

a Sideline Pictures film

IMANI KHIRY

BILL NALLY



How will they survive nature...
if they can't survive each other?

BLOOD ON THE LEAVES

97 Minutes, Color, Unrated

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BLOOD ON THE LEAVES

Short Synopsis

Blood on the Leaves centers on a black, urban youth who is grappling with the sins of his past as he buries a body far from the city near an old Pennsylvania logging plot. In the midst of digging a shallow grave, a tree falls, injuring him and pinning him to the ground. A nearby white bow hunter, startled, drops his box and runs towards the sound of the fallen tree. The hunter is unable to move the tree or free the city boy. Just as he is leaving to find help, he stumbles across the tarp covered body. The city boy pulls a gun on the hunter. Locked in a standoff, they find themselves alone in the middle of the wilderness.

Cast

City Boy - Imani Khiry

Hunter - Bill Nally

Rio - Bendon Taylor

Jamal - Carl Clemons

Trooper Bruce - Dallas Nathan White

Trooper Shaw - Danny Kelly

Hugh - John Furman

Ben - Kieron MacLeod

Hunter's Wife - Cindy Fernandez-Nixon

Kyle - Patrick Stanny

Dealer - Yusef Adekunle

Escort - Petra Bryant

Robber - Aundre Artemus

Crew

Writer/Director - Vincent Barnard

Producers - Vincent Barnard, Ryan Haggerty, Craig Inzana

Director of Photography - Ryan Haggerty

Editor - Vincent Barnard

Production Designer - Rachel Bertrand

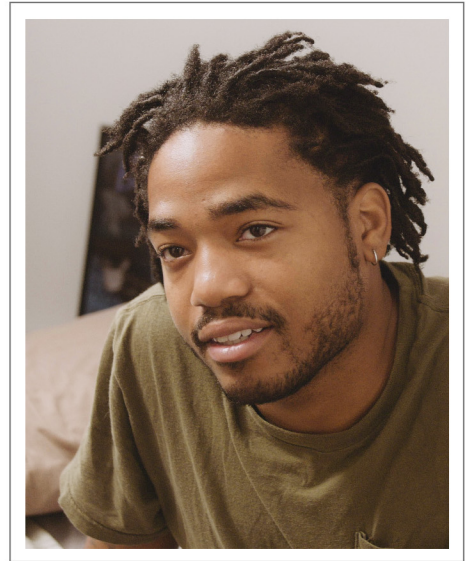
Sound Designer - Mike Hurst

Special FX Artist - Nora Hewitt

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Cast Bios

IMANI KHIRY (*City Boy*) - Recently known for his role as Randall Williams in the feature length film *Made In Cleveland* (2013) which was nominated for “Best Narrative Feature” at the Great Lakes International Film Festival in 2013. Other original Film credits include: Culand in the SiFi action feature film *Aquatic X* (New Talent Productions) (2016); Liso in the short film *Feathered High & Unusual* (Perspective Film Works); Donovan in the short film *Relics* Which won “Best Picture, Best Director, Best Acting and was nominated for three other awards at the Cleveland State Film Festival. (A Tinker Shoppe Production); and City Boy in the up and coming feature *Blood on the Leaves* (2016) (Sideline Pictures).



What Imani brings to the screen as the co-lead in *Blood on the Leaves* is a powerful reminder of what it means to be trapped by your environment. He struggles to break free from the world around him that has claimed the lives of so many and give himself a clean start.

As his character is a boy from the city who has seen the result of gang violence firsthand, he also struggles to trust people and see beyond the stereotypes that have been thrust at him his whole life.



BILL NALLY (*The Hunter*) - Having experience on both sides of the camera, Bill brings an attention to detail with the development of his characters. He served as the lead talent in *Hindsight 2020*, *Ten Years Deep*, and *Curveball*.

As the co-lead in *Blood on the Leaves*, at times he is a calming presence in the middle of a very chaotic situation. Other times he is the thorn in the side of City Boy. Bill plays up the resoucefulness of the Hunter as his predicament becomes ever more dire. Although his character is at home in the wood, he struggles to overcome his own failures and find the will to survive.

Bill continues to hone his talent in Cincinnati, OH as an actor and filmmaker.

