



Dalton Trumbo's

**JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

a  
truly\*indie  
release

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## Table of Contents

I.	Short Synopsis	page 3
II.	Long Synopsis / Dedication	page 4
III.	The Production	page 7
IV.	The Director's Notes	page 12
V.	The Play	page 13
VI.	The Novel	page 14
VII.	Dalton Trumbo	page 15
VIII.	Available for Interviews	page 16
IX.	Ben McKenzie	page 17
X.	The Director	page 18
XI.	The Creative Team	page 19
XII.	The Credits	page 21



Dalton Trumbo's

# **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

One of the greatest and most memorable anti-war novels of all time, **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**, returns to the big screen in a remarkably intimate, emotionally powerful, visually unique adaptation. Presented "live on stage, on film," the movie is a cinematic version of the one-person 1982 Off-Broadway play, which was faithfully adapted by playwright Bradley Rand Smith in the same "stream of consciousness" style utilized by legendary writer Dalton Trumbo in his 1939 National Book Award-winning best seller.

**Characters:** Joe Bonham. In his 20's.

**Time:** 1918

**Place:** The Mind of Joe Bonham, who is lying in a private hospital room in England.

**Setting:** Dark, non-descript, empty, box-like, with a single chair and bench. All locations and events should be suggested only through light and sound.

**Costuming:** A Henley t-shirt, WWI issue Army pants, belt, bare feet; there should be no attempt to suggest handicaps or wounds through the use of make-up or special effects.

**Note:** The audience sees Joe as he sees himself, in his mind's eye; healthy, youthful...trapped.

## **Short Synopsis**

The film takes place in the mind of an American soldier hit by an artillery shell on the last day of WWI; a quadruple amputee who has also lost his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Regaining consciousness, Joe Bonham discovers that while his brain is healthy and able to reason, the rest of his body is irreparably shattered, leaving him trapped forever within the confines of his own imagination. He struggles to find some way to communicate with the outside world. Tapping his head in Morse code, he breaks through and pleads with his caretakers to be put on display as a living example of the cost of war. The film explores the interplay between science, medicine, religion, and politics.

Greenwood Hill Productions presents in association with Tres Hermanos Productions, **Dalton Trumbo's JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**. Ben McKenzie. Casting by Chadwick Struck. Costume Designer, Denitsa Bliznakova. Art Direction, Keith Mitchell. Theatrical Lighting Designer, Leigh Allen. Music and Sound Designer, Michael D. Mortilla. Edited by Jay Cassidy, A.C.E. Director of Photography, Andrew K. Sachs. Based on the novel by Dalton Trumbo. Adapted for the stage by Bradley Rand Smith. Associate Producers, Kevin Eberly, Calvin D. Horton. Executive Producers, Robin A. Sateriale, John Meindl. Produced by Rowan Joseph, Lauri LaBeau, Shane Partlow, Wesley Horton. Directed by Rowan Joseph. A Truly Indie Release.



Dalton Trumbo's

## **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

### Long Synopsis

The film takes place in the mind of Joe Bonham, an American soldier lying in a hospital room after being hit by an artillery shell on the final day of WWI. Traveling in and out of pools of consciousness, Joe flashes back to memories of his farewell on the day of his embarkment. He calls out to his girlfriend, *"Don't get scared, Karen! It's alright!"* Then, *"Goodbye, Mother! Goodbye, Katherine! I'll send back half my pay and Dad's insurance will hold out until I get back!"* Finally, he shouts out in youthful enthusiasm, *"America! You're like a sweetheart to me!"*

As he regains full consciousness, Joe describes the scene at the train station that morning. He jumps up on a bench, waving to his girl, Karen, when he is suddenly stopped by a distant painful ringing in his ears. Leaving his memories behind, he sits on the bench, gathers his thoughts, and discovers he's gone deaf, *"Stone cold deaf, Joe."*

His mind wanders back to childhood and the sound of freshly fallen snow. Lying on the bare floor making imaginary snow angels, Joe's eyes go wide as he senses that his body is actually lying on a hospital operating table.

Joe discovers he is severely injured and that both of his arms and legs have been amputated. Furthermore, he cannot speak, see, hear, or smell because he no longer has a face – only a mask covering where his face used to be. He wonders bitterly about the doctors' motivation for saving him at all.

He continues to live inside his head, seeking comfort in his memories: sleeping in the arms of his beloved Karen, going to a dance at the county fair with his childhood buddies, and camping and fishing with his father. He also finds himself terrorized by nightmares of an unseen rat gnawing at his wounds.

Joe struggles to figure out whether he is awake or asleep, to find a way to *"keep myself in the world."* He uses the only part of his body that is unharmed, *"that is exactly as it should be,"* the skin of his neck not covered by blankets, to try to sense the outside world. He develops a plan to tally the nurses' visits and feel the heat of sunrise on his skin so that he can establish the time of day. Sensing the dawn of a new day, Joe rejoices at capturing time and making his way back into the world.

Settling into his new world, Joe is surprised to feel a nurse preparing him for some special occasion. Generals visit his bedside and lay something cold and hard on his chest. Joe is furious, *"They've pinned a medal on me!"* He struggles violently to remove his mask, sending the men

running from his room. Joe feels the vibrations of their running feet as they flee, and the thought occurs to him that he might be able to communicate after all...using his movements. He begins tapping "SOS" in Morse code with his head, only to have the nurse assume that he is having seizures and sedate him.

Sinking into a drug induced stupor, Joe finds himself once more in a dugout at the height of a fierce battle. He calls out to an English comrade, "Hughie, oh God, Hughie am I glad to see you!" He recounts the story of "old Lazarus," a German soldier whose decaying corpse dangled for days from a nearby barbed wire fence. The story climaxes with Joe shooting Lazarus' body from the fence, Hughie being dragged away to a mental ward and a shell coming down on Joe, rendering him the shell of the man he has become. He asks bitterly, "Where are the brass bands now?"

