

Lunch Ladies



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Contact: Ouat Media - 416.979.7380

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Duration: 18:51 Minutes

Aspect Ratio: 2:39 (Scope)

Shooting Format: Arri Alexa 3.2k

B/W Color: Color

Country of Production: USA

Year of Production: 2017



Lunch Ladies

Lunch Ladies

Synopsis

For the past twenty years, obsessed Johnny Depp fans and fraternal twin sisters, Seretta and LouAnne Burr, have shared a miserable existence as high school Lunch Ladies serving up rubbery chicken parts, ammonia-treated government meat and whatever else the cash-strapped national lunch program sends their way.

This year is going to be different: The twin's Cheesy Burger Bites recipe is the Grand Prize Winner of Johnny Depp's *Cook for Kid's Charity Event!*

Convinced this is their ticket out of high school hell town and that "The Depper" will hire them to be his very own Personal Chefs, their dreams are shattered after a snotty head cheerleader pushes them one step too far.

This forces the Lunch Ladies to ask themselves...

WWJD? What would Johnny do?

Tasty Facts

- We used 10 gallons of blood, 10 gallons of slime/goo, 15 gallons of “food,” 40 pounds of potatoes (200 pounds brought to set) and 13 pounds of ground meat.
- 48 pie tops were made of salt dough, and varnished, a hot glue gun was used to attach the tops to pie tins. 25-30 real pies were made. 20 pounds of flour was used, and the meatloaf was made from cheap very fatty ground beef, SpaghettiOs and Saltine Crackers - a big loaf of greasy gristle with wormy looking bits – yummy!
- We prepped the film for four months and filmed over the course of two weekends in South Central Los Angeles.
- Our first catered meal was awful – we had to fire the real lunch ladies on the *Lunch Ladies*’ set.
- Shayna Weber, our producer, gave birth to her son, Max Bowie Band, two weeks before we filmed.
- We had a diverse cast and crew which included African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Caucasians, a French production coordinator, Spanish composer, music producer and music manager, an orchestra in Budapest and handicapped actor/screenwriter Kent Rodricks who was one of the first successful spinal fusion surgeries in the world. (Kent told me to put this in.)
- Our final horror scene went way over schedule, and we finished cleaning up gallons of fake blood only one hour before kids were to arrive for Monday morning school.
- The fake decapitated leg that Seretta holds up in the T-Rex Meat Grinder scene is a cast of Clarissa’s. The fake ear in the pie is a cast of Matt Falletta’s.

After the shoot, Clarissa hung up the *Lunch Ladies*’ parking sign in the parking spot at her apartment.

The landlord made her take it down.





Quotes

"I seriously don't think you'd be able to watch this and have a bad time. Unless you were doing acid.
Don't do acid and watch this movie. Or do. Whatever man, it's your trip."
 Yeti, [Tennessee Horror News](#)

**LUNCH LADIES IS HANDS DOWN ONE OF THE BEST
 HORROR COMEDIES I'VE SEEN IN THE LAST DECADE.**
 TORI DANIELLE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF [POPHORROR](#)

*"Fans of Black Comedy Rejoice!
 Lunch Ladies is a viciously amusing short - 5 stars!"*
 Travis Mullins, [Dread Central](#)

"LUNCH LADIES IS ONE OF THE FUNNIEST, ODDLY SWEET, GORY
 GOOD TIMES TO COME OUT IN A LONG TIME - **GRADE A+**"
 Film Threat, Bobby LePire

Winner of [Nevermore Horror's](#)
 2018 Best Horror Short
"Hands down the best short I watched was the magnificent Lunch Ladies"

**"Best short film I've seen all year, and easily one of the best to come
 across this site's team since Thirteenth Floor's inception..."**
 Jeremiah Rosario, [Thirteenth Floor](#)

**"Lunch Ladies is a motherfucking masterpiece.
 This being a short is a crime against humanity and a feature needs to be made."**
 Mac Brewer, [Horror Society](#)

"One viewing will convince you that it **NEEDS to be a feature.**
 Jeremy Dick, Fansided's [1428 Elm Street](#)

"10 OUT OF 10. A PERFECT SHORT FILM."
 Bitches of Horror

**"QUIRKY, DARKLY COMEDIC AND
 EXTREMELY HILARIOUS - IT'S MY NEW
 FAVORITE DARK COMEDY."**
 Zombie Vicki, [Morbidly Beautiful](#)

**"Lunch Ladies is fucking brilliant! My only negative? I
 want it to be longer and I want it to come to Ireland!"**
 Noelle Kelly - [Banshee Irish Horror Blog](#)

"ONE HELL OF A SHORT FILM"
 Yeti, [Tennessee Horror Movie Reviews](#)

**"I cannot express, in words, how fun, flamboyant
 vibrant and out-right insane this film is."**
 Wormwood, [Nevermore Horror](#)

I love the movie and can't wait to see where it goes. The women characters are my kind of
 gals.... **reminds very much of the 80's throwback horror films.** Funny storyline and great characters.
 Lori Lethin, Actress & Scream Queen
 (Return to Horror High, Bloody Birthday, Werewolf TV Series)

**"Lunch Ladies is an hysterical horror comedy.
 AN ABSOLUTE DELIGHT TO WATCH"**
 Deborah Voorhees - multi-talented filmmaker and
 B-Scream goddess, Friday 13th, Part V.

