

# BEFORE THE DAWN

**Narrative Feature Film: Before the Dawn**

**Running Time: 105 mins**



Directed by: **Jay Holben**

Written by: **Alana de Freitas**

Produced by: **Alana de Freitas, Diane Foster, Jay Holben**

Starring: **Alana de Freitas, Jared Scott,  
Houston Rhines, Kelly Hancock, Juli Cuccia, Gregory R. Gordon**

[www.beforethedawnmovie.com](http://www.beforethedawnmovie.com)

Now Available on [Amazon Prime](#)



# BEFORE THE DAWN

## CONTENTS

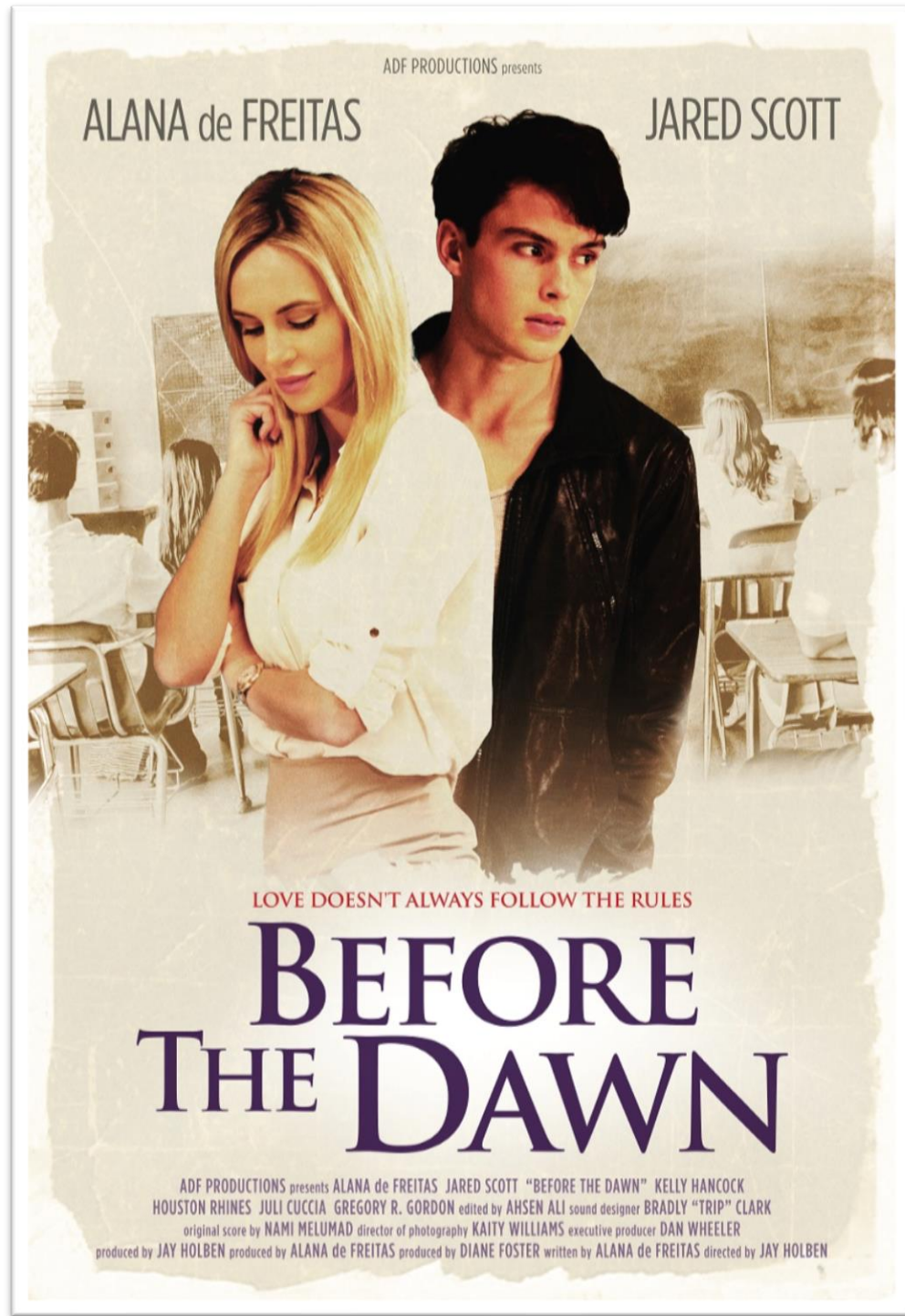
Film Poster and Logline .....	3
Additional Film Poster .....	4
Synopses (Short, Medium & Long) .....	5
<b>Production Team</b>	
Director – Jay Holben .....	6
Director’s Statement .....	7
Writer – Alana de Freitas .....	8
Film Inspiration .....	8
Producer – Diane Foster .....	9
The Making Of .....	9
Director of Photography – Kaity Williams .....	10
Editor – Ahsen Ali .....	10
<b>Cast</b>	
Alana de Freitas (Lila Kendy) .....	11
Jared Scott (Jason Walker) .....	11
Houston Rhines (Andrew Matthews) .....	12
Kelly Hancock (Shelly Walker) .....	12
Juli Cuccia (Mary Kendy) .....	13
Gregory Gordon (Thug) .....	13
 Frequently Asked Questions .....	 14
Crew Credits .....	17
Cast Credits .....	19
Technical Information .....	21
Festivals / Awards .....	21
Links & Social Media .....	22



