT; and Chris Eska's forthcoming Civil War drama. Jason's short, THE GROWNUPS, premiered at SXSW 2010 and played as part of the 48 Hour Film Project's showcase at Cannes 2010. From 2002-2005, he served as a programmer on PBS' INDEPENDENT LENS series.

Cast Bios

Ashley Spillers - NANCY

Ashley Rae Spillers is a film actress based in Austin, Texas, and has been doing lots of film work you probably haven't seen, but soon will. She has been featured in over fifteen short films, a few film fest bumpers (Joe Nicolosi's MARIO), and now has two features under her belt (Spencer Parson's SATURDAY MORNING MASSACRE and PILGRIMS), and another on the way (Geoff Marslett's LOVES HER GUN). She is also featured in a SLACKER 2011 segment directed by Paul Gordon (THE HAPPY POET), opposite Jonny Mars (WUSS, THE HAPPY POET).

Josephine Decker – GWEN

Josephine Decker works as an actress, musician and filmmaker. Her on-screen credits include ART HISTORY (Berlin Film Festival), UNCLE KENT (Sundance Film Festival/IFC), and AUTO-EROTIC (IFC), directed by Joe Swanberg. She has also appeared in a deodorant commercial here or there. Her [performance art](#) has received coverage in The New York Times, New York Daily News and on WNYC, and her feature doc BI THE WAY screened at SXSW, Silverdocs, and about 100 festivals worldwide. Lucky to be collaborating with artists she admires, Josephine currently directs children's music videos and shoots and edits documentaries in New York City.

After improvising scenes with the [Main Squeeze Orchestra](#) and members of [Pig Iron Theatre](#), Josephine wrote a script about a highly unusual accordion store. She aims to shoot the result -- SQUEEZEBOX-- as her first narrative feature in the fall of 2012.

Jonny Mars – FLOYD

Bio on previous page.

Adam Tate – CHAD

Adam Tate received his Bachelor's degree from The North Carolina School of the Arts and his Master's degree from the University of Texas at Austin. He has directed a handful of shorts, a documentary HEALING SPRINGS (about an artesian well located in rural South Carolina and the people it attracts), and directed and produced ROSS MACKENZIE'S REDEMPTION ON THE WEST TEXAS BBQ TRAIL. He recently produced PILGRIM SONG, which premiered at SXSW 2012 and continues its festival run. This fall, he will begin studies for his MLIS degree from the University of South Carolina. His career goal is to be an educator and film historian.

Paul Gordon – OFFICER LANCE

Paul Gordon moved to Austin in 2001 to attend film school at the University of Texas, where he made MOTORCYCLE, a feature film crafted from his three film school projects. MOTORCYCLE premiered at the 2006 Slamdance Film Festival, and went on to play at film festivals around the world, including Thessaloniki, SXSW and Rooftop Films. Paul's short film GOOD played at the 2001 SXSW and Chicago International film festivals, and aired on Chicago PBS's Image Union. Paul wrote, directed, and plays the lead in THE HAPPY POET, which world premiered at the 2010 SXSW film festival and premiered internationally at the 67th Venice Int'l Film Festival. Paul also acted in Geoff Marslett's MARS and Mike Akel's AN ORDINARY FAMILY.

Full Production Credits

CAST

Jonny Mars – *Floyd*
Ashley Rae Spillers – *Nancy*
Josephine Decker – *Gwen*
Adam Tate – *Chad*
Hamlet – *Hamlet*
Ryan Hennessee – *Ghost Projection*
Cyndi Williams – *Pornographer*
Spencer Parsons – *Pornographer*
Jason Wehling – *Pornographer*
Dodge Evans - *Kid in a Cage 1*
Levi Krause - *Kid in a Cage 2*
Sonny Carl Davis – *Detective 1*
J. Nathan Day – *Detective 2*
Jory Balsimo – *Drug Dealer*
Matia Balsimo – *Waitress*
Chris Walters – *Man Eating Cherries*
Nancy Sidla – *Phone Etiquette Stickler*
Chris Doubek – *Mike Ryan*
Mical Trejo – *Pedro*
Paul Gordon – *Officer Lance*
Wyeth Miller – *Feral Kid*
Sean Ryan – *Frankie Kyser*
Heather Kafka – *Mona Kyser*
Will Wehling – *Young Frankie*
Harper Lenton – *Young Mona*
Andrew Bujalski – *City Official 1*
Rebecca Beegle – *City Official 2*
E. Jason Liebrecht – *Pa Kyser*
Mallory Culbert – *Ma Kyser*
Carlos Trevino – *Phone Operator*

