

mongrel  
MEDIA

Presents

# NORMAL

A Film By

**CARL BESSAI**

Starring

Carrie Anne Moss

Kevin Zegers

Callum Keith Rennie

(2007, Canada)

Distribution

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**Log Line:**

Three strangers struggle to come to terms with a tragic accident, each searching for closure and connection after their worlds had briefly collided.

**Short Synopsis:**

**NORMAL** explores the lives of three strangers who are struggling for control, having failed to confront their roles in a tragic accident two years earlier. Catherine is a well-to-do suburban mother who has lost the ability to connect on any level with her surgeon husband and twelve-year-old son after the loss of her elder son. Walt is a failed writer and philandering university professor who deals with impending middle age and haunting memories by sabotaging every relationship around him. Jordie is a sensitive teenager who made a wrong choice one night and although he's paid the price, still can't halt his journey downward.

**Long Form Synopsis:**

**NORMAL** is the story of three strangers who have avoided coming to grips with the aftermath of a senseless tragedy, and their role within it. While the accident claimed the life of one young man, it is slowly deconstructing everyone that was touched by it.

Catherine, Dale and their twelve-year-old son, Brady, are a family on the brink of collapse. Since the death of her elder son and star athlete Nicky, two years earlier, Catherine's tightly wound control over her affluent, well-ordered life is slipping. Her surgeon husband has chosen denial, preferring to exist on the surface and move on, losing himself in work and routine. Her remaining child, tip toeing around his parents and never allowed to really grieve for his brother, is a constant reminder of what has been lost. As for Catherine, the shrine of Nicky's untouched room, weekly visits to his roadside cross, alcohol, compulsive cleaning and endless grocery shopping, no longer serve as gatekeepers to her grief and rage.

Walt, a reluctant professor of literature, appears to be in the clutch of a midlife crisis. Increasingly apathetic in his life and detached from his wife Abby, his main preoccupations are the routine care he provides for his much-loved high functioning autistic brother Dennis, and the ever-present crutch of whisky. After Abby, walks out, Walt briefly finds solace in the arms of another student, Sherri, a young television reporter. However, when Sherri brings the past to life by reminding him that they had met previously, on the steps of a courthouse two years earlier, Walt realizes that his future depends on his facing his haunting memories.

Jordie was Nicky's best friend. After serving time in a juvenile detention centre for car theft, he returns to his affluent childhood home and the coldness of his domineering psychologist father Carl. Jordie's mother died several years earlier, and ever since, his relationship to his volatile father has been strained. Carl's recent second marriage to a much younger woman, Elise, who he soon neglects, just adds to the tension in the household. Jordie tries to pick up the threads of his life but his gnawing guilt and sense of worthlessness leave him stalled. When Jordie embarks on a taboo affair, it brings his strained relationship with his father to a violent confrontation, and sets him free to leave the past behind.

## **Director's Statement:**

*"It is interesting that in a world that stresses our freedoms – freedom of movement, freedom of expression, freedom in both physical and virtual terms, we are all still remarkably interdependent, and surprisingly fragile. It is incredible that one event, one accident, can put so many lives together in one place, as if to remind us that we all live in that place, we all breathe the same air, we all share the same fragility. All of the characters in **NORMAL** have lost the ability to express themselves, with their husbands, their wives, their children – and yet their redemption is so carefully tied to this need to communicate with one another. They must find each other and ask forgiveness of one another if they are going to hope to survive."*

## **NORMAL – THE PRODUCTION:**

**NORMAL**, the latest feature film by acclaimed and prolific Canadian writer/director Carl Bessai (*UNNATURAL AND ACCIDENTAL*, *EMILE*) was created and produced by Raven West Films (Bessai) and Submission Films (Andrew Boutilier), and will be distributed in Canada by Mongrel Media, with London-based Bankside Films handling International Sales.

Headlining the all-Canadian cast are Carrie-Anne Moss (*MEMENTO*, *THE MATRIX TRILOGY*, *CHOCOLAT*), Kevin Zegers (*TRANSAMERICA*, *THE STONE ANGEL*) and Callum Keith Rennie (*CASE 39*, *THE INVISIBLE*).

