

# "Little Savages":



## Filmed in Culver



Cast of the movie, *"Little Savages."*

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- Noah Lomax, lead character in the movie, *"Little Savages"* about his experience at The Original Root Beer Stand



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# Little Savages - The story

By Jeff Kenney  
Staff Writer

While “Little Savages” was obviously filmed mostly in Culver, Indiana, some have asked if the movie is actually set there, and the answer is a definite “yes.”

As the movie opens, we meet 10-year-old Albie Peterson (played by Noah Lomax) and his 16-year-old, social media addicted sister, Tiffany (played by Katherine McNamara), at a rural Indiana gas station on the way to Culver (the store at Yellow River Farms on State Road 8 was transformed into the spot).

Their mother Meg is dropping them off for the summer at the home of Aunt Jackie (Leigh-Allyn Baker), a slightly eccentric (she fancies herself a stand-up comic) resident of Culver, whose home is portrayed by Bill Barnes’ Cherry Villa cottage in Culver.

Neither Albie or Tiffany are thrilled, at first, to be temporary residents of Culver, but for different reasons: Albie is a socially awkward “brainiac” sort, nose perpetually buried in science books (he pines to attend a science camp advertised on the radio near the start of the movie) and plagued -- at least he thinks -- by a plethora of allergies and potential maladies.

Tiffany is his opposite: social to the extreme, she dreads the “social suicide” of small-town Indiana.

For her part, Aunt Jackie does her best to attempt integration of the two into the best of Culver life, dragging Albie to a talent show audition where he inadvertently meets would-be magician Eddie Savage (played by Aedin Mincks). The two have an unpleasant meeting with the villain of the story, Billy Bronson (Adam Hicks), forever trailed by his “cronies,” Harley (Connor Del Rio) and Garrison (Austin Mincks), which gets their gears turning on various possibilities for revenge.

We soon also meet Eddie’s cousins, a local family with the last name Savage: twins Winnie (Aubrey Miller) and Vinny (Buddy Handleson), and teenaged Todd (Kenton Duty), who works as a technician at Culver Marina, where Aunt Jackie has taken her pontoon boat for repairs. It’s clear there’s no love lost between good-

hearted Todd Savage and sneering Billy Bronson.

We also learn, as the movie unfolds, of Mr. Whitmore, a benevolent, faith-filled benefactor to the town of Culver who has been deceased for one year. Whitmore has famously hidden a treasure somewhere in Culver, with the intention that it go to someone deserving of it and who will do good with it. Clues as to its whereabouts are set to be released soon, and not coincidentally, Billy Bronson’s underhanded father, Fritz (played by Jamie Kennedy), has made his way back to Culver just in time, after being disgraced for his embezzling from Whitmore and leaving town for Chicago some years earlier.

One of the major themes of the film comes to the fore in the manner Albie inadvertently stumbles upon a clue related to the treasure: his passion for science has him reading Mr. Whitmore’s science-related books purely for pleasure, and in one he unwittingly stumbles upon a hint. We learn through implication, as the movie progresses, the value of using one’s intellect and following one’s passion, and the “treasure” they may lead one towards.

Albie’s growing bond with the Savages as his apparent first real friends form another important theme in the movie: that of authentic, self-giving friendship based on mutual and unconditional acceptance, contrasted as it is with the obviously uncharitable and manipulative relationships of which young bully Billy seems only capable.

One of those budding relationships is with Tiffany Peterson, who has initially fallen into an increasingly




PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

The cast includes: (from left, front) Buddy Handleson, as Vinny Savage; Aubrey Miller, as Winnie Savage; Noah Lomax, as Albie Peterson; ; (in back) Kenton Duty as Todd Savage; Aedin Mincks as Eddie Savage; Leigh-Allyn Baker as Aunt Jackie; and Katherine McNamara as Tiffany Peterson.

strained comrederie with Billy and his cronies, as well as Tiffany’s shallow friend Sarah (played by Leah Bate-man).

