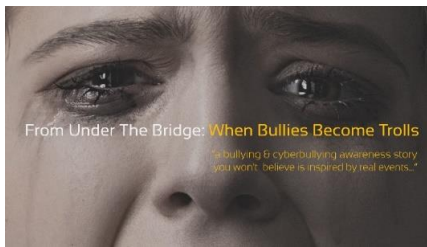


TRAILER



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## PRESS KIT: FILM INFORMATION

### [FROM UNDER THE BRIDGE: WHEN BULLIES BECOME TROLLS](#)

#### Synopsis:

(Short): A lonely high school girl escapes depression and her bullies when she meets the perfect boy online, but is he too good to be true? A shocking and powerful multi-faceted bullying, cyberbullying and suicide awareness story you won't believe is inspired by REAL EVENTS!

#### Director Statement:

If you read nothing else, please read this:

**Bullying • Cyber-Bullying • Suicide • Inspired by a Shocking and Twisted TRUE STORY**

'From Under The Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls' was inspired by and is based on the true story of Megan Meier, who took her own life 3 weeks prior to her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday after a severe cyberbullying attack. **BULLYING** and **CYBER-BULLYING** continue to rise, while seriously affecting, damaging and destroying lives. And with over 4.66 billion people accessing the internet across the globe (60% of the world's population), the stage, platforms, opportunities and techniques for CYBER-BULLYING are dramatically and continuously expanding and exploding! Of the 4.66 billion people accessing the internet across the globe, 4.33 use social media (93%).

Sadly, CYBER-BULLYING is a prominent and powerful relative trend, which is growing at a frightening pace. Bullying has become possible from anywhere in the world, with far more anonymity than ever, while the absence of accountability and responsibility soars. We must all recognize this massive problem and **'be the change'**.

Paul James Houghton

#### Links:

Film Official Website (find interviews, featurettes and more): [www.fromunderthebridgefilm.com](http://www.fromunderthebridgefilm.com)

IMDb: [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13315454/?ref=nm\\_knf\\_t1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13315454/?ref=nm_knf_t1)

Film Freeway: <https://filmfreeway.com/projects/2070635>

Trailer (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HfSiW-D8ag>

Trailer (Vimeo): <https://vimeo.com/546249561>

Interview - Paul James Houghton (Writer & Director):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UckmiHTIcj8&t=725s>

Interview – Connie Jo Sechrist (Producer): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qB-VIVa784s>

Megan Meier Foundation: <https://www.meganmeierfoundation.org/>

Original Soundtrack Spotify: <https://www.spotify.com>

## Writer/Director, Producer and Cast:

The Writer and Director: Paul James Houghton ([Website](#))



Paul James Houghton is a British-born award-winning filmmaker, who moved to the United States in 1992. He now resides in Seal Beach, California, where 'From Under The Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls' was filmed. Although Paul is an established and published writer, this film is his directorial debut. He directed his second film, 'Once Upon a Riot', at the end of 2022, which shot in London, England and Los Angeles, CA. Paul also wrote the screenplay, which is based on another true story. Most recently, Paul's production company, 'Dreamotion Studios' was commissioned to develop a TV Pilot, which he also directed in April, 2023.

Paul developed a passion for film, theater and writing as a child, and took Performing Arts in school where he performed in numerous productions. After receiving a writing scholarship from Comcast, he focused on creative writing and design in college. In 2006, he sold a screenplay to a major studio, while also pursuing a career in design to support his family. In 2019, he was able to resign as a Vice President in Design to focus on his film career and founded his production company, 'Dreamotion Studios'.

Paul is currently working on several intriguing projects, as a writer, director and producer, independently and with studios. Additionally, he is helping to develop the biographical true story on which the film is based.

The Producer: Connie Jo Sechrist ([IMDb](#))



Connie Jo Sechrist is an accomplished Emmy® Nominated Producer and Actress from San Jose, CA, whose work has been recognized at prestigious festivals such as SXSW, Tribeca, and other Academy Qualifying Festivals around the world. She is known for her dynamic and complex roles in drama, action, and sci-fi genre films.

As a passionate advocate for mental health, Connie Jo has produced and starred in over 20 films that explore mental health and personal stories, with the goal of de-stigmatizing mental health issues and breaking down barriers. Her commitment to raising awareness about the prevalence of mental health problems and encouraging greater understanding and acceptance is evident in the impactful nature of her work.

In addition to her producing and acting career, Connie Jo is a Co-Founder of the Coven Film Festival, which is dedicated to showcasing films created by emerging women and non-binary filmmakers. She is also a respected leader and mentor in various independent film groups around the world, where she strives to inspire and support other aspiring filmmakers.

