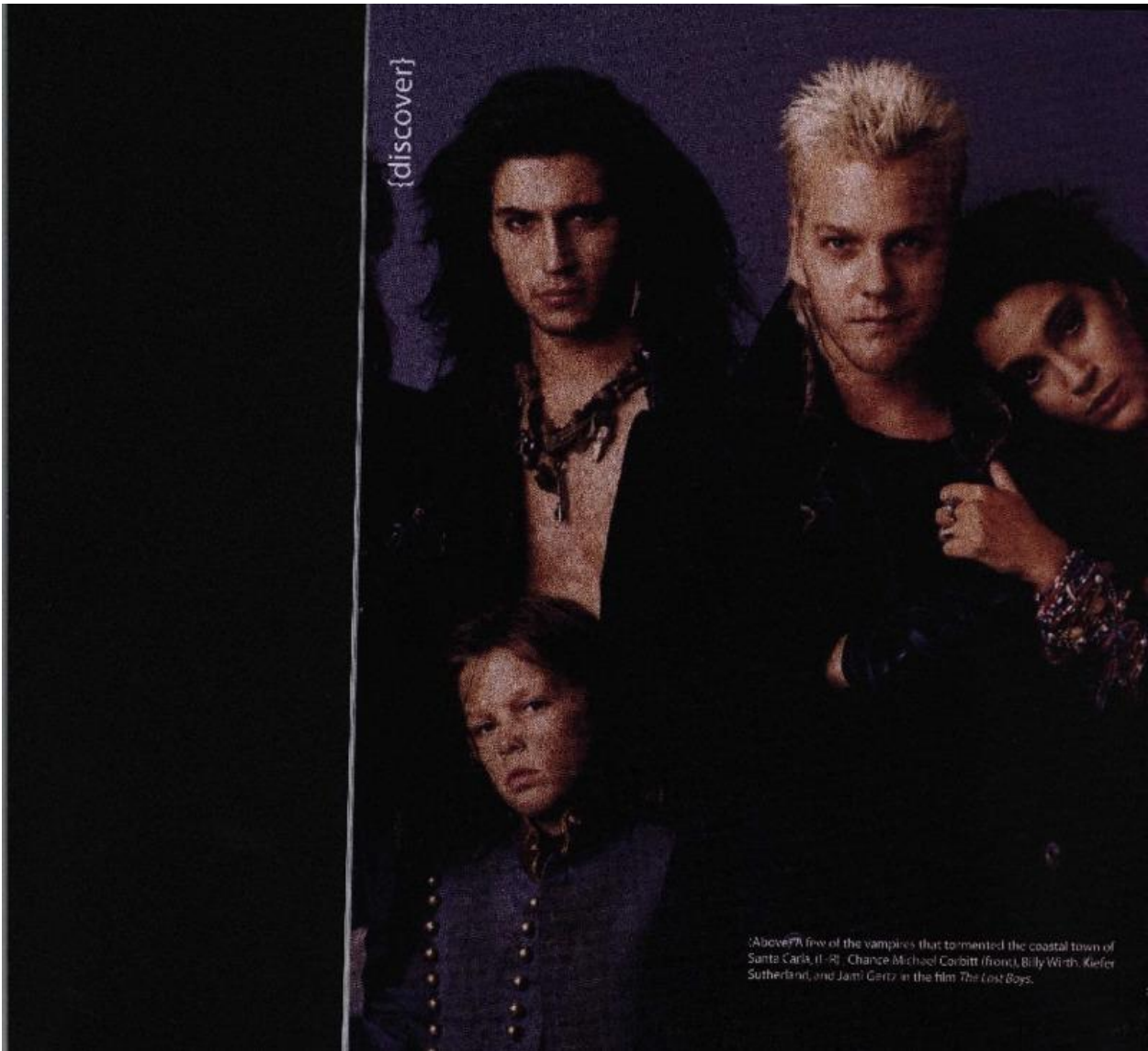
