

A GRINDHOUSE PICTURE PRODUCTION & SILENT D PICTURES

PRESENT

THE PROPHET

A FILM BY **STEPHEN PRESLEY**

ABOUT

A detective who has lost his family due to his obsession with work goes back to his hometown to find himself. He gets called back into action as a copycat killer emerges, forcing the detective to consult the original serial killer on death row in order to save the missing women, one of which is his estranged daughter.



FILM PROFILE

MPAA

R

Length

100 mins

Tech Specs

4K HDR, Dolby Vision, 2.35:1 anamorphic

Genre

Crime Thriller

Written by

Stephen Presley and Gemma Esau

Directed by

Stephen Presley

Produced by

Djonny Chen, Stephen Presley, Ajo Kacmar

Associate Produced by

Virginia McDonald

Financed by:

Bondit, Thomas Swartzfelder, the State of Georgia

SAG Tier

Standard Agreement tier of 2M-5M budget

Production

August 1st - September 2 2023

Release

Spring 2024



SYNOPSIS



In an old country house in the forest, THE PROPHET, 65, sits in his study. He writes in his journal about God creating two beings: Asher, who represents life and goodness, and Tammuz, who lives in the darkness. In the house cellar, a woman, EMMA, 20s, is screaming, shackled to a wall. The Prophet takes off into the night.

On a winding mountain road, homicide detective JAMES O'CONNOR, 35, drives with detective MIKE CATONE, 30. James drives into the forest chasing after The Prophet. The Prophet meets James on a bridge and they share a perplexing interaction - one that will linger with James for the next decade.

After making the arrest, James and Mike survey the crime scene to find an occult symbol painted in blood on the wall, as well as a woman's corpse in the cellar, with heart and reproductive organs removed. They also find Emma. She suddenly starts screaming, "Unclean! I am unclean."

Ten years later, James is a visiting criminology lecturer at Vanderbilt. He is discussing the old case about CECIL DOBBINS aka. The Prophet - the most notorious case of his career. James has been kicked off the force for his plaguing alcohol abuse and is currently in the midst of a divorce.

James' therapist, and the Psychology lecturer who has gotten him the gig at the university, DR. WINSTON, 50, suggests that he go back to his hometown to reconnect. With nothing to lose, he takes her advice and goes back to his family's mountain home. He bumps into his high school sweetheart CATHY BANKS, 33, and upon walking her home, discovers that she is widowed, and is introduced to her teenage daughter, KAT, 19. Moments later James receives a call to say that Dobbins, from his maximum-security prison cell, has requested an audience with him. Not only this but there are recent reports that a killer, just like The Prophet, is on the loose.

Meanwhile, a young appellate lawyer, JEFF SIMONS, late 20s, is assigned to represent Dobbins at his final appeals hearing. He struggles to convince Dobbins, who is only willing to co-operate if Jeff can get James to come to visit him, due to "unsettled business." James finally agrees to the visit and is instantly psycho-analysed by Dobbins. Dobbins calls James broken, but not beyond repair. He adds that James is seeking the truth but cannot face it. Dobbins continues, "to embrace the light you must first look into the darkness." Dobbins is calm as ever as he paints a portrait of a woman and boy.

The following night Kat is attacked and abducted by a DARK FIGURE in a gas station bathroom. When she wakes up, she is in a cellar. In the adjoining room, she sees the Dark Figure rape and kills a woman.

Cathy gets the call that Kat is missing and immediately calls James. It is quickly learned that Kat was involved in a scandalous love affair with her professor, THOMAS BIRCH, 35. Outside the police station, Cathy breaks down and tells James that Kat is his daughter. James vows to bring her home safely, and the hunt for Birch is on. Trying to piece the evidence together, James eventually goes back to the prison. Dobbins, cryptic as ever, tells James: "find the book, find an answer, save the girl" and "go to where it all began."

