



STAY AWAKE

A teenage girl begins having dreams of her own brutal death only to discover that these visions depict the murders of other missing girls. As the nightmares escalate, she tries desperately to avoid sleep, which sends her into an erratic spiral that lands her at the center of the investigation.

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SYNOPSIS

In 2008, four-year-old Cree Reynolds is found alone in a house after her teenage babysitter, Jenny, has mysteriously disappeared. Cree is in a catatonic state and numerous therapists agree that she has no recollection of what happened that night.

Flash forward to today, where a now-teenage Cree has a disturbing nightmare of her own murder, only to later learn that a classmate of hers has been found killed in the exact same manner.

When Cree experiences a vision of Jenny, she struggles to determine what is real or imagined. As Cree's nightmares and visions escalate, she begins sleepwalking and awaking to find herself in dangerous situations that not only threaten her life, but also lead to the discovery of other bodies – placing Cree at the center of the investigation.

Cree finds herself on the radar of Detectives Paloma Menendez and Tony Duncan when she is found at the burial site of one of the victims.

When the scope of the crimes is finally revealed, we learn that this is a serial killer who has been targeting teenage girls for years; only their disappearances have garnered little police or media attention because they are girls of color.

With Cree's parents beginning to question her sanity, she finds herself in a race against time to find the killer not only before he claims another victim, but before she is committed to a mental asylum for her increasingly erratic behavior.

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The film is a horror/thriller tonally similar to SCREAM, but with supernatural accents.

Cree is a typical teenage girl who just wants to have fun, but her life is turned upside down when she is intimately connected with these brutal murders.

The film includes a diverse cast of characters with strong personalities, and the dark subject matter is offset with dry humor.



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The film is reminiscent of A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET where our leading lady must try to avoid sleep at all costs; but when the nightmares start creeping into her waking hours, she knows she has no choice but to face these visions head on.

Cree begins to experience quick, dizzying flashes of gruesome images during her waking hours, which gives her the déjà vu feeling of being plunged back into the nightmare while her body continues to exist in the awake world.



Her visions of Jenny have a sensation of hallucination that leaves her uncertain of where the line between reality and insanity actually is.

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A person is shown from behind, standing in a dark doorway and looking out into a bright, hazy light. The person is in silhouette, and the light creates a strong backlight effect, highlighting the edges of their body and the doorway. The overall mood is mysterious and somber.

Our killer keeps his victims in a dungeon-like basement. It's dirty, dark and moist. Cree experiences the murder of the girls in her dreams as though they are happening to her, and she herself is in that basement.

Cold and alone, she is chained to a bed and injected with a substance that renders her unable to scream. When the killer finally decides to brutally stab her to death, she knows that nobody is able to hear her strained cries for help.

Our two detectives lead a social commentary throughout the film that addresses racial profiling in the criminal justice system, and lack of attention from law enforcement and the media when people of color disappear.

Even in putting this presentation together, finding relevant images with actors of color was near impossible.

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The supernatural visions of Jenny that Cree encounters are in the same vein as STIR OF ECHOES. They are jarring and accentuate the feeling of total lack of control that Cree is experiencing.

With Cree doing all that she can to stay awake in order to avoid the nightmares, she begins to act strangely to those around her.

Falling asleep in class, only to suddenly awaken screaming; almost causing her parents to have a car accident because she thought she saw something; sleepwalking to a burial site and awaking to herself digging; But the final straw for her parents is when she sleepwalks out into traffic and lands herself in the hospital.

This leads them to admit Cree to an asylum for involuntary psychiatric evaluation. With the threat of sedation and forced sleep looming, Cree must find a way to escape... but first she has to find a way out of restraints that have her pinned down to the bed.

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Cree Reynolds

After suffering the traumatic disappearance of her beloved babysitter, Cree has been told that her memories of the event are all in her imagination. This has given her a royal case of trust issues - in herself and everyone else.

Ever since the disappearance, everyone has treated her with kid gloves, which she finds incredibly frustrating.

Cree pushes the boundaries, especially those set by her overprotective parents. The trauma they suffered by Cree's past is shown in their constant micro-management of her life, which she rebels against.