Rounding out the ensemble cast are Andrew Airlie (*INTELLIGENCE*, *THE SAFETY OF OBJECTS*), Cameron Bright (*BIRTH*, *THANK YOU FOR SMOKING*), Tygh Runyan (*SNAKES ON A PLANE*, *TWIST*), who has starred in two of Bessai's previous features, Michael Riley (*ST. URBAIN'S HORSEMAN*, *RACE TO MARS*), Camille Sullivan (*INTELLIGENCE*, *MOUNT PLEASANT*), Lauren Lee Smith (*LIE WITH ME*), Ben Ratner (*LAST WEDDING*), Hrothgar Mathews (*DA VINCI'S INQUEST*, *DA VINCI'S CITY HALL*) and Gabrielle Rose (*THE SWEET HEREAFTER*).

Executive producers are Stephen Hegyes and Shawn Williamson (Brightlight Pictures), with Phil Hunt and Compton Ross (London-based Head Gear Films). The producers are Andrew Boutilier, Carl Bessai and Rajvinder Uppal. The film, set in Victoria, B.C., is made with the participation of Telefilm Canada, The Harold Greenberg Fund and Movie Central.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF NORMAL:

*"Every death is a thousand deaths"*, according to Vancouver-based screenwriter Travis McDonald. He has a personal and profound insight into those devastating ripple effects; his best friend was killed walking beside him one night by a drunk driver. Already an aspiring writer, McDonald poured himself into the first draft of a script that was to become **NORMAL**.

Producer Andrew Boutilier was Director of Development for Vancouver-based Brightlight Pictures when he came across McDonald, and the early script (which had won a screenplay competition), at an open actor reading session. He was hooked: *"I really connected with the material and found the characters that he had placed within his story riveting."* Boutilier optioned it and, through one of those happy coincidences that happen in life, and within the close knit circles of Canada's indie movie community, brought Bessai on board. *"I had met Stephen Hegyes (Brightlight Pictures) at a big party on the beach in Cannes for my film EMILE. He introduced me to Andrew"*, explains Bessai.

Bessai coming on board marked the beginning of a two-year process of focusing the script down to three main characters: Catherine, Walt and Jordie. McDonald likens the re-writing process they went through to a tennis match of back and forth collaboration. In fact, the two worked so well together that they wrote another script in the interim which Bessai directed, a horror movie also shot in Victoria called SEVERED.

Rewriting the script, sourcing financing and attaching noteworthy, bankable actors took another four years. *"It is a risky film, in the sense that it is an emotional film about the small matters of peoples' lives"*, notes Bessai. Fortunately, during that period the appetite for small emotional dramas, *"actors' movies"* adds Bessai, *"the kind of movies I really like"*, was growing. Adds Boutilier: *"Casting was a long process; these kinds of films live and die on the cast."*

Continues Bessai: *"I knew this had to be an actor's movie, so it was all about the casting, in a way. I think that everyone, even small roles, have been great. There is a subtlety in the lead performers that is really beautiful and I am proud of the fact that we have all Canadian actors"*.

## THE VENEER OF NORMAL:

**NORMAL** is set in glorious scenery and restrained upper middle class enclaves of Victoria, British Columbia, which plays itself in the film. Within a very small geographic area the city offered a marvelous array of locations for the filmmakers to choose from, and a community that was eager to accommodate the strict time constraints and limited budget of a small Canadian feature film.

These tangible settings were all important to the film. Explains Bessai: *This kind of drama is about finding the truth. To not shoot on location would be a complete mistake. The houses are very symbolic. They set the tone and tell you everything about the characters. It is not just what you see in the frame, the locations also feed the actors really well; they can see that 'this is my house, this is my world'.*

Catherine, Walt and Brady live in beautiful home in a secluded area, with large pristine gardens and a sweeping driveway. Cool, angular, with muted tones and high ceilings, nothing is out of place, and the interior is as stripped of colour and life as is Catherine's wardrobe. Unable to deal with their loss, or comfort each other, the family walks on eggshells amongst themselves, around the house, and outdoors which is uncluttered by bikes, or other signs of teenage vitality.

