

Film Crash presents

A Blue Egg Picture production

Big Heart City

Written and Directed by
Ben Rodkin

Starring
Shawn Andrews
And Seymour Cassel

Executive Producer
Matthew Harrison

“Big Heart City introduces a talented new director, Ben Rodkin, and leading actor, Shawn Andrews.”

“...graceful performances by two actors from different generations.”

-Stephen Farber, The Hollywood Reporter

“Big Heart City consciously evokes the 'beautiful loser' cinema of the 1970s...it not only has the grit and grain of old-school technology but the grit and grain of old-school storytelling.”

“...not every bum is Bukowski, and not every depressive philanderer is Leonard Cohen. But I found myself watching Big Heart City and wholly dragged into it...a wounded heart pumping rich blood fast.”

-James Rocchi, Cinematical (for The Los Angeles Times)

“Shawn Andrews' performance recalls the work of James Dean.”

-Dennis Hopper

“The tone is as gritty as the look...this is a quality film to experience.”

-Mark Bell, Film Threat

“Shawn Andrews is a breakout star. This is a terrific actor who is given a fully realized, complex role...riveting.”

-Victoria Alexander, of Films in Review

“For thespians hoping to witness a real acting tour de force...”

-Backstage

CONTACT:

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Matthew Harrison,
Executive Producer
C/o Film Crash
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Cast

Seymour Cassel
Shawn Andrews
Desi Lydic
Jake Alston

Larry
Frank
Rita
Peter

Crew

Written & Directed by
Executive Producer
Producer
Director of Photography
Original Score by
Editors
Casting by

Ben Rodkin
Matthew Harrison
Peter Paul Basler
Peter J Scalettar
Mick Turner and Jim White
Johannes Weuthen and Ben Rodkin
Alison B Buck

TRT 84 minutes Country of Origin: USA Original Production Format:
Super 16mm, color, 1.85:1, Stereo.

Available DVD Extras: Deleted scenes, video interviews, behind the scenes
shorts, extended original score.

www.bigheartcity.com

Log line:

A gambling addict attempts to pick up the pieces after the unexplained disappearance of his pregnant girlfriend.

150 word synopsis:

"I tell myself, don't give up." Whispered over beautifully grainy images of a racetrack and its shuffling, ever hopeful denizens, the first words of director Ben Rodkin's Big Heart City draw us immediately into the troubled head of Frank Polowski, from which the film's gritty tone springs, as he returns to the cracked concrete fringes of industrial Los Angeles to pick up the pieces of an interrupted life. He cons his way into a warehouse job, thanks in large part to the knowing good graces of its foreman, played by indie icon Seymour Cassel, but at home he finds the girl he expected to be waiting for him long gone. As Frank follows clues, real and imagined, to her whereabouts, perseverance gives way to obsession and paranoia. Assisted by Shawn Andrews' compelling performance at the film's center, Rodkin weaves an engrossing, and ultimately redeeming portrait of lost souls searching for their place in a hardscrabble world.

Full Cast

(In order of appearance)

frank	SHAWN ANDREWS
larry	SEYMOUR CASSEL
checkout girl	ANNA GAVRONSKY
rita	DESI LYDIC
rita's friend	ANNE JENSEN
peter	JAKE ALSTON
neighbor	NATHAN JONGEWAARD
bettor	MARK MCKEOWN
jane	DESI LYDIC

Full Crew

written and directed by	BEN RODKIN
executive producer	MATTHEW HARRISON
producer	PETER PAUL BASLER

director of photography	PETER J SCALETTAR
edited by	JOHANNES WEUTHEN BEN RODKIN
original score by	MICK TURNER and JIM WHITE
casting	ALISON B BUCK
additional original music	DAVID RHODES
sound recording	PAUL LOSADA
first assistant camera	JOSHUA RIDDELL
second assistant camera	CHRIS WESSINGER SARA NATOLI
costume	STACY GOLD
key make up	SHERRI CELIS
production manager	MICHELLE SULLIVAN
production coordinators	MARK D MCKEOWN MINDY ZEMRAK
props	SHAYDE CHRISTIAN
still photographer	DEBORAH CHESHER
bts videographer	DANTE DELLA MAGGIORE
production assistants	ADAM CHORDOCK BRIAN DAGGETT GABE SUCHOV KATHERINE FLORES

Cast Bios

Shawn Andrews (Frank). After studying under Arthur Penn at The Actors Studio in New York, Shawn made his feature film debut as the uber cool Kevin Pickford in Richard Linklater's indie coup, *Dazed and Confused* (1993). Since, he has been a champion of independent film making, committing his career to provocative character work, including, among others, his roll as Simon in the melodic festival favorite, *After the Flood* (2001), as the beautiful loser, Robbie, in the Matt Dillon directed, *City of Ghosts* (2002), and more recently in Tao Ruspoli's, *Fix* (2008).