Kat wakes up in a bed and sees a body facing the wall with photos on it. On the back of the photos are the words "whore," and "unclean." She sees that the body is Thomas and the photos are her having sex with him, as well as him with other women. The Dark Figure tells Kat that he does not want to hurt her and that he truly loves her.

James goes back to the crime scene from ten years before, Eldridge Manor. It has since become a homeless squatting place. He runs into a woman inside, who turns out to be Emma.

She says that The Prophet gave her a new path and love. She gives James a journal. In the journal, James reads how Cecil Dobbins was adopted by an elderly couple, Mr and Mrs Eldridge, and furthermore, heinously abused by Mr Eldridge who talked about punishing him as a sacrifice. Young Dobbins found a secret passage in the manor with a shrine to a demon named Tamu. After Mrs Eldridge died, a girl was brought to the house. Dobbins slaughtered Mr Eldridge and vowed to free the Earth of the demon's curse, "only to embrace Asher."

At the mention of this, James goes back to investigate recordings of Dobbins and Emma and listens back. Here Dobbins says he was helping women be cleansed, but that he did not kill them. Emma says that Dobbins was not evil; it was the Void, or darkness which she feared, and Dobbins was trying to save them from it. He would "purify" their bodies. He wanted to take one woman as his bride because he was trying to create a new family. The women who did not obey the ritual were brought into the darkness by "the evil one." The evil one would slit the women's throats and carve out their hearts and sexual organs.

After exhausting research, James finally understands the cult and its two opposing extremities: Demonism is associated with Tamu and mass ritualistic sacrifice.

Further recordings talk about a woman named Lilly, who tried to kill her son because she thought he was evil, but Dobbins killed her instead. Dobbins tried to bring the boy into the light, but a monster emerged instead. James is shocked to discover that Lilly was the adopted girl and makes the startling realization that Kat is in the basement of the Manor House.

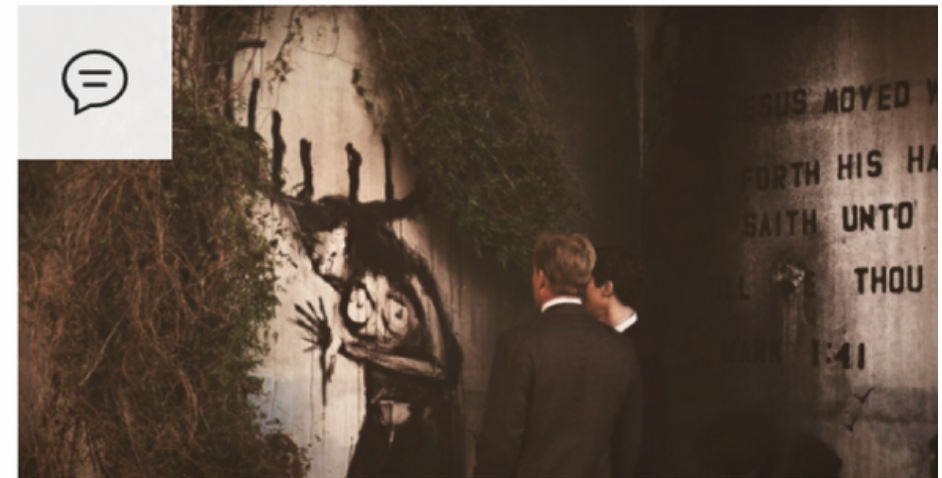
Kat meanwhile, wakes up in a white dress. The Dark Figure makes an advance on her and she hits him in the head. He drags her out of the room. He chains her up and prepares execution tools, telling Tamu "to take over and use me to your will." Before The Dark Figure can kill Kat, James arrives and a fierce battle ensues. James taunts The Dark Figure saying that he knows that Eldridge raped Lilly, who birthed him, and that he is the "spawn of the monster." This drives The Dark Figure crazy and he viciously attacks James. Kat manages to save James, who in turn, saves Kat.

