

**Little Swan Pictures presents**  
**a new film by the acclaimed, Emmy-winning filmmaker Dustin Morrow**



## **Black Pool** Press Kit

Contact: Lisa Molinelli, Producer  
[everythingwentdown@gmail.com](mailto:everythingwentdown@gmail.com)

Website: [www.blackpoolfilm.com](http://www.blackpoolfilm.com)

Press materials available at the film's website:  
Press release, synopsis, logline, contact info,  
director's statement and bio, cast and crew  
bios, credits, FAQs, photos, fliers and posters,  
screenings, trailers, interviews and more.



## Synopsis

A dark, dingy basement.

One man is tied to a chair. Another man stands before him, gripping a large hammer.

A video camera whirs away in the background.

"How do you know me?" asks the man with the hammer.

"I've never seen you before in my life," answers the man in the chair.

"You will tell me how you know me, and what you've done to me, or you won't get out of that chair alive."

So begins *Black Pool*, a gripping thriller of imprisonment and interrogation, as three desperate people engage in a battle of wills that may leave one of them dead. Set all in one night, the film uses a contemporary story of fatalism and vengeance to explore the conflict that has raged in Northern Ireland for nearly a hundred years.

Michael is a tortured Irishman living with his wife Emma in America. Perpetually down on his luck, he has projected his life's misfortune onto a stranger, a man who changed his life in a tragic incident nearly thirty years earlier. A shadowy figure he saw for only a fleeting moment. But tonight, through a chance encounter, he believes he's found the man who ruined his life. And he's going to make him pay.

But does he have the right man?

This question ignites a revenge-fueled game of cat-and-mouse that will test Michael's understanding of his past. And caught between the two men is Emma, who may hold the only key to escaping the night alive.

*Black Pool* is an Irish/American co-production shot partially on location in Dublin and Belfast.

## Note from the Director

*Black Pool* is a film about Irish history and Irish identity, particularly as they relate to the conflict in Northern Ireland, and how that identity is tied to questions about religion, politics, economics and culture. The conflict technically ended in April of 1998 with the Good Friday Agreement, but only on paper. The tension that exists between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, even if it's now more below-the-surface. Brexit is stressing the region, as it raises a lot of questions about the management of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland once Northern Ireland leaves the EU with the rest of the UK.

I have a friend from Belfast who, at the height of the Troubles, discovered her cousin lying facedown in a ditch. He had been executed by the IRA. I know that more than four decades later this image still haunts her. She's told me stories of growing up in a working-class part of Belfast, walking to school everyday, hurling rocks at Catholic kids and dodging the rocks that were thrown back. Hearing gunfire and explosions in the distance. Seeing fires burning in the streets, marches with chanting unionists and nationalists, and soldiers with machine guns patrolling the neighborhoods. She lives in America now, and has since she was a young woman. She's thousands of miles and forty years from those events, and yet the images linger.

Ireland has long been a nation of immigrants. People have been driven from its shores for hundreds of years, for a number of reasons, from the Great Famine of the

1840s to the economic collapse of the 2000s. James Joyce once wrote that Ireland is a nation that confers honor only upon those who've left it. With *Black Pool*, I wanted to tell a story about the conflict in Ireland, and contemporary Irish identity, through the lens of immigration. What must it be like to feel as though you were expelled from your home, a voluntary refugee of sorts? The two men who engage in a deadly game of cat-and-mouse in the film are both adrift, from two different, but both inherently Irish motivations. They've left their homeland to seek something better in the U.S., only to find that they can't outrun the past.

William Faulkner once wrote, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." *Black Pool* is about a man who allows one incident, one small moment from deep in his past, to proceed to inform every action of his life for three decades. Like a cancer, it eats him alive, from the inside out. He kidnaps and interrogates a man he believes is responsible for all of his pain, but the interrogation is really of the self. It's a reckoning. He's been on this collision course with violence and chaos for a long time, and it finally comes to a head in this one terrifying night. The film is, in some ways, about imprisonment - both literal imprisonment and imprisonment to an idea.