Through a series of misadventures (some of them blatantly dishonest on the part of Billy and company), both Billy and his gang, and Albie and the Savages each find themselves with critical components in finding the treasure. The decision is made to hold a competition involving a series of challenges -- ranging from canoe races, to tests of intellect, to a fishing competition -- with the losing team handing over their respective “key” to the treasure, to the winning team.

In the climactic scenes that follow, a number of the movie’s overarching themes are brought together, and of course the matter of the treasure -- among other things -- is resolved, but not without some unexpected twists and turns along the way.




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# On Location - Familiar Landmarks



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

Cast members Aubrey Miller and Noah Lomax race through the cemetery during a scene from the movie, "Little Savages."



CULVER CITIZEN-PILOT NEWS GROUP PHOTO/JEFF KENNEY

The Culver Library is featured in this photograph from the set, which depicts the Mayor of Culver being interviewed by a local news crew.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

The Original Rootbeer Stand is the location for several scenes in the movie, including this night-time one, shot the last day of filming in the community. Here, cast members Katherine McNamara and Adam Hicks talk with Director Paul Tomborello.

In filming "Little Savages," movie-makers creatively utilized a number of sites, ranging from businesses (Culver Marina, First Farmers Bank, the Original Root Beer Stand, and Lakehouse Grille among them), to public buildings (the exterior of the Culver Public Library, the train depot), to the town park and beach (for a variety of scenes), to Culver Academies (both interior office and infirmary scenes and outdoor shots of the Woodcraft Camp), to private homes (in addition to the Barnes cottage, also Aker and Damore houses on the lake).



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN  
LEFT: Cast members Buddy Handleson, Kenton Duty, Noah Lomax and Austin Mincks cool off in Lake Maxinkuckee during the filming.



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# Week One - Filming Begins



**CULVER CITIZEN-PILOT NEWS GROUP PHOTO/JEFF KENNEY**

Director of Photography, Gerry Lively (far right, front) discusses a scene being shot inside the Lakehouse Grill with Katherine MNamara and Kenton Duty.



**CULVER CITIZEN-PILOT NEWS GROUP PHOTO/JEFF KENNEY**

Actors Austin Mincks, Leah Bateman, Adam Hicks and Connor Del Rio are on campus at Culver Academies in a scene from "Little Savages."



**PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN**

Aedin Mincks and Noah Lomax, portraying Eddie Savage and Albie Peterson wait for directions outside Cherry Villa.



**CULVER CITIZEN-PILOT NEWS GROUP PHOTO/JEFF KENNEY**

Producer Phillip Glasser, actor Noah Lomax, Executive Producer James Simmons and actor Katherine McNamara cut up for the photographer outside the Cherry Villa during the first week of filming.

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# Week Two - Rolling



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

Cast and crew use a portion of Culver Park to film scenes in the movie "Little Savages." Scenes were shot in random order to utilize locations, cast member schedules and other production factors.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

Kenton Duty (front) and Adam Hicks perfect their personal water craft operating skills on Lake Max in preparation for one of several scenes shot on the lake.



CULVER CITIZEN-PILOT NEWS GROUP PHOTO/JEFF KENNEY

A room at First Farmers Bank is transformed into the Culver mayor's office during filming this week.

PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

RIGHT: Actress Leah Bateman is interviewed as part of Bearfruit Films documentation of the filming.



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# The Vision - How “Little Savages” came to Culver

Producer James Simmons: Back in February, I was talking with a friend named David at Man Camp, which is run through Young Life, and thinking about what film to do next. I wanted to make a kids’ movie -- something my 10, 8, and 6 year olds could watch, something adventurous like “Goonies,” but for younger kids. When I watched “Goonies,” I realized there’s a lot in there that I didn’t remember watching (from childhood).

David and I spoke for three to five hours, and I turned that into a four page treatment, which I gave to Paul Tomborello, my business partner at Bearfruit Films. Paul said he would love to write the script, so Paul and one of his associates in Los Angeles wrote the script in seven weeks.

