

The short film *Come Out, Wherever You Are* was written and produced by Dan Burns and directed by Caitlin Presberg. The adapted screenplay is based on Dan's original short story of the same name, published in his short story collection, *No Turning Back: Stories* (Chicago Arts Press, 2014). Principal filming was completed on October 1, 2023, and post-production was completed in March 2024.

Website: https://www.comeoutwhereveryouarefilm.com

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/come out wherever you are film/

Film Trailer: https://vimeo.com/1234567

Behind-the-Scenes Video: https://vimeo.com/1234567

Still Photos:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ofzr5odxfur3pfdiks9zl/AOmZpKg9TjCGfZ3KUbnJ0G4?rlkey=7zs4r1bm3ziczgct4tckkub1z&st=6v6o5ufb&dl=0

Logline:

A man retreats to his home in the woods, wishing to live the rest of his life in solitude. He hopes to evade the public eye but instead finds himself both a victim and beneficiary of circumstance.

Description:

Vernon Parrish, a retired mayor of a large suburb just outside of Chicago, had moved to the small town of Livingston, Montana, for peace and solitude and to get out of the public eye. After six years, Verne's past returns to haunt him, driving him into a self-imposed exile at his cabin in the woods, hoping to ride out the media storm. While he is away, a storm of a different form rolls in, drastically changing the world as he knew it, culminating in a tale of a man who is both a victim and a beneficiary of circumstance.

Current Status of the Film:

Post-production of the film was completed in March 2024. The filmmaking team has ambitiously submitted to film festivals across the nation and around the world and is in the midst of an eighteen-month tour to share the film with audiences everywhere.

Premise and Original Inspiration:

(from "Notes on the Story" by Dan Burns, following the original published story)

These days, our world is enmeshed in technological connectivity—twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Internet services and social network capabilities available to the individual are endless, and as a result, many people spend the majority of their days searching and texting and updating their networks of people on every minute detail of their existence. The time that used to be spent reading and thinking or just doing nothing is now filled with a seemingly endless stream of digital communications. What is everyone communicating about? In addition, anything (and everything!) a person may say or do can be captured instantly by one of the millions of smartphone devices lurking around every corner. The thought is unnerving. Personal privacy is an afterthought and is most certainly in jeopardy. Not only that, but we're at risk of losing our individual identities in a sea of social media consumption.

Don't get me wrong; I like technology as much as the next person. I realize that our current technologies and communication capabilities are endless and can prove to be tremendously beneficial, but where does it all end? Is it possible to be too consumed and too connected? I think so.

I think we need to be forced away from our devices every once in a while to relish the simple pleasures in life: reading a book, taking a walk, or just looking around and taking in all that is happening around us. For without the break, we might get so distracted that we'll miss out on what is really important.

What if a person decided to walk away from the technological tether and live his life in solitude, and what if while he was away, the social network imploded and took its membership with it? That, very simply, was the seed of the idea.

In the story, the protagonist, Verne, has forced himself to break away. During his career as a politician, he was always in the spotlight and always in the news. Privacy was not a possibility and he understood that the absence of it came with the job. So, as he came to the end of his career, he made a wish and then when he retired, he made the wish a reality. What he didn't expect was for the circumstances that nudged him into exile to end up being the same circumstances that made his exile permanent. Sometimes, we have to be careful what we wish for.

Cast of Characters:

VERNE is played by Blake De Pastino (*Treasure State* and *Eye for Eye*).

IMDB: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm5846365/



Verne is a career politician who moved to Montana to escape everything about his past life, especially the technology tether. People in town like and respect him. He is kind and outgoing but keeps his feelings and past life close to the vest. When his past comes back to haunt him (the newspaper article), he escapes again to his cabin in the woods. He still mourns the loss of his wife and daughter and thinks of them often. When the world as he once knew it ends, he realizes his ultimate wish—to run away and be left alone. What he never expected was that the circumstances—technology, constant press—that nudged him into exile to Montana would end up being the same circumstances that make his exile, in the future world with few people, permanent.

