

JOHN BERCHTOLD

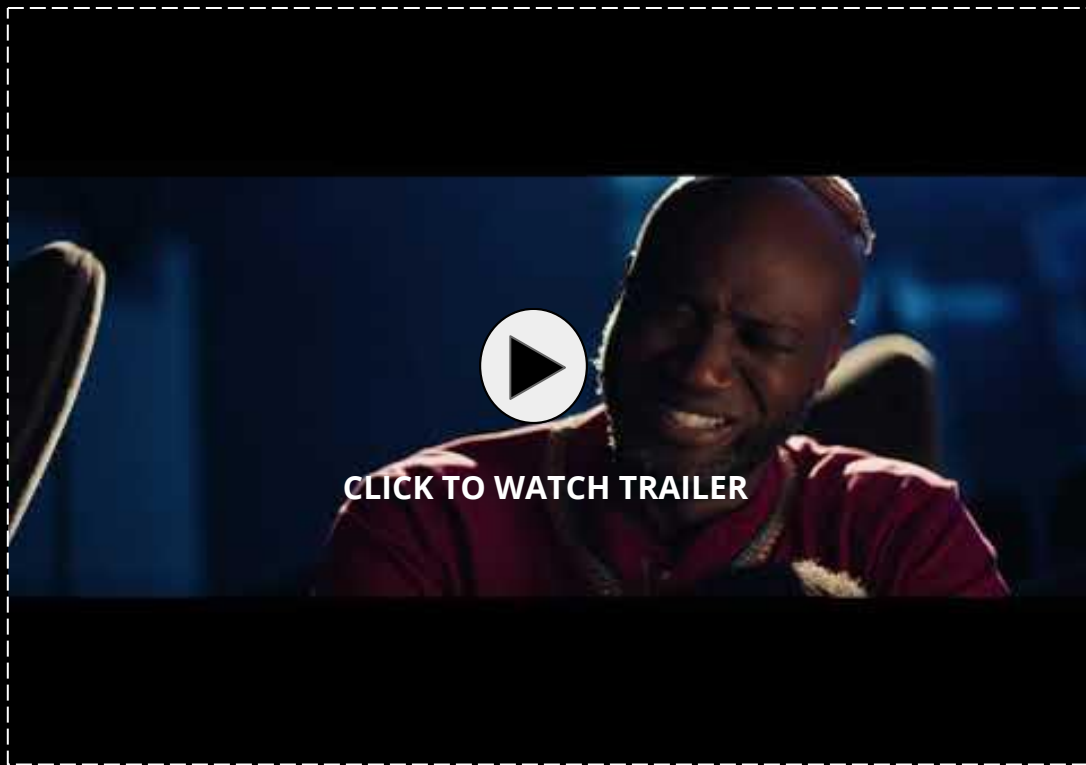
SAMMI ROTIBI

OBSIDIAN DOLLS

A FILM BY MICHAEL CARNICK



OBSIDIAN DOLLS



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OBSIDIAN DOLLS

Running Time:

1 hour 42 minutes

Written & Directed By:

Michael Carnick

Produced By:

Chelsea Fenton

Production Company:

Underdog Overkill

Carnick Cousins

The Malt Shop

Cinematography By:

Gabriel Carnick

Edited By:

Fernanda Schein



LOGLINE

A troubled young man (John Berchtold, "Manhunt") visits an Ethiopian born rabbi (Sammi Rotibi, "Django Unchained") on the eve of Yom Kippur. He requests a blessing that tests the rabbi's faith as they bond through revelations of past traumatic events.

SYNOPSIS

On the eve of Yom Kippur, an Ethiopian born rabbi, "Nate", is approached by a troubled young man, "Isaac". Isaac tells Nate that he wants to end his life, but before that, he wants Nate to recite the Mourner's Kaddish for him. What transpires will test the limits of faith, compassion, and humanity. Ultimately, Isaac's life is saved by the rabbi's counsel and the limitless strength of what it means to be a part of a loving community.

BEHIND THE LENS

From development to screen and beyond, this film was a labor of love completed by a team of filmmakers who proudly embody minority representation. This includes a disabled director, an all female camera crew, and a female production team, many of whom also identify as LGBT.

This made for a wonderfully collaborative experience, with perspectives brought from an array of backgrounds. We are all incredibly excited to continue to build our careers together in this supportive environment.







