

# ROUNDING



A. Waligowski



# ROUNDING

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ALEX THOMPSON

OFFICIAL WEBSITE

OFFICIAL STILLS

90 mins. / Drama, Horror, Mystery, Thriller / United States / English / 2022

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## **LOGLINE**

After a traumatic incident, a driven young medical resident transfers to a rural hospital for a fresh start, but the demons of his past start to catch up to him when he becomes consumed by the case of a patient with mysterious symptoms.

## **SUMMARY**

After a traumatic incident during his residency, young medical student James Hayman (Namir Smallwood) transfers to a rural hospital for a fresh start. Observing that James is struggling and having difficulty connecting with patients, Dr. Harrison (veteran stage and screen actor Michael Potts) suggests he take a class focused on bedside manner and facilitating deeper relationships with patients. The demons of James's past begin to catch up with him when he becomes consumed by the case of a young asthma patient (Sidney Flanigan, NEVER RARELY SOMETIMES ALWAYS) with mysterious symptoms. His grip on reality starts to slip as his disturbing nightmares, anxiety-fueled speculations, and physical injuries collide with the harsh realities of the world of medicine. Director Alex Thompson assembles a strong ensemble of veteran character actors in his follow-up to SAINT FRANCES - and precursor to GHOSTLIGHT - in this humanist and unconventional genre vision.







## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In the 90's you could turn on AMC between five and eight in the morning on the weekend and watch black and white movies. They were mostly thrillers and melodramas, often with familiar faces that nonetheless weren't as in demand as *Stalag 17* or *The Guns of Navarone*, which had regular prime time spots throughout the week. My siblings and I often woke up early to catch this block, often turning on the TV in the middle of a gunfight, a machine gun appearing out of a violin case as my parents slept upstairs. Twisty and propulsive, they captured my imagination effortlessly and felt like connective tissue between the marquee films I'd watch with my grandfather, linkage between Curtiz and Sekely, Capra and Borzage.

I learned later that many of these were "Poverty Row" films, the so-called B-pictures that filled out what used to be a night at the movies. Like great independents today, their scrappiness hardly registered as a limitation; in any decade intention is cheap and free-flowing.

I grew up in a family of medical professionals. Dinner conversations often included black lung and bronchoscopies, and when asked how his day went, my father can be relied upon to reply: "I didn't kill anyone." At the start of lockdown in Kentucky he told me a story about a patient he'd seen frequently as a young resident whose story was strange and who he thought about often.

At that time I realized I wanted to make the sort of film I'd woken up to on a Sunday morning; the thrillers I revisited in adulthood are particularly wry and messy, and wildly ambitious. Like *Rounding*, they were slightly crewed and budgeted and shorter than most, and because they were the studio's, they featured the same cast over and over like a troupe (*Rounding* borrows many actors and locations from *Saint Frances*, my first feature).

My brother and I wrote with intention that leaned into his experience as a medical student and future resident. My father, a pulmonologist, oversaw our COVID protocol and worked as a rigger in the art department. They each had recollections of what it felt like to be young, sleepless and staring into the eyes of patients whose lives were in their hands. Like most doctors I've met, they built up a necessary distance to the horror they encounter so regularly; the protagonist of this story would not.

So, what inspired *Rounding* wasn't so much one film in particular or even an era of filmmaking, but a feeling and memory of a particular engagement: cereal bowl in my lap, too-close to the screen with the volume turned way down, eyes riveted as a well-dressed outsider sneaks, sulks and investigates.

There are nights at the movies, and joyous matinee days at the movies, but these mornings at the movies are something special altogether for me - birdsong and gunshots; rooted to the floor, along for the ride and wishing the rest of the world would stay asleep just a little longer.







