

PRESS KIT

KNOWING NOTHING COLD

A NEW FILM BY JEFF KAO

KNOWING NOTHING COLD

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Short Synopsis:

Knowing Nothing Cold follows a group of teenagers living in the American Midwest of the 1970s as they attempt the impossibility of a graceful entrance into adulthood.

Medium Synopsis:

Based on the director's memories of growing up in Iowa in the 1970s, *Knowing Nothing Cold* is a character study of four teenagers caught in the purgatory between childhood and adulthood. The movie covers three days in their lives, showing each character fated to a different form and pace of evolution. The film's ultimate message is a testament to the resilience of the young.

Produced using a skeleton crew and many first-time actors, *Knowing Nothing Cold* is built around penetrating, unfiltered performances by the young cast and shot with dedication and ingenuity.

Long Synopsis:

Based on the director's memories of growing up in Iowa in the 1970s, *Knowing Nothing Cold* is a character study of four teenagers caught in the purgatory between childhood and adulthood.

Dean has been Stevie's best friend for two years. During that time, Stevie has helped him understand a very simple vision of what it is to become a man: Never to back down from a fight, drink and smoke what's offered, and above all, get "experienced" with women. Stevie's older brother, Eric, is a heroic manifestation of this model, and Dean recognizes his own home life with his gentle father and responsible older sister as a liability in his quest for this brand of manhood.

Stevie's girlfriend, Tina, is impatient for her future. Bored by the social conventions of her peers, and unsure of the life she wants to lead, she at least knows this isn't it. Her friend Kelley is smart, studious, and is beginning to outgrow her obedience to authority. She is a bit self-conscious like Dean, but more confident, and therefore, better able to traverse the dangerous social terrain of late adolescence.

The movie covers three days in their lives, showing each character fated to a different form and pace of evolution. The film's ultimate message is a testament to the resilience of the young.

Produced using a skeleton crew and many first-time actors, *Knowing Nothing Cold* is built around penetrating, unfiltered performances by the young cast and shot with dedication and ingenuity. It achieves a high degree of fidelity to the period and feel of the time using an inspired original soundtrack and meticulous costume and production design.

The Cast and Crew:



Gabe Bennett

Gabe is currently studying production design at CalArts in Los Angeles. After rehearsing, primarily using improvisational situations during pre-production, Gabe delivered consistently thoughtful performances in his role of Dean, a painfully self-conscious, quiet best friend in the shadow of his reckless mentor, Stevie.



Jasmine Stade

Jasmine studies guitar and sound production at University of California, Santa Cruz, and plays in a number of bands. Her experience performing in a musical capacity since very young made her film acting debut fairly effortless. The emotional depth she brings to the role of Kelley is remarkable.

The Cast and Crew:



Emmalee Johnson-Kao

Emmalee studies Fine Arts and Liberal Arts at The New School in New York. Her previous acting experience consisted mainly of starring in her father's elaborate home movies with lifelong friend and musical partner, Jasmine Stade. She embodies Tina, who can't wait to get started with the life in front of her.



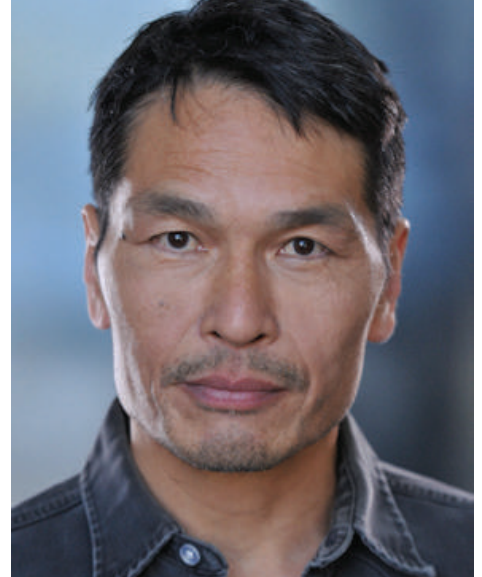
Tyler Bohon

Tyler was cast as Stevie, the tough kid, after Kao re-united with him outside of a martial arts competition in Oakland. Kao had known Tyler as a second grader, who was in the same class as his daughter, Emmalee. With no previous acting experience, Tyler worked quietly to find his own iteration of the character in the script, and brought a truthfulness to the portrayal that belies his inexperience.

