

# THE WAKE OF LIGHT

Written, Directed and Produced  
by  
Renji Philip



**OFFICIAL WEBSITE:**

<http://www.thewakeoflightmovie.com/>

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## **LOGLINE**

*The Wake of Light* is a romantic drama about a young woman slowly losing hope while caring for her aging father and their broken down farm. One day she meets a charismatic young man on a cross country road trip, who falls for her and asks her to leave her father and join him on his journey. Now she has an impossible choice to make.

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

In this timely, heartfelt film, a young woman has to choose between caring for her aging father or a chance at love.

Mary (Rome Brooks) has spent her entire life caring for her widowed father after he suffered a stroke when she was a little girl. One day Mary meets Cole (Matt Bush, from TV's "The Goldbergs"), a young man passing through her small town on a cross-country road trip, who falls for Mary and asks her join him on his journey. Now Mary must choose between her deep-felt responsibility to her father or a chance at love.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

*Growing up in Colorado, I often chose nature over other activities. While wandering the woods, or fly-fishing the evergreen-lined rivers of the Rockies, my mind coasted into realms where earthly problems didn't exist. The only thing that existed was the woods, the water, and the light. There was something special about that light that stayed with me, something bigger, more mysterious.*

*During a vacation to a small mountain town in Colorado called Carbondale, my wife and I were having breakfast at a little diner and I started taking in the life around me. Mom and Pop shops, people walking to the hardware shop, the pharmacy, the farmer's market, greeting each other. There was something so simple, yet strangely poetic about it all. There was an elusive depth to the simplicity of life in Carbondale. That hooked me and served as a platform to tell a story about a young woman with the world at her feet, yet, unable to leave her small town. This served as a springboard to explore the pathos of a character like that; the why, the how, the hopes, the circumstances surrounding her.*

*When I returned to Los Angeles I set out to write *The Wake of Light* and eight weeks later had a finished script. It flowed out of me like a river. As I was writing, I realized everything about making the film had to be different. It had to be shot differently. We had to avoid "perfect" studio lighting. No big crew. No trailers, walkie-talkies or fancy nonsense. No distractions. Everything about the film had to feel intimate, personal and poetic. I wanted the same simple and mysterious light that soothed my soul as a child to be the center-post of the film: from locations, to pacing, to the time of day we would shoot (quickly shifting according to the natural light), to the selection of cast and crew, composition of music, building of sound...and the title.*

*The Wake of Light* shoot lasted 18 days, in 15 locations, with 99% of the film shot using only natural light.

*We set out to capture the beauty and mystery of something that is hard to define but known when felt. I hope we have been successful and look forward to sharing *The Wake of Light* with audiences that have also felt a deep connection to the often elusively and poetic world around them.*

*Renji Philip*

*Writer-Director-Producer - The Wake of Light*



## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION - A conversation with writer-director-producer Renji Philip**

### **How did you go about writing *The Wake of Light*?**

During a vacation to a small mountain town in Colorado called Carbondale, my wife and I were having breakfast at a little diner and I started taking in the life around me. Mom and Pop shops, people walking to the hardware shop, the pharmacy, the farmer's market, greeting each other. There was something so simple, yet strangely poetic about it all. There was an elusive depth to the simplicity of life in Carbondale. That hooked me and served as a platform to tell a story about a young woman with the world seemingly at her feet, yet, unable to leave her small town. This served as a springboard to explore the pathos of a character like that; the why, the how, the hopes, the circumstances surrounding her.

### **How did you go about casting the film?**

I've worked with Rome (Brooks) on 5 of my last 6 projects and wrote the part of Mary specifically for her. I know her strengths as an actress, which helped inform a lot of choices I made during the writing process. I knew what she could do and what would have the most cinematic impact and built the character's story around that. I wanted to also write a character that makes an atypical and empowering choice at the end of the movie, different from most movies where the girl ends up with the guy, that might serve as an inspiration to other people in her situation.

I also wrote the part of Mary's father specifically for William Morton. I've worked with William on two short films in the past, including *Milkshake*, where he played regular customer at a truck stop diner who is befriended by a young waitress (played by Rome Brooks). Rome and William had such good chemistry in *Milkshake* I wanted to expand that connection into a bigger narrative.

I first saw Matt Bush in the movie *Adventureland* and subsequently in Ed Burns' film *Nice Guy Johnny*, both of which I really liked. While writing *The Wake of Light*, Matt popped into my head for the role of Cole and never left.

