

# TWO STEP

A FILM BY ALEX R. JOHNSON

## TWO STEP SYNOPSIS

Kicked out of college, James visits Grams, his only remaining family, who dies shortly after his arrival. He finds consolation in the company of Grams' neighbor, Dot, a dance teacher, as he figures out his next move.

While settling Grams' affairs, James learns she's been the victim of the "grandparent scam" in which someone posing as James has been slowly bilking her out of thousands. But before James can go looking for the culprit, he shows up at the front door, desperate for money. The culprit, Webb, has his own problems in the form of Duane, who has ordered Webb to pay an old debt or else.

And if Webb can't get it from Grams, James will have to do - no matter who stands in his way.

## TWO STEP TECH DATA

95 minutes. Color. HD. 2014.

Shot with the Arri Alexa.

Edited on Final Cut Pro 7.

Shot on location in Austin, Texas, USA.

Production Company: La Chima Films

Edited at Grackle Flats, Austin, Texas.

Sound design and mix by Sonic Magic, Los Angeles.

Color correction by Light Iron, NYC.

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## **TWO STEP** PRESS

“A slow-burn thriller with rich Texas flavor, TWO STEP reps a promising feature debut for writer-director Alex R. Johnson. This character-driven picture takes its time marinating in quiet conversations and Austin atmosphere, making the sudden jolts of violence all the more shocking when they land.”

– GEOFF BERKSHIRE **VARIETY**

“Nifty Texas noir Two Step gets us acclimated to its community of fully realized and differentiated characters before letting blood flow or bullets fly—which is another way of saying that writer/director Alex R. Johnson dares honor the bygone art of cinematic storytelling. It’s a film in which costs—human, financial, moral—are always fully counted and felt.”

–ERIC HYNES **FILM COMMENT**

“Deeply human, full of dread simmering just beneath the surface and quietly unsettling.”

–DREW TAYLOR **THE PLAYLIST**

“Gripping and brutal, TWO STEP is a taut thriller which signifies the arrival of two major talents in director Alex R. Johnson and star James Landry Hébert.”

–ISAAC FELDBERG **WE GOT THIS COVERED**

“TWO STEP shows exactly how Texas Crime should be done.”

–BRYCE WILSON **PARACINEMA**

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## ALEX R. JOHNSON BIO

Johnson is an Austin, TX based filmmaker.

Previously he's produced Henry Corra's feature documentary SAME SEX AMERICA, as well as Pete Sillen's feature documentary I AM SECRETLY AN IMPORTANT MAN. He's had screenplays in both The Hamptons International Film Festival Screenwriter's Lab as well as IFP's Emerging Narrative Program.

Having directed narrative shorts ("Pickup and Return," "Thanksgiving") and music videos (The Wooden Birds and Goldmund), "Two Step" is his feature length directorial debut.

## Filmography

2014	TWO STEP (feature)	Writer/Director/Producer
2012	GOLDMUND: Shenandoah (music video)	Director/Editor
2012	THE WOODEN BIRDS: Long Time To Lose It (music video)	Director/Editor/DP
2011	THE WOODEN BIRDS: Criminals Win (music video)	Director/Editor
2010	I AM SECRETLY AN IMPORTANT MAN (feature)	Producer
2008	PICKUP AND RETURN (short)	Writer/Director/Producer
2008	THE ALCOHOL STUNTBAND: Gold Pain (music video)	Director/Editor
2006	SAME SEX AMERICA (feature)	Producer
2002	THANKSGIVING (short)	Writer/Director/Producer
2001	JOHN: ONE WAY (short)	Writer/Director/Producer

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## ALEX R. JOHNSON DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Before I moved to Austin, Texas I'd lived in New York apartments for 18 years. There were always at least one or two outer building locked doors before your own locked apartment door. There seemed to be layers of security - now, maybe that's more just the illusion of security, but at least there was an illusion. Moving here and living in a house for the first time as an adult, it completely freaked me out that there was just this one door between the inside of the house and the outside. And that one good kick is probably all it would take to get through. That freak out was definitely part of "Two Step's" germination.

