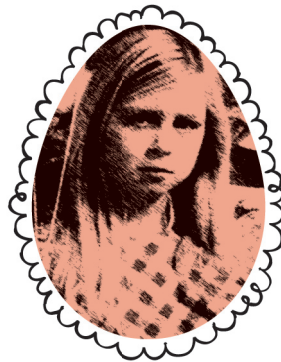
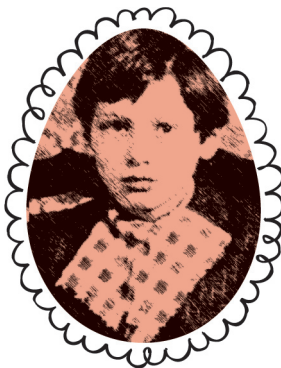


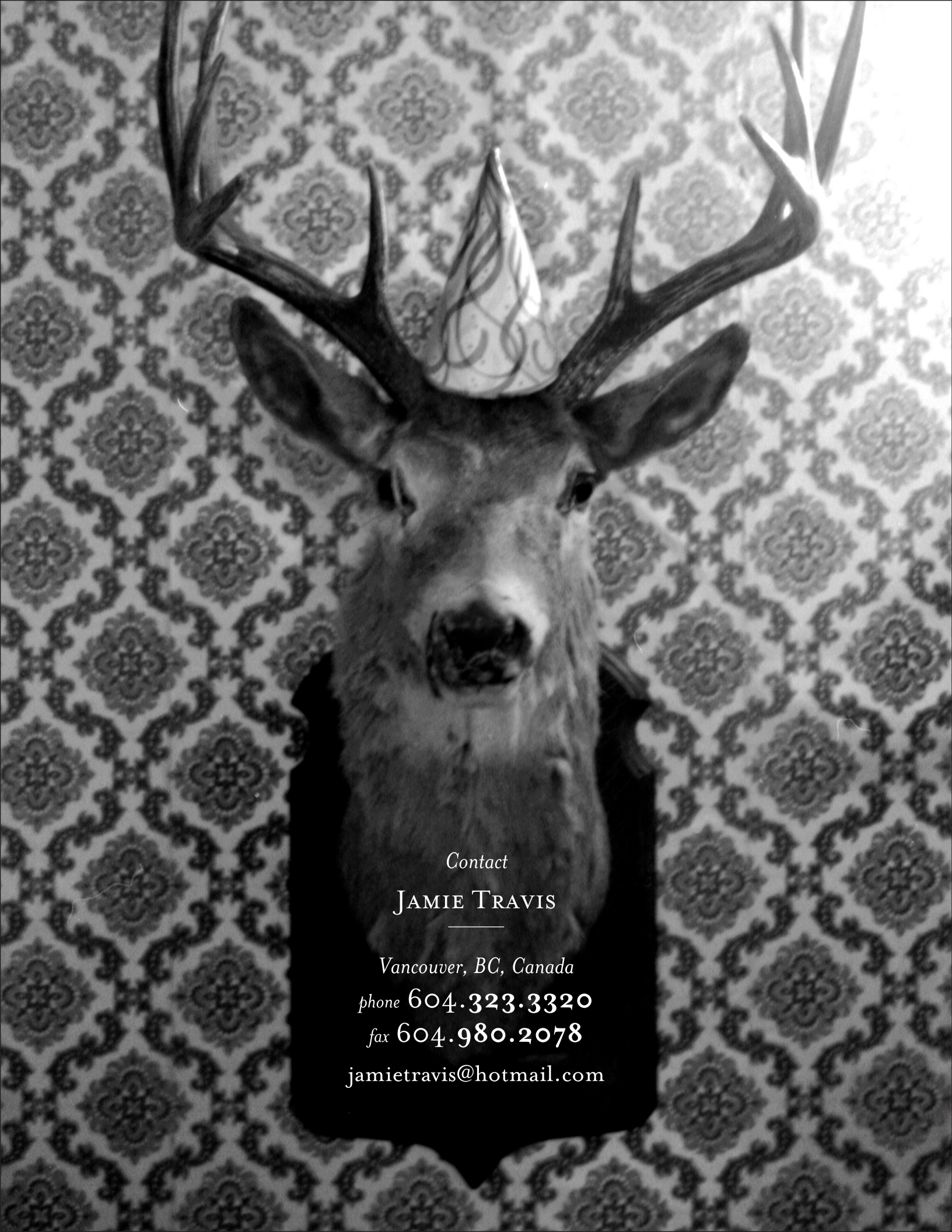
Why  
the Anderson  
Children

Didn't

Come to  
Dinner



Written and Directed by Jamie Travis



Contact

JAMIE TRAVIS

Vancouver, BC, Canada

phone 604.323.3320

fax 604.980.2078

jamietravis@hotmail.com

WHY *the* ANDERSON CHILDREN  
DIDN'T COME *to* DINNER

16.5 MINUTES | COLOUR | 2003  
© MODERN FAMILY PRODUCTIONS

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## FESTIVAL HISTORY

~ in chronological order ~

**2003** • MONTRÉAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL | TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL | ATLANTIC FILM FESTIVAL (*Halifax*) | CINEFEST SUDBURY  
CALGARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL | VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL  
NORTHWEST FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL (*Portland*) | PRENDS ÇA COURT FILM SERIES (*Montreal*)

**2004** • VICTORIA INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL  
SLAMDANCE FILM FESTIVAL (*Park City*) | BIARRITZ AUDIOVISUAL FESTIVAL (*Fipatel*)  
SAN FRANCISCO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL | FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL  
SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST FILM FESTIVAL (*Austin*) | EAST LANSING FILM FESTIVAL  
CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL | RENDEZ-VOUS DU CINÉMA QUEBECOIS (*Montréal*)  
KANSAS CITY FILMMAKERS JUBILEE | COMMONWEALTH FILM FESTIVAL  
JACKSONVILLE FILM FESTIVAL | ANTELOPE VALLEY INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL  
UTAH ARTS FESTIVAL | ATLANTA FILM FESTIVAL | SHERBROOKE FILM FESTIVAL (*Québec*)



## Press

VICTORIA INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL 2004

Winner: Best Student Short

PORTLAND MERCURY | NOVEMBER 6, 2003 | **Chas Bowie**