When you are a prisoner to your own thoughts and ideas, what happens when you can't break free? Where do you end up? What happens when you just *can't let it go*?



## Writer/Director Bio

Dustin Morrow is an Emmy-winning filmmaker, bestselling author, programmer and professor. He teaches courses in film production and film studies at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. Prof. Morrow's films have won numerous awards and been screened in more than 30 countries around the world. He has written about film and pop culture for a host of publications, and his photographs have been featured in both solo and group exhibitions. Before re-entering academia, Morrow was an editor and director of short-form projects and series television in Los Angeles, for such clients as MTV and the Discovery Channel, and with such filmmakers as Spike Jonze, Michael APTED, Steven Soderbergh, and Guy Ritchie. He continues to operate his own independent production company, Little Swan Pictures, for which recent projects have taken him as far away as the Aleutian Sea.

Among his recent works are the feature-film contemporary musical *Everything Went Down*, which was the subject of a TED Talk and has screened at film festivals around the world, taken Best Film honors at five film festivals, and was a runaway success on the streaming service Hulu. Other recent projects include the experimental short films *Dead Mall*, *Treetops*, and *Ground London*, which have screened and won awards at festivals worldwide. He is currently at work on *Black Pool*, a feature-length thriller about the conflict in Northern Ireland.

In 2013 Focal Press published Prof. Morrow's book *Producing for TV and New Media*, a core text at universities across the country. *Kathleen Turner on Acting: Conversations about Film, Television and*

*Theater*, a collaborative book he wrote with the legendary actress, was published by Skyhorse Press in Fall 2018. Prof. Morrow was the director of the Greenfield Youth Film Festival, one of the largest youth media education programs in the country, and is currently the director of the Portland Music Video Festival, one of the only festivals in the world dedicated exclusively to the art and craft of music videos. He has received grants for his work totaling more than half a million dollars. Learn more about his work at [www.dustinmorrow.com](http://www.dustinmorrow.com).



## Cast Bios

### Tom Walton

The majority of Tom's work has been on the stage as an active company member of the Northwest Classical Theater Company for 14 years. Over that time he has had the opportunity to work and study with some modern Shakespearean powerhouses like Bill Alexander, Barry Kyle, Janet Suzman, Lisa Harrow, Joseph Marcel, Richard Katz, Immogen Stubbs Andrew Wade and Jonathan Guy Lewis. He has performed in over 80 professional theatrical productions throughout the Portland area having worked closely with Tracy Letts on an adaptation of *Three Sisters* and Tanya Barfield on her original play *The Call*. Tom has appeared in 30 film projects ranging up and down the west coast and has appeared as a guest star on 2 episodes of NBC's *Grimm*. Tom is an active chiropractor and full time professor teaching manual medicine at the Natural University of Natural Medicine and the University of Western States. Tom is always on the lookout for his next adventure.

### Todd Van Voris

Originally from Tampa, Florida, Todd Van Voris studied acting at New York University. He relocated to Portland in 2001 and has been active in the theatre scene ever since. He's won rave reviews for performances in such plays as *Seven Ways to Get There*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, *Design for Living*, *Holidazed*, *Becky's New Car*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Sometimes a Great Notion*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *The Flu Season* and *The Seafarer*. He won a Drammy award for his lead role in *Betrayal* at Imago Theatre. He is a former member of the company at Artists Repertory Theater and has worked extensively with the Portland Opera. He starred in a production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at the Sydney Theatre Company in Australia. Todd is also a voice-over artist, and his distinctively rich and resonant tones have earned him an appropriate nickname in the Portland theatre community: "Todd Van Voice".

### Amber Stonebraker

Amber Stonebraker is an actor currently living in Los Angeles. She began her acting career around 12 years ago at Northern Arizona University where she received a BA in Theatre Performance. She continues her education through improv, clown, and scene study classes. While the stage will always have a special place in heart, most of her current work is centered around television and film. She has worked with many local and non-local talent in a handful of independent films, can be seen in many local and national commercials, and has had costar roles in television shows such as *Grimm* and *Mystery Diners*, where she appeared in 3 episodes.