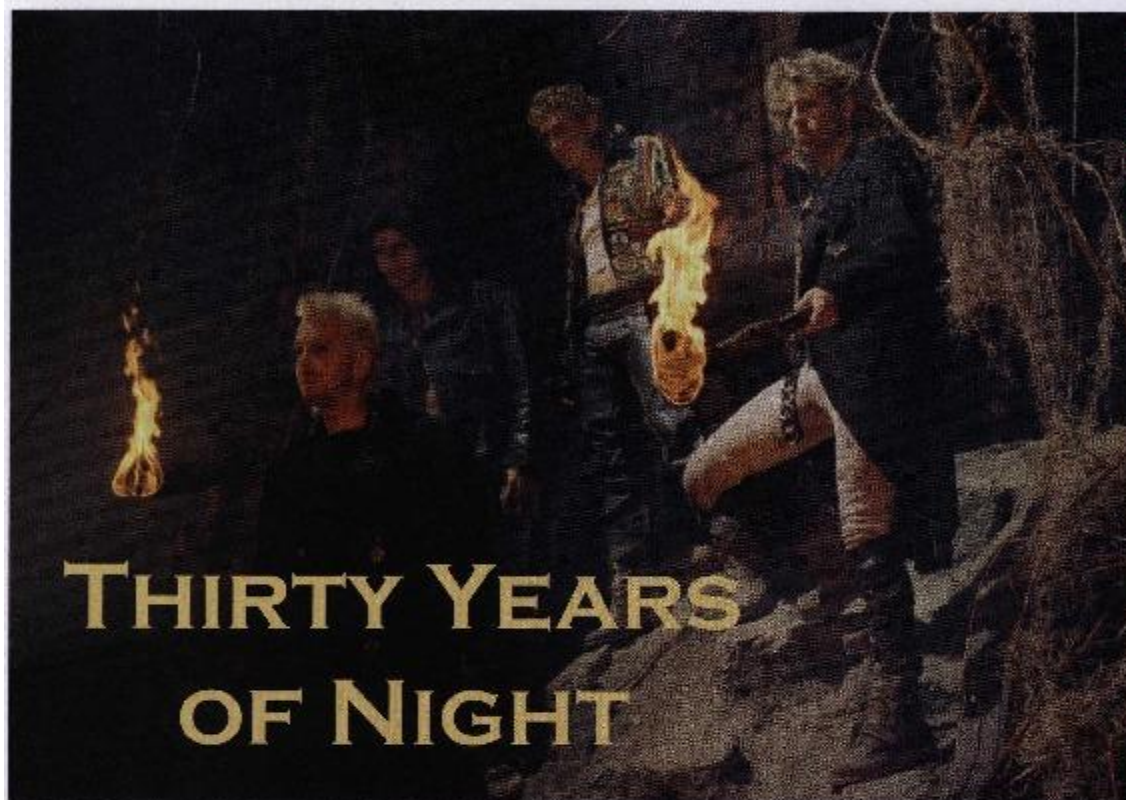


