

# WAY PAST COOL

**a film about the hood... childhood**

PRELIMINARY PRESS KIT

98 minutes  
currently un-rated

For information, contact:  
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## SYNOPSIS

(adapted from the Harper Perennial book jacket)

Based on the award-winning best seller by Jess Mowry, "Way Past Cool" is a coming-of-age story told in reverse, for it's the moving tale of a group of young black kids and their fight to reclaim their childhood.

The Friends, as they simply call themselves, are 12 and 13 year olds living on the bleak and ragged turf of "Oaktown," better known as Oakland, California. The largest, Gordon, may be their leader, but it is Lyon, thought to be "magic," who is their spiritual heart. When a powerful 16-year old drug dealer tries to set the Friends against their rivals, it's his unwilling bodyguard who emerges as a key player in this drama that illuminates America's urban reality in a totally fresh way. The story is both hard and soft, moving and funny, lyrical and yet shocking, as it paints a portrait of children living on the slimmest of edges. But mostly, "Way Past Cool" is an inspiring, even hopeful, testament to the renewing power of love.

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"(A Story) that should be read by ALL of mainstream America."

-Terry McMillan, author of "Waiting to Exhale"

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"'Way Past Cool,' Adam Davidson's debut film, is inventive and intimate, and it brings these qualities to material that most filmmakers and opinion-makers treat with all-too-familiar images and assumptions.

Is this a movie about Black gang members (boys and men) in California? Yes and no. It is also about how we become who we are in those terrifying years between childhood and adolescence. What help do we get from parents and friends? When does loving them protect us and when does it endanger us? What happens when kids live in neighborhoods that threaten to violate them every day of their lives?

When a gang of young boys use guns to protect their turf from older gang predators, that old political question of means versus ends arises—and in a country (not just a ghetto) that has no idea of how to separate violence from "entertainment" violence. No other movie I've seen so captures this blurring in the minds and psyches of the young: that giddy omnipotence alongside the puzzlement about what death really means.

We read about this in newspapers, we see it on television in the long-faced documentaries about the young and the breakdown of values. "Way Past Cool" is something else altogether. It makes us want to struggle with these crises and questions by looking and feeling more deeply. It turns life into art in ways that are truly surprising but that make heart wrenching sense."

-Margo Jefferson, Cultural Critic,  
The New York Times

## CAST

Deek ..... Wayne Collins  
Markita..... Luchisha Evans  
Ty..... Terrance Williams  
Danny ..... Karreem Woods

### The Friends

Lyon..... Wes Charles Jr.  
Rac ..... D'andre Jenkins  
Ric ..... D'esmond Jenkins  
Curtis ..... Partap Khalsa  
Gordon..... Jonathan Roger Neal

### The Crew

Gameboy ..... Lawrence Ball  
Turbo ..... Calvin Hall  
Tunk..... Richie Holliman  
Wesley..... Dejuan D. Turrentine  
Ajay..... John Webb

Officer Washington ..... Melvyn Hayward Sr.  
Officer Hoover..... Adam Davidson  
Big Boy #1 ..... Marshon Williams  
Big Boy #2 ..... Benjamin Mills  
Stanley..... Courtney D. Howe, Jr.

Ty & Danny's Mother..... Melody Garrett  
Justin. .... Arthur Reggie  
Marcus..... Dajon Maize  
J'Row..... Julian Richardson  
Tom Boy ..... Christina Gibbs  
Gordon's Mother ..... Debra D. Holt  
Leroy..... Quehannes Jones  
Junkie ..... Marcus Salgado  
The Hoodly Host ..... Orlando Brown

## FILMMAKERS

Directed by..... Adam Davidson

Screenplay By..... Jess Mowry  
Yule Caise

Based On The Novel "Way Past Cool" By Jess Mowry

Produced By ..... Ira Deutchman

Co-Producer ..... Avram Ludwig

Executive Producers..... Norman Lear  
Milos Forman  
Paul Rassam

Director Of Photography ..... Amy Vincent

Music Composed By ..... Zen Amen

Editor ..... Stuart Emmanuel

Production Designer..... Bill McCallister

Line Producer..... Michael Jackman

Music Supervisor ..... Gillian Grisman

Unit Production Manager ..... Michael Gibbs

Costume Designers..... Darryl Johnson  
Sharon Childress

Casting Director ..... Jaki Brown-Karman

Production Supervisor..... Bobby Mardis

Art Director..... Norman Scott

Sound Mixers..... Lionel Ball  
Oliver Moss

Special Effects ..... Erich Hicks

Wardrobe Supervisor ..... Germaine Hill

Make Up & Hair..... Rosemary Lawrence

Stunt Coordinator ..... Marcus Salgado  
Skateboard Coach and Double ..... Karl Cully  
Act III Production Executives..... Rachel Davidson  
Greg Cope  
Redeemable Features Production Executives..... Melissa Chesman  
Lee Ann Hileman

