



**ODIN'S EYE**  
ENTERTAINMENT

**PRESS KIT**

# DAMNED BY DAWN

An Amazing Krypto Bros. Production.

Written & Directed by  
Brett Anstey

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# CREDITS

**An Amazing Krypto Bros. Production.**

**Written & Directed by  
Brett Anstey**

**Produced by  
Brett Anstey  
Luke Gibson**

**Special Make Up Effects  
Justin Dix**

**Production Designer  
David Jackson**

**Film Editor  
Dave Redman**

**Director of Photography  
Reg Spoon**

**Sound Designer  
Tristan Meredith**

**Original Music  
Phil Lambert  
Scott McIntyre**

## **STARRING**

**Renee Willner**

**Bridget Neval**

**Peter Stratford**

**Dawn Klingberg**

**Taryn Eva**

**Danny Alder**

**Mark Taylor**

## **LOG LINE**

During a violent thunderstorm, a family is awoken by piercing shrieks which summon the dead to rise again. Their lives explode in a blood soaked fury as they battle malevolent spirits ... whilst fighting to save their souls from eternal torment with... the Banshee.

## **SYNOPSIS**

After receiving a mysterious gift from her dying grandmother, Claire takes her new boyfriend home to meet her family who live on an isolated property in the country. The family reunion begins well but Claire becomes increasingly uneasy with her grandmother's medicated mumblings about the banshee coming for her during the night. Later that night, the family is awoken by piercing shrieks and Claire's worst fears become a waking nightmare as the Screaming Banshee and her army of undead return to unleash blood soaked fury on them all.

## **ABOUT BANSHEES**

In Irish mythology, a Banshee is a spirit, a messenger of death, who's wailing signals that a family member is going to die. Although not always seen, her mourning call is heard at night across the fields & within the woods. According to tradition, the Banshee can only cry for five major Irish families: the O'Neills, the O'Briens, the O'Connors, the O'Gradys and the Kavanaghs.

She appears in a number of different guises – the most popular are as a beautiful young maiden or as a ragged old woman. The Banshee may also appear in a variety of other forms, such as that of a hare, a hooded crow and weasel - animals associated in Ireland with witchcraft. But no matter how she appears, the Banshee's eyes are always bloodshot from centuries of weeping.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I grew up on a steady diet of the Hammer horror films and they were a big influence on the overall look and tone of DAMNED BY DAWN. In particular, as a kid I was never quite sure where exactly some of the Hammer films took place, geographically speaking. They had a nether world quality, almost like a fairy tale. I suppose the same could be said with the Universal films from the '30s and '40s too. So I worked hard to instill that feeling into DAMNED BY DAWN.

And as a kid growing up in the 'burbs of Melbourne, the Hammer "world" was for the most part, just so alien to me. It was so "old worldly European". And so scary!

I'd say "for the most part" because the only thing remotely "Hammer" in my world back then were pine forests. And the forests in the Hammers were always so dangerous. They were filled with evil; vampires, bats and wolves inhabited them. And I was attracted to that. I think because there was that connection. Because I could ride my BMX down the road to the forest and play within the "Hammer world" on a Saturday afternoon!

So I borrowed Hammer's "what evil lurks within the forest" element and used that in DAMNED BY DAWN. And the use of fog. We used a lot of fog!

I first became fascinated with the mythology of Banshees after watching the Disney movie *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* (1959). The image & concept really struck a chord with me. So I was always flummoxed that there hadn't been more banshee films. The idea and concept of a banshee is just ripe for a film. So as we were brainstorming ideas for a new film, I found some notes and research I had done on Banshees years earlier, and bingo! We had our new film. Through researching banshees, I discovered there are many different interpretations. Is she a young lady? A washer woman? An old hag? If you hear her wailing, does it signal it's you who will die? Or is it a loved one? So then it was just a case of what will work best within our story. What's creepier? So with some minor liberties, we stuck as close to traditional Irish folklore as possible.

After the first draft of the script was completed, it soon became apparent that making a period Hammer-esque horror film was beyond our poultry resources - we just couldn't afford Christopher Lee, Ingrid Pitt, horse-drawn carriages and boobs. However, fog, atmosphere and heavy doses of Irish mythology were all within our budget, so those elements remain.

Principle photography was shot during winter over 26 grueling days and nights in Ballarat, Australia. The cast and crew had to endure many nights in near-freezing conditions whilst working in forests and paddocks. In other words, the circumstances weren't ideal. But in the end we all survived...just! And despite the lowish budget, every cent is up on the screen.