Jordie lives in his father's home. A stately old showplace that Carl, a psychologist, insists is kept clean. Beneath the beauty, however, there are dark wood surfaces that suck light, and shadowed corners that hint to the undercurrents running between the father, his new wife, who appears to often be regarded by him as just part of the furniture, and his son. Just back from a year in juvenile detention Jordie does not fit back into a room decorated as he left it, for a much younger teenager, and a more innocent time.

Walt and his Art Gallery owner wife share a craftsman home that is full of old and beautiful detail. However, Walt's office is cluttered and somewhat neglected, like his writing career and wife, and is full of a burden of books and papers that he doesn't read and cannot deal with.

## **KEY CAST BIOS:**

### **CARRIE-ANNE MOSS as CATHERINE**

Ever since her breakout starring role as “Trinity” in the three hugely successful Warner Bros. “Matrix” series (THE MATRIX, THE MATRIX RELOADED and THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS), Carrie-Anne Moss has become one of the most sought-after actresses in Hollywood.

More challenging starring roles quickly followed in notable feature films including THE CREW, opposite Burt Reynolds and Richard Dreyfuss in the Disney mobster comedy for producers Barry Sonnenfeld and Barry Josephson, RED PLANET, with Val Kilmer for Warner Bros. and producer Mark Canton, CHOCOLAT, opposite Juliette Binoche, Johnny Depp and Dame Judy Dench in Miramax’s Oscar-nominated film for director Lasse Hallstrom and producer David Brown, MEMENTO, the critically acclaimed independent thriller in which she starred with Guy Pearce, and SUSPECT ZERO starring alongside Aaron Eckhart and Sir Ben Kingsley in the Cruise/Wagner produced film for director Eliase Merhige.

Recent projects include the ensemble independent feature film THE CHUMSCRUBBER with Ralph Fiennes, Rita Wilson and Glenn Close, MINI’S FIRST TIME opposite Alec Baldwin, Luke Wilson and Nikki Reed, and Marc Evans’ touching drama SNOW CAKE with Sigourney Weaver and Alan Rickman. In 2007 audiences saw Carrie-Anne in DISTURBIA, in which she stars alongside Shia LaBeouf, and FIDO, in which she stars opposite Billy Connolly, Dylan Baker and Tim Blake Nelson for director Andrew Currie. Earlier this spring, Carrie-Anne filmed a starring role opposite Julia Roberts, Ryan Reynolds in FIREFLIES IN THE GARDEN.

For her performance in MEMENTO Moss received an Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Female and her role in SNOW CAKE earned a Genie Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role.

### **KEVIN ZEGERS as JORDIE**

Upcoming roles for this rising young star, who started acting professionally before he was seven years of age when he played a younger version of Michael J. Fox’s character in LIFE WITH MIKEY, include the starring role of Mike Manadoro in THE NARROWS, directed by Francois Velle, and starring Vincent D’Onofrio, Sophia Bush, Eddie Cahill, Monica Keena and Roger Rees.

Since his debut, Zegers has worked continuously, appearing in over 20 films and numerous television movies and series. Recent starring credits include the role of Trey in THE JANE AUSTEN BOOK CLUB, written and directed by Robin Swicord, and three recent independent movies: Kari Skogland’s drama THE STONE ANGEL, where he plays the role of John alongside Ellen Burstyn and Cole Hauser, as Frank in the upcoming indie release, GARDENS OF THE NIGHT, starring John Malkovich and Jeremy Sisto, and IT’S A BOY GIRL THING for Elton John’s Rocket Pictures, playing the lead role of Woody Deane in the high jinx romantic comedy about neighbours who live worlds apart.

