



Runtime: 16 minutes

Language: English Genre: Crime / Action / Drama

A Chromosomes Production / In Association with I Love That Dog Films

The Fixer (dir. Michael Schilf)
michaelschilf@lunardoor.com

ACCOLAIDES



REVIEWS

What industry people are saying on IMDb...

“Schilf is a talented writer/director. His style has the deliberate patience of Denis Villanueve, combined with the grit of filmmakers like Michael Mann, Antoine Fuqua, and Tony Scott.”

— Jeff Legge (Writer)

“Great performances. Intriguing setup. A gripping short with impressive visuals and scoring!”

— Roshni Bhatia (Director / Writer / Editor)

“The film is shot beautifully, and without waste; every scene powerful and colorful to the story with resolution at stake.”

— Brett Zimmerman (Actor)

“Cinematically filmed, thoughtfully written, especially for a short. Great ensemble cast.”

— Columbia Tatone (Commercial / Music Video Director)

“Much like every phenomenal thriller, the direction and script keeps us biting our nails with every passing second.”

— Roy Arwas (Editor / Producer / Director)

“I was truly blown away by this! Directing and story are fantastic. I want more!”

— Michael Amato (Producer)

“Writer/Director Michael Schilf skillfully delivers just the right pinch of levity to help you take a needed breathe between bouts of tension-filled suspense.”

— David C. Hernandez (Actor / Stunt Coordinator)

“Taut well-made short that's begging to be a feature or series.”

— John Serpe (Writer / Director)

“If you're a fan of *Sons of Anarchy* or *Vikings*, you'll love this. Old fashioned, bloody, ready to get violent.”

— Matthew Jaeger (Actor)

“Made me hope the ‘Best Menudo in LA’ is going to show up at Trejo's Tacos someday soon!”

— Tim Hedrick (Writer / Producer)

LOGLINE (32 words)

An extorted Mafia enforcer must partner with the femme fatale hired gun who murdered his wife in order to save his daughter and liberate himself from a sadistic Los Angeles crime boss.



SYNOPSIS (201 words)

After paying his respects at the grave of his murdered wife in Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights, Jack Cross, a Caucasian enforcer in the Mexican Mafia, along with his malamute/husky mix, arrive at the home of Benito “Benny” Sanchez, an ex-con and former Mafia gangster.

When Cross opens the trunk of his 1971 Chevrolet Chevelle SS, Benny is not surprised to see Dutch, a tattooed “gezant” envoy from the New York Dutch Mob, bloodied, bound and gaged.

Failing to extract needed intel from Dutch using brute force, Cross imposes a loaded framing nailer to inspire Dutch to cooperate. After Dutch delivers the dirt, Cross treats Dutch’s wounds before forcing Dutch to share a meal of Benny’s homemade Menudo.

Using Dutch’s lead, Cross abducts Camila De La Cruz, driving her to a secluded hillside that overlooks the Los Angeles skyline. Cross prepares to bury her for stealing from his employer Sint Maarten, but the tables turn when Cross discovers Camila was deceitfully hired by Sint Maarten to murder Cross’ wife.

Learning his daughter is now a marked target, Cross must partner with Camila in order to save his daughter, liberate himself, and enact revenge upon his sadistic employer Sint Maarten.

CHARACTERS



JACK CROSS (Jesse C. Boyd)

Blackmailed by his employer Sint Maarten, Cross must “fix” things, for if he refuses, his daughter will suffer the same fate as his murdered wife.



BENITO “BENNY” SANCHEZ (Danny Trejo)

An ex-con and former gangster, Benny is Cross’ trusted father-in-law. Skilled with knives and a ladle... he makes a mean bowl of Menudo.



CAMILA DE LA CRUZ (Veronica Diaz Carranza)

A killer with a code, Camila is hired to murder Cross’ wife, but upon discovering Sint Maarten’s nefarious motives, she turns the tables.



DUTCH (Vincent van Hinte)

A “gezant” envoy from the Dutch Mob pushing “E” into L.A., Dutch is a flashy, tattooed psychopath, with a glutinous appetite for booze, women, and drugs.



