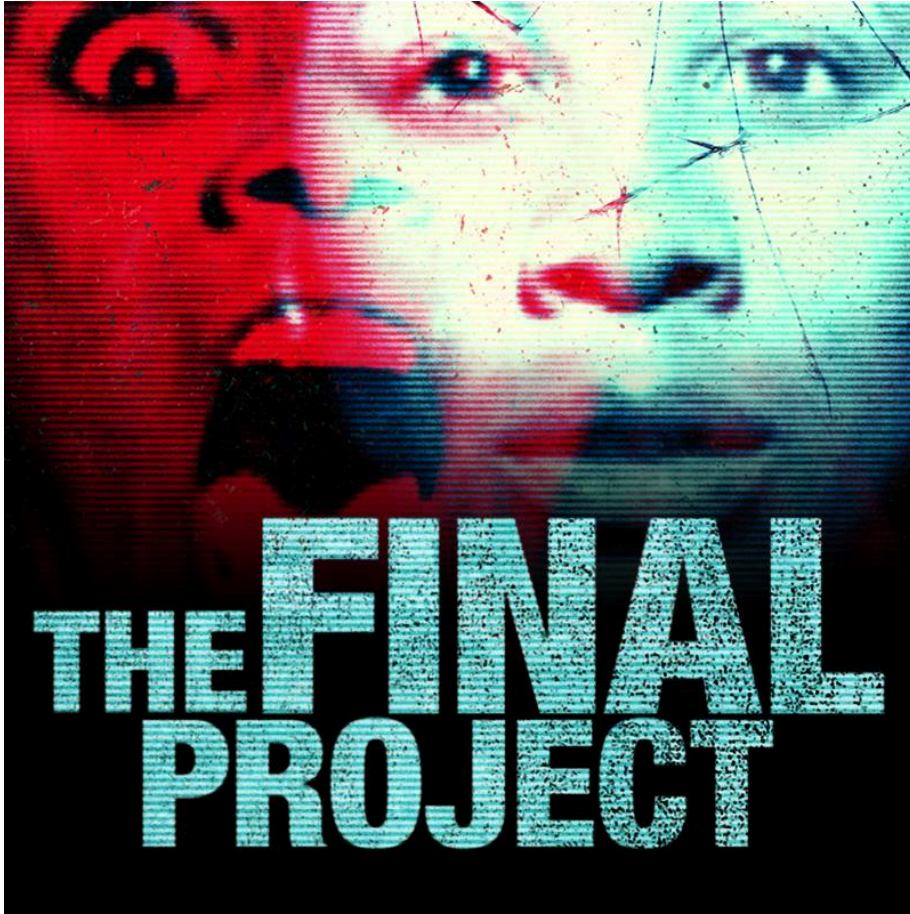


Press Notes



A Film By Taylor Ri'chard
RT: 80 min

OPENING Feb 12th

New York Press & Distributor Contact:

Isil Bagdadi
CAVU Pictures / CAVU PR
ib@cavupictures.com
(917) 375-7615

Digital Press Contact:

Allie Lopez
Submersive Media
Allie@submersivemedia.com
(917) 294-9348

THE FINAL PROJECT

Short Synopsis

Six college students have found the ultimate graduation project: A documentary about one of the most notorious haunted houses in America. Lafitte Plantation is a Civil War landmark with a dark past, complete with stories of dead soldiers, murdered families, and restless shadows roaming its abandoned corridors. No one has entered Lafitte in years - until now. Venturing deep into the backwoods of Louisiana and outfitted with high-tech recording equipment, the intrepid filmmakers think they're ready for anything. But something is watching, and as darkness falls and their fears come to life, one by one, they'll learn the terrible secret of Lafitte. The dead are awake, and there are some places the living should never go.

Long Synopsis

For six college students, it's the ultimate graduation project: A documentary about one of the most notorious haunted sites in the Southern United States. Lafitte Plantation is a Civil War landmark with a dark past steeped in American history. All over Vacherie, Louisiana, locals whisper about the legend of Lafitte, telling terrifying stories of dead soldiers, murdered families, and restless shadows roaming its abandoned corridors. No one has occupied Lafitte in years. No one will stay after dark. No one has dared to uncover its secrets... until now.

