

= Last Clear Chance =

Last Clear Chance is a 1959 American short film produced and directed by Robert Carlisle . Sponsored by Union Pacific Railroad , Last Clear Chance is a safety film intended to warn young drivers to be careful at railroad crossings . The film 's cast consists of William Boyett , Harold Agee , Mrs. Harold Agee , Tim Bosworth , William Agee , Christine Lynch , and Lou Spraker . Written by Leland Baxter , the film was shot in parts of Idaho . Wondsel , Carlisle & Dunphy Inc , based in New York City , served as the film 's production company .

The film centers on the Dixon family , in particular Alan Dixon , who has recently received his driver 's license and is eager to begin driving a car . When local police officer Hal Jackson visits the Dixons and learns that Alan 's license has arrived , he sits down and tells Alan ways to drive safely and avoid getting into accidents . Although the film is fictional , a real family served as the inspiration for the film 's scenario . During production , assistance was provided by staff of the National Safety Council , along with the Idaho State Police and the Colorado State Patrol .

Last Clear Chance was distributed by Union Pacific in 1959 , and was circulated widely in the years that followed . Met with warm reception from safety workers , the film was featured in an episode of Mystery Science Theater 3000 that originally aired in 1993 , and clips from the film were used in the 2004 film Panorama Ephemera . The film 's copyright was never registered , and it is in the public domain . A copy of the film is preserved in the Prelinger Archives , where it is able to be downloaded or streamed online free of charge .

= = Plot = =

Idaho police officer Hal Jackson ( William Boyett ) arrives at the funeral for young Frank Dixon , Jr . ( Bill Agee ) , who has died in a car accident . Hal , a friend of the Dixon family , does not go inside , feeling it would be too difficult to take . Hal finds it hard to believe that , only a few days ago , the Dixons were a relatively regular family . In flashback , he recounts what led to Frank Jr . ' s death . Frank Jr. has returned home for the summer to aid his father , Frank Sr. ( Harold Agee ) , on the family farm . He also visits his girlfriend Betty Hutchins ( Christine Lynch ) . When Frank Sr. ' s new tractor arrives at the local train station , Frank Jr . ' s brother Alan ( Tim Bosworth ) wishes to drive it , having recently taken a driver 's test . His father disallows it , so Frank Jr. drives it home .

The next day , Alan discovers that his license has arrived in the mail . Ecstatic , he wishes to drive immediately , asking his family members if they need help with any errands . Later , Hal shows up at the Dixon home . Knowing that Alan 's license had been scheduled to arrive , he begins to talk to Alan , telling him about things he should know in order to be able to drive safely . As he finishes giving the advice , Frank Jr. and Betty return home . Alan asks his father if he can drive the car into town . His father lets him , and Frank Jr. and Betty agree to go with him to make sure he arrives safely .

Alan begins driving the car down the road , and sees Frank Jr. and Betty in front of him . They look behind to wave to Alan , and he waves back . However , the pair keep driving while looking backwards . Observing that a railroad with an oncoming train is near , Alan desperately tries to signal to them to stop waving and look ahead . When they do not pay attention to him and continue waving , Alan shields his eyes as the two drive right into the path of the train and are killed . Back in the present , at the funeral , Hal enters his police car , and decides to go back on the road in order to prevent more traffic accidents from occurring .

= = Production = =

Last Clear Chance was produced and directed by Robert Carlisle . The production was supervised by Francis B. Lewis , who was the Union Pacific Railroad 's Director of Safety and Courtesy . Assistance on research for the film was provided by staff of the National Safety Council . A note at the end of the film gives thanks to the Idaho State Police , the Colorado State Patrol , and their respective staffs for " their unstinted cooperation and assistance in making this film . "

The film features William Boyett as police officer Hal Jackson . Frank Dixon , Sr. is played by Harold Agee , while the role of Mrs. Dixon is credited to " Mrs. Harold Agee . " Future corporate executive William Agee plays Frank Dixon , Jr. with Christine Lynch appearing as his girlfriend , Betty Hutchins . Tim Bosworth was cast as Alan Dixon , and Lou Spraker plays the grandfather . The film , written by Leland Baxter , features a scenario that was inspired by a real @-@ life family . Bert Spielvogel served as the cinematographer for Last Clear Chance , with Peter Norman working as assistant cameraman . Shot in Kodachrome .

