

Strand Releasing presents

GUIDANCE

A FILM BY PAT MILLS

*Starring Pat Mills, Zahra Bentham, Tracey Hoyt,
Kevin Hanchard, Alex Ozerov, Eleanor Zichy*

PRELIMINARY PRESS NOTES

Official Selection:

*Toronto International Film Festival
Miami International Film Festival
Miami Gay and Lesbian Film Festival
Seattle International Film Festival
Frameline Film Festival
Outfest Los Angeles LGBT Film Festival*

Country of Origin: Canada
Format: HD/1.85/Color
Sound Format: Dolby 5.1
Running Time: 80 minutes
Genre: Comedy
Not Rated
In English with no subtitles

National Press Contact:
Jenna Martin / Marcus Hu
Strand Releasing
Phone: 310.836.7500
jenna@strandreleasing.com
marcus@strandreleasing.com

Please download photos from our website:
<http://strandreleasing.com/films/guidance/>

SYNOPSIS

David Gold, 36, a pathologically immature former child actor, has never been able to get over high school. Recently diagnosed with skin cancer, unemployed and with nothing left to lose, he fakes his resume and gets a job as a high school guidance counselor. Quickly winning over the students at Grusin High with his laidback attitude and similar interests, he befriends Jabrielle, a teenaged outcast and soon learns that sometimes you can go too far, especially when it comes to committing a ridiculous crime.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: PAT MILLS ON GUIDANCE

I had a horrible time in high school. I spent most of it alone, hiding from everyone behind my well-conditioned hair. I felt like I had no one to talk to, so I indulged in my loneliness. I never felt like I could talk to the guidance counsellors because they were well-adjusted. I always wished they were a bit more like me - insecure, messed up and unsure about the future. Had they been more like me, I may have trusted them enough to open up to them. If only I had an immature, sexually repressed, alcoholic for a guidance counsellor. If David Gold were my guidance counsellor, maybe I would have turned out differently?

I've always felt like the most fucked up people have always helped me the most, so I thought I'd explore that in a film. I wanted to create a character full of surprises. I wanted to play with the irony of someone employed by the self-help industry who's about as psychologically damaged as it gets.

As a writer/director I am constantly exploring themes of youth, teenagers and high school. With GUIDANCE, I wanted to play with themes of self-help, psychology, depression, alcoholism, self-medication, asexuality, gender and pathological immaturity. But explore these themes in a comedic and dark and twisted way. I'll admit that I am "stuck" in the past. David Gold is a clown character that I created out of my own fears and insecurities. David and I have much in common - we are both former child actors, we're both immature, we get along well with teenagers, and we're both lushes. I created this character out of what COULD have happened to me. His story my alternate-autobiography. What if I didn't have a good head on my shoulders. What if my life had gone a different way? What if I didn't know when to say, "stop"?

I sometimes feel like it's "too late" for me to have a "normal life" and I've succumbed to my failures. I recognize this intellectually as being the most ridiculous (and clichéd and common) thing to feel as an "artist", but I am an emotional person and my feelings eclipse everything else. And then I come to my senses and realize I never wanted a "normal life", anyway. All of these feelings have culminated and solidified in the character of David Gold.

David Gold is also a fictional character that was born out of my own insecurities as a gay man. I've never been particularly good at being gay (I didn't have sex until I was 28). I've also never been particularly confident in this regard. When we see characters who are sexually repressed in film, they usually combat it in the end. The typical "coming out" film is a bit boring (she falls in love) - I wanted to tell a "coming out" story that wasn't in such a straight line. I wanted to tell a story that doesn't have that clichéd happy ending of self-acceptance. Instead, I wanted to ask, "how do fucked up people who will never change deal with their repression?". For David, his own failings of his repressed sexuality have culminated in a desire to cut off his penis. We've all been there, right?

When it was time to go into production, I was ready to take a creative risk. I had some successes with my short films - and it had been 4 years since my last film.

When it became obvious that to make a film that was authentic, I had to take the role of David Gold, I was nervous as hell, but excited. It was time to stop playing it safe. I was ready to dive in and risk everything and open myself up to embarrassment and failure.

I didn't even know if I would be able to be behind and in front of the camera at the same time. Who did I think I was, Tyler fucking Perry? But it was an entirely enjoyable experience - and in the end, it made a lot of sense. If I'm not taking any creative risk with my work, I feel like my heart isn't pumping.

