



# FAREWELL DARKNESS

SOMETIMES THE WAR COMES HOME



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**SOMETIMES THE WAR COMES HOME** Michael returns home to Chicago from Operation Iraqi Freedom with more scars than he left with. The surroundings of his childhood, trigger a series of bad memories of his turbulent childhood. Most of which were suffered at the hands of his alcoholic father, Roman. Reuniting with his girlfriend Rose opens his eyes to the good things in his life. Contrary to his plan to enact revenge on his Father for his Mother's suicide. He must decide, either move forward and live his life with Rose. Or settle the injustices he endured as a youth.

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## CREW:



### **Daniel J. Pico:** *Writer/Director/Producer/Editor*

Daniel J. Pico has been making movies since the age of eight. Fulfilling this dream, he went to film school at Columbia College Chicago (BA in Film and Video). He has written and directed award winning Short Films including the World War II Drama, "Two Days in Limbo" (2002) [Limbo went on to garner a bevy of festival awards including Grand Jury Prize for Best Short Film at the Michigan Independent Film Festival 2003, and The New York International Film and Video Festival 2004].

Other credits include, "Back to Reality" (2004) that was praised by Kevin Smith (Clerks, Dogma, Chasing Amy). As well as over thirty other short films.

Mr. Pico also directed the feature documentary, "In Bloom: The making of Effloresce", for Los Angeles based production companies Painted Saint Entertainment and Max Ink Productions. He also took part in the collaborative Dogme 95 inspired feature, "Common Senses" (2005). His Chapter "Hearing Impaired" was praised by critics for its ingenuity.

His latest short film, "David Bianchi,s Soldier", was an official selection of 11 film festivals and winner of best short film at the Queens International Film Festival, and best action drama at the San Tan Film Festival.

Most recently, he completed his feature directorial debut "Farewell Darkness", due to hit the festival circuit in 2008.



### **Roy Maurer:** *Writer*

Roy Maurer is an award winning filmmaker, screenwriter and journalist. A graduate of Columbia College Chicago's film program ('00) with concentrations in both directing and screenwriting, Maurer worked in both Chicago and Los Angeles in the film and video industries.

Maurer has written several screenplays, including Inland, a dark romance set against the backdrop of the Southern California sex industry and a 2002 Written Image Award winner; Black Hills, a violent, operatic western set in the 1880's Dakotas; and Hollywoodland, a sprawling rise and fall drama played out during the birth of Hollywood.

Maurer, a Marine Corps veteran himself, conceived of and penned Farewell Darkness as a way to portray the thoughts and feelings of returning combat vets, and to honor the amazing survival stories of the men and women who were abused and or neglected as children.

Maurer is currently an award winning journalist and the Editor in Chief of Culture-week, an arts and culture magazine in Bloomington, Indiana. He received the 2006 Chandler Prize, the top award for religion writing, for an in-depth feature on Bloomington's pagan population.

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## **Matthew M. Jones:** *Producer*

Matthew was born and raised in the southern suburbs of Detroit. Woodhaven, Michigan to be exact. He spent his days drawing comic book characters, creating haunted house tours through his friends basements and acting in the Woodhaven High School's theater program. Matthew moved to East Lansing and graduated from Michigan State University with a B.A. in Advertising. Where he concentrated on graphic design and marketing. After graduation Matthew moved to Chicago, where he worked as a print and web designer.

In 1999, he entered the Film and Video Program at Columbia College, Chicago, where he graduated with honors. Developed and released uPressplay Online Entertainment Network in 2001. uPressplay also produced many original titles including, Stay Dead, Two Days in Limbo, Palooka, Roscoe Village, Back to Reality, Soldier, Terrorvision and music videos from Marazene, Lexceone and Court Jester.

uPressplay has been awarded 15 Official Film Festival Selections and winning Best Dramatic Short at the Michigan Independent and NY International Film Festivals.



