

THE  
DRUID'S  
HAND



# SYNOPSIS

An ostracized town priest and his acolyte face  
the ramifications of their dark past.

Guilt turns to paranoia as an evil ignites their once peaceful town.

## CHARACTERS



Father Huw (60's) was once a beloved beacon of faith and hope in the village of West Berwick, but the death of a favored church patron 30 years ago has made his sermons and demeanor increasingly cynical by the year. His once loyal congregation deteriorates until his holy walls are only occupied by dust and the specters of his past.

## CHARACTERS



Cole (30's) is a local roughneck whose mother died during childbirth. His father was rumored to be a drifter that abandoned his mother when learning of the pregnancy. Father Huw took the liberty of adopting and raising him as his own, ultimately polluting his mind with distorted perceptions of love, life and God.

# CHARACTERS



Rose (20's) is the embodiment of the pain and suffering that engulfed West Berwick by the wicked actions enacted by Father Huw and Cole. She was a victim of Huw's delusions but has become something far worse and more vengeful than any evil they thought they were abolishing.

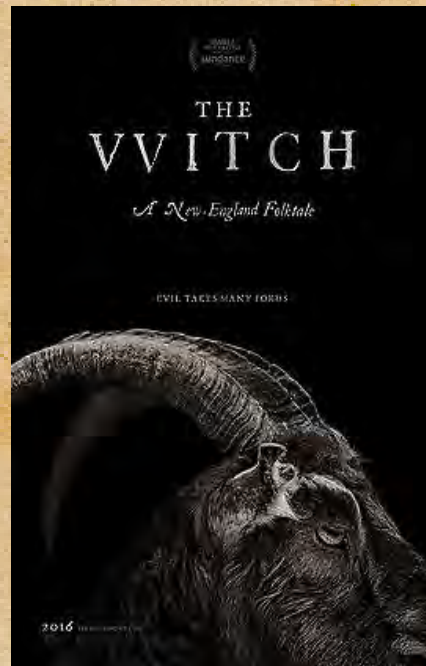


# THEMES

This story is inspired by classic tales of religious and familial horror. Theology, paranoia, obsession and grief are the core themes that weave their way through this intense and emotionally rich story. This cautionary tale is rooted in the human condition, a fear of all that is unknown and the consequences of our troubling lineage.

# INFLUENCES

THE DRUID'S HAND was inspired by the viscera of THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (1974), the historical context of THE WITCH (2016), the chill of ROSEMARY'S BABY (1968) and the aesthetic of Jeremy Saulniers BLUE RUIN (2013).



# THE PRODUCTION

Mitch Oliver, Jesse Sawitsky and Tara Oliver spent the early part of 2021 developing this project in order to fulfill their dream of making a Saskatchewan based horror film. They wanted to bring an exciting opportunity to their province while also showcasing the underestimated talent and cinematic landscapes that Saskatchewan has to offer. The three collaborators launched a Kickstarter campaign that reached its target goal within 30 hours of running - which would go on to raise 188% of their goal as well as being featured on the front page of the popular crowdfunding website. This resulted in an outpouring of support from the province - with over 200 kickstarter contributors, alongside local and national news coverage.

(for interviews see CTV Saskatoon, CKOM, CBC Radio One and CBC.ca) \*\*\*

Oliver and Sawitsky meticulously crafted a script that would highlight Saskatchewan's potential in the visual arts. While this film is entirely fictitious, it serves as an outlet to comment on the dangers of misinformation, conspiracies and ignorance.

In order to achieve this ambitious vision, the team began assembling cast and crew; most of which were based out of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Filling positions with local talent who would genuinely appreciate an opportunity and experience to work amongst some of Saskatchewan's established filmmakers. This proved to be a great success during principal photography, which took place between August 12th - 15th of 2021 on Treaty 6 territory in the Village of Alvena and surrounding areas. These four days consisted of early mornings and late nights as this cast and crew formed a machine-like bond, meeting every challenge with determination and ingenuity.



The community of Alvena offered a tremendous amount of support ranging from Kickstarter contributions to lending camper homes for the cast and crew during production. The mayor of the town, Ernie Sawitsky, rented out the town community center for craft services and production meetings. The Alvena Fire Department also showed their support by volunteering to stand by during any sequences that involved fire or any other safety hazards.

