



a film by Jacob Strunk  
**VALHALLA**

**Press Kit**

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# VALHALLA



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# ABOUT THE FILM

*Valhalla* came out of the air.

Working in conjunction with Brooks Institute & Glynn Beard, director Jacob Strunk had procured a Sony CineAlta camera package for use on his short film *Sand Country*. There was a very limited amount of time the camera would be available.

Two weeks before production, an image conjured itself in Strunk's head. He saw, in vivid detail, what would become the opening shot of *Valhalla*. Strunk saw the chance to shoot the film on 24P HD as an opportunity to tell a story revolving around remarkable detail. He immediately made a phone call and got the camera for two extra days. Two days...in two weeks...and there was no script yet.

That night, Strunk sat down and wrote the first – and ultimately final – draft of *Valhalla*. It was one sitting, one evening, and in one frantic session, the film appeared, trailing behind a blinking cursor on his screen. The story virtually wrote itself as Sutton (Beard) stumbled through an eerily empty house.

With ten days until the shoot, Strunk took the script to Beard for his opinion.

Beard: “I was impressed by the script in its simplicity. I knew Jake had a specific vision for the piece that would come out in shooting. I felt sorry for the poor bastard that would play Sutton as the film would live or die by his performance.”



The next step was casting. The film's production would be small, with the narrative surrounding but one character. Finding the right person for that character would prove harder than he first imagined.

Strunk's first two possibilities dropped off the project, citing reasons he could only chalk up to an embarrassed lack of interest in something so seemingly morbid and, well, odd. It was here that Beard stepped in.

The two had collaborated before. Beard appeared in a featured role in *Go Man Go*, a short film produced for the Pioneer 2880 Project which Strunk wrote and directed. Strunk had also served as Assistant Director on Beard's film *Success*, the first installment in a series of nine short films. Strunk knew Beard could act, he had seen it before. The problem lay in Beard's position on the crew. Strunk had earlier asked him to head the camera crew on *Sand Country* and *Valhalla*.

Beard: "When I heard that Jake had lost his actor for *Valhalla*, I offered to play the part of Sutton. I knew I could play the part but was apprehensive that I could pull off the major changes in the character. The focus was completely on Sutton in *Valhalla* and I was concerned that I could deliver what Jake needed to make this film work."

And with that, Beard was cast in the role. The match proved to be perfect. With Glynn Beard acting under Jacob Strunk's direction, the space proved a fertile bed for creativity and the two fleshed out the character – and the film – together. Beard beautifully found the character Strunk had envisioned and each scenario, only weeks prior typed out in that frenzied writing session, became rich with life.



Glynn Beard said of the production, “The production of *Valhalla* was a little screwy. I was incredibly nervous before the shoot as I knew the demands on the character of Sutton were intense, but I was also excited to be working with Jake as an actor.

“When we were filming, Jake would give very cryptic, but clear direction as to what he wanted for the shot. I toned down the performance thinking that Jake would know what he wanted on the second or third take, but he would look up and say, ‘That was great,’ and we would move on, most times with the first take. I was concerned that I was being too subtle and wanted to really blow the performance out of the water. But, in the end, Jake was right. The subtle approach was far more effective in translating the vision of *Valhalla* as he saw it as opposed to me shredding the scenery with my teeth and announcing to the world, ‘I’m acting, look at me!’ The one scene that really stood for me was when Sutton is frustrated trying to drag the body from the hallway. I had originally wanted to kick in the closet door, totally lose control, but Jake didn’t think that was necessary. In the end, he was right, although I did injure my hand in that scene. I ached for weeks after production. It was worth it, though.”

The shoot went more smoothly than it should have, and the crew moved admirably quickly. Beard soon realized Strunk’s method of bringing the character to the screen as realistically as possible was shooting as few takes as possible, capturing genuine moments instead of rehearsed actions.

This method proved more than effective at bringing through the camera and onto the screen the atmosphere, emotion, and raw feel Strunk was looking for. The film in his head found itself footing and came into being. The momentum from the shoot carried him into the editing room, where he cut the film into the final product, a perfect representation of the twisted vision



which had come to him two weeks earlier. A screening with Beard, sound man Dale Angell, D.P. Johnny Bishop, advisor David Roy, and Strunk's own mother proved the film succeeded in creating a world of its own.

And so, a mere two weeks after the idea's inception, *Valhalla* came into being...out of the air.



# JACOB STRUNK

## BIOGRAPHY

Jacob Strunk was taken to filmmaking at an early age, earlier than most. He cites two incidents as being instrumental in his young psyche attaching itself to the medium of film and the desire to push his creativity as such. Both events, so contradictory by their very nature yet so similar in theme, happened before Strunk could appreciate their repercussions, though in hindsight, he credits them equally for driving him to where he is today.

The more memorable of the two surrounds Strunk's first viewing of and subsequent fascination with George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* at age seven. Though Strunk has embraced rich, character-driven dramas as his current focus, the vision of those dead hands battering at the reinforced door of an old farmhouse and the excitement and horror of it is something that has haunted him through every endeavor, and something which still inspires what ends up on the page and, eventually, the screen.

Growing up in the small and horribly mundane town of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, Strunk made the transition from in front of the screen to behind the camera early, producing a number of short horror-themed films in the years before high school. He began working for the local television station and video production house doing everything from newscasts to sporting events to wedding editing and videography. Not long after, Strunk and a longtime friend decided to bring to fruition what would be the culmination of all that had come before and the final product was a featurette calling upon both local and out-of-town talent which gained him recognition in Wisconsin.



as one of a scarce few filmmakers attached to dramatic work in the state.

