

SELF-RELIANT FILM presents a NEST FEATURES production

something, anything

WRITTEN & DIRECTED by
PAUL HARRILL

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essentials

SOMETHING, ANYTHING

Paul Harrill - Writer/Director

USA - 2014 - English - 88 minutes - Color/Stereo - 2:1 aspect ratio

SYNOPSIS

When a tragedy shatters her plans for domestic bliss, a seemingly typical Southern newlywed gradually transforms into a spiritual seeker, quietly threatening the closest relationships around her.

One of ten projects selected in 2013 for IFP's prestigious Narrative Lab, the debut feature from Sundance award-winning filmmaker Paul Harrill is both a meditative character study and an unconventional romance.

IMAGES

All images seen in this presskit are available as still images. Please contact info@selfreliantfilm.com for high-resolution .TIF or .JPG files.



quotes

In his unpredictable, moving and totally refreshing feature directorial debut, Paul Harrill reveals a unique sensibility and a passion for human transformation.

-- Chris Fujiwara, *Edinburgh Int'l Film Festival*

Willing to walk away from everything she's known, yet not afraid to face the consequences, Peggy is a genuine contemporary hero.... A low-key jewel of a movie, SOMETHING, ANYTHING is something indeed.

-- Jim Healy, *Wisconsin Film Festival*

A film about a woman of few words who swallows her emotions and fends off despair, SOMETHING, ANYTHING manages, in its final moments, to capture two minor miracles, both of them earth-bound and sublime.

-- Darren Hughes, *Mubi's The Notebook*

Harrill's writing and directing is sensitive in the best way possible...[Ashley] Shelton's performance has a steady intensity that gives off a soft but beautiful light throughout.

-- Glenn Kenny, *Some Came Running*

An important highlight [of BAMcinemaFest]

-- Leah Anderst, *Bright Lights Film Journal*

A real discovery.

-- Peter Labuza, *The Cinephiliacs*

4 out of 5 Stars. An impressive accomplishment...particularly remarkable for the deftness of touch with which it addresses such profound issues as religion, identity and personal fulfillment.

-- Julie Dawson - *TV Bomb (UK)*

A close-up profile shot of a woman with dark hair looking out of a car window. The background is a blurred green landscape, likely a golf course or park, under a clear sky. The word "creators" is overlaid in white text at the bottom left of the image.

creators

PAUL HARRILL: Writer-Director

Named one of *Filmmaker Magazine's* 25 New Faces of Independent Film, Paul Harrill's work has screened at film festivals, museums, and on television around the world. His short films include *Gina*, *An Actress*, *Age 29*, which won the Jury Prize in Short Filmmaking at the Sundance Film Festival and, *Quick Feet*, *Soft Hands*, a co-production with the Independent Television Service, starring Greta Gerwig. Harrill's work has been supported by the Sundance Institute, the Independent Filmmaker Project, and ITVS, among others. *Something, Anything* is his debut feature.

ASHLEY MAYNOR: Producer

Ashley Maynor was named the Sundance Institute's Sheila C. Johnson Creative Producing Fellow for 2012-13. Her previous productions include Cameron Nelson's *Some Beasts* and Paul Harrill's *Quick Feet*, *Soft Hands*, co-produced with ITVS. As a director, her most recent film is the documentary *For Memories' Sake*, which screened at several festivals, the Library of Congress, and on the Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers, among other venues.

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KUNITARO OHI: Cinematographer

Raised in Tokyo, Japan, and currently based out of Washington D.C., Kunitaro Ohi's credits include three features and numerous short films, including Christopher Munch's ITVS-produced FutureStates episode *Return to Elektra Springs* and Chris Sheriden's festival hit *Beta to the Max*, starring Todd Rohal.