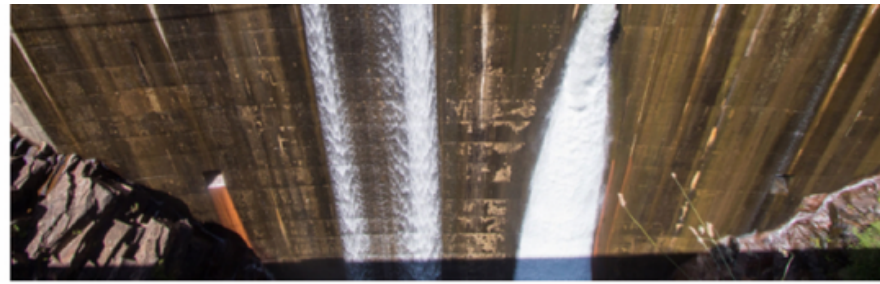
When Mike finally arrives with a team and paramedics, James leaves Kat and rushes off to the prison. The appeal trial of Dobbins had begun that same day, and the jury found Dobbins guilty and sentenced him to execution. James urgently seeks to stop the process just as Dobbins is being led to the execution room. James says he knows the killer was not him.

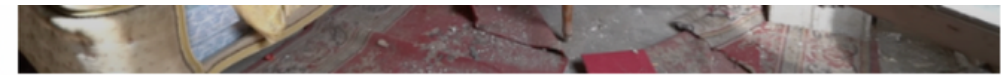
Dobbins replies that he only helped guide James, adding "I could not die with his blood on my hands." He adds for James to go and be with his family, while he goes to be with his. And with that, he is led off to his departure.

Two weeks later, James burns Dobbins' painting of the woman and boy, now understood to be Lilly and her son, severing any last part of the curse. Kat comes up to James and refers to him as "Dad." Cathy arrives after, and the two walk up to her, a family.

MOOD BOARD







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CHARACTERS



JAMES O'CONNOR

James has lost everything in his life due to depression and alcoholism since his divorce. He moves back to his hometown to seek peace in order to find himself again. His childhood sweetheart, Cathy Banks, comes to find him, desperately seeking his help. James and Cathy find themselves in the path of a vicious killer. "The Prophet" manipulates everyone with his knowledge of the situation forcing James to meet him. James now must go back and seek the help of the very man whose capture brought James to national prominence a decade before – "The Prophet" – whom James put on death row to find the answers he needs to save Cathy's daughter Kat Banks. In a twist of fates, James learns that Kat, the abducted girl, is his estranged biological daughter.

THE PROPHET

A condemned man on death row awaits his sentencing. He has one shot left in the court of appeals and he is offering no contest to his crimes. The problem is that he is the only person who has the answers needed to save others' lives and the clock is ticking. The prisoner is at peace and accepts his sentence. He would rather never speak than tell if it's not on his terms. He is extremely intelligent. Prefers to speak in esoteric parables. A deep thinker focused on his spirit as he prepares for death. However, he is hiding something to protect someone and James O'Connor (the investigative journalist whose work led to his incarceration) needs to know who and why? In the end, The Prophet, Cecil Dobbins can redeem his eternal being by saving the life of an innocent girl.

CATHY BANKS

A local widow bumps into her childhood sweetheart, James O'Conner, at a diner. She is a lower-class single mother now and lives a simple life. She guards her emotions to be strong for her daughter. Her efforts fall short because her daughter is abducted from a nearby university. Cathy now desperately seeks James' help for answers. Will he be able to save her daughter? Will she love him if he does?

KAT BANKS

Kat is a young girl with the power to realize every dream and ambition ahead of her. Her "father" died in Iraq. She was raised by her mother Cathy whom she loves, but she wants to forge her own path. Once she starts classes at the nearby university, she quickly becomes infatuated with her middle-aged professor Thomas Birch and begins an affair. She is seeking love, stability, and a father figure. Soon after Kat disappears and falls into the hands of a dangerous cult serial killer.

