

T E C H N O W E S T E R N

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**synopsis**

*A young boy tracks down a mysterious man in what he thought would be a fun game of crime solving.*

**short film** narrative

**duration** 14 min 30 sec

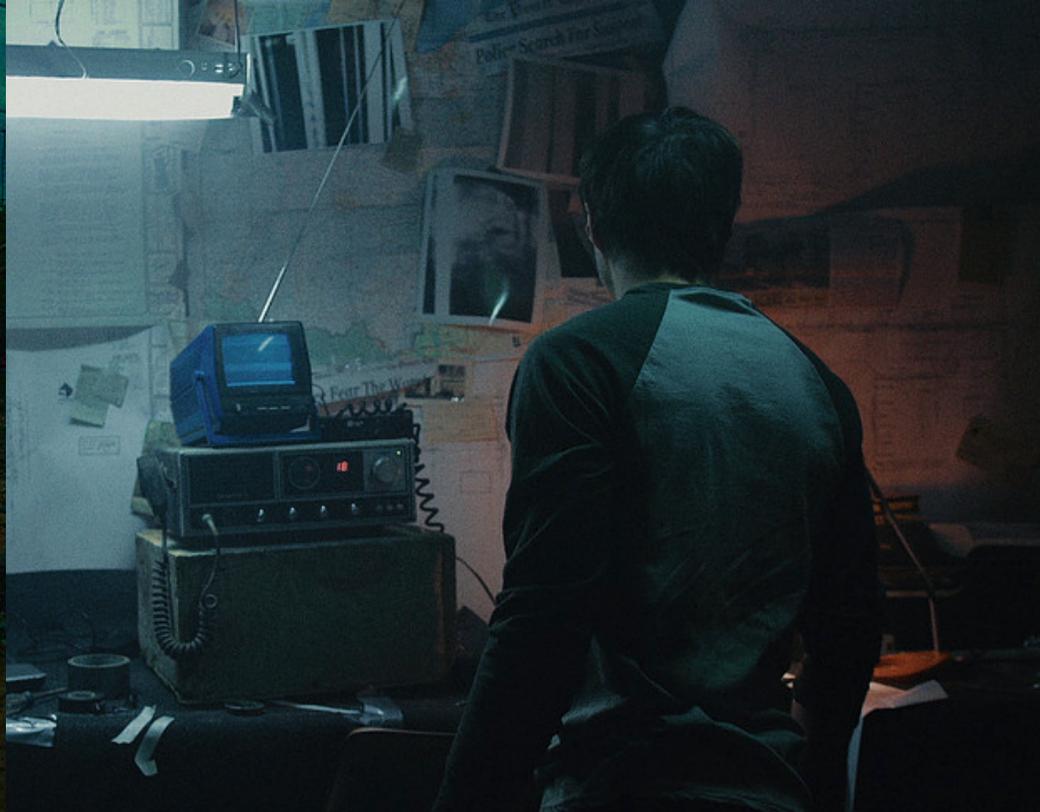
**shooting format** HD / 1.2:30 / Color

**screening format** HD / Blu-Ray

**language** english

**production year** 2015

**country** USA



*Statement From Director*  
JORDAN DOWNEY

*Techno Western* is a project that feels very special to me - special because it's nothing like I've seen before - special because it's nothing like I've made before - and special because I'm left with a very uneasy feeling after watching it. If it truly affects others the same, we've arrived here because we very clearly set out to create a mood piece that moves you with a deep sense of dread. The film tells the story of an everyday child embarking on a journey to hunt down a "bad guy", imitating a bounty hunter character he admires in his favorite cartoon show. I found it interesting to explore the darker elements involved with a childhood quest gone wrong - something I used to do without a fear in the world - but what if? What if something did go wrong? Though I don't look upon life through a negative lens, I find the heroes journey to be far more vague and murky in real life. I have no experience in the matter, but violence, to me, is far more interesting when it doesn't go the way you planned it.

As a filmmaker I try to keep one foot in with the creative team responsible for making the project and one foot out with the audience. With *Techno*, we've made a very understated film. We wanted to give the audience a lot of credit. Questions are raised - some go unanswered - some are there for your own interpretations. It's hard to place us within a certain genre - there are elements of science-fiction, horror, mystery and revenge. It's all of those things, yes, but then again maybe it's not.

All that matters is that people feel something at the end of a film and with *Techno Western*, I'm confident they will.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Jordan Downey', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

# PRODUCTION NOTES

*from Director Jordan Downey*

## **What was the genesis and inspiration for this project?**

The idea, really, is drawn from my childhood. When I was a kid I would always take my squirt guns and spray paint them to look like some cannon or prop from Star Wars. I'd duct tape flashlights and pocket knives to the barrel and pretend to go "hunting" in the woods for bad guys. At the same time I was really into bounty hunters, especially Boba Fett. I always used to imagine "what if a bad guy was loose in our small town" and how could I solve the crime and capture him for a reward? It was a combination of those elements that when I became a filmmaker I always liked the idea of exploring. Then about six or seven years ago I started filling out a notebook on what would become "Techno Western".