Meanwhile, I went to a film festival in Nashville and met (movie producer and actor) Phillip Glasser.

Instead of coming back to Phoenix and L.A., we went to Indianapolis to see what the drive was like. That was to please my wife! She thought we should make “Little Savages” in Culver. Paul didn’t like the idea at all, because there are no film incentives in Culver.

Halfway through my drive from Indianapolis to Culver, I was like, “We’re not doing this!”

When I got to Culver, it was a totally different experience. We pulled in at 9:30 at night and stopped in at the Lakehouse Grille. Paul and I had a side bet and whoever lost had to sing karaoke, so Paul sang karaoke there!

The next day, we drove around and parked, and walked all around the lake. We both thought, “This movie could really be filmed right here in Culver.” Paul thought, if it’s going to happen got to get rootbeer stand and this house he really liked for Aunt Jackie (was going to be grandma’s house but changed).

When I got back to Phoenix I made a few phone calls. The first one was to Culver Chamber of Commerce President Tony Sellers; we spoke half an hour to



Paul Tomborello and Russ Mason discuss the possibility of filming a movie in Culver during a visit to the area this summer.

an hour three times. Finally he said, “I think you guys are for real,” and he began to forward my e-mails to the Chamber, including Rick Tompos at the (Culver) Academy. Things were looking like this could really be an option, but we needed to make another trip to Culver to meet business owners, the Academy -- we wanted to make sure there was no resistance. Less than \$1 million is not enough money to buy many favors!

Mark Damore Jr. said, “I want to meet with you first, so on our second trip I meet with Junior at his restaurant and he says, “Do you mind if I invite my dad? My dad owns the root beer stand.” We thought, “This is working out nicely!” Mary introduced us to Gary Aker Jr., and we changed a little of the story after meeting with Gary, turning our hero from a mechanic into a marina tech. Gary actually became one of the three on-set production managers of “Little Savages.”

We did a casting call at the local (middle) school. There’s that dichotomy of town, lake and Academy, and we thought, “What can we do to reach out to the community?”

We thought if we could get two or three name actors we would be happy. We were able to get nine recognizable, name actors. There was a buzz and some started reaching out to see if they could be in this film.

We were really, really blessed with recognizable name actors. It took only two or three takes to get everything.

Then the (elementary) school asked if we could have some of our kids go there, and we said we would do what we can.

On their off time the young actors wanted to go to the school and encourage that group. There were others we found out about along the way, and our kids and (actress) Leigh-Allyn Baker wanted to encourage those people. They were really, really good with the locals. I was blown away with how kindhearted they are. They are not big stars in their own heads.

If I could envision the way our pre-production and production would go, in terms of the cast, the crew, the weather -- just things falling into place, I don’t think I could envision it happening any better than it played out. It literally played out better than I could have hoped!

I think when you watch it, you’ll be very proud.

It was amazing, and I’m really happy we chose Culver. The cast and crew fell in love with Culver, so thank you.

## Artifacts

As cast and crew prepared to leave Culver for all points north, east, and west, the film-makers behind the movie made a point to leave those props from filming which they wouldn’t need for future projects, many of which were uniquely specific to “Little Savages” and Culver. These included costumes worn by many of the stars, items created for the movie such as a faux Culver newspaper called “The Culver Courier,” signs to convey spaces like a false “city hall” (“Who needs theme parks when you have city hall? Meetings every 30 minutes!”), and a number of other items.

These were donated to the Center for Culver History, the museum of the Antiquarian and Historical Society of Culver, for future exhibits.

Producer James Simmons has also suggested it’s possible some of those props could be used in sequels filmed here, if there are any

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# Community Outreach - Cast get involved

By Jeff Kenney  
Staff Writer

Several cast members of “Little Savages” delighted students at Culver Elementary School mid-way through shooting the movie by way of an appearance before the assembled students who greeted them with thunderous applause, cheers, and foot-stomping.