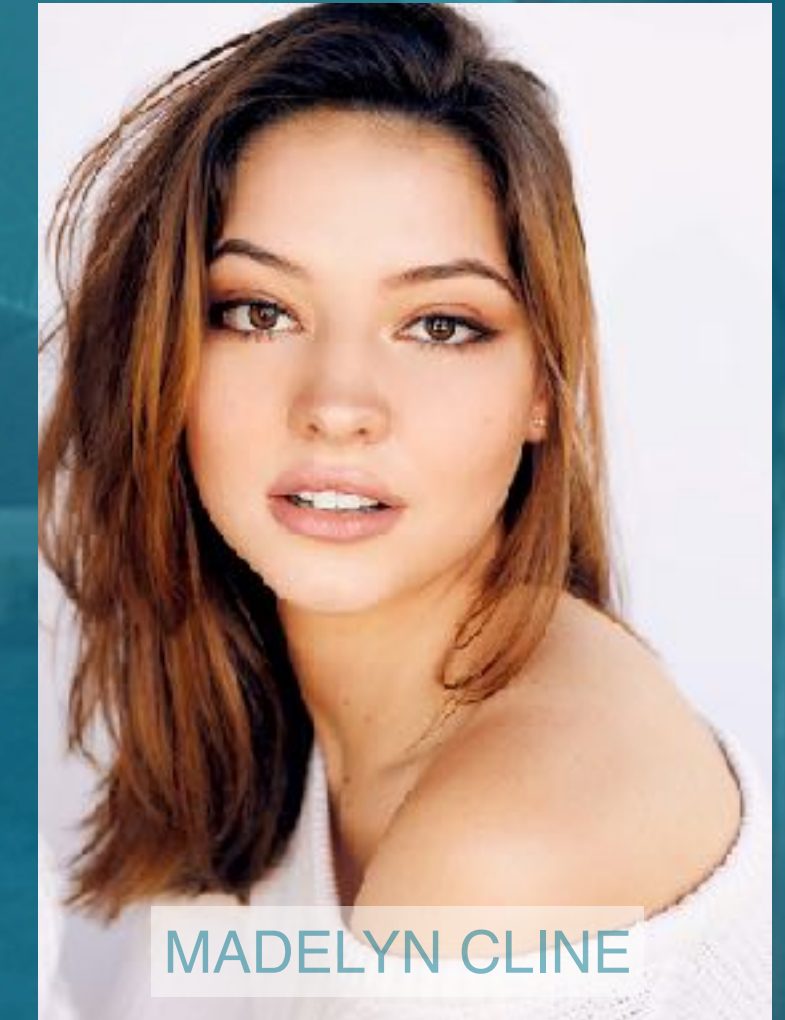
Cree feels as though her life is spiraling out of control when she starts having visions of her missing babysitter and nightmares of her own murder.



STAY AWAKE

Cree Reynolds

“Didn’t you hear? My new nickname is ‘The Bone Collector.’”



With a lack of sleep and the fact that the bodies of girls are popping up, having been murdered in the same manner as her dreams, Cree descends on a downward spiral of erratic behavior that lands her under psychiatric evaluation. It is here that she realizes she must confront the situation head-on if she is to have any chance at her life returning to normal.