*"It's like THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS meets THE ADDAMS FAMILY, and it's one of the best short films I've ever seen. A set of triplets, a food-obsessive mother hooked to an IV, and a suite of cats move surreally and beautifully through this entrancing film. The art direction had me squealing with glee. Aside from just being an insanely good film, the director is only 23 years old. I'm still in awe."*

FILM THREAT | MARCH 18, 2004 | **Doug Brunell**

*"This is the kind of film Tim Burton wishes he could make. Kind of touching, kind of morbid and totally original... Rarely has there been a short film so worthy of attention. It has just the right amounts of dark humor and fantasy, and it always takes itself seriously. It's also painfully obvious that director/writer Jamie Travis has a natural gift. If this doesn't win some awards, the judges are asleep at the wheel."*

NOW TORONTO | SEPTEMBER 4, 2003 | **Wendy Banks**

*"Then there's Jamie Travis's darkly hilarious WHY THE ANDERSON CHILDREN DIDN'T COME TO DINNER, with its hollow-eyed kids straight out of Edward Gorey."*

NORTHWEST FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL PROGRAMME GUIDE

*"Heroically succulent and frolicsome art direction with a hilariously deadpan delivery."*

SAN FRANCISCO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL PROGRAMME GUIDE

*"An exquisitely detailed mannered modern fairy tale."*

ATLANTIC FILM FESTIVAL PROGRAMME GUIDE

*"Taking a page from Wes Anderson's THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS... Supremely art-directed, this short is a feast for the eyes."*

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DIRECTOR'S  
STATEMENT

I WILL NEVER FORGET THE SECRET MY LONG-TIME NANNY TOLD ME WHEN I WAS SEVEN. IT WAS THE KIND OF SECRET THAT INCITED BOTH FEAR AND DELIGHT IN MY DEVELOPING MIND. I REMEMBER LAUGHING, THEN CRYING, THEN LAUGHING AGAIN. AND I REMEMBER HER UNBLINKING EYES AS SHE DIVULGED IT. NANNY, AS I WILL CALL HER, THOUGHT NOTHING OF IT.

SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE ONCE FLUSHED A CHILD DOWN THE TOILET.

I ALWAYS KNEW SHE HAD FOUR CHILDREN OF HER OWN, BUT SHE INSISTED SHE HAD FIVE. ONLY THE FIRST SHE FLUSHED DOWN THE TOILET. "IT SLIPPED OUT WITH MY PEE, SO I FLUSHED IT." HOW AWFUL NANNY MUST HAVE FELT, I REMEMBER THINKING: WHAT AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT!

AS IT TURNS OUT, SHE HAD MISCARRIED HER FIRST CHILD. I ONLY DISCOVERED THIS IN RECENT YEARS. WHAT STORYTELLING PANACHE SHE HAD! WHAT FLAIR! ONLY NANNY COULD TAKE SOMETHING SO CLINICAL AND MAKE IT SO MYSTICAL! ONLY NANNY COULD TAKE THE LOGIC OF A CHILD AND APPLY IT TO SOMETHING SO ADULT!

*Why the Anderson Children Didn't Come to Dinner* IS AN ATTEMPTED EMULATION OF NANNY'S EXPERT HANDLING OF THE WORD. HER MATTER-OF-FACT TONE AND HER FANCIFUL WORDS CREATED IN ME, A CHILD OF SEVEN, THE QUEEREST TENSION. DO I LAUGH? DO I CRY? DO I RETURN TO MY LEGO? IT IS THIS TENSION I HAVE STRIVED TO ACHIEVE IN TELLING THE STORY OF MAUD ANDERSON AND HER THREE 'MISCARRIED' CHILDREN.

EITHER YOU CAN LAUGH AND CRY AND LAUGH AGAIN, LIKE I DID.  
OR LIKE NANNY, YOU MAY THINK NOTHING OF IT.

# Long Synopsis

A day in the life of the Andersons and their three cats.

Maud Anderson, mother of three, prepares bounteous breakfasts, lunches and dinners for her three hollow-eyed children. Her culinary choices are peculiar.

Little does she know that peculiar too are her young ones. Young Chester has a fixation with the toilet and a propensity towards kleptomania. His sister Eliza, a closet-voyeur, likes her Paint-by-Numbers a little too much. And poor Godfrey, buoyed by an awe for the horticultural, can't tell the difference between the things he loves and the things he wants to eat.

All is normal at the Anderson residence until poor Godfrey breaks the house rule. He eats the one food banned from Maud's kitchen, the one food crafty enough to conspire against Maud and make her come undone. He eats a BROWN EGG! And right before lunch!

Maud's sinister retaliation stuns the children and prompts them to orchestrate a harrowing musical number.

As Maud prepares the dinner her kids will never forget, Chester, Eliza and poor Godfrey employ their queer preoccupations for a communal objective - their undeniable, unprecedented and completely heroic absence from dinner.

Tonight Maud Anderson eats alone.

SHORT SYNOPSIS | *Three seven year-olds endure the culinary abuses of their mother. When Mother's aversion to brown eggs reaches new heights, young Chester, Eliza and Godfrey take a stand.*

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# Production Notes

Pre-production for *WHY THE ANDERSON CHILDREN DIDN'T COME TO DINNER* began in the fall of 2002.

Jamie Travis, Amy Belling and A.J. Bond made the film as their graduating project from the University of British Columbia's Film Programme.

Travis wanted to make a film with children and cats; he wanted the story to be contained within a single day; and he wanted to create a world in which flocked wallpaper and mounted deer heads incited not even a glimmer of a blink in the eyes of the characters. And so came the sixteen page script for *ANDERSON CHILDREN*.