## **David Bianchi:** *Producer/Dougie*

Originally from Rochester, NY now based in Hollywood, CA he first hit the stage in 3rd grade. He is a classically trained actor with a BFA in Performance Theatre and Film from Arizona State University and graduated top of his class Magna Cum Laude.

He has starred in numerous independent films, National commercials, and episodic television and is a member of both SAG and AFTRA.

He is writer, producer and Star of the Award winning, critically acclaimed short film "David Bianchi's Soldier" directed by Daniel J Pico (which marked their first collaboration). Soldier became an official selection of 11 domestic festivals and won best short at Queens, San Tan in Phoenix, and was voted by Film Threat Magazine the N.02 best unseen film of 2006.

Currently he is in post-production on a feature length documentary which he produced and directed called "Outspoken- Los Angeles" with a 2008 release and other projects in development.

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## CAST:



## **Keith Compton:** *Michael*

Keith began his acting career at the age of 12 when he endeavored in plays at school and throughout the Chicago land area. During these years, he performed in a variety of classical, contemporary and musical theatre productions. Keith began his professional training at Barat College's Shakespeare on the Green Summer Youth Program during the summer of 1999.

In the Fall of 2000, Keith continued his professional training at Roosevelt University's Theatre Conservatory Program. There he performed in such productions as Fires in the Mirror, Romeo and Juliet, The Kyogen Rope and The Skin of our Teeth. After graduating with his B.F.A in Acting, Keith began playing roles in short films and independent features. Farewell Darkness marks his first lead role in a feature length film.

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## BriAnna Weaver: *Rose*

BriAnna Weaver is a born and raised Kansas City girl, who recently graduated with honors from the Chicago College of Performing Arts with a B.F.A. in Acting. She was fortunate enough to spend a semester in London studying with the British American Dramatic Academy. BriAnna was honored to play the part of Rose, and would like to send out a prayer to all of our soldiers, both home and away, who are serving our country. FILM CREDITS: Rose- Farewell Darkness, Allison- Square Pegs. THEATRE : Juliet~ Measure For Measure, Violet- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Green Woman- Peer Gynt, Thea- Spring Awakening, Mary- Little House on The Prairie.



## Circus-Szalewski: *Roman*

Circus-Szalewski began the pursuit of a performing arts career immediately after high school and was acting professionally within five years. Overall, C-S has credits on stage spanning 35 years, 25 years in television, nearly a decade in feature cinema, and has recently ventured into the new realm of interactive cinema with David Donihue's THE WEATHERED UNDERGROUND (via iPod, PlayStation, and computer distribution from ChooseInteractive.com).

Circus' portrayals of deceased great wordsmiths include Tennessee Williams, Hart Crane, and John Lennon while the C-S penchant for character work has resulted in feature film performances as diverse as aging punk cave-diver, militant Christian computer-hacker, corporate villain, backwoods good ol' boy, marathon runner, small town deputy, surfer turned inventor, and a Gollum-esque persona in the parody DORK OF THE RINGS.

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## PRODUCTION NOTES:

### **DARKNESS BEGINS**

The story came from a breakfast meeting with Screenwriter Roy Maurer and Director Daniel J. Pico (Common Senses, David Bianchi's Soldier) in 2004. The two friends and collaborators since film school; discussed a many stories that morning. One of which was the story of a young man who was abused as a child and then goes to war and comes home to avenge his past. The story went through many incarnations until the final shooting script was delivered almost two years later. It was then that director Daniel J. Pico had decided to make "Farewell Darkness" his feature film debut.

He quickly assembled a production crew made up of professional filmmakers, like producers David Bianchi (David Bianchi's Soldier), Matthew M. Jones (The Art of Pain), and Cinematographer Jason Deuchler. The production knew going in that they had limited funds, so they decided to shoot the picture in High Definition Video which allowed for every dime to put up on screen. After casting director Adam Mack joined the project it was full steam forward into finding our players.

