

FILM INFORMATION

Film Title

The Strong Box

Contact Info

Huge Hype Films
6550 Satsuma Avenue
North Hollywood, CA 91606
818.635.9006

Hassan El-Amin - Producer / Director

818.635.9006

hassanelamin@live.com

Technical Info

Running Time: 10:19

Exhibition Format: Blu-Ray, Digital

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Shooting Format: 4K Digital

Color, English

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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hassanelamin@live.com
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Short film ***The Strong Box*** will leave you laughing and screaming for more.

The horror comedy follows Randall, a night janitor who is flat broke and in debt. Sick of grind, he finds what may be the answer to his empty pockets...an ancient strongbox packed with golden treasure. The treasure can be his if he grants a simple favor. Will his greed be his downfall?

The inspiration for the film occurred when the Director, Hassan El-Amin, encountered a strange box one night while leaving work. His sense of humor and twisted imagination took over from there creating a darkly funny feast for the mind.

El-Amin wrote, directed and edited the film which was shot in locations around Los Angeles. It features rising acting talent Joseph Fox and seasoned stage and screen actor Time Winters. John Ames brought his wealth of experience as Director of Photography imbuing the film with a sinister feel. Yun Nam served as Key Make Up Artist, Pratik Singh served as Visual Effect Supervisor and Alvaro Morello enhanced the eeriness with his sound design and original score. The film's running time is 10 minutes.

Hassan is in the process of entering film festivals around the globe.

SYNOPSIS

Synopsis Short

Randall, broke and in debt, finds ancient treasure in an old strong box. The treasure can be his...if he grants one simple request.

Synopsis Medium

Randall is flat broke and in debt. His only way out of the hole is the crappy night job he works, cleaning old buildings for an overbearing boss. On one of his many work-breaks, he finds what may be the answer to his empty pockets...an ancient strong box adorned in gold. Inside, he discovers golden treasure beyond his wildest imagination. Fortunately for Randall, the treasure and freedom debt can be his...if he grants one small request.

Synopsis Long

It is a rainy, miserable night. But the rumbling thunder doesn't disturb Randall, a night janitor, as he sleeps while taking a break from cleaning an old warehouse. His boss finds him and cracks the whip. The place has to be spotless by morning or they don't get paid. Randall goes back to work lamenting how broke he is. He hears a sound, like a whisper. It beckons him down a dark and dusty row of shelves. There he finds an ancient strong box, hidden away and long forgotten. He is fascinated by the gold adorning it. Thinking it might be worth something, he pulls it out for a closer look.

The box is strange and foreboding. He tries but can't open it. He hears that whisper again and can just make out a word. He repeats it and the box blasts open. Inside, he finds a mound of golden treasure, a treasure that can be his...if he grants one small request.

Q AND A

1. What was the inspiration for the film?

I love horror movies but rarely see stories about someone who looks like me. Instead of complaining I decided to get off my butt and make something. This particular story is inspired by an encounter with a mysterious box at the end of my work shift and what could have happened.

2. How long did the production take?

This film for me was a lesson in perseverance. Writing was deceptively simple. The initial script was written in a day with rewrites lasting another couple of weeks. Production wouldn't be as easy. It was shot over the course of five long days in three locations over several months. From script to post production it has taken a year to complete. All along I knew that if I just didn't give up I could make something really cool.

3. What did you enjoy most about making the film?

This project was the film school I should have attended at a fraction of the cost! Every aspect was an education. I directed actors with experience ranging from novice to advanced. I had never worked with a large crew before and learning to manage it was thrilling. I built sets and props. I taught myself how to color grade and do practical and visual effects. There were so many conundrums to unravel and we were all thrilled to take on the challenges.

4. What kind of difficulties did you have making the film?

There were many. I didn't have much experience with effects and this film called for several practical and visual effects. Working with special effects make-up was also an education. Fortunately, I was surrounded by people who were as excited as I was to bring this vision to life. I couldn't be happier with the results!

5. What are your hopes for the film?

This film is a crowd pleaser and I just hope as many people get to see it as possible. I plan on a two year festival run and then screening it online for the world to see.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Directors Statement

I made this film because I was afraid. Truly afraid of what I didn't know, what I wouldn't allow myself to know...what's in the box?