JENNIFER LILLY: Editor

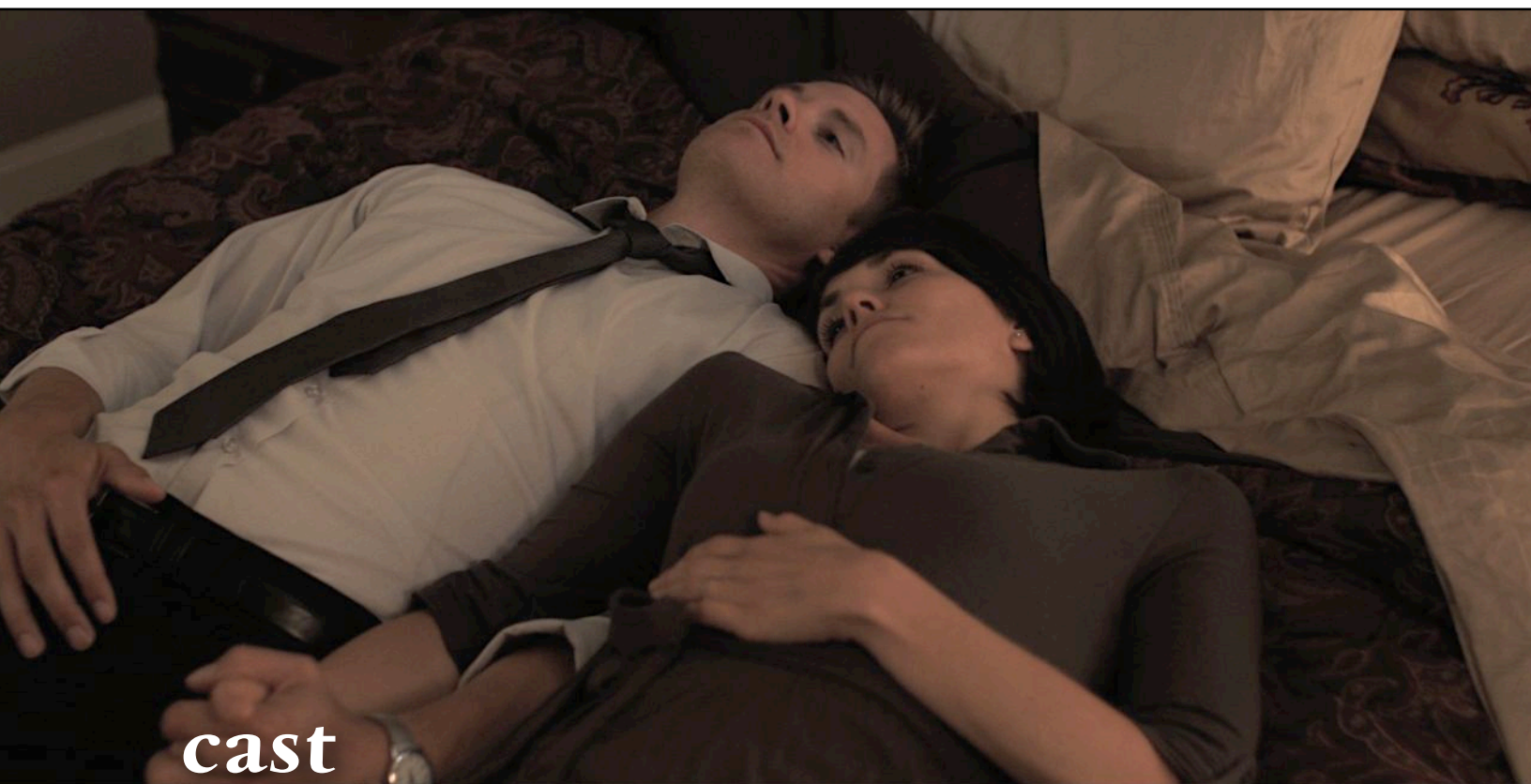
Jennifer Lilly began her career in the cutting rooms of some of New York's most esteemed filmmakers, including Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese, and Sidney Lumet. Her credits as an editor include *The One I Love* (Sundance 2014), *Electrick Children* (Berlinale 2012); and *Were The World Mine*, which screened at 150+ festivals and earned Lilly the Best Editing award at the Woodstock Film Festival.

ERIC V. HACHIKIAN: Composer

Eric V. Hachikian is an Armenian-American composer whose music has been hailed by the New York Times as “lovely and original.” His compositions and orchestrations can be heard in a variety of motion pictures, network television shows, and ad campaigns and have been performed Off-Broadway, at Carnegie Hall, and Boston’s Symphony Hall.

KELLEY BAKER: Sound Designer

Kelley Baker's work as sound designer includes six feature films directed by Gus Van Sant, including *My Own Private Idaho*, *Good Will Hunting*, and *Finding Forrester*. Other credits include Todd Haynes' feature film, *Far from Heaven*, with Dennis Quaid and Julianne Moore. As writer and director, he is the creator of three feature films.



cast

ASHLEY SHELTON: Margaret

Something, Anything is Ashley Shelton's feature-film debut, cast by director Paul Harrill after he auditioned over 100 actresses over a period of nine months for the role. A graduate in Theatre from the University of Tennessee, Shelton divides her time between New York and her native Knoxville.

BRYCE JOHNSON: Mark

Bryce Johnson was most recently seen in the critically-acclaimed *Willow Creek*. Other film credits include Christopher Munch's *Harry & Max* and Bobcat Goldthwait's *Sleeping Dogs Lie*. On television Bryce portrayed Officer Darren Wilden for four seasons on ABC's *Pretty Little Liars* and has been featured on *Glee* and *NCIS*.

LINDS EDWARDS: Tim

Linds Edwards appears in the recurring role of Bobby Dean in Sundance Channel's original series, *Rectify*. Linds' recent films include Alison Anders' *Ring of Fire*, *Get Low* with Robert Duvall and Bill Murray and *Redemption Road* with Michael Clarke Duncan.



director's statement

The place where I live and work - the “New South” city of Knoxville, Tennessee - is, like so many places in America, one where we are pressured to make money, consume, conform, and reproduce. *Something, Anything* is a film by and about people who feel alienated by those pressures, and a film for those who have the lingering suspicion that a society with such values may, in fact, be rotten.

Something, Anything is not, however, an angry movie. It is a love story, but one in which love is defined as a woman’s search for meaning instead of merely a search for a partner.

