



MADMAN

& Vertigo Films
Present

A GARETH EDWARDS Film

MONSTERS

SIX YEARS AFTER A NASA PROBE CRASHES, AN AMERICAN PHOTO JOURNALIST AGREES TO ESCORT A SHAKEN TOURIST THROUGH THE INFECTED ZONE TO THE SAFETY OF THE US BORDER

Written and Directed by Gareth Edwards

Starring: Scoot McNairy and Whitney Able

monstersthemovie.com.au

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PUBLICITY:

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SYNOPSIS

Six years ago a NASA space probe crashed to earth with a shipload of alien stowaways on board - in the time since, a massive swath of the Mexico-US boarder has been fenced off and is now quarantined as an 'infected zone'.

Today, the American and Mexican military still struggle to contain "the creatures"...

Photojournalist Andrew (SCOOT MCNAIRY) is keen to get pictures of the creatures, but when he's tasked with the getting his boss's daughter (WHITNEY ABLE) back to the US, a one-day trip turns into a surprising journey.

Not your average sci-fi monster movie, MONSTERS is instead a one-of-a-kind hybrid, a cross genre road movie love-story that just happens to travel into the heart of an alien-infested war zone.

ABOUT THE MOVIE

MONSTERS stars Scoot McNairy and Whitney Able and is written, shot and directed by BAFTA award-winning, EMMY Nominated CGI animator Gareth Edwards. Presented by Vertigo Films, produced by Allan Niblo and James Richardson.

Having carved out a very successful career as a BAFTA award winning & EMMY nominated visual effects creator for the BBC, (series including 7 WONDERS OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORLD and SPACE RACE) and The Discovery Channel. Gareth Edwards decided the time had come to embark on his own feature and capitalise on his, by now, well-honed CGI skills, and combine it with the simplistic approach he had always wanted.

Edwards explains. "As there's so much competition in the film industry and so many people want to be film makers in our generation, I didn't feel as if an opportunity was going to come to me. I didn't want to have to wait for someone to come along and give me the money or permission to make a film. So I was just trying to think of an idea that, if I had to, I could fund and create myself, without a big crew and it could be made as cheaply as possible."

He came up with a plan for how to shoot a film which would tick all these boxes whilst on holiday, where he not only realized that his CG eye never took a break from work, but that by using everyday situations and locations and building a story and film around these could be his way forward. Edwards spotted some fishermen in the Maldives struggling with whatever was on the end of the line whilst he imagined a huge tentacled monster surfacing from the water. MONSTERS was born.

"I sat watching the other fishermen laughing and taking the mickey out of the poor guy struggling with this net and thought it would be brilliant if a giant tentacle was attached. I thought if only I had my camera I could just shoot it there and then. There's so much production value in exotic locations where you don't have any complications; you can shoot what happens and then manipulate the story to fit once you get back to the computer."

By this stage Edwards' agent had approached Vertigo with various ideas and reels and both Allan Niblo and James Richardson had little doubt they had struck upon someone with a talent and reputation not just for visual effects and ideas, but also for his approach to storytelling. Richardson explains. "Gareth's UK agent had sent us examples of his work that were all about disaster films, like hurricanes and floods etc. He'd also done a one minute short for the Sci-fi channel which we looked at and got incredibly excited by. He clearly had a talent not just for the CG stuff but from what we saw in this one minute competition entry was his ability to handle drama incredibly and build incredible atmosphere."

"What blew us away even more" continues Niblo, "was not just that he had come up with all these effects, but that he'd done it on his own laptop. There was no studio involved, no big post production facility, it was just incredible. So we asked him if he wanted to make a feature film with us."

Edwards picks up the story. "After my inspiration with the fishermen on holiday, I wrote down how I would approach making a film like this rather than a specific storyline and Vertigo loved the idea. We then spent 3 months coming up with a story until we were all happy."

Having grown up with films like JURASSIC PARK, ET and other Spielberg classics, Edwards wanted to make 'The most realistic monster film ever'. He also wanted to make a love story that didn't make him cringe as well as a sci-fi movie where the premise wasn't totally unbelievable. "I did some research on one of the moons of Jupiter called Europa which, scientists say, has the highest chance of there being life on it and NASA apparently wanted to send a probe up there to try and bring something back. So I thought if they did, it could easily crash and bring with it micro-organisms which could then infect the area it ends up in. In our case, the Mexican Ocean."