In 2005 Zegers boldly selected the independent film TRANSAMERICA, from Belladonna Productions, to further challenge his skills. In the acclaimed feature he plays Toby, a drug-addled street hustler who dreams of meeting the father he never knew. In a twist of fate, that man turns out to be Bree, a conservative transsexual (Felicity Huffman) who unknowingly fathered a child when she was still a man. Prior

to this, Zegers starred as Terry in DAWN OF THE DEAD, Universal's remake of the 1979 apocalyptic horror classic by George A. Romero, which achieved No. 1 at the box office in its opening weekend.

Early memorable projects for Zegers include the AIR BUD franchise.

Born in Woodstock, Ontario, Zegers now splits his time between LA and his hometown, just outside of Toronto.

### **CALLUM KEITH RENNIE as WALT**

Callum Keith Rennie was born in Sunderland, England, raised in Alberta, Canada and was first struck with the passion to act while living in Edmonton. Starting out in university radio and working his way to the renowned Shaw Festival, Rennie moved to Vancouver and quickly caught the eye of producers and directors.

Further to his many television appearances Callum landed his first independent feature film role in director Mina Shum's DOUBLE HAPPINESS, for which he garnered a *Best Supporting Actor Genie Nomination*. Other starring roles in numerous Canadian films include CURTIS'S CHARM, MEN WITH GUNS and Bruce McDonald's critically acclaimed HARD CORE LOGO. Concurrently he starred on several television series including MY LIFE AS A DOG (winning a *Best Actor Gemini Award*), TWITCH CITY, and DUE SOUTH.

Rennie has starred in numerous notable feature films including Christopher Nolan's MEMENTO, David Cronenberg's EXISTENZ, Lynne Stopkewich's SUSPICIOUS RIVER, his second feature film with filmmaker Bruce McDonald, PICTURE CLAIRE, and LAST NIGHT directed by Don McKellar, which earned Rennie a *Best Supporting Actor Genie Award*. FLOWER & GARNET and FALLING ANGELS, starring opposite Miranda Richardson, both appeared to acclaim at the Toronto International Film Festival, as has virtually every Canadian feature film in which Rennie has starred.<sup>in.</sup>

Previous projects for Rennie include Daniel MacIvor's WILBY WONDERFUL, Stephen King's mini series KINGDOM HOSPITAL directed by Craig R. Baxley, and David Goyer's BLADE TRINITY, plus starring opposite Jon Voight in the mini-series FIVE PEOPLE YOU MEET IN HEAVEN. Rennie worked in South Africa on Harry Hooks' WHISKEY ECHO, opposite Ving Rhames and Freddie Prinze Jr., on Keoni Waxman's SHOOTING GALLERY shot in New Orleans and SNOW CAKE, with Sigourney Weaver, Alan Rickman and Carrie-Anne Moss. Rennie has five feature films currently set to release in 2007/2008 including the New Line feature THE CLEANER, opposite Cedric The Entertainer, Lucy Lui and Nicollette Sheridan, David Goyer's THE INVISIBLE opposite Marcia Gay Harden for Touchstone and Spyglass Entertainment, SILK starring Keira Knightley, BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL with Pierce Brosnan, the Paramount Pictures thriller CASE 39, starring Renee Zellweger, and the mini-series TIN MAN for director Nick Willing.

Recent television credits include MEN IN TREES, THE L WORD, SUPERNATURAL and SMALLVILLE, plus the signature recurring role as the Cylon 'Leobon' in BATTLESTAR GALACTICA.

Rennie resides primarily in Vancouver, Canada.

### **TYGH RUNYAN as DENNIS**

Born and raised in Vancouver, Canada, Tygh Runyan, who is an accomplished musician as well as an actor, first appeared on television screens in the CBC teen series NORTHWOOD.