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(Above) A few of the vampires that tormented the coastal town of Santa Carla, (l-r) Chance Michael Corbitt (front), Billy Wirth, Kiefer Sutherland, and Jamie Gertz in the film *The Lost Boys*.



## THIRTY YEARS OF NIGHT

**The *Lost Boys* celebrates three decades as Santa Cruz's best-known movie — and Hollywood's coolest vampire flick**

By Peter Crooks

The opening shot of *The Lost Boys* captures the feeling of summer in Santa Cruz with perfection. A helicopter camera swoops in over Pacific Ocean waves at night, then glides in toward a beach covered with bonfires, and finally settles on panoramic look at the city's famed Beach Boardwalk. With its Giant Dipper roller coaster and various carnival rides aglow, the boardwalk is an intriguing, mysterious, and inviting sight.

"It's a beautiful boardwalk," said the film's director, Joel Schumacher, in *The Lost Boys* commentary tracks. "I really felt that if you were a teenage vampire, you would definitely live in Santa Cruz, California."

Schumacher's instinct about his film's setting has proven true. *The Lost Boys* wasn't a huge hit during its initial theatrical run — released on July 31, 1987, it grossed a respectable \$32 million — but the film has become a cult classic in the 30 years since then, delighting millions of teenagers and horror fans at slumber parties and midnight screenings. It also has become a wildly influential piece of popular culture. Long before *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the *Twilight* books and movies came along, *The Lost Boys* balanced horror, comedy, and sexy teenage summer nights into a 98-minute bucket of popcorn that plays just as well

in 2017 as it did in the summer of 1987.

But oh, that summer. I was the perfect age to appreciate *The Lost Boys* when it first came out. I was a 17-year-old film geek, working a recreation job in the East Bay before starting my senior year of high school. My coworkers and I took a weekend trip to Santa Cruz — eight or nine of us crashing in a motel room, hanging out on the beach all day and on the Boardwalk at night. We caught a late show of *The Lost Boys* at the Aptos

(Above) (R-L) Kiefer Sutherland, Brooke McCarter, Alex Winter, and Billy Wirth in their sea cave hangout.



Photo: © 1987 Warner Home Video

(Above) (L-R) Corey Feldman, Jami Gertz, Jason Patric, and Jamison Newlander on a stage constructed to look like Pogonip's interior.

Twin, and despite the film's fantastical story, it presented an idealistic rush of endless summer youthfulness. To my group of suburban-raised friends, it had an *American Graffiti*-like feel. The film's tagline — "Sleep all day. Party all night. It's fun to be a vampire," — perfectly captured the sense of adventure that would make it a classic over time.

*The Lost Boys'* unique tone — ranging from almost screwball comedy to full prosthetic vampire horror — is largely due to the film's director, although Schumacher wasn't the original filmmaker attached to the project. The film was going to be directed by Richard Donner (*The Omen*, *Superman*), who had a hit with the kiddie-adventure movie *The Goonies* in 1985 and intended to follow it up with a kiddie-vampire movie.

The original vision for *The Lost Boys* cast the vampires as 8- and 9-year

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olds, with the title a reference to the legion of boys who never grow up in *Peter Pan*. When that project failed to gel, Donner dropped out of the director's seat so he could make the action smash *Lethal Weapon*. (Donner stayed on as producer on *The Lost Boys*, and even dropped some subliminal advertising for the vampire

movie into *Lethal Weapon*, posting "*The Lost Boys* — the Year's Big Hit" on a marquee behind Mel Gibson and Danny Glover in an early scene.)

The project lingered until Schumacher became attached. The director had just made the hit *St. Elmo's Fire*, which featured a winning cast of 1980s heartthrobs such as Emilio Estevez, Demi Moore, and Rob Lowe. Schumacher had no interest in making a G-rated vampire movie about little kids. He convinced Warner Bros. that the film would be more interesting if the vampires were sexy teenagers and the studio agreed.

Schumacher put together a fantastic cast, including Dianne Wiest, Jason Patric, Jami Gertz, Klefer Sutherland, and the "two Coreys," Haim and Feldman. With the exception of Wiest, who had just won



Photo: © Dan Coyro

(Above) Director Joel Schumacher (L) makes his way across the set at Pogonip Lodge followed by his crew during the filming of *The Lost Boys* in Santa Cruz.

an Oscar for Woody Allen's *Hannah and Her Sisters*, and character actors Barnard Hughes and Edward Hermann, *The Lost Boys'* now-iconic cast was packed with unknown faces at the time of its release.

"I looked at every actor for Jason Patric's role, and he was the only actor at that age with that look who could do the part," explained Schumacher. "The problem was that Jason did not want to make the film. He was concerned it would be an explanation film."

Schumacher was able to convince Patric to take the part, and Patric recommended Gertz for the role of the sweet-but-cursed female vampire. Kiefer Sutherland just finished filming *Stand By Me*, and signed on to play malevolent vampire, David, the toughest and surliest of a gang of motorcycle riding blood-suckers. The part made Sutherland into a star.