## Crew Bios

David Jordan (Producer) is an award-winning producer, filmmaker, actor and world-traveler currently living in Portland, Oregon. His introduction to film came just after his tenth birthday when his father took him to see *Gladiator*. Since then, he has gone on to create the travel-inspired short series *In Transit*, worked with clients including Infiniti, TEDx, IBM, Google, and helped produce the widely popular *High Resolution* video-podcast series. He graduated from Portland State University, where he produced his award-winning short film *Consume*.

Lisa Molinelli (Producer) is a writer and editor with a Masters in Library Science from Simmons College. She has extensive experience in editing, publishing, content management, and user-centered web design. She is currently the web services librarian for Portland Community College, and was the Social Media Strategist and Producer for the indie feature film *Everything Went Down*.

Michael Bryan Hull (Cinematographer) is an award-winning cinematographer and artist known for his work in film, photography, and music. Michael recently shot and directed the music video *Hiking* for Portland musical duo There Is No Mountain. He graduated from Portland State University with a degree in film, where he directed his award-winning short film *Daniel*.

Nathanael Sams (Sound Designer) is a Telly Award winner with expertise in editing, sound design, and music production. His diverse skill set allows him to bring a unique perspective to every project he works on. His client list includes Warner Brothers, adidas, Target, Netflix, Coca-Cola, Stampede Ventures, Maybelline, The Rock, and many others. Nathanael and his wife currently split their time between Santa Monica, CA and Portland, OR.

Hailing from Portland, Oregon, Rum Rebellion (Songs) is a peppery mix of punk rock and Celtic influences served up with a distinctive pirate twist. Comprised of members whose past musical endeavors include All Worked Up, Unstable Youth, Fire At Will, and Heathen Shrine, Rum Rebellion has transformed from its humble street corner busking roots into a widely known touring act. The band

began in 2005 with all-acoustic instrumentation and played sea shanties, jigs, and reels. The band's namesake reflects the historical feel of the band's conception - The "Rum Rebellion" was an actual historical conflict in New South Wales territory of Australia, brought on by the governor's desire to eliminate the use of rum as a trading and purchasing commodity. After twelve years, four albums, and over 1000 shows, Rum Rebellion is one of the hardest-working national touring acts in the country.



Connor Jones (Camera) is a filmmaker and cinematographer based in Portland, Oregon. He is a recent graduate of the School of Film at Portland State University, where he earned a B.A. in film production. He spent a semester studying abroad at the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, also known as Ireland's National Film School. While in Ireland, he wrote and directed the film *Alice Abroad*.

Jaden Fooks (Sound) is a videographer and filmmaker based in Portland, Oregon. She has directed multicamera shoots for the Portland State Opera, interned at Koerner Camera Systems, and shot multiple music videos. She won awards for her short films *Superhero* and *Untitled in Ireland*. Her documentary *Free Hot Soup* profiles an innovative program that brings free meals to the homeless populations of Portland.