Students, however, listened with rapt attention as stars Katherine McNamara, Kenton Duty, Noah Lomax, Aubrey Miller, Leah Bateman, and (joining the others several minutes into the presentation) Austin and Aedin Mincks, were introduced by assistant principal Erin Proskey and briefly described the movie and some of the particular scenes.

McNamara and Proskey said it’s hoped there will be a showing of the finished movie, slated for release in spring or early summer, 2014, outdoors at the town park (though news of having to wait that long to view it elicited groans from the clearly eager young audience).

Duty discussed school being a “big aspect” of life for young actors, noting McNamara has completed her bachelor’s degree and will soon start her master’s. He said young actors must take part in classes three hours



Actor Kenton Duty has fun with the students at Culver Elementary School during a visit while in town during the filming of Bearfruit Films’ movie, “Little Savages.” Duty and several of his co-stars are well known from working with Disney television and movies. Also in this photo is fellow cast member Austin Mincks.

a day while filming. Duty himself, along with Austin Mincks, has graduated high school and both are preparing for college.

“Keep at it,” Duty added, referring to school. “Always do your studies.”

Closing out the presentation, McNamara referred to an anti-bullying poster in the school office and thanked students for not being bullies.

“Don’t be a bully,” she added, “be a buddy. If you are a bully, I will hunt you down!”

The actors then took group photos with each grade at the school and chatted with teachers and administrators before departing.

Before leaving town near the end of shooting “Little Savages,” star Leigh-Allyn Baker (of TV’s “Good Luck Charlie”) took time from her busy schedule to make a solo visit to Culver Elementary (she hadn’t been in Culver when other cast members visited), where kindergarten, first - third grade students gathered in the gym to hear her read, “Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns About Bullies” by Howard Binkow and Susan F. Cornelison. Then she surprised fourth- sixth grade students in class, ac-



Leigh-Allyn Baker, who plays Aunt Jackie, takes time to read a story and send a message to Culver kids.

cording to assistant principal Erin Proskey.

The visits exemplified the warm reception stars of the movie had for Culver residents throughout the filming process.



Actor Katherine McNamara chats with students at Culver Elementary School.



# Filming Fun — Cast and crew make memories



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

Golf carts provided an easy means of transportation between locations as well as amusement for many of the young cast. Here Adam Hicks and Connor Del Rio head off on one of these excursions.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

ABOVE: Kenton Duty and Noah Lomax practice their moves on the playground at Culver Park. Behind them other cast members pass the time between scenes.



There was plenty of time for cast member bonding. Here Buddy Handleson, Aubrey Miller and Katherine McNamara enjoy some down time on set.



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# Week Three - Rolling



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

Actress Katherine McNamara gets her makeup touched up during a scene being filmed at the Original Rootbeer Stand. Around her, crew members are making adjustments to lighting and sound



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

A talent show is part of the movie and is being shot at the Woodcraft Family Camp. In this photo, adjustments are made to Aedin Mincks before the scene is shot.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

Noah Lomax (left) and another cast member shoot a scene outside a Culver residence.

PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

RIGHT: Leigh-Allyn Baker cuts up with the cast and crew during a break in the shooting.



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# Week Four - Rolling



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

In a scene at the Culver Marina property, cast members (from back) Kenton Duty, Aedin Mincks, Katherine McNamara and Noah Lomax wait for direction.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

Gerry Lively, Directory of Photography, prepares to shoot a scene at the Culver Marina during the last week of filming. It took four weeks to shoot the film, which included several Culver landmarks, called upon local people to help in production crew and serve as extras in various scenes..



CULVER CITIZEN-PILOT NEWS GROUP PHOTO/JEFF KENNEY

The stars sign autographs and talk with fans during the last official day in Culver, Aug. 31.



Although not part of the filming, the cast and film makers took part with members of the Culver community (as seen here) to discuss faith and films. This forum was held on Saturday, Aug. 31 at the end of Week 4.

