

GROUNDED

THE INSIDE STORY



A note from the director

Welcome to the Inside Story of the short film *Grounded*. In these pages, you'll learn a little about the story behind the film, including scriptwriting, pre-production planning, on-set production and post-production editing. It was a wonderful journey with friends old and new, and there are a lot of people to thank along the way. That list includes you, for giving your time to watch the film. And for some of you, for giving funds directly or through the Indiegogo campaign to help make it happen.

Best Regards,

John Bruner

Pre-Production

When I was accepted into a Master of Arts in Film program, I needed to pitch a few story ideas to the faculty. One had its start in some short stories I had written for friends years ago. That story idea became *Grounded*. It's the story of a son who's trapped on a long car ride with his mother who knows how to push his buttons. It's also about what we put between us, like careers and fears, and how we think we can put the world on pause and expect things to be just like we left them when we're ready to re-engage.

Once the script was finished, the pre-production planning began. That included scouting locations, gathering props and set pieces (and having a Porta Potty delivered), budgeting, panicking, and assembling the cast and crew.

GROUND
(6.20.17)

Written by

John Bruner

OFF

STEREO

the
IRISH WINDS



PG:

DIALOGUE:

Ruby
"Can we not slow"
down road... - Ruby

ACTION / NOTES:

Car falls onto
ever small
road.

DIALOGUE:

ACTION / NOTES:

Jones is looking
down

DIALOGUE:

ACTION / NOTES:



Cast & Crew

I'm especially grateful to the team of cast and crew who got the ball rolling: Josh Taylor, my longtime friend and wiz at editing software, Tim Sutherland, a friend who works as a camera operator in network television, and Mark Fauser, the only person I could imagine playing the role of James. Mark brought his son to play the role of Michael. Next I found Shani Salyers Stiles. I had seen her in a student film and knew she'd be great. Things picked up steam in June when we added co-producer Natalie Francis and assistant editor and prop designer Jon Meharg. Still, we had no Ruby, so we sent out a casting call to both coasts. In the end, we found Joann King White right here in Indiana.

Production

Production was actually the shortest part of the entire process. This is where the “lights, camera, action” part happens, and in the case of *Grounded*, it lasted just four carefully planned, action-packed days. It’s also the first time that all the cast and crew came together.

After months of pre-production it was time to not just follow through on the plans, but to adapt to the weather and other challenges. This is when we had to learn how to fly a pricey rental drone in our backyard and over Interstate Highway 69. Yikes! We

also had to figure out the logistics of using wireless video, audio and 2-way radios to shoot in a moving car while directing from a van driving in front of it. I put my director skills to the test when I had to explain to a state trooper what I was doing on the entry ramp to a highway with a car, full crew and ton of equipment. Such are the joys of production. Tom Johnson brought his vanload of field audio equipment, operating the boom mic, positioning microphones in the car and hiding them on the actors’ bodies. Dan Madison served as first assistant camera, pulling focus. When

Dan left, Jon Meharg took over as first AC. Thank goodness for a flexible and talented crew.

We had eleven locations, and that’s a lot for a short film. Additional grips joined us to handle equipment resets including B.G. Moore, Lincoln Reed and Thane Syswerda. The weather was remarkably good for late June—it stayed in the 70s and low 80s for several days, but one rain day required some adjustments and a very fast “strike” of the equipment.





Day 1

Day 2



Day 3

Day 4





Post-Production

In post-production you feel like you're nearly done, but really you're only at the beginning of a very long process. Jon Meharg served as assistant editor, and worked with me in assembling my favorite shots in a single, gigantic sequence. Editor Josh Taylor helped me finesse things until we reached "picture lock," after which no changes can easily be made. Next, the sound and picture were separated. For sound editing, I'd commute to my friend Dan Madison's deluxe studio. Otherwise, I was in my dining room, working the night shift with Josh doing color grading. When I needed to make some changes after picture lock, I was nearly killed by my own crew. We finished the film on a Friday at 1:30 a.m., and I left for the airport at 4:30 a.m. to fly to Vermont where I submitted the film. I had plenty of time.

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double
burner
productions