## Credits

Tom J. Walton as Michael

Amber Stonebraker as Emma

Todd Van Voris as Aidan

Kailey Rhodes as Siobhan

Writer/Director: Dustin Morrow

Producers: David Jordan, Lisa Molinelli, Dustin Morrow

Story: Lisa Molinelli, Dustin Morrow

Cinematographer: Michael Hull

Editor: Dustin Morrow

Production Sound: Jaden Fooks

Sound Crew: Christina Dodge

Sound Designer: Nathanael Sams

Graphic Designer: Kacey Morrow

Script Supervisor: Lisa Molinelli

Camera: Connor Jones

Assistant Editor: Christina Dodge

Production Assistant: Lukas Gordon

Electronic Press Kit: David Jordan

Webmasters: David Jordan, Lisa Molinelli

Dialect Consultant: Karl Hanover

Cinematography in Ireland and Northern Ireland:  
Jaden Fooks, Dustin Morrow

Songs by Rum Rebellion

Rum Rebellion is

Dave Noyers - Acoustic Guitar and Vocals

Tyler Bennett - Tin Whistle

Ty Ward - Electric Guitar

Hyatt Eshelman - Bouzouki

James Privette - Bass Guitar

Jon Cummings - Drums

## FAQs for Writer/Director Dustin Morrow

### Where did the idea for *Black Pool* come from?

I have a friend from Belfast who, at the height of the Troubles, discovered her cousin's body after he had been executed by the IRA. I know that more than four decades later this image still haunts her. She's told me stories of growing up in a working-class part of Belfast, walking to school everyday, hurling rocks at Catholic kids and dodging the rocks that were thrown back. Hearing gunfire and explosions in the distance. Seeing fires burning in the streets, marches with chanting unionists and nationalists, and soldiers with machine guns patrolling the neighborhoods. She lives in America now, and has since she was a young woman. She's thousands of miles and forty years from those events, and yet the memories linger. I was interested in telling a story about contemporary Irish identity as it is haunted by its past - in particular, the trauma inflicted on the psyche by what it must have been like to have grown up in what was effectively a war zone.

### How would you describe the film?

*Black Pool* is a film about Irish history and Irish identity, particularly as they relate to the conflict in Northern Ireland, and how that identity is tied to questions about religion, politics, economics and culture. The conflict technically ended in April of 1998 with the Good Friday Agreement, but only on paper. The tension still exists between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, even if it's now more below-the-surface. Brexit is stressing the region, as it raises a lot of questions about the management of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland once Northern Ireland leaves the EU with the rest of the UK. And *Black Pool* is also a film about immigration. Ireland has long been a nation of immigrants. People have been driven from its shores for hundreds of years, for a number of reasons, from the Great Famine of the 1840s to the economic collapse of the 2000s. James Joyce once wrote that Ireland is a nation that confers honor only upon those who've left it. With *Black Pool*, I wanted to tell a story about the conflict in Ireland, and contemporary Irish identity, through the lens of immigration. What must it be like to feel as though you were expelled from your home? The two men who engage in a deadly game of wills in the film are both adrift. They've left their homeland to seek something

better in the U.S., only to find that they can't outrun their pasts. There's a great quote from Faulkner: "The past is never dead. It's not even past." This film is about what happens when the past comes, like the devil, to get its due.

### What were the biggest challenges of making the film?

The budget and the schedule were the biggest logistical challenges. It's a microbudget production, and everyone involved was working for a fraction of what they'd normally be paid on a project like this. I was very lucky to have this cast and this crew, not only for their immense talents, but for their commitment to the project. We shot the film in less than a week, so it was a fiendishly accelerated shooting schedule, to put it mildly. Most of it is set in one room, so that was a challenge too: how to stage the actors, move the camera and light the set so that there is some visual kineticism in what is otherwise a very static setting.

### What is the most rewarding part of filmmaking to you?

It's the various aspects of collaboration. Collaborating with a DP, collaborating with a sound designer, and especially collaborating with actors. I love working with actors, and writing good, dense material for actors to play with. And I was blessed on this production with an incredible cast.

### So what was it like to work with this cast?

A dream from beginning to end. Tom Walton is a rock solid, dependable actor who breathes his whole performance through his body. He's a big guy, and yet he has moments of almost unbearable vulnerability in this film. Amber Stonebraker is a gifted, intuitive film actor. She has in many ways the trickiest role in the film, because she's the surrogate for the audience, and she imbues the part with extraordinary warmth and humanity. And my third principal, Todd Van Voris, delivers a masterclass in this film in how an actor can use his eyes and his voice to render the whole spectrum of human emotion. He spends almost the entire film strapped to a chair, so from the outset he was limited. And yet what he manages to do with his voice and his expressions is nothing short of astonishing.

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How did you decide on the look of the film?

Michael Hull was my DP, and he's a very sharp and experimental cinematographer. I had a sense from the outset what I wanted the film to look like - noirish, black and white, grainy and gritty - and within that general outline he filled in the specifics, finding ways to enrich and expand the narrative through light and shadow. He's very gifted.

Who are your influences as a filmmaker?