Since then the critically acclaimed versatile young star has established a reputation for taking creative risks, and for his ability to portray a wide range of characters. His lengthy credit list includes numerous independent feature films with recent starring roles in Ross Webber's MOUNT PLEASANT, Carl Bessai's UNNATURAL & ACCIDENTAL and EMILE, opposite Sir Ian McKellen, and VARIOUS POSITIONS, which won the Prix de Montreal at the 2003 Montreal Film Festival and garnered Runyan a Vancouver Film Critics Circle Award. He appeared in the Genie award winning film TWIST, directed by Jacob Tierney, COME TOGETHER, MY FATHER'S ANGEL and KITCHEN PARTY. Runyan has done several films with Director Mort Ransen, including TOUCHED, co-starring Lynn Redgrave.

In Hollywood features Runyan played memorable roles in SNAKES ON A PLANE, in Kathryn Bigelow's K19: THE WIDOWMAKER starring Harrison Ford and Liam Neeson, and MGM's ANTITRUST alongside Ryan Philippe and Tim Robbins. He was a twisted serial killer in the thriller 15 MINUTES, starring Robert De Niro for New Line, and a straight-A student with a shady past in DISTURBING BEHAVIOUR with Katie Holmes and Nick Stahl. Runyan has numerous television MOW and guest starring roles, including a recurring turn as Gene Feinberg in Showtime's THE L WORD, as well as guest-starring on the same Network's DEAD LIKE ME as a quirky romantic. In 2004 he portrayed a heroic fisherman in USA Networks' drug mini series TRAFFIC.

Runyan, who combines a hectic acting schedule with performing live music, plays guitar as a member of the Vancouver indie rock band, The Awkward Stage, which performed the song "All Suns" in an episode of THE L WORD. A twice Leo nominated composer, Runyan has scored the films VARIOUS POSITIONS, RED DEER, and shorts WHITEOUT and DENTS IN THE SKY. Prior to becoming a full-time actor he studied art at the Emily Carr College of Art in Vancouver and he also established a theatre company in the early 1990s. Runyan will soon be seen as a sadistic sergeant in Christian Duguay's film BOOT CAMP, which recently wrapped production, and as a janitor who gives birth to an electric blue fish in the internationally acclaimed animator David Russo's comedy, THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF LITTLE DIZZLE.

### **CAMILLE SULLIVAN as ELISE**

Camille Sullivan can currently be seen on television screens reprising her role as Francine in INTELLIGENCE, Chris Haddock's acclaimed series about underworld crime. Other recent credits include the feature film, MOUNT PLEASANT, written and directed by Ross Weber, plus a recurring role in 49TH AND MAIN for the CBC, and leading roles in CRIES IN THE DARK for Lifetime, and DARK STORM for the Sci-Fi Channel.

Originally from Toronto, Sullivan moved to Vancouver to attend the University of British Columbia, and after four years of studying acting for the stage she moved straight into film and Television.

Sullivan appeared for three seasons on Haddock's groundbreaking series DA VINCI'S INQUEST as Suki, the former vice cop turned robbery detective. She took on a leading role in the Gary Burns film, A PROBLEM WITH FEAR, and has had recurring roles on BIG SOUND, REUNION, and the mini-series TAKEN. She has also appeared

in episodes of such series as FIRST WAVE, DEAD MAN'S GUN, DARK ANGEL, TERMINAL CITY, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA and COLD SQUAD.

### **MICHAEL RILEY as CARL**

Michael Riley's impressive career includes performances on television, film and stage which have garnered the versatile actor five Gemini Awards and seven nominations. For two years running, he earned the Best Actor Award for his role as Brett Parker in the hit series POWER PLAY. Other winning performances include his role as "The Author" in THE HELSINKI ROCCAMATIOS; and his three-season recurring role in the CBC series THIS IS WONDERLAND. He also received nominations for guest turns on the series THE ASSOCIATES, WIN, AGAIN!, DUE SOUTH, and the award-winning mini-series TO CATCH A KILLER.

Also for television, Riley guest-starred in episodes of C.S.I and VERITAS; performed lead roles in the TV movies HOMELESS TO HARVARD: THE LIZ MURRAY STORY, AMERICA'S PRINCE: THE JOHN F. KENNEDY JR. STORY and 100 DAYS IN THE JUNGLE. Riley recently wrapped production on the mini-series RACE TO MARS, and ST. URBAIN'S HORSEMAN.