"DUDE, THIS WAS FCKING GOOD. I LAUGHED OUT LOUD LIKE TEN TIMES!"**
 David Mickey Evans, Director/Writer [The Sandlot](#)

"...PITCH BLACK (AND PITCH-PERFECT) GROSS-OUT COMEDY"
 Christopher Shultz, [The Cinematropolis](#)

**"Wow. Lunch Ladies makes Evil Bong look like a Disney film! Very
 well done and pretty revolting. Congrats!"**
 Charles Band, [Cult Horror Producer/Director, Full Moon Features](#)
 (Puppet Master, Gingerdead & Evil Bong Series, Trancer, Subspecies).

**"I wanna watch this movie like a billion more
 times, because it was so good."**
 Devi, [Reel Ghouls](#)

**"I'm a big fan of your film, just saw it on the big screen at [Feratium Fest...](#)
 Really brilliant work. Sweet, weird & wonderful."**
 Bill Oberst, Jr., Emmy Award Winning Actor

Clarissa Jacobson's story for Lunch Ladies is **groundbreaking.** Leads,
 Donna Perioni and Mary Manofsky are **exceptional,**
 director J.M. Logan **triumphs** in the delivery.
 Stacy Cox, [DecayMag](#)

**"SO MUCH FUN! LUNCH LADIES IS CRAZY, WEIRD, BLOODY AND
 DISGUSTING... ALL THE THINGS I REMEMBER ABOUT THE LUNCHROOM
 CAFETERIA... WAS THAT REALLY DEPP AT THE END?"**
 Tiffany Shepis, Actress and fan favorite [Scream Queen](#)
 (Tales of Halloween, Scarecrow, The Hazing, Sharknado 2, Syfy's Abominable).

"I had no idea what I was in for, but when it was over, it was solidified as my favorite short film I've ever seen."
 Taylor Terrible, [Nightmarish Conjurings](#)

**"TO SAY I ENJOYED THIS SHORT WOULD BE A GROSS
 UNDERSTATEMENT, I LOVED IT!"**
 Jaye Clinton, [House Of Tortured Souls](#)

**"Gloriously written by Clarissa Jacobson, combined with
 director J.M. Logan's eye for detail and
 LUNCH LADIES STANDS TALL AMONGST ITS COUNTERPARTS"**
 Paul Farrell, [Surgeons Of Horror](#)

"Lunch Ladies will not disappoint you."
 Sofia Mongo, [Drm.am](#)

THE SET DESIGN IS FANTASTIC and the teenagers superbly unpleasant, each coming across as a
 fully fledged character despite the fact that most have no lines."
 Jennie Kermode, [Exe For Film](#)

"One independent film that I would love to host one of these days is Lunch Ladies"
 The Haunted Cinema - The Boon Jangler, Eerie Late Night & Monster Channel

**"DIRECTOR J.M. LOGAN DIRECTS CLARISSA JACOBSON'S WITTY,
 WICKED SCREENPLAY WITH PANACHE"**
 Grosse Magazine, Joseph Perry

**"This film is so damn good. I loved it and now I have a new
 saying...WWJD: What would Johnny Do?"**
 D.D. Crowley, [1428 Elm Street](#)

**"This film contains a moment in it that is a perfect moment of theater of the absurd. When you
 see the sequence, and you'll know it, you cannot help but fall in love and laugh."**
 Hellbeat For Horror

"STELLAR ACTING, DIRECTING, EDITING, WRITING AND EFFECTS..."
An impressively witty, gross, and finely detailed film that will surprise and delight any horror fan!
 Horror Habit

Delicious Press!

To Read Over 120 Clippings Head Over To [IMDb](#)



By: Peter Borreggine
Hollywood, CA (The Hollywood Times)
"...Definitely a bloody ride into the macabre of a dark comedy mixed with horror with a twist of a delectable, delightful solution to a not so tasty problem... MUAHAHAHAHA!" — Peter Borreggine, The Hollywood Times

Two burnt out high school Lunch Ladies do whatever it bloody takes on their quest to become Jot Depp's Personal Chefs.

Release date: August 13, 2017 (USA)



All in all, would I recommend this movie? Without a doubt! It's incredibly fun and original. I seriously don't think you'd be able to watch this one and have a bad time. Unless you were doing acid. Don't do acid and watch this movie. Or do. Whatever man, it's your trip. Anyway, as soon as you get a chance, you need to check this out. It's currently kicking ass through some festivals and hopefully it'll be available to the masses soon. If you knew what I knew, you'd be hungry for Lunch Ladies. Trust me.



MOVIES TV REVIEWS EDITORIALS VIDEOS VIDEO GAMES PODCASTS FORUMS

Things Are About To Get 'Hellarious' On Blu-ray & VOD
By David Badier



Seven legendary tales of when it



Featured

Lunch Ladies

Bobby LePire

Some movies are too short, some are too long, and some are just right. Clarissa Jacobson and J.M. Logan's new horror-comedy Lunch Ladies is a hilarious blood-soaked journey that is the exact right length.

Seretta (Donna Pieroni) and LouAnne (Mary Mancosky) are put upon lunch ladies, both of whom are absurdly obsessed with Johnny Depp. They receive a letter informing them that they won the grand prize in a contest to personally cook for Mr. Depp. But the tough principal of their school, Mr. Grossfeig (Chris Fickley), is threatening to fire them if the school lunches don't improve. This means they would no longer have the funds to travel to the city to cook for the acclaimed actor. This stress coupled with the ridicule of the school kids harassing these two all the time pushes the best friends to their breaking point, and they accidentally kill student Alexis (Daisy Kershaw). Asking HWJD: What Would Johnny Do?, they land upon a Sweeney Todd inspired moment. Will the trashy but lovable duo get caught? Or do they get to meet their idol?



