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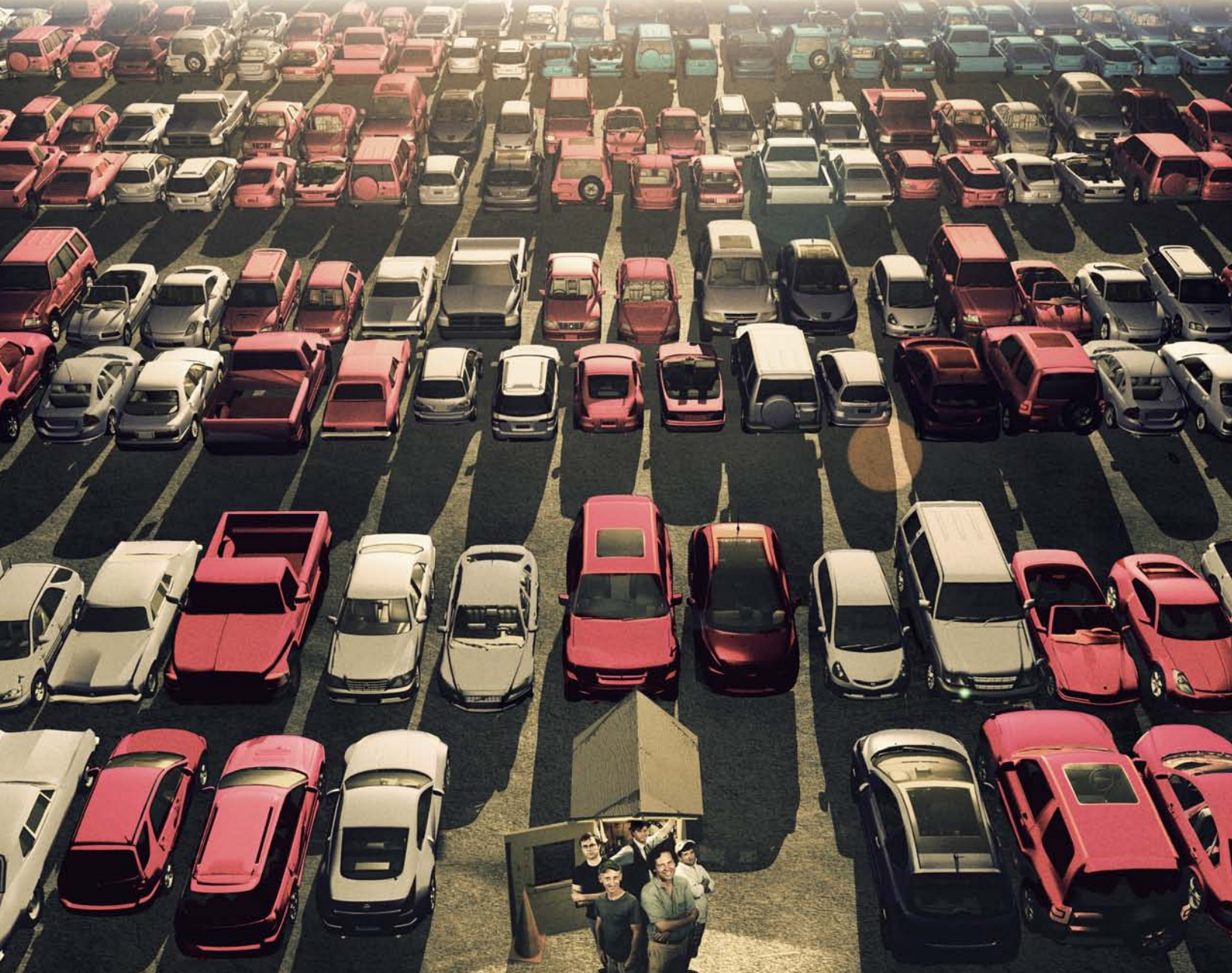
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**IT'S NOT JUST A PARKING LOT. IT'S A BATTLE WITH HUMANITY.**



**THE PARKING LOT MOVIE**



71 minutes | Documentary | 2010 ©Redhouse Productions LLC

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# CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR THE PARKING LOT MOVIE

**"Enthralling! The mix of absurdism and intellectualism is perfect."**

- Neil Genzlinger, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Far more compelling than its title..."