Riley made his indie feature film debut in Yves Simoneau's PERFECTLY NORMAL opposite Robbie Coltrane, which opened the 1990 Toronto Film Festival before going on to enjoy a record-breaking 10-month run. Riley starred in CUBE ZERO, Guy Bennett's PUNCH and Andrew Currie's MILE ZERO, with other credits including: the political thriller DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY; MUSTARD BATH, which premiered at the Berlin Film Festival and received the Gold Prize for Best Dramatic Feature at the 1993 Houston World Film Festival; and BECAUSE WHY, a romantic comedy which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival, and earned the Bronze Prize for Best Picture at the Tokyo Film Festival. Big screen credits also include Wendy Ord's BLACK SWAN; Arthur Boorman's cult classic, AND GOD SPOKE; Lawrence Kasdan's FRENCH KISS, starring Meg Ryan and Kevin Kline; Steven Spielberg's AMISTAD; PALE SAINTS with Sean Patrick Flannery; and THE PRINCE, with Billy Dee Williams.

A native of London, Ontario, Riley studied at the prestigious National Theatre School of Canada. His body of stage work has earned him Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations for his roles in the Canadian Stage productions of COMEDY OF ERRORS, BLOOD BROTHERS, CentreStage's NOTHING SACRED; and Toronto Free Theatre's THIS SIDE OF THE ROCKIES.

### **LAUREN LEE SMITH as SHERRI**

Lauren Lee Smith was born in Chilliwack, British Columbia, but traveled the world with her family, before moving to Los Angeles, California, as a teenager to begin a modeling career before turning to film and television. At the age of 19, she was cast in a small featured role in the remake of GET CARTER and went on to build a lengthy credit list with projects like: CHRISTY: RETURN TO CUTTER GAP, CHRISTY: A CHANGE OF SEASONS and CHRISTY: A NEW BEGINNING, and the show MUTANT X, where she played the character of Emma Delaro. She was also a guest star in an episode of Season 3 of the series DEAD ZONE, and has appeared as a frequent guest star in the drama series THE L WORD, playing the sous-chef Lara Perkins.

In 2005, Smith shot to critical acclaim, and controversy, in Clement Virgo's film, LIE WITH ME, where she played the character of Leila. She is currently appearing on screen in the dramatic series INTELLIGENCE as an undercover operative and she stars in the CBC mini-series DRAGON BOYS. Other films due to release shortly for

this busy actress are: a J.J. Abrams project for HBO, based on Jerome Groopman's The Anatomy of Hope; PATHOLOGY about a group of medical students who devise a deadly game to see which one of them can commit the perfect murder, and Michael Dougherty's TRICK 'R TREAT playing Anna Paquin's sister.

**CAMERON BRIGHT as BRADY**

Cameron Bright may only be 14 years old but he has already been nominated for 6 acting awards. Born in British Columbia, Canada, Bright's first acting job was in a commercial for Telus, which was soon followed by a guest appearance on the television series, HIGHER GROUND. Other small roles followed but his career began to take off after a supporting part in THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT. His first major role came soon after that in GODSEND, a horror film co-starring with Robert De Niro. Shortly thereafter, he starred opposite Nicole Kidman in BIRTH, playing a ten-year-old boy who claims to be the reincarnation of a woman's deceased husband, and THANK YOU FOR SMOKING, co-starring opposite Aaron Eckhart. Bright's most recent credits include: BOY OF PIGS co-starring with Gretchen Mol, the comedy CHRISTMAS IN WONDERLAND, the action-thrillers ULTRAVIOLET, RUNNING SCARED, and X-MEN: THE LAST STAND, where he played the mutant Leech. Bright is currently in production on the animated feature SPACE CHIMPS.

**Production Companies:**  
**SUBMISSION FILMS**

Submission Films was created in 2004 to develop, finance and market commercially viable, independent feature films with a focus on emerging talent. Production credits for the Company include PINK LUDOOS, an Indo-Canadian romantic comedy which has played to audience acclaim at numerous Asian festivals in North America and abroad, and SEVERED, an eco-horror film which has sold in territories throughout the world since its debut at the Marche du Film at Cannes 2005.