[Review] Lunch Ladies (FilmQuest 2018): Death Can't Dash The Dreams of Two Sisters Obsessed With Johnny Depp
Joseph Perry



Nothing can get in the way of two sisters who have dreams of becoming Johnny Depp's personal chefs - not even a crime of passion - in the hilarious, gloop-ridden horror comedy short Lunch Ladies. This colorful, energetic romp is a fun blast of feel-good horror comedy.

Seretta (Donna Pieroni) and LouAnne (Mary Mancosky) are cooks at a high school, slaving away at their underappreciated jobs and turning out the best food that they can with what they are given. Unfortunately for them and the student body, that food is disgustingly unappetizing to the eye, and can't be any better for the palate. When Johnny Depp chooses their Cheesy Burger Bites recipe for the grand prize winner of a

1428 Elm



Lunch Ladies: Hilariously nauseating horror short needs to be a feature

by Jeremy Dick 1 minute ago Follow @silmymeteor (https://twitter.com/silmymeteor)

TWEET SHARE COMMENT

The new indie horror short Lunch Ladies is making the rounds at the film festivals, and one viewing will convince you that it NEEDS to be a feature.

"Would would Johnny do?"

As a big fan of horror comedies, I considered it a privilege to check out the new short film *Lunch Ladies* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt6283384/>). The film is written and produced by Clarissa ith J.M. Logan directing, Donna Pieroni and Mary Manofsky star as Seretta and

LEUNCHLADIES — THROUGH FLOOR



REVIEWS INTERVIEWS PODCASTS CONSUME ABOUT

LUNCH LADIES

Directed by J.M. Logan
Written by Clarissa Jacobson
19 MINUTES

REVIEW BY JEREMIAH ROSARIO

Lunch Ladies is the best short film I've seen all year, and easily one of the best to come across this site's team since Thirteenth Floor's inception. Due in large part to its effortless blend of horror and humor (no mean feat), Clarissa Jacobson and Joshua M. Logan deliver a hysterically dark story that should resonate with anyone who's ever had the displeasure of digesting mystery meat, or experience the mania associated with extreme fandom.



Two burnt-out high school Lunch Ladies do whatever it bloody takes on their quest to become Johnny Depp's Personal Chef.



For one, the film is full of beautiful shots. The cinematography is beautiful and reminds me a lot of some of the films of John Waters mixed with the early films of the Coen Brothers. Depp and Waters collaborated on the film *Crybaby* together so this is only fitting. The characters and score reminds me a lot of the early works of Tim Burton which is another frequent collaborator of Depp's. The love for Depp runs deep in this short and that really adds to the charm.

Finally, the film gets gruesome in the final moments. We have one kill and it takes place off screen but the film makes up for it by allowing the viewer watch as the cooks dismember the body. The practical effects look amazing and incorporating real meat in the preparation of the school lunch made it cringe worthy. Overall, *Lunch Ladies* is a mother fucking masterpiece. This being a short is a crime against humanity and a feature needs to be made. This short is fucking perfect and the world needs more.



NEWS REVIEWS FEATURES VIDEOS STORE

Clocking in at nineteen minutes, *Lunch Ladies* moves along swiftly. The filmmakers make full use of the concept in the allotted run time and while the finale montage enjoyably wraps things up, there is so much ripe material here left to be explored, begging the question 'What REALLY happened in Hollywood?' The only aspect that disappoints is that *Lunch Ladies* was produced as a short that truly leaves you wanting more of Seretta and LouAnne's antics. Otherwise, this is a five-star little film that deserves a look!

Film



Yummy News Around The World

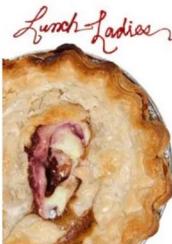
Germany

Testkammer

Testen macht süchtig: Filme, Spiele, Bücher etc. im Fokus

„Lunch Ladies“ (2017)

Kurzfilm / USA / Fiktion / 2017



Filmkritik: Kluges, weibliches Genrekino muss ihnen wie der Kurzfilm „Lunch Ladies“ aus Regisseurs JM Logan und der Drehbuchschreiberin Clarissa Jacobson. Der Publikums-Gewinnerfilm des „Sch“ auf dem 20. Landshuter Kurzfilmfestival überzeugte durch viel Humor, ordentlichen Splattereffekten, sondern stimmigen Mix aller Zutaten.

Die beiden Freundinnen Seretta (Donna Pieroni) und Manofsky (Mary Manofsky) teilen nicht nur ihren Beruf, indem sie in Schulen seit Jahren das Mittagessen auftragen, sondern auch ihre Leidenschaft für Johnny Depp. In diesen beiden Rollen werden sie anders dargestellt, denn ihr Rezept wird bestimmt für die Kinder-Preise ausgewählt. Doch eine Auseinandersetzung mit einer (Daisy Kershaw) könnte alle Träume platzen lassen. Was würde Johnny jetzt tun?

Nach einem Gespräch mit der befreundeten Schauspielerin Donna Pieroni kam die Drehbuchautorin Clarissa Jacobson, welche schon seit vier Jahren Drehbücher schreibt, auf die Idee einen Film über Lunch Ladies zu machen. Schnell war die Geschichte ersponnen, die sich souverän zwischen Splatter, Komödie und einem klassischen High School-Film bewegt. Als Produzentin und Drehbuchschreiberin fand Clarissa Jacobson mit JM Logan den Regisseur, der die gleichen Vorstellungen von der Umsetzung hatte. Zusammen schufen sie einen