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Cast Bios

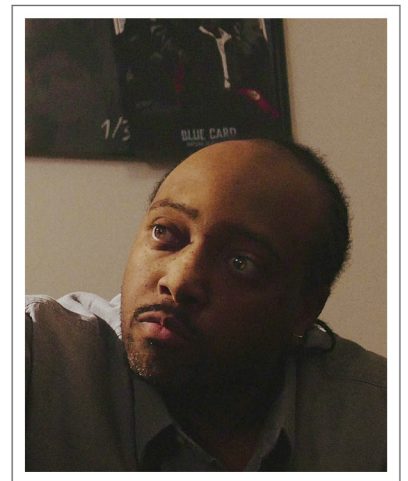


BRENDON TAYLOR (*Rio*) - An explosive, young talent who has worked in the Pittsburgh area as an actor on the TV Show *Banshee*, on the film projects *Running Circles*, *An Honest Man is Hard to Find*, and has appeared in commercials for Coca Cola, the Pittsburgh Pirates, and Dolby.

As Rio, he stands on the verge of ascending through the ranks in Jamal's crew. Will he be able to make the necessary sacrifices to run the crew, or is he just another scrub?

CARL CLEMONS (*Jamal*) - He has acted in roles for TV shows such as HBO's *The Wire*, feature films in the Pittsburgh area including *Southpaw*, *Out of the Furnace*, *Insomnia (2016)*, and *The Dark Knight Rises*, and the short film *Some Gave All*. Carl grew up in Wilkinsburg, PA surrounded in the midst of gang violence and drugs. He turned to acting as a way to be successful in life. In his own words, "The sky is not the limit, just a view."

Carl brings a deadly calm to the character of Jamal that allows him to command the room.



DALLAS WHITE (*Trooper Bruce*) - A Jefferson, Maryland native, he began his acting career during his freshman year of high school, performing in such productions as "High School Musical" and "Addict," a dinner theater production. Beginning with a major in business, White realized he preferred performing arts, and switched his major to drama, studying method acting and acting history. White also worked on short films and was introduced to 72 Film Fest. He has been cast in various roles in many television, short film and feature film performances, and continues to expand his resume and pursue his dreams and goals in the field.

Trooper Bruce often finds himself at odds with following his instincts or the orders of his superiors.

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DANNY KELLY (*Trooper Shaw*) - He has played various character roles onscreen such as a wrestling referee in the 2014 drama, *Foxcatcher*, and was a stand-in for *The Last Witch Hunter*. In addition to his film credits, Danny, a resident of the Carnegie section of Pittsburgh, has also appeared in national commercial spots for automaker Hyundai.

As the over bearing Trooper Shaw, he tends to wear the badge as a way of exerting his power over others. He is definitely not the trooper you want to meet on a country backroad.



JOHN FURMAN (*Hugh*) - John is both an actor and media producer. In addition to appearing in onstage productions at the Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, he is also producing a web series called *Downsized*. John currently resides in Butler, PA.

As Hugh, he seems to know a little about everything, except people that don't look the same as he does.

KIERON MACLEOD (*Ben*) - In that short time he has appeared in several independent short films and also Point Park University and Pittsburgh Filmmakers student productions. In addition to the film work he has also appeared in the role of Thomas Putnam on the stage in Arthur Miller's "The Crucible". Whether it's playing Colonel Sam Trautman in a "First Blood" scene study, a burnt out private-eye in a short, or a Revolutionary war Captain in the web series *Mason*, both student and professional filmmakers cast Kieron, a South Park, PA resident, in roles that demand he step fully into the character's world.



Ben runs a respectable store, he is just not a very respectable

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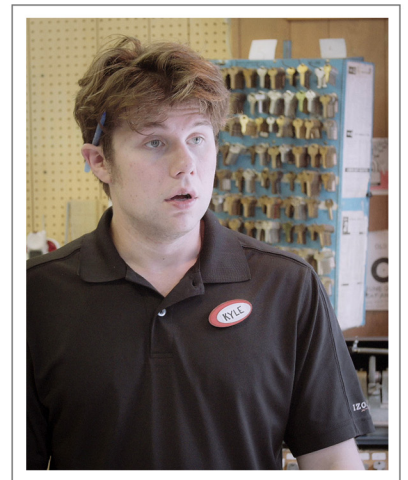
Cast Bios



CINDY FERNANDEZ-NIXON (*Maya, Hunter's Wife*) - Cindy, a Dominican born talent, made her first appearance on the entertainment scene at the age of 9. She is very active the television, film, and radio industries from Pittsburgh to Miami. She has made many contributions to incorporating diversity in popular media with her talents as an host, actress, and producer. She continues to broaden and hone her talents in Pittsburgh, PA.