# CAST (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

**Namir Smallwood** as Dr. James Hayman

**Alex Wilson** as Security Guard Bart

**Cheryl Lynn Bruce** as Vivian Spurlock

**Ed Kross** as Dr. Justin Groff

**Michael Potts** as Dr. Emil Harrison

**Edwin Linker** as CPR Doctor

**David Parkes** as Code Doctor

**Kelly O'Sullivan** as Dr. Kayla Matthews

**Cruz Gonzalez-Cadel** as Brenda

**Hanna Dworkin** as Nan

**Meighan Gerachis** as Mrs. Watts

**Max Lipchitz** as Carol Hontolas/Young Doctor

**Bradley Grant Smith** as Dr. Mac MacLauren

**Pierce Cravens** as Family Member/Peter

**Edwin Lee Gibson** as Mr. Jones

**Sara Deodhar** as Mr. Jones' Daughter

**David Cromer** as Mark

**Sidney Flanigan** as Helen Adso

**Rebecca Spence** as Karen Adso

**Nadirah Bost** as Geraldine Hugg

**Larry Neumann Jr.** as Macon Rogers

**Charin Alvarez** as Sam

**Bob Farster** as Funeral Director

**Kayla Holder** as Clerk/Lu

**Tim Hopper** as Dr. Max Simonson

**Kelli Simpkins** as Pathology Attending

# CREW

Directed by  
Alex Thompson

Written by  
Alex Thompson, Christopher Thompson

Director of Photography  
Nate Hurtsellers

Editing by  
Michael S. Smith

Score by  
Quinn Tsan, Macie Stewart

Casting Director  
AJ Links, CSA, Mickie Paskal, CSA, Jennifer Rudnicke, CSA

Hair and Make-Up  
Catherine Woods

Production Designer  
Rachel Cole, Matt Hyland

Creature Design  
Ben Gojer

Produced by  
Julianna Imel, Leah Gaydos, James Choi, Edwin Linker,  
Pierce Cravens, Alex Thompson, p.g.a

Executive Produced by  
Neil Elman, Hannah Pillemer, Tony Vassiliadis,  
Fernando Szew, Markie Glasgow, Ted Reilly, Kelly Waller,  
Gianna Capra, Ian Keiser, Liv Krusinski, Alex Wilson

Co-Executive Produced by  
David Massey



# CAST BIOGRAPHIES

## **Namir Smallwood (Dr. James Hayman)**

Namir Smallwood recurred in the Showtime limited series Rust opposite Jeff Daniels and plays the leading role in award winning director Alex Thompson's next indie feature Rounding, premiering at the TriBeCa Film Festival. A staple of New York and Chicago theater, Smallwood has starred in Bug opposite Carrie Coon, Pass Over, and Pipeline at Lincoln Center on Broadway, which garnered him a Lucille Lortel Award Nomination for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play. He earned a BFA from the Guthrie Theater Program at University of Minnesota, and is an Ensemble Member at Steppenwolf. Smallwood is originally from Newark, New Jersey.

## **Sidney Flanigan (Helen Adso)**

Sidney Flanigan made her acting debut in the independent feature film NEVER RARELY SOMETIMES ALWAYS directed by Eliza Hittman which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2020 winning the Special Jury Award and the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival.

Her powerhouse performance in the film garnered rave reviews and major acclaim winning her various awards such as the New York Film Critics' Best Actress award, The Boston Society Film Critics' Best Actress award, the National Board of Review's Best Breakthrough Performance award, and the Hollywood Critics Association's Standout Performance by an Actor or Actress 23 or Under award. She also received an Independent Spirit Awards' nomination for Best Lead Actress, a Gotham Awards nomination for Breakthrough Actor and was selected in Variety's Power of Young Hollywood Impact Report 2020.

Sidney can next be seen in the independent film ROUNDING directed by Alex Thompson and recently wrapped production on a genre film ONLY THE GOOD SURVIVE starring opposite D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai, Darius Fraser, and Will Ropp. Sidney is also the lead singer of indie punk band StarJuice which is going out on tour this year.