The three served as Co-producers under the banner Modern Family Productions. A.J. Bond would serve as Editor. Amy Belling would serve as Director of Photography and Sound Designer.

On a \$10 000 budget, many favours needed to be called in to make the slick product the filmmakers intended. Friends, family members, colleagues, equipment houses - all volunteered their valuable hours and resources.

The Dutch Colonial mansion which served as the sole location for principal photography was a donation of sorts as well.

The only cost was the casting of the homeowner's daughter (Katherine Eaton) as young Eliza - a strange deal which worked out very well in the end.

Vancouver casting directors Carole Tarlington and Dorothy Szymanska helped fill the other principal roles. No one could quite relish the line "Tonight we'll be having a very special dinner" the way Patti Wotherspoon could. And so she won the role of Maud Anderson. Colton Boreen was the obvious choice for the role of Godfrey: his only prior acting experience a school play, he showed not the slightest hint of affectation. Michael Kurliak, similarly unaffected, bestowed the character of Chester with a charming insolence.



Principal photography began on November 28, 2003 after months of colour coordinating and test shooting. The original eight scheduled days became twelve once the filmmakers learned of the great difficulties involved when children, cats, pigs' heads and Vancouver weather come together.

Fly infestation, the foul smell of rotting meat, the hijinks of warring cats and the fluctuating sugar levels of eight year-olds - these all posed quite the challenge for the three student filmmakers and their twenty to thirty person crew. The budget was soaring. The film stock was disappearing. And Christmas was coming.

The outdoor shots were necessarily postponed until the first non-rainy weekend in the new year. Well into February, dryness finally arrived. Godfrey's exterior scenes were shot in A.J. Bond's Vancouver backyard. And the climactic swingset scene was shot commando-style in between bouts of showers in Vancouver's Kitsilano area.

Editing spanned from January to March 2003 at the UBC editing facilities. The original assembly was twenty five minutes long and needed major cuts. A.J. Bond tried out countless variations, and finally, in March, the 16.5 minute final cut was ready for Amy Belling's sound treatment.

Dave Webber, a Vancouver musician and graphic designer, was brought on board as Composer. His klezmer-inspired, pizzicato strings-heavy score made the Andersons seem only weirder.

The film premiered at the UBC Student Film Festival on May 2, 2003. Awards received include Outstanding Film, Outstanding Direction and Art Direction for Jamie Travis, Outstanding Cinematography for Amy Belling, an honourable mention in editing for A.J. Bond, the People's Choice Award and a special commendation for excellence in cat wrangling.







## FILMMAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

**JAMIE TRAVIS | Writer / Director / Co-producer / Production Designer**

Jamie Travis graduated from the University of British Columbia with a BA in Film Studies. The first film he wrote and directed at UBC, entitled *DIARY OF AN INSOMNIAC* (2002), travelled most notably to the Montreal World Film Festival. *WHY THE ANDERSON CHILDREN DIDN'T COME TO DINNER* (2003) served as his graduating film. Stationed in Vancouver, BC, Jamie is currently writing a number of shorts and a feature, *I HATE WHITE RABBITS*. | 604.323.3320 / [jamietravis@hotmail.com](mailto:jamietravis@hotmail.com)

**AMY BELLING | Director of Photography / Co-producer / Sound designer**

Amy Belling is a graduate of the UBC Film Programme, and is currently working as an Associate Producer at Soapbox Productions. She is also producing two short films and a music video. On the opposite side of the festival fence, she worked as the Canadian Images Programme Assistant at the 2003 Vancouver International Film Festival. | 604.626.2781 / [amy@magicaltingles.com](mailto:amy@magicaltingles.com)

**A.J. BOND | Editor / Producer**

A.J. Bond started his film career as an actor, appearing in Canadian films like *KITCHEN PARTY* (Slamdance 1998) and *BETTER THAN CHOCOLATE*. A recent graduate of the University of British Columbia Film Programme, where he wrote and directed a short film titled *REPEAT* (2002), A.J. is now pursuing a career behind the camera. | 604.760.9766 / [bonders007@hotmail.com](mailto:bonders007@hotmail.com)

