



LUCID INC. PRESENTS

# UNCERTAIN

*A film by*

EWAN McNICOL & ANNA SANDILANDS

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## UNCERTAIN

THEATRICAL RELEASE DATE: 03/09/17

VOD RELEASE DATE: 03/17/17 (Pre order 03/02/17)

RUNTIME : 81 mins

RATING: Unrated

PRESS DOWNLOADS: [Download here](#)

WEBSITE: [www.uncertainfilm.com](http://www.uncertainfilm.com)

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## LOGLINE

Uncertain is a visually stunning and disarmingly funny portrait of the literal and figurative troubled waters of Uncertain, Texas, a 94-resident town so tucked away “you’ve got to be lost to find it”.

## SYNOPSIS

Winner of Tribeca Film Festival’s *Albert Maysles Documentary Director Award*, UNCERTAIN is a visually stunning and disarmingly funny portrait of the literal and figurative troubled waters of Uncertain, Texas. In a 94-resident town so tucked away “you’ve got to be lost to find it”, three Uncertain men make their own bids for survival looking to find a more certain future. An ex-convict obsessed with Mr. Ed, a gigantic boar he hunts in order to stay on the straight and narrow. A young idealist with big plans but few prospects looking for a bigger life. And an aging fisherman learning to let go of his youthful ways, and making peace with a fateful moment thirty years ago. All the while Uncertain’s vast, swampy lake is being choked by an aquatic weed, upsetting the natural balance and the town’s only source of livelihood. From award-winning director’s Ewan McNicol and Anna Sandilands, UNCERTAIN is an outstanding feature debut capturing a vivid cast of characters as compelling as any fiction.

## DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

We first saw Uncertain on a map. A tiny town tucked miles away in the far corner of Texas, hovering on the edge of a massive lake, and we were intrigued. We thought it might make a great subject for a short film about how a town gets a name like Uncertain.

When we arrived we were immediately taken with the feeling of the small, one-road town and the hub of activity at Johnson's Ranch, the town's boat launch, general store and bait shop. Everyone knows everyone. Everyone in some way is relying on the land. And the lake was breathtaking, almost primeval with its moss-laden giant cypress. We spent our first days there feeling as though we'd gone back in time.

We met Henry within our first hours of arriving, and he took us out on the lake in his boat. It's fair to say we fell in love with him. A straightforward and honest man who seems to belong to another time. And very quickly we came to find out he's not without a mischievous side.

We met Wayne the next day and he took us out to the middle of the woods to show us his hunting stand. When we asked him why he hunts with a powder rifle he told us he was a convicted felon. Both our hearts skipped a beat. Then he told us why. We were so touched by his honesty. Why would he tell this to two perfect strangers, with a camera?

When we met Zach we felt we'd met the town jester - the one who tells it as it is. So bright an affable, with the world in front of him, but almost too gentle to get himself unstuck.


These men couldn't be more different from each other. But they are each honest, candid and very funny. And it seemed that each of their lives was in some kind of limbo—as though the town of Uncertain is Purgatory.

We knew we had met three amazing men, great characters with great stories, but we didn't know where their stories would take us. So we filmed just over a year and a half in our own kind of limbo—aware of what we had, but not necessarily what it would become. Our approach was to be present and open. Sometimes absolutely nothing happened so we filmed turtles. But over time they came to trust us and to tell us their stories.

Visually, we were driven by wanting to do justice to the beauty and mythical quality of the lake. It was important for us to give a strong sense of place. As well we wanted to allow things to happen in front of us, vérité. Though these two styles don't often go together we wanted to make it work. With that we made choices in framing, lenses, and throughout editing to make moments for considered, contemplative frames.

For us characters and place are the stories we are drawn to. That's how we knew we had some kind of film when we met these men, almost regardless of where they took us.

And in this time we have forged otherwise improbable friendships. On a few occasions we have wondered together how our lives can be so different. Yet we think one of the strengths of their stories is a sense of how much we are all alike. We hope they are proud of the film we've made together.