Maya is at an impasse with how to break through her husband's pride as she looks for a way to improve their lot in life.

PATRICK STANNY (*Kyle*) - is a recent grad of Skidmore College's theater program. Feature film credits include *Because We're Numb* (Nash) and *The Way That I am* (Matt). Previous theater credits include *The Fellowship of Actors and Directors* (Devon) at the recent Pittsburgh New Works throwback show, *Macbeth* (Malcolm) with Pittsburgh Classic Players and *You Belong to Me* with Prime Stage. *Blood Wedding* (Bridegroom) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Michael) both at Skidmore College. Patrick has studied with Anne Bogart and SIT Company as well as at the Gaiety School of Acting in Dublin Ireland. He resides in the Allison Park area of Hampton



Township, PA just outside Pittsburgh. His character, Kyle, is a young man who is way out of his element and too scared to do anything about it.



PETRA BRYANT (*The Escort*) - Petra Bryant is a Czech born film actress, she splits her time between London and that USA (Pittsburgh, PA). Petra's most recent project is a feature film called *Insomnia* in which she stars as Ana in this Pittsburgh-based psychological thriller. Her many other roles include a sci-fi horror *Abduct* where she plays Russian UFO scientist Lyra alongside William B. Davis of *X-Files* and Sienna Guillory (*Resident Evil*).

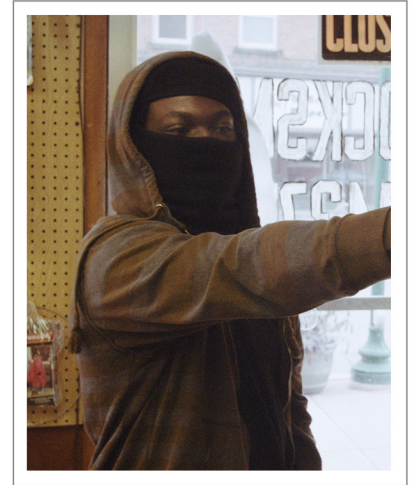
The Escort finds herself awake earlier than she'd like and being asked questions she would rather not answer.

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AUNDRE ARTEMUS (*The Robber*) - A musician / actor from Pittsburgh PA. Also known by his nickname "Gwalla" He is currently working on various musical projects, videos, and a YouTube web series out of the Penn Hills area of Pittsburgh, PA.

The robber gives us a look at the bad choices a lot of youth can make when faced with dim prospects in the world they live in.

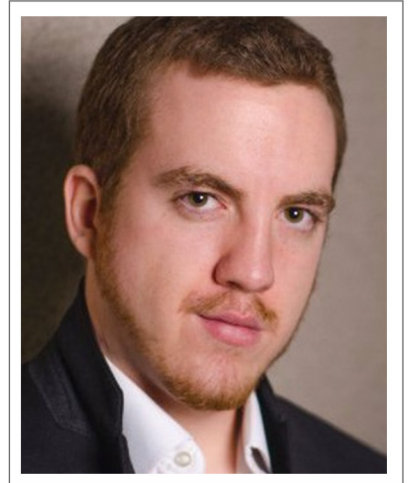


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Producer/Crew Bios

VINCENT BARNARD (*Producer/Writer/Director/Editor*) - Hailing from Port Allegany, PA, he has served as producer writer director on both the 2014 web series *Blue Card* and the 2013 documentary short *Hey Coach*. Vince also starred as Cole in the web series *Blue Card*, and played prominent roles in the stage performances of *Little Women*, *Learned Ladies*, and *Private Lives* at the historic Reitz Theater. He currently calls DuBois, PA home with his fiancée and pet guinea pigs.

Vince lived and breathed the story early on with casting calls, throughout the many shoots, and in never ending editing sessions. Harry Potter and Vince both slept in rooms under staircases for their films.



RYAN HAGGERTY (*Producer/DoP/Colorist*) - A Midland, NC native, he spent many years in DuBois, PA and served as DoP on the award-winning narrative “Heels on Wheels” the 2014 Pittsburgh 48 Hour Film Project, the 2007 feature length documentary *Tearing Down the Tent*, and various commercial projects. He was the director/writer/producer on the 2013 narrative short, *Summer Hatch* and the 2010 documentary short *Van Dyke and Company 25th Anniversary Retrospective*. In 2007, Ryan also wrote segments, produced, and was the main voice-over artist for the audio book collection *HP Lovecraft Radio Hour, Vol. I*.

