



PRODUCTION NOTES

DIRECTED BY

Eli Roth

WRITTEN BY

Eli Roth & Noah Belson

STORY BY

Eli Roth

CAST

Ari Millen, Benjamin Byron Davis, Eli Roth, Karen Cliche, Dylan Hawco, Sarah Abbott, Shiloh O'Reilly, Kiori Mirza Waldman, Charlie Zeltzer, Charlie Storey

Featuring original music by legendary GRAMMY® nominated rapper/actor Snoop Dogg and Emmy Award-winning Composer Brandon Roberts.

Executive Produced by GRAMMY® award-winning rap icon Nas.

Special Makeup Effects by Steve Newburn and Academy Award-winner Adrien Morot.

SYNOPSIS

Ice Cream Man follows an idyllic summer town descending into madness when an ice cream man serves kids sweet delights with horrifying results.

RUN TIME: 86 Min | **RATING:** Unrated | **GENRE:** Horror

Official Site: www.icecreammanmovie.com

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20 YEARS OF TERROR UNLEASHED

Over 20 years ago, Eli Roth had a dream. One oozing with dread and viscera, and sticky with the relentless drip of slowly melting ice cream. The images it burned into his fevered brain were vivid and rich, thrilling and shocking. One even featured a group of schoolchildren in a playground, enjoying a spot of jump-rope with human entrails. Another of a few more playing a game of tag with a recently severed hand.

Today, Roth is about to unveil to the world the results of that blood-red vision, a masterpiece of murderous mayhem now more than two decades in the realizing. A movie he claims is “the most insane” one that he has ever made. Which, given the nine that have preceded it, is quite the statement. It is also, as audiences are about to discover, entirely justified.

Roth’s 10th movie is *Ice Cream Man*, a story that deliciously takes something supposedly innocent – an ice cream van trundling into an idyllic town one hot and sunny summer’s day – and perverts it into mass-scale matricide and patricide, shot with invention, intensity and pitch-black wit.

The concept for this pioneering picture first hit the director after he had made his dynamite debut, *Cabin Fever*, in 2002, with Roth and his friend, Noah Belson (who also cameos in *Cabin Fever* as ‘Guitar Man’), crafting a script soon after.

“Long ago in the before-times, about two decades ago roughly, Eli hired me to write a draft of an idea he had for a movie about a mysterious ice cream man who causes kids to go nuts and start doing absolutely horrible things,” Belson says now. “I had a lot of fun writing it and even more fun hashing out ideas with Eli since when we get together we’re both basically 12 again, which is the age we were when we met.”

The problem was, as Roth recalls, “back then it was just too *big* of a movie,” given its scale at that point in his then-fledgling career. “So, it became one of those ideas that I shelved for a long time. But still this idea wouldn’t let me sleep at night. It was one of those ideas that you’ve always got to pay attention to, or they’ll make you go insane.”

Some time later, when Roth was hot off the back of *Hostel*, his spectacularly gruesome 2005 sophomore feature that had asked the question of just how far audiences were willing to be taken into the realm of gore-soaked carnage, and been answered with a resounding \$82 million global box office, off a budget of just \$4.8, his mind returned to the idea. “When, after *Hostel*, everyone was asking me what was next, I knew the answer, but didn’t know how to pull it off,” the director remembers.

For a while during this period, for Roth it seemed like the world only ever wanted to ask him the same question: “What’s next? What’s *next*?” But even though he was sure deep

in his gut what that next step should be, the studio suits were somewhat less certain, alarmed by the sheer outrageousness of what he wanted *Ice Cream Man* to be.

"Over the years we'd often discussed *Ice Cream Man*, as well as tossed around new and horrific ways for kids to murder people. Some of them weren't even for the script, but when I can think of a new way for kids to brutalize adults, Eli is the first person I call," Belson deadpans.

"Then about a year ago, Eli sent me a new draft of the script and he'd basically cracked the code that took it from a script with tons of wonderful violence to an actual story with serious stakes and characters that felt very vivid, basically like people you've known all your life/always wanted to see get murdered (in a movie). I read the script several times and made a ton of notes about possible additional story beats, as well as suggesting a lot of jokes and gags, because I feel like if you're gonna kill a bunch of people, you might as well make people laugh while doing it. I mean maybe not if you're doing it in real life but definitely if you're doing it in a movie, laughter helps a lot. And, after a couple of months of back and forth, it just seemed like *Ice Cream Man* was finally ready to burst forth with all its gory goodness."

Indeed, now, finally, Roth is ready to unveil the finished result to an international audience that had better be ready for it. Because they're about to meet a new horror icon set to sit proudly and bloodily alongside the likes of Freddy, Jason, Michael, Leatherface, Candyman and more, and dig a savage ice cream scoop deep into everyone's brains while it's at it.

"This movie is something truly special," says Ari Millen, the man who plays the eponymous agent of evil himself. "*Ice Cream Man* is going to transcend horror. This experience is unlike anything anyone has ever seen. It's like *Home Alone* meets *28 Days Later*. It's hysterical. It's terrifying. It's going to live on its own plane." Or, as Charlie Storey, who plays the standout role of Piper, says: "This is creepy on a *whole new level*."

In a nutshell, *Ice Cream Man* is a fable, a fairytale even. A cautionary story of a lone confectionary vendor who motors into Bayleen Bay, the fictional town in which the film is set, one balmy day to dispense his wares. Then all hell breaks loose.

"That's because when he gives all the kids his ice cream, it makes them go crazy and kill all the adults," Roth grins. "It's my version of a Pied Piper tale. I've always wanted to make a movie like *The Birds*, a full-on apocalypse. But with children."

Whenever Roth would tell friends about the idea, they'd badger him to make it, desperate to see this uniquely abominable proposition come to life. The studios, though, proved to be singularly less enthusiastic, terrified by the flagrant boundary-stretching scope and ambition of the concept.

"The *other* answer to why I hadn't made *Ice Cream Man* before was that no one would give me the money for it!" Roth laughs. "Studios would read the script and go, 'You can't ask children to do that! How could you make a movie like this, with children chopping up their parents, cutting off their heads with hacksaws and playing jump-rope with their guts?' But I'm like, 'Yeah! I want to see *that* movie!'"

What makes Eli Roth so ideal to tell this story, says Kiori Mirza Waldman, who plays young Mia in *Ice Cream Man*, is the kid inside him too. "Eli is so sweet, friendly and funny. He's a great director but he also has an *amazing* energy," she says.

It's a sentiment the director doesn't disagree with. And which made him perfectly positioned. "What studios don't realize is that kids *love* all that stuff. Kids love playing monsters, they love horror, Halloween. And children understand that it's all make-believe. It's the parents who are more nervous about it," smiles Roth.

"Remember when you were a kid and played 'Ghosts in the Graveyard'? Kids are *always* pretending. They love all the gore and guts. On this, when we put them in the ice cream make-up, these children *transformed*. I didn't have to direct them. They all wanted blood. We were just like, 'Okay, who wants a leg? Who wants an arm?'"

To confirm his point, Roth reflects on the day of shooting *Ice Cream Man*'s most spectacular set-piece, in a movie loaded with them. It takes place when, with the Ice Cream Man having dished out his delectable wares to the children in the previously sleepy Bayleen Bay, they all turn hilariously feral, descending on their school with the sticky remnants of ice cream on their lips, and murder on their minds.

"That big day at the school was the first week of the shoot," Roth says. "We were filming basically the kid-pocalypse, 80 children covered in blood and ice cream going absolutely nuts, playing jump rope with guts, basketball with heads, tossing around limbs. It was insane, but the kids were having the time of their lives! That's the fun of the movie, this idea that the kids don't think they're doing anything wrong. For them, that day is just like Christmas morning – only with body parts."

To make that Christmas Day a reality, Roth had eventually realized that trying to greenlight this movie through the studio system was a fruitless endeavor. That to do it would mean branching out on his own.

"That's why after *Thanksgiving* [Roth's 2023 feature-length adaptation of his own faux trailer that sat within Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez's *Grindhouse* double-bill in 2007], I decided to form my own company, a new mini-studio called The Horror Section," he says. "And I thought *Ice Cream Man* would be a great first film for it."

For Millen, the appeal of headlining *Ice Cream Man* was threefold. On the one hand was the challenge of the role itself – the character doesn't have a single line of dialogue, conveying his menace through facial and body movements alone – on the other, the calibre of the director and his team.

"One of my teachers once said to me, 'There are three variables in a project: a good cast, a good director, a good script. And it's very rare that all three line up.' *This* movie is all three wrapped up into one and *then some*," Millen reveals.

Mainly, though, it was the sheer fire and exuberance that Millen could feel pumping through the project's veins. "This really is 20 years in the making," Millen says. "Eli had been told 'no' over and over again. In the end, he just said, 'Fuck it. I'm going to make it myself.' Now he's done it. And you can *feel* his passion."

It's not to say that Millen didn't have any hesitation the day he first stepped onto the set of *Ice Cream Man* in costume, as the main man himself. But whatever concerns he might have been imagining instantly dissipated as soon as the cameras started to roll.

"You might think that after 20 years of trying to get this movie made, it would be very precious for Eli, that it'd be his baby and he would have a very distinct vision of who this character was," Millen says.