I work the graveyard shift. Besides the cleaning crew that comes and goes, it's just me. When I'm done for the night I follow a well worn routine: shut off the computer, follow the back hallway out of the office and take the elevator to the parking lot. One night, I followed the hallway and found the elevator open and waiting for me. In the center of it was a cardboard box closed but not sealed. There's no one in the elevator or the building for that matter. I was all alone.

The scenario felt like something out of a horror movie, beckoning me to unravel the mystery and learn...what's in the box? However, as a Black man keenly aware of how we don't often fare well in horror flicks, I said to myself "Hell no!" and did the only sensible thing. I took the stairs.

When I arrived safe at home, the image and the thought still plagued me. "What was in that box?" This film is an attempt to answer that question.

I banged out a script, assembled a team and shot a movie. Every stage of this project was a joy to me. Writing, casting, hiring crew, directing, editing...there was nothing like the feeling of seeing it all come together. I hope that joy and the fear I felt when I first discovered that box comes across on screen.

CREDITS

CAST

"Randall"	Joseph Fox
"The Head"	Time Winters

CREW

Director	Hassan El-Amin
Director of Photography	John Ames
Assistant Director	Fred Charleston
Script Supervisor	Michael Harris Kristyn Stewart
Sound Mixer	Scott Evans Robert Martin
Visual Effects Supervisor	Pratik Pradeep Singh
Boom Operator	Charlie Jimenez
Gaffer	James Brown Stephen Pinkston
1st Assistant Camera	Townsend Dick
2nd Assistant Camera	Arianna Cobbs
Grip	Kevin Tie Darnell Williams
Key Makeup Artist	Yun Nam
Assistant Makeup Artist	Gabriella Paredez Christine Jackson
Production Assistant	Edwin Monterroza

GALLERY



The Box



John, Hassan and Joseph



Hassan Directing



The Crew Working







CAST AND CREW BIOS



Hassan El-Amin - Director

Hassan El-Amin is a Director with a creative flair and a knack for solving problems.

Hassan was an odd kid. Typically, Black kids from Detroit don't grow up loving Kubrick and Kurosawa. He blames his odd parents for exposing him to arthouse cinema at a young age. He graduated from Howard University's film school and moved to Los Angeles to pursue his dream.

Once there, he quickly realized how expensive the city is and got a PA job. That job led to better jobs which led to an Emmy Award winning career as a

Television Editor for the entertainment news show Extra. Yet, as the years passed, something began to nag at him. What happened to the dream? He had to make a change.

So he got to work. He wrote scripts, raised money and begged and cajoled friends in the industry to help him get back to doing what he loves, making movies.

In his spare time, Hassan enjoys kicking things like "ass" and "bad habits." The discipline and skills gained from his second passion martial arts allows him to do just that. But most of all he's into films and wants to share his joy of making them with the world. One day he hopes to direct a feature film and make his mama proud(er).

Hassan El-Amin lives in North Hollywood, California. It's just like Hollywood without the traffic, money or famous people.

John Ames - Director of Photography

John is a Los Angeles based cinematographer, instructor and consultant with over 30 years of production experience on feature films, short films, documentaries, TV series and commercials. After earning an M.A. in film production in Virginia, he relocated to Los Angeles which allows him to stay abreast of cutting edge camera and lighting trends in the entertainment industry and the opportunity to work with some of Hollywood's A-list actors.



Whether it's filming a woman making tortillas in the mountains of Guatemala

or shooting celebrities in Hollywood, John always strives to “use the camera to tell the story, not just cover the action.” His genuine understanding of visual storytelling through lighting and camera work has made him a part of numerous award winning productions which received such honors as: Telly Awards, Addy Awards, (NADA) National Automotive Dealership Award, Service Industry Advertising Award, (CAB) Cable Television Advertising Bureau Award, INTERCOM Gold Plaque winner and The Videographer Awards Award of Excellence.