### **How did you select the locations in the film?**

I initially wanted to shoot the film in Carbondale, Colorado, but due to the other location needs, became convinced California would be a better choice. I set out one day from Los Angeles and drove up old Highway 49 where tiny mining towns dot the route and ended up in Sutter Creek, where we shot the majority of the film. We had to delay shooting the end of the film an entire year due to a major landslide in Big Sur that cut off access to a beach I was set on using (spoiler). But I'm glad we waited.

### **Discuss the music used in the film.**

Somewhere during the writing of the screenplay I discovered the piano music of Josh Kramer. There's an emotion in Kramer's music that was perfect for the tone I wanted to capture in the film. I ended up writing the majority of the script listening to Kramer's music in my headphones, which served as emotional inspiration. I think that's interesting: story choices coming out of music. After we shot the film and started editing, I couldn't hear anything BUT Kramer's music in my head. So, I tracked Josh down in Turkey and plead our case and thankfully, he said yes. After we got Kramer's piano music into the film, there was an original score that still had to be composed. It had to work with Kramer's piano, yet stand on its own to underscore to some of the flashbacks and more emotional scenes of the film. Josh Mancell was my obvious choice for the score. We've collaborated on six film projects and I knew he would hit it out of the park, which I felt he did.

### **What was the editing process like?**

It wasn't easy. After we shot the film we started putting together the footage and one of the key elements of the screenplay wasn't translating like we hoped. So we had to pivot and create mini-montage elements to advance the secondary story around the main story. Matt (Diezel) has a very sharp eye in terms of story so we were able to advance the story visually and poetically with Matt keeping us on track from a story perspective. It was a delicate balance.

### **As a trained actor, what's the hardest and easiest part of directing?**

The hardest part of directing is waiting for a scene to be lit, or in the case of *The Wake of Light* (where we used 99% natural light), waiting for the light to be perfect. I do a lot of the prop placement and set decoration myself, so after I've prepped a location and discussed the scene with my actors, waiting for the light is always the hardest part. Thankfully my DP, Rainer Lipski, is incredibly talented and we choreographed every scene with



the real-time movement of the sun a week before we started shooting, so a lot of the guesswork was eliminated.

The easiest part of directing for me is working with actors. My strength is being able to break down what motivates a character to act and behave in a certain way, then get out of the way and allow that actor to put their stamp on the performance.

**In addition to writing and directing, you also produced the film. Discuss that.**

I chose to center the production of the film around using only natural light and I wanted the relationship that Mary has with the spiritual element the light represents to feel intimate and personal. That was critical. I didn't want to make the film if we weren't able to capture the intimacy of that. So, I eliminated set "luxuries" and we shot the film with a very small crew, where we were able to pivot quickly and be incredibly nimble, according to finding the perfect natural light for each scene as it was occurring in real time. We shot 99% of the film using only natural light. A regular-sized crew with trailers, walkie-talkies, sterile studio lighting, endless cables and generators never would have allowed for us to capture the poetic intimacy we were after. It was a simple choice really.

**Why did you choose to write, direct and produce a film with a female lead?**

I knew what Rome Brooks could bring to a character like "Mary" (from *The Wake of Light*) and wanted to write a character that makes an atypical and empowering choice for herself at the end of the movie, different from most movies where the girl ends up with the guy; a choice that might serve as an inspiration to other people in her situation.



## **AWARDS / NOMINATIONS**

- \*Winner - Audience Favorite - Knoxville Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best of the Fest - Angaelica Film Festival
- \*Winner - Platinum Award - Worldfest-Houston
- \*Winner - Best Domestic Feature Film - Cobb International Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Feature Film - Rendezvous Film Festival
- \*Winner - Grand Jury Prize - Veritas Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Director - Renji Philip - Cobb International Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Director - Renji Philip - Silicon Beach Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Director - Renji Philip - Rendezvous Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Director - Renji Philip - Smoky Mountain Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Lead Actress - Rome Brooks - Culver City Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Lead Actress - Rome Brooks - World Music and International Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Lead Actress - Rome Brooks - Cobb International Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Lead Actress - Rome Brooks - Rendezvous Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Lead Actress - Rome Brooks - Smoky Mountain Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Supporting Actor - Matt Bush - Cobb International Festival
- \*Winner - Best Supporting Actor - Matt Bush - Worldfest-Houston
- \*Winner - Best Supporting Actor - Matt Bush - World Music and International Film Festival
- \*Winner - Best Screenplay - Renji Philip - World Music and International Film Festival
- \*Nominated - Best Supporting Actor - William Morton - Cobb International Film Festival
- \*Nominated - Best Cinematography - Rainer Lipski - Hoboken International Film Festival
- \*Nominated - Best Cinematography - Rainer Lipski - Cobb International Film Festival
- \*Nominated - Best Cinematography - Rainer Lipski - Rendezvous Film Festival
- \*Nominated - "Monica Vitti Award" for Best Actress - Rome Brooks - Chicago Blowup Film Festival
- \*Nominated - "Tarkovsky Award" For Best Director - Renji Philip - Chicago Blowup Film Festival