## UNCERTAIN & CADDO LAKE

On the edge of Caddo Lake sits the small town of Uncertain, population 94 and dwindling.

The lake itself crosses the borders of Texas and Louisiana, making it easy to cross state lines when running from the law. As Sheriff McCool says, *“Running from anywhere, Uncertain is a good place to hide”*.

Today only ghosts of the town’s once-glory days remain. The population is mostly poor, relying on visiting fishermen and modest tourism.

The rapidly spreading weed *Salvinia* (likely introduced by someone setting a gold fish free) is aggressively choking wildlife and fishing on the lake. With no successful abatement the weed is growing exponentially. Water levels and catches this year have reached the lowest ever seen.

As the lake struggles to survive so does the town of Uncertain.



## WAYNE

Wayne is a recovering addict, dealer and brawler. He's been shot three times and logged thirteen years in prison. Today he is bright, affable and strikingly honest. *"Great spirit whose voice I hear in the wind, I ask you for strength. Not that I may best my brother, but that I may defeat my greatest enemy, myself."*

In his quest for sobriety, Wayne has refocused on his native-American roots and a childhood passion for hunting wild hog, "the new buffalo". As a convicted felon, in Texas he is only allowed to hunt with a black powder, single shot rifle. His ritual quickly becomes an obsession with the arrival of Mr Ed, a massive, old, domineering pig that scares away Wayne's steady food supply.

We watch as Mr Ed's survival skills continue to outwit and bait Wayne, escalating into man-against-pig warfare. Wayne erects a 17-foot high tower, deploys motion sensors, night vision, and spends months gathering 'intel'.

The only break in their battle comes when Mr Ed appears to have been abducted by a UFO. (You can decide for yourself.)

As we follow the pursuit of Mr Ed, Wayne slowly reveals his violent past; dealing meth, drug-fueled threesomes that included one of his sons, and attacking a dope dealer with ice picks. Wayne eventually tells us that he killed a young man while driving drunk. *"I don't know what else to do but not be that man anymore."*

Upon Mr Ed's return Wayne feels he must kill him. *"I've kind of gotten to know this guy. What do you do when you've killed your adversary?"*

## HENRY

As the reputed best fisherman on Caddo Lake, Henry goes out on the lake every day. *"Fishing takes your mind off your worries."* As a young man in Uncertain Henry was a trouble-maker. *"If you keep doing wrong, time will catch you."*

Henry grieves the loss of a daughter who died in a car accident on the road in and out of Uncertain. And he recently lost his wife of 50 years, Mary. *"The day she died I started going to church. Generally I would have fished on Sundays."*

But as the salvinia worsens, Henry has fewer chances to stay busy fishing.

Henry begins a relationship with a younger woman, *"my fat girlfriend"*, also named Mary. She is energetic, voluble, and makes Henry feel young again. His family and friends say she doesn't care about Henry and is just using him for money. They want him to stay away from her and settle down. *"If I want to stay out all night that's my business, ain't it man?"*

He tells us about his younger days in Uncertain, how he befriended white people, and that his defiance and indignation drew the ire of both blacks and whites. The day they integrated the schools Henry sent his children to school against the wishes of the other black townsfolk. An "Uncle Tom" slur escalated into an angry attack by a young black man swinging a lug wrench. Henry drew a pistol and shot the man once, dead. *"If you ask me if I could put breath back in his body, yes I would."*

Henry thinks about his future, and the day that he will be reunited with his family in heaven. *"I know I have to die to do that, and to have my heart right with God."*



## ZACH

As Zach tells us, *“If you live in Uncertain, you retire at 21...You’re going to be drinking at those bars.”* Zach is 21.

He is bright, easy going and something of the town court jester—earnestly, but poorly singing karaoke at the bar. He lives alone in what was the family home, having had to commit his mother to psychiatric care a few years back. His easy-going manner wavers occasionally under the weight of his loneliness.