Director Pico decided early on that he wanted a cast of unknown actors, not just for budgetary reasons but he felt it would help the audience connect more with the characters if they had no frame of reference. "The actors chosen would appear more to be the characters on screen as opposed to a name they would recognize as the actor and not the character", says director Pico. After much searching the production chose newcomers such as Keith Compton and BriAnna Weaver, as Michael and Rose the two lead roles and more veteran actors such as Circus-Szalewski (Cup of My Blood), Duane Sharp (Godfather of Green Bay, Zen Noir), and David Bianchi (Elizabethtown).

### **DARKNESS FALLS**

Production began in March 2007 in Chicago Illinois and finished in Avondale Arizona at CJS Studios in July. The production shot for a total of 25 days and faced many problems through out. The weather was the first challenge according to producer David Bianchi, "We started in Chicago with 20 below zero conditions, and finished in Arizona with record setting heat of 118 degrees." But thanks to a small but dedicated crew the production wrapped under budget and ahead of schedule. "This wasn't to say this was an easy shoot just because we finished early, we worked our butts off, and have the battle scars to prove it.", says director Pico. The production had

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virtually no stage to use in Chicago so the entire film was shot on location in and around the Chicago land area. "The closest thing the production had to a stage was an abandoned police station that the Chicago film commission allowed us to use. This building had to be turned into 9 separate locations, by painting rooms, and art directing the hell out of it.", said producer Matthew M. Jones. The filmmakers were also able to maximize the production value by planning ahead and art directing only what was absolutely needed. "We had some scenes that one wall was painted, and decorated and the other across from it as well and that was it." says director Pico.

After production wrapped in Chicago the filmmakers cut the film together and planned for the company move to Arizona. In Arizona the production faced the elements yet again on the back lot of CJS Studios. "But the high temperatures and harsh conditions lent a little bit of authenticity to the films Iraq sequences. The cast really felt like they were there", said producer Bianchi.

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The post production process was completed over the course of six months in Chicago with the aid of Industrial Strength Productions, and Avenue Edit allowing the filmmakers the use of post production facilities. The film was given the added touches by composer Carl Sondrol and sound designer Ryan Prybil whose contributions to the film were immeasurable according to director Pico, "Ryan and I have done four films together and I always look forward to our collaboration. This is the first time I worked with Carl and I was amazed at just how much he could do with such little time." In the end the filmmakers completed the whole process from preproduction to finish in less than nine months.

Director Pico's thoughts in closing, "The project began out of my anger and frustration with the Iraq war, and grew into one out of love for our young men and women who are coming home with scars under the surface. The more I researched and learned about PTSD the more I knew this was a story that could potentially help people. I want to make it clear that there is more to the story than just our main character's experiences in Iraq, it's also about trying to right wrongs by doing more wrong, and the consequences of that."

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## REVIEWS:

Farewell Darkness is an intense and gripping story that dives deep into subjects such as destiny, human behavior and the aftermath of war, when a soldier comes back home from Iraq and brings the war with him.

The disturbing memories of his childhood, the violence he lived during his time in Iraq, and the pain of the loss of his mother takes Michael into a nightmare of anger and hate, bordering on insanity, where all that converges with the possibility of a happy future with his loving girlfriend. He has to make, then, the most difficult decision of his life.

David Bianchi, Daniel J. Pico, and Roy Maurer are the architects of this excellent production. Keith Compton and Brianna Weaver as well as all the cast, perform their roles so well that they take you along the soldier's journey. The cast render the characters with humanity and breathe life into them.

A very professional team put together their talents to create this outstanding independent film.

Marisa Darnel

- **Artist Interviews**

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## LINKS:

### **Official Website:**

<http://farewelldarkness.com>

### **Myspace:**

<http://myspace.com/farewelldarknessthefilm>

### **IMDB:**

<http://imdb.com/title/tt0988090/>

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