

FROM THE ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATED PRODUCER OF *IN THE BEDROOM*

childless



ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE
barbara HERSHEY

GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINEE
joe MANTEGNA

TONY AWARD WINNER
james NAUGHTON

GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINEE
diane VENORA



MONTEREY MEDIA PRESENTS SEALION FILMS PRESENTS "CHILDLESS"
BARBARA HERSHEY JOE MANTEGNA JAMES NAUGHTON DIANE VENORA with JORDAN BAKER NATALIE DREYFUSS
PRODUCED BY JOOIE LYNN TILLEN EDITOR CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE MUSIC BY DAN STOLOFF COSTUME DESIGNER EVA GAROOS MICHAEL RAFFERTY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JOHN PETERSEN PRODUCED BY JACK BARAN WRITTEN BY GRAHAM LEADER DIRECTED BY CHARLIE LEVI
www.montereymedia.com/childless/

SEALION FILMS



monterey media

presents a

SEALIONFILMS

production

childless

Written & Directed by Charlie Levi | Produced by Graham Leader

Starring

barbara HERSHEY
joe MANTEGNA
jim NAUGHTON
diane VERONA
jordan BAKER
natalie DREYFUSS

Casting ... lindsay CHAG
Costume Design ... christopher LAWRENCE
Original Score ... john PETERSEN
Production Design ... jodie lynn TILLEN
Editor ... eva GARDOS
Director of Photography ... michael RAFFERTY
Line Producer ... dan STOLOFF

Drama

Run time: 87 minutes

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MPAA: R

Quotes

"Audacious... Great Cast... Venora in a delicious performance."
– The Village Voice

"Solid acting... deftly shot and edited."
– The New York Times

"Jolting and compelling!"
– Amy R. Handler, Film International

Festivals



Synopsis

With the unexpected passing of Katherine, a vibrant teenager, the four adults in her life are left unsettled. As each gets ready for the funeral, they reveal off-kilter, self-serving, and frequently humorous accounts of the family dynamic; trying to understand - and justify - the current state of their own lives. Even Katherine can't help trying to set the record straight.

Outline

CHILDLESS is like no other film you've seen. The film's characters have a direct relationship with the viewer: personal, intrusive, engaging and ultimately revealing.

Katherine, age 16, has all the freshness, curiosity, and vitality of a healthy, born-lucky teenager, yet we learn immediately that she has just died, a possible suicide. As the film begins we find the adults in her life getting ready to go to her funeral - each of them getting dressed, alone with their thoughts. Well, not quite alone...

CHILDLESS is told in an unusual fashion: serial monologues. This allows us to hear these thoughts as the characters speak them directly to camera, all the while going about their somber chores. They all have a lot on their minds and it's almost as if they're delighted to have the viewer to confide in. Inevitably the individual backstories weave themselves into a family history, and it seems that at least some of it must be true.

Richard is Katherine's father, yet even his reaction to her death is complicated by the way it thrusts his ex-wife into his thoughts, along with the humiliating divorce that seems to be echoed by his recent breakup with Mary, the woman he'd been seeing until a few months ago. The shock of his daughter's death conflates time and makes him feel that all his losses are happening right now.

Mary is an artist, an unlikely mate for the more grounded Richard, and she seems to feel that this funeral is just some trick to get her to see him once more after she'd finally made a clean break. It doesn't help that neither her love life nor her career has since blossomed into anything she's been able to commit to. It's inconvenient for her to have to face the fact that Richard's biggest flaw may have been that he was truly good to her. It's hard for her to hold a grudge against him, but luckily it's easy to hold one against his sister, Natalie, who

originally introduced her to this family when they were all younger and disappointments seemed to only happen to other people.

Outline (Cont.)

Natalie is spurred to recount the faithless marriage she maintains with her diplomat husband, Harvey, revealing all sorts of dissatisfactions even as she wistfully justifies her own affair. Harvey is home from one of his many stays abroad and it's not clear what his intentions really are. Being a diplomat, it's not surprising that the more he talks about it, the less sure we are about what he really means.

Everybody thinks of themselves as an innocent, particularly in relationship to Katherine, but we come to learn that they are much quicker to forgive themselves than anyone else. The film reveals their flaws and their disappointments while simultaneously contrasting their different versions of the family history. Flashes from home movies seem to contradict everyone's story, but since when have home movies ever been the true version of anything?