"The initial fear for me was, 'Maybe this will be micromanaged.' But it was the opposite. When Eli and I first talked, we were on the same wavelength of who this guy was. He invited my input. He supported my vision. Because of how fast we shot this, things moved quickly. But I don't think he gave me one redirect, which was terrifying but incredibly freeing."

That creative liberty has resulted in a movie that throbs with the exuberance and enthusiasm of the man behind it, that speaks to the confidence of a director in total command of a genre his work has gone such a long way to redefine. It also meant that *Ice Cream Man* was pretty much as much fun to make out on set in Toronto, over 19 lightning-paced, blood-soaked days in August 2025, as it will be to watch.

All the child stars of the movie speak of the fun on-set atmosphere that Roth established. But Charlie Zeltzer, the 12-year-old who plays Jared, says he has one example that sums up the mood in camp the best.

Between set-ups, Zeltzer and his young co-stars would play games or guitars, sing or just hang out. But by far their favorite choice of downtime distraction was filming their own videos, documenting their burgeoning friendship group out on location.

"Us kids did a few TikToks," Zeltzer remembers. "One day we invited Eli to join us and he was like, 'Sure, I'll join that!' So now we have this entire TikTok with Eli dancing with us." And, with Roth being ever the showman, the experience wasn't about to end there.

"Eli has a lot of contacts, of some of our favorite celebrities," Zeltzer adds. "So, he'd record a selfie video with us, to send to these celebrities, then they'd send a message back. We even got one from Vanessa Hudgens. Eli really is *that* nice. When you think about all the gore, you'd never know that as a director, he's into this kind of thing!"

Then again, that dichotomy between terror and fun has always been a staple of Roth's style. From that outrageous leg-shaving scene in *Cabin Fever* to the spiky trampoline of *Thanksgiving*, his work has always taken audiences on a roller coaster of emotions. And *Ice Cream Man*, say his collaborators, sees that approach turned up to the max.

"We're infusing Eli's style and sensibility into everything we do at The Horror Section, and that starts with *Ice Cream Man*. It's a gnarly, scary ride, but at the end of the day it's entertainment and we want filmgoers to know they're going to have a uniquely fun and exhilarating time at the theater," says Executive Producer and CEO of The Horror Section Jon Schnaars.

As for the man selling the ice creams, he couldn't agree more that this unique mix of scares and laughs is going to have people, rather like kids at an ice cream truck on a warm summer's day, coming back for more and more, over and over.

"It's the juxtaposition of children and the games they play with the brutality and imagery that Eli brings to his movies that makes this so compelling," Millen says. "People are going to have a *lot* of fun with that, because they're going to be laughing while being disgusted, all at the same time."

HE'LL GIVE YOU THE CHILLS! ENTER THE ICE CREAM MAN

Ask the young stars of *Ice Cream Man* what makes this movie's eponymous killer such a startling, unnerving presence and they'll all tell you it's how he does so much while doing so little. "The way he stares and smiles, it just makes your skin crawl," explains Piper's Charlie Storey.

"He starts out looking like this regular ice cream man, happily giving everybody ice cream. But when you look a little closer, he's kind of weird. He doesn't talk, ever. And he gives people ice creams for *free*..." adds Kiori Mirza Waldman, who plays Mia. "He also has these weird gestures. He has one salute that he almost moves in slow motion when he's doing it. As you look closer, you start to realize, 'This guy is *really* creepy.'"

For Roth, what makes the character such a potent threat is that his line of work is something that we all, wherever in the world we're from, associate with innocence – and have done since we were all kids ourselves.

"That's why the movie works so well," Roth says. "As a kid, you'd go crazy when the ice cream truck came to your town. It was the most fun thing. They'd have stuff you couldn't get in the store. Everything tasted better off an ice cream truck!"

Our love of ice cream men is ingrained in all of us, in other words. "Even now, we see one and they represent summertime, happiness. An evil ice cream man is a perversion of something we trust," Roth smiles, delighted with the devilishness of his conceit.

"There's something very trustworthy about an ice cream man. You see an ice cream truck, and you do just trust it. But I saw an ice cream truck and thought, 'What if this person wanted to poison all the kids?' There's this inherent social contract that everything is going to be okay when someone pulls up in an ice cream truck. What if someone broke that?"

It became a question that haunted Roth even more when he became a father himself. Now a dad to a baby girl, that feeling of powerlessness, of perhaps being unable to protect your children from what lurks in the shadows, was something that increasingly "terrified" him.

The director knew who his villain was 20 years ago, could see him vividly in his mind. "I didn't want him to be a *scary* ice cream man," Roth says. "I wanted the Norman Rockwell version of an ice cream man, someone friendly, who has that *smile*."

In his leading man, Roth says, he has hit the payload. "We needed the perfect person. And there is *no* better actor on the planet to play this part than Ari Millen. He's brilliant, a mix of Cillian Murphy and Joaquin Phoenix. Every mannerism of his is on purpose, and meticulous." It needs to be, too.

"That's because he has no dialogue, so must do everything with his eyes. There's so much behind the surface that's communicated with just a look or a smile," Roth says. "Ari also gave him this little mustache, which is so perfect for him."

Horrifying facial fuzz aside, the most fruitful aspect of Roth and Millen's prep lay in digging deeper into the character. "The backstory for this character is genuinely chilling because that's what informs his motivations, from a base level up," Roth says. "What we spent a lot of time discussing was actually how beautiful and sweet he is. How the children love him, and he loves the children. His agenda, in his mind, is that he's not doing anything evil. He's *liberating* them, in a way. *That's* what's terrifying. When people doing horrific things truly believe they're doing them for a good cause, that *always* scares me. Those villains who don't believe they *are* a villain – that everyone *else* is crazy."

In many ways, Millen says, *Ice Cream Man* is that modern-day Pied Piper story (which may well explain why one of its key characters is named Piper herself) but now with a serious added edge. Just as the legendary character from the German folk tale lured all the town's children up a mountain, so does this protagonist employ something magical to tempt them. In his case, a truckload of sweet treats.

"The Ice Cream Man just wants to bring children happiness," Millen says. Which all sounds well and good, at least until you understand what that truly entails. "He's giving

these children his ice cream, which turns them into rage zombies and so wipes out the entire population of adults in the town.”

Despite the bloodshed that ensues, Millen is more than happy to fight his character’s corner, having been convinced from his very first read of Roth’s script that this is a man who only has the best intentions at heart.

“Straight away when I read the script, I saw the humanity in him. How I was picturing this character was not as some stock horror movie villain,” says the actor, who claims his experience on *Ice Cream Man* has been just as transformational.

“The last thing I ever want is to play a two-dimensional character,” he says. “But this is that and then some. Because this character says nothing, the fascinating challenge is for me to try to show his humanity without any exposition. It’s all internal. I didn’t want him to be just a slow-moving killer or a creepy clown. I wanted him to be *human*.”

Most importantly, according to executive producer Holly Adams, is how much Millen’s nightmare-fuel performance is going to stay with you after the credits have rolled.

“There is just something so striking and enduring - haunting, even- with what Ari has done with Ice Cream Man,” says Executive Producer Holly Adams. “On the page, this was always a brilliant character. But, on the screen, he’s instantly iconic and impossible to shake. This is a performance that will worm his way into your brain - and stay there.”

HELL ON WHEELS!

DESIGNING THE ICE CREAM TRUCK

If the horror genre has taught us anything, it’s that an iconic villain needs an iconic prop. Freddy’s razor-fingered glove. Jason’s hockey mask. Candyman’s hook. Pinhead and his box of delights. But here’s the thing: the Ice Cream Man doesn’t just have a prop – he has one *on wheels*.

In the script, his ice cream truck is described with deceptive simplicity. ‘It’s an ‘80s-style truck. Ice cream paint job, lots of stickers, and a friendly waving ice cream cone mascot on top. Music plays from a speaker in the mascot’s mouth.’ Up on screen, it’s a creation from the depths of Hell itself.

That music plays no small part in its power to chill. “Ringa ding-ding, ringa ding-dong, ringa ding-dong it’s the ice cream song...” So goes its melodic, hypnotic jingle, enticing children from the safety of their homes and out onto the streets, to sample his menu board of gruesome wares.

“From afar, it just looks like a normal ice cream truck, but when you go closer, it’s *not*,” says Charlie Storey, whose Piper is one of the first children in Bayleen Bay to skip out of her house to taste what it has on offer.

"This truck is blue and white. Most ice cream trucks are colourful, with a bunch of photos on the outside. This one has pictures of popsicles with bugs on them. There's a scorpion one, a spider one, a frog one. It's quite odd, but very cool and creepy."

To make it, Eli Roth enlisted the help of Peter Mihaichuk, his production designer on both *Thanksgiving* and *Trick VR Treat*, the latter a richly eerie virtual reality experience that made particularly good use of Mihaichuk's highly coveted and deeply disturbing world-building skills, by plunging Vanessa Hudgens (hence her recorded note to the young cast) into a phantasmagorical, 180-degree haunted house nightmare writ large.

For their third creative partnership, Roth's brief to Mihaichuk was less technical but no less challenging: to take something we all associate with carefree sunshine and turn it into something so sinister it could haunt our waking dreams; a vehicle that would harken back to the 1980s but hint at earlier times too, elements from the '50s seeping into its wicked aesthetic.