## The Cast – ‘Clare Taylor’: Piper Reese ([IMDb](#))



Born in South Florida, Piper Reese began acting at 9 years old and is known for her high energy and professionalism. After appearances in ABC’s ‘Modern Family’ and ‘The Neighbors’, Piper landed a recurring role in the Nickelodeon series, ‘Deadtime Stories’. During high school, Piper performed lead musical roles in Green Day’s ‘American Idiot’ and ‘She Kills Monsters’. As a voice actor, she has starred in PSAs, a Comcast commercial and ‘Fragger Pro’.

Piper and her father created PipersPicks.TV in 2007, making her the first online entertainment news-show host at just 7 years old. She has since conducted over 1,100 interviews with top talent and industry executives. Through her online channel and presence, Piper has become a role model for young people across the globe. She has also taught acting classes in school.

Known for: ‘Deadtime Stories’, ‘AwesomenessTV’ and PipersPicks.TV

## The Cast – ‘Kyle Badger’: Luc Clopton ([IMDb](#))



Luc Clopton was born and raised in Sacramento, California where he would find an early love for acting, watching movies with his dad and performing in school and church plays. Luc is a recent graduate of the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, where he found success on stage playing Prince Eric in their production of The Little Mermaid. He would soon move to Los Angeles and make the transition from stage to the screen, making his film debut as Kyle in "From Under the Bridge".

Known for: ‘From Under The Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls’, ‘No Goodbyes’ and ‘Disney’s The Little Mermaid’.

## The Cast – ‘Stacey Brown’: Sara Wolfkind ([IMDb](#))



Sara Wolfkind was born and raised in San Diego, California. What began as an extracurricular activity with the local youth theatre, acting soon became a true passion of Sara’s. Throughout her teens, she worked around San Diego in commercials and independent films, while also driving to LA for auditions. Now committed to making acting her profession, Sara lives in Los Angeles, pursuing her BA in Theatre Arts at Loyola Marymount University.

Outside of school, auditioning, and acting classes, Sara enjoys martial arts and advocating for animals and the environment.

Known for: ‘From Under The Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls’, ‘Grimcutty’, ‘Love All You Have Left’ and ‘HR 805’.



## The Cast – ‘Julie Brown’: Rachel Alig ([IMDb](#))



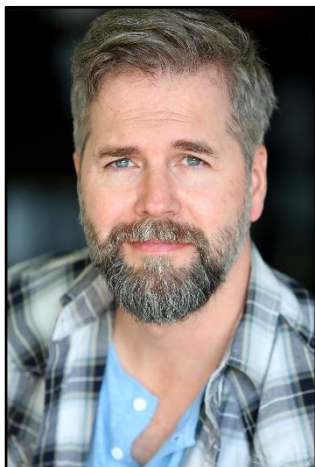
Rachel Alig is an award-winning actress, who has been honored with ‘best leading actress’ on a number of projects and has over 100 credits on IMDb, illustrating her extensive experience and commitment to the craft. Her colleagues have described her work as “masterful”.

Rachel graduated from the University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music and has studied at the Margie Haber Studios with Lesley Kahn, Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute of West Hollywood, Ivana Chubbuck Studios, and The Groundlings.

Rachel can be found starring in films on Amazon Prime, iTunes and more.

Known for: ‘Girl Next’, ‘The Cleaning Lady’, ‘First Blush’ and ‘Truth’.

## The Cast – ‘Anthony Taylor’: Ryon Thomas ([IMDb](#))

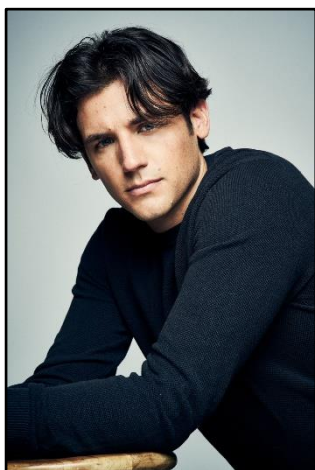


Ryon Thomas is a graduate of The Ruskin School of Acting in Santa Monica, CA in Advanced Meisner Technique and has trained with John Ruskin, Michael Myers, and Michael Laurie. He has also worked with Annie Grindlay and Carla Rosatti at the Annie Grindlay Studio in Hollywood, CA.

Born and raised in Oklahoma, Ryon graduated with a BA from Southwestern Oklahoma State University. A musician and songwriter for over 25 years, he has released 5 albums and performed live with his band ‘Rival The Giant’ at many LA venues, including House of Blues, Viper Room and The Roxy.

Known for: ‘The Missing’, ‘Surviving the Cartel’, ‘They Don’t Cast Shadows’ and ‘Heroes of the Sky: The Mighty Eighth Air Force’.

## The Cast – ‘Steven Badger’: Chris Cimperman ([IMDb](#))



Born and raised in New York City, Chris Cimperman was first drawn to acting through his work in production on a variety of network television shows. This prompted him to return to school. He trained at the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute, T. Schreiber, and the Actor’s Studio, among others. Chris has since kept busy.

He can be seen in a host of films, national commercial spots, and on television. He resides in Los Angeles, California.