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# Reaction - From the Cast, Crew

## ADAM HICKS - Actor

"This is a cool experience, being in a small town. I'm usually filming in claustrophobic cities. It's a different experience coming out here with all the 1,200 people of Culver." Hicks has had a great time with other cast members "doing a lot of water sports. I'm getting my exercise in," he adds, "The most I've had in years." Hicks says his favorite aspect of shooting "Little Savages" here is "interacting with all these people, who are so in love with the fact that we're making a movie in Culver. You realize you're doing it more than just to do it. It's a new experience for me as an actor. It's not just the producers (from Bearfruit Films); it's like all of Culver is helping out. I can't even walk down the street without someone honking and waving. Culver is really behind this movie!"



## KENTON DUTY - Actor

"I love how it's a lot slower than Los Angeles. I come from Texas, so (small town life is) very enjoyable. Everybody (in Culver) is extremely nice and sweet, and they're sincere about it. I try to teach the kids who look up to me to be sincere and be nice. A few of the guys said, 'Let's go to the lake today,' or, 'Let's do some night swimming!' I'm down. They're just loving the fact that we can be spontaneous. We have fun -- we toodle around in the golf carts! And everybody's very accommodating. If I brought somebody who's been L.A. raised, they would not recognize the sincerity (of Culver)...the honesty, kindness, and warmth that everybody here gives off."



## NOAH LOMAX - Actor

Lomax said he likes "the small town -- everything's so close and everybody's nice. I have not been bored at all. Usually when I go to different towns I get bored and have to bring toys or action figures -- things like that, to entertain myself. Here I can just go to the lake and beach and swim when I'm not in school, or go tubing."

## GERRY LIVELY - Director of Photography

"The experience was excellent. The community was very cooperative and fabulous. Everyone was too willing to put themselves out to be of assistance to us. There was a mannerly and good natured way about the people there. It was a fabulous experience. In the future when remember Culver I will think, 'Wow, I spent seven great weeks there and enjoyed every second of that.'"

## About this publication

By **Lois Tomaszewski**  
Managing Editor

There is no doubting the fact that the movie "Little Savages" movie, the talented cast, and the crew brought into Culver, Ind. by Bearfruit Films, was significant for Culver and Marshall County. To commemorate the filming process, the Pilot News and the Culver Citizen present this special publication.

Thanks to the ability of Culver Citizen editor Jeff Kenney to forge a positive relationship with the film makers, this publication provides an inside look at the filming process, with a scrapbook feel.

Many of the photos are also provided by Christine Worden, a photographer from

Chicago who grew up in Culver and maintains ties to the area. She was hired as the still photographer on the set and captured many of the movie making moments.

Special thanks also to Bearfruit films who were open to both the press and the public ; the stars of the film, who reached out to fans and the community while they stayed here; and the Culver community who gave these out of town visitors some fond memories and an overall fantastic impression of Culver.

Thanks as well to the advertisers who supported this special publication and the documentation of this event. The impact it will have on Culver is unknown, but the Pilot News Group is pleased to have played a role in the story.

That's a wrap.





# Reaction - From the Culver Community

"The youth around here loved it. They got to meet the stars, and they (the stars) made it to the school. The actors went out of their way to show they cared, and they were not conceited. The kids just loved it.

"It's been a great experience. I went into the coffee shop and saw one of their film (crew members) come in. He was from Indianapolis; he said he's been doing this for eight years and it's the most fun he's ever had. It's nice to see the local community excited -- the whole town, especially the kids."

-Tony Sellers,  
Culver Chamber of Commerce president

"Our grandkids took (cast members) turtle hunting and sailing!"

--Bill Furry, Culver.

"The stars were gracious. A lot of adults had no idea who they were. In fact, the stars, we all learned from the younger generation who they were. They exhibited nothing but professionalism and kindness. We're (business owners are) obviously invested in Culver, and I think we've all received an uptake. But bigger than that is that Culver has had a buzz, an excitement, in August, that I've never seen. Culver is so vibrant and excited about this movie. The energy is amazing."

-- Mark Damore Jr., owner,  
The Lakehouse Grille

"Our granddaughter visited us for a few days, and we told her about the movie. She was skeptical. She's 19. She went onto her iPad and found out the names in the paper were real. We went by the root beer stand and saw a couple of your leading actors, and she just went

ape. It was really a pleasure."