Joe slowly stands and moves forward into a new sense of clarity and understanding.

*Somebody tapped you on the shoulder and said, 'Come along son, we're going to war.' No 'yes' or 'no' or 'I'll think it over.' Somebody just said 'let's go fight for liberty', and those that went got killed without...ever once thinking about liberty.*

*If there could be a next time, I'd say, 'Mister, my life's important to me. When I swap my life for liberty I've got to know in advance what liberty is and whose idea of liberty we're talking about and just how much of that liberty we're going to have when it's all over. Mister, you owe me that much in this deal because I like the liberty I have to walk and see and hear and eat and sleep with my girl.'*

*...Always hear the same people willing to sacrifice somebody else's life. But it's time two people had a say in things: us little guys and the dead. What do the dead say? Any of them ever come back and say I died for decency and that's better than being alive? The man who says death before dishonor is either a fool or a liar because he doesn't know what death is. I do. I am the nearest thing to a dead man on earth. Those kids didn't die thinking about decency, they died crying in their minds like babies, they died whispering for the voice of a mother, a father, a wife, a child; they died moaning and sighing for life! I want to live I want to live I want to live! Nothing is bigger than life! Nothing!*

Joe awakens from his sedation to a new nurse who spells out "MERRY CHRISTMAS" on his chest. Joe signals with his head that he understands and begins tapping his head again in Morse code. The nurse, realizing he is trying to communicate, returns with a doctor who understands the code.

The doctor taps onto Joe's forehead, "WHAT DO YOU WANT?" Joe's mind reels at the absurdity of the question.

*An ice cream cone? A good book? Dancing lessons, the bed's a little hard, bring me a glass of water, the coffee you've been pouring in my veins needs more sugar?*

*You stupid bastards I want what you take for granted. Eyes to see with. A nose to smell the faint perfume that stays in the air after a girl's passed by. A mouth to kiss. Arms and legs to work and be like a man, like a living thing. I also want what you can give me. I want out. Out of this bed, away from this empty room, doing something, anything – I could do*

*something – I can pay my own way! I could be an educational exhibit! People wouldn't learn much about anatomy from me but they would learn all there is to know about war, the difference between a war in the newspapers and liberty bonds drives and a war that's fought out lonesomely in the mud somewhere, a war between a man and a high explosive shell. Take off my nightshirt, build a glass case for me and take me wherever people are on the lookout for freakish things. I'm the alive man that's dead! I'm the dead man that's alive!*

*Take me to wherever parliaments and congresses and chambers of statesmen are meeting. I want to be there when they talk about honor and justice and the fourteen points and self-determination of peoples. Let them form blocks and alliances and mutual assistance pacts and guarantees of neutrality.*

*Let them draft notes and ultimatums and protests and accusations but before they vote to start killing each other, let the main guy rap his gavel down on my case and say, 'Here gentlemen, is the only issue before this house, and that is are you for this thing here or are you against it?'*

Calming himself, he slowly taps his head, pleading, "Please...let...me...out...of...here!" The doctor responds, "WHAT YOU ASK IS AGAINST REGULATIONS." Joe explodes with anger at this betrayal – he realizes that they are afraid to let him out, to let other men see him, "*As I am, so shall you be.*" In an act of defiance and desperation, he screams out, "I won't let them do it! I WON'T LET THEM WIN! I WILL NOT!"

As the camera slowly pulls back, Joe once again recites his multiplication tables, refusing to give in to the insanity of his world.

### **Dedication**

*This film is a testament to the noble sacrifice of those who fight our wars for us and as a reminder of the solemn responsibility of those who chose to send them.*

My choice of wording in the film's dedication has caused a bit of controversy within a small segment of today's anti-war movement. The film has received comments such as, "*I loved it, up until the dedication*" and "*I thought it was the best anti-war film I'd ever seen, until I saw the dedication at the end.*" I confess I've never understood the concept that if you are pro-soldier you are inherently pro-war, and conversely, if you are anti-war you are somehow anti-soldier. I have never known a single combatant who came away from any conflict with the attitude that war is "good" and we need more of it; usually quite the opposite. Still, even Trumbo himself, while serving as an Army war correspondent in WWII, voiced the opinion that some conflicts are, to paraphrase, "a necessary evil" – but an evil nonetheless. My intent was to create a film that would cause all those who see it to better understand and THINK about the true cost of war; a movie that would give the audience something to think and TALK about. – *Director, Rowan Joseph*



Dalton Trumbo's

# **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

## The Production

**Dalton Trumbo's JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN** was never intended to be a motion picture, or even a video for that matter, but two major events interceded which gave birth to this remarkably original, feature film version of the renowned anti-war novel.

The first occurred on Memorial Day weekend 2007, when theatre director and producer Rowan Joseph returned to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, located at Lincoln Center in Manhattan, to review the archival video tape of the original 1982 Off-Broadway production. The theatrical production company that Joseph co-owned and operated had recently obtained the touring rights to the play and Joseph was set to direct the national tour, scheduled to coincide with the upcoming 2008 Presidential elections. Joseph explained his enthusiasm for the project.

I had viewed the video back in the late 1980's after having seen a production of the play at the West Bank Downstairs Theatre. Bradley Rand Smith, who had adapted the novel into a stage monologue, told me stories about the original Circle Rep production. I had heard about the show, which had taken on a kind of legendary mystique by then since it had only run for 27 performances and won Jeff Daniels an Obie Award for his performance. Brad suggested I screen the VHS tape of the Circle Rep production at the Lincoln Center Library, which I did. I was completely blown away by Jeff Daniels' performance, despite the fact that the first ten minutes had no picture, only audio. Apparently the person operating the camera at the back of the theatre had forgotten to remove the lens cap. All of a sudden you heard another voice, clearly not Daniels', say 'Shit', and then suddenly the picture came on. Even with that, I still found the video absolutely riveting; I have never forgotten it, never will.

On Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Joseph sat before a small 13" monitor at the Lincoln Center library, once again set to view the tape, after having flown in from Los Angeles, where he now lives. "The tape started and there, right away, was a 29-year-old Jeff Daniels about a third of the way through the play," Joseph recalls. "I immediately went up to the video librarian and asked him to please replay the tape from the beginning." After checking with a technician in the archival film distribution center, the librarian informed Joseph that the initial twenty minutes or so of the original tape had been destroyed when it was transferred from VHS to the new digital format. "I was just devastated. I went back to the monitor and watched the remainder of the video. When it was over I sat there, once again, with tears in my eyes, but for a very different reason. I could not believe that the only recorded version of the play, the original production of the play, was essentially gone forever."

Returning to California, Joseph approached his business partner, Shane Partlow, with the idea of making a video of their production of the play prior to touring it. "While I liked the idea and certainly understood where Rowan was coming from, I knew we didn't have the financial resources to mount both an Equity touring production of the play and make a video," Partlow explained. "If we did decide to film or tape the play it would have to be done either under a SAG or AFTRA contract, both of which made it financially impossible." Joseph and Partlow decided to postpone the tour and instead pursue the idea of making a video of the play which could be sold as a DVD. "We felt that if worse came to worst, we could mount the tour later and sell the DVDs in the lobby and recoup our money that way," Partlow remarked.

Once the decision to make the video was made, the first hurdle was casting the right actor in the role of 'Joe Bonham'. The play is a one-person stage monologue with a few off-stage voices. Adapted by playwright Bradley Rand Smith in a similar *stream of consciousness* style of writing as the original 1939 National Book Award-winning novel, the play is fifty pages of solid dialogue. "I knew we need to find a really strong actor who was comfortable on camera, as well as on stage." Joseph commented.

Casting Director Chadwick Struck agreed, "Rowan had decided that he didn't want to go the more traditional route of filming the play in front of a live audience, but he still wanted the feeling of it being a live play, sort of in the vein of Lars Von Trier's *DOGVILLE*." The decision was also made to try and attract a name actor. So Struck compiled a list of all of the hot, up-and-coming twenty-something actors who he thought could handle the material and sent it over.

"It was a good list but there was another problem that had to be addressed," Joseph remarked. "The actor playing 'Joe' had to have a very All-American, Everyman quality about him, and look like he could have stepped off of a battlefield in WWI. He had to have a wide-eyed innocence about him, yet still be very masculine. Definitely not a Hollywood pretty boy or some Gen-X dude."

Ben McKenzie had recently finished a stint on the hugely successful hit Fox TV series, *The O.C.* He came to Los Angeles after appearing in several Off-Broadway plays and interning for a season at the prestigious Williamstown Theatre Festival. He is also the nephew of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, Robert Schenkkan. Struck e-mailed McKenzie's picture and resume to Joseph.

"As soon as I saw Ben's photo I knew he had the perfect look for what I wanted," imparted Joseph. "I also knew we didn't have that kind of money in the budget; welcome to indie film producing 101."

Relying on the many contacts he had developed over his years as a successful theatre producer and executive, Joseph set out to find a direct contact through to McKenzie.

"In addition to having worked many years in the New York theatre community, I had the good fortune to run the Falcon Theatre in Burbank for Garry Marshall," Joseph explained. "I created and launched the Falcon's first-ever subscription series with *Cobb* in 2001, co-produced with Kevin Spacey, and I finished with a workshop of *Happy Days, the Musical* in the summer of 2006." It turned out that veteran Broadway character actor, Ernie Sabella, who had played 'Arnold' in the *Happy Days* workshop, was a former roommate of one of McKenzie's uncles. "Forget Hollywood's six degrees of Kevin Bacon, in the theatre we have two degrees at the most to deal with," chided

Joseph. "I called Ernie on his cell phone and reached him backstage at the Al Hirschfeld Theatre before a matinee of *Curtains*. He called Ben and the rest is now film history."

McKenzie plays 'Joe Bonham', a young American soldier hit by an artillery shell on the last day of the First World War. As a quadruple amputee who has also lost his eyes, ears, nose and mouth, he lies in a hospital bed but remains conscious and able to reason, all the while struggling to communicate with the outside world. The film explores the interplay between science, medicine, religion, and politics.

McKenzie explained how he became involved with the project in a series of recent interviews.

The director, Rowan Joseph, who's been involved in L.A. theatre - and New York, as well - approached me about doing a film of it. And I'm somewhat political, and I loved the book and the play. I just fell in love with the words, you know? Dalton Trumbo was one of the best screenwriters and novelists of his time, and the book itself has its own place in American history.

When asked if he's ever seen the original 1971 film version, McKenzie replied:

To be honest with you, I've only seen clips. It's really hard to get a hold of. I've just seen clips from the [1989] Metallica video [for the song "One," which included snippets of the film]. It's a very different thing than the movie. No props, sets...it's a much more stripped-down version of it, just the words. It was a challenge. I had to memorize it all, to be able to do the whole thing straight through, so that we could shoot it all without breaking much. That was just a great challenge and a lot of fun.