**Populated by a cast of characters Terry Gilliam couldn't dream up."**

- Sandy Hausman, NPR

**"Every minute spent in the Corner Parking Lot is stimulating and engaging..."**

By the end, you won't want to leave."

- Matt Frederick, AUSTINIST

**"More than just a real-life CLERKS..."**

You need to have fun manning such a claustrophobic pit stop and Eckman equals it for the audience."

- Erik Childress, CINEMATICAL

**"If there is only one film you see at Hot Docs 2010 it has to be The Parking Lot Movie..."**

one of the most brilliantly put together pieces I've seen this year."

-CITY TV, TORONTO

**"A 100 percent hidden gem."**

- SLACKERWOOD

**"A hilarious indictment of capitalism, class politics, and car culture."**

-Angie Driscoll, HOT DOCS FILM FESTIVAL

**"The Parking Lot Movie is a slice of Zen heaven, a tiny perfect movie shot in a single location"**

- MACLEANS

**"Makes an awfully convincing case for**

**the lot as a key battleground in America's ongoing culture war"**

-NOW, TORONTO

**"The fest's most feel-good film [on SXSW]"**

John Lichman, THE WRAP

**"Populated with smart characters that veer from acerbic to goofy without breaking a sweat."**

- Jim Kolmar, SXSW

"The backwaters of college towns are generally more colorful than elsewhere, and Charlottesville, Va., is no exception...**director Eckman's production is stunning."**

- AUSTIN CHRONICLE

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I'm very pleased with how the movie turned out. It contains both playful and serious moments. While the themes explored in the documentary are observations of American Culture, there is a level of absurdity at play. The attendant sits in a ramshackle booth and delivers his armchair philosophies. It is as if the booth becomes his throne or court bench so to speak. This creates the poignant vantage point from which the attendant judges both the world and himself and also finds his place within it. I call it Parking Lot Justice. The attendant is the ruler in a liminal space, where the rules and the realities bend and blur. This sets the stage for the unique drama.

I've always been interested in making films that are both socially intelligent and educational as well as entertaining. Fun is very important for me. Although I didn't initially intend to make a movie about social issues, The Parking Lot Movie became intertwined with larger themes concerning American culture. These themes included, but were not limited to: service sector jobs, college life, capitalism, anger, justice, awareness, car culture, the rise of the SUV, entitlement, the social contract, class struggle, and the American Dream.

This film is a coming of age story. It shows the attendants working at the Parking Lot during a formative time in their lives. They are a band of brothers coming together for the duration of their employment, growing collectively, and then moving on.

There is a kind of hype built up around this Parking Lot. In Charlottesville, the Corner Parking Lot has a legendary type of status and the hype surrounding it was contagious. Nearly everyone I interviewed brimmed over with enthusiasm for the project, and this kept me highly motivated.

In the end, I see this documentary as culturally significant for those involved as well as for the viewer.

**Meghan Eckman**

**Director and Producer, The Parking Lot Movie**



## TAGLINE

"It's not just a parking lot, it's a battle with humanity."

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

The Parking Lot Movie is a documentary about a singular parking lot in Charlottesville, Virginia. The film follows a select group of parking lot attendants and their strange rite of passage. Something as simple as a parking lot becomes an emotional way station for the American Dream.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

The Parking Lot Movie is a documentary about a singular parking lot in Charlottesville, Virginia and the select group of Parking Lot Attendants that inhabit its microcosm. The Attendants are a uniquely varied group of men comprised of both undergraduate and graduate students, philosophers, intellectuals, musicians, artists, and marginal-type characters.

