EMILE HIRSCH BRUCE DERN GRACE PARK WITH AMANDA CREW AND INTRODUCING LEXY KOLKER

FREAKS



THEY LOOK JUST LIKE US

SYNOPSIS

In this science-fiction thriller, a disturbed father (Emile Hirsch) locks his bold 7-year-old daughter (Lexy Kolker) in a house, warning her of grave dangers outside. But the mysterious Mr. Snowcone (Bruce Dern) convinces the girl to escape and join him on a quest for family, freedom, and revenge.


MR SNOWCONE

DIRECTORS NOTE
Adam Stein & Zach Lipovsky

Chloe (LEXY KOLKER) is 7 years old; she's lived her entire life locked inside a decomposing house. Her only companion is Dad (EMILE HIRSCH). He's her teacher, partner, and guardian, protecting her from dangers she doesn't understand. Dad tells Chloe she must never look outside, let alone leave the house. He's preparing her for a different life, one that promises to be more "normal."

But in their uneasy status quo, there seems to be something wrong with Dad too: is he sick? Lying? Demented? Chloe doesn't understand, so neither does the audience… yet.

Unknown to her father, Chloe has visitors as well: a surreal series of apparitions that materialize around her. A neighbor girl who lives across the street, an ice cream truck man named Mr. Snowcone (BRUCE DERN), and a horrific woman known to Chloe only as "ghost" (AMANDA CREW).

Are they friends? Terrors? Or symbols of what Chloe yearns for most? The audience only figures it out when she does. And they will lead her on a quest to find family, freedom, and revenge.

OUR INSPIRATION
Freaks was inspired by Adam's real-life experience as a new father. When Milo Stein was born, we were both fascinated by the wide-eyed wonder and intense fear that accompanies a child's discovery of the world. We wanted to explore a father's unbounded love and desire to protect his child, coupled with a parent's exhaustion, inadequacy, temper and guilt.

Film is an exercise in perspective. An audience explores a world through a character's eyes, and we sought to make a film that is entirely told from the perspective of a child. We designed the film so the audience only sees and understands what Chloe experiences.

We asked ourselves, what would it really feel like to live in Chloe's extraordinary head? We shot scenes mostly from her height, designed the sound so the audience would hear what she heard. We sought to make her extraordinary visions as real as any other part of the film.

OUR WORLD
Parents sometimes shield children from the whole truth about the world. For a child who is different, the world can be a cruel place. In addition to a grounded father-daughter story, we aimed to make a film that reflected current stories of parents and children in a time of xenophobia and prejudice.

In our world, families are dehumanized and torn apart by abusive power structures. Tribalism is paired with the deadly instruments of the State to kill innocents and separate children. An unlucky birth can destroy a life just as it begins. The universal yearning for freedom is at the mercy of society.

Violence generates more violence; the cycle can only be broken by love. And sometimes when it's broken, it's truly smashed to bits. Exploring these themes from the innocent perspective of a child, and with a science fiction lens, we hope to contribute to the dialogue around tolerance and equality.

Chloe.....LEXY KOLKER
Dad.....EMILE HIRSCH
Mr Snowcone.....BRUCE DERN
Agent Ray.....GRACE PARK
Mary.....AMANDA CREW
Nancy Reed.....MICHELE HARRISON
Harper Reed.....AVA TELEK
Steven Reed.....MATTY FINNOCHIO
Robert Kraigen.....ALEKS PAUNOVIC
News Interviewer.....KWESI AMEYAW
Diner Cook.....RYAN BIEL
Officer Richards.....RJ FETHERSTONHAUGH
ADF Agent.....RESSE ALEXANDER
ADF Captain.....DEAN REDMAN
Security Chief.....LEE SHORTEN
Executioner.....DAKOTA DALBY

THE CAST

We found the incredible LEXY KOLKER after combing through 1200 audition submissions. After directing several projects for Disney Channel, we've had years of experience with young actors, so we have a deep understanding of how to work with kids. But with Freaks, of course we needed to go deeper.

