

 AVA Independent Presents



## THE ROAD TO GALENA

A Joe Hall Film

Joe Hall | Writer/Director | [jhall@avaindependent.com](mailto:jhall@avaindependent.com) | 202-421-9086

Teri Kane | Publicist | [terikane@gmail.com](mailto:terikane@gmail.com) | 917-692-1076

---

**AVA Independent** presents ***The Road to Galena***, written and directed by Joe Hall.

The film stars Ben Winchell (*Max Steel*), Will Brittain (*Kong: Skull Island*), and Aimee Teegarden (*Friday Night Lights*) with Alisa Allapach (*Light as a Feather*), Jay O. Sanders (*JFK*), Jill Hennessy (*Law & Order*) and Tony and Grammy Award winner Jennifer Holliday (*Dreamgirls*, the Broadway musical). Eric Bannat produced, Andrew Woodin Co-Produced, Marty Eli Schwartz served as Consulting Producer, with Christopher Maes as Unit Production Manager. Cinematography by Clark Vandergrift. Filming took place in Galena, Church Hill and Chestertown, on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and in Washington D.C.

## LOGLINE

*The Road to Galena* follows one man's need for personal fulfillment over the traditional success.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

*The Road to Galena* follows one man's pursuit of personal fulfillment over traditional success. Cole Baird (Ben Winchell) has everything – a beautiful wife, successful career, large home and membership to an elite country club.

Behind the facade, however, is a man trapped by his surroundings and falling ever behind in the pursuit of his life's dream.

Not strong enough to confront his father's expectations, he left his true love, his best friend and a fulfilling life in small town America to embark on a legal career – intent, one day, to return.

Now the rising star in Washington social circles and the youngest managing partner in the history of a powerhouse D.C. law firm, Cole is given the choice to continue the path of success in a life to which he never aspired or to return to the community that nurtured him.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

*"The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave  
with the song still in them."*

*Henry David Thoreau*

**Summer 1998. Galena, Maryland. Population 428.** Cole (Ben Winchell), his girlfriend Elle (Aimee Teegarden), and his best friend Jack (Will Brittain) are inseparable. Together, they spend their days on Maryland's idyllic Eastern Shore basking in the glow of young love, friendship, rural charm, and unspoiled nature.

Cole loves farm life and the simple pleasures it offers – hard work, a connection to the land, the satisfaction derived from working with his hands under the heat of a nurturing sun – but Cole's domineering father, a manager at the local bank, is relentless in preaching his dogma of ambition to Cole. Cole *must* leave the limited life afforded him in Galena and pursue the American dream that eluded his father (Jay O. Sanders).

A foregone conclusion, Cole proceeds down the path laid out for him: a Georgetown Law degree, marriage to Sarah (Alisa Allapach) – "the right girl" – and ultimately partnership in a prestigious law firm. Things come easily to Cole, and he reluctantly embraces this new, dissociative life amid the political razzle-dazzle of Washington.

Galena becomes a distant, hazy memory. With Cole gone, Elle and Jack fall in love and start a family. As Cole's star rises on the DC scene, Jack's farm falters. Cole's visits to help his old friend become more and more infrequent. When Cole does come back to Galena, his estrangement weighs on him.

Happiness eludes him, and he longs for everything he left behind... and *everyone* he left behind with it. His marriage is not perfect, his life is not perfect, and his dreams are not his.

Cole still feels the pull of a small town – *his* small town – and he aches for the community’s humility, beauty, and care for the human spirit, but he begrudgingly returns to Washington and his life in the fast lane ...

... until something happens that brings Cole back to Galena, this time for good.

### **DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT**

I thought long on how best to tell this story. The underdog, struggling against great odds to achieve his dream, has been told. Though satisfying, it presents the audience with the obvious, for who would not give up a life of hardship to reach for glory? But what if the hero had it all – position, influence, money – and was presented with the option to pursue his quiet aspirations of a simple life? Could he really give it up? What would it do to him inside – and how would he face the future knowing he’d passed on his one chance for true fulfillment?

I was driving my son, Patrick, to a Boy Scout camping trip on Maryland’s Assateague Island. It was March – cold, gray and raining – and I was struck by the natural beauty of the Eastern Shore, with flat farmland punctuated by the inlets and waterways of the Chesapeake Bay. On that drive, the story of Cole Bard coalesced in my mind, a man who felt called to the simple beauty of these small communities and away from the insincere glamour of Washington DC, my hometown. That night, against the cold, wet canvas of our tent, poorly staked on a windy beach, with wet sand stuck to nearly everything we

had, I sat with a flashlight pinched between my chin and shoulder and scrawled the outline of *The Road to Galena* on a scrap of paper. Over breakfast the following morning, with Patrick peering at me over a stack of pancakes, I shared with him Cole's story – to which he replied, “sounds like your life.” When I told him I never wanted to be a farmer, he corrected, “Dad, the story's not about being a farmer.”