STAY AWAKE

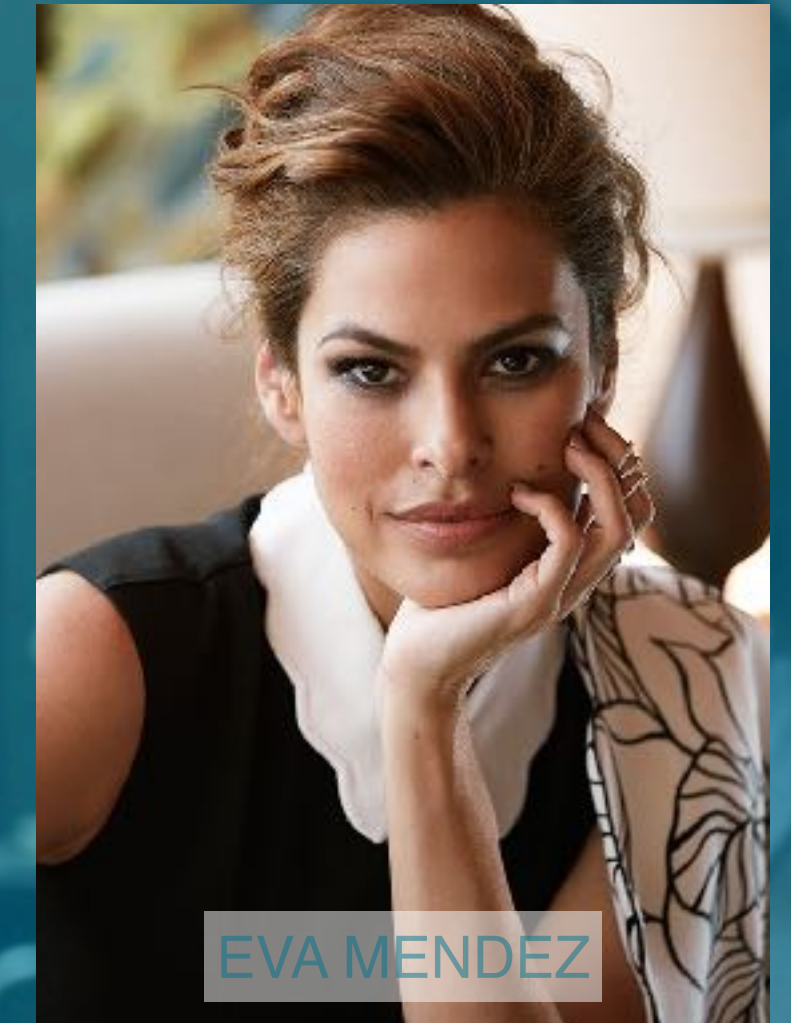
Det. Paloma Menendez

"Bodies make the news. Missing people don't."

Paloma and her partner, Tony, are the two lead detectives working on the local girls' murders. Paloma is career-focused and outspoken. She isn't afraid to ruffle a few feathers to get answers.

Paloma's niece ran away 12 months ago and Paloma fears she may in fact have fallen victim to our killer. The murders consume Paloma, keeping her up nights, relentlessly tracking down any lead.

Paloma loves to get a rise out of Tony and says things to playfully push his buttons. They have a good rapport and there may be a slight attraction simmering under the surface.



STAY AWAKE



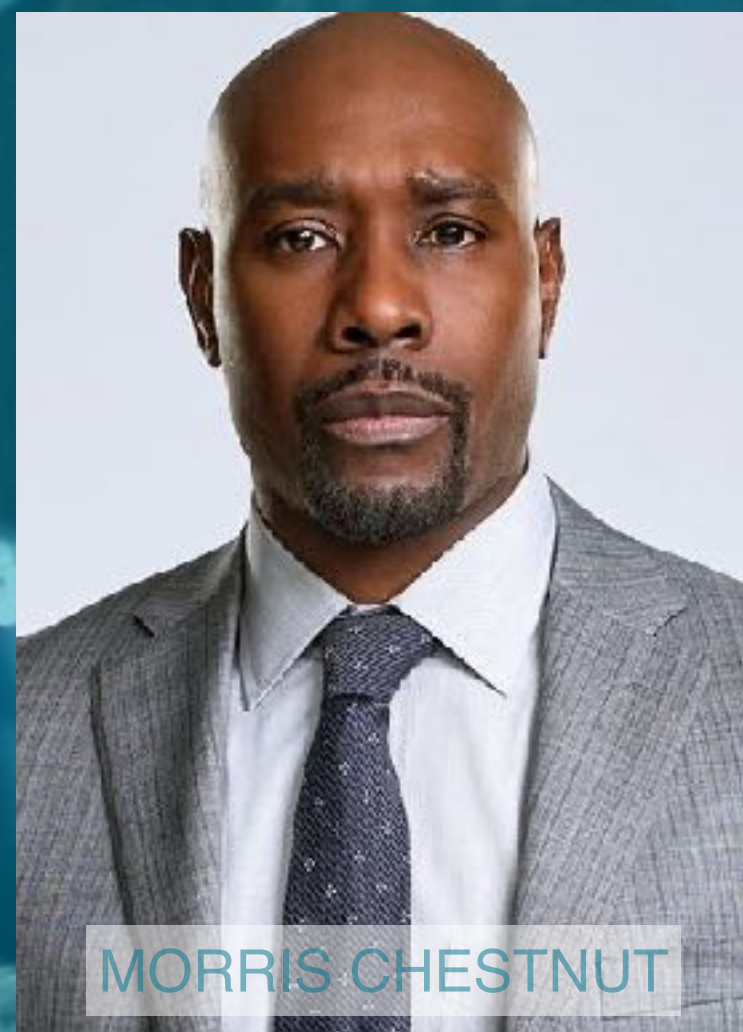
ALDIS HODGE



COMMON



MICHAEL EALY



MORRIS CHESTNUT

Det. Tony Duncan

"Missing white girls make the news."

Initially Tony is just happy that something interesting is finally happening, until the reality of a dead teenager sinks in.

Tony has a good sense of humor, but he is also responsible for driving the social commentary on racial issues throughout the film. He highlights the inadequacies in the system with regards to people of color.

