

AIRPLANE

DISASTERS



SYNOPSIS

Airplane Disasters explores a shifting American identity through the eyes of young and desperate Hollywood denizens. Two stories progress simultaneously in split screen: On the right, Phillip—a successful musician—hikes through the wilderness in search of either redemption or destruction. On the left, Phillip and his girlfriend Monica each attempt to steer their relationship in a drastically different direction, even as they are bombarded with bizarre houseguests who reenact airplane crashes. As Phillip tries to repair his life and love, a fresh Army recruit sends the impromptu party into a tailspin that can only end in disaster.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Airplane Disasters, made for under \$5000 with an all volunteer cast and crew, was conceived from the start as a free flowing, partly improvised series of collisions. Character collisions, certainly, but at the heart of the film there also lies a central spatial and temporal tension: each of the two frames provides a window into the simultaneous unfolding of events in seemingly irreconcilable spaces and times, yet involving the same main character. Because the exact temporal connection between the two stories isn't revealed until the end of the film, there is a constant tension between the two: details from one side inform the other, but as an audience we can't be certain about the underlying causal relationships.

Synching up the two halves of the film required a great deal of planning and timing, of course. The wilderness was shot and edited first, roughly timed to the “house” script. It was then fully edited, and the house film was shot to

roughly match it. Thus the two films progressed in tandem for quite awhile before they were composited together and synched, beat by beat.

When filming, the eight actors and two camera operators were encouraged to improvise and experiment. Though the overall structure of the film was tightly planned and adhered to, individual scenes and shots often took unexpected new directions.

Almost all filming took place chronologically, in long takes covering entire scenes. Director Zach Horton's goal was to stage a series of events that would be captured on the fly rather than to fastidiously compose and design each shot in isolation. This helped keep up the momentum on set as well as contribute to the "documentary" feel of the film. No two takes would be the same, either for the actors or for camera. In the end, these disparate takes were intercut to approximate the internal dynamics of the characters.

To further enhance the immersive and claustrophobic world of the "house" half of the film, the cast and much of the crew actually lived on location for the duration of the shoot. In contrast to the usual rigidly structured production schedule, the company simply began to film when everyone was awake and ready, and ceased production when everyone was exhausted (or the sun came up). At each day's wrap, everyone simply crawled into bed and fell asleep. This also enhanced the documentary look and feel.

The cast consisted of a mix between professional and non-professional actors, which, combined with the unorthodox techniques employed in the production, ultimately lead to a paradoxical result: a film that seems both highly structured formally and completely off-the-cuff in the way it unfolds. It is simultaneously a precise formal work and a free-flowing documentary.

Airplane Disasters is the first film in Zach Horton's Disaster Trilogy, a trio of features that explore America's disaster mythology in the early years of the new millennium through narratives involving disastrous personal relationships.

STILLS



Split memories: Zach encourages Monica and Phillip to recall their past relationship.



Phillip struggles to finish the greatest song of his career, but can't quite break through...

CAST



JOSH ANDERSON

“PHILLIP”

Born and Raised in Washington D.C., Josh attended Brown University, where he received his B.A. in Art Semiotics with a focus in both film theory and film production. After graduating from Brown he attended the American Film Institute where he wrote and directed his thesis film “EXIT 72”. Since receiving his MFA. Josh has joined a semi-professional soccer team and continues to play as he pursues his dreams of making feature films.

MONICA YOUNG

“MONICA”

Monica Young is an accomplished actor/singer/dancer. Since moving to L.A., she has appeared in several commercials, films, and tv shows including “Still Standing”, “Passions”, and the comedy pilot “Nobody’s Happy”. You can also hear her vocals on the current single Come Together, a song for Hurricane Katrina relief featuring Celine Dion, Patti LaBelle, Joss Stone, and many others. “Airplane Disasters” is her second film working with Zach Horton.



ZACH HORTON

“ZACH”

Raised in the small Northern California town of Ukiah, Zach has always been fascinated with open vistas, mild insanity, and protracted interpersonal space. He has studied Philosophy and Creative Writing at Oxford University and earned BAs in both Visual Arts (Media) and Philosophy at UC San Diego. He was a 2002 recipient of the national Cary Grant Film Award for his short film work, and recently earned an MFA in Directing from the American Film Institute.