# BEFORE THE DAWN

## LOGLINE:

A young high school teacher moves to a new town for a fresh start and falls for a troubled student.





# BEFORE THE DAWN



# BEFORE THE DAWN

## **SYNOPSIS - SHORT (59 words)**

Lila Kendy leaves behind a troubled past, for a fresh start teaching in a new town. She takes on tutoring Jason Walker, a troubled kid from the wrong side of the tracks. The lines of the teacher-student relationship become blurred when Lila's efforts to help Jason with his grades end up leading to a secret affair between the two.

## **SYNOPSIS - MEDIUM (136 words)**

Lila Kendy has left behind an abusive marriage for a fresh start, teaching at a private Catholic school in a new town. There she meets fellow teacher, Andrew Matthews, whose charm convinces her to begin dating again.

Jason Walker is a senior from the wrong side of the tracks whose mother, through the help of her church, places Jason in a private Catholic school with the hopes of getting him away from the bad influences of their neighbourhood, which have already ruined the life of his brother.

The lines of the teacher-student relationship become blurred when Lila's efforts to help Jason with his grades end up leading to a secret affair between the two. The pair struggle with the pressure of Jason's past luring him back in, Andrew's affections, and the threat of being found out.

## **SYNOPSIS – LONG (239 words)**

The film follows Lila Kendy, a teacher who moves to a new town in pursuit of a fresh start after leaving behind an abusive marriage. Lila begins to allow herself to date again, at the encouragement of her mother, and quickly becomes the interest of her colleague, Andrew Matthews.

We also follow the story of Jason Walker, a student from the wrong side of the tracks whose mother, with the help of her church, places Jason in a private Catholic school with the hopes of getting him away from the bad influences of their neighbourhood, which have already ruined the life of his brother.

The lines of the teacher-student relationship become blurred when Lila's efforts to help Jason with his grades end up leading to a secret affair between the two. The situation takes a disastrous turn when Jason's mother gets wind of the relationship, and criminal influences from Jason's life try to drag him deeper into the underbelly of their world. With Lila's colleagues beginning to get suspicious, which in turn rouses the jealousy of Andrew. Running away might be the only answer.

Genre: Romantic drama – *Blue Valentine* meets *Notes on a Scandal*.

The film explores the challenges that arise from socio-economic factors that pressure teens into a life of crime, as well as domestic and sexual abuse. Our two leads struggle with the demons from their past and strive to create new and better lives for themselves.



# BEFORE THE DAWN



## DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

Jay Holben

### BIOGRAPHY

Jay Holben is an independent producer and director in Los Angeles, California. A former cinematographer, he is an author of two commercially-published books on cinematography, a contributing editor for *American Cinematographer* Magazine, faculty instructor for Global Cinematography Institute and international lecturer, an Associate member of the ASC and the co-chair of the ASC Motion Imaging Technology Council Lens Committee.

Holben's short film, *Paranoid*, which was adapted from the poem by Stephen King, garnered overwhelming praise for its stylistic excellence as well as high praise and support from Mr. King. An even shorter effort, an amazingly terse 50-second horror project, *Hunger* was spotlighted as one of director John Carpenter's favorites for a Halloween special he hosted on *American Movie Classics* and hailed by the New York Post critic Linda Stasi as her favorite of the show. Holben followed up those shorts with, *Descent*, which had an extremely successful run at the festival circuit playing all around the world and winning several top awards. It has also been included in the anthology feature film, *All Hallow's Eve 2*, released by RLJ Entertainment. Holben's *Alone* was also released in two anthology collections *The Invoking 2*, released by RLJ Entertainment and *Strange Events*, released by WOWNow Entertainment. He directed the internationally acclaimed short *If* and was the supervising director on the gritty romantic feature drama *Black Tar Road*. Holben also served as 2<sup>nd</sup> Unit director and cinematographer on HBO's *Femme Fatales*. As a producer, Holben has helmed independent feature films, a television series, documentaries, short films and commercials. He was a producer on the independent feature *Of Fortune and Gold* and a consultant on Showtime's *Dexter*. Additionally, he is a former Technical Editor and columnist for *Digital Video* magazine a lighting columnist for *TV Technology* magazine in addition to contributing for several years to the prominent trade newspaper *The Hollywood Reporter*.