Great comedy comes from opposites, and the dark comedy in GUIDANCE is a stadium-sized playing field. Like Mavis Gary from YOUNG ADULT (one of my favourite recent movies), David Gold might make you cringe, but you can't keep your eyes off of him. He's always inappropriate - but at least he's consistent. GUIDANCE is about the downward spiral of a man who has no limits.

But it's not just David that I see myself in. I am every teen-aged character in this film. From shy-around-boys Rhonda, to fuck-you-rebellious Ghost, to bitchy Nisha, to insecure Jabrielle - all of these kids are based on me, at different parts of my life. I'm sure a Pop Psychologist will say that this film is really about me trying to help myself. They're probably right.

I'm the first to admit - I will never get over high school - but I write about it, so at least I have something.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- First Feature for writer/director Pat Mills
- Two of Pat Mills short films have played TIFF: "5 Dysfunctional People in a Car" and "Pat's First Kiss"
- Pat was on the hit kids show "You Can't Do That On Television" when he was a kid. Nickelodeon refused to license the original footage for "Guidance"
- The Team is in the process of putting together the financing for Pat's follow up feature film "Don't Talk To Irene" which recently won best screenplay at the Austin Film Festival. It also won TIFF's Pitch This! competition in 2008.
- Pat Mills and Executive Producer/Producer Alyson Richards have known each other since they were 15. They have collaborated on a number of short films in the past and this marks their first feature collaboration.
- Director of Photography Daniel Grant is currently shooting Patricia Rozema's film "Into The Woods" starring Ellen Page and Evan Rachel Wood.

- This production is the first completed project of recently formed Edyson Entertainment <http://www.deadline.com/2013/06/new-scripted-production-company-opens-los-angeles-office-run-by-ed-gernon-signs-distribution-deal-with-content-media>
- Guidance is Producer Mike MacMillan's second feature this year, following the success of "I Put A Hit on You" which premiered at Slamdance 2014.

PAT MILLS BIOGRAPHY

Pat Mills got his start in the industry as an actor on the series YOU CAN'T DO THAT ON TELEVISION (Nickelodeon). He received his training at Ryerson University where he was the recipient of the Norman Jewison Filmmaker Award and City TV Best Film Award. His short films have played at festivals all around the world, including TIFF.

Recently, Pat participated in the inaugural NSI/Movie Central "Script to Screen" with his time travel comedy HERE I GO AGAIN. An alumnus of TIFF's Talent lab, Pat was named winner of TIFF's Pitch This! for DON'T TALK TO IRENE, in development with Edyson Entertainment, which has received development support from Telefilm, Corus and the Harold Greenberg Fund. The project took part in the 2013 CFC Telefilm Canada Feature Comedy Exchange, where the script was mentored by Kirsten Smith (LEGALLY BLONDE). The screenplay won best comedy screenplay at the 2013 Austin Screenplay Competition.

Short films include: BABYSITTING ANDY, MARJORIE, PAT'S FIRST KISS (played 2008 TIFF) and 5 DYS-FUNCTIONAL PEOPLE IN A CAR (2009 TIFF).

GUIDANCE is his first feature film. He is represented by the Jennifer Hollyer Agency in Toronto and Oasis Media Group in Los Angeles.

ZAHRA BENTHAM BIOGRAPHY- "JABRIELLE"

Zahra Bentham was born in Canada and grew up with two older sisters. At a young age she developed a passion for acting and performing. She attended Wexford School For The Arts where she majored in Music Theatre and Drama. She worked with some of the top theatre directors and coaches in productions like RENT, Fiddler On The Roof, The Music Man and "Welcome to Thebes", where she landed her first lead as "Eurydice".

Zahra's film debut is playing Jabrielle in director, Pat Mills' film Guidance (2014).

TRACY HOYT BIOGRAPHY – "BRENDA"

Tracey Hoyt was born in Chatham, Ontario, Canada. Her late father was radio personality Sandy Hoyt, who had a distinguished career in broadcasting from the late 1950s to 2000. Tracey trained at Theatre Aquarius (Hamilton, Ontario), The

Second City (Toronto, Ontario), The Banff School of Fine Arts (Banff, Alberta) and York University. (Toronto, Ontario) She toured extensively with The Second City National Touring Company in Canada and continues to teach Improvisation at The Second City today.

Her latest project is series lead Aurora Farqueson in CBC TV's mockumentary series "The Tournament" in Canada.

