

Richard  
de Klerk

Kandyse  
McClure

Sonja  
Bennett

Chad  
Willett

# Cole

a film by Carl Bessai

featuring music by  
The Album Leaf  
Black Mountain  
Broken Social Scene  
Chad VanGaalén  
Great Lake Swimmers  
Jason Collett  
Jon & Roy  
Ladyhawk  
Thunderheist

## Press Kit

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# Logline:

Ambition and forbidden love collide with the expectations of a small town in this coming of age story.

# Synopsis:

Do you ever feel like everyone in the world is counting on you?

22 year old, Cole Chambers is a handsome, magnetic, talented young writer with dreams too big for his small town. Frustrated and trapped, Cole has spent his entire life picking up the pieces of his shattered family and using them as the basis for his writing and recreating an alternative reality.

When Cole gets the opportunity to bring his talents to the city, he sees his potential for the first time - that he can get out of his small town and make his life what he had wanted it to be.

Cole spends increasing amounts of time away from home, falling in love with Serafina, a beautiful black girl from a privileged background with secrets of her own. Shackled to his family by responsibility, Cole finds it increasingly hard to lead a double life and is forced to choose or do the unthinkable: unite his two worlds.



# Key Cast Bios:

## Richard de Klerk - 'Cole'

Richard has had numerous film and television credits and won the Best Actor Award in London for his starring role in the feature film entitled *Part of the Game*. He starred in the feature film *Crossed* has appeared in numerous popular television shows such as *Stargate SG-1*, *Supernatural*, *Andromeda*, *Cold Squad*, *So Weird*. Richard presently lives and works in Los Angeles.

## Kandyse McClure - 'Serafina'

Since being "discovered" in a tiny theatre 8 years ago, performing Athol Fugards' Valley Song, Kandyse has worked continuously in film and television, including NBC's *Carrie* (as Sue Snell), *Dark Angel* (as the blind woman Annie Fisher) and alongside Malcolm Jamal Warner on *Jeremiah* (as his love interest Elizabeth) and for five seasons in *Battlestar Galactica* and multiple episodes of the television series *Reaper* and *Sanctuary*. This is her first leading role.

## Sonja Bennett - 'Maybelline'

Sonja Bennett played her first major film role in the feature film *Punch*, which garnered her an award for Best Actress the Vancouver Film Critics Circle and a special citation for the Women in Film and Video Artistic Merit Award. Sonja's had several series lead roles including CTV's *Cold Squad* and *Godiva's*, earning her both Leo and Gemini nominations, as well as, supporting roles in numerous features including Atom Egoyan's *Where The Truth Lies* and John Carpenter's *The Fog*. Recently, Sonja completed lead roles in *Young People Fucking* for Think Films and *Ctrl Alt Delete* with Tyler Labine.





### **Chad Willett - 'Bobby'**

Chad burst from the gates working on his first film *Alive* (1991). After a successful run on such TV shows as *Madison*, *Nothing Too Good for a Cowboy* and the mini series *Joan of Arc* for CBS, Chad landed series lead roles on *The Cape*, *Charmed*, *Jack & Jill* and a NBC development deal which produced *The Chronicle* for him to star. NY brought a career highlight working beside the iconic Vanessa Redgrave in *The Locket*, which was also his first award win. He also found the stage again in the Tony Award winning play *Proof* and *As Bees in Honey Drown*. He also worked on such shows as *House M.D.*, *Bones*, *Supernatural* and *NCIS*. Chad has recently wrapped a mini series with Gina Gershon.



### **Michael Eisner - 'Frogger'**

Michael Eisner is a graduate of Studio 58 and has been studying at Lyric in the master class for a year and half. His Theater credits are: Spurio in *Revenge*, Billy in *Steel Kiss*, and Tomas in *Tomas at Mile Zero*. Film and Television credits: The Englishmen's boy in *The Englishmen's Boy*, Frogger in *Cole*, Previn in *The Guard*, Edward in *Sanctuary* and various other short films. *This is Michael's feature film debut.*

### **Rebecca Jenkins - 'Mrs. Chambers'**

Rebecca Jenkins burst onto the film scene with her charismatic acting and singing performance in Anne Wheeler's *Bye Bye Blues*, for which she received a Best Actress Genie Award. Her feature films include *Interstate 60*, *Bob Roberts*, *Darrow*, *South of Wawa*, *Cowboys Don't Cry* and Daniel MacIvor adaptations; *Past Perfect* and *Marion Bridge*.