# BEFORE THE DAWN

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My passion for filmmaking comes from that primal place of sharing stories in the darkness. It's about a communal experience; a mutual emotional experience with an audience. That was why, when I first read *Before the Dawn*, I knew it was a story I wanted to tell. It was astounding to me to learn that it was not only Alana de Freitas' first feature script – but that it had only been written a month before I read it. There was a heart to it; a sincerity that I don't often see in scripts. It was a character-focused story that was so close to recent events, I assumed it was a true story, but it turned out to just be a situation that fascinated Alana. It's a challenge for a director to take on a project that is written by and starring the executive producer. I realized, early on, that this was less about *my* interpretation of the script and much more about working to get inside Alana's imagination and make *her* vision come alive. In that way, it was a bit like being a director for an episodic drama series.

For me, the success or failure of the story hinged on the relationship between Lila and Jason. As an audience, we had to believe in their love and we had to root for their relationship to be a successful one – in spite of the moralistic and legal issues surrounding their courtship. I was fortunate to have an incredibly talented lead actress and we looked carefully to find our Jason – Jared Scott. Their chemistry and connection brought the story to life. We wanted to make a film that was honest and true to life, not one that necessarily followed a typical romantic paradigm. It's a love story, but it's also a look at the harsh realities of a love against social norms.

[www.jayholben.com](http://www.jayholben.com)



# BEFORE THE DAWN



## WRITER/PRODUCER

Alana de Freitas

### BIOGRAPHY

Alana de Freitas is an Australian-born writer/producer who is now based in Los Angeles. She produced the short film, short film, *'Infidelity'* in early 2017 which was also her made her writing debut. The film centers on a group of three friends who gather for their weekly ritual of watching *The Bachelor*. Their conversation turns to the topic of cheating, and what began as a friendly catch-up, becomes a heated argument about who really holds the blame. The film was selected as a finalist for Los Angeles CineFest.

Prior to this, Alana had produced a number of narrative short films as well as an internet lifestyle program that focused on reviewing bars and restaurants, and interviewing up-and-coming fashion designers.

*'Before the Dawn'* was de Freitas' first feature-length screenplay, and she also produced and starred in the film. The film details a forbidden relationship between a teacher and a student and explores the factors that could drive these two together. *'Before the Dawn'* will be available for streaming in August 2019. *'Before the Dawn'* has collected eight festival laurels.

In 2018, Alana wrote and produced a short film called *'Nancy'*, which also marked her directorial debut. The film follows the journey of a father who is struggling to come to terms with his son coming out as gay. He is forced to examine his own ingrained language and behaviors in order to salvage the relationship with his son. *'Nancy'* was an Official Selection for the Chain Film Festival (NYC), Cinema Diverse (Palm Spings), and the Sherman Oaks Film Festival.

Alana also has a #MeToo focused documentary, and a horror/thriller feature in development.

### INSPIRATION

Since first hearing the story of Mary-Kay Letourneau in 1996, when she herself was 12 years old, the same age of Letourneau's lover, de Freitas was intrigued by the idea of a teacher-student relationship. From that time on, the stories of these forbidden relationships have become more frequent headlines.

The fact that these types of relationships are becoming so prevalent in our society lead de Freitas to ask the question 'why'? She wanted to explore societal versus legal views on the age of consent and when we are old enough to make our own decisions without it being considered as 'being taken advantage of'. She wanted to take an unbiased look at the line between institutional abuse and genuine love. Essentially, she wanted to tell the story of two people, who for various reasons, find solace in each other, regardless of age, and in spite of the taboo nature of the relationship.

The film explores the challenges that arise from socio-economic factors that pressure teens into a life of crime, as well as domestic and sexual abuse. It was not until de Freitas began talking the screenplay through with the production team, that she realized how much she had drawn from her own life experience and that of those closest to her to create the story and characters in *Before the Dawn*.