When we met with young actresses in person, we used improvisation to explore how the best kids could live in the intensity of the moment. We needed to find a girl who could feel Chloe's emotions and live in her world without becoming disturbed herself. Lexy was a true discovery, a charming girl who could stand her ground with veteran actors. When unleashed, Lexy was truly fierce, a powerful force that had no limits, just like Chloe.

EMILE HIRSCH, like Adam, was also a new father when he read the script for Freaks. He identified with the deep bond and stresses of being a single parent. On set, Emile helped us create a cocoon of support around Lexy so that she could explore the most intense parts of her role within a feeling of safety. The result was primal, nurturing, and raw.

Speaking of raw, BRUCE DERN has been an unparalleled engine of emotional power for six decades. Bruce told us that he wasn't sure about Freaks at first, because he hadn't done a science fiction film since 1972's Silent Running. But the core story of family love and loss won him over.

His character, Mr. Snowcone, is driven by a need to save his own daughter. Bruce tragically lost his first-born daughter when she was young, and he connected to the character's need to save his own daughter while he still can. His pairing with Lexy was incredible to watch, a true experience in "in the moment" behavior that brought an intense realism and connection. In the process, he said many times that Lexy reminded him of his daughter Laura.

AMANDA CREW was a surprising revelation. A Canadian actress who has found mainstream success on HBO's Silicon Valley, Amanda was excited to flex her muscles in a much more dangerous and powerful role than what she's known for. The movie's ending is an expression of her passion and triumph.



“Freaks was a script that spoke to me as I read it, in a most intimate and personal way. Like my character, I’m also a father, and the dynamic between the father and daughter, and the deep bond and stresses that the script explored -- almost felt like it had been written for me, personally. The last few years have been a time of growth for me, and first and foremost it’s been about being the best parent I can be.

Zach and Adam are truly talented dudes, and it was a pleasure helping them to reach their vision.”

— EMILE HIRSCH

EMILE HIRSCH is currently filming Quentin Tarantino’s next film ONCE UPON A TIME IN HOLLYWOOD for Sony opposite Margot Robbie, Leonardo Dicaprio and Brad Pitt. He will next be seen in Jim Hosking’s AN EVENING WITH BEVERLY LUFF LINN, opposite Aubrey Plaza, Jemaine Clement, and Craig Robinson, which debuted this year at Sundance. He just wrapped filming NEVER GROW OLD, a western opposite John Cusack, directed by Ivan Kavanaugh.

Emile most recently starred on screen in Andre Overdal’s THE AUTOPSY OF JANE DOE, released by IFC Films, and Gavin Wiesen’s ALL-NIGHTER opposite J.K. Simmons. He also recently completed filming on the international feature CHINESE WIDOW for Palme d’Or-winning director Bille August. In addition to Gary Michael Schultz’ VINCENT-N-ROXXY, which had its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival this spring, Emile’s other recent screen credits include Craig Roberts’ JUST JIM and Shari Berman and Robert Pulcini’s 10,000 SAINTS with Ethan Hawke and Hailee Steinfeld.

In 2013, Emile starred in the critically acclaimed box office hit, LONE SURVIVOR opposite Mark Wahlberg, Taylor Kitsch and Ben Foster. Directed by Pete Berg, the film is based on the best-selling book by Marcus Luttrell. He also starred in the Bruce Beresford-directed miniseries BONNIE & CLYDE, which reached almost 10 million viewers while simultaneously airing on the History Channel, A&E and Lifetime. He starred opposite Paul Rudd in PRINCE AVALANCHE, an off-beat comedy directed by David Gordon Green which premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival and went on to win the Best Director Award at the Berlin Film Festival. Emile also starred alongside Stephen Dorff and Dakota Fanning in MOTEL LIFE, winner of the Audience Award at the 2012 Rome Film Festival, and starred opposite Penelope Cruz in Sergio Castellitto’s TWICE BORN which premiered at the 2012 Toronto Film Festival.