"The minute I knew I was doing this movie, I saw ice cream trucks *everywhere*, and of course they all took on a sinister feel," Mihaichuk laughs. "So, my inspirations came from everywhere."

The production designer's start point came in the form of an old delivery vehicle that he scouted in Montreal and swiftly converted into an ice cream truck, radically retooling its design, if not its mechanics.

"Because it was a vintage truck, we spent a lot of time just making sure it would run," Roth smiles. "And, of course, it *never* worked when we wanted it to. That truck was basically like the shark in *Jaws*. We always had to have a jumper cable on standby before a take."

Even after the rebuild, the truck's Montreal ancestry still shone through in the French writing still visible at points on the dash. "It also made this awful squealing noise when it moved that I hope stays in the movie," remembers Ari Millen. "But I did get to learn how to drive standard. That was fun."

And then there was Merle. Puppeteered from inside so that he could pivot and peer around on top of it, Merle is the Smiley's Ice Cream mascot, a supposedly friendly waving ice cream cone figure who entices children, not least thanks to the speaker pumping out its tune from his mouth.

Based on a 1930s-style cartoony aesthetic, Merle was a long time in the making, to the point that Roth can't even remember who exactly it was from the art department who gave him his unofficial moniker.

What he is sure of, and is equally sure they have delivered, is that Merle lives up to his billing in the script. "We talked about him for ages," Roth says. "I wanted this swirly face, this smiley thing with an arm on a spring, creepily waving, and that could rotate

360 degrees. Something that looked at once so innocent and so unsettling. Really, Merle is just a soft-serve ice cream cone. But there's something so disturbing about him. When you walk, his face follows you around and looks at you as if it's alive."

Movement and context were key when it came to giving the vehicle that Merle sits perched atop a terrible "otherlife" too. One evening, curious to see how the truck would look moving through the dark of night, Roth and his director of photography, Simon Shohet (*Urban Legend*, *The Haunted Museum*), decided to observe it in action, out in its unnatural habitat.

"That night, we got on the Segway and followed the ice cream truck around the neighborhood. No lights, just in and out of complete blackness. We put on a 16 lens, got behind it, watched out for children, and followed. It was literally *haunting*. There's something so disconcerting about an ice cream truck at night because it's something you're not supposed to see. It's the velociraptor in the kitchen. It's not supposed to be there. When you see that ice cream truck in a neighborhood at night, you instinctively know whoever is driving it is up to no good."

Another day, when Charlie Zeltzer was admiring the ice cream truck with his father, the latter made a chilling discovery. "It was amazing because when you first look at the truck, it looks so cute and happy. But when you look a little closer, you start to see all these creepy details," Zeltzer says.

"My dad pointed out to me a sign on the back of the truck. It said, 'Watch Out For Children'. That seems like a normal thing you might see on most ice cream trucks, until you think about it a bit. Because you *really* do have to watch out for the children in this movie – or they might brutally kill you."

Millen believes that if everyone on this production has done their jobs properly, there will at least be "a bit of a phobia for a little while" when people next encounter an ice cream truck in the real world. And Eli Roth wouldn't have it any other way.

"Have I ruined ice cream trucks for kids forever? You know, I just think it's one of those things," Roth laughs when it's put to him. "I mean, I've ruined hostels. I've ruined going to a cabin. I've ruined shaving your legs. I've even ruined Thanksgiving. So, why not?"

Then again, he suggests, maybe that's precisely why so many of his movies have been such successes. That when you tap into something so universal, so buried deep in our shared subconscious, when you twist the knife in it, *everyone* can feel it, right down to their bones.

"In a way, the title of this movie is a bit of a cheat," Roth thinks. "It's almost like naming your movie 'Stop Sign' because every time people see an ice cream truck, they're going to think of *Ice Cream Man*."

The director grins, tickled at how he is sat once again on the precipice of taking something people associate with special times and turning that into something that will from this point forward fill them with dread.

"For me, one of the reasons that *Hostel* is what it is after 20 years is because every city you go to around the world has hostels everywhere, which makes you think of the movie," Roth suggests.

"Same with *Thanksgiving*. I hope that, 20 years from now, people are like, 'Oh man, all I think of is that human turkey [in that movie's signature set piece, the corpse of Karen Cliche's Kathleen is trussed up and served as the holiday feast] on the table.' That's kind of the fun, that people are like, 'You *ruined* it for me!'"

It's a sentiment that trussed-up turkey herself wholeheartedly agrees with. "I think Eli taps into our intrusive thoughts. That's what makes him so good," Cliche laughs. "Okay, so maybe not *everyone* has these terrifying intrusive thoughts, but all I know is since I was a kid I only ever saw any ice cream man as a creep." In other words, she says, he has only gone and done it again.

Then again, the actress would like to note that she does have a number of personal phobias, so perhaps these movies do hit particularly hard for her. "In *Thanksgiving* also," she adds, "there's the moment when Lizzy's face gets stuck to the freezer door – that was always a fear of mine with anything wet on a cold surface. Another weird thought I always have is on an escalator, picturing my hair getting caught in the hand rail and having my scalp ripped off, like Gina Gershon's character. So when I read the script for *Thanksgiving*, I couldn't believe so many of my fears were in there. I don't know what that says about me," she laughs.

"Maybe there is a comfort in knowing you aren't alone in your weirdness. Or maybe people just like super unique, outrageous deaths, which are Eli's specialty. Especially in Ice Cream Man. I mean, just wow."

Essentially, the director says, that idea, of marrying the super unique and the outrageous, has long been his mantra. And, so far, it's proved to be one that has worked rather well. "Try and find something sweet and innocent and ruin it. If you can do it first, you have a hit horror movie!" And, when you think about it, what on Earth could be sweeter or more innocent than ice cream? Eli Roth sits back, breaking into his biggest grin yet. "That's my point entirely," he smiles.

WATCH OUT FOR CHILDREN!

MEET THE YOUNG CAST

Eli Roth has directed children before, principally in last year's big screen videogame adaptation *Borderlands* and in his thrilling 2018 take on John Bellairs' young adult mystery novel *The House with a Clock in Its Walls*. But that's not the only experience the director brought to bear when making *Ice Cream Man*.

"There were also all my skills as a camp counsellor," Roth reveals. "I spent three summers, from 16 to 18, dealing with 10 and 11-year-old boys at a day camp, doing archery and all sorts. So, I'm very comfortable wrangling large groups of children. And I love kids. I relate to them very well. I was also the neighborhood babysitter, so it's very easy for me to direct them. I feel like I have an innate understanding of children and how to get the most naturalistic performances out of them. And I could not have gotten luckier than with the cast I have for this movie. These kids are *incredible*."

Some of them he's worked with before, like Charlie Storey, who made her screen debut in *Eli Roth Presents: A Ghost Ruined My Life* in 2021, then returned to work with him on *Thanksgiving* – and has been rewarded for her astonishing performance in that movie with the standout role in this one.

"Piper is an ordinary 10-year-old girl. She's sweet. But after she eats ice cream, she takes a bit of a turn. Let's just say she *isn't* innocent after that," Storey laughs. "Working with Eli on this was so much fun. He *always* makes it fun. Let's say you're trying to stab someone or something. He's like, 'Yeah, get all in there!' He's so good with kids. I love it."

When it came to casting Shiloh O'Reilly once again, Roth simply thought back to how impactful his brief role in *Thanksgiving* had also been. "Shiloh had one part [in that] and it was to scream. When the turkey gets their head cut off, we needed a kid to go, 'Argh!' We had a bunch of auditions with kids just going, 'Argh!' And I was like, 'This kid's *really* funny.' His scream was hilarious. [In the movie] he had one close-up and it always gets a laugh. Anytime I watch that movie with an audience, when the turkey gets its head cut off, it's funny. But then when you cut to Shiloh going 'Argh!' that's when you get the *biggest* laugh."

In *Ice Cream Man*, O'Reilly plays Tommy, a character he describes as, "a badass from beginning to end. In the beginning, he has this front that he's this cool guy, and he's not scared of anything. He's super macho and grown up. But as these events start to unfold, you can see it's all a front, and he's really a softie on the inside." O'Reilly pauses, keen to clarify something: "But he's *still* a badass, from beginning to end."

Not only did O'Reilly love playing the role of Tommy; he also discovered another love on the set: one for Rice Krispies Squares. Come the end of production, his peers estimate, he was sometimes eating seven a day.

Other kids on the cast simply nailed their auditions. Take Charlie Zeltzer, who plays Jared. "When you're casting kids, you need them to know how to act in very sophisticated ways," says Roth. "This isn't a simple movie where kids are just interacting with other kids. There are crazy things happening and the entire movie rests on them. If the kids don't work, the movie doesn't work. I got very lucky that there's an incredible talent pool in Toronto. When Charlie Zeltzer came in, I *knew* he was Jared. He's got all the pathos, all the emotion. Everything is right in his eyes. And he's *so* funny."

So it proved with Kiori Waldman, who walked in to audition as Mia and instantly blew everyone away. "Kiori Waldman is a *star*," says Roth. "She's so beautiful and so sweet and has this angelic personality, but also a real understanding. And she can play cold and distant *and* warm, sweet and funny. In the movie, she's the unattainable one."