Despite the accusations of a highly insightful son, I see this as my story only in that it's universal – one shared by so many who carry with them dreams, often never spoken, and sometimes to the grave.

The era of COVID-19 has prompted many to reassess their lives with the acknowledgement that time is not unlimited. Thoreau once said, “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” Cole Baird's journey shows us the possibilities that come with overcoming that desperation – sharing aloud our aspirations and taking that unthinkable step of living our own lives, instead of the lives of others – and defining success in terms measured only by our happiness and that of those we love.

### **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

*The Road to Galena* traveled its own challenging journey through a global pandemic – finding its voice at a time when the industry had been silenced by COVID-19. Once health protocols had been established and a compliance program confirmed, we set out on a six-week, masked, shielded, tested, bubbled and sanitized adventure through Maryland's Eastern Shore and into the reawakening hustle and bustle of the Nation's Capital in May 2021.

Our Galena family was housed and fed by the remarkable staff at Pecometh Retreat Center, and welcomed warmly by the rural Maryland communities of Chestertown, Galena, Church Hill and the surrounding counties of Kent and Queen Anne. The residents of these communities went to great lengths to provide for and join our sets in a COVID-friendly manner. Having pushed the production from October of 2020 to April/May of 2021, our greatest obstacle was weather. With the pandemic already putting our independent production to the test, we had little capacity to withstand a wash-out, an all-too-likely event in the mid-Atlantic in spring. Miraculously, in 32 days of shooting, much of which on location and outdoors, we had not a single rain delay.

Ultimately, the story of our production was its remarkable team. A dedicated and highly experienced crew that approached each day with optimism and enthusiasm, and a talented cast that rallied around a story in which each of us found a piece of ourselves.

## PRODUCTION STILLS





## THE CAST

### **BEN WINCHELL** – Cole Baird (*Max Steel, Feed*)



Ben Winchell was cast as the title role of Max McGrath in the feature film *Max Steel* from Mattel and Open Road Films. A native of Duluth, Georgia, Winchell began his acting career at the age of five doing community theatre. At age fourteen, he began his career in film & television. Winchell is known for his role as Ben on MTV's *Finding Carter* and for his role in the Sony feature *Feed* opposite Troian Bellisario and Tom Felton.

### **WILL BRITTAIN** – Jack Miller (*Kong: Skull Island*)



Will Brittain recently thrilled audiences in Universal's *The Forever Purge*, across from Josh Lucas and Tenoch Huerta. Recent appearances include Focus Features' *Let Him Go* across from Kevin Costner and Diane Lane, and Amazon's highly-acclaimed *Blow The Man Down* with Margo Martindale and June Squibb. Brittain was praised for his role as 'Trey' opposite Idina Menzel in *Skintight*, which played at the Roundabout in 2018 and Geffen in 2019. Additionally, he stars in Beck & Woods' cult slasher *Haunt*, in Warner Bro's blockbuster *Kong: Skull Island*, Richard Linklater's *Everybody Wants Some!!*, and in Hannah Fidell's 2013 Sundance favorite, *A Teacher*. Other work includes *Savage Youth* and *William*. In his first turn as a triple threat, Brittain's fantasy short *Wildman* is currently making the festival circuit.



**AIMEE TEEGARDEN** – Elle Shepard (*Friday Night Lights, Love and Honor*)



Aimee Teegarden is an American actress, model, and producer. She starred in the NBC drama *Friday Night Lights* (2006–2011) and the CW's science fiction romantic drama *Star-Crossed*. Teegarden has also made appearances on *90210*, *Legend of the Seeker*, *CSI: Miami*, and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. In 2011, she co-starred in *Scream 4* and the Disney film *Prom*; in the same year, Teegarden was named "TV Actress of the Year" by Young Hollywood Awards for her work on *Friday Night Lights*. She co-starred in the war drama *Love and Honor*, with Liam Hemsworth and Teresa Palmer, and F. Javier Gutiérrez's horror film *Rings*. Additionally, Teegarden has modeled for campaigns including Alltel, Hollister, Old Navy, Tommy Hilfiger, and YMI Jeans. Teegarden has over 63k followers on Twitter and 113k on Instagram.

