

Anonymous Content presents an *Arena* Film for  
The Andrew Douglas Company  
and  
Lone Star Productions

# *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*

A film by Andrew Douglas

*“An amazing piece of work. The film essentially follows one man, Jim White, as he deals with both his own and the South’s demons... and in the process we are given a musical tour of another planet. Beautiful dark and weird stuff.”*

~David Byrne

Publicity Contact:

Sasha Berman  
Shotwell Media  
2721 2nd St. # 217  
Santa Monica, CA 90405  
310-450-5571 office  
310-428-8942 cell  
[SashaBerman@earthlink.net](mailto:SashaBerman@earthlink.net)

Distributor Contact:

Ken Eisen  
Shadow Distribution  
P.O. Box 1246  
Waterville, ME 04903  
207-872-5111 office  
207-872-5502 fax  
[shadow@prexar.com](mailto:shadow@prexar.com)  
[www.shadowdistribution.com](http://www.shadowdistribution.com)

**82 Minutes.**

## Production Credits

Directed and Photographed by	<b>ANDREW DOUGLAS</b>
Written by	<b>STEVE HAISMAN</b>
Edited by	<b>MICHAEL ELLIOT</b>
Produced by	<b>ANDREW DOUGLAS MARTIN ROSENBAUM</b>
Line Producer	<b>JONATHAN SHOEMAKER</b>
Camera Operator	<b>FLOR COLLINS</b>
Focus Puller	<b>MICHAEL CAPARELLI</b>
Clapper Loader	<b>BARNABY CROCKER</b>
Sound	<b>PETER WINTER WHIT NORRIS</b>
Art Director	<b>CLIVE HOWARD</b>
Gaffer	<b>MATT CLARK</b>
Grip/Drivers	<b>JOHN-ANTHONY GARGIULO (Florida) GILLY CHABONNET (Louisiana) DAVID GOWEY (West Virginia)</b>
Production Manager	<b>CRAIG ZOBEL</b>
Location Manager	<b>DANA HANBY (Louisiana)</b>
Production Manager (Center Street)	<b>SOPHIA LIN (Center Street)</b>
Director's Assistant	<b>MARCY GERSTEIN</b>
Associate Producer (ADC)	<b>SIMON CROCKER</b>
Production Assistant (ADC)	<b>ANNA SOFRONIOU</b>
Assistant Producer (BBC)	<b>ALISON WILLETT</b>

Associate Editor

**EMILY DENNIS**

Assistant Editor

**CHRIS ANGEL**

Colourist

**STEFAN SONNENFELD**

Dubbing Mixer

**HUGH DAWSON-MITCHELL**

Executive Producer for  
Anonymous Content

**STEVE GOLIN**

Executive Producer for  
BBC Arena

**ANTHONY WALL**

### Music

**STILL WATERS**

Jim White

**CROSS BONES STYLE**

Cat Power

**MURDER**

Johnny Dowd

**MY SISTER'S TINY HANDS**

The Handsome Family

**CINDERBLOCK WALLS**

Jim White

**WAYFARING STRANGER**

16 Horsepower

**COTTONMOUTH**

David Eugene Edwards

**ALABAMA CHROME**

Jim White

**FIRST THERE WAS**

Johnny Dowd with  
Maggie Brown

**COLD COLD COLD**

The Handsome Family

**WORRIED MIND**

Johnny Dowd

**THEY DON'T KNOW**

Rev. Gary Howington

**I'M ROOTING FOR THAT CITY**

Rev. Gary Howington

**WHEN JESUS CALLS MY NAME**

Rev. Gary Howington

**PERFECT DAY TO CHASE**

**TORNADOES**

Jim White

**WHEN THAT HELICOPTER COMES**

The Handsome Family

**THE WOUND THAT NEVER HEALS**

Jim White

**KNOXVILLE GIRL**

The Singing Hall Sisters

**ONE WAY**

Johnny Dowd

**DANVILLE GIRL**

Lee Sexton

**WAYFARING PILGRIM**

Hobart Smith

**LAST FAIR DEAL**

David Johansen  
with Larry Saltzman

**MEET ME ON THE OTHER SIDE**

Brother Doug Trio

**AMAZING GRACE**  
Melissa Swingle

**LITTLE MAGGIE**  
Lee Sexton

**RYE WHISKEY**  
Lee Sexton

**BORROWED WINGS**  
Jim White  
Doc Watson

**COO-COO BIRD**  
Clarence Ashley &

**I WILL PRAISE MY BABY**  
Brother Fred & Sister Brenda

**DID MY SAVIOUR DIE?**  
Brother Fred & Sister Brenda

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
Jim White

## Introduction

*“Yes and there are projects for the dead and there are projects for the living... though I must confess sometimes I get confused by that distinction...”—Jim White, "Still Waters"*

*Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus* is a captivating and compelling road trip through the creative spirit of the South. ‘Alt’ Country singer Jim White takes his white-trash muscle car through a gritty terrain of churches, prisons, truck stops, biker bars and coal mines. Writer Steve Haisman says we were “*trying to pin down what it is about this baffling place that inspires musicians and writers. This whole area was so fascinating – somehow it was a raw image of ourselves, or at least something we’ve lost sight of or forgotten. Our own world seems so sophisticated and so devouring, it assimilates everything but is at the same time so lacking in a certain content....We suspected the Southern Church and the internal conflict with, shall we say, secular impulses, was somehow central to the creative process, and this certainly seemed true of Jim’s music.*”

This is a journey through a very real contemporary Southern America, a world of marginalised white people and their unique and intense homemade culture. Along the way are roadside encounters with present-day musical mavericks including the Handsome Family, Johnny Dowd, David Eugene Edwards and David Johansen; old time banjo player Lee Sexton; Rockabilly and mountain Gospel churches – and novelist Harry Crews telling grisly stories down a dirt track.

Everybody has a story in some form, almost invariably of sudden death, sin or redemption - yet all transformed by the characteristic grim humour and natural eloquence of the Southern imagination.

And all the while, a strange Southern Jesus looms in the background.

Anthony Wall, Series Editor of *Arena* comments, “*Arena* has always been committed to pushing the boundaries of conventional documentary film-making to challenge the ideas, beliefs and expectations of their audience. *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus* takes us on an extraordinary journey to the heart of the culture of the South, exposing a truth that is only possible to glimpse to those who inhabit this world. This extraordinarily powerful and moving documentary plays to each of the senses, taking the viewers off the beaten track to the poor white backwaters and backwoods of the South. This film unites the unique talents of acclaimed photographer and film-maker Andrew Douglas, whose visual eye is responsible for so much of the beauty of this film, and Martin Rosenbaum, who returns to work with *Arena*, following the collaboration on the critically acclaimed *Pinter at the BBC* season, at the centre of which was the two-part *Arena* film”.

“Anonymous Content are proud to be associated with this extraordinary film,” says Steve Golin, Executive Producer. “Working on this project with Andrew was a remarkable experience. His humanity, love of music, stunning photography and innate understanding of the culture and atmosphere of the American South, have made this a truly unique piece of film-making.”

#### STATEMENT BY DIRECTOR ANDREW DOUGLAS:

I wanted to make a film that had the scale, poetry and emotional resonance of a feature film, and show *directly* the peculiar character of the South – with its ancient obsessions with the otherworldly and the flesh. But I wanted to do this in a modern and entertaining way and find a new form to approach a fundamental question – *why* does so much music and writing come out of the South? When I heard the music of Jim White, one of most acclaimed of the Alt. Country singers, I was struck by the haunting quality of his songs and knew he was exactly the right person to provide a focus for that question.

I wanted to explore the ancient Southern obsession with the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane but in a thoroughly modern voice. So it seemed appropriate to follow Jim into this world as he worked through his own preoccupations with his muse – or, as he puts it, *‘trying to find the gold tooth in God’s crooked smile’*.

Jim’s journey is the spine of the film. Along the way we embraced other contemporary musicians who take their inspiration from the atmosphere of the South and the intense religious fervour of the Southern Pentecostal Church. The musicians played live wherever appropriate: in a diner, in a bar, by the roadside, in a junkyard or barbershop – there were no rules.

The journey, the stories, the music, the mysterious atmosphere – these are the elements of the film. I wanted a film that would connect with a broad range of audiences who could identify with the struggle to find faith and meaning in the modern world, wherever they were.

The result is *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*. I hope you enjoy it.

Andrew Douglas, Director and Producer

## Production Notes

In 2000 the writer Liz Jobey, knowing my love of photography and music, introduced me to Andrew Douglas. She had known Andrew and his work for many years, and thought that I might be interested in a project that he was working on with his friend Steve Haisman. Andrew and Steve had travelled through the American South, Andrew taking photographs and Steve writing about the people and places they visited. They had been inspired to make the trip after listening to Jim White's haunting album, *The Mysterious Tale of How I Shouted Wrong-eyed Jesus*. Their idea was to make a film that, in Andrew's words, 'tried to find the place where the music came from'. In the process it would explore the potent creative spirit in the South and encompass the music of other contemporary 'Alt' Country musicians who found inspiration in Southern culture.