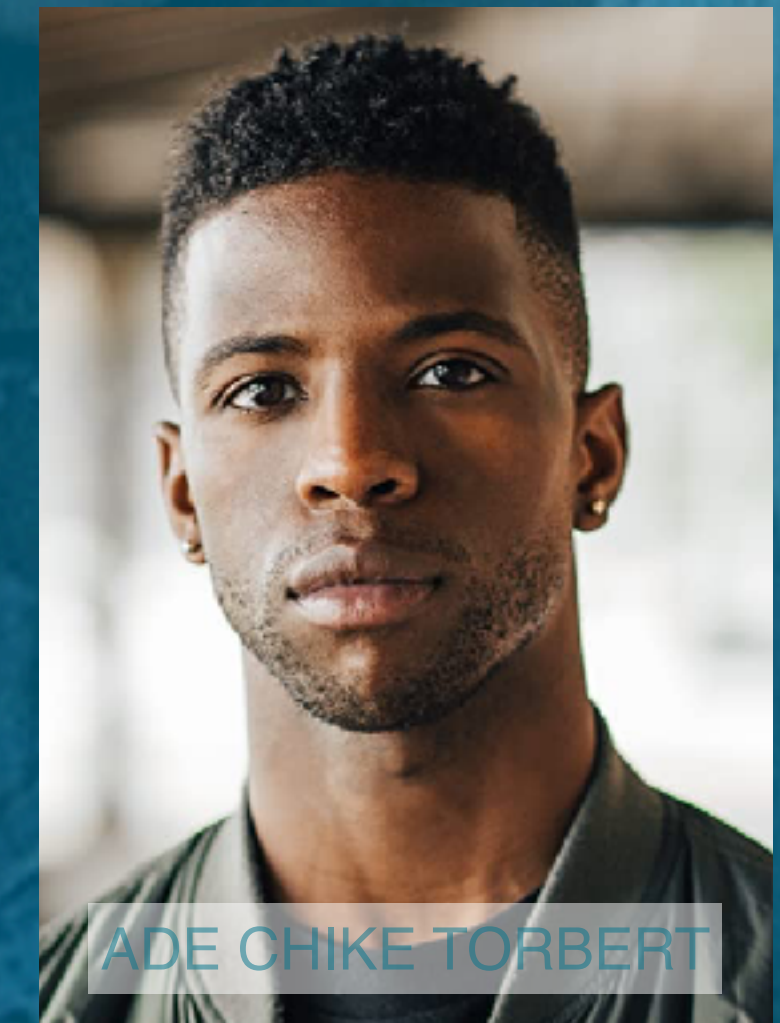
He loves to make playful digs at Paloma, but he is also concerned that this case is taking its toll on her. He is charismatic but also very conscious of the serious nature of these crimes.

STAY AWAKE

Blake Ashcroft

“One minute we’re about to... the next you’re trying to pin me for murder.”

Blake is Cree’s perfect-on-paper boyfriend: All-American, talk dark and handsome, as well as sweet and loving. He seems like a nice guy, but like all teenage boys, he has sex on the brain. When it comes out that Blake dated the first victim, and his behavior reminds Cree of one of her visions, she begins to question whether he could be the killer.



STAY AWAKE

Diana

“Better a notch on my belt than a notch on your dick.”

Diana is Cree’s ride-or-die best friend. She’s the type of girl that your parents would consider a ‘bad influence.’ She loves to party and has a mouth like a sailor.

Even though her boy-crazy antics make Cree laugh, she’s still the one that Cree trusts to turn to when she decides she needs to face her nightmares in order to track down the killer.



Josh

“Let’s celebrate being young and alive!”

Josh is a lovable doofus and Blake’s best friend. He’s not the type of guy you would trust to pet-sit your furbaby, but you know he’d be down to help you bury a body.

Josh is crushing hard on Diana and their love/hate relationship only fuels his attraction to her.



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Ellen Reynolds

“Just try and relax. The doctors are going to help you.”

Ellen is Cree’s mother, and she is still haunted by the disappearance of Jenny of all those years ago. As a result, she is hyper-vigilant with Cree’s every move. When confronted with the topic of Jenny, Ellen would prefer to leave the past where it is, opting for Cree to talk to therapists rather than ever discussing it with her daughter herself.



Greg Reynolds

“Do you know how many O.D.s and rapes occur over Spring Break?”

Greg is Cree’s father. He’s always a little preoccupied and travels a lot for work. Like Ellen, he errs on the over-protective side and can be a little quick to jump to the worst case scenario.