DIRECTOR'S BIO

Michael Schilf is an award-winning writer, director, and producer. In June 2020, he and creative partner Chase Kuker co-founded *Lunar Door*, an independent film production company. A graduate of the USC's School of Cinematic Arts (MFA in Screenwriting), Schilf has penned twelve features, nine TV pilots, and over 100 advertising campaigns (including *Nike*, *American Express*, *Volvo*, *Walmart*, *Ford*, *Target*, *Chrysler*, *Lexus*, *BMW*, and *Mercedes Benz*).

In 2010, Schilf co-founded *The Script Lab*, a screenwriting resource and entertainment news outlet, designed for writers, filmmakers, and creators. As President and Editorial Director, he developed content that helped *The Script Lab* gain brand recognition as an industry leader, providing high-quality E-learning and industry education to millions worldwide. In 2014, *The Script Lab* was acquired by *TSL Media, Inc.*, and Schilf stayed on as an Educational Consultant.

Schilf is co-creator/writer of *LIGHT*, a sci-fi, action, crime graphic novel and TV series; co-creator/writer of *SWORN*, a fantasy, action, adventure series; and writer, director, producer of award-winning short *The Fixer*. Currently, Schilf is pitching *The Fixer* as a TV series while in pre-production on his directorial feature film debut, based on his memoir *The Sins of My Father*, which takes an introspective look at growing up with an absentee, alcoholic, mentally ill father.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Creating stories has been my foundation ever since I bought my first VHS camera in the fifth grade. Of course, at the tender age of ten, I was more interested in filming G.I. Joe action figures engulfed in gasoline fueled fires within my backyard sand box. I imagine still today if you dug deep enough to the spot where my childhood imagination seemed limitless, you'd find the mangled remains of battle tested toys pitted against each other like gladiators among fortified sand castles and garden hose moats.

Although the stories behind those epic battles may have been void of complex internal character flaws, powerful plot point twists, and juxtaposing story lines, those battles still encapsulated the most fundamental foundation of a good story.

A character, let's say the ultimate bad guy Skeletor from *Masters of the Universe*, is forced to face off against Optimus Prime from *Transformers*. Both characters have a want: to win the battle. Both face an obstacle: each other. Each goal propels the story forward while obstacles create conflict and tension.

Now I'm older: married, three kids, a mortgage. I'm a writer, director, producer, and a professor, who teaches writing. Yet despite all I've learned, the story equation remains the same: $S = (C + W) \times O$.

A good *story* (S) is about an interesting *character* (C) who *wants* (W) something badly and faces *obstacles* (O) while struggling to achieve that goal.

I'm always looking for good stories. Sometimes the plot presents itself before the character, and at other times, the character evolves before the story, which was the case for *The Fixer*. I was eating lengua tacos at a local Mexican stand in Los Angeles, thinking about family, acceptance and forgiveness. My wife is Mexican, and as a Caucasian of European descent, I had experienced first hand the intricate process of acceptance into a large ethnic family. Then I wondered, could an outsider be accepted into a mafia family? And with that, the character of Jack Cross was born.



FAQ's

Q: With film festivals featuring independent films being hit particularly hard due to the coronavirus pandemic, how has this impacted your film?

The Fixer had its World Premiere February 28 at Mammoth Film Festival. Then everything stopped. It was going to have its Southern California premiere at the Beverly Hills Film Festival in April and then continue through the festival circuit, but as you know, COVID-19 changed everything. Some festivals are still announcing awards despite being canceled or postponed. *The Fixer* won two awards at the Independent Filmmakers Showcase (IFS)—L.A. Film Festival: Best Action Film and Best Supporting Actor in a short film, Danny Trejo. While the timing has been terrible, the good thing is that the content exists. *The Fixer* is here to stay.

Q: You wrote and directed *The Fixer*, but you also worked as producer, executive producer, and production designer. What was it like wearing so many hats?

As writer and director, I was never at odds with myself. I envisioned how I was going to shoot each scene as I was writing. I even drew all my own story boards during pre-production, and I knew the shot list so well that I rarely opened my director's bible during principle photography. The biggest thing, however, was casting Danny Trejo. The original budget was much less, but when we secured Trejo, the budget tripled. At that point, as an executive producer, I had only one choice. Find more money!

Q: When you wrote the script, did you have Danny Trejo in mind for the role of Benny?