Sammi Rotibi as *Nate*

With an array of impressive work under his belt, including roles in “Django Unchained”, “Lord of War”, and “Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice”, Sammi Rotibi is a well seasoned actor who gives a versatile performance as the character of Nate. Sammi takes the audience on a riveting journey as he continues to reveal past choices that haunt Nate, through his existence in the present.



John Berchtold as *Isaac*

Known for his work in films such as “Manhunt” and as a popular personality on social media platforms such as *TikTok*, *Twitter* and *Instagram*, John Berchtold is a talent of many mediums. John brings a beautiful nuance of emotion and connotation to the character of Isaac.



WRITER/DIRECTOR, Michael Carnick



Michael Carnick is a screenwriter and playwright from San Diego, California. In 2005, while studying Theatre and Dance at UCSD, Michael was unanimously voted for first place at the Samuel Goldwyn Writing Awards. He was the first undergrad to ever receive this prestigious award. While attending UCR for his MFA in Creative Writing for the Performing Arts, Michael was selected as a Finalist for the Kennedy Center ACTF Region VIII New Play Festival two years in a row.

In 2015, Michael independently produced a feature film based on his Goldwyn award winning script "Who's Driving Doug", starring RJ Mitte as the titular Doug. "Who's Driving Doug" is semi-autobiographical and centered on personal events from Michael's life. The film was sold to Netflix for online streaming rights in 2016. It made its theatrical worldwide premiere at the Santa Barbara Film Festival.

In 2018, Michael directed and wrote the independent TV pilot "Manny Fantasma", which premiered at the Santa Monica Film Festival on December 8th, garnering the Emerging Director Award. It has since screened at over a dozen festivals worldwide, picking up several awards, including the Los Angeles Film Awards' Best Web/TV Pilot.



Michael was born with a rare physical disability which confines him to an electric wheelchair. His work is often centered around the themes of disability awareness and the human experience of being a minority. He often highlights disability, LGBTQ+, and race inequality using empathy and deep self reflection of the united human spirit. carnick@mac.com

PRODUCER, Chelsea Fenton

Chelsea Fenton is a producer based in Los Angeles. After graduating with her MFA in Producing from Chapman University's Dodge College, Chelsea commenced a career as a line producer on features including Annapurna Interactive's "Telling Lies" (2019), and "MFA" (SXSW World Premiere 2017). She continues to champion projects that capture unique voices through strong visual commentary. chelseafenton@gmail.com



CINEMATOGRAPHER, Gabriel Carnick

Gabriel Carnick is an award winning cinematographer whose work has earned her accolades such as Best Cinematography for TV pilot "Manny Fantasma" at the Los Angeles Film Awards, and the European Cinematography Awards. She received her MFA in Directing from Chapman University. Gabriel is happily making a career out of films that have a message of social justice, aiming to make the world a better place. filmmakergabriel@gmail.com



EDITOR, Fernanda Schein

Fernanda Schein is an editor who prides herself on being a passionate filmmaker, a challenge seeker and a continual optimistic. She has worked on a variety of projects, including "Prime Angel", which obtained distribution on popular Chinese streamer *Youku*. She is excited for future visibility as she continues to garner impressive opportunities. She enjoys cutting with strong feelings and sensible eyes. fernandavfschein@gmail.com



MUSIC AND COMPOSER



Music plays a pivotal role in heightening the emotion felt by each character's performance. Much of the score was recorded by the wonderfully talented ensemble of the Budapest Scoring Orchestra on location in Budapest, Hungary.

Locally in Los Angeles, our composer Chad Rehmann collaborated with the Grammy award winning Ayana Haviv, whose voice can be heard in films and TV such as "Star Wars: The Last Jedi", "Deadpool 2", "Alita: Battle Angel", and "Transparent". Ayana's charismatic voice is a complimentary contribution to the film.