Mia is principally unattainable for poor old Jared – "Sorry, Jared," Waldman deadpans – who pines after her from afar. But maybe don't write the young guy off just yet. "Jared starts out as this wimpy, dorky kid, getting bullied a lot, who doesn't have a lot of confidence. But as the movie goes on, you see a new level to him. He has a lot of bravery under the dorkiness and inability to fit in," Zeltzer says.

Waldman says Jared isn't the only young character who evolves, either. "At the start, Mia is a very popular girl. I think that's her title. She's the girl you can't get. She even says that in the script!" Waldman adds. "But she discovers that she's actually a very brave, courageous person, and able to create a special bond between these two boys. She becomes who she *really* is, not the girl behind her TikToks."

The second boy that Waldman mentions above is Elliot, played by Luke Dietz, who has similarly worked with Roth previously, in *Eli Roth's Haunted House: Trick VR Treat*, and is also, in something of an abrupt change of pace, the voice of Chase in *Paw Patrol*.

Jared's best friend for life, Elliot is, Dietz says, "a goofball". Even if it took his mother reading him the script to figure that out. "When I first got the script, I actually had my mom reading it to me, and it's really gory, so she skipped over some parts without telling me because she knew I was going to get scared," Dietz laughs.

"On set, it wasn't as scary as I thought it would be. And that's because Eli is so funny. He's different from every other director. He sees things in a different way because normal people think a dead body is gross. He thinks it's funny."

Rounding out the youngest cast is Ivano DiCaro, who says his Hank is "a bully – I read the script and knew what I had to do". He also already had form in the horror genre, having acted in the *Chucky* TV series from 2021.

A few years older but no less plunged into the gore and guts is Sarah Abbott, the *Ginny & Georgia* and *Black Mirror* alumnus who plays Lizzie, Jared's older sister, who has to somehow find a way to keep her little brother safe and fend off the romantic gestures of her ex-boyfriend Chris, played with a big heart and even bigger truck by Dylan Hawco, a graduate of The National Theater School of Canada, who also featured in last year's *Youngblood* and the final season of *The Handmaid's Tale*.

"Lizzie is very strong willed, doesn't like being told what to do, especially by her parents. So, a very typical teenager," Abbott says. "But she does have a big heart. You see that as the movie goes on, especially in her relationship with her brother."

Her favorite scene, Abbott adds, is the one when, having sampled some of the Ice Cream Man's deadly wares, Lizzie finds herself stuck on her bed, paralyzed. "That was very interesting," Abbott laughs. "If you've ever seen *The Wolf of Wall Street*, the scene when [Leonardo DiCaprio] takes the Quaaludes, it was basically like that. I had to get from the bed all the way to the bathroom without using my arms; crawling, rolling, bumping into things. I have a few battle wounds, but it was a lot of fun."

Lizzie and Chris have a complex backstory, and a lot of that complexity, Hawco says, is down to Chris' own ineptitude. "I pictured Lizzie and Chris as high school lovers who now, at the beginning of the film, dislike each other. Chris is a bit of a douchebag," Hawco laughs. "Every time Lizzie breaks up with him, he just buys a bigger truck to try and impress her."

Hawco had never been part of a horror movie before signing onto *Ice Cream Man*, and it's fair to say he thoroughly enjoyed the experience. "It was something that was the complete opposite of what I've done in the past, when I was at theater school," he says. "You know, like cutting heads off, or watching kids do snow angels in blood."

The 23-year-old Hawco is currently seeing his career accelerating almost as fast as the brand new wheels that Chris burns around town in in *Ice Cream Man*, but says he will always remember one day in particular on the movie with a special shudder.

"All the scenes with Ari were terrifying," Hawco says. "But there was one when he was on the hood of my truck, smiling at us. He did this thing with his eyebrows that just made me want to run away. He is terrifying, literally perfect. And Ari slips right into it. That's the scariest part! We'll be laughing and talking, then they'll call us in and within a half a second, he's back to being the guy everyone's scared of, which makes our job so much easier. It's insane how quickly he can go in and out of it."

That respect runs both ways, too. "These kids are some of the most talented actors, let alone child actors, I've ever gotten to work with," says Millen. "They were being kids between takes, having fun, doing little dances, eating chips, whatever. And then, boom! On 'Action!', they'd flip the switch and be right in the movie. That's a level of concentration and imagination that is so enviable. They're beyond talented."

Supporting the young cast is an older one with an astonishing track record. Playing Jared and Lizzie's parents, Marty and Alison, are Roth himself and Karen Cliche, back alongside the director who last dressed her as that Thanksgiving turkey and who here gives her another role to die for.

"Jared and Lizzie's parents are pretty cool, I think, but definitely cringy to their teenagers of course!" Cliche says of their family unit. "There is a big family dinner scene with us and you get a real sense of the playful marriage and fun family dynamic, while these parents remain strict with certain rules. We had so much fun filming that scene, with lots of improv, as Eli is so good at that. We had genuine laughs constantly. It was fascinating to watch Eli's focus, juggling being an actor and directing as well. I really enjoy working with him and am so lucky to have done, three times now. He is so passionate, and an actor's director. We really feel he is in the trenches with us every minute of filming."

But maybe the most magnetic and mysterious of all of the adult supporting cast is Benjamin Byron Davis' The Priest, a man of the cloth who has presided over his flock in Bayleen Bay for many years, and might just hold the key to helping the children who have avoided being poisoned by the Ice Cream Man's deadly wares.

Davis had loved the script when Roth first sent it to him and was intrigued even more when he talked to the director about it in more detail. "When he told me I had the role, the first thing he mentioned to me was a film that I had never heard of, let alone seen before. It's from 1976, a Spanish film directed by Narciso Ibanez Serrador, and it's called *Who Can Kill a Child?* The film is extraordinary. Not a fun movie by any stretch of the imagination, but certainly an amazing one, with remarkable performances, and an example of what the horror genre can aspire to. It sets up an unimaginable and unstoppable circumstance that is like a knife twisting as it hurtles towards its finish," the actor says. "I saw the depths that Eli was looking to plumb."

Watching it was one of Davis' preparations. Another was researching the long history of iconic priests in horror movies. "I looked at Jason Miller and Max von Sydow's work in *The Exorcist*, I watched Russell Crowe in *The Pope's Exorcist*," he says. "Philip Seymour Hoffman in *Doubt* was fun to return to, though tonally a world away. I even went as far back as *Boys Town* with a wonderful performance by Spencer Tracy – his warmth in that film was something I hoped to find in *Ice Cream Man's* priest."

Davis notes that there is a long history in storytelling, particularly in horror films, that if there is a lore to be explored, as there is in *Ice Cream Man*, there must also be a figure who is a keeper of that lore – a role he describes as "a pretty sacred one" to play.

"So, I saw that as a responsibility," Davis says. "A priest is one of those figures that we are taught to trust in the world. And in the film, this one is confronted with these three children – embodied by these three magnificent actors – and has an opportunity not

merely to tell these children why this horror is being visited upon this town, but what they can do themselves to stop it."

Whether any of these children will survive this evil onslaught is something that audiences will have to discover for themselves. But, for Roth, he managed to find precisely what he always wanted: kids who could be kids between scenes and then deliver once in them. "I didn't want people who were going to come in and be little acting machines, like, 'I know my lines. I'm just going to repeat them again and again,'" the director says.

"You're not used to kids in movies going 'fuck' because kids in movies have gotten so sanitized. There's the 'PG' version of kids. I wanted the 'R' version. I wanted these kids to be like I was as a kid. I wanted to capture *that*."

As a considerable bonus, of course, this was a set that featured a *lot* of ice cream, whether it was the real deal or the fake kind that production made from cake frosting on the days that the 100-degree heat on location meant the genuine article would melt as soon as it was scooped.

"We went through all of it," Roth chuckles. "The kids were like Pac-Man. They ate right through the stuff. We had kids literally going insane from sugar and ice cream."

Ultimately, Roth is fiercely proud of the unique opportunity this script has given them. "There we were one day with Charlie Storey, who's 10 years old. And at midnight is hacking off her mother's head with a hacksaw. I said to her, 'This has got to be the weirdest first day of school *ever*.' And she goes, 'Yeah, but it's also the *best*,'" he says.

"For all these kids, what compares to *this*? We were making a movie with blood and guts, and they were the stars. There hasn't been anything like this. *Ice Cream Man* is like *Saving Private Ryan* with children. It's *Dawn of the Dead*, but with kids. It's totally nuts. I think this movie is going to be hard for them to top because we gave those kids one *hell* of a summer."

WELCOME TO THE MELTDOWN!

A NEW LEVEL OF BLOODSHED

On every movie he makes, Eli Roth sets himself a personal challenge: "To break my record in terms of the amount of blood I've spilled by the end of it." And, when you consider that this is the man who started his feature directing career with *Cabin Fever*, a movie about a flesh-eating disease that infects then rots away people's faces in front of their own eyes, you realize quite how high a bar he set himself from the outset.

"But I do think that *Ice Cream Man* might just take the cake," Roth chuckles. "In this case, take the *cone*. I wanted to make the craziest, goriest movie I've ever done. And

everybody stepped up. They all brought their blood and guts, gore and body parts to the table.”