## **What was the process of getting the film made?**

"Techno Western" actually started as a feature that Kevin Stewart and I intended to shoot for \$10,000 in Ohio. We'd been working on the script and had the energy and drive to do it. The only problem? We didn't have ten grand. So we decided to sell a bunch of movie props from ThanksKilling (previous b-movie we made) on eBay to raise the money. That turned out to be a success and we had our budget. Unfortunately we got a few weeks into pre-production when we realized we just couldn't pull it off for that price, which was hard to admit because we pride ourselves in being able to do a lot for so little. So we decided to simplify and put all resources toward making "Techno Western" the best short possible.

## **This was literally shot with a two man crew. You and Kevin Stewart did everything on set from production design, cinematography, and sound. Talk about how you managed all the technical issues while still focusing on story?**

All those elements mentioned are an invaluable part story and besides, we didn't have a choice! Kidding aside, we were very conscious about not ever getting too wrapped up in all the technical aspects which is actually a big reason we decided to shoot in Ohio. Everything there is a little more lived in which was the look we were going for. So we very carefully picked locations and props that were already 'camera ready'. On days where we weren't shooting, we would go to the sets and get everything dressed in advance. I think we made a trip to Wal-Mart every single day for two weeks getting all the props, costumes, and building supplies we needed!



# PRODUCTION NOTES

*from Director Jordan Downey*

## **Describe the casting process for the film?**

For casting the film's two leads, we turned to local casting agencies in Ohio, theater groups, contacts of friends and Craigslist. We were having a really hard time finding a 10 year old child actor. I always kind of felt drawn to that role being played by a non actor, but we were casting from Los Angeles so running into the perfect kid on the street wasn't an option. We just wanted a natural kid who had goofy kid mannerisms like we all used to. I was on the phone with my mom telling her we couldn't find the right person when she suggested I look at pictures of her friend's son, Dylan. In one of the first pictures I saw, he was wearing a Godzilla t-shirt and I immediately had a good feeling about him! I spoke with his mom and she sent me a cell phone video of him describing everything he knew about Boba Fett, which was more than I could remember. It showed me that on camera he could still be himself and that he was into the material.

Justin Rose, who plays Dylan's older brother in the film, actually responded to a casting notice on Craigslist and was head and shoulders above the rest. He read the script and sent an audition the next day and nailed it right from the start. I called him and offered him the part immediately. I can't say enough about Justin - he's one of those rare actors that just has some magical aura around him. What's crazy is that Dylan and Justin both lived in the same part of town! So we got very lucky finding two really talented actors literally in the same area where we shot.

## **How did you work with child actor Dylan McDonald to prepare him for being in front of the camera for the first time ever?**

Honestly being a director, for me at least, isn't about whispering some miracles to the actors - it's about making them and everyone on set feel comfortable in their roles. So with Dylan, I just wanted him to be himself and to feel comfortable around Kevin and I. We had breakfast with he and his family before the shoot and got to know each other a little bit before that. He didn't have to play a character, he just had to be himself. But I will say that Dylan also has a lot of natural talent and a great understanding of filmmaking. He's just as obsessed with movies as we are! He was incredibly subtle, hit his mark from take to take without being asked and never looked in the lens. He just 'got it' from the start and did such an incredible job.



# PRODUCTION NOTES

*from Director Jordan Downey*

**This is neither a film about electronic music or a western, so why the title “Techno Western?”**

“Techno Western” is the name of a fictitious cartoon show in the movie that the young boy is obsessed with. The animated show stars the Techno Cowboy, a bounty hunter in an intergalactic world known as the ‘new west’. Naming our movie after the cartoon was important to us because it pushes you to think about the show and how its themes play a part in our movie. I felt like the cartoon, while just in the background, provided a real soul to the movie that I didn’t want people to miss. It also doesn’t hurt that we felt like our title stands out and peaks interest a little more than other options we considered.

**The ending of this film is kind of a bold choice. What led you to the decision to end the film in this manner?**

The ending is definitely an anti-ending and not the ‘safe’ way to go, which is exactly why we wanted to do it. Not out of spite or just to make a splash, but because we felt like the way we handled it was the most realistic ending and the most honest way to go for the characters. We did try a number of different endings but, without giving away anything, I feel like how it ends now was the most powerful way to go.