After a brief stint as a travel agent, Strunk made the move to southern California and enrolled in Brooks Institute in Santa Barbara to hone his filmmaking skills. It was here that he met Glynn Beard and began vigorously pursuing film projects.

Strunk is now working on a number of projects, most notably the development of a feature film (the fourth he's written) which he will direct. He also continues to write both literary fiction and work for the screen. He and Beard have collaborated on four films: *Go Man Go*, *Ocean of Storms: Success*, *Sand Country*, and *Valhalla*.



# JACOB STRUNK

## FILMOGRAPHY

*Wrath of Man*

Writer/Co-Director/Producer/Editor

*A Day Awake*

Writer/Director/Producer/Editor

*Go Man Go*

Writer/Co-Director

*Ocean of Storms: Success* (Dir: Glynn Beard)

Associate Producer/Assistant Director

*To Slay a Giant* (Dir: Johnny Bishop)

Sound Recorder & Designer

*Sand Country*

Writer/Director

*Valhalla*

Writer/Director

### -- Feature Screenplays Written --

*Coffee Grounds & Cigarettes: An Urban Adventure*

*An Azure Kismet*

*Symphony*

*Foursquare*



# GLYNN BEARD

## BIOGRAPHY

Glynn Beard was born in Vancouver, British Columbia on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1964. His parents gave him a Super 8 film camera at age 10. Glynn made his first short film, a mad scientist horror movie in 1974. There was a screening for his debut film to friends and family, which went so well that he continued to write, direct and act in short Super 8 films all through high school. Upon graduation from Prince of Wales High School in 1982, Glynn was admitted to the Centre for the Arts film school at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.

Beard's first feature film, *Murdered*, went into production in January of 1992 and was completed by January of 1993. Glynn co-wrote, directed, produced, and played the lead actor in this film. It premiered at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival in 1993 and was also shown at the Angelika Theatre in New York as part of the Independent Feature Film Market in 1994.

In 1994 through to 1998, Glynn also co-produced, directed and acted in another feature film, *The Crier*, a horror film based upon the Mexican folk legend of 'La Llorona'.

In 1994, Glynn was hired on, with Leland Faulkner, as the Video Design artist for the theatre company Slightly Askew Players in Santa Barbara. From 1994 through to 1998 Glynn and Lee created video projection backgrounds to be used during play performances. These "video walls" were subtext backgrounds used to support the story and performance content of the original plays. Glynn and Lee shot, edited and technically ran



the video cues for these video walls during theatrical performances.

Glynn ceased freelancing in the Motion Picture industry in the middle of 1998 to pursue his Masters degree at Brooks Institute of Photography. He graduated from this program with his Masters degree in December of 2000.

In 2002, Glynn acted with Ethan Wilcox in the Pioneer 2880 Extreme Filmmaking project *Go Man Go* which Jacob Strunk had written and was directing. Glynn was impressed with Ethan's performance and in the Spring of 2003 cast him in a short film he was directing titled *SUCCESS*. *SUCCESS* is the first of nine films that Glynn plans to make for a body of work titled *Ocean of Storms*. *Ocean of Storms* will be comprised of nine short films that each deal with a different aspect of the costs of what it means to be a human being in our current culture. Glynn hired on Jacob Strunk to be the Associate Producer and Assistant Director for *SUCCESS*. Their work together on this project further strengthened their relationship as filmmakers and the realization that they shared a vision for what filmmaking could be.

Glynn is currently in pre-production on the next film for *Ocean of Storms* titled *SON* which is about a father videotaping himself giving advice to his son. *SON* is set to shoot in the beginning of 2004.



# GLYNN BEARD

## FILMOGRAPHY

### *Fire*

1986 Writer/Director

### *Shadows*

1987 Writer/Director

### *Blue Highway* (Dir: Joseph Tuan)

1988 Actor

### *Murdered*

1993 Writer/Director/Producer/Actor

### *The Crier*

1994 Director/Producer/Actor

### *The Devil's Playground* (Dir: Jean-Nathaniel Courtens)

1995 Actor

### *The Jester* (Dir: Derek Dale)

1996 Actor

### *Go Man Go* (Dir: Jacob Strunk)

2002 Actor

### *Success*

2003 Writer/Director/Actor

### *Valhalla* (Dir: Jacob Strunk)

2004 Actor



# SCENE STILLS









# PRODUCTION STILLS



The quiet set.



The cast and crew between takes.





Director of Photography Johnny Bishop.



The Sony CineAlta.





Writer & Director Jacob Strunk.



# TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Running Time:            Approximately 20 minutes

Production Format:    1080 24p HD

Sony CineAlta

Finishing Format:      1080i HD

Aspect Ratio:           2.35:1

*(Native HD) 16x9*

Sound:                    16 Bit Stereo



# FULL CREDITS

featuring Glynn Beard  
director of photography Johnny Bishop  
executive producers Kristen Ratzsch & Glynn Beard  
produced & edited by Jacob Strunk  
assistant director Christopher Hodson  
camera operator Johnny Bishop  
1st assistant camera Joe Martin  
gaffer William Higley  
sound guru Dale Angell  
boom operator William Higley  
written & directed by Jacob Strunk  
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