The film is also something I believe in from a political standpoint. Trumbo was one of the Hollywood 10, and an admitted Communist, although I don't follow him quite to that level. He actually set the story during World War I, but his criticisms of many of the wars we've been in since, including Korea and Vietnam, are very relevant to what's going on today. It's about the travesty of these big institutions, these governments, fighting each other, and sacrificing their young and relatively innocent men, under the guise of some sort of loftier slogan, but the reality being that the poorer and less educated men are sent off to die and fight these wars, for causes they don't necessarily understand or agree with.

What appealed to me most about the project was the fact that the screenplay is very pro-soldier. While it does a great job presenting the book's most famous anti-war passages, it gets just as much power, if not more, from the main character's unflinching resolve to overcome his situation. Even though the story takes place in World War I, it is sadly still relevant today. The movie demonstrates so beautifully the fact that you can be both for the soldiers and against the war; that they are not two opposing points of view.

[A portion of the film's proceeds are being donated to the Fallen Patriot Fund, a non-profit organization established to help families of U.S. military personnel who were killed or seriously injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. Several of the film's scheduled premieres, including the World

Premiere in Austin, TX, are serving as fund-raisers for the fund, which is part of the Mark Cuban Foundation.]

The second major event which served to alter the course of film's future occurred during the final week of rehearsals, just prior to the beginning of principal photography, when Academy Award-nominated editor Jay Cassidy agreed to come on board the project.

After watching McKenzie do a final run-thru of the play, Cassidy felt that there could be potential for a feature film. "I was completely blown away by what I saw," the veteran film editor commented. "I just wasn't prepared to have that reaction, even though I had read the book many years ago."

"We had pretty much settled on the HD camera we wanted to use," the film's cinematographer, Andrew Sachs, remarked, "when Jay suggested that we switch to the camera they had used to film Al Gore's studio sessions in AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH, which Jay helped edit. He felt that while the Sony model we had planned on using was more than adequate for a cross-platform DVD transfer, it wouldn't offer the option of being able to blow the film up if we wanted to try for a theatrical release."

"Never in my wildest dreams had I given a thought to making anything more than a simple video of the play," Joseph volunteered. "I had never so much as directed a single frame of film in my life and here was this legendary film editor saying, 'You've got to go for it!'"

Joseph continued:

Fortunately, Andrew [Sachs] and I had been working with a wonderful theatrical lighting designer, Leigh Allen, to create the shots that I'd had in my head for the video. I had always planned to film the play in a black box theatre but I wanted to ignore the device of shooting straight-on, as you might in a proscenium theatre setting. I had been directing Ben from the beginning of our rehearsals at the Electric Lodge in Venice Beach to play it not so much to a theatre audience, as much as for an imaginary audience – a camera. When Andrew came to a rehearsal I literally walked around with him while Ben ran the play and showed him the different points of view I wanted to utilize. While clearly the space Ben, 'Joe', was trapped in had four distinct sides and set dimensions that were fixed, I wanted to have the liberty to approach them from any and all angles, especially from above.

Sachs added:

One of the unique experiences for me in working on the film was dealing with a theatrical lighting designer. Even though this was my first feature length film, I had shot quite a few music videos, promos, commercials and such, but I'd never collaborated with stage lighting designer before. It was an interesting challenge since as a cinematographer I am use to lighting primarily up from or off the floor, rather than having the light coming primarily from above as they do in the "live" theatre. Fortunately, Leigh had some background in lighting for film and TV, so she understood where both the director and I were coming from. Rowan would sometimes pose a question or make a suggestion and Leigh would translate the idea from stage craft to film craft terminology – it became sort of a running joke with us.

Ultimately, we were able to marry both design worlds to achieve the effects Rowan was looking for.

Leigh Allen, the film's Theatrical Lighting Designer, had won the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle and LA Weekly Lighting Design Awards for the 2004 Los Angeles stage production of *Johnny Got His Gun*, directed by author Bradley Rand Smith.

"When Rowan called to offer me the job of lighting the play he hadn't yet hired a Cinematographer. I could tell, based on our conversation that he wasn't aware of the fact that on a film the Director of Photography does the lighting. I suggested he might want to hire a D.P. first and then see if he (it's almost always a man, which might also have posed a problem) would be amenable to working together. Luckily, Andrew [Sachs] was completely open to the idea, especially since I understood what his needs and requirements would be for the film. He proved to be one of the easiest, smartest, and most enjoyable artists I've worked with in any medium. We really did collaborate on each and every shot and set-up. It also helped enormously that Rowan had a very clear idea of what looks he wanted for each scene and usually from which angle. Fortunately, he too was enthusiastic about collaborating with Andrew and I, but that's pretty much how the theatre world works all the time.

Sighting a specific example Allen continued:

I think the best example I can use is the shot of 'Joe' floating down the Colorado River, which is probably my favorite in the entire movie. Rowan knew how to achieve the effect of the flowing water by using an old (and very inexpensive) stage technique of blowing dry ice onto the stage. I suggested we hit it with a blue light to give it a more natural water quality and Andrew suggested bringing in a crane to shoot it all from above. When Ben ('Joe') reaches down and let his hands paddle the water, the blue fog ripples as though he was on his back floating down a river - when you see it on film it's just gorgeous. That entire sequence cost just \$53.00 and to my eye it's worth a million dollars.

With films today so dependent on bombastic sound and over-the-top visuals or violence and gore to achieve their "shock and awe" it's refreshing to find a filmmaker so willing to let the actor and the words tell the story.

"I think that was the element which gave me the most pause, when it came to accepting Jay Cassidy's insistence that we had something a movie-going audience would embrace." Joseph offered, "I mean let's face it the film is essentially an actor, a bench, and a chair for 75 minutes, that's about as rudimentary filmmaking as you're gonna get. Then add to that the commercial appeal of a story about a guy who loses his arms, legs, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, and I think you can understand my reluctance.