"I wanted MONSTERS to be set after most monster movies normally end", explains Edwards, "so, six years later, when life just goes on and there are these creatures affecting in a certain part of the world. It's a seasonal problem to do with the migration path that these things go on which happens earlier than normal this particular year. For photographer Andrew Kaulder (Scoot McNairy) it is the

chance he's been waiting for to get those big money monster shots. But when his boss's daughter Sam (Whitney Able), is also caught up in it her father demands that Kaulder helps to bring her home. What starts out as a straight forward task get worse and essentially we end up on a road movie where we go right through the heart of the Infected Zone as they try to get back to America."

Given that the weight of the film rested primarily on the two leads, casting was an area Edwards felt very strongly about. "I wanted a real life couple for the two lead roles, as I thought it's much more believable to have a couple act out just meeting and getting to know each other. Then when it comes to having the chemistry of a couple on screen it's much easier and more natural than if you have two people who don't know each other trying to create this tension and chemistry that isn't real."

Highly praised for his role in, IN SEARCH OF A MIDNIGHT KISS, Scoot McNairy jumped at the chance of working with Whitney Able (his then girlfriend) on a project that promised to be both challenging and unpredictable.

Scoot explains, "If the guys over at Vertigo are doing a picture, you better try and get involved, it seems to be the only company out there with the guts to take on the films that no one else will. They approached us with a very loose treatment to go and shoot a film in Central America, which we thought was a wonderful opportunity and as we were looking for something that we could do together it was perfect. Then when we saw Gareth's short film FACTORY FARM, it really struck our interests; we were completely sold."

Edwards flew out to the US to meet them not only to make sure he had found his ideal couple but that, faced with 3 weeks in a truck together 24/7 they would all get along.

Whitney explains, "Gareth put together a really enticing treatment, complete with images, clips, and a thrilling story idea. The next thing we knew, he was on a plane to come and meet us. We told him not to book a hotel and that he had to stay on our couch. If we were going to spend week upon week with a small crew in intimate situations, we wanted to be sure we could make it at least through a week of him at our house. It was a treat. Together we brainstormed, researched, developed our back-stories, and started to form a solid picture of what was to come. We may have also played a 5 hour long game of Strategy at some point! At the end of it, I knew that we'd all be able to work, have fun, and pull together something really interesting."

And rather than being put off by the premise of the film, the improvised script and shooting style Edwards had in mind, Scoot was even more enthused. "My initial thought was, this is never going to work! I think that's what got me so excited about doing it. It was absolutely outrageous. I recall sending an email to Vertigo saying.... "Near death experiences, small crew, possible kidnappings, lugging gear through the jungle in the middle of the night, and improvisation - that sounds like the project of a lifetime. We are definitely in."

Part of the appeal for the couple were the real aspects of the story itself "In a sense, the story begins in the middle" says Whitney, "people are already used to the notion that there are these occasional creature flare-ups happening around them. The word "creature" or "extraterrestrial" has become common nomenclature in everyday conversation. Like when the weather is bad, and someone throws out "El Nino", it just is. This is the world these people are living in."

One of the keys to keeping the dialogue as true to life as possible was improvisation. Gareth gave certain guidelines on what would happen in a scene and what character developments should be between particular stages of the story but then left the actors to it. Which meant that, at times, they would be improvising and shooting for up to 40 minutes to get what he wanted.

"We would get some pages in the morning" explains Whitney, "and sometimes we had time to have a quick coffee and talk about what we were going to shoot that day, but generally, they were sort of a guideline rather than anything specific. We knew we had to hit these certain points and that particular elements and happenings had to be in the dialogue in order to move the story forward, but aside from that we were pretty free to play within the environment. By not having a cast with us it was sort of just off the cuff, so we had to navigate the conversation as it was happening."

"The improvising was one of the biggest challenges for me" says Scoot, "I would improvise a scene and go on for ages coming up with things and doing this and that. Then Gareth would call 'cut' and turn to me and say, "Ok, so can you do that again? I need to get coverage on that, so just say everything you just said again". Of course I'd have no idea what I just said because I'd been talking for 10 minutes, so I'd ask him which part he wanted me to repeat and he'd say "All of it!". That part was a bit of a nightmare but I'd do it again, for him."