[www.alanadefreitas.com](http://www.alanadefreitas.com)



# BEFORE THE DAWN



## PRODUCER

Diane Foster

### BIOGRAPHY

Diane Foster is an American Producer based in Los Angeles. Her feature film, *IOWA*, starring Rosanna Arquette, John Savage and Michael T. Weiss, was nominated for Best Narrative Feature at the 2005 Tribeca Film Festival. The film is a cautionary tale of love, crime, fantasy and addiction that follows two Iowan lovers who decide to go into the 'batch' business – cooking their own methamphetamine – only to watch it burn a searing hole in their lives. *Iowa* was distributed by Koch Vision worldwide. During the making of *IOWA*, Foster spent five years investigating the meth epidemic in Middle America, which led to the documentary *Dying for Meth*, which was awarded Best Documentary at the Prism Awards and nominated with CBS' *Cares* and NBC's *The More You Know*. Foster also produced the 2011 horror cult classic *The Orphan Killer*, and its sequel *Bound X Blood: The Orphan Killer 2*, about a serial killer hell-bent on teaching his estranged sister about family loyalty in 80s-style slasher fashion. The merchandise for these 2 horror films is sold in Walmart and Sears. Foster then went on to produce the pilot for the web series *Lettuce*, a comedy about midlife crisis, sex and aliens. The series is executive produced by Robert Gunnerson and Peter Facinelli, and has been optioned for release by Crackle. *Before the Dawn* marks Foster's fourth feature film. She just finished Executive Producing the short film, *Dissonance* written by Rafi Jacobs, and the romantic comedy short, *SHIRI* written by Grace Yee & directed by Micah Coate. In 2018, Diane launched her own production company, Wallybird Productions, to produce all forms and genres of media, worldwide. Under the WallyBird banner, the company saw its first theatrical production run in San Francisco in October 2018 - James McClure's pair of one-act comedies: *Laundry and Bourbon* and *Lone Star*. Directed by Michael Yavnieli, the show received 'love letter' reviews by a number of long-standing and respected members of the critics' circle. Diane is committed to producing projects with diverse talent, gender equality, and creating the teams responsible for films that push the envelope with high entertainment value and substance.

### THE WHIRLWIND MAKING OF...

At the end of May 2017, Alana de Freitas set herself the goal of having a production ready for the 2018 festival season. She began writing the first draft June 4th, and completed it July 3rd. At this time she paired up with Diane Foster to produce the film. The women took a leap of faith and began pre-production before funding had even been secured. Jay Holben came on board to direct, and casting was well underway by the time the project was greenlit financially.

The final screenplay was revised and completed over four days in early August, and Kaity Williams was brought on to DP the project. Principal photography began August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and wrapped on September 9<sup>th</sup>. 112 pages were shot over a grueling 15 days during a stifling heatwave. A dedicated cast and crew worked 12-14 hour days at a rapid pace to ensure completion.

Each night the footage was dropped to the editor, Ahsen Ali, to maximize the amount of time for editing. The first assembly was provided by Ali on September 14, a mere five days after wrapping out. An additional four days of pick-ups and re-shoots were scattered over the following month, by which stage the production team were in full-swing post-production. The film was released on Amazon Prime in October 2019.

# BEFORE THE DAWN



## DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

**Kaity Williams**

### BIOGRAPHY

Kaity Williams is a South Carolina native who moved to Los Angeles in 2014 to pursue her career in film. With an early passion for cinematography, Williams dived headlong into the profession.

Williams saw her competition working with low-end HD SLR cameras and decided to take a major gamble, leaping beyond her competition to purchase an Arri Amira camera. In 2015 she became the youngest Amira owner in the history of the camera.

Since her bold decision Williams has been continuously booked shooting documentaries, commercials, short films, and music videos (including the recent *Pillow Talk* for the jazz quartet The Summit - the first project on which she collaborated with director Jay Holben). She has shot for Footlocker, comedian/producer George Lopez, actor/host Mario Lopez, R&B artist T.I., horror-master John Carpenter and alternative superstars Daft Punk. Although she has worked as a camera operator and 2<sup>nd</sup> unit cinematographer on a number of feature films, including Lifetime's *The Maid*.

*Before the Dawn* marks Williams' debut as a feature cinematographer. She is an active member of the American Society of Cinematographers Motion Imaging Technology Council Lens Committee.



## EDITOR Ahsen Ali

### BIOGRAPHY

Ahsen Ali moved to Los Angeles from Karachi, Pakistan in May 2016 to pursue his Masters in Film Production from New York Film Academy.

He has been working as an editor for over seven years editing short films, music videos and documentaries.

Ali is also a writer and director for the short films *Untitled* and *The Pale Red Dot*.

*Before the Dawn* is the first feature film that Ali has edited.