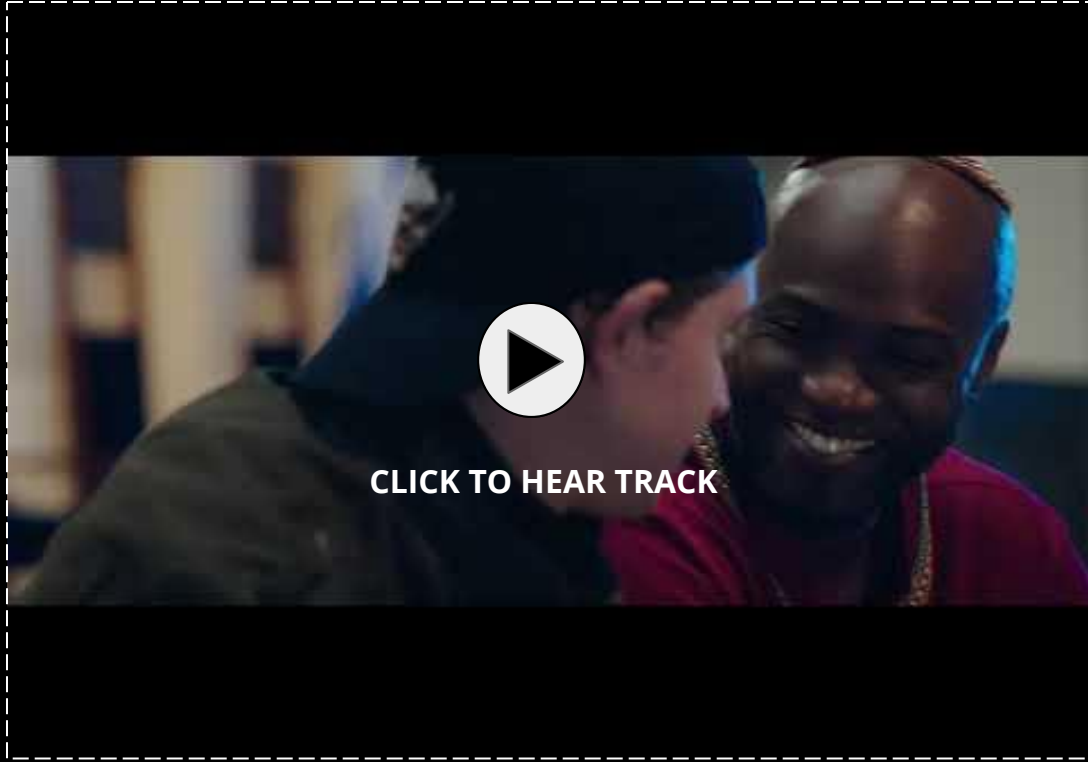
COMPOSER, Chad Rehmann

Chad Rehmann is a highly acclaimed composer whose work has been recognized by the National Foundation for the Advancement in the Arts and the ASCAP Foundation. He is a recipient of the ASCAP Foundation David Rose Centennial Award, recognizing excellence in music composition.

Chad has written music for the best in Hollywood. His work can be found in projects by Dreamworks, Sony, Paramount, ABC Family, Syfy Channel and PBS, to name a few. Versatility, humor and the midwest ethic of getting the job done right no matter what is the foundation of Chad's success. chad@chadrehmann.com



"CROSSING OVER", CHAD REHMANN, AYANA HAVIV





CAST

Nate: **Sammi Rotibi**

Isaac: **John Berchtold**

Hiram: **Maximus Birchmore**

Elad: **Bodhi Dell**

Doctor Rodricks: **Rahi Sarbaziha**

Cellist / EMT 1: **Jeff Myers**

Violinist / EMT 2: **Myla Wingard**



CREDITS



Writer/Director: **Michael Carnick**
Producer: **Chelsea Fenton**
Director of Photography: **Gabriel Carnick**
Editor: **Fernanda Schein**
Composer: **Chad Rehmann**
Colorist: **Paul Sage**
Casting Director: **Doug Haley**
Sound Mixer: **Scott Tipton**
Sound Supervisor: **Tony Crowe**

Production Manager:
Production Coordinator:
1st Assistant Director:

Shannon Losinski
Berit Bontems
Casey Nicholas Price
Aaron Ellis
Michi Que Doan
Chandler Freeland
Nicky Hayes
Daniel Drummond

2nd Assistant Director:

Script Supervisor:
Camera Operator:
1st Assistant Camera:

Meghan Pezzano
Daniela Rodriguez Martinez
Victoria Chen
Jude Abadi
Kyah Cook

2nd Assistant Camera:
VFX:

Production Designer:

EPK:
Gaffer:

Hansjeet Duggal
Bryan Barrios
Nathaly Lopez
Chelsea Fenton
Stefan Colson
Raphael Bittencourt
Beau Moran
Jason Tozier

Best Boy:
Key Grip:

Monty Sloan
Dustin Lawyer
Connor Vickers
Jason Tozier
Beau Moran

Best Girl Grip:
Best Boy Electric:
Steadicam Operator:
Boom Operator:

Cristina Guzmán
Davis Bonner
James Geyer
Kris Mangey

Makeup Artist:

Dawn Coleman
Mana Afshar

Costume Designer:
Wardrobe Supervisor:
Art Director:
Set Dresser:
Stills Photographer:

Deborah Carnick
Mel Castro
Heidi Strykiewicz
Brandon Hazou
Scott Tipton
Raphael Bittencourt

Digital Imaging Technician:

Studio Teacher:
Production Assistants:

Fernanda Schein
Alexander Rodriguez
Egoitz Mendia
Stella Pacific Management
Mel Castro
Taylor Coker
Cheyton Jain
Aaron Ellis

Catering:
Location Coordinator:
Sound Design/Foley:
Dialogue Editor:
Trailer:

Bekker's Catering
Mendy Strebe
Postmark Audio Services, Inc.
Christopher D. Anderson, C.A.S.
Paul-Anthony Anselmo
Budapest Scoring Orchestra

Score recorded by:
Colorist:
Co-Producer:

Camera & Grip Equipment:

Paul Sage
Chad Schultz
Stray Angel
F22

Lighting Equipment:

Stray Angel
CFG
The Fun Ton

Production Supplies:

The Production Truck

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

In 1991, Israel covertly airlifted approximately 15,000 Jewish Ethiopians from Ethiopia to Israel. The planes were packed tightly. One 747 had over 1,000 people on board. Two children were born during the flight. Ethiopia officially denied the presence of Jews in their country. They were forced to live in segregated, isolated villages lacking basic necessities like running water and electricity. Starving children went from dirt floors to well tended orphanages practically overnight. However, like America and many countries in the world, Israel grapples with its own issues of systemic racism. Israel elevated thousands of Ethiopian Jews from poverty to first world comfort, yet they also face a sense of loneliness and otherness even there.

Not many films have covered this incredible tale of human spirit and struggle, and I felt that this was a story worth exploring. In "Obsidian Dolls", I paired an Ethiopian born rabbi with a troubled young Jewish American man, who is dealing with his own baggage of white privilege and micro-aggressive racism. He is also beset with emotional and mental instability. Diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, and plagued with hallucinations and unstable moods, this young man tried to commit suicide when he was just a boy. He's also struggling with opening up about his sexual identity, which is at odds with the rabbi's internalized homophobia. In a way, like the Ethiopian born rabbi, the young man also feels lost and without a home. This feeling of mutual sequestration is what ultimately bonds them together. The feeling of constant retreat and segregation is part of the Jewish experience. A perfect common thread interwoven into their genetic tapestry. It also personally speaks to my own experience of being physically disabled and Jewish.

When writing and developing this story, I wanted to create a film that explores faith, but is not a "faith film". The Jewish experience is at heart here, but I aimed for a universal experience, and approached religion with an even hand. Some events in the story could be open to interpretation, depending on the audience's own beliefs or lack thereof. I based this film on an award-winning one act play I wrote while studying for my M.F.A., thus I intended the film version to also feel like a theatrical stage play. Tired of constant "popcorn" movies, I wanted to distill drama down to its core elements. Just two principal actors in mostly one location, sparring over an objective. Magical realism and surrealism play a heavy part in this film, as I wanted the audience to feel like they're watching a cinematic stage play.

It's also interesting to note that one of the characters in this story is afraid of getting others sick and wears a mask. Principal photography was completed six months before the COVID19 pandemic hit the news, and before the unfortunate events that led to explosive racial tensions in America and around the world. It's interesting that this story tapped into the zeitgeist of the time before it became mainstream. Coincidental, or perhaps prophetic..

CONTACT

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714-262-7897 (Chelsea Fenton, Producer)*
Production Company Email: [*media@obsidiandolls.com*](mailto:media@obsidiandolls.com)

SOCIAL MEDIA



Website: **COMING SOON**



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