

A
FILM BY
NEIL JACKSON

BUTTER SIDE UP





THE STORY

Richard Brodie is about to die. It's what he wanted when he hired the killer, but somehow, in chasing death, he realized that he has more to live for...The only problem now is he can't call off the hit.

SYNOPSIS

Richard Brodie's life hasn't gone the way he planned. His dreams of becoming a rock star were going well right up until he met Teri. She was in the crowd for one of his shows and things complicated quickly when she got pregnant soon after they met. Wanting to do the right thing, Richard proposed and quit the band to 'take a real job' at an insurance company in order to provide for Teri and the baby. Richard's parents were against the wedding, so were his friends, but Richard didn't listen—he was in love. Instead, he cut everyone out of his life in favor of his wonderful new wife and burgeoning family.

Now, five years later, Richard is suicidal. He and Teri lost the baby. Their relationship is in tatters. The job he gave up his dream for sucks and he sucks at it. And, adding insult to injury, Teri is having an affair. It's been going on for so long now that Richard can't remember what bothers him more—the fact that she's cheating, or the fact that she wakes him up when she returns home from doing it.



After several failed attempts to take his own life, Richard realizes he needs help. Professional help. He needs a hitman.

Richard calls Mike, his old bandmate. Mike is ex-military and reluctantly tells Richard where he can find a contract killer. But they're expensive and, after the bank refuses Richard a loan, he's left with only one option—to call the parents he hasn't spoken to in five years... to borrow money... to pay for an assassin to take his own life.

This messed up situation worsens when, through pursuing death, Richard inadvertently repairs the broken elements of his life and realizes he no longer wants to die. Unfortunately, he doesn't know how to call off the hit.



BUTTER SIDE UP is a darkly-comedic, feel-good movie that will have audiences laughing out loud one moment and bursting into tears the next. It asks us to challenge our sense of personal identity and suggests that, after all the bullshit, happiness may actually be found in living the life you have instead of chasing the one you dreamed of.





NEIL JACKSON

As an actor, Neil has worked with A-List directors and producers, including Marc Forster, Woody Allen, Joe Johnston, and Neil Jordan. He recently appeared in the Robert Zemeckis feature WELCOME TO MARWEN as well as season two of WESTWORLD on HBO.

Neil's "big break" came when he was cast opposite Angelina Jolie and Colin Farrell in Oliver Stone's ALEXANDER. The big budget epic led to international recognition as an "actor on the rise" and landed him on the Universal Studios "One to Watch" list. This propelled Neil into the role of Marcus Van Sciver, the lead antagonist in BLADE: THE SERIES. He then worked on the superhero thriller PUSH, opposite Chris Evans and Djimon Hounsou, and played Mr. Slate in the 22nd James Bond film QUANTUM OF SOLACE.

Neil can currently be seen in the Amazon original series ABSENTIA and will soon appear the prequel to the KINGSMAN franchise as well as star in the DC Comics series STARGIRL.

RICHARD

Neil will play Richard, the hero of this story. Richard is a troubled man. Having made a series of bad choices, Richard is a tragic figure in the film and, like most tragic figures, he is fraught with comedy. We will laugh as he wallows in his own misfortune and rejoice when he finally takes responsibility for his actions and finds the will to live.

MIKE

Richard's estranged best friend and former band-mate, Mike is the heart of the film. His excitement to reconnect with Richard is second only to his love for his friend, and he proves throughout the film that he'd do anything to help Richard get back to himself. A role with humor, depth, and emotion, Hannibal Burrell, Bobby Cannavale, and Jake Johnson would be amazing choices.





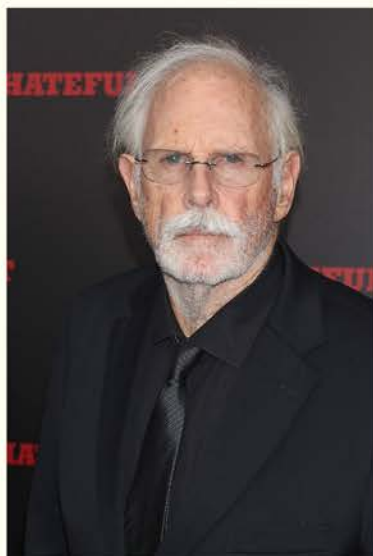
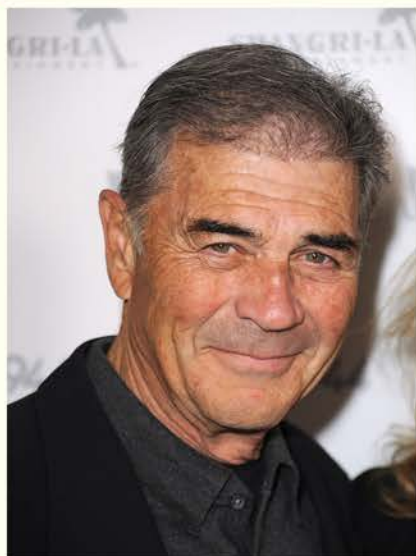
GENA