# MITCH OLIVER

(DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER)

Mitch Oliver is an up and coming filmmaker from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. In 2016, Mitch founded the popular horror movie podcast called, The Terror Table and has been using the platform to expand his cinematic knowledge and to network with other filmmakers. He is also a programmer for The Dark Bridges Horror Film Festival and a member

of The Saskatoon Fantastic Film Festivals programming committee. Mitch has spent the entirety of his free time either volunteering with visual arts initiatives around his city or studying films up until recently relocating to Vancouver, British Columbia to pursue a career full-time in the industry. He currently works in the production department for BRON Digital's latest groundbreaking animated series, FABLES, which is utilizing the Unreal

Engine to animate and create a virtual pipeline unlike any other productions before it. While working in this position, Mitch has been able to learn another side of the film production process such as managing a pipeline, diligent scheduling of animators, visual effects artists, software engineers and the props department.

Mitch is currently developing two short films and intends to make a feature length version of THE DRUID'S HAND.



# JESSE SAWITSKY

(WRITER, PRODUCER)

Jesse Sawitsky grew up in the Village of Alvena and from a young age took a strong interest in music, movies and art. His love for horror began by staying up late to watch classic black & white monster movies and Hitchcock films on TV and scouring the VHS rental shelves at the local gas station for anything that looked scary. Over the years, the DIY aesthetic and drive of punk rock and independent

B-movies would influence Jesse as a musician and visual artist, which culminated into a collaboration with longtime friend Mitch Oliver to write and produce a short horror film. With strong family ties and personal connections to the people of Alvena and surrounding area, Jesse was able to secure key filming locations and local support that allowed The Druid's Hand to come to life.



# TARA OLIVER

(PRODUCER, 1ST AD)

Tara Oliver (she/her) is a project manager and producer with areas of expertise in production management, communications, and community building. She has held roles as Operations Manager for Saskatoon Summer Players, Theatre Festival Manager for 25th Street Theatre, and Community Engagement and Outdoor Festival Manager for 25th Street Theatre. Her theatre

production management credits include: Monty Python's Spamalot, Little Women the Musical, Into the Woods, Annie, Footloose, Sweeney Todd, and Breaking the Curse - currently in production. Tara also is an active board member of Ferre Play, an independent theatre company that seeks to develop women through theatre. Tara is passionate about building community and connection through art and is motivated by the magic that happens when people from different backgrounds and disciplines work together towards a common goal.



# DYLAN HRYCIUK

(DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Dylan Hryciuk is an emerging director of photography with a knack for creating projects that are emotionally captivating and expansive in scope. He spends a lot of time adding meticulous detail into any project he touches and subconsciously captivates audiences to keep their attention while utilizing a more traditional film-oriented style inspired by movies, music videos and commercials of all genres. Dylan established his own production company, “Versa Films” in 2015 and has proven himself through working on projects of all kinds and making a name for himself in the Saskatchewan film industry. He has won three consecutive Best Music Video of the Year Awards at the Saskatchewan Music Video Awards for his work with the popular Heavy Metal act, SPIRITBOX.



# JASON HAMILL

(EDITOR)

Jason Hamill is a graduate of Vancouver Film School and a member of IATSE 891's editing department. Jason Hamill spends his days on the cutting room floor; both as an assistant editor and editor alike.

His credits include: Family Law, Dangerous Lies and countless other independent projects.

# MITCH CLARKE

(ACTOR, COLE)

Mitch Clarke is a Saskatoon, Saskatchewan born retired MMA fighter and educator in Edmonton, Alberta. Mitch was the first and only Saskatchewan born MMA fighter to be signed by the UFC. He won multiple fights in the UFC including the famous UFC 173 MGM Grand Garden arena where he won the performance of the night bonus and defeated the future title challenger, Al Iaquinta. Mitch also participated in the University of Saskatchewan Drama courses and performed in multiple dinner theater performances including the Merchant of Venice. Mitch currently performs in the theatrics of professional wrestling, winning multiple titles in different organizations and being a renowned heel. Mitch currently teaches social studies, math and film studies while volunteering with the schools drama and improv clubs.