Outfitted with high-tech recording equipment, the intrepid filmmakers are ready for anything. Venturing deep into the Louisiana backwoods with cameras ready and GoPro 'head-cams' online, the students begin to explore the estate and plantation grounds, livestreaming every moment of their adventure. But something is watching, and one of them has already been chosen. As darkness falls and their fears come to life, one by one, they'll learn the terrible secret of Lafitte. The dead are awake, and there are some places the living should never go.

The Final Project is the macabre brainchild of Atlanta-based Louisiana native and first time director Taylor Ri'chard and screenwriter Zach Davis. Utilizing real locations in and around Georgia, it features a crew and ensemble of dedicated locals well acquainted with the haunted history of the South. Combining the "found footage" genre with authentic local folklore, it updates the classic American ghost story by tapping into a history too chillingly real to deny.

The backstory of *The Final Project* combines an Old Hollywood touch and a real-life twist. Chretien Point Plantation in Sunset, Louisiana, the real-life model for the film's Lafitte Plantation, was also the inspiration for the interior of the legendary "Tara" from *Gone with the Wind*. Its true claim to fame, however, lies closer to home. The site of a pitched and bloody battle between Union and Confederate soldiers at the height of the Civil War, with a bullet hole still embedded in one of its front doors, Chretien Point has long been rumored to be one of the biggest supernatural "hotspots" in North America. Ghostly sightings have been reported for decades, with stories of buried treasure, a vengeful "house mistress", and even a nearby haunted bridge.

The Final Project is fiction, but its roots are all too real. Blending cinematic suspense and found-footage immediacy with urban legends and old-school American terror, it's a next-level supernatural thriller. The South is full of ghosts. You can try to catch them on tape... but it might cost you more than your life.

THE FINAL PROJECT

ANNA: Scary and haunted are two totally different things
GENEVIEVE: Well, we're going to see about that...

Six students, one haunted plantation... this is their raw footage.

From a fresh young Louisiana filmmaker comes a real-time descent into fear, as the restless demons of the American South are unearthed in an abandoned plantation. Six clever, fun-loving film students pile into a van in search of their big class project: a documentary about a legendary Civil War-era plantation house. Dark rumors of past horrors and strange sightings swirl around the overgrown Lafitte Plantation. But for the students, the creepy atmosphere seems just right for some gripping footage. Only gripping doesn't even begin to cover it – as they realize something within is very, very wrong. They have stirred up a terrifying torrent of hunger for revenge ... and this project could become final in more ways than one.

As soon as the students' cameras start rolling, the bloodcurdling shocks begin. The footage left behind brings audiences directly into the students' deeply disturbing experiences, as their questions mount as to what is real, what they're imagining, and whether they can escape a malevolent presence with an insatiable fury. At once an ode to the old-school scares of the found-footage genre and its own 21st Century, Louisiana twist on it, THE FINAL PROJECT is directed by Taylor R'ichard from a story by R'ichard and Zachary Davis.

ABOUT THE FOOTAGE

The question of whether a house can be haunted has flummoxed and fascinated people since humankind first moved into caves. Can dwellings truly be beset by phantasms, poltergeists or demonic possessions or are some homes merely afflicted with dark memories, the stain of past corruption and primordial fears? To find the answers, by the 20th Century, endless researchers, parapsychologists and the tormented themselves began trying to capture strange household phenomena on film. In the last decade, smart phones, digital cameras and social media have led to more clips of hauntings than ever before ... only to have most disproven as visual trickery.

But some footage cannot be dismissed so easily.