### **Michael Potts (Dr. Emil Harrison)**

Michael Potts is an accomplished actor of stage and screen. In March, he'll portray Michelle Obama's father "Frasier C. Robinson III" alongside Viola Davis in Showtime's highly anticipated limited series "The First Lady." Additionally, he stars opposite Melissa Leo in the psychological thriller "Measure For Revenge." Later this year, Potts takes on the role of civil rights activist "Cleveland Lowellyn "Cleve" Robinson" in Netflix's historical drama 'RUSTIN.'" In 2020, his portrayal of "Slow Drag" earned him critical acclaim in Netflix's award-winning, feature adaptation of August Wilson's play "MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM." The film served as Chadwick Bosman's final acting portrayal.

On the stage, he is known for originating the roles of "Mafala Hatimbi" in the 2011 Tony® award winning musical comedy *The Book Of Mormon* from Trey Parker, Robert Lopez and Matt Stone as well as the heartwarming "Mr. Hawkins" in the Tony® nominated Broadway musical *The Prom*.

He received critical praise for his role as "Joe Mott" alongside Denzel Washington in the Tony® nominated Eugene O'Neill revival *The Iceman Cometh*. For his role in *Iceman* - Potts received the distinguished "Richard Seff Award," which is presented to veteran actors for their performances in supporting roles both on and off Broadway. Additionally, he was appointed as the 2018 Denzel Washington Endowed Chair in Theatre for Fordham University.

In 2017, he starred as the notorious gossip "Turnbo" in the Tony® award winning production of August Wilson's *Jitney*, under the direction of Ruben Santiago-Hudson's. That same year, Potts appeared alongside Olivia Wilde and Tom Sturridge in the stage adaptation of George Orwell's dystopian masterpiece *1984*.

Potts is widely recognized for his role opposite Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson as "Detective Maynard Gilbough" in the Emmy® Award winning HBO anthology series "True Detective." Well versed in producer David Simon's work, Potts starred opposite Idris Elba as the well-mannered yet feared assassin, "Brother Mouzone" on HBO's critically acclaimed series "The Wire." He starred in the HBO six-hour miniseries, "Show Me a Hero," co-created by David Simon ("The Wire") and directed by Oscar winner Paul Haggis. Recurring television roles also include CBS' "Madam Secretary" and FOX's "Gotham."

As a graduate the Yale School of Drama, Potts' extensive theater background has afforded him several performances on New York's theater stages. Roles in *Rent*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night* and *Richard III* garnered him the Falstaff Award for best 'Male Supporting Performance' and The Village Voice's Obie Award for his portrayal in the off-Broadway production of *The American Play*.

Potts originated the role of "Brooks, Sr." in the Tony® Award winning play *Grey Gardens* and additionally the role of "Paul Pierce" in Tony Kushner's *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures* at the Guthrie Theatre. In the regions, Michael has starred in *Oedipus*, *Highway Ulysses*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Hostage*, *The Rivals* and was in the original Broadway company of *Lennon*.

He is an active supporter and contributor of the 52nd Street Project, dedicated to the creation and production of new plays for, and often by, kids between the ages of 9-18 that reside in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood in New York City. The organization achieves this goal through a series of unique mentoring programs that match kids with professional theater artists.

Potts was born in Brooklyn, New York and raised in Wisacky, South Carolina. He resides in New York City.



### **Max Lipchitz (Carol Hontolas/Young Doctor)**

Max Lipchitz is a Los Angeles based actor whose previous feature credits include SAINT FRANCES (Dir. Alex Thompson) and FIRSTNESS (Dir. Brielle Brilliant).