The seriousness with which the characters portray their own predicaments and the often catty ways they describe each other ends up being surprisingly comic at times, even while hinting at a melancholy having little to do with Katherine. Part of the fun for the audience is in sorting truth from fiction, bragging from badgering, discretion from deceit. Eventually, we are able to piece together an entire story from the strands of their self-serving tales.

CHILDLESS takes us on a trip that is far from elegiac. Even though this all takes place on the saddest of days, the film is more vital than morbid, more hopeful than tragic. We're left asking ourselves: is it just that we'd rather hear anything - even inappropriate, self-involved banter - than face the tragic loss of a young life? Or can it be that Death actually saves the day by injecting life into people who could barely sense how lost and stuck they'd become? Despite the late hour, they may yet be capable of opening up to the prospect of a new beginning as they realize that everything they need is within reach.

Most curiously of all, the one person in the family who seems healthy and unscathed is Katherine herself. Perhaps she's just enjoying these people talking honestly for a change.

The Cast



Barbara Hershey | Natalie

Barbara Hershey has received accolades for her work in both film and television. Well known for her roles in Woody Allen's "Hannah and her Sisters," Jane Campion's "Portrait of a Lady", Garry Marshall's "Beaches" and Darren Aronofsky's "Black Swan." In addition to giving memorable performances in two Martin Scorsese films ("Boxcar Bertha" and "The Last Temptation of Christ") she has been called upon by other noted directors such as William Wyler, Stephen Gyllenhaal, Richard Rush, Phillip Kaufman. Winning an unprecedented two consecutive Best Actress Awards at the Cannes Film Festival for her roles in "Shy People" and "A World Apart" and an Emmy and a Golden Globe for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Miniseries/TV Film for her role in "A Killing in a Small Town" she continues to dazzle with her diverse style and talent.

Joe Mantegna | Richard

Joe Mantegna has made over 200 film and TV appearances, but he first made his mark – and won a Tony Award - on stage as Richard Roma in David Mamet's Glengarry Glen Ross. He and Mamet continue to collaborate both on stage and on the screen, Mantegna directed a critically-acclaimed stage production of Mamet's play Lakeboat, and later made his feature film directorial debut with the screen adaptation of that play. He's currently best known for his starring role on the TV crime drama "Criminal Minds." Mantegna's continues to enjoy working with Hollywood's top filmmakers such as: Coppola, Mamet, Levinson and Woody Allen .



James Naughton | Harvey

Theater was Naughton's first love, and he is well known for his great work on the musical stage, winner of two Tony Awards, the first for his role in City of Angels and the second for playing the shyster lawyer Billy Flynn in Chicago. He has also directed highly regarded Broadway productions of Arthur Miller's The Price and Thornton Wilder's Our Town with Paul Newman and Jane Curtin, which was then filmed for television. Naughton has been seen in films such as "The Devil Wears Prada", "The Paper Chase", "The Glass Menagerie", "The Good Mother" and "The First Wives Club." He has had recurring roles in TV shows such as "Hostages", "Gossip Girl" and "Ally McBeal" with numerous guest spots and continues to bring his cabaret to clubs in Manhattan.



The Cast (Cont.)

Diane Venora | Mary

Diane Venora won the New York Film Critic's Award and a Golden Globe nomination for her role in Clint Eastwood's "Bird". Her wide range of acting talent lends the perfect complement to her leading men such as Al Pacino and Russell Crowe. She won critical acclaim on stage for her Gertrude in the Public Theater's production of Hamlet. Her television work includes recurring roles in "Thunder Alley" and "Chicago Hope" as well as many guest appearances on shows ranging from "NCIS", "Grey's Anatomy", "Medium" and "Law and Order."



Jordan Baker | Edith

Jordan Baker can be seen in films such as "Another Earth," "City Hall," (opposite Al Pacino) and "Escape from L.A." She received strong critical acclaim on the New York stage as one of Edward Albee's "Three Tall Women," in which she originated the role of Woman C. She is also a familiar presence on television where she's had recurring roles on "The O.C." "The New Adventures of Old Christine", and "L.A. Law." She has guested on shows such as "The Americans," "Madam Secretary," "Ugly Betty," "Frasier," "Chicago Hope," "Touched by an Angel," "The West Wing," and "Ally McBeal," and many more.