Known for: ‘Novel Love’, ‘The Retreat’ and ‘Sentris’.

## The Cast – ‘Chester’: Tezz Yancey ([IMDb](#))



Tezz Yancey is a vocalist, dancer, actor, musician, director, producer, and writer. He studied musical theater and music at The Boston Conservatory and Berklee College of Music. In addition to a variety of film and television roles, Tezz has also performed on Broadway.

A multi-instrumentalist, Tezz starred in and provided the music score and vocals for the independent films ‘Heroes’ and ‘Malevolence’. He is currently producing the soundtrack to his original screenplay ‘Full Circle’ at his own ‘Soul Sanctuary Studios’ in Los Angeles. ‘Soul Desire’, his original musical act, headlined at New York-New York Hotel and on the Las Vegas Strip.

Known for: Disney’s ‘Mere Et Fille’, ‘Dice’ and ‘Victor Crowley’.

## The Cast – ‘Mickey’: Erick McAllister ([IMDb](#))



Erick McAllister was born and raised in San Francisco but is now common law married to Los Angeles, having lived there for over 20 years. When not on set, training or working on an audition, he is helping small businesses secure funds for equipment. He loves to cook and caters 3 or 4 events a year for fun. He has performed stand-up comedy, hosted live events and helped produce a few films, but his passions are acting and improv.

Known for: ‘The Equalizer’, ‘Blue Bloods’, ‘Façade’, ‘Butterfly Caught’ and ‘The Brazilian Connection’.

## From Under The Bridge: **When Bullies Become Trolls**



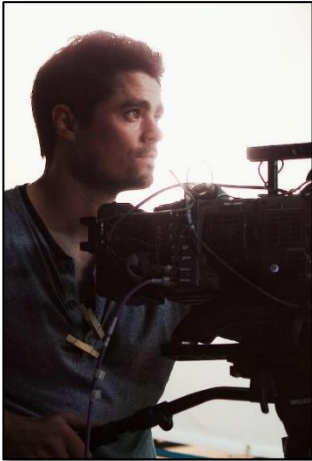
*behind the scenes: 'the cast'*

a film by **paul james**

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

## Cinematographer, Editor, Composer & Colorist:

The Cinematographer: Matthew Macar ([IMDb](#))



Matthew Macar is a cinematographer based in Los Angeles, but has a penchant for popping up in different parts of the world and making things happen. With a background in design, animation and post production, which eventually lead to cinematography, he brings valuable technical awareness and strong visual story-telling acumen to every project. Additionally, Matthew's keen problem-solving instincts ripple through every department helping projects achieve their creative goals.

When not on set or otherwise being professional, he enjoys wood working, bourbon, sarcasm, camping, and traveling. Warning: he enjoys sarcasm while working, too. He is also the Founder and Creative Director of 'Dovetail Creative', a story-driven marketing and branding agency working with passionate companies in luxury tourism and artisan markets to give unique voices to their stories. Matthew is truly a unique and brilliant talented artist.

The Editor: Phil McLaughlin ([IMDb](#))



Phil McLaughlin is a Film and Television Director and Editor, who works tirelessly to have his contributions to a project go unnoticed. Whether it's wrangling undead zombies on AMC's 'Fear the Walking Dead' or sending Hillary Swank into space on Netflix's 'Away,' he mines every frame of footage in service of character and story.

Outside of his directing and picture editing work, Phil is a contributing editor and producer for the independent science fiction lit magazine 'Dark Matter Magazine.' In a past life, he made cartoons.

When he's not working Phil loves making his three children laugh. Sometimes he does this while he's working, too.

The Composer: Alexander Arntzen ([IMDb](#))



Alexander Arntzen is an award-winning Film Composer & Singer/Songwriter of multiple genres, styles, and mediums. His latest projects include original music for feature films 'Last Man Down' (Netflix Top 10 Movies), 'Initiation' (SXSW Film Festival), & 'Unmothered' (HBO Max). He has also enjoyed being an integral part of creating music for TV productions, including Netflix.

During the Summer of 2010 Alexander was honored to accept an internship with Hans Zimmer. In the Summer of 2013 Alexander had the privilege of interning for Danny Elfman and assist with transcribing scores for his concert, "Danny Elfman's Music from the Films of Tim Burton".



The Colorist: Billy Hobson ([IMDb](#))



Billy Hobson is a Senior Colorist at HARBOR in Santa Monica, CA. Working in all genres, from feature films and documentaries, to TV and commercials, Billy launched his career as a colorist in 2015, honing his skills under the guidance of one of the world's most respected colorists, Yvan Lucas. As a former Director of Support at Technicolor, Billy also brings an engineering background to his skill set.

Billy's most recent credits include major feature films 'Venom', 'The Way Back', 'Peanut Butter Falcon', 'Lady and the Tramp' and 'The Kingmaker', CBS TV Shows – 'FBI', 'FBI: Most Wanted' and 'FBI: International', Music videos for Bebe Rexha, Diplo, Tiesto, and commercials including spots for the Super Bowl and Olympics. Additionally, Billy has worked on many projects with world-renowned digital artist, GMUNK.