Later that year I took the idea to Anthony Wall, the Editor of *Arena*, whose own passion for and deep knowledge of the South goes back many years. Anthony felt that the time was right for a contemporary take on the South, interpreted through the distinctive visual perspective of a distinguished photographer. He agreed to support the film and *Arena* and the BBC became our first co-production partner. Anthony would provide invaluable guidance throughout the production. Once the BBC was on board, the LA company, Anonymous Content, for whom Andrew had directed many successful commercials, agreed to be our other major co-production partner. *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus* was now on the road.

After the first day of shooting in Ferriday, Louisiana, during which the Mayor of the town arranged for half a dozen convicts from the local penitentiary to help prepare a location to record one of the bands, Andrew, Steve and I went for a drink, Ferriday-style. The local bar, owned by Jerry Lee Lewis' sister, was no ordinary place. She runs Ferriday's Drive-Through Bar.

As we entered into the bar, on the driver's side, was a counter at window height. Behind the bar were mirrored glass shelves loaded with bottles. On the passenger side was a wall of fridges full of beer. We rolled down the window and ordered Bourbon. American measures (triples) were handed through the window in plastic shot glasses. With drinks in hand, we drove off, absorbed into this extraordinary Louisiana world.

The people and musicians who make this film reveal the immense power of the southern imagination to express ideas and emotions in the most poetic way. As Lee Sexton observes: looking out to the landscape inspires him to want to make that 'high lonesome sound...'

The music was a crucial factor in creating the mood and structure of the film, the musicians were extremely generous in trusting Steve's intentions. Although there was a certain amount of planning in getting them to the locations and agreeing

what songs they would play, their performances grew organically out of their experience of being in that environment. They didn't know exactly what to expect and responded inspirationally. The musicians infused the locations they inhabited with a special atmosphere that motivated the way the film came together.

The religious fervour of the communities infused every step of the film - the intensity of life for people living in extreme situations, such as in the poor white southern communities, seems to lead to an equally intense religious expression. It is at the core of their lives and will remain there – it's in their blood. And at least it's something they can rely on.

This was an unusual documentary shoot in that we had a relatively large crew. Andrew wanted to bring high production values to the film, for example using tracks and feature film lighting, and still be flexible enough to react spontaneously to situations. Although the crew consisted of 11 people with specific jobs like camera operator, focus puller, grip, gaffer, line producer and so on, everybody was prepared to do anything to get the shots. Moving camera dollies, tracks and lights into unlikely locations like swamps, woods and barbershops was accomplished in a record time.

To some extent, every film takes me into new territory, but this one journeys to places where films don't often go, geographically, in spirit and poetically.

Martin Rosenbaum, Lone Star Productions, Producer



## Biographies

### **JIM WHITE**

"I grew up down South with a good heart and a bad mind, trying like hell to do right, but most times messing up and doing wrong instead."

'Alt' Country singer/songwriter Jim White grew up in Pensacola, Florida, enamoured with the sounds of the white gospel music that he heard on the Gospel Jubilee television series. White was the last of five kids, born late to an itinerant, middle class military family. Conceived on a cross-country journey, he'd traversed the US no less than six times by the age of five, when his family put down roots in Pensacola, Florida. "This is one hell of a churchy town," Jim notes. A fact confirmed by statistics recognising Pensacola as the leader in the United States for the density of churches per capita.

Of his inevitable experience in the church White recalls, "I'd got messed up with drugs real young and saw my friends get all hollowed eyed and dead looking, so I figured, if I was going to be strung out, it might as well be on Jesus." But ever the outsider, the church was a poor fit for White's quirky, irreverent character, although it was to prove a key influence in his music.

Whilst White's music was later to reveal a deep affection for the South and its people, his twenties saw him leave the South and travel the world, trying many careers before his music was eventually to make his fortune. Explains White, "At a certain point there in my twenties when it all just got too damn complicated for me in this small town, what with my church background and my drug background and all these different people's expectations of me, I got fed up, packed my car and took off."