Hirsch is likely best known for his breakthrough performance in INTO THE WILD, which was directed by Sean Penn and received worldwide acclaim, including a SAG Award nomination for Hirsch. He has also had starring roles in such films as William Friedkin’s KILLER JOE opposite Matthew McConaughey, Gus Van Sant’s MILK, opposite Sean Penn, as well as SAVAGES, SPEED RACER, ALPHA DOG, THE LORDS OF DOGTOWN, THE GIRL NEXT DOOR and THE DANGEROUS LIVES OF ALTAR BOYS.

“These two guys are clearly up to something. They have made a movie that could revolutionize the way horror films are made.”

— BRUCE DERN

Two-time Oscar nominee BRUCE DERN has played both modern day heroes and legendary villains. Through decades of lauded performances, Dern has acquired the reputation of being one of the most talented and prolific actors of his generation. FREAKS is the first science fiction film he’s appeared in since 1972’s SILENT RUNNING.

Dern has several highly anticipated independent film projects completed, including THE ARTIST’S WIFE, MUSTANG, EMPEROR, THE PEANUT BUTTER FALCON and WHITE BOY RICK opposite Matthew McConaughey (September 14, Sony Pictures). Earlier this year he earned rave reviews for his portrayal of Joe Kennedy in CHAPPAQUIDDICK. Last year he appeared with Jane Fonda and Robert Redford in the Netflix film OUR SOULS AT NIGHT. Other upcoming titles include REMEMBER ME, CLASS RANK, WARNING SHOT, ABILENE, THE LEARS, AMERICAN DRESSER and NOSTALGIA.

In 2015, Dern reteamed with his DJANGO UNCHAINED director Quentin Tarantino in the ambitious & critically-acclaimed THE HATEFUL EIGHT. In 2013, Dern earned his second Academy Award nomination for his heralded role in Alexander Payne’s NEBRASKA. That role also garnered him a Best Actor Award from the Cannes Film Festival and the National Board of Review. He was also nominated for a BAFTA, Golden Globe, Independent Spirit Award, Broadcast Film Critics Association Award and Screen Actors Guild Award.

Dern was also nominated for an Emmy in 2011 for his portrayal of polygamist patriarch Frank Harlow in HBO’s hit drama “Big Love.” A celebrated stage actor, Dern was trained by famed director Elia Kazan at the legendary The Actor’s Studio and made his film debut in Kazan’s WILD RIVER in 1960. In the 60’s, Dern also found success as a distinguished television actor. He appeared regularly in contemporary Western TV series, as well as on “Alfred Hitchcock Presents.” Mr. Hitchcock was such a fan of Dern’s that he cast him in MARNIE and FAMILY PLOT (Hitchcock’s final film).

Also during the 60’s, Dern went on to work with director Roger Corman and appeared in several of his classic and decade defining films including WILD ANGELS. He also received critical success during that time for films such as THEY SHOOT HORSES, DON’T THEY? and DRIVE, HE SAID. Dern goes down in history for his role as Long Hair in THE COWBOYS, in which he became the only man ever to kill John Wayne on screen.

Dern went on to star in such classic films like THE KING OF MARVIN GARDENS with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Burstyn as well as playing Tom Buchanan in THE GREAT GATSBY (for which he received a Golden Globe nomination). It was his brilliant and powerful performance in Hal Ashby’s COMING HOME that earned him both an Academy Award and Golden Globe nomination.

Dern has starred in over 100 films in his career, including: MONSTER, HUSH…HUSH, SWEET CHARLOTTE, SILENT RUNNING, SMILE, MIDDLE AGE CRAZY, THAT CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON, TATTOO, THE ‘BURBS, THE HAUNTING, ALL THE PRETTY HORSES, MASKED AND ANONYMOUS, DOWN IN THE VALLEY, ASTRONAUT FARMER, THE CAKE EATERS, BLACK SUNDAY, MADISON, DIGGSTOWN, TWIXT and LAST MAN STANDING.