## Executive Producer:

The Executive Producer: Lucas Ferrara ([IMDb](#))



Lucas -- who is primarily an attorney by occupation -- has been identified as one of New York's Super Lawyers® every year since 2007, and has repeatedly achieved "Top 100" recognition. He works with creatives around the world to produce award-winning films, has over 150 credits on IMDb, and is particularly proud to have a 2023 Oscar-eligible short on his slate of projects.



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## Film Details:

Film Completed: May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

Run time: 15 minutes and 40 seconds (15:40)

Cameras: Sony A7ii and Panasonic S1

Filming Commencement: August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Filming Completion: September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Shooting Location: Seal Beach, CA

Script First Drafted: 2008

---

## End Credits:

Written and Directed by: Paul James Houghton

Produced by: Connie Jo Sechrist

Executive Producer: Lucas A. Ferrara

Co-executive Producers: Kevin Broughton, Victoria DeLuce, Danny Kewson, Noreen & Mark Lerner, Darren Shepherd

Director of Photography: Matthew Macar, Rachel Wyn Dunn

Edited by: Phillip J. McLaughlin, Nick Allen

Music by: Alexander Arntzen

Production Designer: Sid Kramer

Costume Designer: Lorraine Ely

Visual Effects: Akton (Brendan Ryan & David Sacha), Keith Pullman

Casting: Connie Jo Sechrist, Paul James Houghton

Co-Producers: Marti Eulberg, Caitlin Houghton, Bernhard 'Barny' Koehler, Michelle Plato, Denise Siverling

Associate Producers: Alan Clark, Phillip J. McLaughlin

Unit Production Manager: Connie Jo Sechrist

First Assistant Director: Michi Que Doan, Siyu Karneboge

## Cast (character – actor):

Clare Taylor – Piper Reese

Kyle Badger – Luc Clopton

Stacey Brown – Sara Wolfkind

Julie Brown – Rachel Alig

Anthony Taylor – Ryon Thomas

Steven Badger – Chris Cimperman

Chester – Tezz Yancey

Mickey – Erick McAllister

Bar Patrons - Justin Busch, Heidi Merrill

Waitress – Dana Warner

Park Pedestrians – Noreen Lerner, Mark Lerner

Evan – Tyler Adkins

Clare's Mother – Stacey Feinsilver





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### **Crew:**

Production Safety Supervisor: Christine Hachem

Production Assistant: Elizabeth Jackson

Art Director: Fairuz Jane Schlecht

Construction Coordinator: Don Warner

First Assistant Camera: Michelle Black, Alicia Blair, Robert Tapaltsyan

Second Assistant Camera: Alexander Van Doan

Gaffer: Jorge Hernandez

Grip: Mike Long

Electrician Grip: Nathan Davis, Andy Poulsen

Script Supervisor: Eddie Vigil V

Sound Mixer: Jose Castro

Location Manager: Connie Jo Sechrist

Key Makeup Artist: Jaya Loo

### **Post Production:**

Colorist: Billy Hobson

Sound Editor: Big Break Sound

Stills Photographers: Amy McMullen, Chris Jones

Title Design: Connie Jo Sechrist, Paul James Houghton

### **Songs:**

'Born To Fly' – written by Justin Busch & Heidi Merrill. Performed by Heidi Merrill.

Courtesy of: Grade One View Music

'I Can't Hold On' – written by Justin Busch & Heidi Merrill. Performed by Heidi Merrill.

Courtesy of: Grade One View Music

'Right Side of My Neck' – written by Faye Connell Webster. Performed by Faye Webster.

Courtesy of: Secretly Canadian

'Can't Fight Falling In Love' – written by Justin Busch. Performed by Lou Ridley.

Courtesy of: Grade One View Music

### **Thanks:**

Megan Meier Foundation & Tina Meier, Akton LLC (David Sacha & Brendan Ryan), Pierside Press Sandwich Shop (Lily Chan & Jost McDonald), O'Malley's On Main (Brian Kyle, Sean Byrne, Victor M. Barboza Jr.), City of Seal Beach (Joe Kalmick, Jill Ingram, Les Johnson, David Nett), Sharp Focus Creative Academy (Scott Thomas Crawley), OC Building Services (Don Warner), Fivestar Embroidery (Matthew Poerter), Art Images Gallery & Framing (Bret Menasco).

MariyIn & Tony Dollamore · Will & Maggie Houghton · London & Hayley Houghton · Jordan Horowitz · Kimberly Dyas · Rob & Laura Eames · Tina Foster · Shannon Harford · Dan Hooper · Sam, Tom & Martin Houghton · Ben Jacobs · Jonathon King · May & Cleve MacKenzie · Laurie M. Muschong · Jessica Nokes · Melanie Overett · Maria Ramirez · Tim Richmond · Eileen & Mike Shapiro · Cindy Sidoti · Molly Stapelman · John Wettergren · Lan & Art Wolfkind.