Make no mistake, *Ice Cream Man* is a movie that is genuinely pushing boundaries further than they’ve ever been pushed. Among its many twisted delights are patricide, matricide, dismemberment and decapitation. Not to mention a diverse assortment of weaponry used to deadly effect that includes everything from garbage disposal units to dental drills, staplers to crayons.

“I was very lucky,” says Roth, who cites his returning prosthetics designer Steve Newburn, at Applied Artists, as well as Academy Award winners (for their astonishing work on Darren Aronofsky’s *The Whale*) Adrien Morot and Kathy Tse as his partners in the outlandish crimes that make up the bloodthirsty tableau.

“I’d sit there with Steve and say, ‘Hey, can we cut up someone with power tools?’” Roth says. “This movie has to be crazy because it’s almost a fairy tale. I believe that horror movies really *are* fairy tales for adults. I knew I had to fully go there if I was going to do this. There’s no safe version of this movie that works.”

Despite the substantial body count that *Ice Cream Man* boasts, there are two sequences set to become instant fan talking points, so determined are they to up the ante in anything that has ever been put on screen before.

For the soon-to-be-legendary ‘hacksaw scene’, Roth and Newburn devised an appliance that could house Piper’s adult victim’s neck in a fake cast, “so we could really cut in and see her reaction,” Roth says. They also crafted a dummy, for a quick cutaway at the point of full severance.

“That dummy shot was so disturbing,” Roth notes with glee. “Once we cut all the way through, the head started rolling back and forth, like she was saying ‘no’. And the way we were pumping the blood in the bedroom and just this image of a child sawing their mother’s head off, it was so great. It was sublime, gorgeous, a work of art; like something out of *American Psycho*, but with kids.”

If that all sounds rather traumatic, for the actors playing the scene it was the exact opposite. “This might sound weird, but it was really fun to pretend to kill people because of the way they made it so fun on set,” says Storey, noting how Roth and the crew established such a jovial mood that the murder scenes often became the ones she and her co-stars looked forward to filming the most, getting drenched in the process.

“When I had to saw off my mom’s head, they put a tube through her body, so it was spraying everywhere – on the walls, the bed, the windows, me. Most of all me.” And besides, the aftermath turned out to be beneficial for her upper body strength, too.

“For a lot of the rest of the movie, I’m carrying around my mom’s head, because after I saw her head off, it’s like my baby,” Storey says. “You know how some kids carry baby

dolls? Well, I carry around my mom's head. Sometimes I was just sitting in the park brushing my mom's hair or putting lipstick on her. I loved that prop. Although it was a bit heavy, because I sometimes had to carry it just with one hand. Even carrying it for a couple minutes was like getting an arm workout."

Roth describes the scene above as the one where he went "full Scarface", drenching the room in "a chainsaw-in-the-bathroom level of blood" that left him concerned they might not even be able to clean up afterwards.

"I was very concerned because we were in someone's actual house and it really looked like a crime scene," Roth admits. "But the art department got all the blood out. I don't want to know *how* they're that good at cleaning up that amount of blood, but, you know, they did it."

Then again, they had plenty of practice. "We're talking about *countless* body parts. And we were into the hundreds of gallons of blood for sure," is Roth's conservative estimate of the scale of the horrors that had unfolded come the end of production.

Never is that more overt than in *Ice Cream Man's* showstopping set piece, a sequence so extraordinary in its scale and ambition that Roth took to describing it in the build-up to shooting it as, "like the Jerusalem sequence in *World War Z*, or the Normandy beach landing in *Saving Private Ryan*. It's its own thing, *so* much happens, and it just keeps going and going..."

If that sounds like hyperbole, trust us when we say you have never seen anything like the school sequence in *Ice Cream Man*. Spoken of in hushed tones on set, mapped out meticulously in pre-production, and shot with gleeful invention, it is set to go down in the history of horror – and will have popcorn flying through the air.

"It's not just *one* sequence of the kids going nuts. It's sequence after sequence after sequence," is how Roth sums it up. "Once these kids turn, the movie takes off like a *rocket*."

The set-up is this: with most of the children of Bayleen Bay having consumed the Ice Cream Man's infectious cones over the past 24 hours, the next day the town's young generation arrive for morning lessons, their brains full of bloodlust. Their teachers, oblivious to the danger, try to instill order. It is safe to say that does not go well.

The sequence was shot over seven days, in the 100-degree heat of a sweltering Toronto August, and within the walls of one of its local schools, with zero air conditioning, gallons of blood, smoke machines billowing and wasps flying everywhere, attracted to the sticky ice cream smeared around the cast's faces.

"It was *very* tough," Roth remembers. "I've never filmed anything like it. I mean it about *Saving Private Ryan* because that's how we shot it, running through everything

with a camera. There were kids playing tag with a hand, tether ball with a head, pin the tail on the teacher with knives.”

To map it out, Roth returned to some of his favorite interviews with Steven Spielberg. “I’ve watched every one where Spielberg talks about that opening beach sequence in *Saving Private Ryan*. He always says, ‘You just chew your way through it. Now we’re going to get to the wall. Okay, we made it to the wall. Now we’re going here...’ So that’s how I broke it down,” Roth says. “It was so much to coordinate, and there was so much blood that it was hard to keep track of it all. My head was spinning.”

For the sequence, composer Brandon Roberts, who scored *Andor* in between his work with Roth on first *Thanksgiving* and now *Ice Cream Man*, really let loose. In terms of the movie as a whole, Roth’s brief had referenced the music of Waldo de Los Rios. “And I immediately understood what he was going for,” the composer remembers. “I recorded creepy children sounds and purchased a vintage toy piano, extracting every possible sound I could out of it. I coupled this with vintage ’70s synth sounds and traditional orchestra to emulate that wonderful ’70s horror vibe.”

But cometh the school sequence cometh the real carnage. “That epic school sequence really is pure musical carnage,” Roberts grins. “The score paces itself by starting with sparse ominous bending cellos, slowly adding more and more musical elements until it explodes into full-blown cacophony. Epic choir, demented toy piano, children’s chanting, bells, and even buzzer sounds akin to the board game *Operation* were used to add to the chaos. Eli pushed it to the absolute limit. And just when there is no further place to go with the score, we switch to Snoop’s instrumental piece for the end of the playground sequence, which gives a whole new approach to the insanity, ratcheting it all up to the next level.”

When it came to stunt coordinator Stephannie Hawkins, who brought her skills to Roth’s *Thanksgiving* but has also managed mass scale mayhem in everything from *Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City*, *Robocop* and more, the school sequence in *Ice Cream Man* also registered a number of next levels.

“We had stunt performers running all over the place and different children working with those stunt performers to kill them in various ways. We had a stunt person with pencils stuck in his eyes and a young person who was that stunt performer’s daughter on his shoulder, stabbing him. We had one playing a firefighter who did a high fall from over two storeys. We dragged a police officer behind a truck,” Hawkins remembers.

But the biggest challenge came in a smaller package. “The main issue we had was telling the kids they couldn’t do their own stunts because they were so excited and wanted to show us all the incredible things they could do,” Hawkins laughs. “Showing kids how to hit someone with a fire extinguisher was not something I ever thought would come up in my career.” But come up it did. And then some.

But maybe weirdest of all wasn't all the surreal violence but the location itself. Shooting in a real school – that had been discovered by locations manager Michael Knox – over their summer holidays was perhaps the thing that threw the kids on set more than anything else.

"It was chaotic, with all of us kids there. And being at a school during summer felt strange but also just such fun because we got to walk around and explore all the classrooms," Storey says. "And we had a random ice cream truck in the playground. That was *extra* weird."

Fortunately for all concerned, come the end of these seven days of guerrilla-style shooting, Roth had his sequence in the can. As for the location, it even miraculously ended up in a better state than it had been when the lens caps first came off.

"Apparently we'd decorated the school in such a way that afterwards the school wanted to keep a lot of the inspirational messages and stuff like that that we had put up on their bulletin boards, as well as some of the theming we did to the school itself," says production designer Peter Mihaichuk. "So, you know, everyone was happy in the end."

I SCREAM. YOU SCREAM. WE ALL SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM MAN!

With all the blood and ice cream splats long since mopped up, Eli Roth has much to be proud of when it comes to *Ice Cream Man*, the 20-year labor of love finally now ready to be unleashed on audiences worldwide.

When those audiences eventually emerge blinking into the daylight from the pitch black bellies of theaters across the world, they will have been treated to an experience unlike any other they have ever seen. Not least when it comes to its genuinely head-spinning finale. "Whenever you're working on a movie where your make-up effects are an integral part of the climax, you definitely feel that extra weight on your shoulders. That was *exactly* the case with *Ice Cream Man*. Plus, Eli is a dear friend of ours, so we really wanted to blow it out of the water," says special effects legend Adrien Morot.

"We specialize in creating highly realistic fake heads and dummies, but most of the time, they're only on screen for a split second. A knight chops off a soldier's head, cut to a head rolling on the floor... you know the drill. In those moments, a perfect actor resemblance isn't make-or-break. But *Ice Cream Man* was a completely different story. It was crucial that the resemblance was flawless because the head reveals a massive plot point – and, to make things even more intense, the camera lingered on it for a long, *long* time! No pressure whatsoever, right?!"

Shot by Simon Shohet, *Ice Cream Man* is set to become an instant fan-favorite, the director of photography having delighted in filming some of the most unforgettably shocking images he believes he may ever capture in a camera.