## QUOTES

**"A film from the heart. Beautifully told and beautifully acted - a touching rite of passage."**

Thom Noble - Academy and BAFTA Award-Winning Editor - THELMA AND LOUISE

**"An illuminating film with resonant messages of hope and change."**

Matt Brunson - Film Frenzy (Rotten Tomato Approved Critic)

**"A film of immense charm, humor and hope with powerhouse performances across the board."**

Logan Taylor - Film Programmer - SXSW

**"Matt Bush is a refreshing change as a romantic lead."**

Joel Fisher - BRWC (Rotten Tomato Approved Critic)

**"The Wake of Light has won a string of audience awards and it's easy to see why."**

Dan Eagan - Film Legacy (Rotten Tomato-Approved Critic)

**"I know Matt Bush from The Goldbergs. He's fantastic in this film."**

Audience Member - Rendezvous Film Festival

**"The film's stunning photography works perfectly."**

Alejandro Turdo - EscribiendoCine (Rotten Tomato-Approved Critic)

**"A visual treat that touches hearts and re-awakes hope."**

Kathleen Haney - Program Director - Worldfest-Houston

**"What an indie should be."**

Tony Macklin - Las Vegas Critics Society (Rotten Tomato Approved Critic)

**"I loved seeing a female lead that was both kind and strong. Inspiring!"**

Audience Member - Angaelica Film Festival

**"I wasn't expecting the ending. Very powerful."**

Audience Member - Knoxville Film Festival

## **BIOGRAPHIES-CAST**



### **Rome Brooks (MARY)**

Rome Brooks garners her namesake from Rome, Georgia. She attended the University of Alabama on an athletic scholarship. Upon moving to Los Angeles, writer-director Renji Philip saw her rehearsing a scene in a park and immediately cast her in a short film he was directing at the time. Twelve years later, Renji and Rome have collaborated on 3 short films (*Milkshake*, *I Love You*, *Dirty Laundry*), two feature-length films (*Cheesecake Casserole* and *The Wake of Life*) and have been married for 11 of those 12 years.



### **Matt Bush (COLE)**

Matt Bush plays Andy Cogan on the ABC hit comedy *The Goldbergs*. He is well known from the film *Adventureland* (with Kristen Stewart and Ryan Reynolds), his AT&T Rollover Minutes commercials, *Nice Guy Johnny* (with Edward Burns), *Margaret* (with Anna Paquin and Matt Damon), *Trouble with the Curve* (with Amy Adams and Clint Eastwood) and *Undrafted* (with Jim Belushi). His additional select television credits include *Anger Management*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *Glory Daze*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Scrubs* and *Veronica Mars*.



### **William Morton (MARY'S FATHER)**

Bill Morton is a Viet Nam Vet who served two tours as an Infantry Marine. He was honorably discharged after being shot by friendly fire on patrol in the Quang Tri Province. He worked for Lockheed Martin for 21 years, including secret work on the F-117 Stealth aircraft. He began his career in theater at the age of 58 in Hollywood, acting in plays and several commercials, including playing the iconic zombie with a chainsaw in the *Be the Boss of What Your Kids Watch* PSA. *The Wake of Light* is William's third collaboration with writer-director Renji Philip. He currently resides in Pryor, Oklahoma.



### **Tyler Steelman (RUSSELL)**

Tyler Steelman was a child actor by the age of 4, parlaying theater into commercials and TV roles. At 14, Tyler booked *Beowulf* (directed by Robert Zemeckis acting alongside Anthony Hopkins, Angelina Jolie and Robin Wright). His additional credits include Zac Efron's *17 Again*, *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody*, *Workaholics* and *Cougartown*. *The Wake of Light* is Tyler's second collaboration with Renji Philip, the first being the short film, *Dirty Laundry*, acting opposite the Academy Award-Nominated actor, Bruce Davison.