Film, der durch seine übertriebene Ausgestaltung mit wunderbarem bissigen Humor Ideen begeistern. Da die beiden Lunch Ladies, hervorragend gespielt von den beiden Schauspielerinnen Donna Pieroni und Mary Manofsky, große Johnny Depp Fans sind, ist der Film natürlich auch mit Zitaten auf die Musical-Adaption „Sweeney Todd: Der teuflische Fleischer in Fleet Street“ wieder. Auch andere Filme und Stile werden munter zitiert und zu einer Mischung zusammengefügt, so dass „Lunch Ladies“ wie ein Retrofilm aussehend handwerklich und inszenatorisch sehr souverän und modern ist. Die größte Leistung dieser beiden wunderbaren Charaktere Seretta und LouAnne, die durch ihre Überdretheit wunderbar echt und liebenswert wirken und so den Zuschauer kö

France

Bref

REVENIR AUX FILMS



Lunch Ladies (1-42)

Clarissa Jacobson & J. M. Logan

2017, 19 minutes
Fiction

Production : Clarissa Jacobson

Interprétation :

Chris Fickley

Daisy Kershaw

Donna Pieroni

Mary Manofsky

COURTS D'AUJOURD'HUI

A LA UNE

MUSIQUE

CLERMONT-FERRAND 2018

CLERMONT PAR CLERMONT

// SYNOPSIS

<https://www.brefcinema.com/clermont-par-clermont/lunch-ladies.html>

Spain



El "Curtcircuit 33" celebra El dia més curt, la festa del curtmetratge

Demà divendres, 20 de desembre, a les 22.50, "Curtcircuit 33", l'espai presentat per Lluís Salgado i dirigit per Agustí Argelich, ofereix un petit tast d'El dia més curt, la festa mundial del cinema curt.



Al voltant d'El dia més curt de l'any se celebra i es reivindica mundialment el cinema de curta durada, amb esdeveniments i projeccions en moltes ciutats. Es tracta del festival El dia més curt. A Catalunya es projecten més d'una trentena de sessions amb els millors curtmetratges del moment, i a "Curtcircuit33" es podran veure tres joies del cinema en format curt.

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Rhode Island Int'l Film Fest
Grand Prize Best Editing



Best of Fantasy Filmfest



Fano Film Festival
Best Foreign Short
Best Actress



Best of Clermont-Ferrand - Tous à Table
La Créée Tout Court



FilmQuest
Best Comedy Short



Oregon Scream Week
Best Director



Fargo Fantastic
Best Comedy



Dragon Con
Best Horror Comedy



Les Femmes Underground
Best Dark Comedy

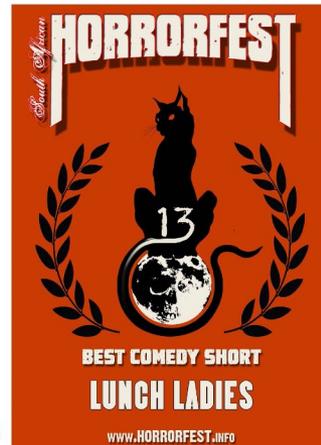


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Post Mortem Mexico
Honorable Mention Red



Apología del Género Fantástico y de Terror
12a. Edición

Cryptshow Festival
Best Soundtrack



Best of Bonebat 2018
Crypticon Seattle



Glasgow Horror Festival
Honorable Mention Breakout Shorts



Anatomy Fest Greece
People's Choice Best Short

MEJOR CORTOMETRAJE INTERNACIONAL
Best International Short
Best Film Editing

Lunch Ladies



Cast & Crew Bios

Cast



DONNA PIERONI – Seretta Burr

Donna Pieroni has busted her ass for the last twenty-five years and her career is finally starting to take off! She has over one hundred credits on IMDb and has worked with the likes of Jessica Lange, Ben Affleck and Viola Davis, to name a few. Donna studied at Second City and Columbia College of Chicago, as well as Illinois State University. After graduating Illinois, she booked a contract with Disney MGM Studios in Florida where she was discovered by an agent. She ended up being cast in *Edward Scissorhands* (with a very young Johnny Depp) which got her a SAG card and off she was to Los Angeles. Her career more or less began with Johnny Depp, so this film is quite dear to her!



MARY MANOFSKY – LouAnne Burr

Mary Manofsky was a Sunday Company member of Los Angeles' renowned improv comedy troupe, The Groundlings, where she got her start working alongside Will Forte, Chris Parnell, and Cheryl Hines. She recently appeared on *Criminal Minds* and the HULU original series *Future Man*. Mary can also be seen in the films *The Garage Sale*, directed by J.M. Logan, and *Rumor From Ground Control*. Originally from Ohio, she graduated from Ohio State and currently lives in Osaka, Japan with her husband, two children and dog, Lucy.

Crew



CLARISSA JACOBSON – Writer/Producer

Originally from Minnesota, [Clarissa Jacobson](#) is from the only family in the state that isn't Norwegian and didn't eat Tater Tot Hotdish every Sunday. Clarissa has a BA in theatre from Indiana University and trained at The American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City. A long-standing member of Twin Bridges Writing Salon, she has several other scripts under her belt including the full-length version of *Lunch Ladies*, and the optioned: *Land of Milk and Honey* and *Stella by Starlight*. Her book - *I Made A Short Film Now WTF Do I Do With It* (a guide to film festivals, promotion, and surviving the ride) is available at her website and more. Clarissa creates scripted projects with partner, Shayna Weber, under their [Rebel Minx](#) banner and happily resides in Los Angeles with all the other weirdos.



J.M. LOGAN – Director/Producer

[Josh](#) is an award-winning filmmaker and cinematographer who has lived many lives in the film industry. Starting in makeup effects building big rubber monsters and slinging blood on movies like *The Dentist*, *Wishmaster 2*, and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, he transitioned through visual effects, sound design, composing and supervising post-production for the studios. He now wears diverse hats as a multi-faceted filmmaker directing, shooting, producing and editing. In addition to directing *Lunch Ladies*, his recent projects include an interactive feature film *The Garage Sale*, producing a feature documentary *The Disunited States of America* for Sky TV and *Manson Family Vacation* for the Duplass Brothers. He recently directed the award-winning short - [The Relic](#), now on Alter.