The Benny character in the first draft was actually Beatrice, the matriarch of the family, but even though my own mother-in-law is the quintessential Mexican homemaker, constantly in the kitchen, cooking some Mexican delicacy, I decided to flip the stereotype, so in subsequent drafts, Beatrice became Benny. While writing, it often helps to have a particular actor in mind,

and as I was creating Benny, I envisioned Trejo, never expecting to actually get the Hollywood legend to play the role. It's not like you just call up 'Machete' and ask him to toss on an apron.

Q: How did you secure Mr. Trejo to co-star in your film?

I wrote him a personal letter, which my manager sent to his agent. The process, which was like a courtship through messengers, took two months before Trejo said yes. It came down to the script. He liked the quality of the writing and the character. Getting Trejo was a huge win, yet a win that came with a different problem. A high-profile talent like Trejo does not come cheap. It was a good problem to have, though, because not only did his name and face help to market the film, but once we got Trejo, it was easier to get more investors. In fact, all I had to do was mention Trejo's name, and people wanted to give us stuff for free. We called it 'The Trejo Effect.'"

Q: Did "The Trejo Effect" extended to the film's cast and crew?

Absolutely! We were able to attract a more experienced crew and top notch cinematographer, and many key department heads were willing to lowered their standard rates, mainly because they wanted to worked with Trejo. Having Trejo attached to the project also made it easier for my manager to go out to A-list talent for the lead role of Jack Cross. We had a lot of interest and a handful of meetings with several high-profile actors considering the lead role.

Q: Let's talk about the lead. What was the process in casting Jesse C. Boyd?

Originally, one of those high-profile actors agreed to play Cross, but he backed out a week before principle photography. Talk about stressful. Thankfully, my manager hooked us with an amazing casting director Farrah West, and over 1500 actors submitted video auditions for Jack Cross. Farrah narrowed it down for about 30 actors, and from there, I selected my top three. I wasn't completely satisfied, but we couldn't reschedule the shoot. With three days before shooting, I had

to pick our lead, which I did with reluctance, but then Farrah sent me a last second audition. It was Jesse C. Boyd, and I knew immediately we found our Jack Cross.

Q: What a story. Any more casting anecdotes you'd like to share?

Farrah West helped us cast Veronica Diaz Carranza for the role of Camila De La Cruz. Her audition was tremendous and the easiest decision. So no drama there. However, the character of Dutch was originally a gang member of Wah Ching, the Chinese American Mafia, but two weeks prior to shooting, my producer Chase Kuker met actor Vincent van Hinte in a Los Angeles bar. They started talking, and Chase thought it might be cool to create additional subtext by adding an international element to the story by changing the Wah Ching to the Penose, the Dutch mob. Kuker pitched me idea, and I loved that Vincent van Hinte could speak fluent Dutch, so I cast him with no audition at all. It was just a matter of trust. Sometimes timing really is everything.

Q: What's next for *The Fixer*?

I wrote *The Fixer* as a proof of concept film. I wanted to make a film that had a self contained narrative that could succeed on the festival circuit, but I also wanted to use it as a marketing tool to pitch *The Fixer* TV series, of which I've written the pilot script. There is also plans to adapt it into a feature.

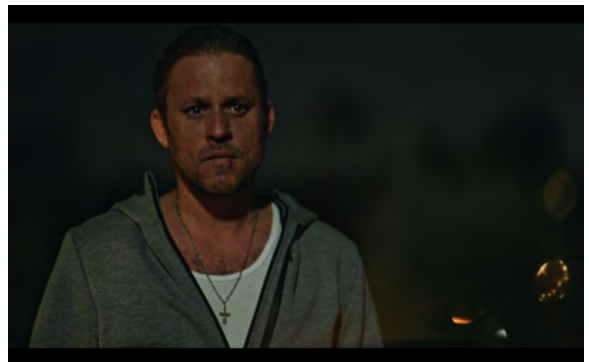
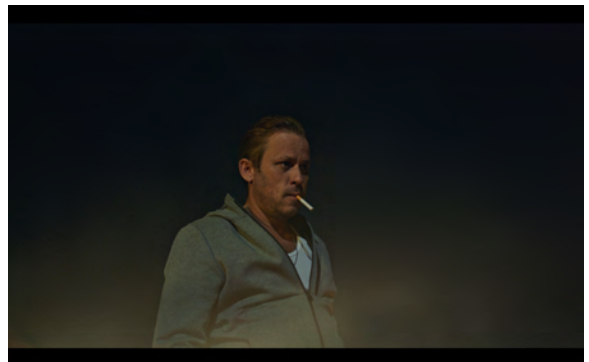
Q: You have a production company: Lunar Door. Any projects on the horizon?