**What were some of your influences for the soundtrack to the film?**

From the start, I always imagined the soundtrack would have a very creepy ambient vibe. I didn’t want to be able to recognize a lot of instruments or sounds in particular; it was about putting together a mood more than anything. Dark ambient music on YouTube, The Texas Chain Saw Massacre or The X-Files were the biggest references I sent to composer Nick Soole when we first started talking about the score. At one point I came across a recording of a 60,000 Neanderthal bone flute, which is one of the oldest known instruments on Earth, and I thought it was really creepy and primal. So I contacted Ljuben Dimkaroski in Slovenia, who performed the recording, and asked if we could use it for our film and he was kind enough to give us permission. Nick ended up taking that bone flute instrumental and working it into the score as sort of the theme for the bad guy and it worked out great. I give Nick a ton of credit for finding ways to work a theme into the ambient drones of the film. I’m a huge fan of movie music and theme songs and miss that our industry has shy’d away from recognizable melodies lately.

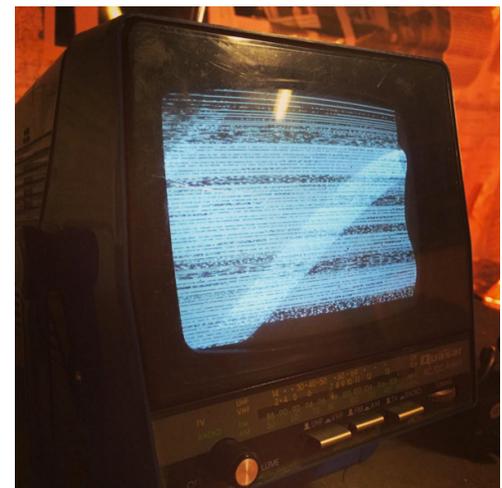


# PRODUCTION NOTES

*from Director Jordan Downey*

**Talk a little about evolving from making a movie like ThanksKilling to this?**

ThanksKilling was the one project I felt the least committed to going into it, the least prepared for and the least attached to. It was a joke between Kevin and I that actually got made! And I'm sure that because I was a little unattached, it allowed us to totally ransack the filmmaking process and let loose and just make fun of anything and everything. We didn't care what anyone thought and we had a ton of fun on set. It was a throwback to the guilty pleasure cheesy movies we loved as kids but it was never the route we wanted to stay on for too long. So what's funny is that ThanksKilling came first, yes, but I honestly always felt that something like Techno Western or the fan film I did, Critters: Bounty Hunter are much more in line with what I'm interested in. There's very little correlation between Techno Western and ThanksKilling or ThanksKilling 3, but we learned to hone our craft on those movies and that's where we really developed our "do-it-yourself" sense of filmmaking. And now again, with this film, we're editing the trailer and designing the poster and running the social media campaign and all those things. The stories we're choosing to tell have evolved but how we're executing them isn't all that different.





## DYLAN McDONALD

[ lead actor ]

Starring in his film debut, Dylan was born in Zanesville, Ohio and has always been an avid movie lover.

A talented artist and budding movie-maker himself, Dylan has experimented with various forms of filmmaking including stop-motion animation. He enjoys spending time with his brother Zach, two cats, his chickens and learning the piano.

For Techno Western, Dylan had the difficult task of performing in front of the camera but quickly found he was a natural at it and immediately made friends with Jordan and Kevin.



## JUSTIN ROSE

[ lead actor ]

Justin is an American actor known for immersing himself in his performances and devoting himself to realistic character portrayals. Justin Rose started a successful career with independent films after writing and directing his own short art films with close friends.

He has also found much success in directing music videos and commercials with Chaos in Rhythm; an independent film production company.

Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, and raised by his mother, Justin began imitating his favorite actors and comedians, and decided at an early age that he wanted to become an actor.

Creativity runs in the family. Justin's brother Ryan Rose is known throughout Dallas, Texas as the dub-step artist RuMoR, who has also found success his music to the soundtrack of a few of Justin's films.





## JORDAN DOWNEY

[ co-writer | producer | director | editor ]

Jordan has always been fascinated with stories surrounding the unknown. His childhood was spent on a farm in Ohio where he watched hundreds of science-fiction and horror films shown to him by his older brother, Mike.

At age 13 he sold his Super Nintendo at a garage sale to buy a camcorder and began making short films of his own. After high school he moved to Los Angeles and graduated from Loyola Marymount University. It was in college he met collaborator Kevin Stewart and the two 21 year olds teamed up for *ThanksKilling*, a low budget horror/ comedy which quickly found cult success. Four years later they returned with *ThanksKilling 3* after raising over \$100K on Kickstarter to fund their ambitious sequel.

Jordan is currently developing a number of exciting new projects as a writer and director. Telling original stories and creating iconic characters are what drive him most. His style and inspiration is drawn from filmmakers like Paul Verhoeven, John Carpenter, David Cronenberg, Jim Henson and James Cameron.



## KEVIN STEWART

[ co-writer | producer | cinematographer ]

Born in Paris, France and raised in Portugal until the age of 17, Kevin always wanted to be involved with making movies.