KEVIN HANCHARD BIOGRAPHY – "PRINCIPAL NEWMAN"

Kevin portrays Art Bell on the BBC America hit series Orphan Black. He is a veteran actor who, in recent years has become one of the nation's most sought after performers. Although no stranger to film and television, this dynamic and versatile actor has made his name in the world of theatre. His knack for bringing a degree of humanity to flawed characters has become the hallmark of his career to date.

He has played leading roles in theatres across the nation, including several seasons at both The Shaw and Stratford Festivals and his critically acclaimed 2011 portrayal of Booth in TopDog/Underdog, garnered him one of his two Dora Mavor Moore nominations for outstanding performance by a male.

ALEX OZEROV BIOGRAPHY – "GHOST"

Ozerov originated from Russia and came to Canada in 2004. During his school years he began taking drama, and in 2006 started studying acting for film and TV with actor/filmmaker Walter Alza in the Alza Acting Studio, Toronto. As the youngest one attending the studio, Ozerov's passion for the craft allowed him to land numerous roles at a young age, including TV Series Transporter, the television movie Salem Falls, based on the best selling novel and featuring James Van Der Beek, and the Disney Channel show What's Up Warthogs. He also made TV appearances on shows like "Rookie Blue", "Cracked", and a History Channel show "Perfect Storms", portraying a young Russian soldier, Sergey Zahlystov. Ozerov made his film debut in Jason Buxton's award winning indie film, Blackbird, playing the lead antagonist, Trevor, opposite "Falling Skies" Connor Jessup. Up next, he stars in the gay coming of age drama, What We have, opposite Roberta Maxwell "Brokeback Mountain."

ELEANOR ZICHY BIOGRAPHY – "RHONDA"

Zichy's breakthrough role was as Eura Snyder in the North American version of the British teen drama "Skins" on MTV in the U.S. and on Movie Central and The Movie Network in Canada. Zichy was born in Toronto and studied at the Etobicoke School of the Arts as a student in their Dramatic Arts program.

Eleanor has also taken classes at the Armstrong Acting Studio and the Lewis Bauder Acting Studio in Toronto.

MEET THE PRODUCING TEAM

ALYSON RICHARDS – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/ PRODUCER

Alyson has been working in film and television since 1999 when she got her start on the Ottawa based cable series THE TOM GREEN SHOW. She spent the next decade garnering on set experience working as an Assistant Director, Production Designer and Production Manager in both television and film. After line producing the award winning feature documentary FIERCELIGHT: WHERE SPIRIT MEETS ACTION and the pilot episode of MAKE THE POLITICIAN WORK for CBC television, Alyson turned her attention to producing.

She developed projects for CTV, CBC, HBO CANADA, LIFETIME, SUPERCHANNEL and SHAW with produced credits including the critically acclaimed feature film THE LAST NEW YEAR, Gemini award-winning series THE LINE and the Rose D'Or nominated series LIVING IN YOUR CAR.

In her position as Vice President of Production and Creative Affairs for The Nightingale Company she moved to Los Angeles in 2009 to open the US office where she spent three years developing series for the North American markets as well as producing the feature documentary QUALITY BALLS on legendary comedian David Steinberg that premiered on Showtime.

Alyson has been a juror for the INTERNATIONAL EMMY AWARDS and was selected to be a production Mentor for the globally televised MTV INTERNATIONAL 48 FEST. Most recently she worked with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association developing and producing THAT'S NOT FAIR!, a series of animated videos and online games.

Alyson is an alumnus of the Canadian Film Centre, The National Screen Institute and has a BA in Film Theory. Alyson brings her vast production and development experience to Edyson Entertainment.

MIKE MACMILLAN – PRODUCER

A graduate of the University of Toronto ('02) and UCLA's Professional Producing Program ('11), Mike MacMillan – founder of Lithium Studios Productions - has been producing independent film since 2007. His first feature, the dark comedy / thriller I Put a Hit on You (2014, Telefilm Canada supported), premiered at this year's Slamdance. Guidance (2014, Telefilm Canada supported), a dark comedy/ coming of age story, is Mike's second feature film, premiering at TIFF 2014. Mike has produced a dozen short films that have played at top festivals around the world.

Mike is currently in the tiff's STUDIO producer lab.

Mike gravitates toward character driven scripts and to filmmakers committed to the development process, echoing the mantra of "fix it in pre". He has honed his

skills as a producer working in highly collaborative teams that value open communication, equality, and creativity above all else.