## Artwork:

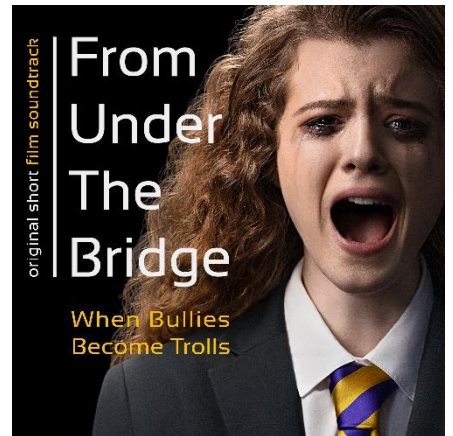
Award-Winning Poster



Logo



Soundtrack Album Cover



Megan Meier Foundation





**Press:**

Sun News (Front Page)



## Seal Beach filmmaker shoots anti-bullying film

Director believes cyberbullying is on the rise

By CHARLES M. KELLY

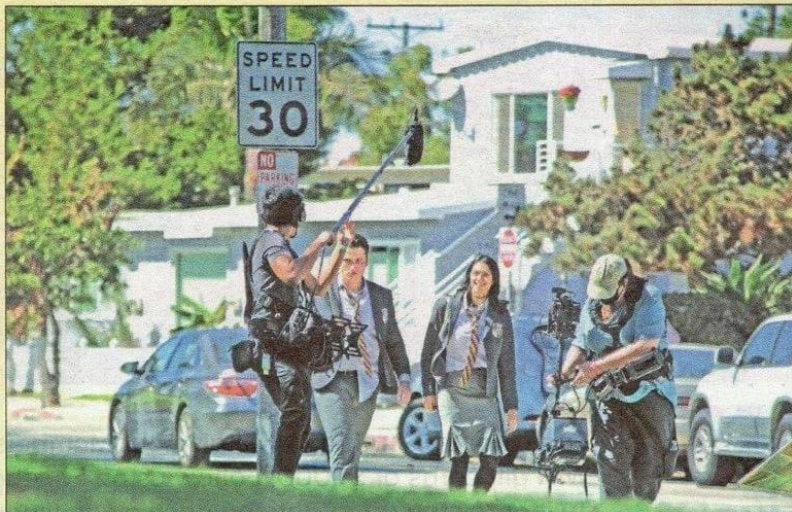
More than 2,000 actors auditioned for the anti-bullying movie "From Under the Bridge," which is being directed by Seal Beach resident and filmmaker Paul James Houghton.

"Bridge" producers asked the actors for their own bullying stories, said Houghton, who is directing the film under the name Paul James. Most of the actors had bullying stories of their own, five of which were used in the trailer for "From Under the Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls."

According to Houghton, the actor playing the bully said he didn't know if he would be alive if it hadn't been for his family.

An online summary of the pitch video for the project describes the film briefly: "A lonely high school girl escapes depression and her bullies when she meets the perfect boy online, but is he too good to be true? A bullying & cyberbullying awareness story you won't believe is inspired by real events."

As the word "trolls" in the title may suggest, the film looks at cyberbullying. Houghton said cyberbullying is a significant part of bullying today. Social media is "expanding the world of bul-



A scene from "Under the Bridge" being shot on the Greenbelt on Seal Beach's Electric Avenue.

Photo by Amy McMullen

lying," he said in a recent phone interview.

According to Houghton, one difference between cyberbullying and "interpersonal" (face-to-face, real world) bullying is that there's a chance the bully will see they've reached a limit. Not so cyberbullying, which is why Houghton believes cyberbullying is growing.

Houghton was filming scenes for "From Under the Bridge" on Saturday, Aug. 29, the day of the recent Caravan4Justice/Black Lives Matter demonstration on

Main Street. As it turns out, they weren't much effected by the demonstration because they were filming near Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach.

Houghton said they didn't know about the demonstration until about three days beforehand. Houghton said they were concerned.

Houghton said District One Councilman Joe Kalmick—who tipped the Sun off to the story—was supportive of the project. Houghton said Kalmick real-

ly helped with the city of Seal Beach, which as a policy does not allow filming during the summer or on weekends.

"We worked very hard to ensure the film would shoot in Seal Beach," Houghton wrote in an Aug. 28 email. "It is much easier to shoot in LA County (less restrictions), but I wanted to shoot here."

"I wanted the film to feature (and center around) Seal Beach to reflect my personal love and pas-

Please see Trolls, page 3

### Trolls

From page 1.

sion for our city and community," Houghton wrote.

For one thing, no one was against the message. He said his project has received nothing but support.

There were other reasons to keep it local. His wife works at four hospitals. His office is on Electric Avenue in Seal Beach. He has two daughters, 2-and-a-half and 7. His eldest, who celebrated her birthday two Saturdays prior to filming, attends McGaugh Elementary in Seal Beach.