# BEFORE THE DAWN

## CAST



### **Alana de Freitas (Lila Kendy)**

Australian actress Alana de Freitas had her first glimpse into professional acting came when she worked on Michael Rymer's 2002 feature, *'Queen of the Damned'*. In 2007, Alana gained a position with *'LifeFunk TV'* which saw her branch out into presenting. As a roving reporter reviewing nightclubs, bars and restaurants, as well as sourcing new talent in the fashion industry and conducting interviews with up-and-coming designers.

Alana was a lead throughout the first season of the sitcom *'Snowpeck'*, which follows a group of friends and the antics they get up to in running a production company. Additionally, Alana appeared in Australian bushranger biopic, *'The Legend of Ben Hall'*.

Alana made her writing debut in 2017 with the short, *'Infidelity'*, which saw success for her and her co-stars on the festival circuit. She followed this up with her first feature-length screenplay, *'Before the Dawn'*, which she produced and starred in - now available on Amazon Prime. Alana won the Best Actress Award at the International Independent Film Awards for her performance in this role.

Next up, you can see Alana in the horror film *'Bashira'* which will be released in early 2020; And she is soon to begin shooting the comedy feature *'Cash Collectors'*.



### **Jared Scott (Jason Walker)**

After pursuing acting and modeling professionally in Pittsburgh while studying animation and visual effects, Jared Scott moved to Los Angeles, where he came in contact and began studying with acting teacher and fellow Pennsylvanian, John Homa. John's faith in him as an actor and professional prompted him to refer Jared to his current managers at Luber Roklin, Mara Santino and Tim Taylor. Subsequently, he was signed by HRI Talent Agency. Jared has since studied with Anthony Meindl and Margie Haber in their masterclasses, and at The Groundlings School for improv.

Jared appears in a lead role in Facebook's first scripted series, *Turnt*. Jared's other recent credits include starring opposite Vivica A. Fox in the Lifetime movie, *The Wrong Friend*, and the ION TV movie *A Christmas Cruise*. Additionally, Jared starred in the short film, *Rockstar*, which was

nominated for Best Short Film at the Burbank Film Festival, Kapow Intergalactic Film Festival, and Marina Del Rey Film Festival.

*Before the Dawn* was Jared's first lead role in a feature film. He plays the character of Jason – a charismatic but troubled kid who is struggling to escape the negative influences in his life.



# BEFORE THE DAWN



## Houston Rhines (Andrew Matthews)

Houston Rhines has worked for years in Hollywood. Rhines has appeared on numerous television shows including *Grey's Anatomy*, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, and *How I Met Your Mother*; as well as short films and the feature length movies *Training Day* and *eCupid*.

He played Kelly Clarkson's boyfriend in the *My Life Would Suck Without You* video, which set a record for quickest jump to number 1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

More recently, he appeared in the film *Jenny's Wedding* opposite Katherine Heigl, Tom Wilkinson, Alexis Bledel and Grace Gummer.

In *Before the Dawn*, Houston plays the role of Andrew Matthews, a teaching colleague of Lila's. Andrew can't hide his affections for Lila, and he uses his charm to convince her to start dating again.



## Kelly Hancock (Shelly Walker)

Kelly is a Los Angeles born actress known for her most recent roles in the feature films: *Princess of the Row*, *Nothing Like the Sun* and *Bastard*.

She has been trained by some of the best coaches that Los Angeles has to offer including Sharon Chatten, Catlin Adams, Marilyn Fox, and the Margie Haber Studio, and has a strong background in improvisation from Second City and the Groundlings.

Some additional works include short features such as *The Sanctuary*, *The Watchers* (named Best Sci-Fi Short Film at the Los Angeles Independent Film Showcase), *Forgive Me Father*, *I Don't* and *No Return*. She was also cast in the recent web series *Down & Out*, *Class Dismissed* and *Horror Show News*.

Kelly plays Shelly Walker, Jason's overbearing mother who will stop at nothing to try to get her son a better life, and protect him from the criminal elements of their neighborhood.

# BEFORE THE DAWN



## Juli Cuccia (Mary Kendy)

Juli Cuccia began acting at age 12. Over the decades she has appeared in dozens of plays throughout Southern California and Hawaii. In 2015 she went from stage to screen, landing a role as a series regular on Amazon's *Hawaiian Sovereignty*.

She has honed her acting skills by working actor and coach, Brad in Los Angeles. Juli is an accomplished voice over artist whose podcast *Rose Drive* was released in September 2017 on Apple podcasts, Google Play, Stitcher and Suncloud.

She has appeared in numerous films and commercials including *Five Faces of Hell*, and *Credit Karma*. In the spring of 2017, Juli gained a supporting role in *TransMute*, which was accepted into the acclaimed Holly Shorts Film

Festival in Hollywood at the Grauman's Chinese Theater for Best LGBT Short.