Oh, yes. My producing and creative partner, Chase Kuker, and I recently founded *Lunar Door*, an independent production company, where we're currently securing equity investment to begin production for our current slate of projects, one of which is the *The Sins of My Father*, based on my memoir of growing up with an absentee, alcoholic, mentally ill father. I'm also writing completing the script *Ashes*, an indie drama, crime, thriller. Kuker and I will produce, and talented female film director Alexandra Chando is attached to direct.

FILM STILLS



FILM STILLS



CAST

Jack Cross	Jesse C. Boyd
Benito “Benny” Sanchez	Danny Trejo
Camila De La Cruz	Veronica Diaz Carranza
Dutch	Vincent Van Hinte
Tuesday	Herself — Dog

CREW

Writer and Director	Michael Schilf
Producers	Michael Schilf, Chase Kuker, Ryan D. Wood
Executive Producers	Michael Schilf, Hal Lester, Ronald Kuker, Chase Mckendry, Michael Petersen, Alex Barron, John Michael Measells, Will James Moore
Co-Producers	Letty Escobar Schilf, Tomik Mansoori
Director of Photography	Shaun Hart
Production Designer	Michael Schilf
Editor	Scott Roon
Casting Director	Farrah West
Unit Production Manager	Philip Marlatt
First Assistant Director	Kelly Burns
Second Assistant Director	Michael Petersen
Production Supervisor	Letty Escobar Schilf

Supervising Art Director	James Flook
Assistant Art Director	Michael Petersen
First Assistant Camera	Alvaro J. Barragan
Script Supervisor	Emily Blake
Sound Mixer	Joseph Cooke
Boom Operator	Kris Geffen
Gaffer	Cory Hart
Key Grip	Anthony Bryce Graham
Costume Designer	Amira Mertaban
Assistant Costume Designer	Maria “Crista” Rivera
Head of Makeup	Lauren Nicole Guzman
Makeup Artist	Kaitlin Lyerly
First Assistant Editor	Chase Kuker
Assistant Editor	Michael Schilf
Post Production Supervisor	Chase Kuker
Colorist	Matthew Macar
Still Photographers	Chris Wood, Ghazal Sheei
Assistant to Mr. Trejo Production Assistants	Talen Antebelian Miguel Carlo Bustos, Graham Kimmel, Jesse John Lopez, Brett Poldrugo
Post Production Sound	Chromosomes Encino, CA — Austin, TX
Music	Chromosomes

Mixed at	Poste Haste Digital 2700 S. La Cienega Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90034
Supervising Sound Designer	Ryan D. Wood
Additional Sound Designer	Chase Kuker
Foley Mixer	Ryan D. Wood
Dialogue Editing	Ryan D. Wood
Re-Recording Mixer	Alexander Verbitskiy
Location Monitor	Eric Jones
Location Manager	Letty Escobar Schilf
Picture Car Coordinator	Letty Escobar Schilf
Picture Car Owner	Joshua Hummel
Transportation for Mr. Trejo	Bela Lochescky
Transportation Captain	Sean Davies
Craft Service	Lucy Mikirdichian
Animal Wrangler	Letty Escobar Schilf
Animal Monitor	Tricia Casper
Song	

“La Paloma (2006 Remastered Version)”

Performed by Victoria De Los Angeles/Sinfonia of London/Rafael Fruhbeck De Vurgos

Rhino Entertainment Company, A Warner Music Group Company

The Producers Wish to Thank

Apache Rental Group — Adam Bloom - Tim Sweet - Jim Krauskopf

Revolution Entertainment Services - Charles Steiner

Sheila Tighe

Jesse Dylan

Elvira Escobar

BOLD|MP, Anna Liza Recho & Evan Anglin

Enrique Salcedo

Columbia Tatone

DJ Kilpatrick

Jennifer Cellucci

Dennis Ray

Pose Hase Digital

Chromosomes did not receive any payment or other consideration,
or enter into any agreement, for the depiction of tobacco products in this film.

Movie Animals Protected in the making of this film.

FILMMAKER CONTACT

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