

L-TRAIN PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

# August the First

Directed by Lanre Olabisi

Starring:

Ian Alsup

Dennis Green

Joy Merriweather

1hr 21min, unrated

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## The Cast

Tunde	IAN ALSUP
Dipo	D. RUBIN GREEN
Rhonda	JOY MERRIWEATHER
Simisola	KERISSE HUTCHINSON
Ade	SEAN PHILLIPS
Grandma	GLORIA SAUVE
Janine	MONIQUE GRAMBY
Alex	ROBERT MCKAY
Elsa	A. TONI STERRETT
Mark	ERIC CASANOVA
Boris	GERONIMO FRIAS
Louisa	YARITZA PIZARRO
Vicky	ACANTHA LANG
Lex	JOSHUA PERCY
Jesus	ROBERT AVILES
Cali	TINA JETTER
Miner	WILLIAM SUTPHIN
Cathy	DR. GAIL OLABISI

## The Filmmakers

Written, Directed and Produced by	LANRE OLABISI
Written and Produced by	SHAWN ALEXANDER
Producer	GABRIEL "SWEDE" SEDGWICK
Producer	NICKY ARZEU AKMAL
Executive Producer	DR. GAIL OLABISI
Co-Producer	A. TONI STERRETT
Director of Photography	LARRY HILLIER
Editor	ALEXANDER KOPIT
Production Design	MARY GLENN FREDRICKSON
Art Director	HEATHER CORBET
First Assistant Director	NICHOLASS LANGHOLFF
Second Assistant Director	JAKE BEESLEY
Additional Photography	LEARAN KAHANOV
First Assistant Camera	KATE LAROSE
Audio Post Engineer	RYAN FAGMAN

It is the morning of Tunde Ibirinde's graduation party and things have already begun to unravel. Tunde has managed to alienate his older sister, Simisola. His older brother, Ade, persistently plagues him with criticism while simultaneously overseeing the party. And his mother, Rhonda, has started drinking again.

Unbeknownst to most, Tunde has orchestrated the return of his long estranged father, Dipo, from Nigeria. This becomes a quiet irony in the film, for in the Yoruba people when an adult has a child following the death of his or her own parent, that child is named to honor the grandparent it will never meet. For instance, a man might name his first son born after the death of his own father "Babatunde" (baba = father, tunde = return). In other words, through this child, the father has returned.



Dipo's return resurrects unresolved family anguish against the backdrop of Tunde's celebration. As the day turns to night, the fall-out begins. Old wounds are re-opened and bad habits are revived. Layer by layer, deceptions and half-truths are peeled away as secrets are uncovered in what will become the most unforgettable day the family has ever experienced.

## AUGUST THE FIRST

## Director's Notes

*August the First* begins as a promising day. Preparations are wrapping up for a graduation party celebrating Tunde's achievement. Friends and family have agreed to reunite on this one day in his honor. As guests arrive and the party begins, a dark history begins to unfold with the return of a surprise guest. Unfortunately, the reunion brings turmoil as secrets are revealed, old wounds are re-opened, and bad habits are revived. Each family member is guilty of pursuing their own interests without regard to its effect on the others, until events unravel, all culminating in a long overdue confrontation with effects that can never be undone.

Typically, when an African-American family is portrayed in crisis, it is usually due to slavery, poverty, drugs, or gangs. These problems do indeed exist, however, they have not been balanced in cinema by the other problems plaguing all families, such as divorce, depression, or the daily difficulties of raising a family. The characters in *August the First* are African American, but the story is universal. They are a middle class family, centered fully in suburbia, with unresolved family issues. In the shadow of the 50's ideal of the modern family, the overused term dysfunctional has come to represent nearly all families. Tunde's family is functional, but unstable. The events at the party upset the delicate balance in which they function and send them all spinning off wildly with catastrophic results.

Within the international community, people are united or divided by their nationalities; within nations, this denominator becomes race or ethnicity. Family is the one place where all of that falls away; what unites or divides us is based on our own personal histories. Our actions or inactions in the face of life's hardships are etched in the history that is our family dynamic. Such a history is told in the interactions of every family worldwide. In *August the First*, the intention was to capture this history and tell it not in words, but in the actions and interactions of each member of the family.

*-Lanre Olabisi*





### **Ian Alsup (Tunde)**

After graduating from the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York city, Ian has appeared on *Law & Order*, and has worked mostly in regional theatre. *August the First* is Ian's feature film debut.



### **D. Rubin Green (Dipo)**

Mr. Green's film work includes: *Vodka Rocks* (2007), *Murder Magic*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *Forever Lulu* and *The Process*. His list of Off-Broadway and regional theater credits include: The Classical Theatre of Harlem's *Ain't Suppose to Die a Natural Death*, *P.S. 122*, *HERE*, New York Theater Workshop, Soho Rep, and Dixon Place; Yale Repertory Theater, Philadelphia Theater Company, Portland Stage, and Center Stage Baltimore. Mr. Green received his MFA from the Yale School of Drama, Yale University.