### **Sandra Seeling (LAURA)**

Born in Berlin and raised in Mallorca, Sandra's acting credits include *CSI New York*, *Bruno* (Sasha Baron Cohen) and *Jane the Virgin* (CW). She is the founder and director of the Evolution Mallorca International Film Festival (EMIFF), located in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. She is a jury member for the Mammoth Lakes Film Festival, the Los Angeles Music Video Festival, the SEEFest Feature Film Jury and the Cinema Without Borders Festival. Sandra speaks fluent English, German and Spanish and holds dual U.S. and EU citizenship.



### **Paula Rhodes (COLE'S EX-GIRLFRIEND)**

Paula was born in Deerlodge, Montana. She won the first Miss Junior Missouri and has appeared in over two dozen national commercials and several television and film roles, including Disney's *Bunk'd*, Amazon's *The Last Tycoon* and *The Kicks* and the over 50 episodes in the lead role of the Web-TV award winning *The New Adventures of Peter and Wendy*. Her voiceover work includes Eveline (the big bad) in *Resident Evil 7*, Skipper and Stacie in *Barbie: Life in the Dreamhouse*, Peaches Pie in *Doc McStuffins* and Kid Constantine in *Justice League Action*.

## **BIOGRAPHIES-CREW**

### **Renji Philip (WRITER - DIRETOR - PRODUCER)**

Renji Philip grew up in Littleton, Colorado, the son of an Indian immigrant. He graduated from the University of Miami (Florida) and studied acting at the Stella Adler Conservatory in New York for 2 years and with Howard Fine as a scholarship student in Los Angeles for 4 years. He's written, directed and produced 5 short films and 2 features (including *The Wake of Light*). His work has been featured at Palm Springs, Raindance-London, California Indie, Ramsgate UK, Kansas International, Knoxville, Catalina, Hoboken International, Ozark Foothills, Cobb International, Fort Worth, Rhode Island International, Mill Valley, Frame 4 Frame, Mayday, Christian International, Worldfest-Houston, Silicon Beach, Angaelica, Rendezvous, Fort Worth, World Music and Film, Culver City, Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, Cinequest, Starz-Denver, Mill Valley, Bel Air, Methodfest, Blow Up, Smoky Mountain and Winnepeg film festivals. Renji is passionate about films that challenge stereotypes and often suggest connections between chance, destiny and coincidence.

### **Rainer Lipski (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)**

Rainer Lipski is an award-winning Director of Photography from Berlin, Germany whom has worked professionally in 18 countries. He has shot eight feature films, over 190 commercials, 30 short films and multiple music videos. Rainer received two diplomas in filmmaking, including a Masters in cinematography at the Filmakademie Baden Wuerttemberg in 2006. In 2006, his thesis project "Living iPod" won the Young Director Award at The Cannes Film Festival which rocketed his career into the commercial world. Rainer has collaborated with three Golden Lion- winning directors and teaches part time at the University of Arts in Berlin and Los Angeles International Film School. In 2016 he won the Best Cinematography Award at Filmout SD for the feature film *Kiss Me, Kill Me* and the Cityscape Award at the Big Apple Film Festival for the best use of NYC as a backdrop for *Flatbush Luck*. Rainer continues to work and gain global recognition for his artistic viewpoint, professionalism, and dedication to the art of cinematography.

### **Matthew Diezel (EDITOR)**

Matt started his film career in Miami, Florida when he received his first break on the feature film *The Substitute* (with Tom Berenger and Luis Guzman). Thereafter, he worked his way up through the cutting room on films as diverse as *Mission Impossible II* (with Tom Cruise), Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, *The Time Traveler's Wife* (with Rachel McAdams and Eric Bana), *Scooby Doo*, *The Lake House* (with Sandra Bullock and Keanu Reeves), *X-Men: First Class* (with Hugh Jackman and Jennifer Lawrence), *Red* (with Bruce Willis, Morgan Freeman, Helen Mirren, Richard Dreyfuss and John Malkovich) *Alex Cross* (with Tyler Perry, Matthew Fox and Edward Burns) and the critically acclaimed *Cash Only*. Matthew has had the privilege of studying under the tutelage of comedy editor Kent Beyda and Oscar-winning editor Thom Noble. In addition to *The Wake of Light*, Matt recently finished work on a James Franco-directed film called *Zeroville* (with James and Dave Franco, Joey King, Will Ferrell, Megan Fox, Seth Rogan, Danny McBride and Craig Robinson).