### **David Cromer (Mark)**

David Cromer director and actor originally from Chicago, currently based in New York. As a director, his New York credits include A Case for the Existence of God (Signature Theatre); A Prayer for the French Republic (Manhattan Theatre Club); The Sound Inside (Broadway); The Band's Visit (Atlantic Theater Company, Broadway & National Tour); the Broadway revivals of Brighton Beach Memoirs and The House of Blue Leaves; The Treasurer (Playwrights Horizons); Man from Nebraska (Second Stage Theatre); The Effect, Orson's Shadow, and Tribes (Barrow Street Theatre); Women or Nothing (Atlantic Theater Company); Really Really (MCC Theater); When the Rain Stops Falling and Nikolai and the Others (Lincoln Center Theater); and Adding Machine (Minetta Lane Theatre). Other directing credits include BUG (Steppenwolf Theatre Company) Next to Normal (Writers Theatre); Come Back, Little Sheba (Huntington Theatre Company); The Sound Inside (Williamstown Theatre Festival); and Our Town in London, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston and Kansas City. As an actor, he recently appeared on Broadway as Howard Fine in the 2018 production of The Waverly Gallery. Prior to that, he appeared on Broadway as Karl Lindner in the 2014 revival of A Raisin in the Sun, and Off-Broadway as the Stage Manager in Our Town, which he also directed, at the Barrow Street Theatre. He appeared in the HBO series "The Newsroom," the Showtime series "Billions," and in the motion picture The Meyerowitz Stories (New and Selected). Cromer has received a Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, three Obie Awards, three Lucille Lortel Awards, a Joe A. Callaway Award, four Jeff Awards, and in 2010 was made a MacArthur Foundation Fellow.



# CREW BIOGRAPHIES

## **Alex Thompson (Writer / Director / Producer)**

Alex Thompson is a writer, director and producer based in Chicago. His debut feature film, the award-winning SAINT FRANCES, premiered at the SXSW Film Festival in 2019 where it won the Grand Jury prize for "Breakthrough Voice" and the Audience Award. The film was released in 2020 to critical acclaim by Oscilloscope and was nominated for several notable end-of-year awards including Breakthrough Director from the Gothams and the John Cassavetes Award from the Independent Spirits.

Alex is currently in development on a TV series with Color Force as well as several other feature films. He is one of Filmmaker Magazine's "25 New Faces of Independent Film 2019", and was part of the NYFF Artist's Academy.

Alex grew up in Lexington, Kentucky. His favorite hobbies are sport climbing, cooking Greek food and hanging out with his beloved Yiayia.

## **Nate Hurtsellers (Director of Photography)**

Nate Hurtsellers is a wildly talented cinematographer with experience in feature films, television, and commercials/music videos. He recently wrapped FilmNation's upcoming comedy DOWN LOW for director Rightor Doyle and is currently shooting Picturestart and Gloria Sanchez Productions' THEATER CAMP for directors Molly Gordon and Nick Lieberman.

Hurtsellers previously lensed Alex Thompson's SXSW Audience Award-winning film SAINT FRANCES as well as Kris Swanberg's I USED TO GO HERE and Bradley Grant Smith's OUR FATHER, which both premiered at SXSW.

Hurtsellers' television credits include an episode of the BJ Novak-created series THE PREMISE for FX; seasons 1 and 2 of Netflix's BONDING for director Rightor Doyle; and an episode of Apple's DEAR... for frequent collaborator and director Joris Debeji.

Hurtsellers' short film and documentary credits include Imagine Documentaries' JOHN BRONCO for Jake Szymanski, which made its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival; The New York Times' THE HAPPIEST GUY IN THE WORLD for director Lance Oppenheimer; the SXSW Grand Jury Award-nominated PERFECTLY NORMAL for director Joris Debeji; and TAILWHIP for director Joris Debeji which was chosen as an official selection at Camerimage.



### **Michael Smith (Editor)**

Michael S Smith is a film editor in Los Angeles. Most recently he edited the upcoming Film Nation feature, *DOWN LOW*, starring Zachary Quinto, Lukas Gage, and Simon Rex. Michael edited the Netflix Original series *BONDING*, music videos for Twenty One Pilots, and short documentaries for the New York Times and LeBron James' *UNINTERRUPTED*. His work has premiered at SXSW, TIFF, and Tribeca. He holds a Master's degree in Editing from the AFI Conservatory.