Ryan brought on investors, figured out tricky lighting situations, and slept in a enclosed porch with a space heater for the duration of production. He now lives in Pittsburgh, PA.

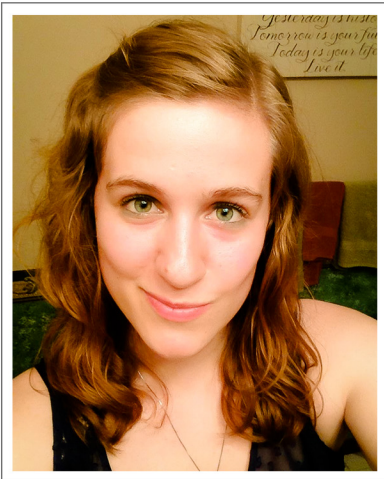
CRAIG INZANA (*Producer/AD/Trailer Editor*) - Born in Brockway, PA, he was the producer of the web series *Blue Card* in 2014, another web series *Main* in 2015, and many music videos in the greater Pittsburgh area. He is making the move to Austin, TX to continue his development as a producer, and will remain a partner with Sideline Pictures.

From organizing people and resources during the development and preproduction phase to keeping a tight schedule during production, Craig’s organization has kept BOTL on track. He also has a great mom who made sure we were never without food.



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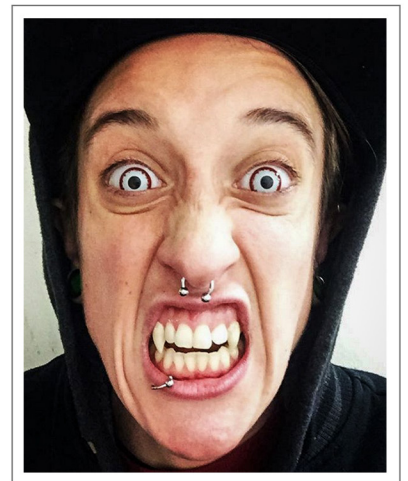
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RACHEL BERTRAND (*Production Designer*) - Having studied theater production at Ohio University, she has applied her talents as a prop maker at both the Idaho Shakespeare Festival and Great Lakes Theater. She currently resides in Avon, OH.

In addition to setting and resetting the wooded and other scenes for various time within the film, Rachel supplied unique props and costuming for each character giving them a sense of place in their individual worlds. She also slated a lot of scenes, for which we are eternally grateful.

NORA HEWITT (*Special FX Makeup/Supervisor*) - Her passion and a life-long knack for artistic flair caused her to pursue her dreams at Tom Savini's Special Makeup Effects Program, from which she graduated in January of 2015. She capped off this experience by competing on Season 9 of the SyFy series *FaceOff*, in which she took top honors by winning the grand prize. Currently, she is happily pursuing her dreams freelancing in the special effects makeup industry in LA.



Nora's make up applications came to life in the form of bullet, knife, blunt force, and other wound effects. She also supplied practical effects to compliment set design and props like a boss.



MIKE HURST (*Production Audio*) - Mike Hurst is a NYC based producer, audio engineer and field sound recorder who splits his time at his recording studio, The Pancake Factory, and on location/on set. Mike's sound work ranges from TV commercials to studio Television, Corporate videos, Reality shows, Web-Series, Documentaries, narrative shorts and feature films. At his studio, he has worked with such talented artists as Cheatahs, Rogue Wave, Pearl and the Beard, White-wash, Cicero and the Orations, Jeffrey Lewis, and the History of Apple Pie (to name a few).

Mike captured clean dialog, wild sound, and sound effects in conditions ranging from downpours to cramped backseats to noisy urban environments and maintained a vegan diet.

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Producer's Q & A

Why make this movie now?

Vincent Barnard

The dramatic themes of *Blood On The Leaves* certainly parallel issues that plague the country right now like violent racism. It's topical, you can't deny that; however, that's not why we made this film now. Racism has been going on a lot longer than cameras have been around and it'll keep happening after this film. I hope it starts some important conversations, but the bottom line is, we are filmmakers who love what we do and want to make meaningful movies. It could be 1987, it could be 2048, there's not a wrong time to talk about these issues or do what you love.