THE TEAM



STEPHEN PRESLEY

WRITER | DIRECTOR

Stephen Presley stormed onto the scene in 2019 with the multi-award winning production "Kaia". The breakout Director & Producer went on to win 19 awards for 3 successful productions.

He is held in high regard throughout the industry for his hard work and attention to detail. He has been mentored and advised by many top executives at Paramount, Lionsgate, Hulu, E-One, Warner Brothers/HBOmax. He has been involved in some of the highest-grossing productions in history including Game of Thrones, Marvel, and Disney. He has worked at all levels of production. Stephen as a Director has 17 Nominations and 19 wins including winning the Los Angeles Film Festival, LA IFS, 3-time winner of Accolades, as well as being named Film Actors Academy of London Supreme Champion for his cinematic vision.

Stephen is known for his hard work and his ability to connect with his crew, his actors, and his vision.



GEMMA ESAU

SCREENWRITER

GEMMA ESAU is a South African screenwriter and musician currently based in Barcelona. Since graduating with an Honours Degree in Film and Television Studies in 2014, she has worked on numerous projects in Film, Theatre, and Music. Gemma has been involved in screenwriting and concept development since 2015 as a freelancer for the Production Company, Antagonist Studios. In the past 7 years, she has worked closely with writer/director Oscar Barby (Scribblings; Cannes 2016, Miami 2016, Rapid Lion 2015, Afriff 2015) and has just recently had Z-State, co-written with Barby, nominated at the British Horror Film Festival (Best Screenplay 2021). Gemma started working closely with multi-award-winning director & producer, Stephen Presley, in September 2021 on their first collaboration, The Prophet.



DJONNY CHEN

PRODUCER

Djonny is an Indonesian-British producer working throughout the UK and overseas, producing feature films, documentaries, and series. His film production work includes various international territories such as London, Oxford, Switzerland, Milan, Barcelona, Budapest, Copenhagen, Morocco, Canada and Indonesia. His works have won several awards. For the last few years, via partnerships with several top film companies in Indonesia, Djonny has produced, co-produced, lined produced and shot many Indonesian feature films, TV, TVC, and Web-series. All of these feature films have been released nationwide in Indonesian cinemas, with a combined global box office of around \$30m, some reaching the top of the Box Office. He has also produced, co-produced and distributed many other English-language feature films. He has produced ten new feature films to date in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, ready to be released in 2021 and 2022. Within VMC, Djonny is responsible for sales/distribution and financing in South-East Asia and the UK, casting top SEA talent, heading the overall VMC distribution arm, and covering international production relations.



AJO KACMAR

PRODUCER

Ajo worked as Head of Operations for a media company named 'Peracals Productions', led its three divisions - Film, Theatre and Audio. He created a value of approximately £5M whilst working as a development producer on a number of features, TV series and theatre plays. During the pandemic, he shifted focus on film distribution/sales in CEE and SEA and film financing. For the latter, he worked on co-financing of \$32M for two features films including 'Resident Evil: Welcome to the Raccoon City' (Constantin Film). With social impact being his life passion and a primary determinant of his decisions, he is now focusing on productions and projects covering social issues such as feature film tackling issue of adult grooming in sport, the life story of James Meredith (civil rights movement, racial equality), and a life story of a scientist Colin Campbell and his 'China Study', written by an Oscar winner David Ward. On a corporate level, he is involved in sales & distribution for Central-Eastern Europe and South East Asia, stakeholder relations, finance, and internal operations management.



VIRGINIA MCDONALD

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Virginia is one of the most beloved professionals in the industry. She has personal relationships with the top executives of the industry on a personal level. She is an amazing person that everyone loves from top executives & world-famous actors to the the most humble of positions. She is also close friends with the director Stephen Presley. She was a major force in recognizing Presley's talents and introducing him to people he now considers mentors.



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PICTURE



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