"In our early discussions about *Ice Cream Man*, Eli made it pretty clear he wasn't looking for the shallow focus and desaturated imagery that dominates the modern horror landscape. He wanted something bright, colourful and nostalgic – a coming of age film. Being an '80s kid myself, my favorite films growing up were Rob Reiner's *Stand by Me* and Stephen Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun*, so it didn't take any convincing for me to be on board," the DoP says.

"Two of the films we talked about early on were Michael Ritchie's *The Bad News Bears* and Narciso Ibáñez Serrador's *Who Can Kill a Child?* – two wildly different films both released in 1976. The dichotomy that these two films represented, innocence vs evil, would become the guiding principle behind much of our creative decision-making. We set out to make a film drenched in both blood and sunlight, simultaneously charming and horrifying." They did so on Sony Venice 2 cameras and Arri DNA large format lenses. And the results are jaw-dropping.

"Shooting with hundreds of children on a tight schedule in unpredictable Toronto weather with practical vfx and stunts while maintaining a consistent idyllic look over a film that spans 24 hours is a formidable challenge," Shohet notes. "We worked fast without rushing, efficiently without compromising, always leaving time and space to find shots we hadn't thought of yet. Like the one where I get decapitated whilst riding a Segway. I'm pretty sure that came to him on the way to set that day..." That, after all, is just the way the director rolls. Little wonder the kids loved the spontaneity so much.

But as much of an experience as Roth has given his young cast over the course of making it, what's clear as he sits back and reflects on the journey they've taken together is that he has learned just as much from them as they have from him.

"I truly will never forget the energy and spirit of those kids. There is something so infectious about genuine childlike enthusiasm. People always say, 'We can learn everything from children.' And one of those things, I think, is how to laugh and enjoy every minute. I wish every actor was like that! They were just so happy to be there. When we'd send them home for the day, they didn't want to leave," Roth smiles.

"In the movie business, people are so jaded and bitter. And they've got *everything*. They have all the money, but then they want awards. I'm not singling out anyone, but you see how unhappy people are. They can't outrun their problems. They're miserable. And these children *love* it. That is something you should never forget – the love of it. And I know that when I'm making a movie, I feel like I'm the 13-year-old version of myself, going, 'God, I can't believe I get to do *this*...'"

Ice Cream Man, Roth says, might well be the pinnacle of that way of thinking. A moment in time built on decades in the planning that has cemented his future. One that has fuelled his desire to keep on stretching the edges with everything he shoots.

"This hasn't been a joyous experience for me, it's been a *rapturous* one," Roth says, the sincerity shining through. "It's been the most fun I've ever had while directing a movie, even though it was the hardest. Making movies is a faith-based system. You roll the dice, cross your fingers and pray to God it all works out. And this one came together beautifully. What we got was greater than anything I could have imagined."

As to what audiences can expect from *Ice Cream Man* when it explodes onto their screens, the director has high hopes that he can deliver them everything they've been hoping for too, with sprinkles on top.

"I'm just grateful that after 20 years, I still get to do what I love. Every movie I make I take so seriously because every movie for me is an opportunity to outdo myself and make an all-time classic," Roth says.

"Every single time, I want to make a movie that afterwards people go, 'That's one of the best horror movies I've ever seen.' Or 'that's got my favorite kill *ever* in a horror movie.' For me, that feeling on a movie's opening night, that adrenaline rush of seeing a movie you've been waiting to see and you scream, is something you'll remember for the rest of your life."

The director smiles, confident that in *Ice Cream Man* he is about to give people something they will remember for as long as they live. "My goal is to create the greatest night at the movies that people have had in years. For them to come out of the theater and say, 'That is the most fucking fun that I've had in a horror movie.'" Roth grins. "And that's *exactly* what they're going to get."

CAST BIOS

ARI MILLEN ("THE ICE CREAM MAN")

Millen will next be seen starring in the title role of ***Ice Cream Man***, the highly anticipated horror feature from the acclaimed genre filmmaker Eli Roth, set for a wide theatrical release on August 7, 2026. Additional screen credits include ***The Expanse*** (2018), ***The Oak Room*** (2020), ***Vicious Fun*** (2020), and ***The Boy in the Woods*** (2023).

Millen earned international recognition for his transformative portrayal of multiple Castor clones on the acclaimed science-fiction series ***Orphan Black*** (BBC America), a performance that earned him the 2016 Canadian Screen Award for Best Actor in a Dramatic Program or Series. Born in Kingston, Ontario, Millen studied Theatre at Ryerson University (now Toronto Metropolitan University) before launching his professional career on stage and in independent film.

Respected for his nuanced performances and versatility, Millen continues to work across genres in both Canadian and international film and television.

BENJAMIN BYRON DAVIS ("THE PRIEST")

Benjamin Byron Davis is an accomplished actor, writer and director, known for his dynamic range and versatility in portraying complex characters. His commanding voice and formidable and magnetic screen presence in film, television, performance capture and theater have garnered legions of fans and social media followers worldwide.

Benjamin currently portrays 'Rupert Thorne' in the adult animated television series, "Creature Commandos," which is receiving rave reviews! Based on DC Comics, it is the first TV series in the DC Universe (DCU) and the first installment overall. All seven episodes were written by DC Studios co-CEO James Gunn, who serves as showrunner. "Creature Commandos" focuses on a black ops team of monsters assembled by 'Amanda Waller' (Viola Davis). Introduced in Detective Comics #469 (May 1977) 'Rupert Thorne,' unlike the more flamboyant rogues of Gotham, is a shrewd and calculating crime boss who wields political and criminal power in equal measure. His influence extends into Gotham's government, using bribery, intimidation, and manipulation to maintain control. As in the comics, Benjamin's 'Thorne' is a catalyst in the origin of 'Dr. Phosphorous,' played by the one and only Alan Tyduk. "Creature Commandos" is produced by DC Studios and Warner Bros Animations and debuted on Max on December 5, with new episodes streaming Thursdays through January 9, 2025.

Benjamin created the iconic character of 'Dutch van der Linde,' the complex, compelling and charismatic gang leader in Rockstar Games's Red Dead Redemption saga. The character of 'Dutch' was described by Twinfinite as "one of the greatest villains of this generation," and they selected Benjamin as the "Best Actor of 2018." "Red Dead Redemption II" upon release had the largest opening weekend in the history of entertainment generating \$725 million in revenue in 3 days and (as of May 2023) is the 6th highest grossing video game of all time (as of May 2024)!

Benjamin recently appeared in the feature film, "Borderlands," Lionsgate and Eli Roth's eagerly anticipated adaptation of the uber successful video game. Ben played Pandora's arms dealer 'Marcus Kincaid,' opposite Cate Blanchett's infamous outlaw 'Lilith.' An important character within the Borderlands universe, 'Marcus' is a weapons dealer and entrepreneur who appears in all the main Borderlands video games. He is known for his gruff demeanor, sharp wit, distinctive accent, penchant for telling tall tales about his past exploits and willingness to do whatever it takes to make a profit. Borderlands is one of the world's most successful game franchises, with more than 68 million units sold-in worldwide and includes "Borderlands 2" which is the highest-selling title in the history of 2K; and "Borderlands 3," which was awarded Best Ongoing Game at Gamescom 2020.

In recent film performances, Benjamin appeared in Marvel Studios' "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3," written and directed by longtime friend and collaborator, James Gunn. The film, which takes place after 'Thanos' was defeated in "Avengers: Endgame," is the culmination of the iconic trilogy; its highly successful predecessors, "Guardians of the Galaxy" (2014) and "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" (2017), amassed over \$1.6 billion in worldwide box office receipts. Benjamin plays hapless OrgoCorp Security Guard 'Bletelsnort'" opposite Guardians 'Mantis' (Pom Klementieff) and 'Drax' (Dave Bautista). GOTG Vol. 3 was released on May 5, 2023 by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures and earned \$289 million globally on opening weekend.

Benjamin played 'Agent Burleigh' in Marvel's "Ant-Man and the Wasp" opposite Paul Rudd and Randall Park; and 'Antonio Fowler' in the action/horror/thriller "The Belko Experiment," written and produced by James Gunn. A veteran of over thirty episodes of television, Benjamin has delivered memorable comedic and dramatic turns in series roles.

Benjamin was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the youngest of three brothers. His parents are retired, Jessica from teaching and William from finance. He graduated from the Noble and Greenough School (MA), where he was awarded the Eaton Prize for Excellence in Performing Arts, went on to attend the University of Chicago where he sat on the board of the University Theatre, and finally to NYU's Tisch School of the Arts where he graduated with honors and a Playwrights Horizons Theatre School "Achievement in Acting" award (1996).

His early work in theater featured two solo shows that he wrote and performed: "In Absentia" (HERE, NYC, 1995 and The Evidence Room, LA, 2001); and "Big Shot" (Lillian Theater, LA, 2002 and Trilogy Theater, NYC, 2002). Benjamin has appeared in numerous stage roles, including 'Lord Byron' in "Bloody Poetry" (nyte/Classic Stage Company, NYC, 1998) and 'Woland' in "The Master and Margarita" (Zoo District/Hudson Backstage, LA, 2000).