She appeared as a series regular on the award winning comedy *Female Friendly*, which she also produced. Some of her television credits include television credits include: *American Horror Story* on FX *Sneaky Pete* on Amazon, and the upcoming new comedy for TruTV, *Tacoma FD*, created by Steve Lemme and Kevin Heffernan of *Super Troopers*.

Juli plays Mary Kendy, Lila's mother who is coming to terms with not having her daughter close by anymore. She is fully supportive and encourages Lila to get back into the dating game because she wants to see Lila happy again.



## Gregory R. Gordon (Thug)

Gregory Gordon was born in Washington D.C. Soon after his birth, his family moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma where he discovered his love for acting and decided to take up theatre in community college.

After finding out community college was limited in training, he decided to move to Dallas, Texas to further his education as an actor. Greg attended KD College for film and dramatic arts, graduating with an Associate Degree in Acting.

Greg now lives in Los Angeles as a full time actor and is known for his roles in *The Mason Brothers*, *My Crazy Ex*, and the Food Network's *Mystery Diners*.

In *Before the Dawn*, Gregory plays the head of a group of drug dealers that are at the forefront of Jason's struggle with breaking free from the socioeconomic shackles of his existing life.

# BEFORE THE DAWN

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Is the film based on a true story?**

Although inspired by true events in several different cases, no; *Before the Dawn* is a complete work of fiction. – JH

### **Are you concerned about controversy around the illegal nature of the relationship that the film follows?**

No, we are not concerned about it. It is a controversial topic – and it should be. We aren't the first film to tackle this topic. You have *Notes on a Scandal*, *Boy Next Door*, *Election*, etc. that all depict a teacher student relationship. Our particular film is definitely a relationship-focused drama. The teacher-student dynamic is something that is in the news every other day. We don't condone the relationship, but rather try to understand it. The trauma that Lila has experienced from her previous relationship, has her hesitant about getting involved with men again, but Jason, being on the verge of manhood, seems less threatening. From there we start to explore the consequences of their affair, and the toll that takes on their relationship. We wanted to explore the controversy rather than shy away from it. - AD

### **As filmmakers, how do you approach gender and racial equality within the industry?**

We are proud to say that we had a 67% female crew for *Before the Dawn*. We are completely behind the initiatives that are creating change within the industry and promoting gender and racial equality. With a female Writer and Producer on this project, and having a female-driven storyline, it was particularly important to us that we give as much opportunity to up-and-coming female crew and filmmakers. We cast a wide net to ensure we had the best team possible and ultimately hired females in the roles of Director of Photography, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Camera, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director, Gaffer/Grip and Make-Up team. Across our cast and crew, we had a large mix of nationalities (Australian, French, Filipino, Latino, African American and Asian). Furthermore, the film has received compliments on having four large supporting female roles in addition to a female lead. We are passionate about depicting multi-dimensional women, and exploring both their strength and vulnerability through thought-provoking storytelling. - DF

### **What was the relationship between the lead actors like on set?**

The age difference between Alana de Freitas and Jared Scott is, roughly, the same as that depicted in the film, although both actors are adults, of course. Jared has a very youthful energy; he likes to play around, tease and joke. It was fascinating to me to watch Alana join in on that energy with him. One-on-one with Alana, she is not like that at all – but with Jared, she seemed to match his energy and interests well. I had concerns about the two having the right chemistry together and made efforts in our brief pre-production period to do connection exercises with the two actors – but my fears were in vain. They bonded immediately and spent a lot of time between takes together. They had an almost instant sibling-like relationship off camera. There might be more Snapchat footage of the two of them than actual footage from the movie! Their bonding and connection definitely helped to solidify the chemistry of their on-screen counterparts – without which there would be no movie. There were certainly moments that I felt like I was surrounded by a couple of teenagers – but that energy and youthfulness translates wonderfully to the screen. - JH



# BEFORE THE DAWN

## **What was the funniest thing that happened during filming?**

There were two moments that stand out to me. While shooting the lake picnic scene at the Sable Ranch in Santa Clarita, CA, there was a small man-made pond specifically intended for shooting. We were assured that the water was fresh, clean and safe for the actors to go into and that many times actors had been swimming in the pond before. The scene called for Lila (Alana de Freitas) and Jason (Jared Scott) to frolic and make love in the water. The two actors spent about half an hour in the water as we shot the various moments for the montage sequence. Kaity Williams waded in to the water's edge with the camera to get more water-level shots as well. During their time in the pond Alana asked Jared if he had ever seen *Stand By Me* and recalled the sequence in that film where the boys wade across a river and come out the other side covered in leeches. Wouldn't that be a terrible experience? Twenty or so minutes later the actors emerged from the pond and as they went to dry off Alana exclaimed, "There ARE leeches!" Sure enough, both actors had half a dozen or more small leeches attached to their skin! Amazingly, they both took this in stride and we were able to complete the rest of the picnic sequence without them running away in terror (as I probably would have done!).