On television, Jenkins is well known for her starring roles in successful series *Black Harbour*, and in *Destiny Ridge*. She recently played the lead in *The Sunrise* one of a series of six Margaret Atwood short stories for CBC and The W Network and guest starred on A&E's *Nero Wolfe* and CTV's *The Associates*, and has also appeared in *Outer Limits*, *Beyond Reality*, *Avonlea* and *Street Legal*.

Jenkins' many starring roles in movies for television include CBS's *And Never Let Her Go*, *Guilty Hearts*, *Catch A Falling Star*; Disney's *Angels in the Infield*; ABC's *The Ruby Silver*; and NBC's *Bad Prospects*, *Till Death Do Us Part*, *Honour Bright* and *Harvest*, for which she received a Gemini Award nomination as Best Supporting Actress in a Dramatic Program or Mini-Series. Her films for cable include Showtime's, *Bad Prospect* and USA Networks' *Split Image*.



## Key Crew Bios:

### **Carl Bessai - Director/Cinematographer**

Carl Bessai started out in the film industry shooting documentaries and soon honed his skills as a producer, writer, director, and cinematographer. His feature films have won international critical acclaim, having screened at numerous festivals including Sundance, Berlin, and Toronto and have been released theatrically in Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. To date, his feature dramas include *Johnny* (1999), *Lola* (2001), *Emile* (2003), *Severed* (2005), *Unnatural & Accidental* (2006), *Normal* (2007), and *Mothers&Daughters* (2008).

Carl sits on the boards off the Whistler Film Festival and the First Weekend Club and is a member of the Director's Guild of Canada, the Writer's Guild of Canada and the Canadian Film and Television Producer's Association.

## **Adam Zang - Writer**

COLE is Adam Zang's first feature screenplay. He grew up in a small town in Michigan, graduated from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota where they manufacture Malt-O-Meal Cereal, and now lives in Seattle, where there are no mosquitoes. He has optioned *Northbridge*, a thriller set on Lake Superior, to Titlecard Pictures, and is furiously working on a heist script set in 1962.

## **Jason James - Producer**

Jason got his start working at Haddock Entertainment as an Associate Producer on the critically acclaimed TV crime drama *Da Vinci's Inquest* (IV, V, VI, and VII). He then went on to create/produce his own TV series for the CBC entitled *This Space For Rent*. Jason also produced Carl Bessai's feature film, *Unnatural & Accidental*, which premiered at the MoMA in New York City and played the 2006 Toronto and Vancouver International Film Festivals.

Jason also directed a commercial for The David Suzuki Foundation as well as produced a short film for the CBC Signature Shorts program, *Rugged Rich and the Ona Ona*. He also wrote, produced, and directed *Light Rapid Transit*, a short film that was awarded the prestigious KickStart grant through the DGC and BC Film. *Light Rapid Transit* premiered at the 2003 Vancouver Film Festival and has screened at several film festivals around the world including the prestigious 2004 Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival in France. Jason also produced and directed two music videos for rock bands *The Smugglers* and *Mount Pleasant*. These videos were produced in co-operation with VideoFACT and aired on Much Music.

Jason has previously been invited to attend the Toronto Film Festival Talent Lab, the Rotterdam Talent Lab, a CTV Fellowship at the Banff Television Festival, the National Screen Institute's Totally Television Program, and The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television's National Director Apprenticeship program.