They are so numerous that I will only mention the ones who informed this project in particular. As a microbudget filmmaker, I'm in awe of what Kelly Reichardt has been able to do with her films. *Old Joy* was very influential on me, as was her thriller *Night Moves*. For *Black Pool*, I also found myself thinking about the experimental techniques that Darren Aronofsky brings to his narratives in films like *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream*. And I thought about the works of Krzysztof Kieslowski, who I think had more humanity as a filmmaker than just about any other director in the history of the medium. *The Decalogue*, *The Double Life of Veronique*, and the *Three Colors Trilogy* were on my mind as I designed the look and feel of *Black Pool*.

Can you recommend other great films about The Troubles?

There are many! *In the Name of the Father* is a classic. More recently, I thought *Five Minutes of Heaven*, *Bloody Sunday*, and *Omagh* were extraordinary. *Some Mother's Son* is a brilliant film, putting a human face on a well-known event [the Irish prison hunger strike of 1981]. And I think that Yann Demange's film *'71* is one of the best pure action-thrillers of the last decade.

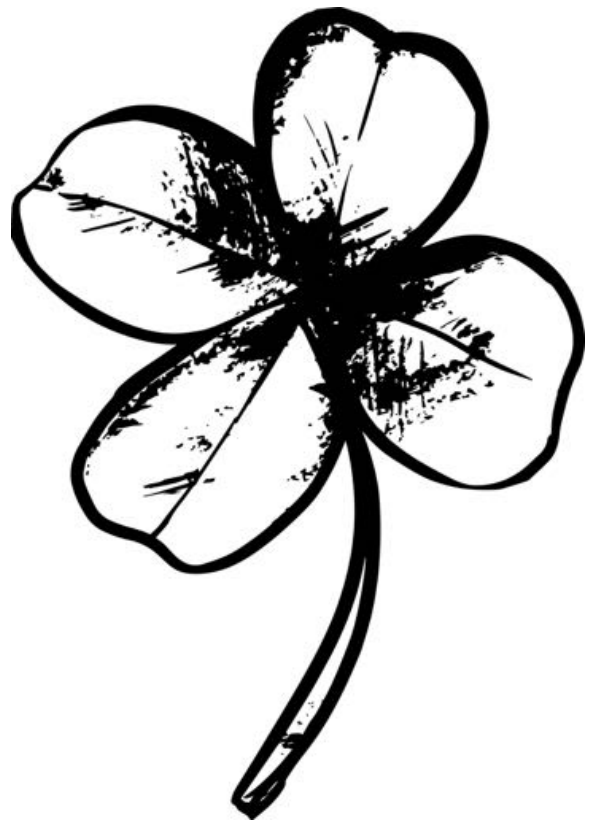
Why do you think independent filmmaking is important?

Because independent filmmakers are telling important stories, stories about real people grappling with real problems. Since Hollywood stopped making dramatic films for adults, and switched to a model focused on often creatively bankrupt superhero movies, dopey comedies and crummy horror movies, independent filmmakers have had to step up and make the films for mature, thoughtful audiences. Don't get me wrong - as a genre film enthusiast who likes escapist entertainment, I think there's a place for superhero movies and dopey comedies. But I also look to cinema

for stories of empathy. I want to walk in other peoples' shoes, and better understand the world in which I live, and independent film is a place where I can do that.

What do you consider the best film ever made?

I wouldn't necessarily say they are my favorites, because I think there's a difference between your favorite film and the film which you consider to be the Best Film, but to me, the best films I've ever seen are Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, which is a film that I think understands film viewing as no other film has, before or since; and Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, which feels to me like the most purely visceral film ever made. That movie almost pulses and vibrates off the screen, like the celluloid on which it was imprinted could barely contain it. I love both of those films and never get tired of watching either of them.



*Black Pool* was funded in part by grants from Portland State University and from the Regional Arts and Culture Council.



Prof. Morrow, the producers and the cast are available for press interviews about the project. Inquiries can be directed to producer Lisa Molinelli at [everythingwentdown@gmail.com](mailto:everythingwentdown@gmail.com).

More information about Prof. Morrow can be found at his website, [www.dustinmorrow.com](http://www.dustinmorrow.com).

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# BLACK POOL



A FILM BY DUSTIN MORROW