### **Josh Mancell (COMPOSER OF ORIGINAL SCORE)**

Josh Mancell is a Los Angeles-based composer. He has created the music for multi-million unit selling video games *Crash Bandicoot*, *Jak & Daxter* and the Emmy award-winning television series *Clifford the Big Red Dog*. He's composed music for acclaimed independent films *Eat the Sun*, *A Star for Rose*, *Cheesecake Casserole* and a diverse array of commercials, including Target, McDonalds, EA Games and AT&T. In addition to scoring multimedia, Josh is involved with several live bands as a performer and a producer (Exploding Flowers, Vagrant Winter, Fun Time Objects). He's guest lectured at The American Film Institute, Berklee College of Music, Sarah Lawrence College, UC Irvine, Cal Poly, LA College of Music College. His iconic music for the Crash Bandicoot Video game performed in May 2018 by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at London's Royal Albert Hall. *The Wake of Light* marks his sixth collaboration with Renji Philip.

**Josh Kramer (COMPOSER OF FEATURED PIANO MUSIC)**

Josh Kramer is an American composer and pianist currently residing in Turkey. His cinematic sensibilities have been described as a mix of Thomas Newman, Max Richter, Yann Tiersen and Alexandre Desplat. His music has been used in productions around the globe including film, television, documentary and commercials. Most recently, his work has premiered publicly alongside Olafur Arnalds and Nils Frahm in a series of major ballet performances at the National Theater of Japan in Tokyo.

**Kenneth L. Johnson (SOUND)**

Kenneth L. Johnson has won three prime time Emmy awards: Outstanding Sound Editing for a Miniseries for HBO's *John Adams* (with Paul Giamatti and Laura Linney), ABC's *Storm of the Century* and *The Shining*. Ken been nominated by the Motion Picture Sound Editors for Best Sound Editing for Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Rises*, *The Italian Job* (with Mark Wahlberg, Charlize Theron and Jason Statham) and won for Best Sound Editing for *Road to Perdition* (directed by Sam Mendes starring Tom Hanks and Jennifer Jason Lee). Ken's additional selected sound credits include *Mission Impossible III* and *The Last Samurai* (both with Tom Cruise), *How The Grinch Stole Christmas* (directed by Ron Howard, starring Jim Carrey, Bryce Dallas Howard and Anthony Hopkins), *Meet Joe Black* (with Brad Pitt, Anthony Hopkins and Claire Forlani) *Thirteen Days* (with Kevin Costner and Bruce Greenwood), *Hollow Man* (with Elizabeth Shue, Josh Brolin and Kevin Bacon), the Academy Award-Winning *Pollock* (with Ed Harris, Marcia Gay Harden and Jennifer Connelly) and *2 Fast 2 Furious* (with the late Paul Walker and Eva Mendes).

STILL IMAGES







## **COMPLETE CREDIT LIST**

Written, Directed and Produced by RENJI PHILIP

ROME BROOKS as Mary  
MATT BUSH as Cole  
WILLIAM MORTON as Mary's Father  
TYLER STEELMAN as Russell  
SANDRA SEELING as Laura  
PAULA RHODES as Cole's Ex  
AVERY QUINN MOSS as Little Mary  
LINCOLN BODIN as Cole's Son

Director of Photography RAINER LIPSKI  
Edited by MATT DIEZEL  
Featuring the Piano Music of JOSH KRAMER  
Original Score Composed by JOSH MANCELL  
Supervising Sound Designer and Mixer KENNETH L JOHNSON

Co-Producer - JARED DRAKE  
Director's Assistant - NICOLE WIDTFELDT  
First Assistant Camera - ALEX VAN PUTTEN and MARC WIERCIOCH  
Art Directors - CHRIS ROBERTS and RANDY KEIZER  
Drone Operators - ROBERT and BLAIR WALLINGFORD  
Legal - LINDA LICHTER and JEFF SPRINGER  
Edit Consultant - THOM NOBLE  
Colorist - NICK SANDERS  
Digital Compositor - SVEN DREESBACH  
Dialog Editor - DAVID M GRANT  
Foley Artist - LORITA DE LA CERNA  
Additional Sound Design - MARC ARAMIAN