Joseph concluded:

Luckily we found out pretty quickly from our test screenings that audiences are actually hungry for a film that offers them an opportunity not only to look but listen, not only to feel but think.



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# **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

## The Director's Notes

"Mr. Joseph, this is Kevin Wensing calling from the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense, I was wondering if you would like to come to the Pentagon for lunch and a VIP tour later today?" Of all the remarkable twists and turns our little film had taken, this undoubtedly has to rank at the very top.

The day after a test screening of the film in Washington for an invited audience which consisted of members of the D.C. Film Society, conventioners from the NEA (National Education Association), and executive members of the Peace and Security Initiative (a collective of over 250 top peace groups in the U.S.), I received this message on my voicemail. Needless to say, I wasn't sure if it was a hoax or if I was about to be locked away in some room deep within the bowels of our federal bureaucracy.

As it turned out, an administrator from the Walter Reed Hospital had attended our screening the night before and taken part in the Q & A afterwards. There had been a lengthy discussion between myself and several members of the audience about the "fine line" (an audience member's words, not mine) that the film walks between being pro-soldier and anti-war. At one point the gentleman from Walter Reed voiced his belief that the film, when available, will sweep through the VA system from soldier to soldier, from laptop to laptop. While not a psychiatrist himself, he felt strongly that our film could be a very useful tool in the emotional and psychological recovery of the amputees returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. A physician from Doctors Without Borders echoed the sentiment, adding that it could also be valuable for the family members of those servicemen and women. It was this exchange which had apparently reverberated around the five corners of the Pentagon the next morning and resulted in the invitation.

In returning Captain Wensing's phone call, I thought it important to clarify at the outset that the film we made was based on one of the most powerful and best known anti-war novels ever written. I even felt compelled to quote a line from the film, "How many generals ever got killed in war?" He assured me he knew the book well and that invitation still stood.

Standing in the courtyard at the center of the Pentagon, I realized that wherever this film's journey takes me, I can take some measure of pride in the fact that the film's message reached the very people who need to hear it the most.



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# JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN

## The Play

Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* premiered August 10, 1982 at Circle Repertory Theatre, Off-Broadway, in New York City and ran as for 27 performances as a limited engagement. The original production was directed by Elinor Renfield and starred a then 29-year-old Jeff Daniels as 'Joe Bonham'. Daniels received an Obie Award for his performance. The play has also received critical acclaim in international productions: France, Spain, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, Paraguay, Argentina, Israel, Germany, and Greece. In 2004, under Bradley Rand Smith's direction, the Los Angeles production received awards for Best Adaptation, Actor, Lighting, and Sound from the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, *Backstage West*, and *LA Weekly*. In 2005, a new bilingual production opened at the New York Fringe Festival with actors performing the play in repertory both in English and Spanish. 2008 will bring a planned production in Africa, along with the release on September 26<sup>th</sup> of the film version of the play starring actor Ben McKenzie, directed by Rowan Joseph.

## Bradley Rand Smith (Playwright)

Bradley Rand Smith is author of the adaptation of Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*, which opened Off-Broadway at Circle Repertory Theatre and received an Obie Award for actor Jeff Daniels, as well as several N.Y. Drama Desk nominations. Smith's play, *Mojave*, opened at the West Bank Theater in New York and had its L.A. premiere at the Odyssey Theatre. A third play, *Nocturne*, recently opened in Chicago and was selected for inclusion in the Skirball/Kennis Theatre Collection at the Los Angeles Public Library. A fourth play, *Theatricals*, about Charles Dickens, was optioned for Broadway. He is currently developing his latest play, *Son/Daughter*, a controversial, secular retelling of the life of Jesus. He has also written a theater piece, *Jazz Lives*, for renowned bassist John B. Williams and his equally renowned wife, singer Jessica Williams. Lyrics Smith wrote for Mr. Williams can be heard on the jazz CD "The Maupin/Williams Project."



Dalton Trumbo's

# **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

## The Novel

*Johnny Got His Gun* by Dalton Trumbo was written in 1938, inspired in part by a newspaper article Trumbo read about the Prince of Wales' visit to a Canadian veterans hospital to see a soldier who had lost all of his senses and his limbs.

The book went to the press in the spring of 1939 and was published on September 3, 1939, just ten days after the Nazi-Soviet pact was signed and two days after the outbreak of World War II. It won the 1939 National Book Award.

Myth has always held that the book was banned during WWII, this is incorrect, it went out of press. Although Trumbo, who served as a war correspondent with the U.S. Army Air Forces, states that had it been banned, he would not have protested very loudly.

The book was out of print again during the Korean War and Trumbo himself purchased the publisher's plates of the book, rather than have them converted into ammunition.

During the 1970's the book was considered a "must read" and it became the moral manifesto for millions of Vietnam War protestors.

In 1971, Trumbo produced and directed a film version of the novel, one of the first independent films ever made. The movie won the Grand Jury and FIPRESCI prizes at the Cannes Film Festival and it has since gone on to become a cult classic.

Playwright Bradley Rand Smith adapted the novel as a stage monologue for the Circle Repertory Theatre in 1982. The now legendary Off-Broadway production ran for 27 performances and launched the career of a then 29-year-old Jeff Daniels, winning him an Obie Award for his performance. The play has since been performed all over the world, including a 2004 production which won the Los Angeles Drama Critics Award for best stage adaptation.

In 1989, the rock group Metallica used clips from Trumbo's film version in creating the hugely popular music video for their hit song, "One."

The book has sold over 100,000,000 copies, having been printed in 30 languages via 40 editions, the most recent in July 2007, with a new forward written by Cindy Sheehan, whose soldier son was killed in Iraq. Seventy years later, the book is still required reading at hundreds of high schools, colleges and universities across the country.