Our second most funny situation happened during re-shoots. We had decided to re-cast our drug dealers who pressure Jason to continue the darker side of his life. We went back to the original location at the Horror Ranch in Santa Clarita - a desolate location with no one around for miles, except one neighbor. All of the sequences we needed to shoot were exterior and as we made the final adjustments on the first setup of the day we suddenly heard an amplified Mexican Mariachi Polka band strike up in joyous reverie. The entire crew froze and stared at each other. The ONE neighbor of this ranch was celebrating their son's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday with a large family gathering and a Mariachi band that played, non-stop, for more than six hours. The only thing we could do was laugh and shoot our sequences anyway – knowing full well that they would have to be 100% ADR in the future. The actors were real troopers to maintain their menacing performances amidst the trumpet, guitars and accordion soundtrack. But that's the perils of independent filmmaking. - JH

## **This was the Director's first feature film – how was that experience?**

With nearly 30 years of professional experience in Hollywood, I have never encountered someone like Alana de Freitas. Her determination and drive was like a freight train running through the city and I was lucky enough to jump on board. She completed the script in June, I was hired at the end of July, we were in production in early September and we're nearing the end of post-production in January. It was an amazingly whirlwind experience. None of this would have been possible without the team we were able to assemble for this production – from Diane Foster, our fearless and tireless producer to cinematographer Kaity Williams, my right-hand partner. Every day was a new challenge – a location we weren't able to scout, an unforgiving production schedule, limited equipment, limited extras cast and atmosphere... I've photographed and produced more than a dozen features, but none held as many daily challenges as *Before the Dawn*. It was a pleasure to work with a talented cast and a great script to tell a very timely and intimate story. - JH

## **What was the writer-director relationship like?**

Being my first feature-length screenplay, I had been sure to get numerous sets of eyes across it for as much feedback as possible. It's a difficult thing to hand control of your baby over to somebody else, but Jay was very generous in the amount of time he spent with me beforehand ensuring that he understood all the facets of the story, the motivations of the characters, and my vision for the film. Building that trust

# BEFORE THE DAWN

upfront was crucial to us having a successful film and relationship. With the limited pre-production time that we had, and the work I had to put into playing the female lead, I needed to be able to step away and allow Jay to be my eyes, and he had instilled in me a comfort level where I felt I could do that. I always felt that we had a very open line of communication that went both ways: I could express what I wanted, we would amalgamate our visions; and occasionally he would have to give me a reality check on just what was and wasn't possible with our resources, and together, with Diane, we would find a work-around. - AD

## **What were some of the influences for the film?**

Narratively Alana had me watch several films that inspired her – *Blue Valentine* and *Gone Baby Gone* were the two top stylistic influences. Although we didn't have the kind of cinema verite-style production that those two films have, we did use more of a naturalistic approach to the blocking, compositions, camera movement and overall cinematography for this film. Cinematographer Kaity Williams and I also looked at a number of films from *Dead Poets Society* to *Searching for Bobby Fisher* for photographic influence. In the end we reached for a visual hybrid between *Gone Baby Gone* and *Searching for Bobby Fisher*, which was a bit of a challenge given the schedule, limited crew and limited equipment. - JH

## **Were there any challenges to making the film?**

Filmmaking is always a challenge. Low budget filmmaking is an extreme challenge. Low budget filmmaking on a very tight pre-production and shooting schedule is even tougher. Low budget filmmaking on a tight schedule with a skeleton crew is even more challenging. When that crew is mostly newbies in Hollywood – things border on impossible – and that was just the start of day 1 of *Before the Dawn*. Against all the odds, we were able to pull together a phenomenal, dedicated and talented team. The production shot primarily in and around the Los Angeles area – another challenge for budget-conscious films. Working without a contract with SAG-AFTRA limited the pool of actors, but didn't stop us from finding a cast of wonderful talent to breathe life into Alana's script. Every day was a challenge, but a dedicated cast and crew pulled together to make a project that we all believed in. - JH

