

a film by jacob strunk
a shadow before sunrise

PRESS MATERIALS

Jacob Strunk
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Life, love, and the dear departed...

A mortician trapped in the life he thinks is necessary
finds his conceptions shaken when a
young widow comes to him for his services.

ABOUT THE FILM

In the fall of 2003, Jacob Strunk set out to create what would be the follow-up to his praised and award-winning film *Valhalla*. The original plan was to go forward with a feature film entitled *Foursquare*, but when inspiration strikes, it strikes hard, and the seeds of the film that would become *A Shadow Before Sunrise* planted themselves in his head. They could not be ignored.

Without hesitation, Strunk penned the script for *Sunrise*, an unconventional and twisted character portrait of Simon Forst. Forst was archetypal in many respects, symbolizing the cost of existence in our modern culture. But he was also very real. The character fleshed himself out without much effort on Strunk's part. He would later muse that Simon "just was."

The completed script caught the attention of key faculty at Brooks Institute – where Strunk was finishing up his undergraduate study – and was selected as the recipient of both a Kodak film stock grant and a full processing grant from Fotokem. The combined benefits of these two grants (with a cash value far beyond what was available for the film) would allow Strunk to explore a medium previously unavailable to him. It would allow him to shoot and finish the film on 35mm.

Casting the film proved to be harder than expected and both open and invite-only casting calls were held in Los Angeles, with a few hundred people submitting for the film and almost a hundred reading for the available parts. A rigorous pre-production schedule bridged the new year, with Strunk and filmmaking cohorts Glynn Beard (*Murdered, Valhalla, Success*), Dale Angell (*In Search of... Plan 10 From Outer Space*), and David Roy (*Mad Song*) making a brief pilgrimage to Park City, Utah for the Sundance Film Festival in January.

In March, 2004, production began on location at Mountain View Mortuary & Cemetery in Altadena, California, a location Strunk chose both for its cinematic beauty and unequaled atmosphere. This atmosphere would become a character in and of itself, both in the film and during production. The long, marble hallways, worn statues, and dark wood of the place would find their way into the collective conscious of the cast and crew and, ultimately, end up an integral part of *Sunrise*. This was, of course, the intention, as the director had decided upon the cemetery with complete disregard to its less-than-convenient location deep in the San Gabriel Valley. Mountain View has also been the site of such large-scale productions as *The X-Files* and Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*.

The days were long and the production was on a large scale, and with generators humming in the background and lights slowly building the temperature, it took a day for things to *sync*. But, after the second camera assistant was fired and replaced and the large crew began to absorb the soul of the old building, things began to progress smoothly and, after a few days on location and subsequent work on stages in Ventura, "Cut" was called for the final time and shooting on *A Shadow Before Sunrise* came to an well-deserved end.

Strunk and director of photography Johnny Bishop screened the 35mm dailies in a private theatre and, for the first time, saw the culmination of their work in glorious black and white. Post-production had begun. The post-production process would stretch for months, with Strunk quietly editing the film at home. Erik Larson, with whom Strunk had previously worked on *A Day Awake*, provided an original score unlike any to come before. The soundtrack, like the script, would defy convention. It would break rules.

And so it was that *A Shadow Before Sunrise* came to be, a small, unassuming film brought forth through the efforts of a talented crew and brilliant cast. Is it the film originally envisioned by its writer/director? No. But is that a bad thing? Not at all. *Sunrise* grew and changed and evolved of its own volition and that, more than anything, is what makes films real.

CREDITS

written and directed by
Jacob Strunk

director of photography
Johnny Bishop

executive producers
Kristen Ratzsch
Jacob Strunk

associate producer
Glynn Beard

produced and edited by
Jacob Strunk

simon forst...
Glynn Beard

sally jeffries...
Molly Mayville

eva...
Eva Derrek

ethan...
Ethan Wilcox

janet forrest...
Gergana Mellin

jerry forrest...
Shawn Wilson

barbara...
Karoline Steavenson

himself...
Luis A. Treto

& franklin...
Dale Angell

assistant director
Christopher Hodson

gaffer
William Higley

camera operator
Marc Shap

1st assistant camera
Joe Martin

2nd assistant camera
Ryan Duke

sound guru
Dale Angell

still photography & documentary
Nate Eckman

production mentor
Barbara Freedman

original music by
Erik Larson

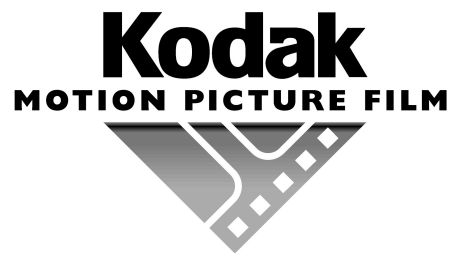
“A Synthesis of Classic Forms”
Written & Performed by Snapcase
Courtesy of Victory Records

35mm camera provided by
Otto Nemenz Intl.

dolly provided by
Chapman Dollies

film processing by
Fotokem
Los Angeles, California

titles by
CineMatte
Los Angeles, California



shot on location at
Mountain View Mortuary
Altadena, California

proudly shot on film
in glorious black and white

in memory of Josh Bouzard
1979 - 2003

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