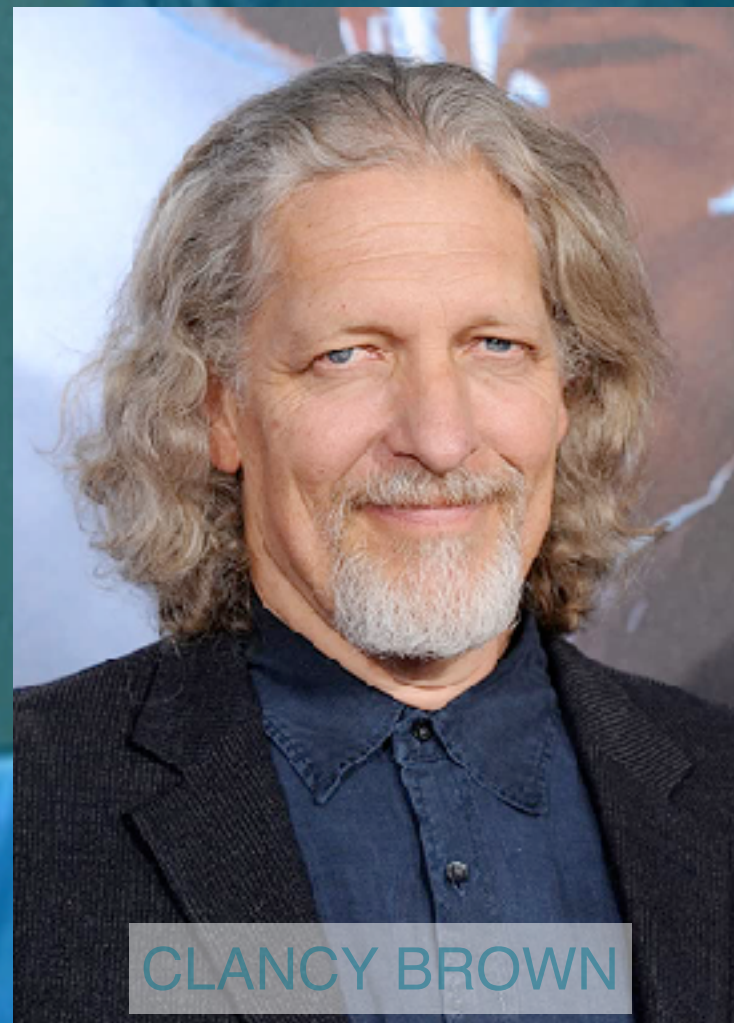
STAY AWAKE

Principal Randall

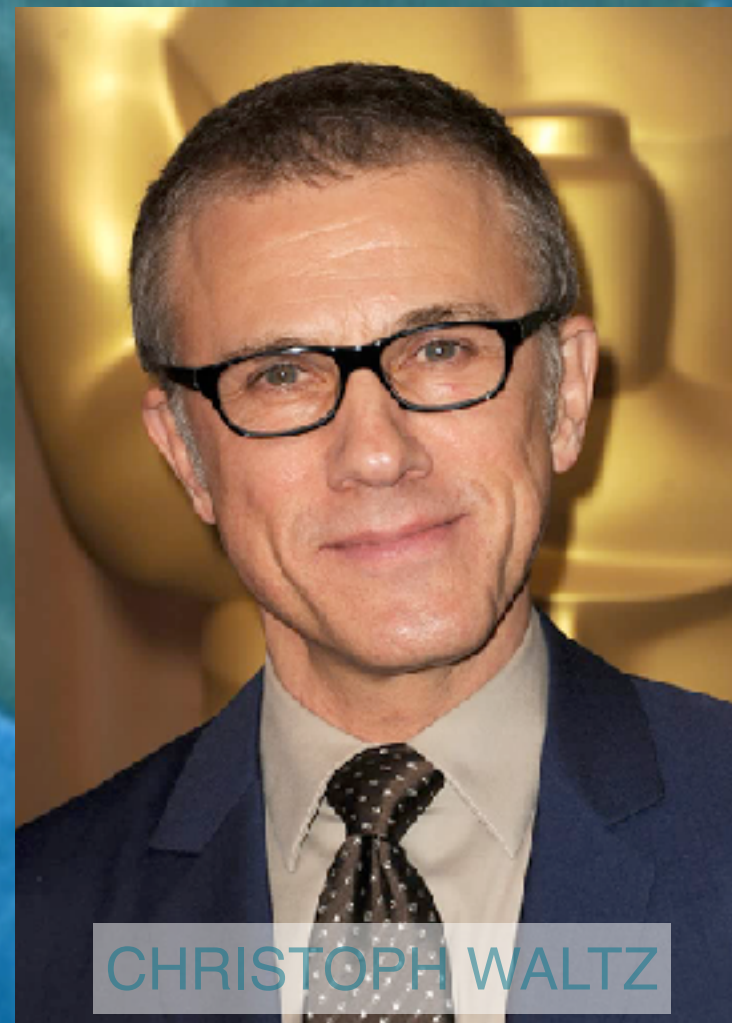
"The loss of a child is something no parent should have to bare."