## **What do you want audiences to take away from the film?**

Primarily, we wanted to tell a love story. I've always been interested in what I call the 'little tragedies of everyday life'. The heartbreaks, financial difficulties, domestic abuse, accidents, etc. – the real-life obstacles that everyone encounters at some point, and the emotional journey that takes us on, as well as the lessons we learn. It was my aim that audiences understand why Jason and Lila would be attracted to each other; and root for the relationship in spite of the taboo nature of both the age difference and teacher-student dynamic. - AD

# BEFORE THE DAWN

## CREW CREDITS

Director	Jay Holben
Writer	Alana de Freitas
Producers	Diane Foster Jay Holben
Executive Producers	Dan Wheeler Alana de Freitas
Director of Photography	Kaity Williams
Editor	Ahsen Ali
Sound Recordist	Manuel Lopez Cano Daniel Hernandez Kally Williams
Hair & Make Up	Michelle Snyder Sabrina Ozuna Alexandra Bayless
Associate Producer	Christopher M. Jiminez
Assistant Director	Micah Coate
Assistant Camera	Rebecca Clayton
Additional Cinematography	Christopher Probst Diego Gilly
Gaffer	Conor Soules Amber Lane Isaak van der Meulen
Grip	Amber Lane Jake Reardon
2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Camera	Pierre Jahn Colvin Ang
2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director	Gustavo Pena



# BEFORE THE DAWN

Stunt Coordinator	Bryan McKinley
Art Department	Alieke Wijnveldt Austin Torelli
Graphic Designer	Jamie Neese
Poster Photography	Sarah Jessica Bennett
Production Assistants	Alieke Wijnveldt Garrett J. Mowbray Austin Torelli Phillip Greenbaum
Composer	Nami Melumad
Sound Design	Bradly 'Trip' Clark
Colorist	Persephanie Engel
Visual Effects	Navid Sanati



# BEFORE THE DAWN

## CAST CREDITS

Lila Kendy	Alana de Freitas
Jason Walker	Jared Scott
Andrew Matthews	Houston Rhines
Shelly Walker	Kelly Hancock
Mary Kendy	Juli Cuccia
Shannen James	Carissa Dalton
Thugs	Gregory R. Gordon Raul Nava Byron James
John Walker	Joseph Covino
Jason's Friends	Juan Magana Matthias Chrans Benjamin Levy
Principal Gibney	Norma Burgess
Penny Walker	Alexa Reddy
Dale Kendy	Zach DuFault
Franklin	Paul Mariskanish
Stoners	Garret J. Mowbray Diane Foster
David	Juan Felipe Restrepo
Nina	Naomi Rodri
Drug Buying Student	Chris Kimball
Mr Galea	Erik Leeming
Mrs Galea	Laura Grimaldi

# BEFORE THE DAWN

Parent	Elizabeth Cool
Police Officers	Mark Krenik Gustavo Pena
Musicians	Justin Robinson Melodie Shih
Teachers	Matthew Rhodes Coronado Romero
Students	Charlene Brandt Garrett J. Mowbray Kally Williams John Price Gian Gilliam
Bar Patrons	Alessia Franchin Cristina DiCarlo Garrett J. Mowbray Michelle Snyder Sabrina Ozuna





# BEFORE THE DAWN

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Duration:	105 mins	Aspect Ratio:	2.0.1
Screening Format:	DCP @ 24 fps	Audio:	Digital 5.1
Shooting Format:	ProRes 422 Arri Amira 3.2k	B+W/Color:	Color
Country of Production:	USA	Year of Production:	2019

## FESTIVALS / AWARDS

LA Femme International Film Festival  
Boston International Film Festival  
Los Angeles Film Awards  
Actors Awards, Los Angeles  
International Independent Film Awards  
European Independent Film Awards  
New York Film Awards  
Focus International Film Festival

Official Selection 2018  
Official Selection 2019  
Official Selection 2019  
Best Actress Nomination – Alana de Freitas  
Best Actress WINNER – Alana de Freitas  
Official Selection  
Official Selection  
Official Selection



# BEFORE THE DAWN

## LINKS & SOCIAL MEDIA

### Before the Dawn

IMDb: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt7021088/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/beforethedawnmovie/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BeforeTheDawnMovie/>

Website: <https://www.beforethedawnmovie.com/>

### ADF Productions

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ADFprods>

### Jay Holben

IMDb: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0002911/>

Website: <http://jayholben.com/>

Instagram: <http://instagram.com/jayholben>

### Diane Foster

IMDb: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1341466/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dianefosterofficial/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dianefosterofficial/>

### Alana de Freitas

IMDb: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3702080/>

Website: <https://www.alanadefreitas.com/>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/alana\\_defreitas/](https://www.instagram.com/alana_defreitas/)

### Jared Scott

IMDb: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm7862765/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/jaredhscott/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/jaredhscott>