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### Adam Davidson (DIRECTOR)

Adam Davidson's first film, "The Lunch Date" was a 10 minute short, shot in black and white, that told the story of the unexpected understanding that develops between a well-to-do white woman and the mysterious black man that she believes had stolen her lunch. The film went on to win the Palm D'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and won the Academy Award for Best Live Action Short. "Way Past Cool" is his first full-length feature film.

### Ira Deutchman (PRODUCER)

Ira Deutchman has been making, marketing and distributing films for twenty-five years, having worked on over 130 films including some of the most successful independent films of all time. He was one of the founders of Cinecom and later created Fine Line Features—two companies that were created from scratch and in their respective times, helped define the independent film business.

In addition to his activities as an independent producer, Deutchman is the CEO of Studionext, a New York-based digital production company. He also serves as an Associate Professor in the Graduate Film Division at Columbia University, and serves on the advisory boards of the Sundance Film Festival and the L.A. Independent Film Festival.

His screen credits include Associate Producer of "Matewan," Executive Producer of "Swimming to Cambodia," "Miles From Home," "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills," "Straight Out of Brooklyn," "Waterland," "The Ballad of Little Jo," "Mrs. Parker & the Vicious Circle," "Lulu On the Bridge" and "Center of the World" and Producer of "Kiss Me, Guido," "All I Wanna Do," "54," "Way Past Cool," "Interstate 60" and "Ball in the House."

He's a graduate of Northwestern University, majoring in film.

### Norman Lear (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

Norman Lear is one of television's most successful producers, having produced "All in the Family" among many others. His company, Act III Communications is an active producer for both motion pictures and television. Among their motion picture credits are "Stand By Me," "Fried Green Tomatoes" and "This Is Spinal Tap!"

### Milos Forman (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

Two time Academy Award winner Milos Forman has one of the most impressive bodies of work of any living director, including such films as "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," "Amadeus," "Hair," "Ragtime" and "The People vs. Larry Flynt." "Way Past Cool" is his first time as an Executive Producer.

Paul Rassam (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

Paul Rassam is one of France's most prestigious producers. His producing credits include "Valmont," "The Bear," "Kafka" and "Showgirls." He is partners with director Claude Berri in Renn Productions and the AMLF distribution company in France.

Avram Ludwig (CO-PRODUCER)

Avram Ludwig's producing specialty is helping rookie film directors through their first feature. Ludwig established himself as Producer of "Swingers," a low-budget independent comedy directed by Doug Liman, was released by Miramax and was featured at the 1996 Venice, Telluride and Toronto Film Festivals. Ludwig also produced "Natural Forces," a futuristic Mad Max style adaptation of *The Odyssey*, filmed in the Virgin Islands, "River Red," starring Tom Everet Scott and "Exiles in New York," directed by playwright Eduardo Machado starring Ed Harris, Amy Madigan and Julie Harris.

Amy Vincent (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

A rising star in contemporary circles, Vincent is perhaps best known for her work on Kasi Lemmons's "Eve's Bayou." She studied cinematography at the American Film Institute, where her graduate project, "Death in Venice, C.A." won many prestigious awards. Her other credits include Bill Birrel's "No Salita," Craig Singer's "The Animal Room" and Lisa Udelson's "The Party Favor." "Tuesday Morning Ride," a short film she shot for Dianne Houston, was nominated for an Academy Award in 1995. Upcoming for Vincent is "Girl Talk," with Juliette Lewis and Michael Rappaport, the black comedy "Jawbreaker," with Rose McGowan and "Walking Across Egypt" with Ellen Burstyn.

Bill McCallister (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)

McCallister created all of the permanent sets for "The White Shadow," and designed the film "Who Framed Roger Rabbit." He has designed many television shows for Mark Carliner, Bruce Paltrow and Steven Bochco during their tenures at MTM as well as many Movies of the Week for E.W. Shwachhamer. Currently, Bill designs the "Moesha" show.