### **Quinn Tsan (Composer)**

Quinn Tsan is a songwriter and composer based in Chicago. She has collaborated or performed with artists including Ohmme, Clay Frankl (Twin Peaks), Serengeti, Liam Kazar and Gia Margaret. In 2015, she collaborated with filmmaker Alex Thompson and choreographer Erin Kilmurray in creating award winning short film, *Bedrooms*, a dance film set to her original compositions. She released her debut EP *Good Winter* in 2014, and her second EP *London, KY* in 2016, and in 2017 composed the soundtrack for *Saint Frances (Oscilloscope)*. Tsan is currently recording her LP *Once I Had a Picture of Us* with Ziyad Asrar, and plans to release it independently in 2022.

### **Macie Stewart (Composer)**

Macie Stewart (she/they) is a multi-instrumentalist, composer/arranger, songwriter, and improviser based in Chicago, IL who *Downbeat Magazine* calls “a master of equilibrium.” Stewart began her musical career at the age of 3. Learning piano while she learned to talk, she discovered two foundational modes of communication at once. As the daughter of a career musician (pianist Sami Scot), Stewart was encouraged to explore the piano and violin, and she became proficient on both instruments. After helping to found the Chicago bands *Kids These Days* and *Marrow*, Stewart broadened her interests and spent time in the avant-garde jazz scene, performing regularly at Chicago institutions *Constellation* and *The Hungry Brain*. It was in that scene Stewart distinguished herself as a go-to collaborator, co-founding the band *FINOM (FKA.OHMME)* (with Sima Cunningham) and performing and improvising with Ken Vandermark’s *Marker* ensemble, the improvised act *The Few* (with guitar player Steve Marquette and bassist Charlie Kirchen) and the improvised duo *Macie Stewart & Lia Kohl*. Stewart has toured as a multi-instrumentalist with bands such as *Japanese Breakfast*, *The Weather Station*, and *Tweedy*. Stewart has also spent years working as a string arranger, drawing on her varied background in classical, jazz, and Irish folk music to create unique arrangements for artists such as the band *Whitney*, *SZA*, *V.V. Lightbody*, *Knox Fortune*, and many others.

On September 24, 2021 Stewart released her debut solo record “*Mouth Full of Glass*” on *Orindal Records*.

The band *FINOM/ FKA OHMME* (Macie Stewart & Sima Cunningham) began in 2014, and since then they have released 3 full records, many singles, and a collaborative dance film entitled “*Half of Us*” with *Hubbard Street Dance* in 2021. Their most recent record, “*Fantasize Your Ghost*”, came out in June of 2020 on *Joyful Noise Recordings*. *Ohmme* premiered a work for 50 piece orchestra and dance with the *Pacific Northwest Ballet* titled “*Before I Was*” in Spring of 2022 alongside choreographer *Robyn Mineko Williams*.



# ABOUT DOPPELGÄNGER RELEASING

Doppelgänger Releasing™ is the alternative, genre-inspired label of Music Box Films. Launched in 2013, Doppelgänger Releasing supports cutting-edge films that push the boundaries of genre filmmaking. Highlights include Cameron and Colin Cairnes' Slamdance award-winner *100 Bloody Acres*, Lukas Feigelfeld's German horror film *Hagazussa*, Kiyoshi Kurosawa's Japanese horror *Penance*, Fabrice Du Welz's psychosexual thriller *Alleluia*, SXSW and Fantasia Festival favorite *Heavy Trip*, and the Blu-ray debut of Wes Craven's 1978 cult classic *Summer of Fear*. The label most recently co-released SXSW award-winner *Raging Grace* with Brainstorm Media. In 2023, Music Box Films relaunched the Doppelgänger Releasing™ label, committing to more experimental and genre films. *Crumb Catcher* is the first of several releases for the label in 2024.

For more information, please visit [www.doppelgangerreleasing.com](http://www.doppelgangerreleasing.com).

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