Dern has received several Lifetime Achievement Awards from various film festivals. In 2010, Dern received the prestigious Hollywood Walk of Fame star along with his ex-wife Diane Ladd & daughter Laura Dern, the only family in history to receive their Stars in one ceremony.

“When I first saw the lookbook and read the story of “Freaks”, I immediately understood Chloe. Even before I was cast, I kept looking at the pictures of the little girl looking out the window and wondered what it would be like to never go outside. I wanted to help her discover the world, and I was scared for her. Then, when I was lucky enough to be chosen for the movie, all of the emotions I felt while filming were so real. I had very intense scenes with Emile, Bruce and Amanda, and Adam and Zach were always right there to guide me through every moment and to let me do the scenes with my own words or with my real feelings. They didn’t limit me to the script, but wanted me to feel and be whatever came to me in the moment.

It was an incredible experience and I am so honored to be a part of this amazing film. I learned so much from Adam and Zach as they encouraged me to go to deep places I never knew I could reach, and I will forever be grateful for the best experience I have had so far as an actor.”

— LEXY KOLKER

ALEXA KOLKER, who goes by LEXY, was born on August 17, 2009 and is already making waves in the entertainment industry. She was introduced to acting as a toddler by her older sister Ava Kolker. Lexy was 7 years old during the filming of FREAKS.

Lexy is best known for her work on the USA network action thriller, SHOOTER playing Mary Swagger, the daughter of Ryan Phillippe and Shantel VanSanten for its 3 seasons and running. SHOOTER has brought Lexy a lot of media attention for her acting and even led to her being nominated for the 2017 Young Entertainment Awards for Best Recurring Young Actress 9 and Under in a Television Series.

In March 2017, Lexy traveled to South Africa to shoot a major Guest Star role on the CW pilot, “Searchers” where she played a fanciful girl named Fable, at the age of 8. Most recently, Lexy filmed an arc of 6 episodes in the popular series Marvel’s “Agents of Shield” where she plays a seer.

Lexy has also played strong roles in five indie films including two lead roles. Her first lead role came at the tender age of 6 in an emotional film about the 911 aftermath in OUR LITTLE SECRET, which premiered in official competition at the Tallin Black Nights Film Festival and was also selected to screen at the Moscow Film Festival.

She then had strong supporting roles in FEMALE FIGHT SQUAD, directed by Miguel A. Ferrer, opposite Amy Johnston, Sean Faris and Dolph Lundgren, YOU, THE CASE OF JONAS BOOKER and A LITTLE MERMAID due to be released August of 2018 where she is told a new version of the fairy tale, ‘The Little Mermaid’ by her grandmother, played by Shirley MacLaine.

Lexy will next be seen in FREAKS directed by Zach Lipovsky and Adam B. Stein, which tells the story of a little girl who discovers a world she was never allowed to be a part of. FREAKS was selected to premiere at the Toronto Film Festival in 2018.

Outside of film and television acting, Lexy loves to sing and perform live. Even at her tender age, Lexy has performed roles for Peter Pan, Hairspray, Aladdin Jr., Seussical the musical, The Little Mermaid and The Lion King in her community theatre and has even earned a “Tony Award” for her performances.

She has already developed a loyal fan following on all the major social media sites and makes charity event appearances along with her sister, Ava. Lexy’s fans are all excited to see what else is in store for this passionate child actress.

“Freaks came to me at time where I was feeling incredibly frustrated with the kinds of roles available. I connected immediately with this woman’s inner strength as well as her unbreakable determination to not conform to what society has told her to be, and the unquenchable rage that comes along with being chained down.

Working with Zach and Adam was the kind of filmmaking experience you get so rarely. Rooted in a shared vision and passion for making this film, a safe environment was created that allowed for collaboration and risk taking. It was the first time in years that I left a film feeling like I had grown immensely as an artist and as a person.”