JOE BRATCHER – Producer/Head Choreographer

Joe Bratcher seems to reinvent himself every seven to fourteen years. Retrieving various incarnations from his 45-year adventure: After graduating Northwestern University, Joe was an actor in Broadway musicals, television and film, a writer of movies, episodics, and books, a screenwriting teacher at UCLA Ext. Writer's Program for eight years, creator of the first beginning screenwriting on-line course for UCLA, artistic mentor to many including the producing team on *Lunch Ladies* – Clarissa and Shayna - and owner (with wife Judy Farrell) of Twin Bridges Screenwriting Salon – *28 years and counting*, literary manager and producer... but always always always... at heart... a tap dancer. (Still taps three hours a week.)

SHAYNA WEBER – Producer

Shayna Weber is a screenwriter, producer and director originally from Bend, Oregon. Shayna started out working in casting and talent management before settling into a career as a producer, during the rise of unscripted television, where she developed, produced and directed a number of projects. Her roster of shows includes: “So You Think You Can Dance,” “RuPaul’s Drag Race,” “Weakest Link,” and more. She has worked for NBC, Fox, Disney, MTV, VH1, Travel Channel, Discovery and Bravo. Shayna creates scripted projects with her partner, Clarissa, under their [Rebel Minx](#) banner and lives in Los Angeles with her musician husband and three-year-old son.

MATT FALLETTA – Executive Producer/Special Effects Supervisor

Matthew Falletta grew up in North Carolina and attended The North Carolina School of the Arts to study acting, mime and dance and Columbia College in Chicago. In NC he helped create East Coast Stunts at Screen Gems Studios in Wilmington as well as opening a special effects shop working on productions like *One Tree Hill* and *Virus*. Today Matt resides in Los Angeles and is the co-owner of SOTA F/X which has been in business for well over 20 years.

**We are pleased to have obtained Matt through the Los Angeles Prison System on a work release program. He has been cleared of all charges against him and is looking forward to reintegrating himself into society as a rodeo clown.*



CHRIS EKSTEIN – Director of Photography

Chris Ekstein graduated from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and received his MFA from AFI, where his 35mm thesis received the prestigious Alfred P. Sloan Grant. He is also the recipient of the Panavision New Film Maker Award. In 2010, Chris won best cinematography at the American International Film Festival and was the cinematographer on the features *Mexican Sunrise* (Gold Award-WorldFest) and *Callous* (Best Picture-IndieFest). Chris is a founding partner of Market Street Productions and the father of two girls who lent us their one-eyed hamster, Smarty, for our classroom scene.



AMELIA ALLWARDEN – Editor

Amelia Allwarden grew up between two horse farms in New Hampshire and worked on a blueberry farm as a teenager. Never wanting to be anything other than an editor, she moved to Los Angeles and interned with American Cinema Editors, where she learned the craft of editing in depth. Reading the Harry Potter books as a kid made her want to pursue a career in story telling. She still believes in magic, probably because editing IS magic.



ANTONI M. MARCH – Composer

At age 7, Antoni M. March won his first prize for a composition. At 14, he wrote and copyrighted an opera for symphony orchestra, choir and vocal soloists. Today he is one of the youngest composers to have conducted and recorded his own music with a 67-piece symphony orchestra at the Eastwood Scoring Stage/Warner Bros. Studios. A graduate of the Royal Conservatory of Madrid and a Fulbright scholar who attended USC's screen scoring program, his concert music has been performed all over the world. *Lunch Ladies* was his first film job and he has since gone on to work on Netflix productions such as *Kissing Booth 2 & 3*, *The Cook of Castamar*, *Below Zero* and more.



What's for lunch? Not that again.

Lunch Ladies

Q&A with Writer & Producer Clarissa Jacobson

You're kind of sick. Where did you come up with the twisted idea for the film?

I was out to dinner with Donna Pieroni (cast as Seretta) who was lamenting about another actress friend of hers, who because they are similar types, are always in competition. She said she wished there was a movie with two lunch ladies as leads because then they could be cast together.

A spoof on *Sweeney Todd* immediately popped into my head because it's my favorite musical and everyone bitches about school lunches. I could see two fraternal twin lunch ladies working in the same dismal high school, being treated poorly by everyone. My father was a high school teacher, so I had a pretty good foundation of the crap faculty has to put up with. I could see them snapping, killing a snotty cheerleader and serving her up for lunch.

The Lunch Ladies' obsession with Johnny Depp naturally followed because Johnny had starred in the movie version of *Sweeney Todd*, and I loved the idea of two fanatical lunch ladies who escape their day-to-day reality by fantasizing about "The Depper." They could further blame the idea of baking up a snotty cheerleader on him because "he" had done it in *Sweeney Todd*. That's where the acronym "WWJD" came from:

"What Would Johnny Do?"

After I finished the feature (which took eighteen months to write), I was meditating and the thought of making a short out of it as a proof of concept came to me. That took another FIVE months to write.

I had never produced anything before and had I known how incredibly hard this would be with food, special effects, difficult location and giant cast, I probably would've balked.

There's something to be said for being ignorant.

What was your vision?