MARGE is played by Amber Rose Mason (*Blood for Dust* and *Ted K*). IMDB: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm3478273/



The town's matriarch, Marge knows and genuinely cares for everyone. She's concerned about Verne's predicament and the impact on him and the community.

PETE is played by Douglas "Hurricane" Hall (*Somewhere in Montana* and *Nexus of Evil*). IMDB: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm9906567/



Pete is a folksy, pure-bread Montanan. He likes and cares for everyone he meets, and his primary goal is to take care of everyone who enters his store. He's quirky, which he knows. Everyone who meets him knows that he's quirky, but they like and respect him just the same. The audience will be sad when they learn of his future.

MARION is played by Marilyn Bass (*Chicago P.D.* and *The Young and the Restless*). IMDB: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm6781590/



Marion is a strong, independent woman who can take charge of any situation but is also able to show her soft, emotional side. As a result of the technology disaster, she realizes she is now alone in the world but will persevere no matter what the future may hold.

Marketing and Promoting the Film:

We have big plans for our film, which will fit nicely in the independent film drama market. We feel the film will reach a broad and diverse audience.

We have a two-step approach to reaching our audience. Upon completing the film, we embarked on an extensive but strategically planned national and international film festival tour over an eighteen-month period. Film festival wins are nice, but our objective is to be selected

for showings, to have our film presented to the largest number of audience members possible, and we're comfortable in letting the audiences then dictate our future.

By garnering the maximum number of showings possible and, with some luck, an award or two, we'll have the opportunity to network with industry professionals. We feel our film will be of interest to many streaming platforms, which we will be approaching for distribution consideration.

The primary goal of producing our film is to create an engaging, interesting, relatable, touching, thought-provoking, and memorable story—what every movie-goer and watcher wants. It's a high bar that we've set, but when we accomplish that goal, audience reaction will be positive, word of mouth will spread, and our film will reach the masses.

The Filmmakers:

Dan Burns, Writer and Producer

Dan Burns is an award-winning screenwriter, author, and independent filmmaker dedicated to telling character-driven stories that blend emotional depth with cinematic precision. His short film Come Out, Wherever You Are—adapted from his acclaimed story collection No Turning Back: Stories—has been an official selection at more than forty festivals and has earned ten awards, including Best Short Film, Best Screenplay, and Best Drama. He is also the screenwriter of the feature film A Fine Line, adapted from his award-winning novel of the same name, as well as the short film Out of Touch (Greenock Productions, 2015). Burns brings a distinct literary voice to each project and a deep understanding of structure, character, and tone. As the founder of 136 Productions, he develops original content for screen and stage, drawing on his experience as the author of seven books. He splits his creative time between Chicago and Montana, where the landscapes and solitude often find their way into his stories. Whether on the page or screen, Dan Burns is committed to telling stories that linger long after the final line—or frame.

Visit Dan's author site: www.danburnsauthor.com

See Dan's IMDb Page: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm9318695/

Caitlin Presberg, Director

Hailing from Chicago, this accomplished filmmaker has earned a reputation for her exceptional work. Her debut short film, "Jules," received numerous accolades, including the Inclusion In The Industry Award, the Jury Award at the New York Short Film Festival, and Best Ensemble at the Premiere Film Festival. Her other award-winning short film, "It's Not About The Lemons," won the Mirkopoulos Cinematic Arts grant and the Best Performance Award from the Feedback Female Film Festival. Her recent short film, "Controllo," secured the prestigious MFA

Production Grant from DePaul University. Her current short film, "Come Out, Wherever You Are," has been named an official selection for thirty-five festivals and has won ten awards, including two for Best Director.

As a writer, she delves deep into the emotional intricacies of the human experience and the journey towards healing from past trauma. Her screenplay, "Tracing Fog," has claimed top honors at the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, the Vail Film Festival, and the Chicago Screenplay Awards, marking a significant milestone as she prepares to make her feature directorial debut.