CREW

Director – Spencer Parsons

Executive Producers – Alan Berg, Kristin Johansen-Berg, Clark Lyda

Producers – Jesse Lyda, Jonny Mars, Jason Wehling

Associate Producer – Adam Donaghey

Writers – Jory Balsimo, Aaron Leggett, Jason Wehling

Story By – Kat Candler, Jonny Mars, Jason Wehling, P. Winstead

Unit Production Manager – Adam Donaghey
First Assistant Director – George Spelvin
Second Assistant Director – Daniel Veliz
Production Assistant – Daniel Laabs, David Shulte

Director of Photography – Drew Daniels
Camera Operators – Allen E. Ho, Jay Galvan
Additional Photography - Harrison Atkins, Kyle Cockayne, Clay Liford, Melissa Elaine Porter, Harrison Witt, Yuta Yamaguchi
Assistant Camera – Kyle Cockayne
Data Manager – Wylie Earnhart

Gaffer – Emmett Kerr-Perkinson
Grip – Brian Pedersen
Additional Grip and Lighting – Nathan Brown, David Hartstein, Edison Jackson, Daniel Johnson, Brad Keffer

Location Sound Recording – Tim Dallesandro
Additional Sound Recording – Jonathan Couch, Steven Degennaro

Production Designer – Caroline Karlen
Art Director – Scott Colquitt
Propmaster – Deneice O’Connor
Art Assistants – Matt Hatfield, Carrie Hunt

Costume Designer – Mirin Soliz
Wardrobe/Hair/Makeup – Elana Farley, Mirin Soliz
Wardrobe/Hair/Makeup Assistant – Michaela Aryn Schweikert
Additional Makeup – Ezra Raez
Special Effects Makeup – Mirin Soliz, Hawgfly

Practical Special Effects Coordinator – Bradley Parrett
Special Effects Consultant – Meredith Johns

Editors – Spencer Parsons, Don Swaynos
Assistant Editor – Wylie Earnhart
Associate Editors – Michelle Green, Brandon Daley

Digital Visual Effects - Jason Wehling
Additional Graphics – Greg Omelchuck, Ray Pena, Kevin Spillyards
Opening Title Sequence – Jason Wehling

Sound Design/Mix – Eric Friend
Sound Effects Editor – Isaac Hammons

Colorist – Joe Malina
Post Production Assistants – Kelsey Coggin, Ben Millstein

Catering – Brown Bag Delivers

MUSIC

“Saturday Morning Massacre Theme Song” – Graham Reynolds
Score - Peter Stopschinski

Additional Music Cues - Eric Friend, Lucas Segall

“Far Behind”

Written by Kevin Martin, Peter Klett, Bardi Martin & Scott Mercado
Published by WB Music Corp (ASCAP)
Performed by Candlebox
Courtesy of AudioNest / Fontana Distribution LLC

“Autumn Years”

Written by Greg Eyman
Published by Episode Eleven
Performed by Rotary Ten
Courtesy of Accordion Boy Music

“Softly”

Written by Bill Baird
Published by The Moon is Actually a Big TV
Performed by Bill Baird
Courtesy of Bill Baird

“Neverending”

Written by Bill Baird
Published by The Moon is Actually a Big TV
Performed by Bill Baird
Courtesy of Bill Baird

“Darrk/Blakk”

Written by Joshua Mills
Performed by Missions
Courtesy of Pau Wau Records

“Aside Herself”

Written by John Wilkins and Clay Walton
Published by Eerie Pinebird Music
Performed by Fires Were Shot

Courtesy of Fires Were Shot

“Casting Dawn Into Shadow”

Written by Kristoph N.

Performed by Vesperian Sorrow

Courtesy of Amplitude Media Records

SPECIAL THANKS

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Kyle Henry

Erik Horn

Reba Howard

Andrew Hughes

Kristin Johansen-Berg

Alex Lewis

Arwen Lietz

Lucy in Disguise

Kenneth Martin

Joe Maloney

Brad Mathis

Alexander McGinnis

Dana McGrath

Ariel Miller

Teresa Moro

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Christopher and Laura Parsons

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