### **Joy Merriweather (Rhonda)**

Joy began her career six years ago studying with writer, producer, director, Veona Thomas of Rejoti Productions, and award winning playwright Samuel Harps in four of his plays. She has studied under Roger Hendricks Simon, Darnell Williams and Bob Dagny; and she attended The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Currently she is working on the August Wilson play, *Two Trains Running*.



### **Sean Phillips (Ade)**

Sean was born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y. and studied the art of acting at the American Musical & Dramatic Academy. He has appeared in a number of commercials, TV series, and is currently playing the role of Monty in the Ed Bullins play *The Taking of Miss Janie*. *August the First* is Sean's first feature film.



### **Kerisse Hutchinson (Simisola)**

Kerisse Hutchinson is a New York native, receiving her acting and dance training from HB Studio and The Ailey School, and a graduate of Towson University, Magna Cum Laude with Double Honors. Her television and film credits include: *All My Children*, *Rescue Me*, *Under the Harlem Moon* (Best Film: NYU King Award), *Uncle Pop* (opposite Andre Royo) and the upcoming feature *My Brother* (with Tatum O'Neal and Vanessa Williams).



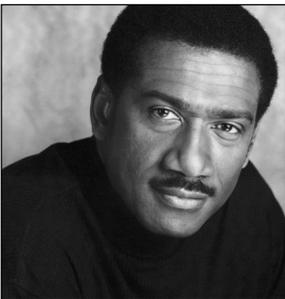
### **Gloria Suave (Grandma)**

Gloria started her Theater, Film and TV career in Toronto Canada. She has performed nationally and internationally. Some of her credits include Broadway's *Comin Uptown*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Having our say*, *Big River*, *As The Crow Flies*, *We Are Your Sisters*, *Starmites*, *Julius Caesar Set In Africa*, *The Medea*, and *Well Living In Paris*, and *Changes*. Films: *Lean On Me*, *Turk 182*, *The First Deadly Sin*, *The Guce Family*, and *Find The Lady*.



### **Monique Gramby (Janine)**

Monique completed a two-year program at The American of Dramatic Arts (LA) and then joined The Repertory. After she moved to New York and she originated roles like Bessie Smith in *Flyer* and *Clowning the Bard* for Six Figures Theatre Company.



### **Robert McKay (Alex)**

Robert has studied in New York with many appearances on TV including *Law & Order*, *Hack* and *Hope & Faith*. Film work includes *Ladder 49*, and the upcoming *Anamorph*.



### **A. Toni Sterrett (Elsa)**

Toni is currently working on her next feature film titled *Chepachet* and is featured in *Spiderman 3* (slated for 2007 release). She has acted a number of shorts and hosted a fashion television show. She is currently in actor training with William (Bill) Esper at

Esper Studio, NYC.



### **Lanre Olabisi (Writer/Director/Producer)**

Lanre graduated from the University of Michigan with a BA in English Literature. After leaving Ann Arbor, he spent the next three and a half years in Madrid. Eventually, Lanre returned to New York where he earned an MFA from the City College of New York. He received the 2007 Jerome Foundation Grant and is a 2007 NYFA Fellow. To date, he has directed commercials and short films. *August the First* is his first feature film.

### **Shawn Alexander (Writer/Producer)**

Shawn is a graduate from the Cooper Union and the University of Michigan with BFA and MFA degrees, respectively. He has written short and feature scripts as well as worked on various award-winning shorts as an assistant director. *August the First* is his first produced feature.

### **Gabriel “Swede” Sedgwick (Producer)**

Gabriel studied film theory at the University of Stockholm, and film directing at FAMU, the Czech Film Academy. After FAMU, New York was next, where he earned an MFA in film production at the City College of New York. A recipient of several awards and grants in both Sweden and the US, Gabriel is the co-founder of Sugar Travelers, a small production company based in Stockholm.

### **Nicky Arezu Akmal (Producer)**

Nicky graduated from the University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Arts in English. She began her career in Maryland at the Instructional Television Station (ITV) where she dealt with the stations daily operations. She then moved to London for two years, where she worked at a post-production facility. After moving to New York City in 1998, Nicky began Line Producing various Independent Film projects. In March 2000 she co-founded UGLY Productions.

### **Larry Hillier (Director of Photography)**

Larry has been in the New York film and video industry for more than twenty years, developing his skills on independent feature films, television shows, commercials and video. In 2005, he completed work as Lighting Director on *Ditty Doodle Works* - an award winning children's television show. Along with his professional work, He teaches the next generation of filmmakers at The School of Visual Arts.

### **Alexander Kopit (Editor)**

Before starting on *August the First*, Alex edited the features *The Tollbooth*, (directed by Debra Kirschner) and *God Has a Rap Sheet*, (directed by Kamal Ahmed, creator of *The Jerky Boys*). He recently worked as an assistant editor on *Jarhead* for legendary film editor Walter Murch.