The footage uncovered in THE FINAL PROJECT was shot by six University of Southern Louisiana film students. It is apparent that they were planning to complete their final film class assignment by making a documentary about the nearby Lafitte Plantation in Vacherie, Louisiana. As interviews with the locals reveal, the plantation is a darkly storied landmark, with hushed rumors swirling about its antebellum history, macabre Civil War fatalities and subsequent supernatural activity. There are long-told local tales of chilling encounters with ghostly children and Confederate soldiers. And then there is the mysterious woman—who may have been one of the owners of the plantation—said to appear numinously in the dining room.

With its mystery-laden atmosphere and momentous links to American history, Lafitte Plantation should be the stuff of exciting filmmaking -- and it is -- but in a way the students couldn't have imagined in their most horrific dreams.

The remnant footage introduces an affable, wise-cracking group in on the investigation: Anna, the quintessential smart-girl who spearheads the project; Genevieve, a charming, Vacherie-born doubter who calls her mother often; Gavin, Genevieve's protective boyfriend; Jonah, a hipster who is awkwardly also Genevieve's ex; Misty, a primped-and-preened all-American socialite; and Ky, a wise-cracking slacker with a devil-may-care attitude.

At the start of their journey they are full of good-natured collegiate verbal jousting and jokes. But before even reaching Vacherie, a shadowy undercurrent is exposed, as amorous jealousies and internal rivalries threaten to undermine the team's togetherness. These rivalries will soon be the least of their worries ... clearly the students have no idea what they will be up against.

Making their way through disorienting foliage to the mansion, they strap themselves with cameras and start probing the grounds, laughing at their anxiety. A slow-building foreboding descends on the group, especially on Genevieve, who seems to have an unsettling connection to the misery of the plantation's unspeakable past -- yet they remain committed.

What happens next is the stuff of legends, lore and campfire ghost tales -- but captured in stark cinema verité. It starts with odd figures in the darkness and the jump-scares of sounds in the night. But how much is in their heads and what is really happening? It's hard to be sure until one of the group's own seems to become hypnotically possessed. As the full-scale horror begins, panic envelops both the students and anyone who doesn't look away.

But it's not just what you see in the footage that is so harrowing. It's also what you hear: some of the most frightening sounds ever experienced on film. Early on, Anna coolly observes that "scary and haunted are two totally different things." But in the inescapable realism of this footage, imagination and actuality merge into one as the students try to survive THE FINAL PROJECT.

The film not only pays homage to a retro found-footage style, but dips into a Southern history dripping with unsettling ghost stories -- with persistent rumors of dozens of unresolved haunted houses in Louisiana alone. Perhaps the most famous, and an inspiration for Lafitte, is Chretien Point, built in 1835, and said to be tormented by a "lady in white" and several other aggrieved spirits. The lady in white is believed to be Felicité Chretien, who inherited the plantation and a reputed fortune after her husband Hypolite died. One night, Madame Chretien awoke to the sounds of thieves creeping up the manor staircase. She shot and killed one of the men and watched him tumble down the stairs. The next day the maids vigorously tried to scrub out the blood from the stairwell, but the stains would not out -- they are still visible to this day. Locals say the specter of Madame Chretien is often seen roaming the grounds, ever vigilante and protective of her house, unable to find earthly repose. Two fierce Civil War battles were also fought on the grounds, and sightings of phantom soldiers have terrified visitors. Madame Chretien's deceased spouse, Hypolite, was a friend to the infamous Louisiana pirate and slave trader Jean Lafitte, who at one point resided on the plantation.

CAVU Pictures presents a 3rd Fathom Entertainment film, THE FINAL PROJECT, featuring the directorial debut of Louisiana native Taylor Ri'chard. The film is written and produced by Zachary Davis and Ri'chard. The cast of newcomers includes Teal Haddock, Arin Jones, Sergio Suave, Amber Erwin, Leonardo Santaiti and Evan McLean.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I started this project, I was seeking to create a widely marketable film that was fresh and original, while staying true the nature of the horror genre. I have always loved horror movies. Inspired by the nightmare dreams of Freddy Kruger, to the dark cult of Children of the Corn, I am a true student of horror. However, it would not be until I saw The Blair Witch Project that I knew where I wanted to start my journey in horror filmmaking. Coupling that fascination with the robust folklore of Louisiana, I knew that The Final Project was a story that needed to be told in a very real way.