When he is not shooting, John enjoys sharing his experience with the next generation of filmmakers as a production consultant. He teaches all aspects of cinematography and has been a guest instructor for The Los Angeles Film Studies Center, California State University Northridge, University of the Nations, Palm Beach Atlantic, Regent University, Bethel University, The University of the Nations and Hollywood Impact Studios.



Joseph Fox - “Randall”

Hailing from Dallas, TX, Joe’s charismatic yet humble demeanor gives him a brand of comedy that is relatable to all audiences.

As a comedian, he’s appeared on two seasons of BET’s hit show *Comic View*, and *Gospel Comedy All Stars 3*. He has also performed for American troops in Africa, Japan and Korea. Fox currently tours the nation’s top comedy clubs such as *The Improv*, *The Funny Bone*, *The Comedy Store* and many more.

As an actor Fox is constantly auditioning and developing his acting chops.

He has had roles in independent films as well as a guest star role on a sitcom airing later this year. Joe is the consummate professional and it comes across on stage as well as in front of the camera. In between road gigs, Joe currently resides in Los Angeles and in addition to acting and performing on the top stages in town, he can be found working on the production team of *All Def Comedy Live* which is executive produced by mogul Russell Simmons.



Time Winters - "The Head"

Time Winters is a seasoned stage and screen actor. His film work includes Netflix's *Blonde*, *Plus One*, *Framed*, *Vice*, and *Velvet Buzzsaw*. Other features include *Lavantula*, *Runaways*, *Life & Death of Peter Sellers*, *A Little Princess*, *Doc Hollywood*, *Thinner*, *Sneakers*, *Gremlins II* and many more. He recently played Father Abernathy in episodic *The Exorcism of Allie Fay*, and recurring roles on ABC's *General Hospital* and Showtime's *Shameless*. Other TV appearances: *This is Us*, *Legion*, *Mayans MC*, *Dollface*, *You're the Worst*, *Love, Death & Robots* and *Who Killed Little Gregory?* (Netflix) Worked

with Tom Hanks in Shakespeare Centre L.A.'s *Henry IV*, and has appeared in live theatres on Broadway, Los Angeles and across the country. He has voiced many characters in games like *Metal Gear Solid 5: Phantom Pain*, *Fallout 4*, *The Elder Scrolls*, and others. He is married to the brilliant actress Tracy Winters.

Fred Charleston - First Assistant Director

"Fred "Pele" Charleston is a 20 year veteran of film and television. A Howard University graduate, Fred has worn many hats - from writing and producing, to directing and videography. Fred is currently a freelance TV writer/producer who has worked on the *Dr. Phil Show*, *Crime Watch Daily*, and the *E! True Hollywood Story*. Fred also co-created the YouTube comedy channel "Dodgy Lot" in 2008. Fred is very pleased to have collaborated with Hassan on "The Box" as 1st Assistant Director. Fred was born in Colorado, raised in Maryland, and currently lives in California.





Alvaro Morello - Original Score and Sound Design

Alvaro Morello is an award-winning composer and re-recording mixer, having worked on numerous feature films, network television shows and national commercial campaigns. With an extensive IMDB credit list, his music can be heard on productions from Lionsgate, Showtime, HBO, NBC-Universal, Netflix, Citibank, Mattel, Target & Pepsico.

Pratik Singh - VFX Supervisor

Pratik is a dedicated, enthusiastic, professional feature film compositor, with additional experience in both TV and commercial VFX. He specializes in high-end compositing as well as python-scripting and tool development. He is from Mumbai, India and has been working as a Freelance Senior VFX Artist since 2011.

His passion for creating extraordinary visuals and solving complex technical issues led him to pursue a career in Visual Effects. He looks forward to evolving his understanding of CG, VFX and Animation techniques and facing new challenges as they come.



Yun Nam - Key Makeup Artist

Yun Nam is a Los Angeles based visual artist and special effects make-up artist. Yun specializes in everything involving artistic craftsmanship. Her work is characterized by an eye for detail and emphasis on visual storytelling. She started her career as a painter and printmaker, taking part in over 30 exhibitions including 4 solo shows between 2009 and 2016. She is also a concept artist and illustrator and has contributed to several publications and album releases. As a SFX make-up artist, she works both on set and in the lab, making anything from wounds to ancient talking heads.