Well aware of the impact Scoot and Whitney have made on the final film, Edwards couldn't have been happier with their performances. "I look at the film now and it's not the film I set out to make. I actually think it's a lot better in that Scoot and Whitney brought so much along to the project in terms of personality and the whole ad lib side of things. They are so fascinating to watch, and it's such an interesting world to be stuck in and they are such interesting people to follow through this world. I've had to watch the film a thousand times in the process of making it and I'm still not bored watching them because they are so charismatic."

Aside from his two leads all the other people in MONSTERS were locals who often didn't know they were going to be in the film until 20 minutes before. "It was great, because you just told people what not to do and what you needed them to achieve by the end of the scene but it was up to them how they got to it."

"I was very much on the fence about going down to these places and just finding people to be in the film" Scoot says, "I wasn't sure how that was going to work. I think I felt it might be a lot of pressure to carry a scene with people there who weren't actors. As it turned out the ones we worked with were amazing; they were so open and willing. I met some truly amazing people on the project, and on this journey, people you would never normally come across deep in the jungle. It really gave me an appreciation for humanity and people's behaviour. I found myself really wanting to hear more about them and what their stories were."

With just a four person crew and a fixer the team traveled through Guatemala, Belize and Mexico picking locations and shooting them as they found them with little or no specific plan or preparation as Edwards explains. "We'd see a place that looked amazing or unusual and work out what scene we could shoot there and just do it. We picked these challenging and often remote places because we wanted a journey that got worse and worse and worse for the two main characters, and the classic idea I thought people could really relate to would be a journey home, but one where the tension gets greater and greater as it goes along and then becomes not what you're expecting at all."

"The film took us on an incredible journey" explains Whitney, "hiking through jungles, climbing to the tops of incredible ruins, riding in boats, cars, trains... you name it. The scenery was always changing around us, leading us into new challenges in our journey back, in both the world of the film, and while we were making it. There were mosquitoes, alligator hazards, snakes as well as blazing heat and dehydration scares. At one point we had to walk back through a dark jungle after the sun had set because it was the only way back and I was sure we'd all be eaten by a panther. Of course there were weather challenges as well. You can't predict the rain in lush jungle area. The forecast is generally, "Yes, there *might* be rain today." It was thrilling. I loved every minute of it. I was able to experience places a regular tourist would never find themselves in."

Having shot the film and spent many months on the editing process, one of the big post-production challenges Edwards had to work out was what his Monsters would actually look like. "I spent nearly a year working out what the monsters would be, and have hundreds of drawings and sketches to that effect! I finally settled on the design and the flickering light idea to make them more visually interesting and almost beautiful to look at."

For Producers, Allan Niblo and James Richardson, after much deliberation all round, this was a part of the process they decided to leave entirely up to Edwards. "The biggest part", explains Niblo, "and it drove him mad all the way through the edit, was the big question of what the monsters were going to look like. It was something that was going to make or break this film."

"It was brilliant", Richardson continues, "he came in with around two hundred and fifty pictures of monsters and to be honest with you, they were all amazing. So, at the end of the day that was where we were least involved as producers because essentially that was his specialty. He knew what he

wanted and what he was trying to achieve so it was very important for him to have the design that was right for him.”

As well as the visual touches to the film, the score played a big part in creating just the right atmosphere for the piece which was a fundamental part of the process as Edwards explains. “Throughout the edit process you use temporary music to help you along, and the music we used was some of the best in the world from some of the most famous films. So I just got to the end of the process thinking we can’t possibly beat this, no one could come along and create anything like this. It happened that the music supervisor for Vertigo Films had worked with a young composer Jon Hopkins, who is basically Brian Eno’s protégé! He had worked on and had co-written some of Coldplay’s latest album as well as working on Peter Jackson’s film THE LOVELY BONES. People were raving about him, so I met Jon and basically said here you go, beat that! I personally thought he was never going to do it, but he came back with these beautiful pieces that were just perfect. There’s a lot of emotion and heart in the film and much of that is because of Jon’s composing; it’s just beautiful.”