— AMANDA CREW

AMANDA CREW has a striking presence with an undeniable talent through her range of portrayals of characters in film and television. Amanda can currently be seen as the series regular role of “Monica” on HBO’s Emmy® and Golden Globe® Award nominated series, “Silicon Valley”.

On the big screen, Crew will next be seen starring in Ricky Bate’s TONE DEAF, for Circle of Confusion, FREAKS, produced and directed by Zach Lipovsky and Adam Stein, and GUT INSTINCT, alongside Josh Hartnett, Antoine Olivier Pilo and Jim Gaffigan.

In 2017, Amanda starred opposite Anna Kendrick in the film, TABLE 19 as well as THE AGE OF ADALINE, in 2015, alongside Blake Lively and Harrison Ford, and RACE, opposite Jason Sudeikis. In 2010, Crew starred opposite Zac Efron, Kim Basinger, and Dave Franco in the Universal feature film CHARLIE ST. CLOUD. Based on the novel by Ben Sherwood and directed by Burr Steers, the supernatural drama centers on a cemetery caretaker (Efron) who after the untimely death of his younger brother, meets and begins a romantic relationship with a young woman (Crew) who is training for a sailing trip around the world.

Crew’s other film credits include; THE IDENTICAL opposite Ashley Judd and Ray Liotta; CRAZY KIND OF LOVE co-starring Virginia Madsen and Zach Gilford; the supernatural thriller THE HAUNTING OF CONNECTICUT opposite Virginia Madsen and Elias Koteas; Bill Guttentag’s KNIFE FIGHT co-starring Rob Lowe and Julie Bowen; and THE BREAK-UP ARTIST.

The actress’ first leading role was in the 2008 film, SEX DRIVE, where she played spunky tomboy Felicia alongside Josh Zuckerman and Clark Duke.

Born and raised in Langley, British Columbia, Crew began her professional acting career in 2003 when she was cast as a series regular on the Canadian television series, “15/Love”. In 2005, Amanda landed the female lead in the CTV hit series “Whistler” and soon after played supporting roles in the New Line film FINAL DESTINATION 3 and SHE’S THE MAN for DreamWorks.

GRACE PARK is a fan-favorite for her starring roles on the critically acclaimed series “Battlestar Galactica,” in which she played not one, but two leading roles (Boomer and Athena). Her performance garnered her a place in TV Guide’s “100 Most Memorable Moments in TV History.”

For her seven-season-run on “Hawaii Five-0,” Park brought heart, suspense, tragedy and sensuality to the iconic role of Kono Kalakaua (not as a man as originally written, but as a woman!) and she was nominated in both 2011 and 2012 for a “Teen Choice Award” for Choice TV Actress: Action.

Park earned a nomination for Outstanding Newcomer Award in 2006 by the “Asian Excellence Awards” for her artistry. In 2010, she received the “Achievement Award in Entertainment” by the KoreAm Awards. In 2014, Park was honored with the “APEX Inspiration Award” and inducted into the “Asian Hall of Fame.”

Born in Los Angeles and raised in Canada, Park received a degree in Psychology from the University of British Columbia before turning her attention to film and television. Immediate acclaim brought her “The Border” for which she was nominated a “Gemini Award” for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Dramatic Role, and the respected film credit for THE CLEANER starring opposite Benjamin Bratt.

Currently, Park resides in Vancouver, British Columbia

ABOUT ADAM STEIN & ZACH LIPOVSKY
WRITER-DIRECTORS

We met 11 years ago as competitors on “On The Lot,” Steven Spielberg’s reality show search for up-and-coming filmmakers. We made a new short film every week and lived together for a summer, sequestered in a bungalow on a studio lot in Los Angeles.

Out of the 12,000 filmmakers who started the competition, we both finished in the top 5 but short of the prize. But we won something better than the competition: a lasting friendship and collaboration. Over the years we’ve directed digital and TV projects, most recently the live-action version of Disney’s “Kim Possible.”