"My character happened to have the one great line at the end of each scene, so I'm deeply grateful for that," Suther-

land said in *The Lost Boys* behind the scenes features. "I've been very fortunate to be able to do a lot of films in my career, but if there was a single film that I have been associated with, by far, it is *The Lost Boys*."

"I've been very fortunate to be able to do a lot of films in my career, but if there was a single film that I have been associated with, by far, it is *The Lost Boys*," said Kiefer Sutherland.

Teen stars Corey Feldman and Corey Haim bonded during filming, hanging out at the cast hotel and the arcade at the Beach Boardwalk during filming in Santa Cruz. The two would go on to make seven films together, including the teen comedies *License to Drive* and *Dream a Little Dream*. Both actors would struggle with drug abuse as teenagers, and *The Lost Boys* remains a career highlight. Haim died in 2010; later that year Feld-

man brought his band Truth Movement to perform a concert at the boardwalk before an outdoor screening of *The Lost Boys*.

Armed with a terrific cast, Schumacher hired famed cinematographer Michael Chapman to shoot the film. Chapman, who shot such masterpieces as *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*, had moved on to directing films. His most recent effort had been the box office flop *The Clan of the Cave Bear*, and Chapman (a lifelong horror buff) welcomed the opportunity to lens a vampire film.

Chapman's photography gave the film a vibrant, sensuous look throughout, whether he was shooting teen punks along the boardwalk (the film's opening credit sequence is chockablock with Santa Cruz locals) or the panoramic beauty of the hills near UC Santa Cruz (the exteriors of the Pogonip Lodge served as the house where Wiest, Hughes, Patric and Haim's characters lived, although the rustic cabin interiors of the home were actually a set on the



(Above) The *Lost Boys*' promotional one-sheet poster which features the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk in the background.

Warner Bros. lot in Los Angeles.

Although Santa Cruz has been the backdrop of some notable movies (Hal Ashby's wonderful *Harold and Maude* and Clint Eastwood's fourth Dirty Harry film, *Sudden Impact*, come to mind), none have used the city's coastal scenery as successfully as *The Lost Boys*. The locations were constantly intriguing, and it made sense that the eternal undead would choose Santa Cruz as their home.

Of course, the city in the film was not called Santa Cruz, but rather "Santa Carla." According to Schumacher, the city's leaders insisted on the fictitious name because a scene early in the film refers to Santa Carla as the "murder capital of the world," an unfortunate moniker attached to Santa Cruz in the late 1970s and early 80s due to a series of serial killings.

"The city wanted to promote the boardwalk as a place for families and kids to come," said Schumacher. "They did not want to be known for teenage violence

and would not let us use the boardwalk unless we changed the name [in the film]."

Ironically, the film's enduring popularity — Sutherland claims it has been

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one of Warner Bros. most popular titles on home video — has made it an integral part of a Santa Cruz summer tradition. Each June, the city kicks off its weekly free movie series at the Boardwalk with a screening of *The Lost Boys*.

"*The Lost Boys* has been kicking off the Free Movies on the Beach series since its inception," said Karley Pope, Director of Promotions and Entertainment

for Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. "We estimate approximately 5000 (people attend each year). There's really nothing quite like watching a movie at the actual place that it was filmed. The *Lost Boys* is a cult classic that is still very popular in many areas throughout the nation, but in Santa Cruz there are people that were extras in the movie or remember when it was filmed. Those people love to come back to where it all happened and celebrate the campy classic with their friends and family."

Thirty years after *The Lost Boys* put a new spin on the vampire genre, the brand still has bite. In fact, Rob Thomas (*Veronica Mars*, *Party Down*) recently signed a deal with the CW Network to develop *The Lost Boys* as a seven season TV series, with each season taking place during a different decade. Here's hoping these new bloodsuckers make time to visit the Beach Boardwalk and pay homage to the timeless classic that kicked off the teenage vampire craze. ♣