Filming locations include :

? 0 : 40 - 1 : 57 and 23 : 25 - 23 : 47 Kohlerlawn Cemetery 300 6th St. N Nampa , Idaho ( 43 ° 35 ' 30 @. @ 29 " N 116 ° 33 ' 48 @. @ 16 " W )

? 2 : 29 - 3 : 12 ex @-@ Union Pacific depot , Meridian , Idaho ; [ demolished ] ( 43 ° 36 ' 31 @. @ 67 " N 116 ° 23 ' 26 @. @ 10 " W )

? 3 : 13 - 3 : 33 Crossing at Main ( First ) St and Boise Valley RR MP 457 @. @ 53 Meridian , ID ( 43 ° 36 ' 30 @. @ 95 " N 116 ° 23 ' 29 @. @ 44 " W )

? 19 : 18 - 19 : 31 Bridge ( Avalon ) St Kuna , ID at UP crossing MP 447 @. @ 23 ( 43 ° 29 ' 20 @. @ 82 " N 116 ° 25 ' 15 @. @ 11 " W )

Main character Hal wears an Idaho State Police uniform . Mort Fallick was the film 's editor .

Made five years after The Days of Our Years , another Union Pacific Railroad @-@ sponsored safety film , Last Clear Chance was produced by Wondsel , Carlisle and Dunphy , Inc. in order to inform young drivers how to make sure to avoid accidents . Archivist , author , and filmmaker Rick Prelinger notes that the film also includes other themes , such as " a teen ? s feeling of invulnerability , the police officer as authority figure , and the train ? s dual role as economic partner and potential killer . " Prelinger believes that " longer films aspire to higher goals , and one way to achieve these goals is to pack them with hints of meaning in many directions . "

= = Release and legacy = =

Last Clear Chance was distributed only in western states that were served by its sponsor . It was released in 16 mm film , and by 1960 was described as being " shown widely in all sections of the country . " A copyright on the film was not registered , and it is in the public domain under Public Domain Mark 1 @. @ 0 . A copy of the film is in the Prelinger Archives , and as such it is available to be freely downloaded or streamed from the Internet Archive .

The film was received positively by many people who worked in the safety industry , with it being reported that many of them considered it to be " the most moving and hard @-@ hitting educational film on highway grade crossing accident prevention and traffic safety in recent years . " It received an award at a national safety film contest . Rick Prelinger described the film as being " engaging " and opined that it was a " skillful drama . " Bill Gibron of DVD Verdict branded the film as " hyper somber " and wrote that " we learn , finally , why reckless driving , trains , and painful automotive accidents don 't mix . The question everyone keeps asking is ' Why don 't they look ? ' The answer is simple . They 're dopes ! "

Last Clear Chance was featured in an episode of the comedy television series Mystery Science Theater 3000 . Last Clear Chance appeared in the twentieth episode of the fifth season , which was originally broadcast on December 18 , 1993 . Last Clear Chance became a " huge hit " thanks to its appearance on the show , and it has been described as one of the " Mystery Science Theater 3000 favorites . " Actor and writer Kevin Murphy , who plays Tom Servo on the show , opined that Last Clear Chance " is right up there with my all @-@ time favorite shorts . " Rhino Entertainment has released the segment featuring Last Clear Chance on VHS , as part of Mystery Science Theater 3000 - Shorts Volume 2 . Shorts Volume 2 was later re @-@ released on DVD in 2003 , as part of Mystery Science Theater 3000 Collection , Volume 3 .

Clips from Last Clear Chance are featured in 2004 's Panorama Ephemera , a film created by Rick Prelinger which compiles clips from 64 short films in order to form a cohesive narrative . The clip used from Last Clear Chance is the scene where Frank Jr. and Betty drive into the path of an oncoming train . Panorama Ephemera can be downloaded or streamed for free at the Internet

