

LET THERE BE LIGHT

PRODUCTION NOTES

LET THERE BE LIGHT is a beautiful and inspirational film, the story of a man who has suffered a tremendous loss and who has left his family and buried his feelings in wine, women and work. But just like the Bible character Saul, God is not done with him yet. The more he rages, the more he feels the emptiness inside.

Kevin Sorbo's character, SOL HARKENS, is a hardened atheist. He doesn't believe in anything. In fact when we first meet him, he is on tour promoting his new book that claims that there is no God. He is handsome, charming and quick with a joke or a drink but underneath it all we can tell something is brewing.

"When I first read the script (written by Sorbo's wife, Sam, and Hollywood veteran Dan Gordon), I was sitting on a plane," said Sorbo. "And it just nailed me. There were three specific times that I couldn't help myself, I just started crying."

Sorbo did double duty as both the director and star of the film. "Yes, it was a lot of work but I loved every minute of it," says Sorbo. "It was easily one of the best and most rewarding film experiences of my life."

Not to be outdone, Kevin's wife, Sam, actually did triple duty - as co-writer, producer and co-star of the film. But it was never intended to be that way. "When I started writing the movie with Dan (Gordon), it was Dan who said 'You should play Katy' and I said 'Why?'. He said it's a family story and part of the story is that you are working with your husband and you know what that's all about. You're perfect for this. And, basically, he just talked me into it."

Ultimately, the movie became a true family undertaking. Sol and Katy's children in the movie are played by the Sorbo's real life sons, Shane (as CONNOR) and Braeden (as GUS). Aware of the fact that their children would be under a lot of pressure, the Sorbos insisted that they audition for the roles.

So the boys took up the challenge and they got the parts! Asked what the movie means to him, Braeden replied, "The movie is basically about forgiveness, and the ability to forgive someone for something hurtful they have done which is really an incredible gift."

“Ultimately,” jokes Sam, “we cast them because they were really cheap.” But the boys worked hard and, not wanting to let their parents down, turned in great performances. “It was great being on set with our parents,” said Shane. “It made it all the more real, working with people who you’ve known your whole life.”

Dan Gordon, both co-writer and a producer on the film, has a long history of Hollywood success. He was the only staff writer and wrote 45 episodes of Michael Landon’s popular HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN television series, as well as mainstream films such as MURDER IN THE FIRST, PASSENGER 57, WYATT EARP, and THE HURRICANE for which Denzel Washington received an Academy Award nomination.

Talking about his experience on the film Dan said, “This was a story about faith. Every step of the way, through every crisis in the production, God made it better. And there was always a lesson for us. Sam had never produced a movie in her life, and she brought this one across the finish line... on faith. Kevin had to carry the load of starring and directing at the same time, and he did a great job... on faith. And Sean Hannity was the best boss anyone could ask for. He left us alone. He never visited the set, never even called. He just said, ‘Bring me back a good movie.’ And he did it... on faith.”

Executive Producer, Sean Hannity, stepped up in a big way to make the film a reality. He had once casually mentioned to Kevin that he was interested in moving into Hollywood and when Kevin first presented the idea, he was intrigued. Dan, Kevin and Sam flew to New York for a meeting and Sean heard them out and made up his mind on the spot.

As writer/producer Dan Gordon tells it, “There are a lot of indecisive people on earth. A lot who do not follow the truth of their own convictions. And even more who have no convictions to follow. Sean Hannity fits into none of those categories. He asked what the budget was, and we told him. He simply said, ‘OK.’ Just like that. An hour after we walked in the door, we had a deal to make the film.”

Besides acting as executive producer of the movie, Hannity also appears as himself on the set of his famous FOX News show, HANNITY. When asked for his thoughts, Hannity said, "I'm incredibly proud of this movie. A lot of hard work went into it but it was so worthwhile. The world needs more movies like this, stories that are inspiring and uplifting, stories that the entire family can enjoy together, stories with a positive message."

Michael Franzese, who plays PASTOR VINNY, was thrilled that Dan Gordon thought about him for the movie. "I've known Dan a long time and he wrote the part for me and, basically, I get to tell my own real life story in the movie. I was a mob guy who came to faith and my faith means everything to me."

Franzese grew up as the son of an Underboss of New York's Colombo crime family and as a second generation captain, Michael at one time generated up to \$8 million per week in his 'business' ventures. He was targeted by federal prosecutor Rudy Giuliani who promised to put him behind bars for 100 years. But Franzese was a fighter. He survived 5 criminal trials, 7 years in prison and even a Mafia death sentence.