The Cast and Crew:

Jeff Kao

Writer/Director Jeff Kao has been making films for well over a decade. His work pits his most vivid memories against his conscious will to shape a story. Educated in fine arts, his films often communicate in a non-verbal, non-linear language to narrate an experience that eludes intellectual description.



CAST LIST

Kelley	Jasmine Stade
Dean	Gabe Bennett
Tina	Emmalee Johnson-Kao
Stevie	Tyler Bohon
Park	John MacKay
Jeanie	Therese Agnew
Eric	Matthew Barrera
Jill	Sionne Elise Tollefsrud
Fackler	Keith Roule-Stewart
Cortmeyer	Federico Andrade
Mrs. Pederson	Ali Hanson
Dean's Dad	Nate Bennett
Kelley's Mom	Jane Angeles
Flasher	Brian Degan Scott
Coffee Pal	Nancy Kimball
Kittleson	Dimitri Zucker
Cousin Jimmie	Aaren Stade
Mustang Driver	Johnny Perez
Shotgun	Ron Bullock
Party Host	Andy Strong
Pilot's Son	Sam Sharkey
Dead-End Youth 1	Liam Hardison
Dead-End Youth 2	Dylan Alvarado
Friend smoking	Katia Pontillo
Camaro Driver	R.L. Anderson
Dept. Store Intercom Voice	Carol Carbone

The Cast and Crew:

Written and Directed by
Produced by

Executive Producers
Associate Producers

Director of Photography
Assistant Camera Operator
Gaffer and Red Tech
Production Sound Recording
Costume Design
Consulting Art Director

Production Design Consultant
Hair Style and Wig Design
Make-Up Design
Special Effects Make-Up
Additional Hair and Make-Up
Production Assistant

Lafayette and San Rafael Crews

Camera Operator
Camera Operator
Additional Camera
Assistant Camera Operator
Sound Mixer
Hair and Make-up
Production Assistant
Cars Provided by

Editor
Music Supervisor
Re-recording Mixer

Sound Editor
Digital intermediate

Titles and Credits
Original Songs and Music by
Drums and Percussion

Jeff Kao
Ali Hanson
Jeff Kao
Jaylynn and Michael Milstein
Jennifer Gao
Cal Zecca
Deniz Demirer
Brent Johnson
Jonas Klittmark
Phillip Park
Kat Yeh
Terra Haywood

Rob Riutta
Caitlin Collentine
Caitlin Collentine
Misty Hambrick
Sylvia Pokorney
Ryan Anderson

Nelson G. Navarrete
Jonas Klittmark
Josh Peterson
Larry Cheuck
James Nighswonger
Tiffany Heggebo
Penny Werner
David Leiva
Wayne LaNoue
Lucy H
Scout Ray
Eddie Young
Phillip Park
Paul James Zahnley
Disher Music and Sound
San Francisco
Allan Abaunza
Color A Go-Go – San Francisco
DI Colorist – Kent Pritchett
DI Producer – Kim Salyer
DI Conform Artist-Albert Fretas
Keith Strand
Phillip Park
Vijay Anderson

The Cast and Crew:

Thanks to Penny Werner, Lori Katz and Craig Detwiler at Amoeba Music, Berkeley, California, Rulon Smith, Shelley and Kris Caltagirone, Dylan Hadley, Max Bowers, Wendy Snyder, Ron Stade, Karisa and Mark Bohon, Teri Duff

Special Thanks to Lisa Johnson

This production would not have been possible without the support of Brad Edgar

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the project through our Kickstarter Campaign.