At age 13 while having dinner at a restaurant, he noticed something on the TV in the corner... a visual effects featurette for "The Mummy", showing Brendan Fraser battling invisible skeletons. That moment of seeing the inner-workings of how a movie gets made had a significant impact on him.

A few years later, Kevin's parents moved his family to Portland, Oregon to help facilitate his dream. He got into the School of Film and Television at Loyola Marymount University, where at first he aspired to be an editor. It wasn't until he was asked to shoot a movie his junior year in college that he realized being a cinematographer was his calling.

He has since shot hundreds of projects including three feature films, commercials for Starbucks, Adult Swim and Walgreens, dozens of music videos and has shot with actors such as Will Farrell, Don Cheadle, and Steve Carell.





## NICK SOOLE

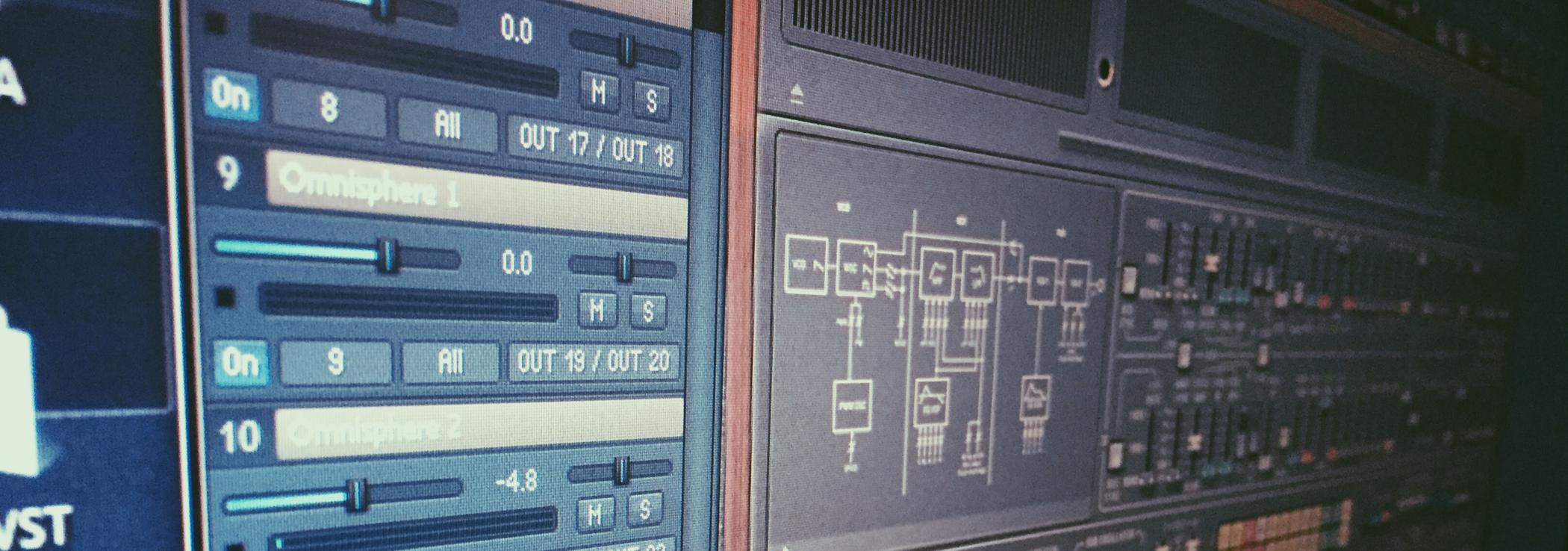
[ composer ]

Born in Sydney, Australia, Nick Soole is a Los Angeles-based composer for film, television and video games.

With a background as a composer, performer and producer of rock, pop, jazz and experimental music in Sydney's music scene; Nick moved to Los Angeles in 2011 where he began working alongside prominent film, television and video game composers.

In 2013 Nick graduated (with honors) from the University Of Southern California's prestigious Scoring For Motion Pictures and Television program.

Since that time Nick has provided music for numerous large scale and independent media projects.



## ERIC WEGENER

[ sound design ]

Eric Wegener is a sound designer, editor and mixer who takes a holistic approach to audio for picture. With experience in nearly every aspect of post production sound, his goal is to create a seamless environment with every auditory element, one that not only supports the image and story, but enhances them in a way that is intriguing, believable and memorable.

From the very beginning, music and film comprised the focus of Eric's interests. Throughout his childhood, he dabbled in many different musical instruments but settled on piano and drum set, which remain at the core of his creativity. His interest in film was also piqued early on, shooting and editing films with his friends. When choosing a career path, Eric sought to bring his worlds of music and film together.

Eric's passion, professionalism and dedication will ensure you receive the highest quality audio treatment possible, no matter your project's needs.





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