Also, as a side note, I have a feeling that if filmmakers sixty years ago with their giant film cameras and restricting studio contracts saw young filmmakers putting their films on hold because they only raised \$90,000 instead of \$800,000 to make their movie, they'd slap them right in the face. The producers and I had a hunger to make a film and simply weren't going to wait for permission. Why would you? You write a script that utilizes resources available to you, grab high quality video gear for low costs, and surround yourself with an equally hungry crew. All you need is a few thousand bucks and 10 days off of your day job!

What influenced the writing and direction?

VB

The script came from a few very different influences. I grew up in a small Pennsylvania town so I took that hunting, back road world that I knew and crashed it into the exact opposite: hip hop. I love rap - my headphones are my most beloved screenwriting tool. I just admire the storytelling ability and articulation a lot of rappers have and how they tell the truth about where they're from - a truth that someone from a two traffic light town has no idea about. So the concept of these two worlds colliding through these characters and not shying away from any issues really drove *Blood On The Leaves* from page to screen.



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In what instances did collaboration help push the project forward?

Ryan Haggerty

Taking a crack at producing a feature length narrative film after working mostly on shorter form content is not unlike taking a boat from a lake to the big sea. Sure, we planned for how

much food and water we needed. We charted the course and brought plenty of lemons to combat scurvy, but with any longer term project there are always unforeseen storms and doldrums just around the corner.

Our AD, Craig Inzana, scoped out the weather for one of our many exterior woods days only to see that rain was imminent. He had a plan B which was discussed, but ultimately the cast and crew buckled down and committed to filming a long scene in the rain. Our audio technician, Mike Hurst, had packed these finger condoms for his wireless mics. They worked great. Imani and Bill got poured on take after take as the camera rolled. Anyone not involved in the scene was on standby with warm clothes and towels for the talent. It helped bring people together and show us just how determined our team was to making it happen. Definitely a good day on set.

Craig Inzana

When you have such a small team, you really feel how powerful the collaborative part of the filmmaking process is. We always joke on set that filmmaking is the “team sport” of the art world, but it really is. A lot of us are coming from backgrounds where we made shorts or web series with two people crews wearing every hat imaginable. It’s a really interesting thing to get to focus heavily on less things and make sure those are done right.

For me, I don’t think I could have pulled off the scheduling as smoothly if I were handling many more responsibilities than Assistant Directing. Scheduling was all set up ahead of time, which helped, but because we’re filming out in the woods and nature doesn’t care what the weather said it was going to be like, there were tons of moments where we were flipping things around in the schedule to get it done. Everyone had their jobs to do, and all I had to say was “we’re doing this scene,” and just about everyone knew what they had to do in order for that scene to be ready to shoot in an hours, the next morning, or five minutes later.

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Who is this movie for?

RH

This movie gives a lot of people a chance to reflect on their own feelings towards the Other. This idea of the Other was brought up for me in a great World Cinemas class I took (yes, people that go to film school can end up making movies too) which presented the Other as an enigma. At the heart of this concept is that fact that identity is often a matter of perspective. White settlers arriving in the New World calling the native peoples Indian does not mean they are really Indian. In modern day America, just because someone lives in a rural area, is white, and enjoys spending time in the woods does not make them a racist redneck.



In this way, the Other is not actually what a group of people or a person are. It is more the view point of an established group of people looking in and deciding how they do or do not relate to a new or different group of people. The story presents multiple sides of how these stereotypical views of people who are different from ourselves (which will be different depending on the viewer), and lets them display their true color for better or for worse. This movie is for an audience that is curious to look past appearances and take a deeper look at who the Other might actually be.

What do think audiences will take away with them after watching the film?

VB

Look, this film definitely brings up some deep issues, namely racial stereotyping, and our goal was to show people in a creative way that this topic is unavoidable. I wouldn't want people to think we're preaching or anything, we just want to show that no one is off the hook when it comes to judging people. The white guy is stereotyping the black "thug" and the black guy is stereotyping the white "redneck," all while trying to survive in nature. But do you think nature cares about what their skin color is? That's the point that I HOPE people will take away from this movie - that in the end, you can look at a book and judge it by its cover, but you can't claim to really know what it's about. And also, people will laugh and enjoy the bursts of action!

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RH

Once the movie is out, people are free to feel how they want about it. Just watching the film through the lens as we filmed it, and even more so as the rough cut came together, I felt a mix of discomfort and pleasure from the exchanges between City Boy, Imani Khiry, and the Hunter, Bill Nally.