Principal Randall knows all too well the loss of a child, having lost his own son, so when the first victim is a student from McCormick High, he takes it especially hard.

Aware of the trauma Cree suffered as a child, he tries to look out for her throughout this new situation. Randall assists our detectives and even comes under suspicion himself.



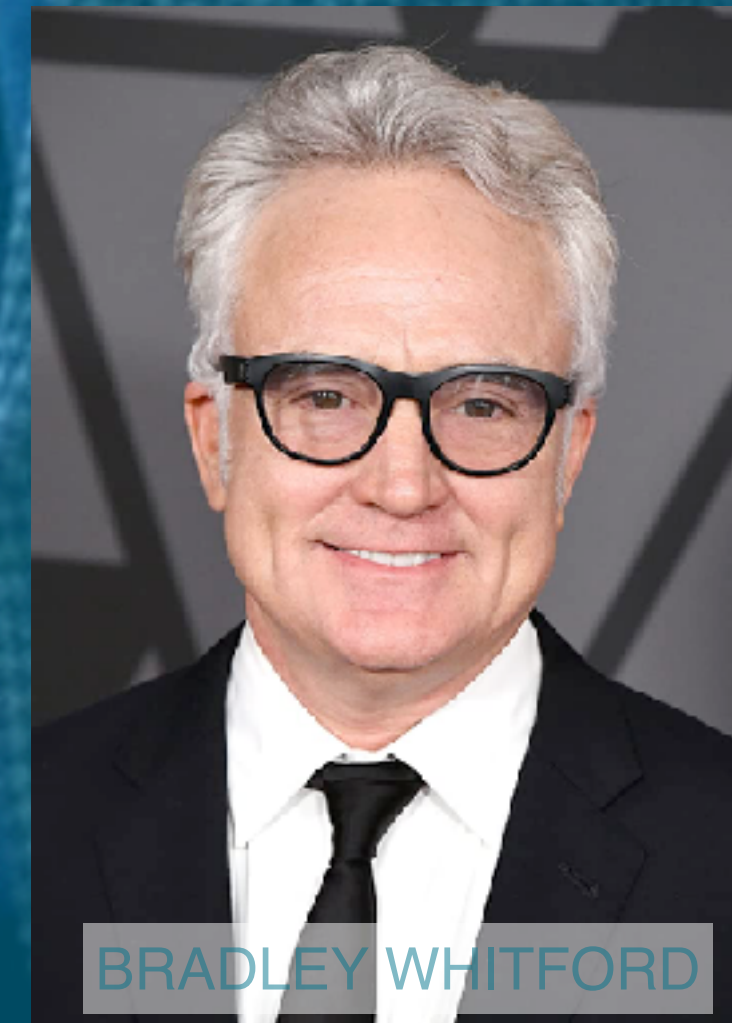
CLANCY BROWN