Three years in the making, this documentary is a strange rite of passage for all involved. Themes receiving daily scrutiny and detailing include cars and license plates, capitalism, anger, justice, drunkenness, spiritual awareness, class struggle, entitlement, and working in the Service Sector. These all mesh together in the orbit of the Parking Lot Attendant.

For these denizens of Charlottesville, Virginia, the intersection between the status quo and the quest for freedom becomes the challenge. Something as simple as a parking lot becomes an emotional way station for The American Dream. As one Attendant interestingly puts it, "We had it all in a world that had nothing to offer us."

# PRODUCTION NOTES

Running Time: 71 min  
Language: English  
Genre: Documentary  
Format: DVCPRO  
Aspect: 4:3



## pre-production

Filming for The Parking Lot Movie began in Charlottesville, Virginia in January of 2007. It was at that time when a friend casually suggested that someone should make a movie about the Parking Lot where he worked. The following afternoon I headed to the Parking Lot and began filming. I never expected to make a feature film, but once I started filming I knew I had to make a full-length documentary about this Parking Lot. Thus began my first venture into making a feature film. In 2008, I brought Christopher Hlad into the project as Assistant Director and Co-Editor.

## production

The Parking Lot Movie was shot over the course of three years. In total, we shot over 140 hours of footage. The movie was shot using a Panasonic DVX in SD at 24 fps. The aspect ratio chosen was 4:3 in order to produce a small, claustrophobic effect that mimics the feel of sitting in the tiny parking lot booth.

## post-production

Editing of The Parking Lot Movie was done in Apple's Final Cut Pro. The primary challenge was in editing the footage so that something as simple as a Parking Lot could be made interesting for the arc of an hour and a half long feature film. As a result, the film went through countless edits and re-edits. Over 140 hours were cut down to the resulting film.

## soundtrack

For the soundtrack, Eckman hired New York based music writer Sam Retzer of Rudyland Music. Retzer, a veteran soundtrack composer, is a graduate of the University of Virginia. His website is [www.echopark.tv](http://www.echopark.tv) and [samretzer.com](http://samretzer.com).

Other songs on the soundtrack are written and performed by former Parking Lot Attendants featured in the movie – including Mark Schottinger and John Lindaman.

Former Parking Lot Attendant James McNew is the bassist of the highly-celebrated rock band Yo La Tengo. His music is available through [www.matadorrecords.com](http://www.matadorrecords.com) and [www.myspace.com/dumpland](http://www.myspace.com/dumpland)

# TOP TEN FAQ'S

## **01) Tell us a little about your background - how did you arrive at filmmaking?**

I started off as a video editor. Editing then evolved to become an interest in filmmaking and narrative storytelling as a whole. I became a filmmaker as a natural progression from editing.

## **02) A parking lot seems like such unlikely source material. What first drew you to the project?**

This Parking Lot is legendary in Charlottesville, Virginia. It has great myth and lore attached to it.

Over the years, many people have talked about making a movie about this particular Parking Lot; however, I was the first person to actually do it.

I personally was unfamiliar with The Corner Parking Lot before I began the project. A friend and parking attendant suggested that his parking lot would be a good subject for a movie. I showed up the next day with a video camera.

Once I started filming, I really began to understand that it truly was an exceptional place and a very deserving subject.

## **03) I get the feeling that there was a staggering amount of material. How was the editing process?**

The editing took three years to get it at a point where I was happy with it. The problem is – you're making a movie about a parking lot. You have to keep that subject matter entertaining and create a narrative arc over the course of a feature film. Overall, I considered my situation bizarre in terms of the subject matter of the documentary. But I think it paid off. It's an unusual subject matter. And yes, there was a staggering amount of material due to the fact that my strategy was to record everything and sort it out later. We ended up with over 160 hours of material. I owe an incredible amount of thanks to Co-Editor Christopher Hlad - who really streamlined the project at the editing stage. Christopher Hlad's role was essential in creating the final product.