The biggest challenge in making the film was not controlling the 950 cockroaches we purchased. Dealing and managing that many insects is testing at the best of times. Throw cold weather into the equation, and even the roaches struggled. They can survive a nuclear war, but barely made it through the nightly weather in Ballarat!

No, the biggest challenge was coming up with a title for the film. The most obvious one to use was, *THE BANSHEE*. But that seemed too literal & too obvious. Another name was *THE WAILING*, but we thought people may think the film was about Greenpeace or something. So with a pun, a homage & a little bit of irony, I came up with the title DAMNED BY DAWN.

**Brett Anstey**

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

Special Make-Up Effects artist Justin Dix helped bring the central banshee creature to life in collaboration with concept designer Seth Justus, performer Bridget Neval and Sound Designer Tristan Meredith, the latter of whom Anstey cites as another key contributor to DAMNED's horrific impact: "Tristan Meredith has created a sound for the banshee's shrieking that seriously makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand up."

Producing a feature film on very little money is never ideal. But thankfully the entire cast and crew were really up for the challenge and were willing to accept any of the obstacles that were thrown at them. "For the most part, making these types of films is a blast. You get to do things that you wouldn't normally get the opportunity to experience. I mean, who wouldn't want to spend their nights running around through spooky woods, or getting covered in blood, or exploring old mine shafts, or dealing with hundreds of cockroaches, or walking around creepy old houses. These things are fun to do!" says Anstey. "We spent two days & nights shooting in an abandoned mine shaft. This place was not easily accessible, as in we'd have to carry the camera equipment/unit gear/generators etc at least two kilometers - over creeks, through waist high thistles & blackberries, up hills which were almost vertical - it was insane, all of this JUST to reach the entrance of the shaft. Then we needed to venture deep inside the shaft to shoot. And without a torch, it was pitch black. And incredibly spooky! By the end of the two days, everyone became a victim of the low hanging ceiling - I've never heard more expletives within a two day period!"

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

### **BRIDGET NEVAL – The Banshee**

Bridget spent much of her childhood in Canada and moved to Australia when she was twelve. She made her professional acting debut at 16 in the Canadian/Australian co-production GUINEVERE JONES (Crawfords). The following year she was cast as the lead in Jonathan M Schiff's series WICKED SCIENCE, which ran for two seasons and won an AFI for Best Children's Programme. At 19, Bridget was cast as the first openly gay character in the long-running Australian soap opera NEIGHBOURS, which generated a great deal of controversy in Australia and overseas. She has performed in various TV, film and theatre productions including KATH AND KIM, CHASING PEGASUS and the award-winning short film, KEN'S BAD DAY. Since completing DAMNED BY DAWN, Bridget has retired from acting and is currently pursuing a career in counselling/social work.

### **RENEE WILLNER – Claire**

Renee graduated from the University of Ballarat Performing Arts. After her critically applauded performance as 'Fiona' in David Williamson's THE REMOVALIST, Renee toured Australia performing the meatiest of Shakespeare's ladies such as Queen Margaret, Beatrice, Miranda and Hamlet (no offence to the Prince of Denmark - it was an adaptation!). Renee's previous film work included the award winning shorts MOTHERS HEART & KIKI. Renee is also an accomplished singer and enjoys performing in a jazz duo belting out classic tunes and exploring original works.

## **PETER STRATFORD – Bill**

Peter has appeared in Film, TV and Theatre, working in the UK, USA, and Australia. He hosted the Current Affairs Programme, “Open House”, for BBC South in the Sixties, appeared in Cabaret/Fashion in San Francisco in the seventies and since returning to Australia in the mid seventies, has appeared in over forty TV mini series and TV series, in continuing and guest roles.

He has appeared on Stage in over forty five productions, ranging from Shakespeare to DeLillo, in subsidized/State theatres, commercial national tours, independent and experimental theatre.

Over the years he has appeared in many short films, some nineteen feature films, the latest of which was shot in 2010. “Damned by Dawn” was his first venture into “horror” which he found immensely enjoyable, especially to work with such a stimulating cast and creative team.

## **TARYN EVA – Jen**

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Taryn’s first feature film role is as 16yo Jen in “Damned by Dawn”.

Her featured acting credits have included Erica in “the Apocalypse Bear “ trilogy and “Bonnie” in “Todd’s Story”, a road safety documentary. Taryn’s stage experience at school culminated in her recognition as one of her state’s gifted drama students, through her inclusion in the Victorian Top Class Drama showcase performance series of 2007.