ED GERNON – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Of the 50 Emmy and Golden Globe nominations Gernon's projects have received notable highlights are **HITLER: THE RISE OF EVIL** starring Robert Carlyle, Matthew Modine, Peter O'Toole, Juliana Margulies and Liev Schreiber; **THE MATTHEW SHEPARD STORY** starring Stockard Channing, Sam Waterston, and Shane Meier; **LIFE WITH JUDY GARLAND: ME AND MY SHADOWS** starring Judy Davis, Victor Garber, and Hugh Laurie; **WHEN BILLIE BEAT BOBBY** starring Holly Hunter and Ron Silver; **NUREMBURG** starring Alec Baldwin, Brian Cox, Christopher Plummer, and Jill Hennesy; and **JOAN OF ARC** starring Leelee Sobieski, Jacqueline Bisset, Olympia Dukakis, Peter O'Toole and Shirley MacLaine.

Other projects of which Gernon is proud are **CROSSED OVER** starring Diane Keaton and Jennifer Jason Leigh; **JENIFER** starring Laura San Giacomo, Jane Kaczmarek and Annabella Sciorra; **CONFESSIONS OF AN UGLY STEPSISTER** starring Stockard Channing, Jonathan Pryce, and Azura Skye; and **BORROWED HEARTS** starring Roma Downey, Eric McCormack and Hector Elizondo.

Gernon got his start in the entertainment business on the Emmy award winning sitcom **KATE & ALLIE**, starring Jane Curtin and Susan Saint James before going on to spend 11 years at Alliance/Atlantis where he helped turn the company into one of the world's largest suppliers of movies and miniseries for network and cable television. In his role as Executive VP of Movies, Minis and Motion Pictures, he oversaw all phases of development and production.

At Edyson Entertainment, Ed not only brings his years of experience as a leading creative executive producer but his passion for exceptional story telling to the team.

FILMMAKER BIOS

DANIEL GRANT – DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Raised in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Daniel Grant developed an interest in image-making at a young age through still photography. Matched with a love of film, this led him to pursue the craft of cinematography.

Upon graduating from the film studies program at Ryerson University, he was awarded 1st Prize for Student Cinematography in Canada by the Canadian Society of Cinematographers (CSC). Since then he has accumulated a wide variety of credits as a cinematographer on music videos, feature films, and over forty short films. His work has been shown at festivals around the world, such as Berlinale, Sundance, Slamdance, and the Toronto International Film Festival.

Recent credits include Bruce McDonalds “The Husband” and Patricia Rozema’s “Into The Forest”.

ZOSIA MCKENZIE – PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Zosia Mackenzie is a Toronto based Production Designer. She holds a degree in Radio and Television Arts from Toronto’s Ryerson University (2010). Since graduating she has designed short films featuring David Cronenberg (Body Mind Change, 2013) and the former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson (The Frame, 2012) in addition to art directing national advertising campaigns for Gillette and Microsoft. Guidance marks her first feature film as Production Designer.

BRYAN ATKINSON – EDITOR

Bryan Atkinson has been a passionate student of film since the age of fourteen, and an editor of motion pictures for the last ten years. Since completing the Editors’ Lab at the Canadian Film Centre in 2012, Bryan has cut the feature comedy BANK\$TAS, the Toronto indie PORCH STORIES and the short film WE WANTED MORE (TIFF 2013). Last year his work on the film NIGHT LIGHT earned him a Canadian Cinema Editors Award for Best Editing in Short Drama and he is nominated again this year in the same category for the short film HOLE. He is proud to be working with Pat Mills on his feature debut, GUIDANCE. Bryan is an ardent supporter of the film community in Toronto and when he’s not working you are bound to find him at the cinema.

CAST

Pat Mills	David Gold
Zahra Bentham	Jabrielle
Tracey Hoyt	Brenda
Kevin Hanchard	Principal Newman
Alex Ozerov	Ghost
Eleanor Zichy	Rhonda

CREW

Director	Pat Mills
Screenwriter	Pat Mills
Producers	Mike MacMillan and Alyson Richards
Cinematographer	Daniel Grant
Editor	Bryan Atkinson
Composers	Joseph Murray, Menalon Music, and Lodewijk Vos
Production Designer	Zosia Mackenzie
Casting Director	Sara Kay and Jenny Lewis
Costume Designer	Tisha Myles