



A FILM BY

MICHAEL STEVANTONI



DESERT SHORES

STARRING

JOEL BISSONNETTE

KEYLOR LEIGH

COLAB STUDIOS PRESENT **JOEL BISSONNETTE KEYLOR LEIGH** IN "DESERT SHORES"

MUSIC BY **DANIEL McCLURE** COSTUME DESIGNER **HANNAH GELLER** EDITED BY **MAC NELSEN** VISUAL EFFECTS BY **LUKE SNEDECOR**

PRODUCTION DESIGNER **KARELIGH ENGELBRECHT** DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **THOMAS TAUGHER** PRODUCED BY **J.J. ENGLERT GIA RIGOLI AND MICHAEL STEVANTONI**

BASED ON THE BOOK BY **GEORGE McCORMICK** SCREENPLAY BY **MICHAEL STEVANTONI AND TIM ROUSSEAU** DIRECTED BY **MICHAEL STEVANTONI**



Desert Shores Directed by Michael Stevantoni
mstevantoni@gmail.com



Feature, Drama: 79 minutes

Winner Best Feature (USA), Best Actor (Joel Bissonnette)

Blow Up International Arthouse Film Festival Chicago, 2018

Winner, Best Feature

Nacogdoches Film Festival, 2019

Nominated Best Film, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actress (Keylor Leigh)

Milan International Film Festival, 2018

SYNOPSIS – SHORT

Hoping to convince his wife that a promotion across the country could change their lives, Brian takes her on a trip to a faded resort town, Salton Sea, where they once honeymooned. Here, Brian is forced to examine his own marriage, fears, and integrity.

SYNOPSIS – FULL

Based on the award-winning book by George McCormick, Brian (*Joel Bissonnette*), a supervisor at a trucking firm, receives a promotion that would bring him to Washington D.C.. It's an opportunity for higher pay, an escape from his idle desert town. For his wife Ramona (*Keylor Leigh*), however, it means the abandonment of her aging father, who dotes upon her seven-year-old. Furthermore, news is breaking that an anonymous sniper is terrorizing D.C., picking off innocent people.

Desperate, Brian takes Ramona to the Salton Sea, a faded resort destination where they once honeymooned, in an attempt to rekindle their chemistry, and if all goes well, to persuade her to move. When Ramona discovers Brian's true intentions, she questions his commitment to their family. In the face of a country losing its way, Brian is forced to reevaluate what it means to be a husband, a father, and a provider; in essence, a good man.

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DIRECTOR'S BIO

Michael Stevantoni was born and raised in Campbell River, British Columbia. At an early age, he started making films and by age 14, he was working with professional actors and garnering awards at international film festivals. He then moved to Southern California to study film production at Chapman University's Dodge College. Here, Michael earned recognition for his short films, including *Feral Feelin' Blues* and *The Banality*.

While still attending school, Michael wrote, directed, and co-produced his first feature film *Desert Shores*, an adaptation of George McCormick's short story collection *Salton Sea*. The film premiered at the Blow-Up Chicago International Arthouse Film Festival in Chicago. After graduating, Michael moved to Los Angeles where he directs music videos and is developing his next feature.



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JOEL BISSONNETTE (*Brian*)

He is originally from Baltimore, Maryland, but was raised in Montreal, Quebec. He is a graduate of the the prestigious Dawson College Theatre Program in Montreal. His classical stage training included roles in *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *La Ronde*. He became a regular on Canadian series *Liberty Street* before landing the role of Misha in *Language of the Heart* for Jonathan Kaplan and Norman Jewison.

He has appeared in the films *Passenger Side*, *Fight Club*, *Century Hotel*, *The Sum of All Fears*, *Darkman III*, and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. In 2010, Bissonnette played the assassin Pavel Tokarev in the eighth season of the television series *24*.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The first year I moved to Southern California from Canada, I found the Salton Sea while exploring the surrounding desert and investigating mysterious vacant buildings I saw from the highway. In its heyday, the Salton Sea spawned several boom-towns, but after a series of ecological disasters, the resorts, restaurants and yacht clubs were abandoned and remain in decay. What can still be found at the Salton Sea are forgotten artifacts of another time, immune to progress but shrouded in the mysticism of nostalgia. I saw this strange landscape as the perfect way to express the anxieties that America is experiencing today.

Like the characters' failing marriage, the Salton Sea is a once glamorous resort destination now fallen into decay and memory of better times. Brian wonders what it means to be a good man, just as the country struggles to define itself and is more nostalgic of an imagined past than it is sure of its future.





*Directed by
Michael Stevantoni*

*Written by
Michael Stevantoni and Tim Rousseau
Based on the Book 'Salton Sea'
By George McCormick*

*Joel Bissonnette
Keylor Leigh
Olivia May*

*Produced by
JJ Englert, Gia Rigoli
and Michael Stevantoni*

*Music by
Daniel McClure*

*Directory of Photography
Thomas Taugher*

*Production Designer
Karleigh Engelbrecht*

*Edited by
Mac Nelson*

*Sound Design
Mateus Valasques and Joshua Wilmott*

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