For Edwards though, ironically perhaps, the aspects of the film that gave him the most pleasure were the more mundane rather than fantastical. “The scenes I enjoyed most were the ones in the hotel room, and the banal but real conversations between Scoot and Whitney’s characters, Andrew and Sam. At one point she turns on the TV and there are these crazy scenes with monsters attacking the city and Sam just yawns and stretches out on the bed. It would be like a film set in Iraq or somewhere like that, despite the seeming madness going on around you, you still have to do normal things, and people do eventually get blase about shocking situations or events. Just because there are monsters around, people won’t be running away and screaming all the time.”

For Scoot, some of his favourite moments were hanging out with local families, particularly the kids. “I really loved the scene with the family that gives us the map and lets us stay with them for the night. I got to play with their 2 year old baby boy. He was sucking on this lollypop for about 3 hours and got it all over his face. Then we hung out for a while and I taught him a little about photography, women and growing old!”

Whitney says it was the experience of a lifetime and one she would never forget. for many reasons. “I laughed, I wept, I saw, I did; It was truly the most enriching, well-rounded experience I have had so far, on a personal and professional level. I would do it again, especially if it were with Scoot. We knew if we could survive this experience we could do anything together, so he proposed a few months after we finished shooting. So in MY fantasy world, we definitely make a sequel!”

“I’m really proud of it”, says Edwards, “there were definitely times I wasn’t sure I could carry on but I feel I’ve really made something that I want to go and see at the cinema. In a dream world I’d say it’s the first love story a bloke would want to go and see and the first monster movie I’m confident a girl would love; one that hits the radar for both. I also love that it doesn’t hang on visual FX, it’s more about the journey these two people go on both literally and emotionally.”

For Allan Niblo and James Richardson at Vertigo, they are equally proud of the end result and are forging ahead to progress this type of film making in the future.

Niblo goes even further to say he feels MONSTERS is a world first. “The fact that a team of five people and one auteur can make a monster movie that has practically every country in the world buying it is amazing. It holds up as a love story, as a monster movie and a road movie all rolled into one. With a budget that would usually just cover the catering on an average Hollywood film for one day. This signifies a real liberation from archetypal filmmaking and a revolution which I think is going to inspire film students who are constantly wondering how they can possibly compete with Hollywood; this is a huge step towards that.”

GARETH EDWARDS - DIRECTOR, DOP, CREATOR

Gareth Edwards has always pushed the boundaries of filmmaking. His graduation film was one of the first ever student films to combine live-action with digital effects. As a result he soon got sidetracked in a career creating BAFTA award-winning and EMMY nominated visual effects entirely 'from his bedroom'.

He recently broke new ground directing the epic drama ATTILA THE HUN for the BBC, creating all the 250 visual effects by himself. But still frustrated with the 'factory approach' to filmmaking, he entered the SCI-FI CHANNEL's 48 hour film contest, hoping to prove that you could make a cinematic film with no crew and just one actor in only 2 days. The film won first prize and led to his feature film debut with Vertigo Films... MONSTERS.

SCOOT MCNAIRY – ANDREW KAULDER

Scot McNairy started on a winding, fateful path to Hollywood by way of Richardson, Texas. His love of the entertainment industry found its seeds in a local theatre where his parents sent him for an after school activity. However, after doing a number of plays at a young age Scot's love of the outdoors won out and he spent the rest of his childhood fishing.

When Scot moved to Austin, Texas he landed his first movie role in the feature film WRONG NUMBERS, which went on to win the Austin Film Festival.

You would think this experience would have led him straight to Hollywood. But Scot decided his next move should be to British Columbia to be a glacier guide. When a back injury put his hopes of climbing on hold he finally found himself in Los Angeles, pursuing his interest in cinematography at film school.

After a brief period working as a cinematographer for music videos and a carpenter for set design, Scot moved in front of the camera starring in over 200 national commercials. Besides starring in MONSTERS, Scot also starred in and produced IN SEARCH OF A MIDNIGHT KISS, which won the John Cassavetes award at the 2009 Independent Spirit Awards. Scot has appeared on TV ("SIX FEET UNDER, CSI, BONES, ELEVENTH HOUR, MY NAME IS EARL, THE SHIELD, JAKE IN PROGRESS, CLOSE TO HOME, HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER), in two TV pilots (MORE, PATIENCE and GOOD GIRLS DON'T) and in films (ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL from director Terry Zwigoff and opposite John Malkovich; TWISTED from Director John Asher; THE SHADOW EFFECT from directors Jared and Justin Varava; the upcoming THE LISTENING PARTY opposite Selma Blair, Neil Young, and Seth Green, and THE FALL from director John Krugger).