Directing in theater, Benjamin's projects have included the one-act play "Godfather Death" (Sacred Fools Theater Company, 2001/LA Weekly Award nomination for best director) and the development and direction of acclaimed poet/performer Joe Hernandez-Kolski's solo shows.

ELI ROTH ("MARTY")

Award-winning filmmaker Eli Roth made his directorial debut in 2002 with the hugely successful film CABIN FEVER; his follow up titles, which include HOSTEL, HOSTEL PART II, KNOCK KNOCK and DEATH WISH, have earned him critical praise and a reputation as a true innovator in the horror space. In front of the camera Roth is best known for appearing as Sgt. Donnie Donowitz, the bat-swinging "Bear Jew," in Quentin Tarantino's epic INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS, for which he won a Screen Actors Guild award, and Tarantino's DEATH PROOF. Roth also appeared in the much-talked-about HBO Max show The Idol.

Roth successfully pivoted to family fare, hosting Discovery Channel's popular Shark Week and its late-night talk show Shark after Dark and directing 2018's fantasy-comedy THE HOUSE WITH THE CLOCK IN ITS WALLS starring Jack Black and Cate Blanchett. Roth also co-created the Dreamworks Animation kids' series Fright Krewe.

On the TV side, Roth hosted and produced a series of Discovery/Travel Channel "Eli Roth Presents" programs including The Legion of Exorcists, A Ghost Ruined My Life, and My Possessed Pet.

Roth's critically acclaimed documentary FIN, a harrowing documentary detailing the destructive practices of the shark fin trade, premiered to rave reviews in July 2021 as part of Discovery's Shark Week, and went on to Best Documentary at the Ischia Global Film Festival.

Roth directed, produced, and wrote the horror-slasher *THANKSGIVING*, based on Roth's fictitious trailer from Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez's *GRINDHOUSE*. The film was a critical and box office hit as well as an instant cult classic with fans, and a sequel was immediately greenlit which Roth is currently writing. He also produced the first ever live action VR series, *The Faceless Lady*, which was released by Meta. He later released the film adaptation of the hit video game *BORDERLANDS*, starring Cate Blanchett, Kevin Hart, Jack Black and Jamie Lee Curtis.

Roth recently produced and narrated the documentary *DEATH BOOM*, which premiered at Tribeca. The film follows death care workers as they expose the environmental and mental health impacts of the death care industry.

Roth launched The Horror Section in 2025, a media company focused on developing horror films and genre entertainment. Its first theatrical release, *ICE CREAM MAN*, which he wrote, produced, stars in, and directs, opens this August and features original music by Snoop Dogg. Next, Roth will write, produce, and direct *DON'T GO IN THAT HOUSE, BITCH!*; Snoop Dogg will produce as well as write and perform original music.

SARAH ABBOTT ("LIZZIE")

Sarah Abbott is a Canadian actor born in Oshawa and raised in Whitby, Ontario. A natural performer from an early age, she began entertaining family with self-created shows—singing, dancing, storytelling, and acting—before training competitively as a dancer at age six. By seven, she had secured professional representation after being discovered at an open casting call.

Abbott's breakout role came when she was cast as young Marilyn Monroe in Lifetime's *The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe*, marking the beginning of a steadily rising career across film and television. She went on to appear in her first feature film, *Lavender*, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and streamed on Netflix.

Her diverse screen credits include roles in acclaimed series such as *Black Mirror* (Season 4, directed by Jodie Foster), *Ginny & Georgia*, *V-Wars* (starring Ian Somerhalder), *Transplant*, *Slasher*, *Heroes Reborn*, *Houdini & Doyle*, *Sheriff Country*, and NBC's *The InBetween*, where she held a recurring guest role. Abbott has also led and appeared in numerous television films, including *Mommy's Little Princess*, *The Color of Love*, *The Enchanted Christmas Cake*, and *The Wedding Ring*, and can be seen in feature films such as *The Silence*, *Feel the Beat* (starring Sofia Carson), and *Spirit in the Blood*. She also appears in the adaptation of Laetitia Colombani's bestselling novel *The Braid*.

Most recently, Abbott wrapped filming a recurring role in the Netflix series *The Body* and has been cast as a series regular in the upcoming Netflix series *Poser* and will be seen in the Eli Roth horror, *Ice Cream Man*, marking a significant new chapter in her career.

With over 30 screen credits to her name, Sarah Abbott continues to establish herself as a dynamic and versatile presence, known for her emotional depth and range across genres.

CREDITS

Directed By
Eli Roth

Screenplay By
Eli Roth And Noah Belson

Story By
Eli Roth

Produced By
Eli Roth
Kate Harrison Karman

Produced By
Christopher Woodrow
Raj B. Singh

Executive Producers
Jon Schnaars
Holly Adams
Kevin Frakes
Nasir Jones
Peter Bittenbender
Matt Maclellan
Andre Coutu
Connor Digregorio
Eli Massillon
Lorenzo Antonucci
Ash Avildsen
Phil Hunt
Compton Ross
Jeremy Ross
Geneva Wasserman
Feng Ren
David Edwards

Co-Executive Producers
Noah Belson
Adrien Morot
Kathy Tse

Director Of Photography
Simon Shohet Csc

Production Designer
Peter Mihaichuk

Editor
Matt Lyon Cce

Costume Designer
Jenifur Jarvis

Prosthetic And Makeup Effects By Applied Arts Fx Studio

Makeup Effects By
Morot Fx

Music By
Brandon Roberts

Additional Music By
Snoop Dogg

Sound Design By
Karen Baker Landers

Casting By
Stephanie Gorin Csa

CREW

Production Manager	Justin Harding
First Assistant Director	Edward Hillier
Second Assistant Director	Manny Kargov
Line Producer	Candice Chow-How

CAST

Mia	Kiori Mirza Waldman
Marcella	Carina Battrick
Jared	Charlie Zeltzer
Hank	Ivano Dicaro
Umpire	Jordan Poole
Moog	Matias Tafilica
Myles	Eli Massillon
Terry	Lorenzo Antonucci
Elliott	Luke Dietz

The Ice Cream Man	Ari Millen
Daniella	Valentina Capetola
Dawn	Lerato Tafa
Myles' Son	Baeyen Hoffman
Benji	Kole Parks
Benji's Mom	Michèle Kaye
Lizzie	Sarah Abbott
Roger	Ric Reid
Chris	Dylan Hawco
Skye	Kiera Laidman
Fran Farber	Brittany Rae Robinson
Dog Walker	Lynne Griffin
Elliot's Mom	Amanda Barker
Sebastian	Sonam Kalsang
Marty	Eli Roth
Alison	Karen Cliche
Piper Farber	Charlie Storey
Barry Farber	Justin Mader
Girl On Big Wheel	Breeze Dango
Jogger	Alex Armbruster
Jesse	Ewan Matthys Wood
Mr. Hamlin	Rodrigo Fernandez-Stoll
Tommy	Shiloh O'reilly
Assistant Teacher Melissa	Hailey Kittle
Greg	Joseph La Marca
Mr. Browning	Ken Hall
Principal Maloney	Darrin Baker
Mrs. Valentine	Andriah Bryan
Girl On The Roof Throwing Bricks	Betty Volpe
Panicked Teacher	Neil Adams
Officer Salinger	Ryan Allen
Firefighter	Jason Lee Bell
Girl With A Claw Hammer	Genevieve Duncan-Reid
Penelope	Addison Bell
Terrified Teacher	Steffi Didomenicantonio
The Priest	Benjamin Byron Davis
Ice Cream Man Stunt Double	Jason Lee Bell
Lizzie Stunt Double	Tressa Young
Chris Stunt Double	Charles Mark
Elliot & Hank Stunt Double	Jonny Caines
Marcella Stunt Double	Brittany Spiteri

Piper Stunt Double	Angela Kostenski
Alison Stunt Double	Andrea Ciacchi
Officer Salinger Stunt Double	Adrian Edwards
Mr. Hamlin Stunt Double	Bart Badzioch
Additional Stunt Performers	Riley Jones
	Chanelle Hunter
	Serena Ly
	Jason Gosbee
	Trevor De Groot
	Vincent Rother
	Amy Szoke
	Allen Keng
	Stephanie Fonceca
	Yana Faie
Stunt Coordinator	Stephannie Hawkins
Stunt Riggers / Stunt Safety	Jason Lee Bell
	Neil Adams
	Joel Labelle
	Alex Armbruster
	Aj Risi
	Charles Mark
	Dustin Faith
	Jackson Rosario
	Bas Reitsma
	Derrick Franklin
Co-Producer	Wendy Xu
Associate Producer	Samantha Allwinton
First Assistant Art Director	Trevor Stewart
Trainee Assistant Art Director	Adrian Bifulchi
Props Master	Ryan Tonkin
Props Assistant / On Set Props	Sarah Donaldson
Set Decorator	Vincent Moskowec
Lead Set Dresser	John Dugray
On Set Dresser	Michael Szalay
Set Dressers	Janine Joseph
	Brodie Mihaichuk
	Karianne Taklo
Tracker	Mary Assenza