Natalie Dreyfuss | Katherine

Natalie Dreyfuss made her film debut in Childless. She can currently be seen on CW's "The Originals." Her natural abilities are showcased in recurring parts in "The Human Condition", "Rita Rocks", "The Secret Life of an American Teenager", "True Blood", "Two Broke Girls", "Burn Notice", "The Shield", "House, M.D.", "New Girl" and "Weeds."



Charlie Levi | Director

Childless marks Charlie Levi's feature film debut as a writer and director. Writing the screenplay over a four year period, Levi developed the script with producer, Graham Leader.

As a student, Levi studied with two very strong – and radically different – filmmakers: Ken Jacobs and Nicholas Ray. The contrast between them only served to make them a greater inspiration. Jacobs awarded Levi the Cinema department's highest honor, and Ray chose him as one of the first editors on his fabled last film "You Can't Go Home Again."



In 1978 Levi co-founded a video production and post-production company specializing in graphics and special effects which won many awards, most notably for directing and producing the best music video at the very first MTV awards ceremony.

In 1990 Levi left the world of commercial production to pursue his own filmmaking. He has written short fiction, a novel, "Loco Parentis," and led a creative writing workshop.

But Levi's primary focus has been on movies. This has resulted in over a dozen scripts, including *Tinian*, co-written with Leader, and *Underground*, a script for director Andrew Douglas (*Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*, *U Want Me 2 Kill Him?*). He is currently developing a TV series, an adaptation of his novel, and other projects.

Director's Statement

There came a time when I got fed up with writing stories I hoped others would enjoy as much as I did. I wasn't getting the desired result, so I took a break and wrote simply to explore some characters on my own. I found myself writing dozens of monologues, with no concern at first with plot or clarity. When I started reading them, I began to see what was on my mind. I enjoyed the two strong women and the men in their lives. I liked the way life had snuck up on them, quietly transmuting their confident hopes into stale disappointments, like a perverse alchemist. And even as the characters revealed some annoying personality traits, I grew sympathetic towards them and worked harder to offer them some sort of salvation without necessarily softening their hard edges. It was fun.

Childless didn't begin with an idea about a teen's suicide. That came into the picture later, when I needed an occasion to bring my characters together. I liked the way the vitality of the young girl and the seriousness of her funeral contrasted so sharply with the often selfish, indeed petty, concerns of the adults. Her death gave them a lot to live up to. The story was never about Katherine. She's the one person in the film we really don't need to worry about.

Because this all started with monologues, I suppose the conceit of speaking them to camera seemed quite natural at first. Then I became fascinated by it, and by how unnatural it was cinematically. I loved the idea of depriving the audience of their relatively easy voyeuristic role. I imagined each monologue almost pinning viewers in place (it would be rude, after all, to turn away while someone was speaking to you oh-so-personally). And the use of long takes just upped the ante even more.

It may just be a personal quirk, but I enjoy films that make me a bit uncomfortable, even embarrassed. And if they force me to figure out the story on my own, so much the better. I know that's not everybody's taste, but what the hell, I figured, I was just writing for myself anyway. Amazingly, this script was embraced by more readers than anything else I had done.

Graham was an old friend as well as a producer. He not only got excited by the project, he managed to get it into production. A miracle. As a producer and collaborator he gave me tremendous freedom and support, and together we put together a cast and crew that seemed to exceed our resources tenfold.

Now there's a finished film. People often ask me questions about 'breaking the fourth wall.' I've had a lot of practice answering them, and the response that has evolved is probably the most succinct way of expressing my feelings

Director's Statement (Cont.)

about *Childless*: It's not about breaking the fourth wall, but about building it. Over the course of the film these characters lose their privileged, self-centered, extra-cinematic right to speak directly to camera; they return to a story, to a community, to the people in their lives.

Graham Leader | Producer



Starting out as an art dealer in the early 70's, Leader moved into the film world when he produced *Heartworn Highways* in 1975/76. Directed by Jim Szalapski, the feature documentary on Nashville's outlaw music scene, was warmly received at the 1979 Sundance Film Festival. 30 years later, the re-mastered DVD and CD were released to widespread acclaim.