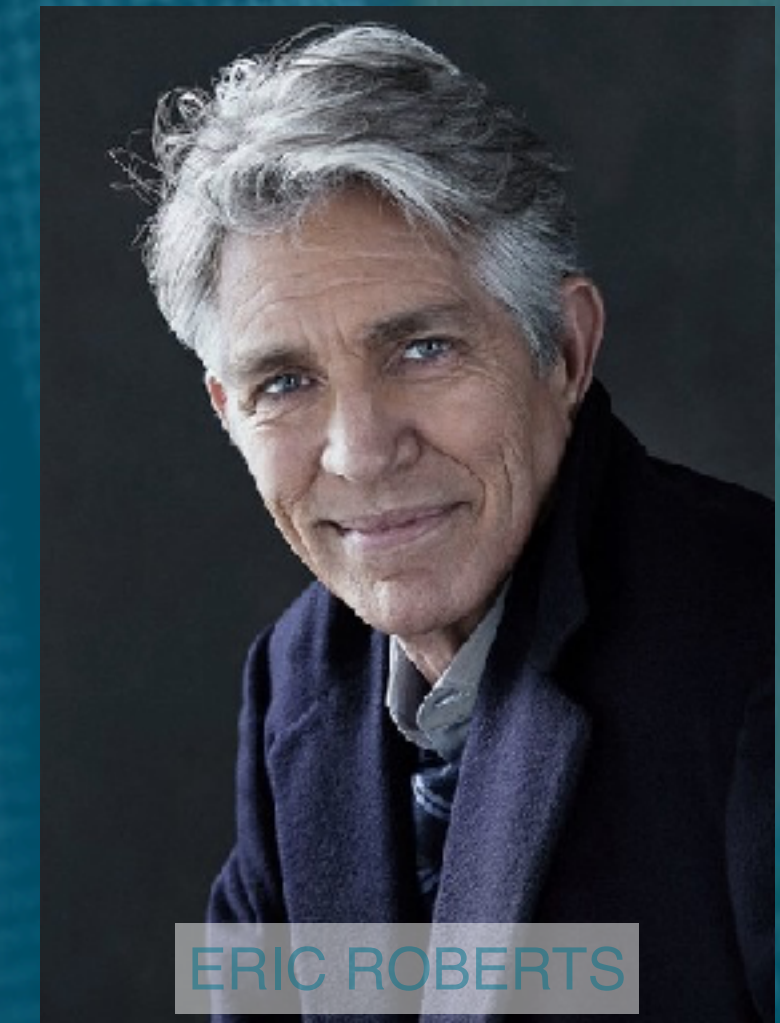
CHRISTOPH WALTZ



JARED HARRIS



BRADLEY WHITFORD



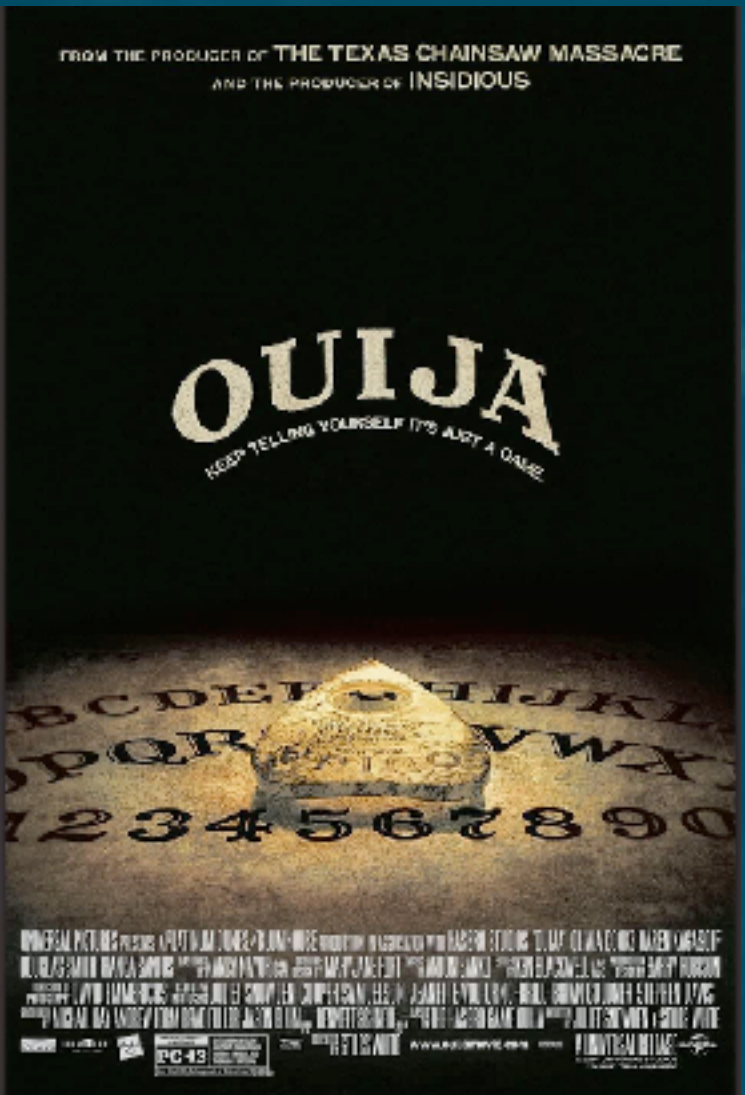
ERIC ROBERTS



STAY AWAKE

COMPARABLE FILMS

FILM	BUDGET	DOMESTIC	WORDLWIDE
A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 1984	\$1.8MM	\$25.5MM	\$57MM
SCREAM 1996	\$14MM	\$103MM	\$173MM
OUIJA 2014	\$5MM	\$50.8MM	\$103.6MM
TRUTH OR DARE 2018	\$3.5MM	\$41.4MM	\$95.3MM