## **Irene Nelson - Executive Producer**

Irene Nelson is the President of Rampart Films, a Vancouver/Los Angeles based Production Company dedicated to creating commercially viable, thought provoking feature films and documentaries. She is also Vice President of Rampart Capital Corp, a company involved in raising funds for real estate and government projects for over 30 years, presently in the planning phase of "Rampart's Avenir", a 'green' live/work/play community that will be a world platform for the development and testing of alternative energy sources. This exciting project located near Edmonton, Alberta will be the focus of a feature documentary as it unfolds. Using film as a means to elicit discussion and bring issues to the forefront, Rampart Films and Rampart Capital Corp support Miles4Justice, an international initiative that employs competitive sailing events to raise funds for human rights. A film documenting this effort begins shooting in September. Other documentaries by Rampart include 'Dahramsala - Home in Exile', currently in post-production.



Previous films include *Crossed* and *Part of the Game*, which is currently in worldwide distribution. Rampart Films is in pre-production on nouveau western *John's Last Job*, written and to be directed by Robert Culp, and also *Repeaters*, a supernatural thriller to be directed by Carl Bessai. Irene's screenplay *Puppet Show*, a personal story adapted from the book by G.J. de Klerk is in development as is *The Second Shot*, a legal thriller by human rights lawyer Sir G.J. Alexander Knoops.



## Writer Notes - by Adam Zang:

In 2005, I moved from Michigan to Vancouver to attend the Vancouver Film School's program for Writing for Film and Television. I felt alone and homesick, and out of that *Cole* started to take shape. Even though I thought at first Cole Chambers was someone only I could relate to, as it evolved, people seemed to gravitate toward his story and he became universal. Cole has a great sense of loyalty, and loyalty, it seems, defines a lot of our lives. To borrow from Bukowski, 'we are born into this life,' and I hope Cole tries to make the most of it.

## Director Notes - by Carl Bessai:

Adam Zang's script for *Cole* struck a chord with me immediately for its universal themes and its distinctive setting. I was interested in the way class and race were handled in the script and I saw great potential in this film to explore these themes in a manner that is thoughtful, insightful and mostly, cinematic.

As a young man growing up in Alberta, I related immediately to Cole's plight of wanting to build a better life for himself. His sense of entrapment in the town, his obligations to his family, to his history, to the family business – all of these elements are familiar to any person who has longed to escape the confines of their small town life. It was the racial exploration in the film that was new territory for me as a director and that aspect of the conflict in the film was both intriguing and challenging.

My concept for the execution of the film was to identify a location that could breathe enormous life into the production design of the film. When we began surveying possible towns in rural British Columbia and happened across Lytton and the gas station, it was really too perfect to be real. I remember the first site inspection of the location – I just couldn't get over how perfect this location was – as though it were designed for a film shoot – windows everywhere, easy to light from the main floor, designed interiors with lots of room for the camera to move, and wall paper and paint that was a perfect indication of the kind of family that lived there. It was as though a designer had read our script and created this location. Ironically, we found out later that this location had been created for a film – it was used in the Sean Penn movie *The Pledge* and after that film was completed, the crew left the building to the owners to use for their own purpose. That explained why there were no power outlets, nor washroom facilities in the building! No matter... thank you 'Pledge', this building was perfect for *Cole*.

The other amazing thing that Lytton offered the film was the landscape. Nestled in the valley where the Thompson River meets the Fraser, there are few places in the province of British Columbia more beautiful. This valley is also where the desert landscape of neighboring Ashcroft meets the mountainous treed landscape of Hell's Gate. As though to provide a guiding metaphor, both the confluence of rivers and the meeting of landscapes create a poetic setting for a story about the clash between racial and socio-economic divides. Through the valley, the wind was a constant companion to our shoot, and its presence can be felt in every shot of the film – both exterior and interior. Once again, nature served to support our story as though the wind itself blowing through the valley helped to reinforce themes of change, of transition of shifts in attitudes – of our central character Cole coming of age. To me, the greatest gift a location can give a director is to provide a visual guide to the sensations that are described in the script, and to present a visual world that subtly communicates the screenplay's themes without having the actor's say a word.