Dalton Trumbo's

## **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

### Dalton Trumbo

Dalton Trumbo (Writer)

Dalton Trumbo was arguably the most talented and most famous of the blacklisted film professionals known to history as the Hollywood 10. Born in Montrose, Colorado, Trumbo got his start working for *Vogue* magazine. He started in movies in 1937; by the 1940s he was one of Hollywood's highest paid screenwriters for work on such films as 1940's *Kitty Foyle*, for which he was nominated for an Academy Award for Writing Adapted Screenplay, *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944), and *Our Vines Have Tender Grapes* (1945). After his blacklisting, he moved to Mexico with Hugo Butler and his wife Jean Rouverol, who had also been blacklisted. There, Trumbo wrote thirty scripts under pseudonyms, such as the co-written *Gun Crazy* (1950) written under the pseudonym Millard Kaufman. He won Oscars for *Roman Holiday* (1953) and *The Brave One* (1956), both written under fictitious names. In December 1992 the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences decided to change the records and to credit Mr. Trumbo with the achievement. In 1960 he received full credit (due in part to the efforts of actor Kirk Douglas) for the motion-picture epics *Exodus* and *Spartacus*, much to the chagrin of many conservatives/right wingers in the film industry, and thereafter on all subsequent scripts, and he was reinstated as a member of the Writers Guild of America. Trumbo's vivid anti-war novel, *Johnny Got His Gun*, won the National Book Award (then known as an American Book Sellers Award) in 1939. The inspiration for the novel came to Trumbo when he read an article about a British officer who was horribly disfigured during World War I. Shortly after the 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union, Trumbo ordered all copies of *Johnny Got His Gun* to be recalled and he stopped any further publication of the book until 1946. Since that time the book has sold 100 million copies, having been printed in 40 separate editions in 30 different languages; the most recent in July 2007 with a new forward written by Cindy Sheehan, whose soldier son died in Iraq on April 4, 2004. In 1971 Trumbo directed his own film adaptation of the novel, which starred Timothy Bottoms, Diane Varsi and Jason Robards. Footage and dialogue from the movie were licensed for use in the music video for the rock band Metallica's 1989 song, "One". Dalton Trumbo died from a heart attack in California on September 10, 1976.



Dalton Trumbo's

# **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

## **Available for Interviews**

Ben McKenzie – Cast

Rowan Joseph – Director

Bradley Rand Smith – Adapter / Playwright

Andrew Sachs – Cinematographer

Jay Cassidy, A.C.E. – Editor

Michael Mortilla – Composer

Leigh Allen – Theatrical Lighting Design



Dalton Trumbo's

# **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

## **Ben McKenzie**

Ben McKenzie ('Joe Bonham')

Ben McKenzie was born and raised in Austin, Texas. Following his graduation from the University of Virginia, he spent a summer at Williamstown Theatre Festival, and then moved to New York, where he appeared in several Off-Broadway plays. He soon landed in LA, where he booked the lead part of 'Ryan Atwood' on the hit Fox TV series *The O.C.* His previous film work includes the critically-acclaimed *Junebug* and *88 Minutes*, in which he co-starred opposite Al Pacino.



Dalton Trumbo's

# **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

## The Director

Rowan Joseph (Director / Producer)

Rowan Joseph has worked as a producer and director in the American theatre for over 25 years. As the founding Managing Director of The Century Theater in New York City, he presented the Off-Broadway production of the Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *How I Learned to Drive*, starring Mary Louise Parker & David Morse. He served as the Executive Director of the West Bank Downstairs Theatre in Manhattan for seven seasons. Under his management, the West Bank premiered some of the early works of such award-winning writers as Alan Ball, Aaron Sorkin, Warren Leight, and Donald Marguiles. Joseph helped conceive and create *Tapestry, The Music of Carole King*, which he produced off-Broadway at the Union Square Theatre. He also produced and directed the Off-Broadway production of *The Queen of Bingo* and the New York premiere of *Washing the Car* by playwright Dick Hepburn, brother of legendary actress Katharine Hepburn. Relocating to Los Angeles, he joined the staff of director/producer Garry Marshall's Falcon Theatre in the fall of 2001. As Producing Director, he created and launched the Falcon's inaugural 5-play subscription series. Under his management the Falcon established itself as one of the premiere, award-winning, professional theatres in Southern California. Joseph left the Falcon at the end of the 2005-2006 season, having produced over 50 productions. Additionally, Joseph co-owns and operates Theatre A Go-Go, Inc., a nationally recognized commercial theatrical production company which has produced the national tours of *An Evening With Jack Klugman* and an all-male production of *The Queen of Bingo*, directed by Joseph. In the summer of 2007, Joseph joined with Shane Partlow and Wesley Horton to form a film and television production company, Greenwood Hill Productions. *Dalton Trumbo's JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN* marks the first time he has directed for film. Joseph created the shooting script from the 1982 Off-Broadway play of the same title.



Dalton Trumbo's

# **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

## The Creative Team

Greenwood Hill Productions is a Los Angeles, CA based production company, dedicated to producing and developing projects with a strong social and moral perspective that entertain and enlighten audiences. Our mission is to create quality original content for film and television which shows the world both the forest and the trees.

### FOR GREENWOOD HILL:

**Rowan Joseph** / President (see page 16)

**Shane Partlow** / Producer

Shane produced the low-budget cult film BEAUTY QUEEN BUTCHER, now available on DVD through Camp Motion Pictures. As the co-owner & operator of Theatre A Go-Go, Inc., he co-produced the Off-Broadway production *The Queen of Bingo* at the Greenwich House Theatre, as well as the play's World Premiere in Chicago at the Buckingham Theatre. He served as an Associate Producer on the Off-Broadway production of *Tapestry, the Music of Carole King* at the Union Square Theatre. Shane also co-produced the national tour of *An Evening with Jack Klugman*, starring three-time Emmy Award-winner Jack Klugman, and the ongoing national tour of *The Queen of Bingo*, now entering its fourth year.