Lunch Ladies is a story about underdogs, friendship and going for one's dreams. It's positive even though it's dark and twisted. To bring that vision to life I wanted it bright and silly, so you feel good even though the story is disturbing as hell. I wanted a world with big cartoonish colors - like a comic book - and I wanted it stylized with every moment being specific – a heightened reality. I wanted controlled chaos and it needed to be surreal with touches of insanity - like sparks flying from the cord when the meat grinder is plugged in, the pot pies at the end to have a glow that you can barely see and crazy props like a guy playing a trumpet in the middle of the lunchroom.

The director and I were on the same page from the very beginning.

Originally my vision for the location was one of a John Hughes school – elite and high-end with sparkling appliances and bright hallways. When we couldn't get the school I wanted, we had to rethink it. There was no way we could bend the new location to look like what was in our minds – the school had a ton of personality but did not look elite or high-end and it would be impossible to make it look that way on my budget. So, the director, JM Logan, came up with a great way to keep the surreal and over the top vibe alive. He said:

“Embracing the 1940s style and technology of our location transformed the Lunch Ladies' school into an oppressive regime. I put together photos from the cold war and found a new fascination with the art, color, texture and shapes of the Eastern Bloc. This then allowed the art department to enhance what was already present in the location which made things tremendously easier. They made propaganda posters, built a crummy, ragged kitchen, and turned it into as much of a nightmare as they possibly could!

The Soviet textures then lead to my listening to a lot of Eastern European classical music while doing my blocking charts and shot lists, which of course included Prokofiev, which I gave to Joe Bratcher, the choreographer who had the idea of creating a dance number out of the crazy lunchroom scene, which was one of the coolest things we did in the movie. The domineering music in that spot gave it a whole different feel and worked great.”

How did you find director, JM Logan?

The original director I had on board backed out after several months of dragging his feet getting started. I was devastated. I still remember sobbing on the phone, telling my mentor Joe Bratcher (producer/head choreographer) and my close friend Shayna Weber (producer) that I didn't know what to do or where to find someone as good. He said he couldn't do it because: 1) no one wanted to see two middle-aged women on screen, 2) that I would never find a school that would let us film, 3) that the special effects would never look good enough, 4) that I wouldn't find anyone to design the giant meat grinder, 5) that I would never get enough extras to cast in the scenes, 6) that no professional actresses or crew would want to be part of it 7) that no one would want to score it and, 8) that I should find a student director because a working director would never do it.

Joe and Shayna promptly told me that was bullshit.

With that, I wiped away my tears, put on my big girl panties and mass emailed all my contacts on LinkedIn (this was the first time I'd ever used the site for anything except to collect names). I got two recommendations from people I hadn't talked to in ages – Matt Falletta (who ended up being the executive producer/special effects supervisor) who I had met at a bar three years ago, and Gregg Daniels (Rainstorm Entertainment) who had optioned a script of mine a few years back.

Both of them recommended someone they called a genius. What was amazing is they didn't know one another but they both suggested the same person – JM Logan!

The minute I met JM I knew he was the one - we were on the same page artistically, had a million great ideas, was easy to work with, believed in the piece, was excited to do it, had great contacts and best of all he was a "we can do it!" guy.

An interesting side note - there was another short I had written after *Lunch Ladies* based on the first director's advice that no one wanted to see middle-aged women as leads. JM insisted on doing *Lunch Ladies*.



That snotty cheerleader really pissed us off.

What was the most difficult scene in the movie to shoot?

The lunchroom sequence where kids are dumping their trays.

Not only did it require a lot of actors (we ended up with forty extras), but we only had a few hours to film it due to time constraints on the space. Further, since there was no money in the budget to pay all these people, I had done all the casting online “NO PAY CREDIT ONLY” and I didn’t know how many were going to show up the day of the shoot or the quality of performers I would get. I also had no costume budget for them, so JM cast them in cliques – Goths, nerds, rockers, jocks... and we asked them to bring their own wardrobe. Our main worries were that we wouldn’t have enough extras show up, the lunchroom would be empty, we would run out of time trying to get it right, and costumes would be all wrong.

To make it even more ambitious, we didn’t know what the dance mosh was going to look like or how it was going to fit together with the extras. Head choreographer and leader of the tap section, Joe Bratcher had been working for months with the other choreographers, Rebecca Ruschell for ballet and Monika Felice Smith for hip hop. But none of the dancers knew the sequence and only had one hour before the shoot to get it down. We were confident they could learn it, we had cast great folks, but we didn’t know how it would all look together or if the extras playing the students would mesh. It could very well have been a huge mess.

Not only did almost every single extra show up that I had cast, but they were dressed perfectly and were all talented and professional performers. They nailed it! When it all came to together no one could believe their eyes. I was hiding out trying not to be in the way but if I’m honest it was because I was so nervous. Estelle Matranga, the production coordinator came and got me ten minutes into shooting and told me I had to come and see it. “It’s brilliant.” I didn’t believe her at first. She’s French.

It turned out exactly as we had imagined - *High School Musical* on crack.



Anyone hungry?

What was the most magical thing that happened during the production?

I feel like *Lunch Ladies* had a lot of magic behind it. So many little things happened that I thought were problems which ended up being blessings. It was almost like everything was aligning to bring the best possible situation into play. As mentioned, the first magical thing that happened was losing the original director and replacing him with JM. Next up was finding the location. I must've called more than a hundred schools. We finally got a taker – Lancaster High School. Then the Superintendent backed out when he read the content. (“Inappropriate” my ass!) We ended up getting a Catholic school (how funny is that?) which was a hundred times better than Lancaster. It had so much character, they were thrilled to have us, and the principal was amazing – she was totally in our corner helping and watching out for us.