Another key part was the "Grandparent Scam" - something I first saw explained on Dateline or 20/20 or some other tabloid magazine TV show 20+ years ago. It's stuck with me ever since. Not really the actual scam per se, but the sadness behind it, the loneliness that has to exist for the scam to work. The basic rundown for those that don't know: a conman picks "old" sounding names (Gladys, Agnes, etc.) out of the phonebook and then calls them up saying, "Grandma, it's me!" The Grandparent inevitably says, "Mark?" or "James?" or whatever their grandson is named. Once that happens the conman plays the role of the grandson, and the Grandparent is so thrilled to hear from their grandson that they feed them all the information they need to keep the con going. After a bit of conversation, the conman tells them that they're in jail, or had a car accident, or stuck in Mexico, or some situation they need saving from. They make it clear that the Grandparent is the only one that can help them - not the parents, not other siblings - just them. They tap into the assumed general sadness and loneliness of the elderly, and they try to make them feel special and needed. Eventually they ask for money to be wired into a Western Union account. An accomplice in Mexico or Canada empties the account with a fake ID. By the time the grandparent realizes what's happened, it's too late.

There's the obvious surface sadness of the Grandparent - the incredible loneliness that needs to be there for the scam to work, but I also always wondered about the actual grandkid - the one the conman pretended to be. What do they think when they hear about it? When they realize their disconnect or lack of a relationship with their Grandparent has aided and abetted the con? I tried to augment the frustration of that moment by making the discovery of the con happen after the Grandparent dies - so, when the Grandson discovers it, he's really unable to do anything about it, unable to try to make amends, unable to try and rectify it emotionally. And he knows that she died thinking he needed thousands sporadically wired to him - and that she was so embarrassed for him that she never mentioned it.

While "Two Step" is at its heart a thriller, it was important to me that you understand the characters before it takes a turn towards the violent. That you comprehend the sadness of James (the grandson), the frustration and panic of Webb (the conman). That the violence has weight, context, and most importantly, actual narrative purpose.

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I still wanted there to be some humanity in that chaos, but not some idealized version. Something real and flawed - that's why Dot and her storyline matter so much to me. I love Dot - I loved writing her. Almost every character in the film is confused in some way about who they are - except Dot. She's solid. And she needs to be or James has no future. And I want you to believe that fucked up or not, James has a future.

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## CAST

Dot	BETH BRODERICK
Webb	JAMES LANDRY HEBERT
James	SKYY MOORE
Duane	JASON DOUGLAS
Amy	ASHLEY RAE SPILLERS
Horace	BARRY TUBB
Ray Mance	BRADY COLEMAN
Bobby	JESSE DAYTON
Flaco	LAURIE GALLARDO
Dale	DALE WATSON
Ada	KATHY ROSE CENTER
Marci	LIBBY VILARI
Ty	JOHNNY SNYDER
Cantina Bartender	ELLE LAMONT

## CREW

Writer/Director/Producer	ALEX R. JOHNSON
Producer	PAUL BIEDRZYCKI
Producer	PAT CASSIDY
Producer	CHARLES MULFORD
Editor	BENJAMIN MOSES SMITH
Director of Photography	ANDY LILIE
Composer	ANDREW KENNY
Casting	BETH SEPKO
Production Designer	CLAIRE M. WHITE
Art Director	KATHERINE MORTER
Costume Designer	RACHEL MARIE JONES
Key Makeup Artist	APRIL SWARTZ
Special Effects Makeup	BENJAMIN D. PLOUGHMAN
1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Director	WILL RIMMER
2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director	RICO GRILLO
2 <sup>nd</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director	LAUREN BURCKHARD
2 <sup>nd</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director	ALICIA COOMBS
Set Dresser	MATT DAYTON
Property Master	ERYNN PATRICK
Sound Mixer	GREG ARMSTRONG
Sound Mixer	KYLE GRAHAM
Stunt Coordinator	CHRISTOPHER M. CAMPOS
1 <sup>ST</sup> Assistant Camera	JOHN KNUDSEN
2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Camera	MATTHEW C. WRIGHT
Digital Imaging Technician	SHARON COURTNEY
Gaffer	HARRISON WITT

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Best Boy Electric	EMMETT KERR-PERKINSON
Key Grip	CAMERON JONES
Key Grip	MATTHEW VAN DOREN
Grip	PATRICK HOY
Costumer	CHARLIE LAROSE
Location Manager	NATE WELLS
Script Supervisor	DAN SIEGELSTEIN
Production Coordinator	RICO GRILLO
Key Set PA	JOE CANIK
Post-production Coordinator	MISHKA BROWN
DI Colorist	SEAN DUNCKLEY
Sound Re-recording Mixer	JASON GAYA
Production Legal	IAN M. STRATFORD