**Wesley Horton** / Producer

Wesley served as the Marketing and PR Director for Garry Marshall's Falcon Theatre in Burbank, CA from 2002-2007. He was a Digital Effects Producer on the Falcon's World Premiere of *Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*. Wes holds a Bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts from Bethel University, MN and is also a graduate of the Los Angeles Film Studies Center.

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**Lauri LaBeau** / Producer

Lauri's first feature as a producer, CHRONIC TOWN, premiered at the 2008 Sundance Festival and has been a selection at the Ashland Independent Film Festival, the Indianapolis Independent Film Festival, the Method Fest Film Festival and LA's Dances With Films festival. She is married to CHRONIC TOWN director Tom Hines and is the proud new mother of Brady Hines.

**Andrew Sachs / Cinematographer**

Andrew K. Sachs is a cinematographer based in Los Angeles, CA. Born and raised in New York City, Sachs graduated magna cum laude from Harvard with a degree in Visual and Environmental Studies. At Harvard, acclaimed documentary filmmaker Robb Moss and legendary Montenegrin director Dusan Makaveyev provided lasting inspiration. Sachs values elegant solutions to visual storytelling: he cites preparation and communication as keys to creating a successful production. Working with outstanding directors, actors, and crew provides ongoing inspiration, and Sachs truly enjoys contributing his leadership and vision. DALTON TRUMBO'S JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN marks his first feature film as a Director of Photography.

**Jay Cassidy, A.C.E. / Editor**

Jay Cassidy's most recent credit was INTO THE WILD released by Paramount Vantage, for which he received the 2008 Academy Award nomination for editing and an ACE "Eddie" nomination for best edited feature film (dramatic). He is currently working with Jim Sheridan on his film, BROTHERS. His long editorial association with Sean Penn began with Penn's first film, THE INDIAN RUNNER and continued with THE CROSSING GUARD, THE PLEDGE, and 11.09.01. Most recently, Cassidy co-edited the AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH, which won the 2007 Academy Award for Best Documentary and the ACE "Eddie Award" for Best Documentary. Cassidy also had the opportunity edit Penn's performance in THE ASSASSINATION OF RICHARD NIXON. Cassidy's other credits include TUCK EVERLASTING for Disney, THE REPLACEMENT KILLERS for Columbia, GOSSIP for Warner Bros., URBAN LEGEND for TriStar and ALBINO ALLIGATOR for Miramax. He also edited the Peabody Award-winning PBS documentary, THE FIRST YEAR, about five first year teachers in the L.A. County school system. Born in Chicago and raised in Highland Park, Illinois, Cassidy earned a degree in American Culture from the University of Michigan. His early background was editing documentaries and political advertisements in Washington D.C., where he worked for filmmaker Charles Guggenheim. In 1976, he moved to Los Angeles to attend the American Film Institute's Center for Advanced Film Studies.

**Chadwick Struck / Casting Director**

Chadwick Struck has cast for TV, theater, & film. He started off in a very fast paced office, covering episodic television, television pilots, and voice-over for video games & feature films, which led to a job at the Center Theatre Group's Mark Taper Forum & Ahmanson Theatre. Chadwick crossed over to features when he served as a casting director on a film produced Kevin Spacey's Tigger Street Productions, starring Alec Baldwin (Tribeca film release MINI'S FIRST TIME). Recently, he cast two urban projects, another Spacey-produced project called COLUMBUS DAY, and then a Sony Screen Gem project starring Cuba Gooding, Jr. and Evan Ross (LINEWATCH). He also cast a comedy starring Diane Keaton called SMOTHER, produced by Jay Roach.

**Michael Mortilla / Composer & Sound Design**

Composer/Sound Designer Michael D. Mortilla has composed over 600 produced scores for theater, film, dance and the concert hall. His commissions include scores for The Chicago Symphony, with whom he was also a soloist, as well as The Academy of Motion Pictures, The Olympic Games Arts Festival, The Martha Graham Dance Company, and many others. His score to Charlie Chaplin's THE RINK accompanied the world's first broadcast of a feature film over the internet by The American Film Institute. Michael's sound design for the Los Angeles stage production of *Johnny Got His Gun* won theater awards from both *L.A. Weekly* and *Backstage West*.

**Leigh Allen** / Theatrical Lighting Design

Leigh received the LA Drama Critics Circle and *LA Weekly* Lighting Design Awards for Bradley Rand Smith's production of *Johnny Got His Gun*. She was also the recent recipient of the Career Achievement Award for Lighting Design from the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle. Her most recent light designs include: *The Prince of LA* at the Old Globe in San Diego, *Vincent in Brixton* at Pasadena Playhouse, and *Killer Joe* (LA Ovation Award: Production of the Year). Some of her other lighting work includes such varied productions as: *Champagne* (Regent Cruise Lines), *Shimmy!* (Princess Cruise Lines), and *Snoopy on Ice* (Schultz Prods.)