“The Final Project” introduces a story about a legendary haunted plantation in Louisiana called *Chretien Pointe*. Chretien Pointe in folklore, boast the tale of a mistress who falls prey to rogue union soldiers. Although the slaves eventually overtake the intruders, the spirits of the mistress, soldiers, and a few slaves are said to still haunt this plantation, making their presence known to any visitor. “The Final Project” is a documentary styled horror film about a group of senior college film students in Louisiana who travel to Chretien Pointe, referred to in the movie as *Lafitte Plantation*, in an effort to capture supernatural action. Their goal is to utilize this footage as the final class project before graduation.

This film was very exciting to work on. It is unique in the sense that it presents a new perspective on a growing sub-genre in supernatural horror films called “found footage.” While “The Final Project” lends itself to this genre very well, what sets it apart from the rest is that “The Final Project” takes the audience on a more personal voyage with the characters in the movie by utilizing P.O.V. (point-of-view) death scenes that place the viewer in the perspective of the victim. This twist in direction gives a very interesting interactive experience to anyone watching. After three years working on this project, I know that anyone connected to this film has experienced all the joys and challenges that came along with it, but the results have been both rewarding and humbling.

I wrote this film because I have always envisioned myself as a movie director. I truly feel that I was born to do exactly what I am doing. Coming from a very small town, fostering such dreams was almost impossible to comprehend. However, I did dare to dream such dreams and as this movie finds its audience I need this film to be successful. It has to be successful because it must be a beacon for all rural and small town kids who dare to dream outside the walls of their current view. They need to know that you truly can come from nowhere and find your way to any dream you can imagine. We pride ourselves in America of being the land of all opportunity. This film is my opportunity to test that theory; a theory that I believe to be true and alive.

-Taylor Ri'chard

About the Filmmakers

TAYLOR RI'CHARD DIRECTOR / WRITER / PRODUCER

Filmmaker Taylor Ri'chard has spent the last 10 years working in production in various roles including directing, writing and distribution for a host of films since his days as an intern at Urbanworld Films.

In 2001, Ri'chard worked as a production assistant on the Academy Award winning HBO documentary "Murder on a Sunday Morning". From there he went to work as a producer for AOL Time Warner in New Orleans producing a television news magazine on WB/UPN TV called "Where's the music?". Ri'chard then moved his love for film and TV to Atlanta, GA where he continued to blaze the trail in the booming film community there. He started directing sketch comedy spoofs, and in 2009, Comcast Communications bought the rights to Ri'chard's sketch of Beyoncé's "Single Ladies". The media giant placed the sketch on its on-demand parody channel in which it garnered a #1 rating.

Ri'chard is now at the helm of his own film production company, 3rd Fathom Entertainment, which is an Atlanta-based independent film production company created by Ri'chard and his producing partner Zachary Davis.

He graduated from Dillard University in New Orleans, LA where he received his BA in Communications and Film. In 2002, Red Dot Magazine (www.reddotmagazine.com), a New Orleans based publication, called Ri'chard one of the "important people to watch under 25."

Ri'chard is currently in development on his next feature film, a psychological thriller titled, "Bête en Bois" (translated: Beast in Woods). "The Final Project" is Ri'chard's first feature film, and he is proud that the film makes him one of the horror genre's first and only African-American screenwriters and directors.