## Credits

WHY THE ANDERSON CHILDREN  
DIDN'T COME TO DINNER

Written and directed by  
JAMIE TRAVIS

Director of photography  
AMY BELLING

Editor  
A.J. BOND

Cast  
PATTI WOTHERSPOON as MAUD  
COLTON BOREEN as GODFREY  
MICHAEL KURLIAK as CHESTER  
KATHERINE EATON as ELIZA

SCRIBBLE as BLACK CAT  
BUNNIE as WHITE CAT  
JIM as ORANGE CAT

Casting by  
CAROLE TARLINGTON &  
DOROTHY SZYMANSKA

Producer  
A.J. BOND

Co-Producers  
AMY BELLING  
JAMIE TRAVIS

Music by  
DAVE WEBBER

Music Engineer  
BEN KARLSTROM

Production Designer  
JAMIE TRAVIS

1st Assistant director  
A.J. BOND

Production Assistants  
RITA YEE  
MANDY WORTHY  
MICHELLE TSAO

Cat Wranglers  
JEFF KHONSARY  
COURTENAY WEBBER

Catering  
HEIDI BELLING  
DIANE TRAVIS  
CAILIN GOOD  
PETR BENDA  
JANET AND JIM BOND

Camera Operator  
AMY BELLING

1st Assistant Camera  
LEIGH JENKINS

2nd Assistant Camera  
KEVIN HARDIMAN

Trainee Assisant Camera  
COLIN MASKELL

Stills Photographers  
ASHLEY MAILE  
LYNETTE GILLIS  
JEFF KHONSARY  
COLIN MASKELL

Videographer  
YU GU

Gaffer  
MARTIN KOSTIAN

Lamp Operators  
BRETT BIRD  
COLIN MASKELL  
HENNISEA HOY  
JENNIFER SHANSE  
GWEN HAWORTH  
CHRIS KEMPINSKI  
SHANNON O'NEILL  
BYRON LAMARQUE  
JENNIFER OEY

Dolly Grip / Grip  
RYAN THOMAS CATHERWOOD

Grips  
KEN STEINKE  
CHRIS ROY  
JOE TOLTA

Sound Recordist  
PAUL FURMINGER

Additional Sound Recording  
SIMON MCNABB

Boom Operator  
SHAWN MILLER

Sound Designer  
AMY BELLING

Sound Mixer  
AMOS HERTZMAN

Continuity  
NASHILA BHIMJI

Costume Designers  
JESSICA ROBILLARD  
GREGORY SHANK  
LISA STARY

Key Makeup Artist  
SHERYL-LYNN ONG

Assistant Makeup Artist  
SHAB RASHID

Set Design Consultant  
JANICE CHIU

Cat Paintings by  
HUMANFIVE:  
MIKE SWANEY  
JARET PENNER  
SIMON REDEKOP

Prop Designers  
COURTENAY WEBBER  
JAMES FRIESEN  
NICOLE TAYLOR

Food Stylists  
VISH JUGDEO  
MANDY WORTHY

Titles Design  
JAMES FRIESEN

Painters  
DARREN CLAYDON  
BECKY HALL  
PIETER BRUSSE  
JUDY HERLICK  
CHRIS FUNNELL  
SHANNON MURRAY  
GUITA YAZDANI  
JENNIFER LAPIERRE  
VISH JUGDEO  
RANDY WHITE  
DIANA SORRENTI  
DAVE BARSHLOMO  
RICH MAEROV  
JEFF KHONSARY  
COURTENAY WEBBER  
MISCHA ZAJTMANN  
MARK NEIGHBOR  
INGRID COUGHLIN  
PAUL FURMINGER  
PETR BENDA  
SARAH SHAMASH  
KAREN TRAVIS

Carpenter  
PIETER BRUSSE

Contact | JAMIE TRAVIS

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*Vancouver, BC, Canada*

*phone* **604.323.3320**

*fax* **604.980.2078**

**jamietravis@hotmail.com**