Development projects include STAY, a Canada-Ireland co-production by writer/director Wiebke von Carolsfeld adapted from the Canadian novel published by Raincoast Books; BARDO, a psychological thriller by writer/director Gaurav Seth based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead and YOUNG LOVE, an adaptation of highly acclaimed short stories by Vancouver author Nancy Lee. The projects have been invited to various co-production markets including IFP No Borders, Cinemart and the Berlinale Coproduction Market.

Company president Andrew Boutilier is the former Director of Development for Vancouver based Brightlight Pictures, where he managed and developed a slate of over a dozen feature film and television projects since the inception of the company in 2001. During his tenure, he was actively involved in a variety of produced feature film and television projects including GOING THE DISTANCE distributed by Odeon Films, the series ALIENATED for Space: The Imagination Station and MOB PRINCESS for Corus.

Submission Films is based in Vancouver, Canada.

**RAVEN WEST FILMS LTD**

Raven West Films Ltd. is a boutique motion picture production company established in 1999 to develop feature films for the domestic and international market.

Through a festival platform, and strong critical response, each project has enjoyed wide international sales, and consistent critical success. Feature films to date include UNNATURAL AND ACCIDENTAL (2006) which premiered in New York at the prestigious MOMA before its launch at the 2006 Toronto International film festival. The film won nominations and prizes at the 2006 American Indian Film Festival, the Vancouver International Film Festival, the 2007 Genie Awards and the 2007 Leo Awards. In 2003, the feature EMILE, starring Sir Ian Mckellen was launched at the Toronto International Film Festival, and went on to theatrical releases in the United States, the UK and Australia/New Zealand. In 2002 LOLA premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, the Berlin Film Festival and the Toronto Film Festival. The company's debut feature in 1999 was JOHNNY, which won a special jury prize at the Toronto International Film Festival that year, and went on to commercial and critical acclaim in both Europe and North America.

**NORMAL**, due out in the fall of 2007 marks the company's sixth feature production. They are currently in development on a screen adaptation of Jane Urquhart's award-winning novel, THE UNDERPAINTER and the cyber-thriller EMERGENCE.

## **FILMMAKER BIOS:**

### **Producer – Andrew Boutilier**

Andrew Boutilier is an independent producer based in Vancouver, Canada. Since forming the company in 2004, Andrew has produced a number of features including *Pink Ludoos*, an Indo-Canadian romantic comedy which has played to audience acclaim at numerous Asian festivals in North America and abroad, and *Severed*, an eco-horror film described by Variety magazine as “pushing the zombie movie in a direction even George Romero would envy.” The film has sold throughout the world since its debut at the Marche du Film at Cannes 2005. *Normal*, is the second film produced in collaboration with director Carl Bessai and Raven West Films.

Development projects include *Stay*, a Canada-Ireland co-production by writer/director Wiebke von Carolsfeld adapted from the Canadian novel published by Raincoast Books; *Bardo*, a psychological thriller by writer/director Gaurav Seth based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead and *Young Love*, an adaptation of highly acclaimed short stories by Vancouver author Nancy Lee. The projects have been invited to various co-production markets including IFP No Borders, Cinemart and the Berlinale Coproduction Market.

Submission Films is committed to the production of independent feature films with a focus on emerging talent.

### **Co-Writer, Director, Producer and Director of Photography – Carl Bessai**

An acclaimed Canadian director, Carl's debut feature film JOHNNY (producer, writer, director) premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in 1999, where it received a special jury citation. It went on to travel internationally, receiving a Golden Alexander Nomination (Thessaloniki) before being released theatrically.

Based in Vancouver, Carl has since produced, written and directed multiple feature films, such as EMILE, starring Sir Ian MacKellan and Deborah Kara Unger. He wrote and directed SEVERED, his first foray into the horror genre.