Carpenter	Tyson Benjamin
Production Designer (Proof Of Concept)	Justin Reu
Steadicam / A Camera Operator	James Hellyer
B Camera Operator	Ashley Iris Gill
A Camera First Assistant	Chris Reilly
B Camera First Assistant	Adam Cummerford
A Camera Second Assistant	Martin Monette
B Camera Second Assistant	Will Robertson
Digital Imaging Technician	Mehran Jabbari
Camera Trainee	Ashley Bodika
Stills Photographer	Danielle Blancher
Publicist	Mario Tassone
Bts / Epk Camera	Ben Martin Cocher
Bts / Epk Sound	Brent Robichaud
Social Media Producer	Caroline Sawyer
Script Supervisor	Steph Boyko
Production Sound Mixer	Brendan Michie
Boom Operator	Alex Gougeon
Gaffer	Catalin Patrichi
Best Electric	Sergei Konovalenko
Electrics	Alex Roman
	Gaelen Cook
Genny Op	Lennox Green
Key Grips	Joe McCormack
	Paul Hildebrand
Best Grip	Joe Marchelli
Dolly Grip	Nicholas Yakubiw
Grips	Don Leclair
	Ashton Leclair
	Jeff Harrison
	Ryan Galway
	Owen Meinert

Special Effects Supervisors	Max Macdonald Melinda Ramsey
Key Special Effects Technician	Drew Turner
Special Effects Technicians	Kayla Kerssies Emma Macleod Simone Manning Laura Sitter Anthony Makela
Puppeteer	Kayla Dobilas
Prosthetic & Makeup Effects	Applied Arts Fx Studio
Prosthetics Head Of Department	Steve Newburn
Prosthetics Key Artists	Adrian Stansfield Georgia Laladaki Shaun Hunter Kayla Dobilas
Prosthetics Artists	Dimple Mistry Cait Gautron Portia Koman Cassandre Bouchard Paul Jones Damon Bishop Tenille Shockey
Assistant Costume Designer	Dawn Thompson
Costume Set Supervisor	Rajetha "Raj" Kalatharan
Wardrobe Assistants	Miranda Lumley Naia Iezzi
Truck Supervisor	Leila Yazbek
Hair & Makeup Department Head	Stella Margaritis
Hair & Makeup First Assistant	Melanie Sleep
Hair & Makeup Second Assistant	Samantha Ryan
Hair & Makeup Assistant	Cassie Brunet
Casting Associate	Brendan Wilcocks Csa
Background Casting	Lawrence Black
Background Casting Associate	Casey Cox

Third Assistant Directors	Ahad Khan Dana Uy
Set Production Assistant	Sean Springtead
Production Coordinators	Josh Clapp Steff Millman
Assistant Production Coordinator	Jiro Pascual
Office Production Assistant	Lachlan Perigord
Assistant To Eli Roth	Isabella Healy
Assistant To Andre Coutu	Anna Di Giovanni
Production Controller	Amir Alimirza
Production Accountant	Heather Rose
First Assistant Accountants - Payroll	Luz Magcawas Garry Maher
Second Assistant Accountant - Payroll	Marcia Zepeda
First Assistant Accountant - Ap	Jess Maxwell
Location Manager	Michael Knox
Assistant Location Managers	Scott Wood Codey Ludlam
Location Production Assistants	Shaughn Cameron Chloe Campbell Matt Galanti
Location Support Personnel Provided By	Copy That Productions
Catering Service Provided By	Blazing Kitchen
Craft Service Provided By	Gourmet Craft And Catering
Key Craft Service	Bernard Isaac
Craft Key Assistant	Michael Ellero
Craft Assistant	Chantel Larson
Set Medic	Morgan Luis
Transportation Coordinator / Picture	
Vehicle Coordinator	Blake Edwards
Transportation Captain	Rosey Tyler
Head Driver	Dildar Brar
Shuttle Drivers	Mark Lewis Jeremiah Lapoint Sarvpreet Gill

Swamper / Basecamp Generator Operator	Opeyemi Adejimi
Second Unit Director	Justin Harding
Second Unit Director Of Photography	Ashley Iris Gill
Production Manager	Justin Harding
First Assistant Director	Edward Hillier
Second Assistant Director	Manny Kargov
Line Producer	Candice Chow-How

Post Production

First Assistant Picture Editor	Alysha Baker-Diaz
Assistant Picture Editor	Shayne Hazell
Post Production Supervisor	Roxanne Ortega
Post Production Coordinators	Julia Kostik Rhett Fester
Post Production Assistants	Adm Shedden Ogo Eze
Post Production Services By	Fly-By-Wire Filmworks
Post Production Accountant	Heather Rose
Post-Production Sound Services By	Formosa Group Sound Dogs
Supervising Sound Editors	Karen Baker-Landers Nelson Ferreira
First Assistant Sound Editors	Devin Loran Philip D. Morrill
Re-Recording Mixer	Peter Staubli
Foley Coordinator	Tina Babakishvili
Foley Artist	Biko Gogaladze
Foley Mixer	Giorgi Lekishvili
Foley Editors	Alexander Sanikidze Levan Tserediani Dachi Abesalashvili
Adr Stages	Company 3 Jam Post King Soundworks
Adr Mixers	Devin Doucette

	David Drage Brian Gallant Jonathan Gomez
Loop Group	Shauna Black Madeleine Cox Evelyn Chen Eliot Dahan Breeze Dango Genevieve Duncan-Reid Lucien Duncan-Reid Graham Horhager Emily Hurson Emerson Kerner Zahara Kerner Patrick Kwok-Choon Derek Moran Lisa Norton Ariel Olliviere Johnathan Sousa Casper Toriel-Mcgibbon
Music Supervisor	Asha Dillon
Orchestrations / Music Preparation	Andrew Lembo
Score Mixed By	Tyson Lozensky
Vocals	Liam Roberts
Vocals	Vienna Roberts
Violin / Viola	Maxwell Karmazyn
Cello	Peter Jacobson
Horror Cello	Kafhaus
Percussion	Andrew Lembo
Toy Piano	Brandon Roberts
Music Editor	Angela Claverie
Additional Music	Alexander Bornstein
Additional Music	Maxwell Karmazyn
Additional Music	Andrew Lembo
Digital Intermediate By	Company 3
Colorist	Tony Dustin
Finishing Producer	Katie Oliver
Finishing Editor	Mizuho Nakai

Manager, Picture Operations	Adrian Saywell
Imaging Supervisor	Nick Paulozza
Head Of Production	Amanda Champion
Manager, Dailies Operations	Christopher Haufe
Data Io Manager	Andrew Lanca
Finishing Executive	Mike Paterson
Billing Supervisor	Susan St. Kitts
Associate Producer, Editorial	Shaneixqui Brown
Vice President & General Manager	James Fraser
Co3 President	Stefan Sonnenfeld

Dailies By	Company 3
Dailies Producer	Gino Carletti
Dailies Operator	Tim Patterson
Dailies Supervisors	Rui Martins
	Kelly Milligan

On-Set Visual Effects Supervisor	Lisa Sepp-Wilson
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Visual Effects By	Josh Petrino
	Declan Boyle

Visual Effects By	Invalid Symbol
Invalid Symbol Vfx Supervisor	J. Lee Williams
Pipeline Developer	Ren Ozen
Pipeline Engineer	Nathan Lapp
Lead Vfx Artist	Callum Gillies
Vfx Artist	Oleksii Koba

Additional Visual Effects By	Jason Milstein
	Justin Harding
	Andy Robinson
	Lincoln Smith

Additional Visual Effects By	Dark Half
Executive Creative Producer	Andrew Macdonald
Lead Vfx Artist	Stephan Kozak
On-Set Rep	Valerie Flores

Graphics By	Olney Atwell
	Charlie Shekter

Main Title Design	Filmograph
End Credits By	End Crawl

THE HORROR SECTION

Client Services	Nina Mistry-Stevens
Production Executive	Matt Butler
Feature Film Development	Mark Ellis

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Production Supervisor	Francine Dibacco
Vp, Business & Legal Affairs	Michael Turner
Manager, Business & Legal Affairs	Milena Alvarenga

STUDIOCANAL

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Head Of Sixth Dimension Development And Production, Sixth Dimension	Jed Benedict Emily Mahon

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Dailies Streaming By	Autodesk Flow Capture
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MUSIC

"The Ice Cream Song"

Music And Lyrics By Eli Roth

Arranged By Aaron Verdonk

Performed By Eli Roth

Recorded At The Orange Lounge Studio

"Rissely Rosselty"

Lyrics By Eli Roth

Arranged By Alex Cuervo And Eli Roth

Performed By Alex Cuervo

"Risselty Rosselty"

Lyrics By Eli Roth

Arranged By Jeff Milutinovic And Eli Roth

Performed By Lucy Dot Milutinovic And Riley Pazulla

"Violenza Inattesa - Originale"

Written And Performed By Ennio Morricone

Courtesy Of Bixio

"Ice Cream Song"

Written By Snoop Dogg

Composed By Snoop Dogg

Performed By Snoop Dogg

SPECIAL THANKS

Michel Aller
Vanessa Bendetti
Vittoria Buraschi
Bernard Chong
Jad Dayeh
Veronica Ferres
Nadare Izadi
Wes Lang
Damien Leone
Ashley Levinson
Sam Levinson
Richard Mettler
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Sara Ramaker
Fred Raskin
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La Famiglia Morricone

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Cream

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DGC

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Formosa

Sound Dogs

Company3

Kodak

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For Scottie, David, Angelo and George.