"Of course we love Seal Beach," he said.

It all started when he read a story about a girl who had been bullied. The actual film has been more than 12 years in the works. He wrote a draft of what became "From Under the Bridge" in 2008.

Houghton said he has been passionate about anti-bullying all his life.

"It is just the right time," he said.

Houghton described the film's story as "fluid." Houghton and his co-producers believe bullies are a product of their own environment. They called "the waterfall effect," and that aspect of the complex

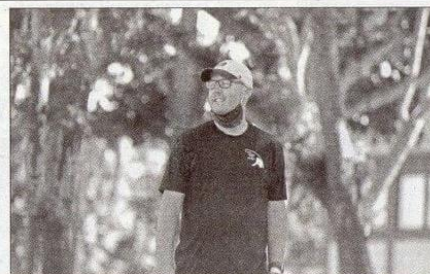
issue of bullying is addressed in the plot of the film. "The other part is that they just don't understand," Houghton said.

He said there are individuals out there who are not aware of the damage they are doing.

"It's really difficult to let your mind go" into the mind of a bully, Houghton said.

According to Houghton, a bully's understanding of wrong might be "beyond" your own.

The online funding drive for the project at the Seed and Spark website has raised \$9,860 of its \$12,000 goal. For more information, visit <https://www.seedandspark.com/fund/fromunderthebridge/story>.



McGaugh parent Paul James Houghton (credited as Paul James in his film) believes cyberbullying is on the rise. Photo by Amy McMullen





**Press:**

Sun News (Front Page)



## Anti-cyberbullying film shot in Seal Beach has invite-only premiere in LA

Filmmaker lives, works, in Seal Beach

By CHARLES M. KELLY

A 15-minute anti-bullying film that was shot in Seal Beach last summer, "From Under the Bridge," had an in-person premiere in Los Angeles on Saturday, May 15. O'Malley's on Main was featured in a pivotal scene. Keeping the setting local was important to the director.

"Bridge," a story about a lonely girl who appears to have found the perfect guy online, was directed by Seal Beach resident

and Seal Beach filmmaker Paul James Houghton under the name Paul James. Houghton studio is located in Old Town. He wrote and directed the shot film.

"The Premiere Private Screening (Invitation Only - this is important because the festivals need to know it has not been publicly shown) was at: Raleigh Studios on Melrose Avenue in Hollywood in their main theater," Houghton wrote in a May 18 email.

District One Councilman/Mayor Joe Kalmick was among those invited to the premiere. He helped Houghton get the per-



Photo by Adam Feinsilver

District One City Councilman/Mayor Joe Kalmick, Adrienne Kalmick, with Seal Beach resident and filmmaker Paul James Houghton.

Please see Film, page 14



Photo by Mathew Macar (director of photography)

Steven Badger (played by Chris Cimperman) and Kyle (Played by Luc Clopton) have a confrontation in "From Under the Bridge." Locals will recognize the location: O'Malley's on Main

### Film

From page 1

mits to shoot on the Greenbelt in August 2020.

"It was fun," Kalmick said of the premiere.

The film was inspired by an infamous cyberbullying case.

"A lonely high school girl escapes depression and her bullies when she meets the perfect boy online, but is he too good to be true?" according to the studio website.

The film was inspired by the events that led to the suicide of 13-year-old Megan Meier. Houghton said her mother Tina Meier supported and approved of Houghton's film. (In 2007, Tina Meier established the Megan Meier Foundation in her daughter's memory. The Foundation's goal: "To live in a world where bullying and cyberbullying no longer exist.")

Saturday's screening was preceded by a reception.

Kalmick guesstimated that 75 people attended the event.

Houghton, however, put the

number at 80. According to Houghton, that was the maximum number allowed due to COVID.

He thought the performances were excellent and the film is powerful.

Filmmaker Houghton said they had hoped the film would be shown in the Bay Theatre.

However, it is not yet known when the iconic Main Street Seal Beach movie house will reopen.

In the meantime, Houghton said they had already been contacted by the Newport Beach Film Festival. He said that would likely be the next showing.

For now, Houghton said, the film will go on the "festival run" first, then be distributed online.

Houghton said one day "Under the Bridge" would be distributed to cable channels that show short films.

For more information about the film, <http://www.dreamotionstudios.com>.

For information about the Megan Meier Foundation, visit [www.meganmeierfoundation.org](http://www.meganmeierfoundation.org).



## Critic Reviews:

### Close-Up Culture

#### CLOSE-UP CULTURE

[WELCOME](#) [FILM REVIEWS](#) [FEATURES](#) [THEATRE & ARTS](#) [INTERVIEWS](#)



by ANNA MAYERS  
January 8, 2022

[Leave a Comment](#)

'From Under the Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls' is a bullying, cyber-bullying and suicide awareness film based on a true story. This review gives my thoughts on the film and doesn't go into detail on suicide, but if you are struggling with the topics the film presents, [please ask for help](#). It's the reason this film has been made.