MARIA ELENA LAAS

“ELENA”

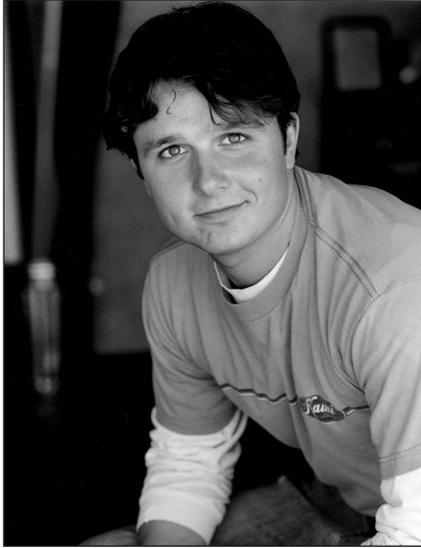
Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, Maria Elena was raised in Saudi Arabia and Japan. She began performing at age 6, and modeling at 13. She has done over 50 national commercials for Miller Lite, Vox Vodka, Nestea, Ford, and Coca Cola, and more. Film and Television credits include “Grounded for Life,” “Pacific Blue,” “This Guy is falling”, and “The Hot Chick”, portraying Bianca, Rob Schneider’s nemesis. She’ll next appear in Alan Cumming’s “Suffering Man’s Charity”.

CARLY C. CRAIG

“CARLY”

Carly recently starred in “First Date”, a comedy which debuted in the LA Film Festival. Craig also guest starred on David E. Kelley’s pilot “Halley’s Comet”. On the stage, she played both woman roles in Neil LaBute’s “Bash” and cowrote and starred in many sketch comedy shows at The Second City with her group, The Weisenheimers. She has studied at both The Second City and the Stella Adler Academy.





EVAN GAUSTAD

“DANIEL”

Evan graduated from USC in May with a BA in theatre. There he was in several shows, including Lady Windermere’s “Fan”, “Once in a Lifetime” and “Sophistry”. He now studies at the Lesly Kahn studios and performs improv with a troupe through Improv Olympic.

IVY KHAN

“IVY”

Ivy Khan graduated from the University of California at San Diego with a degree in theatre. She has performed in over 35 shows around the San Diego and Los Angeles areas. Her most recent film credits include “Airplane Disasters” by Zach Horton and “Inbetween Days” by director Mike Ott.



ANTHONY J. MALDONADO

“ANTHONY”

Anthony J. Maldonado is a singer/songwriter living in Hollywood, California. He enjoys the classic and has co-produced two albums, also serving as recording engineer, guitarist, and bassist. His music ranges from acoustic folk to aggressive distorted rock.



CREDITS

CAST

Phillip Fisher JOSH ANDERSON
Monica MONICA YOUNG
Zach ZACH HORTON
Carly CARLY C. CRAIG
Elena MARIA ELENA LAAS
Daniel EVAN GAUSTAD
Ivy IVY KHAN
Anthony ANTHONY J. MALDONADO

CREW

Written and Directed by ZACH HORTON
Produced by ZACH HORTON
Director of Photography JAMES WEST
Gaffer ANDREW GRANT-CHRISTENSEN
Camera Operators JAMES WEST
ANDREW GRANT-CHRISTENSEN
Art Director ROBERT PHARES
Script Supervisor LEIGH-MICHIL GEORGE

Production Sound URBAN PELICON
KELLY McCLUSKEY
JJ PARADES
GERRY GONZALEZ

Assistant Editor..... DAN LANTER

Art Crew..... HARMONY BAILEY
LYNN COURT

Still Photographer..... JESSICA HORTON

Special Thanks:

ANN AND ROBERT HORTON
BARBARA AND JERRY NEWIN
BRADLEY BATTERSBY
SONY DIGITAL ARTS CETNER, AFI
JOE DUNN
KENT KAHLE
CLAIRE CARASKA
JENNIFER HOFFMAN
SETH GRAY
CURTIS SHERMAN
MARK WHITNEY
SAM TANNEN
OLICER MUNOZ
RITA DASILVA
JOSHUA LAWRENCE
MELANIE SIMPSON
RACHEL EISNER

Music:

“Airplane Disasters Theme” by
Josh Anderson and Denny Hustle

“Osama Dance”
“March”
by Casey Imamoor

“Caissons”
by Mitch Manker

“So Kind was Darlin’”
by Josh Anderson

“Bagatelle Op. 33 No. 4”
by Ludwig Van Beethoven
Courtesy of Gene Michael Productions

“A Spoonfull Blues”
“I’m Goin’ Home”
“Dry Well Blues”
“Moon Going Down”
“Rattlesnake Blues”
“Hang it on the wall”

by Charley Patton

“Mind Reader Blues”
by Bertha Lee
featuring Charley Patton

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THE END