Seymour Cassel (Larry). Cassel who made his movie debut in Cassavetes' first film, *Shadows* (1959), was nominated for a *Best Supporting Actor Oscar* for his role as the hippie swinger Chet in John Cassavetes' *Faces* (1968), later starred opposite Gena Rowlands in *Minnie and Moskowitz* (1971), and in much of Cassavetes' work from then onward. Cassel has remained prominent in the American indie community since the death of his friend and collaborator. He contributed a cameo appearance in the directorial debut of Steve Buscemi, *Trees Lounge* (1996), Alexandre Rockwell's, *In the Soup* (1992), and has appeared in three films by Wes Anderson: *Rushmore* (1998), *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001) and *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004).

Desi Lydic (Rita and Jane). In addition to *Big Heart City*, Desi has received rave reviews for her recent star turns in the features, *Out at the Wedding*, and *Screw Cupid*. This year Desi starred in Bobby Lee's Comedy Central pilot. Last year she starred in the MTV microseries "Fresh Takes" opposite Alicia Keyes which aired during *The Hills*, along with the VH-1 improvisational pilot, *With a Bullet*, opposite Jane Lynch produced by Eric McCormack. Previously, she was a series regular on Ashton Kutcher's , *The Real Wedding Crashers*, for NBC. Desi most recently wrapped shooting on the CBS comedy pilot, *The Karenskys*, created by Linwood Boomer (*Malcolm in the Middle*) opposite Sasha Alexander and Annie Potts. You can see her next, starring in Bo Zenga's forthcoming horror-spoof comedy feature *Stan Helsing*, opposite Steve Howey and Kennan Thompson. Desi is represented by ICM.

Crew Bios

Matthew Harrison (executive producer). Acting as Exec Producer on Big Heart City, award winning director Matthew Harrison's feature film, Universal Studios', *Kicked In The Head*, was Executive Produced by *Martin Scorsese* and, and premiered at Cannes. His network and cable television directing credits include *Popular* for Disney and *Sex And The City* for HBO. His feature directing debut *Spare Me*, a comedy drama, won awards internationally. Harrison's second feature film, *Rhythm Thief*, caught *Martin Scorsese's* eye when the picture won a Jury Prize at the *Sundance Film Festival*. Matthew recently completed his fourth feature film *The Deep and Dreamless Sleep*, and is in post-production on his new comedy, *The Good Life*. Harrison founded the production company, Film Crash, with directors Scott Saunders and Karl Nussbaum.

Peter J Scalettar (director of photography), a celebrated member of the New York independent film making community, has shot seven feature films on four continents. He currently splits his time between New York and Los Angeles, shooting narrative work, commercials and music videos. He is a graduate of the film school at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

Johannes Weuthen (editor). Johannes began his career as an assistant editor on *Run Lola Run* (1998). Since, his editing credits include *Reunion (Dogma #17)*, and famed director Michael Almereyda's award winning documentary, *William Eggleston in the Real World*.

Mick Turner and Jim White (composers). Mick and Jim comprise two thirds of the great Australian instrumental rock/folk band, *The Dirty Three* (the third being Warren Ellis also of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds). The Dirty Three have released albums on Touch & Go Records and have toured with Sonic Youth, Pavement, Throwing Muses, Cat Power, Bonnie 'Prince' Billy, Devendra Banhart and Shannon Wright. Mick and Jim also comprise the moody, haunting, instrumental group, The Tren Brothers, and together they have played with Cat Power and Bonnie 'Prince' Billy. Turner has also released three solo albums under his own name. (www.anchorandhope.com)

Peter Paul Basler (producer). An accomplished independent Director/Producer, Peter's most recent producing efforts include: the independent feature *Float* starring Emmy nominee Gregory Itzin (TV's *24*), and Cristine Rose (TV's *Heroes*.) His first feature film *Just Add Pepper*, which he wrote, directed

and produced, was completed in 2002 and was released nationally on DVD in September 2004. His second feature, an improv comedy entitled *Reality & Stuff* was released on DVD in early 2005. Most recently he produced *Delaney* a horror-comedy directed by Spanish Director Carles Torrens starring Daeg Faerch of Rob Zombie's *Halloween* fame. Frequent collaborator Marc Coppola, of the famous film family, has said of Peter: "He makes independent filmmaking look easy, which we all know it's not!" Peter currently lives in Burbank, California with his wife Michelle and his dog Bailey. Peter is represented by Little Pie Artists.