I grew up in NC and saw flashes of racial tension on bus rides to school and in some of the towns and cities I grew up near. Having lived in the north for a number of years, I would say that racial biases may be found no matter where you live. The discomfort I felt watching Bill and Imani going tit for tat with racial stereotyping brings up some of the things I witnessed with white and black kids making some pretty nasty and biased assumptions about each other's lifestyles.

The scenes that brought me pleasure were usually the ones that just featured the two actors reacting to their situation as people, regardless of their skin color. They really test each other's patience throughout the film. That may come with a touch of machismo, but at least those reactions feel more true to their personalities and less about how they hold racial biases towards one another.

CI

The movie is in many ways about the kind of racial tensions, but moreso this urban v. rural tension we see a lot in Pennsylvania. It deals a lot with what poverty looks like in rural rust belt and what it looks like in a lot of urban rust belt areas. I've never lived outside of Pennsylvania, but I can image those themes carry well beyond this area specifically. In those ways it's a very real story about a kind of "what are the chances" situation.

Vincent has this great ability to write things that are very emotionally charged and touch on serious themes but still retain a level of excitement and tension. Hopefully people walk out of the theater (or whatever medium they're watching) and want to talk to other people they watched it with about what just happened. It throws you for a few loops and the performances are really strong; so beyond the issues it touches on, I think people will really enjoy it as a entertaining movie that they want to talk about.



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What did you learn while making this feature film?

VB

Being the first feature film that I directed, I definitely learned a lot of new things like how to run a casting call and how to rework a budget around what's possible to shoot. Aside from the million and one collaborative, problem-solving experiences on set, *Blood On The Leaves* simply brought a bunch of people from many different backgrounds together to stay in the same house and make a movie for two weeks; as a result, the end of day campfires were very rewarding. We'd shoot all day, get better and better as filmmakers, and then relax and talk for a couple of hours. It was amazing.



Imani (City Boy) was so intrigued by the fact that he could see every star in the night sky. He'd stare at them because he's from the city where you can't see them at all and being from a rural area like where we filmed, I realized I'd been taking things like that for granted. Cool moments like that really led to a bond with everyone that taught me the most important lesson as a director: embrace and trust the talent of others. The cast and crew are there for a reason. I was always a believer of true collaboration, but to see it work repeatedly by not micromanaging and letting them do their thing was eye-opening and made *Blood On The Leaves* a better film.

RH

We have all learned that planning, research, and creative problem solving go a long way towards being ready to make a feature length project, but the biggest take away for me is building up a discipline to stay focused and work hard on the next priority. I would not have been able to work as hard or push myself beyond what I thought I could do without such a great team of collaborators.

To anyone who may be thinking about taking the plunge and investing themselves in a longer term project, choose your allies well. Everyone who was a part of the project was super professional and dedicated to their craft. Vince and Craig have both kept me honest in terms of delivering what I said I would, and adding to my drive to make the film better. In short, be honest with yourself and do what you are good at. Find those other people who complement your weaknesses with their strengths and trust them to do their job. It frees you up to do your part well and sleep a little easier.

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Anything you would have changed about the production?

VB

Our \$10,000 production budget and 14 day shoot schedule has conditioned me to not be picky. That being said, if I had to change one thing about our overall solid production, it would be to somehow, some way get two or three full time production assistants for the entire duration of the shoot. It might sound like an easy position to fill but we were stretched so thin in other areas of the budget, we couldn't offer any pay for potential PAs who would've had to stay in our cramped production house in the woods for two weeks.

Looking back, internships may have been the way to go, but filming in October made that a little tricky as well; however, I would go back and figure out how to get them because when you're the director or even actor and you need to run and grab something from the tent or car real quick, a few times a night, that adds up and slows things down. Production assistants seem to be the lowest step on the ladder in a lot of people's minds, but I think they're the ones holding the on set production in place so you don't fall on your ass.

Imani (City Boy) was so intrigued by the fact that he could see every star in the night sky. He'd stare at them because he's from the city where you can't see them at all and being from a rural area like where we filmed, I realized I'd been taking things like that for granted. Cool moments like that really led to a bond with everyone that taught me the most important lesson as a director: embrace and trust the talent of others. The cast and crew are there for a reason. I was always a believer of true collaboration, but to see it work repeatedly by not micromanaging and letting them do their thing was eye-opening and made *Blood On The Leaves* a better film.



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Film in PA