Taryn is currently combining her acting and university film/TV and zoology studies, hoping for opportunities to travel and pursue both of these passions.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

### **BRETT ANSTEY – Director, Writer & Producer**

In 1984, a showing of the classic Ray Harryhausen film, *The 7<sup>th</sup> Voyage of Sinbad*, captured the imagination of Brett who immediately acquired a Super 8 camera and began his first foray into stop motion animation. Fast-forward many years and he has accrued an impressive and solid work history. Initial employment as a camera operator led soon after to lauded success as both a Director of Photography and Director on a wide variety of commercials, short films, music videos and television series, including *Search For A Super Model*, *Squawk TV*, *The World Comedy Tour* and *The Guido Hatzis Lecture Series* and various music videos for the Aria-nominated bands *Area 7* & *The Living End*.

As founding member of the nefarious Melbourne-based consortium of guerrilla film-makers known as THE AMAZING KRYPTO BROS., he is inspired by Antonio Rinaldi, Bernard Herrmann, Curt Siomak, Mike Barson and Graeme Garden.

### **DAVE REDMAN – Editor, Associate Producer**

Dave Redman is a prolific editor with a passion for storytelling and is a long time collaborator with Brett Anstey on a number of short films.

For over 20 years Dave has been a film and television editor cutting four feature films, over 150 episodes of TV, hundreds of TVCs, music videos and 40 short films that have played at festivals worldwide. He has participated in Q&A sessions at Popcorn Taxi and St Kilda Film Festival and had a rare midnight screening of three of his films at St Kilda Film Festival in 2000.

Dave is also a graduate of the prestigious Australian Film, Television & Radio School (AFTRS) with an MA in Editing for Drama and won the Complete Editor Award in his graduating year (1998). Dave's other awards include Best Editing in an Australian Film at Flickerfest(2000) and the Australian Screen Editors' Best Editing Award (TV non-drama) for 'Bondi Vet' (2009).

### **JUSTIN DIX – Special Make-Up Effects**

Justin heads up Wicked of Oz, an award winning special effects studio to cater for the ever expanding film industry in Australia. Justin and his Wicked crew have created award winning prosthetic makeup effects, props, miniatures, animatronic characters and set pieces for the feature films, television and exhibition industry.

Justin has worked with respected directors such as George Lucas and Roger Donaldson, re-creating iconic robots R2-D2 and C3PO for STAR WARS Episode 2 & 3 and 1960's Trinidad for the UK production "The Bank Job". Wicked of Oz has also now established itself amongst a new breed of directors such as Greg McLean of "Wolf Creek" and Jamie Blanks of "Urban Legend".

Known for injecting his enthusiasm into each and every project, Justin has lead his talented and professional team to be recognized internationally, being awarded 'Best Special Effects Make-Up' for their work on Jamie Blank's Storm Warning. Most recently Justin completed the Make-Up FX for Sean Byrne's THE LOVED ONES & the much acclaimed RED HILL.

### **REG SPOON – Director of Photography**

Reg started in the industry "almost by accident" as a runner in the mid 1960's before working his way into the camera department on numerous television drama series during the 1970's. After shooting the award winning Miss Muffet children's television series, Reg "un-officially" retired in 1989. A gifted artist, he spent the next few years concentrating on painting – resulting in three critically acclaimed exhibitions. It was a chance encounter with The Amazing Krypto Bros that lured Reg back behind the camera for the short film, COSMIC SAFARI. When he's not being lured out of retirement, Reg lives on the Mornington Peninsula with his wife of 46 years & two dogs of 6 & 10 years, respectively.

### **THE AMAZING KRYPTO BROS – Production Company**

Founded in 1986, The Amazing Krypto Bros are a group of film makers favouring the science fiction, horror & comedy genres. Each member proudly wears many hats. They are not brothers in real life.

## **REVIEWS**

“Sick of waiting for EVIL DEAD 4? Check out DAMNED BY DAWN”

- Quiet Earth

“...is highly original and gushes a full dose of chills!”

- [www.horrornews.net](http://www.horrornews.net)

“DAMNED BY DAWN is serious fun... And you can't knock a film with flying skeletons.”

- Fangoria

“the film is beautifully filmed – clear and detailed, despite being set mainly at night – with good acting, strong cutting and narrative pace, plenty of chills and suspense, and sound FX that will drill the spookiness into the back of your skull.”

- Undeep Backbrain