Gena knows exactly who she is: a strong, centered, luminous beacon to which Richard is inexplicably drawn. Theirs is a relationship that we never see fully materialize, but it is integral to Richard's story. Gena is a bastion of hope, an example to Richard that what happens to you doesn't have to define you. She is the emotional core of the film, reminding Richard that he has so much to live for. Zoe Saldana, Gina Rodriguez, and Rosario Dawson would all be wonderful.

TERI

The "villain" of the film if there ever was one, Teri is really just misunderstood. She's as much a victim of the circumstances as Richard is, but she takes the brunt of the blame. All Teri wants is her chance at a happy life, though she doesn't always go about it in the most positive ways. This is a role with gravitas, and needs a sharp actress who can communicate many emotions at once. Perfect for the likes of Rose Byrne, Sarah Silverman, or Krysten Ritter.





JIM

Richard's father is a no-nonsense guy who can't and won't forgive his son for his transgressions. It's only when Richard seeks out help from his parents that he begins to truly piece his world back together, and his relationship with Jim is at the heart of that. Ultimately, all Richard wants is the love and forgiveness of his father, but Jim makes sure he truly has to earn it. Bruce Dern, Jonathan Banks, or Robert Forster would all be fantastic.

SARAH

Sarah is a mother's love personified. She regrets the events that lead to their estrangement and wishes nothing more than to have her son back in her life. Quick to forgive and desperate for harmony, Sarah is the vulnerable center of our story that makes Richard question his actions and allows him to hope for a better life. A powerful performance given by Sissy Spacek, Blythe Danner, or Jacki Weaver would do wonders.





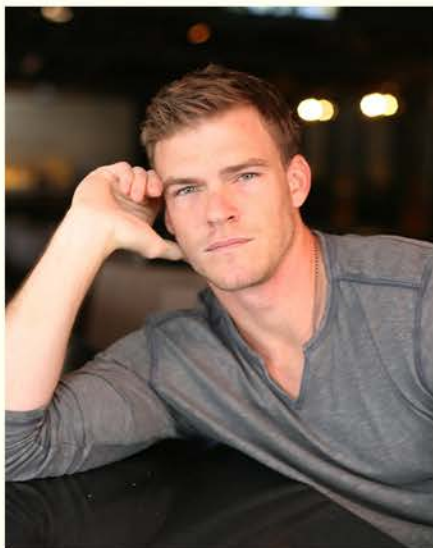
MR. GREENWOOD

A millennial through and through, Mr. Greenwood represents everything Richard never wanted to be, though is rapidly becoming. Smarmy, over confident and brash, Mr. Greenwood is the mirror Richard needs to see how far his life has gone off course. Michael Cera and Jay Baruchel would portray him perfectly with likeability and humor.



LUCY

The personification of Richard's low point, Lucy arrives at what appears to be a welcome respite from the failures of his life, only to end up magnifying them when he finds out she's not who she seems to be. Dakota Fanning or Lucy Hale would be great in this role.



ERIC

Eric is Teri's current lover and represents everything Richard no longer is: young, handsome, and incredibly amiable. Eric has no qualms with Richard, and mostly tries to remain on the sidelines. However, his presence is the final slap in Richard's face that sets him on his journey. He's a comedic character and would be an incredible cameo role.





NEIL JACKSON, WRITER/DIRECTOR

Neil's feature writing career began in 2007 with *THE PASSAGE*, produced by Lynette Howell (*A STAR IS BORN*, *CAPTAIN FANTASTIC*), starring Neil and Stephen Dorff. The stylized thriller was shot in Morocco and premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in the Discovery Section. It went on to win the Durango Film Festival Jury Award for Best Film in 2008.

Neil's second produced feature script was *STAR CROSSED* in 2009. This reimagining of *Romeo and Juliet* set in the world of Portuguese football was shot entirely in Porto, Portugal.