He is severely diabetic and wears a bag and pump system that steadily regulates a stream of insulin. The cost of his medical condition, combined with his heavy drinking has him caught in a financial cul-de-sac and physically strung out. *“My doctor says if I don’t straighten up I’ll be on dialysis by 30 and dead by 35.”*

Zach makes plans to get sober and eventually saves enough money to leave Uncertain for Austin. When Zach isn’t able to land a job, money, food and insulin run out and he winds up in the hospital. *“Some people take for granted what they have. I wonder, am I going to grow old? I’m I going to be able to afford to?”*

As Zach gets back on his feet again, he is making friends in Austin, going out, meeting girls, and drinking.





## SUPPORTING CHARACTERS



### SHERIFF TOM MCCOOL

A man with a long history on Caddo Lake (and once the game warden) Tom knows most of the residents of Uncertain. *“There’s nothing I haven’t seen on Caddo Lake and in the town of Uncertain.”*



### KAREN, THE SHOP KEEP

Karen is the manager of Johnson’s Ranch, the hub of town, where everyone runs a tab. She stays tuned to all the gossip and is a central figure in town and important in Henry’s life.



### GAME WARDEN PEEPLES

Darrin is the game warden for Caddo Lake and spends much of his time trying to catch poachers and fishermen catching more than their daily limit.



### LEE EISENBERG

A biologist, Lee is working on introducing weevils into Caddo Lake as the only known bio-control for salvinia. It is a battle against the town, time and nature. Lee tells us how salvinia spreads, and how this type of abatement has been successful in the past. However the tiny weevil has never been tested at the scale necessary to save Caddo Lake.



### BILLY CARTER

Billy is the first call when someone goes missing on the lake. *“I’ve fished more than one out of here and it ain’t pretty.”* And he is the most outspoken about the lake’s salvinia problem, *“It’s gonna die. It’s sad to see that the only place like this is going away.”*

## EWAN MCNICOL & ANNA SANDILANDS

Ewan McNicol & Anna Sandilands are a directing and producing duo and co-owners of Lucid Inc., a documentary studio based in Seattle.

Anna & Ewan's work has been curated and screened at MoMA in New York, the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London and the National Portrait Gallery in London, as well as film festivals including Sundance, Tribeca, BFI London International Film Festival and SXSW.

In 2015, Anna & Ewan were awarded the Albert Maysles New Documentary Director Award at Tribeca for their documentary feature UNCERTAIN. Their work has received other accolades including a Webby, a One Show Award, a Scottish BAFTA nomination, a Royal Television Society award, an IDFA 'Silver Cub' nomination, and an Effie. Ewan and Anna were named to *Filmmaker Magazine's* "25 Fresh Faces To Watch" in 2013.

Anna, Ewan and their studio are based in Seattle USA.



## FILM CREDITS

Produced and Directed by  
Ewan McNicol & Anna Sandilands

Featuring  
Henry Lewis, Wayne Smith, Zach  
Warren

And  
Billy Carter, Lee Eisenberg,  
Karen Holzman, Isaiah Lee,  
Geraldine Lewis, Sheriff Tom  
McCool,  
Game Warden Darrin Peeples,  
Cindy Walker

Edited by  
Marco Perez & Ewan McNicol

Composed by  
Daniel Hart

Cinematography by  
Ewan McNicol

Sound Recording by  
Steven Bechtold & Chloé McLennan

Sound Design & ReRecording Mix  
by  
Jacob Ribicoff

Thank you to the kind and generous  
people of Uncertain, Texas

### Featured In Order of Appearance

Billy Carter  
Henry Lewis  
Wayne Smith  
Tom McCool  
Zach Warren  
Cindy Walker  
Mollie Walker-Smith  
Karen Holzman  
Deshaun Irving  
Miss Johnnie V. Lee  
Darrin Peeples  
Chaz Warren  
Mark Hayes  
Isaiah Lee  
Lee Eisenberg  
Cedell Mitchell  
Derrick Lewis  
Darlene Manning  
Geraldine Lewis  
Larry McGraw  
Charlie Brantley  
Richard Davis