--Ralph Winters, Culver

"(Producer) James Simmons, (writer-director) Paul Tomborello, (co-producer) Shawn Stephens, and Mark Damore Jr came to the Marina and said they wanted to make a movie, a kids' adventure film. I was interested. About a week later, they said they had decided on Culver (as the site). After that, pre-production started. They had to get everything lined up and after that the crew started showing up. More and more people came to the town and I thought, 'Wow, this is serious!' The cast started to show up and they were all super nice, as we met them. They were all willing to do whatever was needed to get the film made.

"On Aug. 5 the cameras started rolling and the excitement started to grow. They were shooting at the Marina about five days (in all). The kids (in the movie) had a fort made out of a boat, on the Marina grounds. Kim Amond Wright (of Culver) helped with set decoration and props. My dad held a 'lake day' one Saturday at his house for the crew and cast.

"All the local businesses in Culver were super welcoming, which was awesome. The churches hosted dinners, the (Culver) Academy opened their doors for us to shoot at a lot of locations. They were terrific. They put a lot of the crew up in their motels. The Damores went above and beyond with all of their help with everything, including food and entertainment at the Lakehouse Grille.

"Rick Tompos (of Culver Academies) was outstanding; anything we needed, he was on point and got it. He was a



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WORDEN

Star Noah Lomax chats with Original Rootbeer Stand employee Tiffany during a shoot there. It was one of Lomax's favorite places.

huge help. We wrapped up on time and on budget, and at the end of the day everybody was smiling. We think we have a good movie!"

"So many people helped in some way, and the community was happy. When a film crew's in their way all the time you hope you're not ruining their day, but everybody was super nice and willing to wait until the take was over to move through the street. It's amazing how welcoming the entire town was; it was just awesome."

-Gary Aker, Jr, Culver Marina and  
'Little Savages' producer

"I've always been interested in film production and studied aspects of it in school... I was able to spend a lot of time

with everyone in the crew and production and learn how it all works. Most people don't realize these folks work 12+ hour days, away from family and loved ones for 4 weeks or more. I have nothing but admiration for all the crew. And even though I had no idea who any of the kids were who starred in the film before the summer, I became friends with them and their families. It was great fun hanging out with them during down time and especially getting to know Adam, Kat, Austin, Leah, Connor and Kenton. And having fun debating the better NFL team with Saints loving Noah. I even had the opportunity to take some of the crew to Indianapolis to go to the pre-season Colts games. Not many people can say they spent their weekends and vacation helping make a feature film.

"My fondest memory is actually continuing. I have made great friends and I miss having them close by. Fortunately, I am able to keep up with about everyone. There are already plans in the works to see most of them again. It's great to be working away and get a text, e-mail or social media message from one of them just touching base and seeing how everything's going. I didn't know what to expect when they came to town, but I never anticipated meeting so many wonderful people who I am very proud to call friends. I look forward to seeing the film and wish everyone nothing but success. I also want to thank all who were involved for inviting me to be a part of this great adventure.

— Kim Amond Wright,  
Culver, Location Manager, etc.

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# Bearfruit Films - About the movie makers

By Jeff Kenney  
Staff Writer

Producer James Simmons, who launched Bearfruit Films with “Little Savages” writer-director Paul Tomborello, has expressed some hesitation in labeling Bearfruit a “faith-based” company, though he acknowledges the company’s first film, “Rumors of Wars,” is much more overt in its Christian themes than “Savages.”

“A lot of faith-based movies are not great,” Simmons admitted. “(They’re known for) cheesy or corny filmmaking. If you don’t have all the elements -- good writing, acting, and cinematography -- you don’t have a good movie.”

He said the two set out, with “Little Savages,” to create a film “my kids could watch... (It’s) not really a faith-based movie, but a lot of movies are almost antagonistic against faith. We’re not afraid to make maybe the mayor of town be the pastor, or have prayer around the table, or someone talking about prayer, or angels, or God, or church.”