ZACH DAVIS WRITER / PRODUCER

Screenwriter Zach Davis got his start as a contributor at SOHH.com from 1997-99, giving his commentary on Hip Hop music. After honing his craft, Davis and a friend started Z&O Publishing (www.rosesnbrassknuckles.com), an independent publishing company which launched in early 2009. He released his first book "Roses & Brass Knuckles: A Man's Pocket Guide to Winning the Dating and Marriage Game" in the fall of 2009, moving over 10,000 units in that quarter alone with only word of mouth and stellar reviews from major websites such as thrillist.com and examiner.com. In 2010, Davis released "Can't No Dog Worry This Pussy Cat: A Woman's Pocket Guide to Getting a Good Man and Keeping Him," the original "straight talk" relationship book for women. This release also garnered great reviews, which led Davis to lend his work to a monthly column in Urban Lux Magazine. He started doing freelance work in other publications such as Heart and Soul J'Adore magazines, and websites such as Clutch.com and ShoppingLifestyle.com. "The Final Project" is his first feature film script, which he co-wrote with Ri'chard. Davis is currently working on writing and producing several new projects with 3rd Fathom Entertainment.

About The Cast

Teal Haddock (Anna Davenport)

Teal Haddock is a professional actress currently living in Atlanta, GA. She started her acting career at the young age of 8 at a small local playhouse. Teal trained extensively in ballet with prestigious companies such as The Boston Ballet, The New York City Ballet, and her hometown Atlanta Ballet. She was honored to receive the "Honor Thespian" status in her high school upon graduating, and even studied on scholarship at The New York School for Film and Television before entering her senior year. Teal has acted in numerous stage productions and has landed roles in 3 feature films, 2 commercials, 3 short films, and an agent in less than 6 months! She has recently become SAG/AFTRA Eligible and is planning to move to Los Angeles to continue her career in acting.

Arin Jones (Genevieve Ri'chard)

Born and raised in New Orleans, Arin Jones is a graduate of Louisiana State University where she studied theater and received her Bachelor of Arts. Arin is a singer, actor, model and brand ambassador for numerous companies. She's also a member of the singing R&B duo Elysian Fieldz. As a singer Arin has studied under Grammy winning artists such as Germaine Bazzle. She has been able to showcase her talent in numerous arenas such as House of Blues, New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, (where she and her sister Alexis appear every year to rave reviews), The NBA and Essence Music Festival. Arin has opened for such notable acts as John Legend, Frankie Beverly and Maze, Eric Benet and Mary Mary. Last year Arin's group had the privilege of background singing for Fred Hammond, Mary Mary, Chaka Chan, Eric Benet and many more. Arin first got the acting bug at age 8 when she was cast as Zonia in "Joe Turner's Come and Gone". She then got cast in the movie "JFK" and she knew then that she was born to be an actor. Arin's career continued as she was featured in plays such as "Damn Yankees", "Wondeland", "Lil Abner" and "Runaways", where she was fortunate to study under Tony award winning producers and directors. Arin was also one of the first African American news anchors for the popular TV station at LSU. Additional TV shows and movies she's been in include "A Good Man is Hard to Find", "Mama I Want To Sing", "Dead Man Walking", "Necessary Roughness", "The Real Housewives of Atlanta", "Drop Dead Diva" and "Just My Luck" and most recently "The Final Project".

Leonardo Santaiti (Jonah Gerard)

From a young age, Santaiti had a knack for performing and entertaining. He comes from a large Italian family that is riddled with artists, musicians and creative minds. He was first introduced to music and chorus; and as he continued on to his adolescent years, he formed various bands. His training began at the age of fifteen, landing various roles on short films and independent films. While taking a hiatus from film, as he was pursuing his career as a musician, his friend/former band mate called him about a role that was "written for him." He told Santaiti that he was perfect for the part and that he had been talking him up to the director. After a bit of resistance, Santaiti agreed. He landed one of the lead roles and spent two months in Argentina filming on location for the feature "A Band of Rogues". After the film wrapped, Santaiti knew from then on that this was his passion, his calling, and nothing could hold him back. He later went on to direct, produce, write, and star in the film "Forgive Me Father". Taylor Ri'chard recognized his multi-faceted talents and asked Santaiti to not only star, but also be the Director of Photography for his debut film "The Final Project".