We made the choice early on to shoot the film in an HD format so that our budget would not be strained by the cost of film. This was of some concern to me at the outset, because I knew this project would rely heavily on the natural beauty of the region, as well as the available light in this extremely dry, hot valley. Bright, direct sunlight in the early summer, especially in a dry clear climate is not ideal for HD, and I took special pains to keep the actors from direct sunlight. Wherever possible, I favored back-light or diffuse light. Having said that, I was amazed at the HD format's success in these conditions. With modest filtration, and a bit of caution on the hardest sun, I was able to create a constant state of magic hour that I think greatly supports the tone and aesthetic of the narrative. Wherever possible, I blocked each scene for two simultaneous cameras with an



emphasis on the combination of long lens footage from a distance, creating voyeuristic, obstructed views and in-close personal footage, often hand-held to bring the viewer closer to a personal relationship with the actors. I found the added bonus of the HD format was also its generosity when it came to long takes. With less urgency to cut the action of a given scene, the cast found many opportunities for improvisation, which consistently elevated each scene beyond the printed page, bringing a quality of truth and beauty to a given moment that is often hard to find in the printed word.

The Key Cast was a revelation for me, as I was working with many of them for the very first time. I think it helped us enormously to be all at camp in Lytton together for an extended period. It meant that in the times between the scenes, both before and after the shooting days, we would spend together, getting to know one another, getting to know each others' characters and natures – all of this helped to make the work we were doing more honest and authentic.

In the end I learned a great deal about directing from this project. I learned how to discover a narrative through an extended dialogue with a group of like minded people – both actors and producers, and I learned that the land and the landscape are characters in a film that need both time and respect if they are to make a successful appearance in a film. *Cole* is as much a love-letter to small town life as it is the story of young man's desire to leave the town. *Cole* is as much a film about tolerance and understanding our differences as it is a story which exposes those differences. *Cole* was a privilege and an honor to direct.



# Producer Notes – by Jason James:

When I first read the screenplay for *Cole*, I started to hear it rather than see it. I imagined the songs that would play on the old truck radio as this young man drove from his small town to the big city. The soundtrack is essentially my record collection (*Chad Vangaalen*, *Great Lake Swimmers*, *Black Mountain*, *Broken Social Scene*, *Ladyhawk*, etc.) and is reflective of how we made the film: organic, handmade, and honest.

We shot the film in Vancouver and Lytton, BC over 18 days using a small and dedicated crew with minimal equipment. We tried to boil everything down to its bare essentials and make a movie without the circus of trucks, trailers, and teams of drivers. We used HD cameras that required less lighting equipment, set up time, and labour. As such, we were able to spend more time working with the actors and were able to travel and shoot on location in Lytton, BC. The result is a beautifully rendered portrait of a small town and the characters that live there.

I had previously worked with the BC Film Commission on making film productions more 'green' and wanted to continue this process with *Cole*. We implemented the following strategies to reduce our carbon footprint: All production material was sent via email, anything that was printed was made double sided, we used reusable plates, cups, and cutlery on the catering truck, crew were encouraged to car pool and bike to work, while in Lytton we biked around the town, all cast/crew shuttles were shared, we didn't use a gas fuelled generator on set but tied into house power whenever available, and we gave everyone their own 'Cole' water bottle to reduce the amount of plastic used.

The making of *Cole* was a truly unique and rewarding filmmaking experience. The cast and crew were a joy to work with. I will undoubtedly take this experience with me as an inspiration and model for future projects.



# Credits:

a RAMPART FILMS and TITLECARD PICTURES production  
in association with RAVENWEST FILMS and RESONANCE FILMS  
'COLE'

starring RICHARD DE KLERK, KANDYSE MCCLURE, SONJA BENNETT,  
CHAD WILLETT, MICHAEL EISNER, and JACK FORRESTER  
casting MELISSA PERRY and LARKIN MACKENZIE-AST  
production design DINA HOLMES costume design KERRY WEINRAUCH and  
JOI KITTRIDGE editor MARK SHEARER director of photography CARL BESSAI  
composer CLINTON SHORTER line producer KEVIN EASTWOOD  
co-producer CARL BESSAI executive producer IRENE NELSON  
producers DYLAN THOMAS COLLINGWOOD and KIMANI RAY SMITH  
produced by JASON JAMES written by ADAM ZANG directed by CARL BESSAI

funding provided by RAMPART CAPITAL CORP



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