He also explained he and others involved in “Savages” “were very fortunate...we didn’t know personally a lot of our actors before this production. Then God brought us Kat (McNamara) and Kenton (Duty), and a lot of our actors are (Christian) believers. I think they

were drawn partly to this movie because of the script, but also the chance to work with a faith-based company.”

“What drew me (besides ‘Savages’ script) was Bearfruit is faith-based,” said McNamara. “I saw a trailer for ‘Rumors’ and thought, ‘Wow, I would like to be a part of it.’”

Duty agreed. “It was very relatable. What caught my eye was we (the characters in the movie) prayed around a table. I wondered if that would be cut from the final draft -- every movie does that. But we filmed it!”

Duty, a star of the Disney TV show “Shake it Up” and a number of Hollywood films, said he tries to encourage those around him in the entertainment industry to develop a spiritual life, noting the youngest member of the cast on the show reads scripture verses on set daily and joins Duty in prayer at lunch.

Simmons said Bearfruit has struggled with how to market itself while avoiding the negative images asso-



ciated with a “faith based” label, noting, “Our target audience is really not the Church, but the Church’s friends: people who have walked away from God, who are angry or hurting. We don’t want to make movies that just church-goers see, and if they bring one of their friends they’re tempted to walk out.”

He said the company promotes that it seeks to “bring redemptive stories to life.”

Simmons pointed out Bearfruit by no means only hires “like-minded” people.

“We hire good filmmakers. If we have a good wardrobe person or makeup artist, it’s not, ‘Where do you go to church,’ or, ‘Do you love Jesus?’...but I think there’s ministry happening on our sets, because we do have a lot of believers, whether they’re actors or crew.”

“People are people,” said McNamara. “We’re all fundamentally the same; we want and need the same things. If you introduce faith-based ideas back into film in little pieces, it will be more acceptable overall. Even if I can help one person or have one realization that this is what needs to happen in society....”

## Will there be a ‘Little Savages 2’?

Will the ‘Little Savages’ get bigger in future installments?

Even before shooting began in August on “Little Savages,” the question of a sequel was raised, and not just from curious locals, but also by producer James Simmons and writer-director Paul Tomborello, in a handful of talks around Culver prior to the commencement of filming.

Phillip Glasser, a producer on the film (and a Hollywood actor, director, and producer on more than 50 films, including many high-profile projects), said the movie “easily has a chance to be the foundation of a trilogy if you so desire,” and Simmons has made several references to just such a desire.

The overarching question, of course, is how well “Little Savages” is received. It’s interesting to note how many of the young stars of the movie, and their parents, remarked that the quality of the script -- and its ability to offer an alternative to standard, non-family-friendly Hollywood fare -- was what drew them to the project.

Simmons also noted the Disney company -- in whose stead many of the stars work on a regular basis -- reviewed the script positively, at least as a worthy and positive project for some of their television stars.



If Disney picked up “Little Savages” for international distribution, and if the film resonates with audiences enough to be deemed sequel-worthy, there could well be a “Little Savages 2.”

Simmons said the idea has been kicked around of utilizing the campus of Culver Academies -- which stays off-screen in terms of the actual storyline of the film, though several scenes were shot there -- could be an ideal setting for a second film, which could even take on a bit of a “Dead Poets Society” flavor.

In his earlier remarks, though, Simmons made it clear that shooting a second “Savages” in Culver, if there is a sequel, is only one of a great many possibilities.

However, after filming wrapped, and in the wake of what cast, crew, and film-makers alike described as an overwhelmingly -- well neigh amazingly -- positive and bonding experience here, the possibility of a return seemed far greater. In fact, the comments of many cast and crew suggested returning to Culver to shoot would be more like a family reunion than simply a job.

At a panel discussion on themes of faith in film Aug. 31, the morning after filming concluded, Simmons remarked, “(Will a sequel be filmed) in Culver? A lot of our cast thinks it should be!”

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