"A few years ago, I was diagnosed with head and neck cancer, and they had no idea how it came about. I had to do two surgeries, radiation and chemo. And I'm still on chemo right now. My speech is impaired, so I had to work a lot on that, but even though I would be so low on energy, this film really saved me and helped me recover."

See Caitlin's IMDb Page: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm5884973/

Anh Vo, Cinematographer

Anh Vo is a Vietnamese cinematographer and creative director currently residing in Chicago, USA where he nurtures his passion for visual storytelling across diverse projects.

Having spent his high school and undergraduate years in Milwaukee, WI while being born and raised in Hanoi, Anh is naturally drawn to visual storytelling that explores themes of cultural identity, the concept of home, and a sense of belonging. Since earning his master's degree in Cinematography from DePaul University, he has made his mark as the cinematographer for Emmy-winning national TV shows, commercials, and independent films showcased at international festivals. Additionally, he has led original projects and social campaigns as a creative director for Fortune 500 global brands, partnering with agencies and athletes.

With a deep understanding of humanity and an acute ability to find beauty in the world, Anh possesses a remarkable talent for seamlessly transitioning between different artistic worlds. He customizes his film language to perfectly suit each unique story and form of artistic expression. Through his lens, he aspires to capture the essence of emotions and create a lasting impact, leaving viewers inspired and moved.

See Anh's IMDb Page: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm7938361/

Director's Statement:

This film is a cross between Yellowstone and The Twilight Zone. I loved playing with the idea of a Western sci-fi film and creating it as a drama with regard to story structure. The idea that civilization has turned to dust because of devices that we hold so dear is a scary thought because, in a way, it could happen. We give over so much information on our phones that we allow the people on the other end to hold all the power. The people on the other side hold everything in their hands and can easily turn our world to dust if they so wish.

Producer's Statement:

As a producer, I am guided by the values that have served me well in all my past opportunities to work with people: kindness, honesty, respect, and trust. Kindness wins in all cases and is the basis for any fruitful relationship. Honesty of one's thoughts and situation and respect for others leads to trust, and if someone trusts you, then they will want to work with you. In producing my short film "Come Out, Wherever You Are," I worked hard every day to develop an environment of kindness, honesty, and respect to develop mutual trust with each member of the cast and crew. It started with the relationship between our director, our cinematographer, and me, which we had forged over many months. On set, when the cast and crew saw firsthand how we acted and treated each other, they quickly followed along. We led, acted, and managed by example, resulting in a total "love fest" on set for the duration of our filming. Trust leads to results. One example I'll share is regarding our lead actor and his thoughts and ideas about developing his character—to make it his own. He and I had many discussions about his character and the dialogue. He had numerous suggestions for changing the dialogue to develop the character in a way he felt would be better conveyed to the audience. We discussed his changes and how they would change the character, most often in a way different from what the writer (me) had intended. I asked him to trust me and said that if he delivered the lines exactly as they were written, he would become the character I had intended and that he would love the character. He didn't have to agree, but he did because he trusted me, and what we both experienced on set was a pure and perfect transformation of man and actor into character, and we were both elated with his performance.

The Future:

In April 2024, we embarked on an expansive film festival promotional tour. Our goal is to reach maximum viewing exposure for our film and garner critical acclaim for everyone involved. Our dream objectives include a distribution deal for our short film and securing funding for our future projects. Dan Burns has a script in development for a feature film version of *Come Out, Wherever You Are*, and a Twilight Zone-like scripted episodic series in development called *No Turning Back*, based on his stories in the books *No Turning Back: Stories* and *Grace: Stories and a Novella*. These new projects will include the dream team of Caitlin Presberg as Director and Anh Vo as cinematographer. Additionally, Caitlin Presberg has a film in development titled *Tracing Fog*, for which she wrote the screenplay and will direct.

For more information, please contact:

Dan Burns (Producer) (630) 915-8808 daniel r burns@msn.com

Caitlin Presberg (Director) (847) 323-5935 cpresberg@gmail.com