'Broken Egg' and Spiritual by Ramon and Jessica
Porto Franco Records
2011 Daniel Jesse Lewis

'Summer Winds'
Performed by Alwood Sisters.
Composed by A. Alwood-Karčić, M. Alwood-Karčić,
J. Karčić, M. Karčić, C. Forbes, J. Housh. © 2010, Alwood Sisters.

All additional music composed and performed by Phillip Park.



Links :

MOVIE WEBSITE

<https://www.knowingnothingcold.com/>

FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/KNOWING-NOTHING-COLD-861416300643488/>

DEFY FILM FESTIVAL REVIEW

<http://joenolan.com/blog/?p=6490>

CAST INTERVIEW

<https://vimeo.com/165798405>

KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN

https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1823892996/knowing-nothing-cold-a-new-feature-film-by-jeff-ka?ref=nav_search



Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What was the main impulse that led you to make *Knowing Nothing Cold*?

I've always had extremely vivid memories from an early age, but I think the memories I have from adolescence are especially intense because of where and when I grew up as a Chinese-American. I spent my childhood trying to fit in and not bring attention to the fact that I was different. Iowa in the 70s did not allow for much non-conformity and so I remember paying very strict attention to how other kids behaved in social settings during junior high and high school. It made me observant in a very specific way, and these observations, which were always so tied to strong emotions of fear, shame, elation etc. stuck with me. When my daughter was this age, a lot of it came flooding into my mind and I knew it was time to try capturing it in some capacity.

2. Why didn't you make race a part of the story?

I don't think the story is about race. Every kid feels the isolation that I felt—I'm convinced. Adolescence is hell for everyone. I also knew that if I used inexperienced actors, I would be better off if they knew each other, so I started looking at my daughter's friends as potential actors and I ended up with four leads who knew each other and it made for a beautifully relaxed setting for them to take chances.

3. How faithful is the movie to your life from that time?

The characters are based on the people I was close to, but I never felt bound to represent anyone faithfully. It was important to get the essential "vibe" of the character since I was relying on some kind of essence in my memories to give the film integrity.

4. Did you plan on making the film a period piece from the beginning?

Yes, I figured the reference to the time would be important in giving context to some of the behavior—the racism, the sense of isolation and general lack of imagination or at least world view.

5. What were some of the challenges in making the movie faithful to the time?

It was all a challenge, something I underestimated terribly. Luckily, our costume designer, Kat Yeh, was pretty uncompromising and stalwart in the face of my inattention. I'd never done period before and didn't see the real importance of the difference between the flare of a bell bottom from one decade to the next. I didn't appreciate Kat's dedication at the time. It's kind of like sound as far as being a thankless job on set.

Frequently Asked Questions:

6. How did the young actors relate to the content of the script, ie: your memories?

I think they got it. There are a lot of differences in the lives of contemporary teens, but the deepest issues of belonging and morality and friendship will probably never change.

7. Was it strange seeing such coveted or intense memories re-enacted?

Yes. Especially since my daughter was playing one of the leads. It was a crazy way to tell her more stories about my own life—by having her take part in acting them out. Also, my close friend, Phillip Park, who is portrayed in the movie, did the field mixing in addition to composing the beautiful soundtrack. He was caught off-guard when we re-enacted the fight scene about him and he experienced a major mind f*ck.

8. How did your earlier, smaller productions prepare you for the scope of this project?

I think I used the other films to help me “see” what I could shoot. The experience of shooting them helped me in the writing and the conceptualizing, but not with the rigors of the production. Even though we had a pretty light crew, I was still stunned by how exhausting it is to be at the head of that beast.

9. Were there scenes that you absolutely wanted to film that you had to abandon?

I have a precious memory of getting high during shop class in junior high school and then going to gym late. They had just finished a brand-new swimming pool and everyone was practicing treading water when I jumped in wearing goggles. When I hit the water, everything got quiet and I look up to see disembodied legs kicking in place. I broke for the surface in a laughing fit.

10. What's your next project?

I'm planning on shooting a script I wrote about two middle-aged men playing a war fantasy in a cardboard tank in one of their garages while their wives commiserate and get plastered in the house. It's pretty much autobiographical.