Actively pursuing his independent filmmaking dream, Scot partnered with his long time friend and manager John Pierce, and The Group Films was born. Scot's first film production was IN SEARCH OF A MIDNIGHT KISS. Currently Scot is in pre-production on two films. FRANK AND CINDY is the theatrical adaption of the award-winning documentary of the same name, starring Rene Russo and directed by Aaron Schneider – the production is slated for summer of 2010. THE LAST TIME I MADE STRAIGHT A'S is being produced by The Group Films and Holly Wiersma and to be directed by Tommy O'Haver.

WHITNEY ABLE – SAM WYNDEN

With her undeniable talent and her incandescent beauty, Whitney Able is poised as a rising up-and-comer whose name has already become synonymous with one of the top young actresses to watch of this new decade.

A native of Houston, Texas, Whitney has always carried that special quality that manifested itself when she began her training as a performer in early childhood. Starting in local theatre, Whitney later moved on to hone her skills at The High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and even after continued to work on her craft with various respected coaches. It is this dedication to her training combined with her raw talent that has translated into each and every character she plays.

Since moving to Los Angeles, Whitney has appeared in numerous films and television shows, including the Toronto Film Festival and South by Southwest selection ALL THE BOYS LOVE MANDY LANE as well as the upcoming much buzzed-about sci-fi flick MONSTERS, another South by Southwest selection. Her versatility as an actor has led her to featured stints on television in CSI: NY and COLD CASE, as well as the Jenji Kohan and T-Bone Burnett produced pilot TOUGH TRADE alongside Sam Shephard, and in this fall's NIKITA with Maggie Q.

ALLAN NIBLO – PRODUCER

A Graduate of The National Film and Television School, Allan's first film as a Producer was the critical and box office smash hit HUMAN TRAFFIC, which was picked up by Miramax and won a BAFTA. He has produced over 15 films to date including 2010's Oscar nominated AJAMI, MONSTERS which received a phenomenal reception at this year's Cannes and Europe's first 3D film STREETDANCE which was No.1 at the UK Box Office on release. Future Films include adaptation of the legendary TV series THE SWEENEY and a big screen version of the hugely successful kids TV series HORRID HENRY. Allan was one of the founders of Vertigo in 2002.

JAMES RICHARDSON – PRODUCER

James Richardson co-founded Vertigo in 2002 with Allan Niblo with whom he has produced the majority of Vertigo's films from their first film together, THE FOOTBALL FACTORY to the current hit STREETDANCE 3D and soon to be released MONSTERS.

END CREDITS

Written and Directed by	Gareth Edwards
Produced by	Allan Niblo James Richardson
Executive Producers	Nigel Williams Nick Love Rupert Preston
Line Producer	Jim Spencer
Director of Photography	Gareth Edwards
Visual Effects	Gareth Edwards
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Sound Recordist	Ian MacLagan
Music by	Jon Hopkins
Music Supervisor	Lol Hammond
Andrew Kaulder Sam Wynden	Scoot McNairy Whitney Able
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Production Coordinator	Alyson Pengelly
Production Designer	Gareth Edwards
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Associate Editor	Anne Goudie G.B.F.T.E
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EPK and Making Of Director	George McKenzie
Runner	Dexter Navy

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Drivers Mexico

David Gonzalez
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Key Production Assistant

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Locations Manager
Assistant Locations Manager

Jose Hernandez
Desirae Wallace

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MEXICO**

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Jeffrey Perez
Diana Byrne

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SEQUENCE, TEXAS**

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Ticket Seller

Mario Zuniga Benavides

Homeless Woman

Annalee Jefferies

Marines

Justin Hall
Ricky Catter
Paul Archer
Kerry Valderrema
Jonathan Winnford
Stan Wong
Anthony Cristo
Mario Richardson
Jorge Quirs
Erick Arce
Emigo Munkel
Esteban Blanco