## **04) What is so special about The Corner Parking Lot featured in this film?**

This Parking Lot has been referred to as a temporary autonomous zone, a liminal space – so there's a lot of lore and myth built up around it. It seems to be a space that attracts these outrageous situations – and I think it's in part due to the geographic location of the lot – it's located among bars within an affluent town – so you have a sort of class struggle at play as well as the bar college scene –both of which clash with the workspace of the Parking Lot Attendant. I can't tell you how many engaging stories had to be left "on the cutting room floor", and I can only hope to publish the interview transcripts down the road.

The key to what makes this parking lot special are the Parking Lot Attendants themselves. The owner – Chris Farina – likes to hire graduate students, musicians, artists, and so forth. Because of their peculiar vantage point as these Parking Lot Attendants working at The Corner Parking Lot, they have the chance to observe society at large and question its assumptions. I think there is also great love in this story. Although some may watch it and interpret it as a bitter stage upon which the action unfolds, I think if you look deeper you see the great love and connection the parking lot attendants have for this space where they continue to grow. That affection, and that fanaticism, really are contagious – and is what kept me going over the course of this project.

### **05) Can you comment on the 'us vs. them' dynamic that is prevalent throughout the film?**

This 'us vs. them' notion is such a strong part of the Parking Lot Attendant's experience. There's a sense of being on the margin, or part of the fringe culture. As a result, there is this backlash mentality and psychology that develops. This is based on the day to day workshifts of the Parking Lot Attendants and their interactions with the parkers. Yet, at the same time for example, there can be real irony or hypocrisy at play with this 'us vs. them' dynamic. For instance, there is some mockery of University of Virginia Students; however, the funny thing is that many of the Parking Lot Attendants were either graduate or undergraduate students at the University of Virginia as well.

### **06) What would you hope the potential view might glean from the film?**

I would like people to think more on the notion of Entitlement. By Entitlement I mean the belief that a person deserves certain privileges in life. I hope this film can make people more aware of some of their assumptions.

I would like for the film to manifest discourse about the Service Sector, the American Dream, car culture, entitlement, social manners and social etiquette and the brilliant business model that Chris Farina has created with his parking operation.. Ultimately, I want the audience to have an enjoyable experience that leaves them thinking.

### **07) The Parking Lot Movie is populated with all men. Why are there so few women in the film?**

In actuality, very few women have worked at The Corner Parking Lot over the years. The attendant's all being male in the film is representative of the reality and history of the lot.

### **08) What was Premiere like at SXSW?**

Our experience with having our World Premiere at SWSX2010 was truly fantastic.

Not only did we feel we were treated so well by the SXSW Film Staff, the manner in which our film was curated was top notch. We felt a kinship and warmth and generous hospitality from Austin and the fine people there, and the Alamo Drafthouse Ritz & Lamar absolutely rule for seeing films on the Silver Screen! Overall, a real nice blessing.

### **09) What were your biggest inspirations when creating this projects?**

"Clerks" and "Slacker" were big influences in terms of being character driven. I also really liked "Spellbound" and "Wordplay" as two documentaries that I felt were edited well, with a great soundtrack and great characters.

### **10) "The Parking Lot Movie" has a rap video in it. What brought that on?**

I consider the rules of documentary filmmaking malleable. I wanted to insert something fanciful. The entire time making this I was thinking about making the fiction version. So I wanted to leave a mark of something like fiction at the end – but with the same spirit and truth as well.

When we (Co-Editor Christopher Hlad and I) were nearing completion on the film, it ended with a quiet dignity – with parking lot owner Chris Farina reflecting on all the guys who have come through the lot and worked for him over the years. But that ending didn't feel appropriate. I didn't want to end the film on a quiet note – I wanted to end it with more pizzazz. Ultimately, I wanted it to end with the idea that "the parking lot attendant is the victor".

A colleague suggested a more fanciful ending. The music video had just the kind of playful element that the film needed to end on. I felt that it summed up the story of the parking lot attendant's experience in a way that was entertaining and lively.