**ALISA ALLAPACH** – Sarah Meyers (*Light as A Feather*)



Born and raised in Los Angeles, Alisa Allapach spent most of her early life as an ice dancer where she competed on the international level. Alisa's breakout role came as a two-season recur on Audience's *Kingdom*. From there, Alisa guest starred on CBS' *Hawaii Five-o*, Youtube Red's *Single by 30*, NBC's *Days of Our Lives*, and Freeform's *Good Trouble*. Her feature film roles include the Clint Eastwood directed feature, *The 15:17 to Paris*. She recently recurred on season two of Hulu's *Light As a Feather*. Currently, Alisa stars in SNAP's original series *Two Sides: Unfaithful* and Vertical Entertainment's feature *Safer at Home*."

**JILL HENNESSY** – Teresa Baird (*Law & Order, Crossing Jordan*)



Jillian Hennessy is most known for her roles on the American television series *Law & Order*, on which she played prosecutor Claire Kincaid for three seasons, and *Crossing Jordan*, on which she played the lead character, Jordan Cavanaugh, for six seasons. She is currently starring in Showtime's drama *City on a Hill* with Kevin Bacon, executive produced by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. She acted as the lead in the Mike Clattenburg comedy *Crawford* and has made notable features on Paramount's *Yellowstone* with Kevin Costner, CBS' *Madam Secretary*, and CBS' *The Good Wife*. Hennessy was also a regular on the HBO series *Luck*, which starred Dustin Hoffman, as well as the international series *Jo* shot in Paris opposite Jean Reno. She was nominated for a People's Choice Award for her work in *Crossing Jordan* and won a Golden Satellite Award for her work in TNT's *Nuremberg* with Brian Cox and Alec Baldwin. Other credits include Lionsgate film *Crypto*, *Standing Up*, *Falling Down* with Billy Crystal, *Wild Hogs* with John Travolta and Tim Allen, and *Exit Wounds* with Steven Segal.

**JAY O. SANDERS** – John Baird (*JFK, The Day After Tomorrow*)



Jay O. Sanders returns to live theater this September in Richard Nelson's *What Happened? The Michaels Abroad*, followed by his Broadway role in Conor McPherson's *Girl From The North Country* set to Bob Dylan's music. His most recent films include French political thriller *Songs of Revenge*, *When You Finish Saving the World* (written and directed by Jesse Eisenberg), and *Limbo* (directed by Alejandro Iñárritu). Among his other films are *The Day After Tomorrow*, *JFK*, *Tumbleweeds*, and *Kiss the Girls*. On television, he has lately appeared in *Manhunt: Deadly Games*, *Sneaky Pete*, and *The Sinner* (Season 2). Sanders won the Drama Desk Award for his performance in Hunter Theater Project's *Uncle Vanya* and continues as a prolific narrator of PBS documentaries, including WNET's *Secrets of the Dead* and WGBH's *Nova*.

**MARGARET COLIN** – Margaret Kinney (*Chicago Med, Independence Day*)



Margaret Colin has worked on stage, in film, and on television including streaming series. She has acted on stage in New York, both on and off Broadway. Films include *Independence Day*, *3 Men and a Baby*, *Pretty in Pink*, and *Something Wild*. On television, she is known for her work on the hit show *Gossip Girl*, her Saturn Award-winning role as Lisa Wiseman in the series *Now and Again*, NBC's *Chicago Med*, and the acclaimed television series *Veep*.

**JENNIFER HOLLIDAY** – Florrie (*DREAMGIRLS*)



Jennifer Holliday is a Broadway Legend. Her iconic role as Effie “Melody” White in the smash hit musical *Dreamgirls* (1981) garnered her a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical and her first Grammy Award for the recording of her signature ballad “And I Am Telling You, I’m Not Going.” Holliday makes her film debut as featured actor in *The Road to Galena* in a non-singing role. Her dramatic role as gospel singer Lisa Knowles on the Fox hit television show *Ally McBeal* endeared her to millions of viewers (1997-2001). Most recently she made a triumphant return back to Broadway starring as Shug Avery in the hit musical revival production of *The Color Purple* starring Cynthia Erivo (2016). Ms. Holliday is a longtime advocate for mental health and suicide prevention.

## THE FILMMAKERS

### JOE HALL – Writer/Director



Award-winning filmmaker, Joe Hall (Best Director PEER Awards for *The Toast* and *Here There and Everywhere* as well as *Matilda Mench*, which also won a CINE Golden Eagle, has written and will be directing his first feature-length film with ***The Road to Galena***.

### ERIC BANNAT – Producer

Eric Bannat is an award-winning Producer and Location Manager for feature films and television. A graduate of The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Eric started in New York in post production and returned to Baltimore as the location scout for the final three seasons of HBO's "*The Wire*." His credits also include *Veep*, *House of Cards*, *Die Hard*, *Salt*, *State of Play* and *Jackie*. His feature films, to include *Putty Hill*, *The Brooklyn Brothers Beat the Best* and *LUV*, have screened at dozens of national and international festivals including Berlin, Sundance, Toronto, San Sabastian and SXSW.