Growing up, this sort of film was shown in schools and at similar places to raise awareness of what bullying others can do. As young people, we're impressionable, we follow what we think is cool, and can often be the cruelest people. It's crazy to think that children and young people often don't think of others, only what will stop them from getting hurt too. This short film is so real and so important to have been made and shown, to continue the message that bullying is wrong. Often the people who do the worst things to others have had awful things done to them, but that doesn't excuse their behaviour. FUTB:WBBT amplifies victim's voices, tells us that we shouldn't stand by, and always ask for help.

The film shows us 'Yesterday', setting up the story and allowing us to see into Clare's life. Things aren't great: school is the worst, she's lost a parent and is being catfished online although she doesn't realise. The soundtrack is brilliant at showing us the changing emotions of Clare, using bubbly romantic tracks, and then fading them out to help us as an audience see the truth. It's so clever how different elements of the overall filmmaking are used to help us get into the head of each character. Being a short, it can often be hard to accomplish a lot in a small time window, but FUTB:WBBT doesn't

need waffle, it can focus on all the main story points. The audience are presented something cinematic through the look and the sound but focusing on the important plot points allows us to explore each character and the world they are in without taking a long time.

We then skip to 'Today'. All nightmares begin to come true, for all characters. Bullying isn't excused, but we can begin to understand why people make the choices they do. Written and directed by Paul James Houghton, like I've mentioned, we dive straight into the real world and Paul does a fantastic job in exploring a large topic in a short amount of time. I love his choice to give each character a backstory and purpose, again building upon this world we are in and giving us the twists and turns that we crave in a story like this, but keeping us down to Earth, acknowledging that this story is based on a truth. I gasped out loud at the twist, my brain ticking away throughout the film to figure out who would be the secret troll. Our words and actions really can have the biggest consequences.

The short stars Piper Reese as Clare, a young girl who just wants a break in life. Her performance is raw and heart shattering. Even though Clare is a character, she's brought to life by all those watching it, seeing themselves in her worry or in the people they may have been mean to. Piper stays strong in her acting, really reminding us that this story is real and has happened to so many people. Each acting performance is on the same level, showing us that even if we keep a good face, things can be bad under the surface.

I'd really recommend watching this short film, and admire what it stands for. It may not be suitable for all ages with its graphic nature at the end, but its message is important and needed. It's unfortunate films like this are needed for bullies to see how their actions dreadfully harm others, but Paul and team have done a fantastic job in executing each element of it.

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[NHS help for suicidal thoughts](#)

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By **ANNA MAYERS** - January 8, 2022

## Critic Reviews:

Universal Cinema Magazine

# From Under the Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls – A Review

 By UniversalCinema Magazine October 8, 2021



Cyber-bullying has been on the rise since the early 2000s that could cause victims to cause self-harm, or even suicide. With many social networking apps and websites easily accessible for anyone with an Internet connection, any bully can easily create a fake account to lure their victims into something false and can lead to tragic consequences. Director Paul James Houghton takes aim with this critically-acclaimed short film 'From Under the Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls' to increase bullying, cyber-bullying, and suicide awareness, which is loosely based on the late Megan Meier, a teenage girl who committed suicide as a result of cyber-bullying and bullying at school.

The background of the story is on a fictional character named Claire, who shares the similar characteristics of Megan Meier. Claire is a young teenager, already in distress and in deep depression, is suffering from her daily life in school. She is without her mother, who presumably passed away and is under the care of her father. Her father struggles to communicate with Claire, indicating that there is a lack of connection for her to open up to her dad, without much explanation. It does appear that her dad is doing everything he can to provide emotional support.

While Claire suffers from her reality without her mother and being bullied in school, she finds a bit of hope of happiness when she befriended a 22-year-old frat boy named Evan on a social networking

account. Even seems to be an overall nice guy who has great conversations with Claire, even though they never met. Eventually Claire suggested to finally meet in person and Evan obliged and set a date.

Here's my analysis. It looks like this was happening in a period where cyber-bullying may not have been coined as a phrase to even raise awareness of the risks of meeting someone online without proving that the person is not a fake account. There are no red flags that spring out, but rather an innocent girl who believes she found a glimmer of happiness she could focus her energy on. But as a teenager at that time and social media being fairly new, it could be presumed that there was no formal education for anyone to learn how to protect oneself from being a victim of fraud or cyber-bullying.

No matter how many nice conversations between two people who only met online, it takes one simple message that could turn the other person's world upside down, specifically those that believed every word said before was at face value. A simple sentence like "the world would be better without you" is more than enough to incite the cyber-bullying antics as much as a physical shove to someone in bullying. The difference between the two is that bullying is physical, while cyber-bullying is mental. And with the topics of Mental Health Awareness being in the mainstream today, it was just as needed when cyber-bullying became a trend.