Sidney Randel  
Mary White  
Wayne Anderson  
Niles Gray  
Robert Gray  
Bryan DeLorenzo

Additional Photography  
Anna Sandilands, Chloé McLennan

Additional Game Camera Footage  
Wayne Smith, Dottie and Billy Carter

Camera Boat Operators  
Billy Carter, Angie King, Duane Meyers

Additional Editing  
Michelle Witten

Assistant Editors  
Jacob Chase, Chloé McLennan

Production Coordinators  
Apyrl Richards, Eli Martin

Archive Research and Coordination  
Afi Clark

Colorist  
Jeff Tillotson, Lightpress Inc.

Online  
Shane Dillon, Lightpress Inc.

Music Arranged and Recorded by  
Daniel Hart

Music Performed by  
Maria Demus - violin/vocals  
Annika Donnen - viola  
Roni Gan - violin  
Shawna Hamilton - cello  
Daniel Hart - banjo, violin, percussion  
Bobak Lotfipour - percussion

Music Audio and Mix Engineer  
Curtis Heath

Music Recorded at

Dumbledore's Beard Studio, Dallas, TX  
Heath Studio, Fort Worth, TX

Post Sound Facility  
Soundtrack NY

Re-recorderist  
Craign Kyllonen

Foley Walker  
Alex Carpenter

Foley Recordist  
Ric Schnupp

Title Design  
Doug Keyes

Title Animation  
Zak Stoltz

Sales  
Josh Braun, Submarine Entertainment

Counsel  
Victoria Cook,  
Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz

Clearance & Fair Use Counsel  
Melissa Georges,  
Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz

Copyright Counsel  
Hilary Geier,  
Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz

Bookkeeping  
Stephanie Moore

DCP  
BitCine

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the Sandilands Family

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Henry Bradbury  
Bruni Burres  
Jack Canson  
Sam Canup  
Billy, Dottie and Will Carter  
Eddie Chandler  
M.C. Chris  
Church of Uncertain  
Bonni Cohen  
Janet Cook  
Brenda Coughlin  
Philip Cowan  
Miriam Cutler  
Nick Dawson  
Andrew Doga  
Daniel Duddy  
Bob Edwards  
Gary Endsley  
Rob Epstein  
Kitty Episcopal  
Steve Gattis  
Peter Golub  
Rachel Grady  
Robert Graves  
Sam Green  
Jeffrey Greenbaum  
Francis Hare  
Harrison County Clerk's Office  
Janice at Harrison County Clerk's Office  
Harrison County Historical Society  
Harrison County Sheriff's Office  
Vivien Hillgrove  
Marcus Hines  
Christine Holzman  
Pete Horner  
Glenn Issacs  
Angie Itnyre  
Johnson's Ranch  
Cecil Jones  
Sloane Klevin  
Pedro Kos

Benjamin Kracun  
Sage Lewis  
Lighthouse Tavern  
Tom Luddy  
Scott Macauley  
Caryn MacLean  
Cara Mertes  
Duane Meyers  
Rick Michaels  
Mount Zion Spiritual Church  
Geraldine Mouthe  
Omar Mullick  
Ben Nabors  
Ol' Skool  
Susan Owen  
Mac Owens  
Keith Pardy  
Josh Penn  
Oscar Plott  
Keri Putnam  
Joaquin Ramirez  
Red 7  
Terri Richardson  
Aaron Ridenour  
Debbie Sanders  
Jess Search  
Simon Seddon  
Shady Glade  
Shreveport District Attorney  
Shreveport Police Department  
Marc Silver  
Skywalker Sound  
Lane Smith  
Coke Solomon  
Vernard Solomon  
Spatterdock  
R.L. Spencer  
The Sundance Institute  
Rahdi Taylor  
True/False Film Festival  
Jean Tsien  
Patte Turner  
Susan Turner  
Uncertain Tavern