Neil's directorial debut was *OFF RAMP*. A harrowing and emotional drama of hope and redemption, the short garnered several awards, including the audience award for Best Film at New York State Film Festival and Best Short Film at Nice International Film Festival. Neil's second short *PERFECT PAIR* was entirely different in tone, winning awards for comedy at the Columbus Film Festival and the Sydney International Film Festival.

BUTTER SIDE UP will be his feature directorial debut.



SASHA NONAS-BARNES, PRODUCER

Crafting and producing content longer than he even realized, Sasha always had a knack for bringing worthwhile entertainment to the masses. He went from putting on an award-winning stage adaptation of *NEWSIES* as a teenage summer camp counselor to producing the longest-running talk/variety show in Washington University TV history as an undergraduate. A former retail manager, Sasha has experience running big money operations with large staffs of people and understands how to manage personalities.

He began his career in Los Angeles freelancing, working on the feature *NEIGHBORS* as well as various commercials, catalogue shoots, and short films, but soon discovered that developing and producing content was what he wanted to do. He spent two years learning as an assistant before being promoted to Creative Executive and, shortly thereafter, Head of Development at Ineffable Pictures. In that role he blossomed, creating a marketing campaign for the Netflix film *LATE BLOOMER* and setting up projects with various companies, including Millennium Films, Silver Pictures, UCP, and OddLot Entertainment.





TIEGEN KOSIAK, PRODUCER

Tiegen Kosiak began her career in Los Angeles in 2013 handling commercial campaigns for Kay Jewelers, Hasbro, and other brands. She then transitioned into literary management at Untitled Entertainment, working under veteran manager and producer Jennifer Levine.

Tiegen went on to become the Director of Development for Zoe Saldana's production company Cinestar Pictures where she oversaw the development of feature, TV, digital, scripted, and unscripted content under first look deals with Lionsgate, Televisa, and AwesomenessTV.



She received a BA in Communications from Marymount Manhattan College and a MFA in Poetry from Minnesota State University Moorhead.

Tiegen is a member of Film Independent and the Hollywood Radio Television Society (HRTS) as well as the co-founder of The Young Hollywood Mafia, a networking group that recently celebrated its four-year anniversary with 150 members across all disciplines of entertainment.



TY WALKER, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/LINE PRODUCER

Ty Walker has made his mark in the entertainment industry by passionately producing, line producing, and managing a plethora of feature-length movies, television shows, and new media content of various genres and budgets around the globe.

His work includes the Sundance hit BLUE CAPRICE; OMPHALOS, a sci-fi feature starring Emmanuelle Chriqui and Edoardo Ballerini; ALL THAT I AM, a SXSW Grand Jury and Audience Award winner; JULIA, the soon-to-be released noir horror lensed by Icelandic Oscar-nominated cinematographer Bergsteinn Björgúlfsson; REDRUM, the Investigative Discovery (ID) show that set a new record for the channel with the biggest opening night in history and highest audience ratings; and CARTER HIGH starring Charles S. Dutton, Vivica Fox, Pooch Hall, Reginald C. Hayes, and David Banner.

Some of Walker's most recent projects are IMPERIUM, the Lionsgate Premiere thriller starring Daniel Radcliffe, Toni Collette, and Tracy Letts; Animal Planet's hit show THE VET LIFE; INHERIT THE VIPER starring Josh Hartnett, Margarita Levieva, Owen Teague, and Bruce Dern; Netflix's highly talked about series TRIGGER WARNING; and CBS sitcom HOT DATE.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

BUTTER SIDE UP is a deeply relatable and darkly amusing story about one man having something of a mid-life crisis. Faced with the reality that his life has not ended up at all the way he hoped, Richard confronts the choices that lead him there and decides that suicide is his only option. But death proves a lot harder than he expected and, in trying to die, he ultimately learns to live.

I'm fascinated by the image we have of ourselves when we are young. We had these grandiose expectations of how we thought our lives would play out and then, when we look back years later, after time and experience have taken their knocks, we feel like we've somehow failed because we haven't lived up to those impossible ideals. It's hilarious. To think that we can be made to feel like failures based upon the dreams of children. And yet still we do.

BUTTER SIDE UP is my exploration of this. It's a story about letting go of childish ideals. It's a story about taking responsibility for our lives and realizing that we are the product of our choices. It's a story about learning to love the life you have, rather than regret not having the life you once dreamed of. But, ultimately, it's a story about learning to love yourself—in all your wonderful, weird, fucked up splendor. It's about how bad shit happens, but it's often nowhere near as bad as it seems and, how, if we'd only take a few steps back, we might realize that, although we may have fallen, we've actually landed BUTTER SIDE UP.

– Neil Jackson