# QUOTES FROM THE MOVIE

*"In the parking lot we were dynamos. Whirlwinds. We were rulers. We had it all in a world that had nothing to offer us."* -Scott Meiggs, Parking Lot Attendant

"I'm an anthropologist so I want to understand, I want to try to figure things out. Anthropologists try to figure out practices that don't seem to make sense at first, and the Booth was one of those things that I looked at and was like What the hell is going on in that Booth?"

Jeffrey Fleisher, Parking Lot Attendant  
1997-2002

"The level of talent at the Corner Parking Lot is astounding and apparently always has been."

Tyler Magill, Parking Lot Attendant  
2000-2003

"The philosophy of the job. It was a lens of looking at the entire life experience through the Parking Lot."

Matt Datesman, Parking Lot Attendant  
1998-2003

"That's what that job does to you. It makes you think that the fucking gate being broken is important - that it's worth getting into a fight - that it's worth getting into an altercation because someone broke a piece of plywood."

Gray Morris, Parking Lot Attendant  
2006-2008

"It is kind of a temporary autonomous zone, if you want to go Hakim Bey on it. It is a transitional place and I think people do sense that."

John Lindaman, Parking Lot Attendant  
1991-2002

"The Lexuses definitely suck. The Land Rovers always suck."

Bridge Cox, Parking Lot Attendant  
2000-2007

"I saw this car warming up -- but it had this huge cloud of carbon monoxide. The smoke was billowing up around car and it looked like this weird evil creature...and I kind of think of cars that way."

John Bylander, Parking Lot Attendant  
2006-2008

"I did not overcharge people to get more money. I overcharged people because they were dicks and deserved it. Vengeance is mine."

John Beers, Parking Lot Attendant  
1986-1990

"There was something about the Booth that has this very mystical quality. It was also the home of all the lore of the past however many months. So it was also the place where you could sort of see what was happening with other Attendants."

Jeffrey Fleisher, Parking Lot Attendant  
1997-2002

"I try to tell people about the Parking Lot -- about the experience of that. I could never get across what kind of place it was. I don't think it exists anywhere else. It's like, you try to describe it to people. People think it's such a pedestrian thing- a parking lot. They put the blinders on."

Scott Meiggs, Parking Lot Attendant  
1996-2000

"There was this whole issue of the justness of it - that people shouldn't get away parking for free. There's something about the rightness of parking."

Jeffrey Fleisher, Parking Lot Attendant  
1997-2002

"Uhh, you gotta pay?"

'Yeah you do.'

'What's that about?'

'I could explain the entire system of capitalism to you but you're sub-human, and there's a line of cars. It's 75 cents.'

Tyler Magill, Parking Lot Attendant  
2000-2003

"There'd be the list of people that drove off. We all wrote down their license plates because we were resentful. We thought one day God would shine his justice down and hand us this sword to tow people when have come to park here again."

Harper Hellems, Parking Lot Attendant  
1989-present

"It is about the social contract. And especially if you are talking to someone who's in a \$50,000 Eddie Bauer Ford Explorer and they're getting in your grill about 50 cents, to you that 50 cents is worth \$50,000 worth of Eddie Bauer Ford Explorer and you just want to take it out of them any way you can."

John Lindaman, Parking Lot Attendant  
1991-2002

*"Did we play God at the parking lot? And while none of us could, I guess we did. I guess we did play God."* -Scott Meiggs, Parking Lot Attendant

# FILMMAKER'S BIOGRAPHIES



## **MEGHAN ECKMAN** (Director and Producer)

The Parking Lot Movie marks the Directorial debut of Meghan Eckman. Eckman graduated from the University of Virginia in 2000 with a degree in English Language and Literature. In 2001, she moved to New York. There, Meghan made several short documentaries as well as worked as a professional video editor in Manhattan.

In 2005, the short film she produced and co-edited entitled Planet of the Arabs played at Sundance Film Festival. Meghan Eckman now resides in Charlottesville, Virginia and runs her own post-production company, Redhouse Productions.



## **CHRISTOPHER HLAD** (Assistant Director & Co-Editor)

Christopher Hlad is from Virginia, North America. He graduated from Northfield Mount Hermon in 1987. He credits "Somewhere Over The Rainbow", as Judy Garland originally sang it, with imbuing him with the Numinous and the Supernatural. Now he is additionally a Filmmaker.