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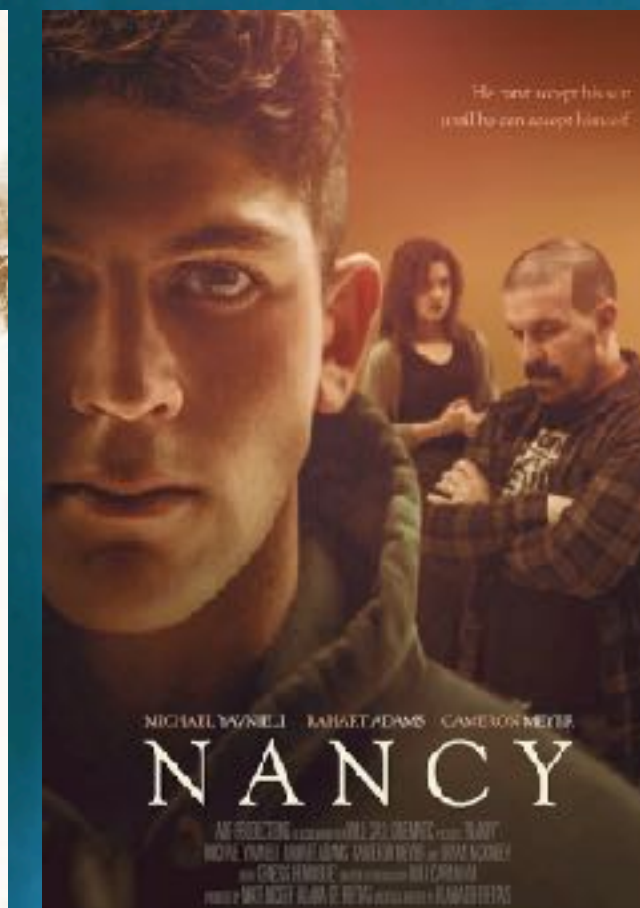
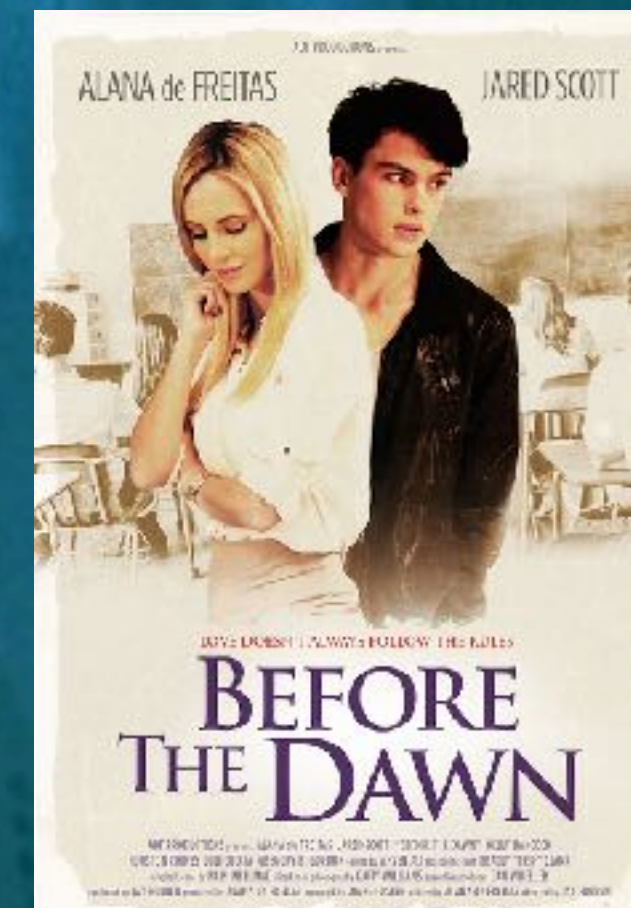
WRITER
Alana de Freitas

Alana de Freitas is an Australian Writer/Producer/Director/Actress based in Los Angeles. Having suffered horrific nightmares growing up, she fully understands just how terrifying the thought of going to sleep can be, which is what prompted her to write STAY AWAKE.

Alana wrote and produced the feature film, BEFORE THE DAWN, which was awarded the ReFrame Stamp by the Sundance Institute & Women in Film for its gender parity, both in front of and behind the camera. The film won numerous awards on the festival circuit, including Best Feature Film at both the American Film Awards and the Focus International Film Festival. It is now available for streaming on Amazon Prime, Tubi, Roku, YouTube Movies and Google Play.

Alana also wrote, produced and directed the LGBTQ-themed short film, NANCY, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sherman Oaks Film Festival, Best First-Time Director at the New York Film Awards and Best Screenplay at the International Independent Film Awards.

Most recently, she was selected as a Producer by the Women's Weekend Film Challenge to create a short film over the course of a weekend. The film, FOR LIFE is just beginning its journey on the festival circuit. She has also proudly been accepted into the 2020 Women in Film Mentoring Program.



A woman with long dark hair is shown from the chest up, covering her face with her right hand. She is wearing a light-colored, ribbed turtleneck sweater. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter. The text "STAY AWAKE" is centered horizontally across the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

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