Subsequently, he produced *In The Bedroom* from a short story by Andre Dubus. The film was directed by Todd Field and starred Sissy Spacek, Tom Wilkinson, Marisa Tomei and Nick Stahl. Acquired by Miramax at Sundance in 2001, where it was later nominated for five Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

He went on to produce *The Saffron Limited*, a six-minute short that captures the dazzling spirit of Christo's historic installation, *The Gates* which played on the

Sundance Channel.

He has two other films slated for 2015 release, including *Heartworn Highways Revisited* and his 25 year long project, *Sins of a Father*.

Heartworn Highways Revisited, directly inspired by the seminal music documentary *Heartworn Highways*, which captured the nascent roots of the Outlaw Country movement in the mid-70s. *Revisited* celebrates the original film while also exploring the scene of the contemporary "outlaws" who are now creating music in Nashville.

Sins of a Father, a production 25 years in the making and directed by Andrew Piddington. The film explores the complex nature of heroism, betrayal and father-son relationships in the context of a three generational drama.

Adapted from a Graham Swift novel and starring the late Alan Bates, *SINS* was initially developed in the 80's and shot in 1990 before it's current re-invention.

SEALIONFILMS | Production Company

SEALIONFILMS is dedicated to developing a strong and varied slate of character-driven projects. Typically, Leader acquires material he intends to produce at the initial concept stages of development with an eye for the international market. www.sealionfilms.com

Producer Graham Leader with
Director Charlie Levi on set of
CHILDLESS



Production Stills

Right click on image to save a low resolution to desktop or go to our Flickr page to get high resolution at:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/montereymedia/sets/72157651299532520>

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Production Stills (Cont.)

Right click on image to save a low resolution to desktop or go to our Flickr page to get high resolution at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/montereymedia/sets/72157651299532520>

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About the company: monterey media inc., a uniquely independent studio

monterey media inc. is proud to feature a diverse film library which transcends genre typecasting and creates instead a palette of film experiences destined to be remembered. Incorporated in 1979, monterey is a privately owned entertainment company actively engaged in all areas of domestic media, including theatrical distribution, film festivals, and other distinctive venues, television, digital delivery and entertainment markets. The Company is known for creating unique and distinctive release strategies tailored to each project.

In the earliest days of online marketing, mmi established a joint venture for the creation of a special theatrical event in conjunction with AMC Theatres to launch the independent motion picture Indigo: A one day event, which Variety touted as a "603 North America only venue showing grossed over \$1,190,000 at the box office." In recent years, monterey media films have been nominated for the Golden Globe Award, Independent Spirit Award (two nominations in the last three years with one win), and NAACP Image Award. Many of our award-winning films have premiered at Sundance, TIFF, Tribeca, and SXSW Film Festivals, as well as on many year-end's 10 Best Independent Film lists.

The philosophy of doing good while doing well alive and well at monterey. mmi was awarded a 2013 California Excellence Award Recipient from the United States Trade and Commerce Institute. monterey is known for its creatively coordinated marketing strategies incorporating promotional alliances with such strategic partners as Wal-Mart, Fisher Price, Pepsi Cola, American Express, Amnesty International USA, Make-A-Wish Foundation of America, Children's Cancer Research Fund, Patagonia, Body Glove, The Creative Coalition for the Arts, KIDS FIRST!, Days Inns, Habitat for Humanity, Greenpeace, the International Motorcycle Shows, Healthy World Healthy Child, Air Pacific and the Alzheimer's Foundation of America.

monterey video & Emerging Technologies

The monterey home entertainment division is the 2nd oldest independent video manufacturer and distributor in the United States and incorporates distribution to all digital markets. monterey is well known for its broad marketing and its direct relationships with key retail, internet sites, educational and specialty markets. The versatile monterey library encompasses unique feature films and documentaries having been awarded numerous awards; prestigious Independent films starring such distinguished actors as James Franco, Kaley Cuoco, Susan Sarandon, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Dennis Hopper, Shirley Knight, Tom Skerritt, Thandie Newton, John Ritter, Tommy Lee Jones, William Hurt, Forest Whitaker, David Strathairn, Brian Dennehy, Robin Williams, Danny Glover, Nathan Lane, Jacqueline Bisset, among many others; celebrated sports programming including Bruce Brown Films' On Any Sunday and The Endless Summer; and the most prestigious educational, yet entertaining, library of films adapted from literature's renowned authors combined with acclaimed performances from many of Hollywood's greatest actors. In addition, monterey has the honor of being the first video market licensee of the American Film Institute.

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