**Keith Mitchell** / Art Director

Keith is an Emmy Award-winning art director; ('92 Barcelona Olympics Coverage on NBC). He most recently won an Ovation Award from the Los Angeles Stage Alliance as scenic designer for *The Value of Names* at Garry Marshall's Falcon Theatre in Burbank, CA. He has worked on a variety of commercial, television, film, and theatre projects. *Lilly Plants a Garden*, *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip*, *Animal Logic* at LA's Mark Taper/PLAY/CTG; *Hedwig and The Angry Inch* at Celebration Theater; and 4 of Ken Roht's *99 Cent Only Bargain Extravaganzas* for Orphean Circus. He is a founding member of Vox Box Arts Collective and has developed and directed 3 live performances. He has designed over a dozen shows for the Falcon Theatre, including: *The Value of Names*, with Jack Klugman, *Wrong Turn at Lungfish*, with Hector Elizondo, *Golf With Alan Shepard*, *Johnny Boy*, *Darwin in Malibu*, and *Happy Days the Musical*. He was a studio manager for the late John Shlesinger and Michael Childers. His art direction can be seen on main titles, promos, and trailers and DVD menus, including *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Beerfest*, *Jumanji*, *Endless Summer II* and *Brady Bunch the Movie*, to name a few.

**Robert Arturo Ramirez** / Production Sound Mixer

Robert Arturo Ramirez is currently Sound Editor/Designer on *One Tree Hill* for Warner Brothers Sound. He has received three Emmy Award nominations for his television work, which included *Family Guy*, *Nip/Tuck*, *Prison Break*, *Smallville*, and *Weeds*. Robert also designs sound and/or composes for independent projects such as web shorts, full length features, etc., out of Orpheus Sound Lab.



Dalton Trumbo's

# **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**

## The Credits

### Cast in order of appearance

Joe Bonham

Ben McKenzie

Additional Voices by

Matty Ferraro  
Rowan Joseph  
Meredith Kendall  
Shane Partlow

### Crew and Credits

Directed by

Rowan Joseph

Produced by

Rowan Joseph  
Lauri LaBeau  
Shane Partlow  
Wesley Horton

Produced in association with Tres Hermanos Productions

Adapted for the stage by

Bradley Rand Smith

Based on the novel by Dalton Trumbo

Executive Producers

John Meindl  
Robin A. Sateriale

Associate Producers

Kevin Eberly  
Calvin D. Horton

Director of Photography

Andrew K. Sachs

Editor

Jay Cassidy, A.C.E.

Theatrical Lighting Design by

Leigh Allen

Music & Sound Design by  
Casting by

Michael D. Mortilla  
Chadwick Struck

Costume Designer

Denitsa Bliznakova

Art Director

Keith Mitchell

Hair & Make-up by

Jacqueline Zaizar

Production Sound Mixer

Robert Arturo Ramirez

Chair Designed by

Chris Kelley

For Greenwood Hill Productions

Script Supervisor

Cammie Henderson

Jib Operator

Nicolas Martin

1st Asst. Camera Operator

Robin Morton

Key Grip

Sena Amengor

Associate Editor

Thomas H. Park

Gaffers

Steeve Vajk  
Mathew Rudenberg

Production Assistants

Robert Blanchard  
Derek Heeren  
Keith Johnson  
Shaun Ali Hosseini  
Heather Hillstrom  
Jennifer L. Booth

Staff of the Luckman Fine Arts Complex

Wendy Baker  
Andy Bart  
Angelica Bernaert  
Lewis Blanchard  
Teresa Uscanga

Still Photographer

Derek Van Oss

Stand-in

Robert Blanchard

Post Production

HTV / Illuminate  
Marc Fishman  
A.J. Ullman  
Andrew Drapkin

Prints by

Deluxe

Catering by

Horton's

Special Thanks to

Screen Actors Guild, J.L. Fisher Motion Picture & Television Equipment,  
West Bank Cafe, New York, NY, William Morris Agency & Craig Kestel,  
Electric Lodge, Venice, CA, Richard Godinez, Devin Gregory,  
Calvin D. Horton, Joseph Leach, Frier McCollister, Todd Molle, Steve Olsen, David Fritz,  
Dale W. Hedstrand, Don Hepner, Gregory Hiatt, Jo Miller, Al & Sheila Meindl  
Sharon & Jim Schaubroeck, Anne Rowan

Very Special Thanks to

Christopher Trumbo, Ernie Sabella, and Jeff Daniels

In Memory of

Mr. Robert B. Shaffer

Filmed at the Harriet & Charles Luckman Fine Arts Complex  
California State University, Los Angeles

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Running Time: 77 minutes

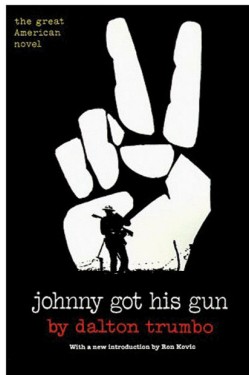
Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1

Dolby SR/SRD in selected theaters

[www.JohnnyGotHisGuntheMovie.com](http://www.JohnnyGotHisGuntheMovie.com)

A Truly Indie Release

# The historic legacy of “Johnny Got His Gun”



Published two days after the start of WWII, the original novel was awarded the 1939 National Book Award.

It has been printed in 30 languages via 40 editions and has sold over ONE HUNDRED MILLION copies worldwide.

In the 1970's the book was a “must read” and it became the moral manifesto for millions of Vietnam War protestors.

The 1971 film version, directed by Trumbo, won the Grand Jury and FIPRESCI prizes at the Cannes Film Festival.

The 1982 Off-Broadway stage monologue based on the novel, won an Obie Award for Jeff Daniels launching his career.

In 1989, the rock group Metallica used clips from Trumbo's film in creating the hugely popular video for their hit song “One.”

In 2004, playwright Bradley Rand Smith won the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for his stage adaptation.

In July 2007, Citadel Press, U.K. published a new edition with a forward by Cindy Sheehan, whose soldier son was killed in Iraq.

In May 2008, California based Tantor Media released a new audio version of the novel read by William Dufris.

Seventy years after being written, the novel remains required reading at hundreds of high schools, colleges, and universities.