Carl's most recently released feature was the harrowing UNNATURAL AND ACCIDENTAL (Producer, Director), an adaptation of the acclaimed stage play by Marie Clements, released theatrically by Alliance Atlantis in 2006. The film premiered at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and at the Toronto International Film Festival (2006), before earning awards and nominations at the American Indian Film Festival, the Vancouver International Film Festival, the British Columbia film Awards (Leos) and the 2007 Genie Awards.

Additionally Carl directed the award winning documentary for IFC INDIE TRUTH and the Marshall McLuhan biography OUT OF ORBIT.

Carl is currently the Chair of the First Weekend Club and on the board of the Whistler International Film Festival, a member of the Director's Guild of Canada, the Writer's Guild of Canada and the Canadian Film and Television Producer's Association.

**NORMAL** is Carl's sixth feature film.

**Co-Producer – Rajvinder Uppal**

Born and raised in England, Rajvinder graduated from the University of Lancaster. Her first industry job was working on a BBC Television children's drama series.

She stayed with the series for three seasons, working her way up to the role of assistant floor manager. She continued to work in that capacity for numerous shows in production across the UK for both the BBC and Granada Television. Rajvinder immigrated to Vancouver in 2003 and has worked as an assistant director on a number of projects.

For two years Rajvinder was an intern producer with Reunion Pictures on the Showtime TV series MASTERS OF HORROR. She then joined Carl Bessai at Raven West Films on a BC Film Producer internship. Outside of her role at Raven West, Rajvinder has successfully produced three short films and in 2006 her solo producer short film DAMNATION was invited to Screampfest LA 2006 and BIFFF 2007.

Rajvinder recently successfully ended her training at Raven West Films and is currently running her own production company, At The End of the Day Productions, which has over three projects in development.

**Original Screenplay and Co-Writer – Travis MacDonald**

Born in Vancouver, Travis started writing screenplays in High School after discovering the films of John Cassavettes, Jim Jarmusch and Hal Hartley.

His screenplay for NORMAL, inspired by a tragedy that touched him closely, earned him a fellowship at the Praxis Centre for Screenwriters and later an invitation to the Summer Workshop with Actors.

Other writing credits include episodes of the half hour comedy series ALIENATED, and SEVERED, a horror film he worked on with Carl Bessai. He is currently developing the feature film, BUDS, a thriller set in the Lower Mainland's thriving marijuana grow-op industry, and is a writer and story editor on Lifetime's original series, BLOOD TIES.

## KEY CAST

Catherine	Carrie-Anne Moss
Jordie	Kevin Zegers
Walt	Callum Keith Rennie
Dale	Andrew Airlie
Dennis	Tygh Runyan
Elise	Camille Sullivan
Sherri	Lauren Lee Smith
Carl	Michael Riley
Melissa	Britt Irvin
Abby	Allison Hossack
Brady	Cameron Bright
Sylie	Tara Frederick
Tim	Ben Ratner
Bob the Social Worker	Zak Santiago
Jerry	Hrothgar Mathews
Connie	Gabrielle Rose
Peter	Dan Shea
Young Catherine	Talia Notte
Young Nicky	Tal Notte
Babysitter	Elyse Levesque
Young Man	Adam Dodds
Store Worker	Bryan Mah

## KEY CREW

Director	Carl Bessai
Story by	Travis McDonald
Screenplay by	Travis McDonald & Carl Bessai
Producer	Andrew Boutilier
Producer	Carl Bessai
Executive Producers	Stephen Hegyes & Shawn Williamson
Executive Producers	Phil Hunt & Compton Ross
Co-Producer	Rajvinder Uppal
Line Producer	Drew Locke
Associate Producer	Judi Babcock
Director of Photography	Carl Bessai
Editor	Lisa Binkley
Production Designer	Nancy Mossop
Costume Designer	Michele Maillet
Music by	Clinton Shorter
Casting by	Susan Brouse C.S.A.
Additional casting by	Billy Hopkins, Suzanne Smith & Kerry Barden