White briefly entertained a career as a professional surfer, followed by a period in Milan as a fashion model, whilst always writing song lyrics and experimenting with his own unique musical sound on the side. A carpentry accident, which resulted in a maimed left hand, seemed to end White's hopes as a musician, but after writing a collection of simple songs on his guitar, a friend convinced him to record a demo which ultimately made its way to the offices of the Luaka Bop folk label. After re-recording the songs, White issued his debut album in 1997, *Wrong-Eyed Jesus*, a collection of atmospheric, oddly spiritual country-folk performances.

The unique blend of 'Alt' Country and metaphysics was instantly acclaimed as a classic of the newly burgeoning 'sadcore' scene, a point which amused the Florida-based songwriter. "For 20 years I'd written these dark little songs," he notes dryly. "Every once in a while I'd play them for someone and they'd shout, 'Stop! That sucks so bad it makes my ears pop!' Then a thing called 'Alt' Country came along and, boom, all of a sudden everyone's hollering 'Jim, you're a friggin' genius!' I mean, what happened???"

White's music was to come to the attention of an international audience when British trip-hop mavens Morcheeba heard a demo he had made and promptly volunteered to produce the track. "They understood that I didn't have the slightest clue as to how to make a living in that oxymoron known as the music business and they offered to help me in any way they could." The chemistry was such that they took time out from their own recording schedule to produce several more tracks, which form the backbone of White's 2001 release, *No Such Place*.

Steeped in the influence of Flannery O'Connor and Tom Waits, *Wrong-Eyed Jesus* revealed White as a spiritual anatomist of the American South. *No Such Place* upped the ante revealing a broader, more diverse collection of songs about rage and redemption, depravity and dreams, dead cars and broken hearts. White's third CD, *Drill a Hole in that Substrate and Tell Me What You See*, was one of the most highly acclaimed albums of 2004.

#### ANDREW DOUGLAS

Andrew began his career working as a photographic assistant to Snowdon. He worked as a professional photographer for the magazine press, publishing, music and advertising industries on both sides of the Atlantic. His work has been exhibited in leading galleries in New York and London.

In 1991 he moved into film, directing music video and then television commercials. He is now one of the top commercials directors in the world and was nominated as '*Best Commercials Director 2004*' by the Directors Guild of America. His success is attributable to his distinctive style which manages to be both timeless and entirely contemporary.

Andrew is now concentrating on combining his visual sensibilities with his story-telling instincts and developing a number of theatrical documentary and feature film projects. Already completed is '*Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*' an idiosyncratic documentary commissioned by BBC TV's *Arena* which will be released theatrically in the US and Canada in July this year. This film won the 2004 Seattle Film Festival's Jury award for Best Documentary and also won him the prestigious Royal Television Society's 2004 award for Best Cinematography for Non-Fiction Films.

Projects currently in development include *Underground* from the award winning novel by Tobias Hill; *A World of Me* – the true story of an Italian bank robber whose greatest triumph –the biggest robbery in UK history- is his greatest disaster; "*The People Next Door*", adapted from the stage play by Henry Adam - a black comedy about what happens when someone else's global problem becomes your local one; *Gideon's Band*, the harrowing story of the Jubilee Singers who brought soul music to a wider world and *Becoming Ho* - a revisionist view of Ho Chi Minh.

Andrew recently made his feature directorial debut with the recent US and International box office hit MGM's "*The Amityville Horror*."

### **STEVE HAISMAN**

Writer Steve Haisman grew up with Andrew in Southend. He studied English at Warwick University, before working for four years as a teacher and community development worker in Central London.

After meeting up with Andrew again, he gave up teaching for a career in writing. Haisman came up with the idea of a poetic documentary that looked into the hidden roots of contemporary musical culture, which was to become *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*.

Haisman is currently developing scripts for feature films for The Andrew Douglas Company, and working on a book and soundtrack to accompany *Searching For the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*.

### **MARTIN ROSENBAUM & LONE STAR PRODUCTIONS**

Martin was the Executive Producer at World Wide Pictures from 1990 until June 2000. During that time he produced the company's factual output including several in the *Arena* strand including *Last Supper*, *The Last Soviet Citizen*, *Tony Bennett's New York* and *Looking for The Iron Curtain*. He has also produced *Equinox: Blue Skies*, *The New Russia* and *On the Map* for Channel 4; and *Placido Domingo's Tales from the Opera* – a look backstage at four opera houses with the great tenor.

Projects Rosenbaum has produced since forming Lone Star Productions include *Arena: Harold Pinter* – a major two-part portrait of Britain's greatest living playwright plus a series of documentaries and plays as part of *Pinter at the BBC*; *I am from Nowhere* – a feature length documentary story of the town in Slovakia where Andy Warhol's family come from for BBC Arena/ZDF/Vienna Film Fund.