Amber Erwin (Misty Gilroy)

Amber has had a passion for the arts since high school when she was doing plays such as “Macbeth”, “Taming of the Shrew”, “Annie”, and “The Music Man”. She continued on taking theater classes at Kennesaw State University where she eventually changed her major to Biology. After several years pursuing her Biology degree, she rediscovered why she loved acting so much while she was on-set doing some extra work. The same month she starting take classes at a professional acting studio called The Company Acting Studio and has furthered her techniques at The Robert Mello Studio. Since then she has been working on several independent films that are shooting in Atlanta.

Evan McLean (Ky Brooks)

Evan McLean always had a passion for cinema, so moving into acting was a natural progression for him. He had no formal training but was excited when he was cast in “The Final Project”. Evan can be seen in several episodes of MTV’s “Teen Wolf”. A graduate of the University of Georgia, Evan has a degree in Sociology. He spent many long nights researching the sociological interactions of downtown Athens. Since graduating, his resume includes an assortment of interesting jobs, including working for a U.S. Congressman, an industrial packaging firm and an IT company. Born in Detroit, Evan spent most of his life in Georgia. He currently lives in Atlanta.

Sergio Suave (Gavin Charles)

Originally from NYC, Sergio Suave is the first-born American in his family, who emigrated to the U.S. from the island of Haiti. As a child, Sergio always had an interest in theatre and a charismatic personality to match. So after attending the University of Central Florida on an athletic scholarship in football and playing professionally shortly right after, he decided to return to his first love, performing arts. Sergio then began taking on projects and received his first major appearance from doing stunts for major productions such as USA Network’s “Necessary Roughness” and films such as the box office hit “The Dark Knight Rises” before landing his first leading role in “The Final Project”.

CAST

Anna Davenport	Teal Haddock
Genevieve Ri'chard	Arin Jones
Jonah Girard	Leonardo Santaiti
Ky Brooks	Evan McLean
Gavin Charles	Sergio Suave
Misty Gilroy	Amber Erwin
Professor McCarley	Robert McCarley
Store Clerk	Tiffany Ford
Caretaker	Benjie Anderson
Engineer	Charles Orr
Lady #1	Gina Davis
Girl #1 – (Swing)	Gizelle Davis
Man #1	Bruce Hassler
Lady #2	Joycelyn Guildbeaux
Lady #3	Josie Felder
Lady #4	Melissa Lavergne
Reporter	Kristen Wade
Man Store #1	Milton Jones
Man Store #2	Bryce Keithen
Woman Store #1	Mary Lewis
Woman Store #2	Candie Green
Anna's Dad	Bob Hartwell
Black figure #1	Logan Thibodeaux
Black figure #2	Taylor Lavergne
Black figure #3	Anne Lavergne
Black figure #4	Anne Lavergne
Woman in window	Jamie Calhoun

CREW

Written by Taylor Ri'chard & Zach Davis
Directed by Taylor Ri'chard
Produced by Taylor Ri'chard
Executive Producer Bobby Badon
Executive Producer Celeste Hearn
Executive Producer Taylor Ri'chard
Executive Producer Shawn Taylor
Executive Producer Melissa Lavergne
Executive Producer Shirley Landry
Executive Producer Guilherme Ramos
Executive Producer Robert McKeithen
Executive Producer Blake Smith
Executive Producer Maurice Prince

Editor Richard Robinson
Director of Photography Leonardo Santaiti
Casting Director Nick Conti
Assistant Casting Director Juanita Lastie

1st Assistant Producer Kristen Wade
2nd Assistant Producer Tiffany Ford
3rd Assistant Producer Josh Taylor
Line Producer Guilherme Ramos
Line Producer Robert McKeithen
Key Grip Brook Kozinski
Grip Brian Kozinski
Grip Tristen Lavergne
Grip Logan Stewart
Driver Damond Butler
Driver Jonas Link
Production Assistant Stormy Green
Production Assistant Marlo Robinson
Production Assistant Lorenzo Pierre - August
Production Assistant Spencer Richard
Assistant Editor Michelle Russell
Location Scout Robert Taylor
Electrician George Therman
Boom Operator Paula Taylor
Cameraman Charles Orr
Sound/Audio Mixer Antoine Wilson
Motion Graphic Artist Bree Smith