



JD Ellenberger is an Irish-American director, screenwriter, producer, editor, actor, and author, who began his film career in 2010 as a gorilla-style filmmaker under the moniker of Johnny Dagggers. That same year saw Ellenberger release his first and only short film *Samhain: Night Feast*, which was both an Official Selection and festival winner of the Bastards Of Horror Short Film Fest (Pittsburgh, PA)

Immediately after the film's release, JD met with the legendary director, George Romero (*Night Of The Living Dead*), who not only gave him advice but also his blessings for JD's first feature length attempt, *Caustic Zombies*. Sadly, despite the film having a sold-out premier at the Hollywood Theater in Dormont, PA (just outside of Pittsburgh) the film never saw the light of day, as internal issues and the actual film having gone missing for several years.

In 2011, JD began writing his next screenplay entitled *Mo Anam Cara*. The film was a dark, animated (claymation) film in which JD had procured Doug Bradley (Pinhead in the Clive Barker horror franchise *Hellraiser*) to do the film's narration. Despite a successful crowdfunding campaign, the project ran out of funding midway through the set production process where one-third of the sets had been built, and subsequently the film came to a halt. Frustrated, JD took a break from his own projects and worked as an extra in two episodes of the A&E Television Series, *Those Who Kill*.

In 2014, with a two and a half year hiatus, JD came back refreshed and began working on two projects at once. The first being a screenplay for a documentary which focused on the trials and tribulations of making a film on a shoe-string budget. And the second was adapting the *Mo Anam Cara* screenplay into an illustrated novella, which later became known as *Neverlasting*. Whether it was a refreshed outlook, or the fierce determination, the comeback was a successful one. The documentary, now known as *Blood On The Reel*, got JD signed to his first major film distribution deal with SGL Entertainment. *Blood On The Reel* was an Official Selection at both the Tri-Cities International Film Festival, as well as the Virginia Indie Horror Film Festival. And his illustrated novella landed JD his first book publishing deal with Burning Bulb Publishing.

Continuing with his headstrong momentum, JD began work on his next screenplay, an homage to the early 20th Century silent films by the likes of *Phantom Carriage*, *Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari*, *Nosferatu*, etc. The screenplay, as well as the film would become known as *Noctambulist*. And in 2019, the film received world wide distribution (SGL Entertainment) and was an Official Selection at one of the

longest running and most prestigious film festivals in the world, the WorldCon 75 international film festival which was held in Helsinki, Finland.

The release of Noctambulist saw JD mature, both personally, and professionally. He felt as though he had finally found his niche and sense of direction. He no longer felt like the young, punk, “gorilla” filmmaker that he began his career as. In October of 2019, JD began work on his next screenplay entitled Lachrymose Primrose. A dark psychological thriller, continuing where Noctambulist left off

Lachrymose Primrose began production in August of 2021. Ellenberger and crew worked through the height of the pandemic, while the rest of the world shut down. Filming during the pandemic made finding crew members willing to work and gather around others quite difficult. Accustomed to being self-reliant, Ellenberger decided that he would shoot, light, and edit, the entire film himself. As well as remodel his entire home which he used as the set for the film. Because of the skeleton crew, the film took a full year and a half to finish. And another year in the editing room.

“Making Lachrymose really took it’s toll on me. But I would not change a single moment. Of course I was accustom to doing the cinematography, but there were certainly a lot of firsts. Lachrymose was the first major narrative film that I edited. The first that I had color graded. The first that I got to really experiment with color schemes. And the first film that I added all of the foley effects. It was a labor of love. And it made me fall in love with the entire film process all over again.”

In July of 2023, Lachrymose Primrose had finally completed and with that, Ellenberger is on the hunt for a new, larger, distribution company. He is preparing for many festival submissions in the hopes that it garners some distribution offers.

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