Guerrillas

Victor Vejan
Cristopher Chararria
Roman Bustamante
Solamon Albarran
Alejandro Sotero
Victorino Angulo
David Alba Garcia
Eduardo Guizak
Alfonso Pineda
Jose Garcia Gomez

Mother "Erika", Bocoyna	Erika Morales Yolanda Chacon
Grandmother, Bocoyna	Elsa Rascon Gonzalez
Children of Family, Bocoyna	Jose Luis Morales Chacon
	Tamilez Morales Chacon
	Jonathan Cadena Chacon
	Cindy Vanessa Cadena Morales
Taxi Driver	Javier Acosta Rodriguez
Boat Skipper	Victor Manuel Martinez Tovar
Boat Assistant	Walter Hernandez Col
Driver of Pick-up Truck to the Zone	Kenedy Gamaliel Jimenez
Motorbike Driver	Hugo Valuerde
Ambulance Guys	Roberto Saluzan
	Cesan Solauo
Nurses in Maternity Ward	Aris Martinez
	Claudia Valdez
Main Receptionist at Hospital	Elizabeth Blanco Sanchez
Second Receptionist at Hospital	Gloria Soza
Third Receptionist at Hospital	Aura Escobar
Policemen at Ceibal Guarding Oil Barrel	Max Alfredo Coe Tux
	Ivan Sanchez
Policemen Guarding Barrier	Wilfredo Hernadez Alvarado
	Ramon Otzoy Sucuc
Boy in Pink Top	Shelmar Bradley
Driver of Red Pick-up Truck	Luis Cails Sosa Carlos
Passenger in Red Pick-up Truck	Rene Moreno Lopez
Little Girl in Pick-up Truck	Kenia Guadalupe Dominluez Yamas
Boy Playing Soccer	Jesus Jose Moreno Quezada
Corn Seller	Marta Maria Acatitla Vasquez
Whistle Blower	Romeo Arista
Dead Women in Jungle	Maria Luisa Ontanon

Refugio Tapia Rendon

Dead Girl in Jungle Katerine Zuleika Guizar Tapia

Poiceman Joagun Salazan

Little boy riding bike at store Anthony Jimenez Jara

Men at bar Luis Robertomonge Brenes
Oscar Mario Badilla Bora
Neston Herrera

Barman at Harbour Iserias Antouro Morah

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and Guatemala Ixta Productions

Production Services, Costa Rica VB Film Production Services

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Foley Artist Carsten Richter
Foley Recordist Marcus Sujata
ADR Editor Sabrina Naumann
Foley Editor Almut Schwacke

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	Kevin Shaw
Online Editor	Gregor Wille
DI Supervisor	Gregor Wille
End Credits	Florian Obrecht
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ADR Editor/ Supervisor/ Recordist	Daniel Willy
Additional Voices Casting	Daniel Willy
ADR Studio	SPG Studios Inc.
Recording Engineer	Daniel Willy
Technical Engineer	Jose Castellon
Machinist	Sergio Leigue
Production/Site Supervisor	Laura Andrews
Voice over for Tommy	Cooper Smith
ADR Supporting Artists	Brian McGuire
	Jon Kluger
	Michelle Parylak
	Erika Robledo
	Eduardo Iduñate
	Hector Crisantes
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	Elezar del Valle
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	Daniel Willy
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In-house Production Coordinator	Louise Killin
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Comision Mexicana de Filmaciones	Gobierno de Guatemala
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Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua	Ennio Estuardo Lopez
Hospital Antonio Peinados de Barrio, Peten, Guatemala	Gobierno del Estado de Quintana Roo
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'El Cascabel'

Written by Lorenzo Barcelata

Performed by Conjuntos

Tlalixcoyan y Medellin

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Limited

1. MI AMOR
2. MUCHOS MESCAL
3. LETTER FROM
MEXICO
4. ARRIBA TEQUILLA
5. RAMON RAMEREZ
6. BUSINESS IN
MEXICO

All Above Tracks Written by: Eva Abraham & Andy Waterworth
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MATERIALS

All materials including key art and production stills can be found on our press site:

www.madman.com.au/pressarea

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