



BEFORE DARK

Logline:

A deaf couple hiking the Appalachian Trail argue over the moral implications of cochlear implants for their unborn child.

Synopsis:

Before Dark wrestles with the moral implications of cochlear implants on the deaf community.

The story follows a young couple hiking the Appalachian Trail when they get into an argument over their unborn child.

Both are deaf, Rebecca was born deaf while Joshua lost his hearing as a child. They argue over if their child should be given a cochlear implant if the child is born deaf.

Both have opposing views on whether their child should be given the ability to hear or the gift of being deaf.

Joshua, who has a faint memory of sound, wants to provide their child with the ability to hear. Rebecca, opposes this by insisting that being deaf is not a disability, but rather a culture. There is no disadvantage for the child if born deaf in her opinion.

The film examines both point of views and challenges the viewers on who is right and if there is a morally correct answer.

Questions:

Question One:

Was it difficult working with deaf actors not knowing ASL?

Answer:

It was a bit challenging at first. Its hard to find the right words that will translate well for ASL. Our first AD, Noah Feldman, is fluent in ASL so we was my right hand man when it came to giving direction. But it definitely got easier the further into the shoot we got. By the end it wasn't difficult at all.

Question Two:

How accurate is the film to the Deaf Community?

Answer:

We did are very best to represent the Deaf Community the best we could. We had deaf producers on the project to ensure we didn't make any choices that were not representative to the deaf.

Question Three:

Are the actors deaf?

Answer:

Yes! Both Amber Zion and Christopher DaSouza are deaf!

Question Four:

Where did you shoot the film?

Answer:

We shot in the North Georgia area. Many of the trail scenes are shot on the actual Appalachian Trail!

Question Five:

What were some challenges you faced on set?

Answer:

The wind! Our first day of shooting was on top of the ridge. This is an incredibly windy spot! We had to cut several take because the wind was picking up sand and getting in our eyes. Plus it was bitterly cold!

Question Six:

Were any other crew deaf on set?

Answer:

We had a couple of crew on set who were deaf. Our set operation manager and one of our grips was deaf! Not to mention one of producers is deaf!

Question Seven:

How many days did you shoot?

Answer:

It was a three day shoot.

Question Eight:

What advice do you have for film makers working with talent who need interpreters?

Answer:

Get a good interpreter! Not only that but have a connection with them off set. It makes it easier to communicate while working together.

Question Nine:

Why did you decide to write the story?

Answer:

I have always love the deaf culture and ASL. I wanted to write a film that represented the deaf community and give deaf actors the opportunity to be apart of it!

Question Ten:

What was your favorite part about this film?

Answer:

The relations we had on set from both cast and crew. We learned a lot from each other and had an amazing time working together.

Cast and Crew



Amber Zion is a Los Angeles based actress who has experience in both film and television along with theatre. She is a deaf actress who works to represent the deaf community and loves to pursue deaf roles where she can.



Christopher DeSouza is a California based actor who has had experience in film and in theatre. He is a deaf actor who takes pride in taking roles that represent the deaf community and show off just how talented deaf actors are.



Aaron Smithson is an Atlanta native and earning his Master of Fine Arts in Film and Television at Savannah College of Art and Design. He graduated from Young Harris College with a B.A. in Theatre with a concentration in performance. He has written and directed several short films in his career and hopes to continue telling stories through film.



Ellen Rice is from San Jose, Costa Rica. She lost her hearing at a young age and eventually learned American Sign Language. She is a deaf actress working on projects all over, but has her roots in Atlanta, GA. She is very passionate about the deaf community and excited to be a first time producer.



Colby Higgins recently completed his undergraduate degree at the University of North Georgia, and is thrilled to be a producer on this project. Most of his experience lies in the world of technical theatre but he intends to explore a career in the film industry.



Luis Peña is from the Dominican Republic and has been making and participating in films ever since he was in high school. What started as a hobby eventually evolved into a prospective career. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 2015, later pursuing a Master's in Film and Television with a concentration in Director of Photography. Having worked behind the camera in more than 30



Noah is an actor in Atlanta looking to expand his experience with filmmaking. He is a C.O.D.A (Child of Deaf Adults) and this is his first time being an assistant director.

Credits

Producer: Colby Higgins

Producer: Ellen Rice

Director: Aaron Smithson

Director of Photography: Luis Peña

1st Assistant Director: Noah Feldman

2nd Assistant Director: Mindy Run Hay

Set Operations Manager: Susan Weinfurthner

Camera Operator: Drew Cook

1st/2nd Assistant Camera: David Bergen

Grip: William Rice

Grip: Charles Ellerbey

Still Photographer: Molly Wood

Driver: Jay Smithson