Ben Rodkin (writer/director) is a filmmaker and writer living and working in Los Angeles, where he can often be spotted walking his dog, Valentine.

Big Heart City is his first feature; he is in pre production on his second.

Q & A with director Ben Rodkin, excerpts:

Tell us a bit about your background and how this project came to be?

I graduated high school when I was 17, and immediately joined the Navy. I wanted to be Ernest Hemingway when I grew up. I was in the Navy for six months. I've worked as a bike messenger, I worked in advertising as a writer for a few years, I've worked in film and television. I have a fine arts background, and a formal studio art education; my previous film work has been fairly conceptual, and a lot of it has been gallery-based.

Like a lot of my work, the idea began with a single image, more an aesthetic pursuit than anything else.

I was spending a lot of time at the horse races, a place that is so rich with images, and sounds, and pretty extreme personalities, and out of that I began writing a story. It was sort of reverse engineering.

Can you speak little bit about the production process?

We shot the whole film on super 16 millimeter, in twelve days.

We shot the whole film hand-held, with almost no lights.

We relied heavily on film stock donations, equipment donations, free locations, cast and crew working for free, or almost for free. I relied upon friends to sneak me in to post production houses late at night.

Matthew Harrison came on early as my executive producer. He has been making films in that way for years, and really clarified, for better or worse, the severe limitations, and the wonderful liberty of working in this way.

Locations were generally shot as-is. Larry's office was really a guy's office; those are his photos on the wall; he really works at that warehouse, and was nice enough to work out of the lunch room for a few days so that we could shoot in there.

We managed to find accomplished, world-class talent to participate, selflessly, in every capacity.

What about the look of the film?

We wanted grit and grain and a lot of texture; dirty windows, natural light, unspoiled locations. These places are where people really live and work. Everything you see becomes an artifact of real life. The light is as it already exists in these spaces, with little intervention. The original film image was only minimally processed outside-of-camera.

How important was actor collaboration to the process?

Shawn Andrews and I rehearsed a lot, and did some rewrites together, and did some casting together. Shawn really desires that level of involvement, and I was more than happy to involve him. Seymour Cassel, however, likes to get to location, get into his space, and just go. You learn as a director that the trick to working with actors is acknowledging that they all have different needs, and wants; they all work in different ways.

Can you speak more about working with indie legend Seymour Cassel?

We really wanted an old master for that part, someone with major chops to sort of be the backbone of the cast. A lot of names were tossed around; Cassavetes came up, then Falk, Gazzara, Cassel, etc. By the end, we had narrowed it down to Seymour, and Harry Dean Stanton, but Seymour was the one I wanted. I kind of imagined his character to be the aged version of his character in 'Minnie and Moskowitz'. So we sent him the script, two weeks later he finally read it, and liked it, and almost as importantly, his agent liked it. The rest was easy. Seymour is very generous with his talents; he responds to scripts, and he responds to people, that's what's important to him. By the time he signed on, we had very little time to prepare, but Seymour doesn't require a whole lot of preparation. He

is just so good at what he does, every take was different, and in every take there was a little gem. He is quite a lot of fun to work with. Even between takes, during lunch, etc., he tells stories, he entertains.

Once, between takes, he literally lit the seat of my pants on fire with his cigar lighter while I was talking to our DP.

Did any films or filmmakers serve as an immediate inspiration for this particular film?

My DP, Peter Scalettar, and I watched Wong Kar Wai's, 'Happy Together' a bunch of times. It's gritty and stirring, and a little bit confusing, and beautiful to look at. That's what we wanted. Similarly, we also looked at a lot of photos (Nan Goldin, Jeff Wall, Mary Ellen Mark, Daido Moriyama, Richard Billingham).

Can you briefly convince the average moviegoer as to why they should go see this film?

Love, fear, deceit, betrayal, horse racing, knife fights, gritty performances, compelling imagery; a film with a lot of spirit, and not like anything you've seen in a very long time. This is throw back filmmaking.

Images, trailers, bios, production notes, additional information at large can be found at:

www.bigheartcity.com

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BIG HEART CITY
Starring SHAWN ANDREWS, DESI LYDIC, JAKE ALSTON

and SEYMOUR CASSEL

Casting by ALISON B BUCK Edited by JOHANNES WEUTHEN and BEN
RODKIN Music by MICK TURNER and JIM WHITE Cinematography by PETER
J. SCALETTAR Executive Produced by MATTHEW HARRISON Produced by
PETER PAUL BASLER Written and Directed by BEN RODKIN