# HUW DOUGLAS EVANS

(ACTOR, HUW)

Huw Douglas Evans, is a writer, artist, and video creator who runs the Saskatoon-based companies EYECATCHER Graphics and Design, and EYECATCHER Video, which he operates with his son, Dylan. During his 40-plus years as a creative professional, Huw's award-winning creative work has appeared worldwide, including cartoons in



MAD Magazine and CRACKED Magazine, as well as in numerous other publications and ad campaigns. He has also acted in a few small roles for EYECATCHER productions, including the feature-length horror/comedy, INSTRUMENTS OF EVIL, but THE DRUID'S HAND marks Huw's first serious acting performance.

# GABRIELLE BUCHHOLZ

(ACTOR, ROSE)

Gabrielle Buchholz is a 24 year old actor, dancer and musical theater performer. She became an avid fan of the horror genre, particularly all things paranormal after discovering various titles that left an impact on her. She began dancing at the age of 13 and continued throughout high school and college. She landed lead roles in musicals at her school and eventually enrolled and performed in musical theatre camps at the Persephone Theatre and at the University of Saskatchewan. THE DRUID'S HAND marks Gabrielle's first on screen role as the film's true agent of terror, Rose.



# SKOT HAMILTON

(COMPOSER)

Skot Hamilton is an artist/musician/composer born in and operating out of Saskatoon, SK. He has been a prolific figure in underground music and the western Canadian counter-culture community for many years and is best known for his work with KEN MODE (a group with whom he has garnered two Juno nominations and toured internationally), ADOLYNE and GREY LIGHT DISTRICT. When he finds himself off stage or without a studio he serves as Film Programmer and Booking Agent for Saskatoon's legendary Broadway Theatre and has done so since 2013.



## THE SOUNDS

Skot Hamilton's work on THE DRUID'S HAND is his first concentrated effort towards film composition and has allowed space for him to channel years of sonic excess towards a more disciplined framework. Pulling from influences as disparate as Phillip Glass' minimal Piano works to the tactile storm and stress of early 80's industrial music, Skot attempted to fuse traditional thematic elements and instrumentation with manipulated field recordings, unorthodox percussion experimentation and tenuous improvisations on an ailing hollow-body guitar in order to augment the violent peaks and mournful valleys of the film.

# THE LOCATION



The Druid's Hand was filmed on Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Metis - we pay our respect to the first nations and metis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

The Village of Alvena is a small community in Saskatchewan with a population of under 100 people, located 70kms north of Saskatoon alongside Highway 41. Like many places in rural Saskatchewan, Alvena is a quiet blip-on-the-map surrounded by farmland and open prairie with a virtually non-existent local economy. There is no school, no stores -- aside from a solitary gas station -- and very little to do in Alvena, making it one of the last places where somebody would expect the arts to flourish. The Druid's Hand, however, proved to be a project that demonstrated how one creative spark can engulf an entire community.

# THE CHURCH



Formerly known as the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church and estimated to have been built in 1928, this small town church was once a hub for the Village of Alvena's religious community. The church sat empty and abandoned for several decades until a local resident purchased the building from the diocese to restore it to its original character as a personal project in 2018.

The church is not used for religious purposes but is full of countless religious artifacts and features original hardwood floors, pews, ceremonial carpets and more.

# CREDITS

Directed by Mitch Oliver

Written by Mitch Oliver & Jesse Sawitsky

Produced by Mitch Oliver, Jesse Sawitsky & Tara Oliver

Director of Photography Dylan Hryciuk

Edited by Jason Hamill

Composed by Skot Hamilton

Executive produced by Brycen Bertoch, Logan Parenteau, Derick Campbell,

Michael Dutzer and Nick Northup

Executive produced by Wanda & Ernie Sawitsky, Cole Sawitsky and Gloria Novokoski

Principle Cast Mitch Clarke/ Huw Douglas Evans/ Gabrielle Buchholz

Poster art/ Graphic design and press kit by Sebás Theriault

# CONTACT US

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thedruidshand>

Official trailer: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAsTIG\\_9Htw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAsTIG_9Htw)