# FULL CAST AND CREW

## The Parking Lot Attendants

PATRICK BARAN  
JOHN BEERS  
JOHN BYLANDER  
BRIDGE COX  
SAM DUNCAN  
MATT DATESMAN  
DANIEL FINN  
JEFFREY FLEISCHER  
COREY GROSS  
HARPER HELLEMS  
JOE LILLE  
JOHN LINDAMAN  
TYLER MAGILL  
JON MALESIC  
JAMES MCNEW  
NATE MILLINGTON  
SCOTT MEIGGS  
GRAY MORRIS  
DAN MOSELEY  
AJ PESCH  
MARK SCHOTTINGER  
RICK SLADE

## Other Interviewees

CHRIS FARINA - Parking Lot Chief  
DWAYNE JONES - City Patrol Officer  
JOHANNA LINDAMAN —  
Wife of Attendant John Lindaman

## Special Thanks

DUNCAN  
JASON ANDREWS  
BEN GATHRIGHT  
STEVE RICHMOND  
BRIAN THACKERY

Directed by  
Producer..  
Assistant Director  
Music By  
Associate Producer  
Edited by

Camera  
Additional Camera

Jib Shots  
Additional Editing Assistant  
Audio Mixing and Mastering  
Web Design

Web Consultants

Print Graphic Design  
Lead Still Photographer  
Secondary Photography

Music Video DP  
Music Video Assistant DP  
Music Video Assistant Camera  
Music Video PA's

Music Video Makeup Artist  
Music Video Attendant #1  
Music Video Attendant #2  
Music Video Attendant #3  
Music Video Attendant #4  
Music Video Angry Parker  
Music Video Judge #1  
Music Video Judge #2  
Music Video Frat Guy Pink Polo  
Music Video Frat Guy #2

MEGHAN ECKMAN  
MEGHAN ECKMAN  
CHRISTOPHER HLAD  
SAM RETZER  
TOM ECKMAN  
MEGHAN ECKMAN  
CHRISTOPHER HLAD  
MEGHAN ECKMAN  
BRIAN WIMER  
RAPHAEL SNABLY  
ERIC HURT  
JOHNNY LEE  
MORGAN KING  
MAC RIDGE  
ERIC HURT  
ROB WOLMAN  
LANCE BRENNER  
MEGHAN ECKMAN  
STILL POINT PRESS  
STEPHEN JOHNSON  
LAWRENCE KRUBNER  
KRISTIN ADOLFSON  
JON-PHILIP SHERIDAN  
RILEY DUNCAN  
CHRISTOPHER HLAD  
ERIC HURT  
JASON MITCHELL  
BRYAN BIEBER  
ALEX STORZ  
ALEXANDRA MILLER  
TAKAHIRO SUZUKI  
ALI CHEFF  
MARK SCHOTTINGER  
COREY GROSS  
PATRICK BARAN  
COLEMAN MOTLEY  
DENNY KING  
ALEX STORZ  
COLEMAN MOTLEY  
SAM RABINOVITZ  
BRYAN BIEBER

# SOUNDTRACK

"The Parking Lot" "Cars Are Weird"  
"Charlottesville Overview" "Coneman"  
"Humble Space" "Meta-Gate"  
"Good Grief" "Getting the Job"  
"Free Parking" "Burnout" "Final Ascent"

Written by Sam Retzer  
Rudyland Music ASCAP

## SOUNDTRACK

"Life In A Nutshell"

Lyrics by Mark Schottinger

Performed by Rikka Rikka

Music by Sam Retzer

Rudyland Music ASCAP

## SOUNDTRACK

"Hellbound On A Barstool"

Written and Performed by

Mark Schottinger

## SOUNDTRACK

"Black & White"

Written and Performed by

Mark Schottinger

## SOUNDTRACK

"Parker Paul Special"

Written and Performed by

Paul Wilkinson