Other magical things - our production designer quit one week before the shoot and we replaced them with husband-and-wife team, Alicia and Ray Ho. They worked 24/7 and made the set better than anything we could imagine. More magic - neither of the two lead actresses auditioned for the roles. I cast Donna but had never seen Mary act, JM cast Mary, but he had never seen Donna act. We just trusted one another. Donna and Mary were perfect together. Then there was the fact that we had no idea how we were going to find, much less afford, a giant meat grinder. Abracadabra, I stumbled across artist, Krystopher Sapp's amazing work at La Luz Gallery in Los Angeles. I messaged him on Instagram. He messaged me back, and the rest is history. He made the most awesome and surreal creature with limited funds and unlimited imagination. Then there's the score... the wonderful score that Antoni M. March composed - but imagine when I found out that JM, Antoni, Federico Jusid (music producer) and María Ulled (music production manager) arranged for a 60-piece orchestra in Hungary (The Budapest Art Orchestra) to record and play it for us?!

I suppose the most magical thing about the movie, however, happened to Ray and Alicia. They had been trying to have a baby forever and conceived during filming! Alicia called it:

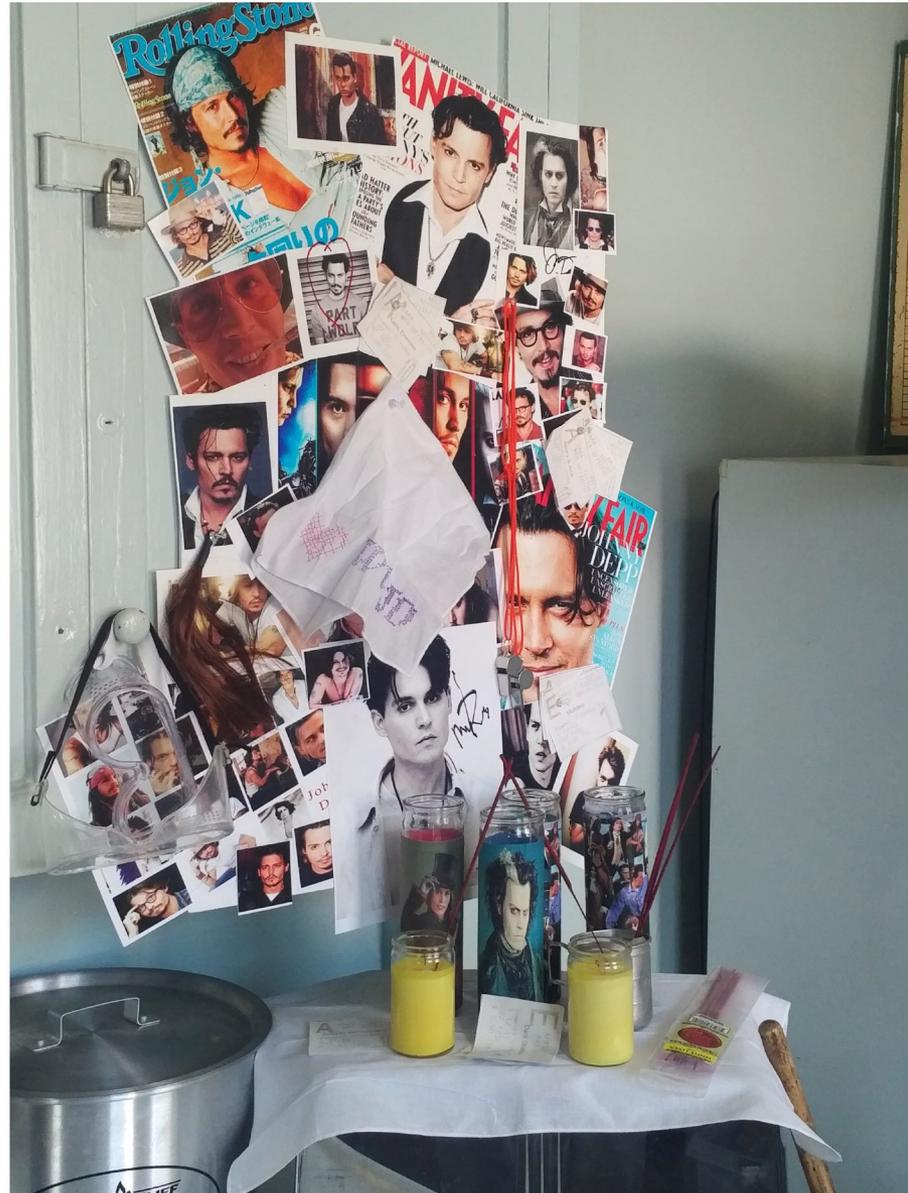
“Who knew fake blood, Johnny Depp and gross cafeteria food was a baby making formula?”



That was the best lunch ever!