Not to say physical harm is just physical, as it does affect one's mental state as well. Bullying is also a big part of hurting someone's life and their mind going forward. It is a trauma that could grow exponentially if there is no proper care to support the victim. Traumas could lead to anxiety, and even worse, depression. Add cyber-bullying to the mix, it could be more than enough to lead to suicide.

From *Under the Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls* does not hold back on all of these intertwined themes of suicide, bullying, cyber-bullying, trauma, and depression. They often correlate with each other when these five facets come at head, as was in Claire's case. Depression could be seen as someone who struggle to cope with feelings from past traumatic events, with so many unanswered questions as to why they deserved to feel the way they felt from their past negative experiences.

Also, the film also touches on the expression of "negativity breeds negativity". All parties that were involved in the interactions with Claire have also at least once interacted with each other. They had a history, and someone felt burned at one point. In this case, it was the cyber-bully. I believe in the adage of the exchange of energy, where if you align yourself with someone who has hope, happiness, or any positive outlooks in life, you become inspired to do the same in return to others. In this case, Claire thought she found that positive energy with Evan, who became her closest confidant, and can easily turn his back and magnify the negative energy Claire was avoiding.

It is no doubt *From Under the Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls* has won numerous awards for the direction of the plot. It is straight to the point with poignant topics aimed at viewers to wake up and realize how deadly cyber-bullying could become. And it is a testament to use this art form as another means to let people know to seek help who is becoming a victim, or to help those who is unaware that they are the victim. For this film, viewer discretion is advised. And to the parents who watch this short film, remember to hug your daughters and sons. Do what you can to protect them from any form of bullying, especially cyber-bullying.



## Critic Reviews:

Adrian Perez



## FROM UNDER THE BRIDGE: When Bullies Become Trolls (USA) Paul James Houghton

By Adrian Perez

**Grade: A**

Unparalleled tension-building, inescapable spectatorial hysteria, Houghton majestically depicts in *From Under The Bridge: When Bullies Become Trolls* a simulation of Megan Meier's (1992-2006) cyclical hellscape at the hands of school bullying, peer victimisation, and cyberharassment that ultimately led to her taking her life just before turning 14. Heavy to digest at all times, due to its overpowering and melodramatic editorial construction, FUTB: WBBT opens up a multidimensional channel through which to explore this thematic across its victims as well its perpetrators, from a cyclical continuum of scapegoating where the very perpetrators are bullied themselves, to ultimately all victims of bullying in all of its forms who digest psychological trauma, social anxiety and chronic depression on a daily. Houghton ends his tragedy on the solid punch that 1 out of 5 teens finds their exit through self-destruction. On a cinematographic and performative level, Houghton gets it all right; this is a high-calibre cinematic tragedy that's gut-wrenching with every fibre of its being, editorially, it has a tendency to be so overpowering through its omnipresent original score (which is superb!) that it will make more than one switch their brain off. There's much power in narrative silence; more editorial equilibrium between the natural tension of the film's performances and the emotional intensity of the score would elevate FUTB: WBBT to a home run. **What's unquestionable is that this is one of the most striking, harrowing, and critical short films of the year. Grade: A**

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## Behind The Scenes:

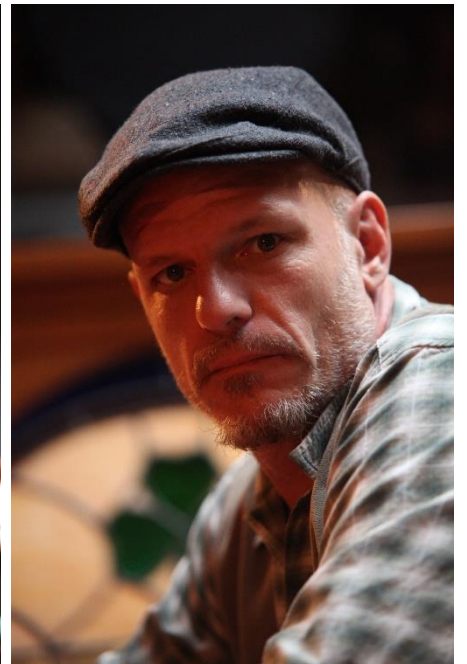
### Set Photographs





## Behind The Scenes:

### Set Photographs







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### Set Photographs





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## Behind The Scenes:

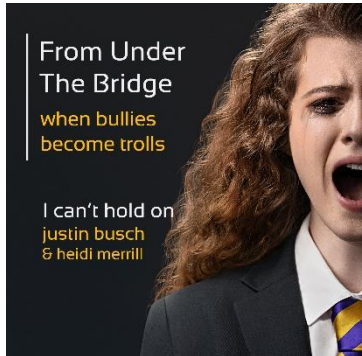
Private Hollywood Screening Photographs





## Music:

Original Songs (Click Images for Songs) – Including the Grammy® Nominated song, 'I Can't Hold On'



## Music Related Still Photographs