### ANDREW WOODIN – Co-Producer

Formerly of Paramount, ABC Studios and 20th Century FOX / FOX Sports, Woody's credits include *Raconteur* (2022) with Oscar nominated producer Daniel Dreifuss (*No, Sergio*) and Camille Delamarre, *AWOL-72* starring RZA, Bokeem Woodbine and Luke Goss. Current projects include *Wild Man* with Brad Johnson (*Small Town Crime*) and John J. Kelly (*Deadpool*), *More Than Steel* based on the true story of "Jefferson Street" Joe Gilliam, *Sheen* (2021), and HBO Max series *Tokyo Vice* (2022) with Ansel Elgort and Ken Watanabe.

### **MARTY SCHWARTZ – Consulting Producer**

Iconic industry veteran, Marty Schwartz has nearly 100 titles to his credit, having served as 1st Assistant Director on some of the most memorable films of the era, to include *The Karate Kid*, *Footloose*, *Night at the Museum*, *Paul Blart*, *The Pink Panther* and *The Pink Panther 2*, *The Leisure Seeker* with Helen Mirren and Donald Sutherland, *Furious 7*, *Thunderstruck*, and a myriad of other titles.

### **CLARK VANDERGRIFT – Director of Photography**

American cinematographer Clark Vandergrift came to prominence crafting powerful visuals in the world of still photography. Shooting ad campaigns for name brand clients was the norm. But it was perhaps his much lauded personal and fine art imagery, such as *Tree People*, that garnered him the most notoriety as an image creator. Transitioning into the world of motion pictures was the next step in a natural evolution that now sees him creating visuals for commercial, documentary, and scripted narrative films. *The Road to Galena* is his first feature film.

### **CHRISTOPHER CIBELLI – Editor**

Chris Cibelli has worked on feature films, television, music videos, documentaries and web-based content. A career highlight was working with mentor Anne Coates on the features *What About Bob?* and *Masters of the Universe* and then becoming the editor for *Congo*, for which he also coordinated complex visual effects with Industrial Light and Magic. Cibelli has worked with such filmmaking luminaries as Francis Ford Coppola, Jerry Bruckheimer, Frank Marshall, Kathleen Kennedy, Richard Donner, Michael Mann, Danny DeVito and Dino DeLaurentiis. This in-depth work experience has taken him on many film location shoots as well as residency at major studio lots such as Universal, Warner Bros., Paramount, Sony, MGM and Disney. Cibelli also spent seven years as editor on the CBS worldwide television hit series *The Mentalist*.

## **PACO PERIAGO – Composer**

Living and working in Madrid, Spain, Paco Periago is an award-winning composer. His unique style has given him the opportunity to score numerous films early in his career, landing him more than a dozen awards. He has received several nominations and earned awards for Best Original Music for *The Radicalization of Jeff Boyd* (2017) and *Lady in the Shower* (2018). Many of Paco's films have been selected for international festivals, including The International Film Festival in Moscow and The Hollywood, International Moving Pictures Film Festival, among others. He has also published several instrumental music studio albums.

## ABOUT AVA INDEPENDENT

Our Mission: Through any medium, in art and business, bring great stories to life.

Launched in 2008 as a collaboration of filmmakers, **AVA Independent** has provided a venue for dozens of actors, cinematographers, musicians and artists. We continue to pursue ideas that capture the imagination.

Since its inception, AVA Independent has produced seven films, receiving a myriad of honors to include multiple TIVA-DC PEER Awards, festival honors, and the CINE Golden Eagle for Independent Short.

To learn more about AVA Independent visit: <https://www.avaindependent.com>

## **CREDITS**

Written and Directed by.....Joe Hall  
Executive Producers.....Robert Cinquegrana & Erich Schwartz  
Producer.....Eric Bannat  
Co-Producer.....Andrew Woodin  
Consulting Producer.....Marty Eli Schwartz  
Director of Photography.....Clark Vandergrift  
Editor.....Christopher Cibelli  
Production Designer.....Erik Boring  
Casting..... Sig De Miguel & Steve Vincent  
Music.....Paco Periago

## **CAST**

Cole Baird.....Ben Winchell  
Jack Miller.....Will Brittain  
Elle Shepard.....Aimee Teegarden  
Sarah Baird.....Alisa Allapach  
John Baird.....Jay O. Sanders  
Teresa Baird.....Jill Hennessy  
Margaret Kenney.....Margaret Colin  
Florrie.....Jennifer Holliday