Freaks is our first feature film, and the first project that we’ve written. As a result, it’s the most personal and artistic expression of who we are as filmmakers.



MAIN CREDITS

PRODUCTION
Wise Daughter Films, in association with My Way Productions and Storyboard Capital Group, an Amazing Incorporated Production. Producers: Adam Stein, p.g.a., Zach Lipovsky, p.g.a, Jordan Barber, Mitchell Waxman. Executive producers: M. Alan Stein, Rick Alyea, Philip Kim, Elisabeth Costa de Beauregard. Co-executive producers: Elana Diaz, Rafael Diaz, Omar Abou-Sayed, Mikhal Abou-Sayed.

CAST
Emile Hirsch, Bruce Dern, Grace Park, with Amanda Crew, and introducing Lexy Kolker.

CREW
Directors: Zach Lipovsky & Adam B. Stein. Screenplay: Zach Lipovsky & Adam B. Stein. Director of Photography: Stirling Bancroft, csc. Production Designer: Moe Curtin. Editor: Sabrina Pitre. Music: Timothy Michael Wynn. Casting Directors: Lisa London & Catherine Stroud, Candice Elzinga.

KEY CREATIVE TEAM

STIRLING BANCROFT, CINEMATOGRAPHER
Stirling is a Vancouver-based cinematographer working in independent feature film. He recently won a Leo for his photography on Ring of Deception (2017, Dir. Scott Belyea). This will be the second year in a row that Stirling has a project at TIFF. Last years Adventures in Public School (2016, Dir. Kyle Rideout) made its world premiere at the festival.

MIA FIDDIS, COSTUME DESIGNER
Mia Fiddis is a Stylist and Costume Designer based in Vancouver and New York. She has spent the last ten years as a stylist and the last four years Costume Designing Indie Features. “Freaks” will be Mia’s fourth feature to premiere at TIFF in the last three years.

SABRINA PITRE, EDITOR
Sabrina’s first feature editing credit was for director Carl Bessai, on his film “Sisters & Brothers,” which premiered at TIFF. Her efforts won her a Leo award for best Editing in a feature, which in turn, led to many more amazing opportunities in the field. Her work on Disney’s action/comedy series MECH-X4 was recognized by the Canadian Cinema Editors, with the award for Best Editing in a 1/2 hour scripted program.

CHRIS DAVID, SOUND MIXER
Chris David is an Oscar-nominated (Legends of the Fall) Re-recording mixer of over 300 feature films that include Best Picture Oscar winners and nominees such as Moonlight, Hell or High Water, 12 Years a Slave and Milk as well as being known for his extraordinary work on highly acclaimed independent films like Donnie Darko, The Road, and A Better Life. His credits also include mainstream films, Expendables, 1,2 & 3, London Has Fallen & Olympus has Fallen, Face Off, American Pie, Clueless, Happy Gilmour, Aliens and Alien 3.

TIMOTHY WYNN, COMPOSER
Tim’s diverse portfolio includes feature films, television series, documentaries and video games. He has been nominated and has won multiple awards for his many scores. His career highlights include the feature films: Horrible Bosses 2 (Warner Bros), To Save A Life (Samuel Goldwyn Films), Starving Games (Peter Safran), Descendant (Katherine Heigl) Superfast (Peter Safran), Mckenna Shoots for the Stars (Martin Chase Prod.) the TV shows: Mech-X4 (Disney), Supernatural (Warner Bros), Wolfpack of Reseda (FOX Digital), The Deep End (ABC), Atelier (Netflix/Fuji TV), Lucky Seven (Fuji TV), the video games: XCOM 2 (2K), Darkness II (2K), Command and Conquer: Red Alert 3 (EA), Total War: Warhammer (Sega), Madden NFL 25 (EA), The Simpson’s Game (EA), Warhawk (Sony), and the documentary James Dean: Forever Young (Warner Brothers Home Video).

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