Lone Star are currently developing and in production on several projects including *The Hedy Lamarr Story* – the first film portrait of 'the most beautiful woman in the world' for BBC Arena/ZDF Arte/Vienna Film Fund; *Arena: Dennis Potter* – the first comprehensive television documentary on the life and work of the writer made with the full support of his family; *Why Germans Love Their Cars* in association with Ufer & Hanfgarn, Berlin and Mischief Films, Vienna and *Becoming Ho* in association with The Andrew Douglas Company.

### **STEVE GOLIN & ANONYMOUS CONTENT**

Steve Golin attended NYU before graduating from the American Film Institute with an MFA in Producing. Golin is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Producers Guild of America.

Steve Golin is the founder and CEO of Anonymous Content, a multi-media production, content development and talent management company. His company has signed directors Andrew Douglas, David Fincher and Gore Verbinski, among others, for representation in commercials, music videos and new media.

Prior to Anonymous, Golin co-founded Propaganda Films in 1986, which set a new creative standard for music videos and commercial production with its revolutionary style and sophistication.

Golin is currently producing *Babel* written and directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu (*Amores Perros* & *21 Grams*), starring Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett and Gael Garcia Bernal.

Past production credits include *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* written by Charlie Kaufman (*Being John Malkovich* and *Adaptation*), starring Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet, and directed by Michel Gondry (*Human Nature*); *Being John Malkovich* starring John Malkovich, John Cusack and Cameron Diaz; *Nurse Betty* starring Renee Zellweger (winner of a Golden Globe for Best Actress, Comedy); David Fincher's *The Game* starring Michael Douglas and Sean Penn; Barry Levinson's *Sleepers* starring Brad Pitt and Robert DeNiro; Jane Campion's *Portrait of a Lady* starring Nicole Kidman and John Malkovich; David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (Winner of Palme d'Or at Cannes 1990), starring Nicolas Cage and Laura Dern.

### **ANTHONY WALL & BBC TV ARENA**

Anthony Wall has been the editor of BBC TV's *Arena* since 1985 and before that a director since its inception in 1979. Wall and *Arena* are a byword for wit, ingenuity and style in arts film-making.

*Arena* has won eight BAFTAs and 22 nominations, four Royal Television Society Awards and seven nominations, plus nominations in the Primetime and International Emmys and the Prix Italia. Wall has also won numerous other honours, notably the Special Medallion at the Telluride Film Festival in 1999 for 'twenty years at the cutting edge of documentary film making'.

At the Festival, Werner Herzog described Wall as 'the oasis in the sea of insanity that is television'.

Wall received the Medallion alongside fellow recipients Catherine Deneuve, David Lynch and Philip Glass.

*Arena's* films have been shown at all the world's major film festivals. Under Wall's editorship the series has initiated and co-produced fiction and non-fiction films which have had theatrical exhibition – the Oscar nominated *Paris Is Burning*

(1990), *I Shot Andy Warhol* (1996), - Lily Taylor won best actress at Sundance, *Wisconsin Death Trip* (1999) (Oscar shortlist), *James Ellroy's Feast of Death* (2001) (nomination Prix Italia), both Royal Television Society winners, and currently, *Imagine IMAGINE* (2003), an investigation into the extraordinary popularity of the John Lennon song, and *Searching For The Wrong-Eyed Jesus*.

Recently Wall and *Arena* have collaborated with the British Film Institute on their major retrospectives of *Kurosawa* (2000) (nomination Prix Italia), *Visconti* (2002) (current nomination International Emmys) and *Richard Attenborough* (2003), with feature-length profiles of all three directors, all shown at the National Film Theatre.

Last year *Arena* swept the board in awards, winning BAFTA, the Broadcasting Press Guild, Royal Television Society and receiving an unprecedented two out of three final nominations for the Prix Italia, along with honours from San Francisco, Washington DC, BANFF, Montreal and New York.

In 2001 *Arena* was voted one of the hundred greatest television programmes of all time in a poll of BFI members, one of only a handful of documentary series to be included.

Future films for *Arena* include the first feature length documentary on Bob Dylan's early years – Martin Scorsese directs this co-production with Spitfire and PBF; and an intimate profile of Luciano Pavarotti – *Arena* has unprecedented access to the life and work of this extraordinary musical talent, filmed over a whole year.