The film’s story demanded I embrace the monk-like virtues that the film’s protagonist adopts: simplicity, humility, patience, and quiet. I know that telling *Something, Anything* in this voice makes the film a kind of whisper - one not everyone may hear. But I am convinced that whispering is the only way to speak about such themes in a world that values so many things so much more.

- Paul Harrill



production notes

Produced over the course of a year in Knoxville, Tennessee, *Something, Anything* is the debut feature from writer-director Paul Harrill.

Origins, Scripting, and Casting

Harrill initially conceived of the project as an largely improvised feature while drawing on influences ranging from Leo McCarey, Frank Borzage, and Robert Bresson to writers like Leo Tolstoy and Thomas Merton. After drafting a treatment he and producer Ashley Maynor began auditioning actors throughout the Southeast.

Harrill and Maynor were committed to finding actors that would be "discoveries" for the audience, as opposed to well-known actors. Auditions were held with nearly two hundred actors from Atlanta, Nashville, Richmond, Washington DC, Charlotte, Knoxville, and Chattanooga and for the lead roles of Margaret, Mark, and Tim.

The process lasted nine months. Through the audition process -- one that included actors improvising to storylines and situations that Harrill gave them --

Harrill began elaborating his notes into a fully-fleshed out screenplay. By the time he had cast Ashley Shelton (Margaret), who makes her film debut in *Something, Anything*, Harrill had all but completed the screenplay.

With \$12,000 in the bank that Harrill and Maynor had saved up for the film, production began. Midway through the on-and-off, year-long shoot, Nest Features came onboard as producers, allowing the filmmakers to compensate the cast and crew for what had been an all-volunteer production to that point.

Monasteries and Fireflies

With a daunting 58 different filming locations, the film was shot on location in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Lexington and Trappist, Kentucky. Some of these venues required the cast and crew to embrace silence, mirroring in part the protagonist's journey in the film.

Undoubtedly the most unconventional location of the shoot was the Abbey of Gethsemani, an active Trappist monastery in rural Kentucky that is perhaps best known as the home of writer, mystic, poet and social activist, Thomas Merton (1915-1968). *Something, Anything* is the first fictional film to have been granted permission to film at the Abbey -- an approval process that took several months. During the four days of filming at the monastery, the cast and crew observed the rule of silence that dominates much of the monastery grounds. Harrill notes, "Working on our film at the Abbey is not an experience any of us will soon forget."

As challenging as it might have been to film in a monastery in pure silence, it does not rival the task of filming fireflies in nearly absolute darkness. As an outward expression of the protagonist's spiritual awakening, the film depicts North America's only species of the rare and fleeting synchronous fireflies, found exclusively in the Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee. These insects have a 21-day life span and for 14 of them, they perform a nightly light show display of synchronized light patterns.

Intent upon creating a sense of authenticity, the fireflies captured in the film are real, not computer-generated images.

Stunning as they are to the human eye, their tiny lights have rarely been captured on film. For Harrill and Maynor, the challenge of filming them was an arduous one. Maynor explains, "We spent nearly a dozen days, over the course of two summers, in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park to capture the fireflies." Harrill adds, "We captured the fireflies on film through research, trial and error. We were forbidden from taking any kind of lights -- other than the recommended red flashlights -- into the park. We corresponded with the foremost authorities on the fireflies about strategies they had used to study them, and we experimented with a half a dozen different cameras." Ultimately, the difference of a year made a difference -- the changes in camera technology that took place between the first days of filming and *Something, Anything's* last days of filming were enough to allow Harrill and Maynor to get the shots included in the film.

Editing and Music

Harrill had begun assembling the film as it was shot, but after principal photography wrapped, Harrill and Maynor began working with editor Jennifer Lilly to bring a new voice to the conversation. Lilly assembled a first cut of the film that ran two-and-a-half hours, which allowed Harrill, Maynor and Lilly to see all of the scenes -- scripted and improvised -- together. From there, Harrill and Lilly worked together to refine the story.

After Lilly and Harrill reached a fine cut, *Something, Anything* was selected for IFP's Narrative Lab. With mentoring from legendary editor Craig McKay, and filmmakers James Ponsoldt (*The Spectacular Now*) and Daniel Carbone (*Hide Your Smiling Faces*) Harrill completed the editing, then worked with composer Eric V. Hachikian while bringing the film to picture lock in December 2013. Sound design and color work proceeded shortly thereafter.



key credits

CAST (in order of appearance)

Peggy/Margaret
Mark
Tim
Jill
Holly
Susan (the Boss)
Gina
Doctor
Brother John

Ashley Shelton
Bryce Johnson
Linds Edwards
Lauren Lazarus
Emily Soleil
Susanna Rinehart
Amy Leigh Hubbard
David Brian Alley
Greg Congleton

CREW

Writer/Director
Producer
Executive Producers
Cinematographer
Editor
Wardrobe & Props
Hair & Make-Up
Composer
Sound Designer

Paul Harrill
Ashley Maynor
Dee Bagwell Haslam & Ross Bagwell, Sr.
Kunitaro Ohi
Jennifer Lilly
Meghan Terry
Megan Church
Eric V. Hachikian
Kelley Baker