Crew Credits

Writer	CLARISSA JACOBSON	Second Assistant Camera	NATHAN GIRARD
Director	JM LOGAN	Lighting Technician	ANDRES HERNANDEZ
Producers	CLARISSA JACOBSON JOE BRATCHER SHAYNA WEBER JESSICA JANOS J.M. LOGAN	Key P/A	IAN AUSTIN
Executive Producer	MATT FALLETTA	DI Colorist	ETHAN SCHWARTZ
Director of Photography	CHRIS EKSTEIN	DI Producers	MARY OMEL FREDDY HERNANDEZ
Editor	AMELIA ALLWARDEN	Digital Intermediate by	LIGHT IRON
Music by	ANTONI M. MARCH	DI Executive Producer	KATIE FELLION
Production Designers	RAY HO ALICIA HO	DI Editors	MATT BLACKSHEAR MANNY DUBÓN
Line Producer	ERIC RAGAN	DI Assistants	GRIFFITH DAVIES CHRISTOPHER ABDON BRANDON TROTTER
Special Effects	MATT FALLETTA/SOTA P/X	DI Management	MICHAEL CIONI PETER CIONI AMIT DAVÉ CHRIS PEARISO
Food Stylist	SUSAN BOYLE	Engineering	EDGAR FURSE ZACK HOWELL
Costumer	DESMOND EVAN SMITH	DI Administration	DANA BLUMBERG PAYTON VAN AMBURGH BRYCE MARRERO MALLORY OTT HANNAH JOYNER JENNIFER RAZON
Makeup	BOBBY GUO DEVON GOLD	Supervising Sound Editor Re-Recording Mixer Post-Production Sound provided by	MATTHEW FESTLE PATRICK GIRAUDI VIRTUAL MIX
First Assistant Director	NICK C. JOHNSON	Music Produced by Music Production Manager MIDI Programmer & Music Preparation	FEDERICO JUSID MARÍA ULLED ÁLVARO GALINDO
Head & Tap Choreographer Ballet Choreographer Hip Hop Choreographer	JOE BRATCHER REBECCA RUSCHELL MONIKA FELICE SMITH	Music Performed by	BUDAPEST ART ORCHESTRA
T-Rex The Meat Grinder designed by	KRYSTOPHER SAPP	Conductor	PETER ILLENYI
Production Coordinator	ESTELLE MATRANGA	Sound Engineer	GÁBOR BUCZKÓ
Script Supervisor	MARIANA MARCANO	Recording Producer	MIKLÓS LUKÁCS
Location Sound Mixer Boom Operators	KIRBIE SEIS SARA BRAVO KEVIN JACKSON	Company	EAST CONNECTION MUSIC RECORDING CO.
Locations Management	ARTURO RODRIGUEZ	Pro Tools Score Editor	MANUEL PÁJARO
Key Grip	SCOTT DUVALL	Score Mixed by	JULIAN SLATER
Gaffers	LEVI KAMINKOWITZ COLLIN LINDSEY	"Bury My Body" Written and Performed by Courtesy of	FIRE THE ANIMAL COUCH GUY RECORDS
Best Boy Electric	JAMIE SUTOR	Visual Effects Digital Compositor	ROGER NALL/11:11 MEDIWORKS BRANDON FLYTE
First Assistant Camera	JACKSON TODD PARKER RONAN		
Steadicam	MIKAEL LEVIN		
B-Camera Operator	NICHOLAS M. PUETZ		
DI Technician	LUQI ZHAO		
Grip	DANIEL JAMES		



The Depper is always watching over us.

Cast Credits

Seretta
DONNA PIERONI

Alexis
DAISY KERSHAW

LouAnne
MARY MANOFSKY

Principal Grossfetig
CHRIS FICKLEY

Crusty Janitor
RUDY HORNISH

Lunch Monitor
JOHN COMERFORD

Crock Pot Club President
EVE BUI

Jock Meatloaf Thrower
RYNE BENCKHART

Green Bean Moron
FIDEL QUIROZ

Ballet Dancers
AMI SHIMADA
KENDRA LEVY
JANICE LARAINÉ
LUIS MARTINEZ

Hip Hop Dancers
ALEXA VELLANOWETH - Cheerleader
MONIKA FELICE SMITH
NOEL ARREOLA

Tap Dancers
ANI MARDEROSIAN
MICHAEL BRIAN
MATTHEW JAMES

Cheerleaders
MADISON WILLOW
VALERY DESMOND

Cool Kids
ADRIENNE ROBERSON
ISAIHA SOLIS
JONNY CARLO

Goths
EMMA BERGKVIST
HARLEY K. DELATORI
ISABELLE BRELU-BRELU
PAIGE AMICON

Jocks
KENYA DORSEY

Nerds
ASIA DORSEY
CAMRYN HOHNEKER
RYAN JONES

Princesses
KATIE HOWARD
KELLY ANNE DORAN
MIMI GAO

Rockers
ALISA BAGGIO
KIMBERLY FULMER
RISA ATA

Students
ESTELLE MATRANGA
GABRIELA RIOS-GARCIA
GENARO TORRES
IAN AUSTIN

JUAN CAMACHO
KEVIN VEGA
MANNY TRUJILLO
RUBEN MUNOZ
YVETTE XIMENEZ

Faculty
KELLY KEATON
KENT RODRICKS
ROBERT DESMOND
SHAWNA CHANCE
SUSAN MARYA BARONOFF – Poetry Teacher
TAMARA BERG

Bouncers
STEVEN BOTTOMLEY
STEVEN HAAS

Johnny's Band
MELISSA MEDNICK
T.S. WATERS

Crowd
DANIEL JAMES
J.M. LOGAN
KAVY RATTANA
LUQI ZHAO



Lunch Ladies!

Smarty the One-Eyed Hamster RIP 3-21-17



Special Thanks

Twin Bridges Writing Salon, Cliff Jacobson, Jeffrey Fiterman, Marina De La Rosa, Tracy Thomas & Cobalt Blue Films, Beverly Nero, Beverly Roman, Peggy & Kellan Farrell, Judy Farrell, Erez Peretz, Pete & Annie Sokoloff, Thomas Peistrup, Bernie & Deb Walko, Joanie Midkiff, Stephanie Farrell-Lesh, Steve & Alex Bannatyne, Whitney Kershaw, Narada Meyer, Dahniel Knight, Kathleen Laccinole, George Kiefer & The LA Film School, Stacy Ekstein & Market Street Productions, Cinema Makeup School, Chapman Leonard, SAG/AFTRA, Metronome Studios.

a
CLARISSA JACOBSON PRODUCTION