Along the way he met his wife, Camille, and became a believer. Franzese now has his own ministry and tours the country speaking at churches and events and working with both executives and youth. He is very proud of the results of their work. "I love the story," he said. "The film really did get to me."

Country music star Travis Tritt plays DR. COREY, a sympathetic surgeon who looks after Katy when her health takes a turn. The singing star has garnered 7 platinum albums, 2 Grammy's and 4 Country Music Awards in his career but has always been interested in acting.

Asked what drew him to the role, Tritt responded that, "There are a tremendous number of people out there who are fed, spiritually, by this type of film and it's extremely encouraging to me to see stories like this being produced at such a high level. I wanted to be part of that positive and inspirational movement."

The theme of LET THERE BE LIGHT resonates throughout the movie. Yes, it is a Bible verse. And, yes, it is a key turning point in the story. But another interesting concept is the idea of holding up lighted cellphones during the darkest night of the year.

Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA is actually developing an app that can be downloaded by fans of the movie. The app is designed to coordinate people all over the world, giving them the exact time to hold up their phones to light up the darkness. And the entire project ties in to a national campaign to feed the hungry where people can donate to the largest United States' food bank network, *Feeding America*. Said Braeden Sorbo, "This is what Christianity is really all about."

Naturally, the film has a strong faith message that will appeal to the Christian audience. One of America's most beloved singers, Dionne Warwick, appears in the film as herself and felt inspired to be a part of it. The 5 time Grammy winner said that, "I just felt that at this point in our lives, especially with what's going on in this world, if we ever needed God, we need Him now. We need Him right this minute."

The Sorbos see film as an important venue to be able to share important themes and ideas, an opportunity to spark conversations. Kevin says, "When I was thirteen or fourteen I went and heard Billy Graham speak. That was huge. Now we've been given this opportunity to pass that on to others."

As a writer, Sam Sorbo couldn't agree more. "We ought to be opening a door for young people everywhere, to grapple with these very difficult concepts that really require each of us to address them. My hope for the movie is to inspire revival and the love of God. I hope that the film will help to open that door and create the opportunity for a dialogue among parents and kids and churches all over the country."

The film was shot on location in Birmingham, AL which according to producer Warren Ostergard is "one of the best kept secrets in film making. It's a wonderful small town atmosphere with great locations, great restaurants and people who are super friendly. We had a wonderful time working here. The city and the people helped to make movie making easy."

The historic Alabama Theatre plays an important role in the film. Built in 1927 by the Public Theatre division of Paramount Studios it seated 2500 people in a five story, three tiered auditorium. Nicknamed 'The Showpiece Of The South', it hosted events such as the Miss Alabama pageant and The Mickey Mouse Club. Now on the National Register of Historic Places, it was designated by the Alabama Legislature as the official State Historic Theatre. Over half a million people a year visit this famous site.

Selected for its beauty and atmosphere, the production filled the building with hundreds of enthusiastic extras for Sol's opening debate speech. As he storms around the stage, dismantling the arguments of his Christian opponent (played by Gary Grubbs) the crowd goes crazy. "When you have a big crowd in a movie, whether it's a comedy or a thriller or whatever, everyone feeds off that," said Sorbo. "I know that I fed off their energy and they fed off mine. It was amazing. In fact, the entire experience, the entire movie, all of it was amazing. I feel blessed to be a part of it."

The theatrical distribution of LET THERE BE LIGHT is being handled by Atlas Distribution. Marketing and publicity is being handled by a familiar name in faith films. Paul Lalonde, CEO of Cloud Ten Pictures and the newly created Cloud Ten Creative Services to help worthy independent films find large and receptive audiences.

"I have produced and marketed over 20 faith based films and documentaries but until now, I have never gone outside our own company to work on a film," said Lalonde. "But I loved this movie and I was so impressed with Sam and Kevin's commitment and faith that I just had to do it."

LET THERE BE LIGHT is a positive and powerful story, a movie that can be enjoyed by the entire family. Perhaps the most important statement about the film comes from co-writer/producer Sam Sorbo. "My hope for the movie is to eschew the hatred that is spreading across the globe." A great goal and certainly one that all of us can support.

LET THERE BE LIGHT will be released in theatres across America on October 27, 2017.